

SOUTH EAST ASIA

Colonial History

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Edited by Paul H. Kratoska

Volume VI

Independence through Revolutionary War



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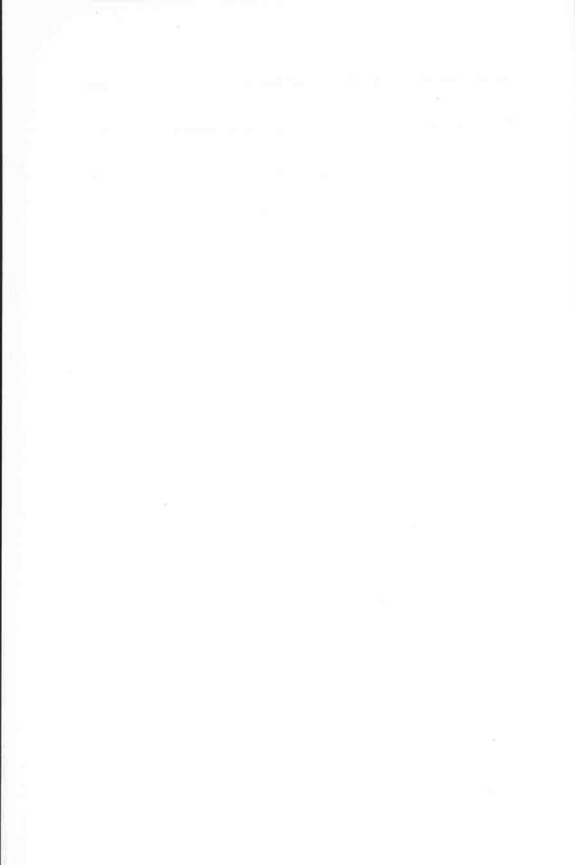
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INDEPENDENCE THROUGH
REVOLUTIONARY WAR

INTRODUCTION

The colonial territories under Dutch and French rule achieved independence only after fighting protracted revolutionary wars, while decades later East Timor gained independence from Portugal only to plunge into a devastating conflict with Indonesia, which seized the territory upon the Portuguese withdrawal. During the Occupation, France and the Netherlands declared their intentions to adopt new approaches to colonial affairs by granting subordinate territories equal status with the home country. Both, however, envisaged lengthy periods of adjustment during which they would control the pace and direction of change, and in the immediate aftermath of the war concentrated on restoring their authority. This dilatory approach was unacceptable to the nationalist leadership. Sukarno and Ho Chi Minh both issued pre-emptive declarations of independence at the end of the war, and their people showed a willingness to fight in defence of the new governments, even in the face of well-armed and battle-hardened Dutch and French forces. On both sides of the colonial divide there were differing views on the course that should be followed. In the West, some politicians disagreed with the new colonial policies, and in South East Asia Sukarno and Ho Chi Minh faced local opposition from people who supported moves towards independence but disliked their specific programmes or leadership, as well as from people who saw advantages in maintaining colonial ties.

Strong communist movements emerged in both countries, and their fate was crucial in shaping future events. In Indonesia the Army suppressed a communist uprising in 1948, and the Republic's anti-communist stance attracted strong American backing in the final stages of the struggle against the Dutch. In Vietnam the communists moved into a dominant position in the governing Viet Minh organization, and for this reason the Americans – despite their stated opposition to imperialism – supported the French in Vietnam, and ultimately intervened directly.

Indonesian nationalist leaders announced the creation of a Republic of Indonesia and issued a declaration of independence on 17 August 1945. The Dutch viewed the step as a Japanese initiative carried out by collaborators, which the Indonesian people would repudiate. This proved to be a major

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miscalculation. Although the Dutch quickly regained control of the eastern archipelago and entered into negotiations with the Java-based government of the Republic to create a new federal system, they faced armed opposition and widespread popular resistance. In July 1947 a Dutch military assault, termed a 'police action', seized much of the territory claimed by the Republic, and a second 'police action' in December 1948 resulted in the capture of the Republic's capital at Yogyakarta, and the arrest of most of the republican leadership. These measures drew an extremely hostile response from the United Nations, and from individual countries (including the United States) upon which the Dutch depended for reconstruction aid and for future trade and investment. Consequently, the Netherlands was forced to free the captured leaders and enter into negotiations leading to a transfer of sovereignty. This change took place on 27 December 1949 for all territories of the former Netherlands Indies apart from the western half of New Guinea. Indonesia made Dutch retention of this territory a major political issue, and ultimately annexed the region in the early 1960s.

Wartime Dutch planning tends to be dismissed as unrealistic, or as a ploy to retain the pre-war empire. Details of the schemes rarely find a place in the nationalistic studies that dominate the historiography of this period, but they are not without interest. As the present volume indicates, the report of the Visman Commission, set up in 1940 to investigate political reforms in the Netherlands Indies, anticipated 'drastic changes in the superstructure of the Kingdom', but noted that 'without exception' all those interviewed had expressed 'the wish not to break the bond which had been forged in the course of centuries between the Indies and the Netherlands'. Whether this statement truly reflected the wishes of Indonesians may certainly be questioned, but it goes a long way towards explaining the confidence on the part of the Dutch that Indonesians would welcome their return.

Some of the authors whose work is included in this section were academics, but others were Dutch officials involved with Indonesian affairs. Dr Frans Visman was chairman of the Visman Commission, mentioned above. H. J. van Mook was head of the Netherlands Indies government-in-exile set up in Australia during the war, and of the post-war colonial government until October 1948, while J. H. Boeke was an economic advisor to the government of the Netherlands Indies and Professor of Economics at Leiden University. George McT. Kahin was an American observer who was in Indonesia from mid-1948 until mid-1949, and his book *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952) is a classic account of this period.

* * *

While the Indonesian revolution was underway, a struggle also took place for French Indochina. The French administered the territory until March 1945, when the Japanese seized control and interned French officials and soldiers. After the Japanese surrender, a newly proclaimed Democratic Republic of

INTRODUCTION

Vietnam (DRV), headed by a National Liberation Committee dominated by the Viet Minh, issued a declaration of independence. In March 1946 France recognized the DRV as a free state in the Indochinese Federation and the French Union.

Officials in France appeared ready to accept a new order in Indochina, but Frenchmen resident in the colony were unwilling to accede to changes. By the end of 1946 there was open warfare between partisans of the French and the DRV. A stalemate ensued, which the French attempted to break in 1948 by making Vietnam an associated state within the French union, and restoring the former Emperor Bao Dai as head of state. Bao Dai proved unable to draw support away from Ho Chi Minh, and fighting continued until May 1954, when French forces suffered a decisive defeat at Dien Bien Phu. The French and the Viet Minh were already holding discussions at Geneva to arrange a settlement of the conflict, and the resulting Geneva Accord partitioned the country at the 17th parallel. The Viet Minh would govern territories to the north of that line, and a Republic of South Vietnam the territories in French hands. France now withdrew.

The contemporary literature on the Franco-Vietnam conflict was, Ellen Hammer notes in an article reproduced in this volume, strangely sparse until 1949, when France appeared to be in danger of losing the struggle with potentially disastrous consequences for American interests both in Asia and in Europe. It then began to attract considerable attention, part because of the communist victory in China. Hammer suggests that outside observers watched developments in Indonesia more closely because America and Britain had extensive investments there, while Indochina was largely a French preserve. It was cold war politics and a desire to shore up the position of France in Europe and in Africa rather than economic concerns that finally attracted American support for the French.

* * *

For East Timor, colonial rule lasted until 1975, when Portugal's withdrawal was followed by an invasion by Indonesia, which announced its intention to annex the territory. From the perspective of the Timorese, the Indonesian takeover was in effect the beginning of a new period of colonial rule, which ended with a referendum conducted under the auspices of the United Nations in 1999, when the population voted overwhelmingly for independence.

INDONESIA

INDONESIA

*Paul M. Kattenburg*¹

Source: Lawrence K. Rosinger et al., *The State of Asia: A Contemporary Survey*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf (1951), pp. 405-42.

The islands of Indonesia (once commonly referred to as the Indies, East Indies, Netherlands India, or Netherlands or Dutch East Indies) have entered more and more into the mainstream of world affairs. Ruled by the Dutch for three hundred years and then captured by the Japanese at the beginning of the second World War, the archipelago became the stage of an intense postwar conflict between local nationalists and the returning Dutch. While the evolution of the archipelago affects its own people first of all, recent events in Indonesia also have deep significance for the rest of South East Asia, as well as for the Netherlands and other colony-holding nations of western Europe. Clearly the prestige of the United Nations has been at stake in the Dutch-Indonesian struggle. Nor can one overlook Indonesia as a factor in the contest between the two main centers of world power, the United States and the Soviet Union.

The Indonesian archipelago lies between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and the continents of Asia and Australia. It is thus strategically located athwart the communications lines of the British Commonwealth and Empire. In religion Indonesia is the easternmost territory of the Moslem world, while ethnically it is the home not only of the Indonesians, and of some three hundred thousand Eurasians and Dutch, but also of two million Chinese who play a powerful role in its economic life. Its population—the largest among the countries of South East Asia—was approximately sixty million in 1930, including about forty-eight million on the two main islands (forty million on Java, eight million on Sumatra). In 1940 the figure was estimated at more than seventy million, and today it is undoubtedly higher—perhaps seventy-five million; i.e., roughly half the population of the United States.

Indonesia is a major reservoir of valuable raw materials. In 1939 it produced more than a third of the world's natural rubber, more than a sixth of

its tin, about a fourth of its palm oil and coconut products, and very large, or at least significant, quantities of petroleum, tea, cinchona bark, sisal, kapok, pepper, bauxite, sugar, and coffee. The Netherlands built its wealth and power in large measure on the East Indies. The total capital investment in Indonesia before World War II is estimated at some four billion guilders (roughly one billion U.S. dollars, in terms of 1950 currency values), about seventy per cent of which was held by Dutch interests. This investment paid handsome returns. According to one survey, sixteen per cent of the Dutch national income has been attributable to sovereignty over Indonesia.² However cautiously one must approach such a calculation, it gives an idea of the Dutch stake.

Indonesia, it is generally agreed, provides the most graphic illustration of the role a colony can assume in the economic life of the ruling country. The islands were highly important because of their great excess of exports over imports (and consequent exchange earning capacity), the field of operations they offered Dutch shipping and other services, and the employment opportunities for Dutch nationals, who held the best positions in government, business, and the army. Since the colony was essentially self-supporting up to World War II, the returns to the Netherlands were almost pure profit on the Dutch investment.

When Japan invaded Indonesia in 1942, the Netherlands had had a stake in the area for more than three centuries. In the sixteenth century the Portuguese established themselves in the islands; in the seventeenth the Dutch replaced them, using the Netherlands East India Company as the spearhead.² Early Dutch policy involved little direct government and much emphasis on the profitable trade. Later, as Dutch power grew despite outbursts of Indonesian resistance, there was an effort to press as much profit as possible directly from the islands and the people. Thus in the nineteenth century intensive demands on the Indonesians for land and labor brought great financial returns to the government at The Hague. In reaction to this, as well as in response to new theories about productive efficiency and the exploitation of natural resources, Dutch policy was modified towards the end of the century. Private capital began to replace that of the state; there was a new emphasis on large-scale plantations; Netherlands rule penetrated increasingly into the lives of the Indonesians; and, as part of a reform movement, stress was laid on the need for social services in maintaining a constant high level of economic returns.

The Dutch effort, which contributed greatly to the development of some sectors of the Indonesian economy and brought some social improvements, especially in public health, was directed almost entirely towards making Indonesia an effective support of the Netherlands' economic system. The great mass of Indonesians remained sunk in poverty, earning their livelihood largely by raising subsistence crops, especially rice. The prevailing pattern in Java was one of very small holdings or communal lands, carved

out of the heavily overcrowded but fertile soil. Indonesia was not plagued by land-tenure problems as were other Far Eastern areas, because the Dutch from 1870 on prohibited the sale of land to non-Indonesians and carefully respected the traditional system of common ownership of land by villages. But the pressure of population on the land was intense. Increasing numbers sought employment on European-managed estates and plantations, and programs of emigration to the Outer Islands (the islands other than Java) were developed. In the Outer Islands, especially Sumatra, the traditional pattern of native economy was being broken down by an increasing reliance on cash crops. Outside the agricultural field, the prospects for light industry appeared promising immediately before World War II, but industry itself was only in its infancy. Labor, whether on plantations or in industry, formed only a very small percentage of the total population.

The first strong symptoms of modern national consciousness appeared in Indonesia early in the present century. This partly reflected the fact that a small but growing number of upper-class Indonesians were entering Dutch schools and universities, where they absorbed the culture of the West. While these students were slowly developing into an intelligentsia capable of leading the people, a series of international events contributed to the rise of nationalism. These included the modernization of Japan and her emergence as a great power, the Chinese Revolution of 1911, the upsurge of nationalism in India and the Near and Middle East, the victory of Bolshevism in Russia and the consequent spread of international Communist doctrine, advances towards self-government in the Philippines, and the strengthening of the principle of national self-determination, confirmed in the European peace treaties. *An organized Indonesian nationalist movement emerged shortly after World War I.* The world depression that began in the late twenties dislocated many sectors of native life and contributed to the growth of Indonesian national consciousness. The increasing contacts of Indonesians, especially seamen, with the outside world also played a part. Nor should one overlook the effect of the establishment by the Dutch, however slowly, of native representative institutions.

Indonesian nationalism gradually exhibited four major tendencies, frequently interwoven with each other in varying combinations. From Western culture, modern democratic nationalism and Marxism were borrowed. From Indonesia's cultural tradition, nationalists took Islam as a rallying point against foreign influences, while rediscovering their country's history and pattern of values. In the process two "conservative" wings developed. One emphasized religion. The other stressed gradual progress towards self-government through co-operation with the Dutch and through a rejuvenation of the great forces in Indonesian civilization. Two "radical" wings also evolved, one looking towards immediate, absolute independence through non-co-operation with the Dutch and the development of

nationalist sentiment, and the other going beyond this to a revolutionary philosophy of establishing a Marxist, workers' state.

Centered almost exclusively at first in Java and Sumatra—the areas of densest population and most intimate contact with the West—Indonesian nationalism developed a series of able and devoted leaders, symbolizing the main tendencies of the movement. These included the Islamic leader Hadji Agus Salim (later foreign minister and elder statesman of the Indonesian Republic) and the traditionalist and moderate nationalists Sutomo, who died before World War II, and Dewantara, a leading educator still active today. There were also the radical nationalist leaders Sukarno and Hatta, who later became respectively the president and vice-president of the Republic. The Socialists produced Sjahrir, once prime minister of the Republic and still a highly influential leader, and Sjarifuddin, a left-socialist ex-premier of the Republic who joined a Communist-led rebellion in 1948 and was executed. The Communist leaders included Alimin, Samaun, and Sardjono, and the extreme left deviationist Tanmalaka.

The nationalist movement faced great barriers in working for Indonesian unity. The separateness and diversity of the islands, and the many differences among the people in language, culture, and ethnic background constituted one factor. The lack of popular education was another. Throughout Dutch rule, only from five to ten per cent of governmental expenditures was allocated for education in Indonesia. Since by 1930 only six per cent of the population could read and write satisfactorily, and this percentage increased very slowly, the most obvious means of nationalist propaganda was not available for reaching the great mass of the people.

The Moslem religion, it is true, was a unifying element, since roughly ninety per cent of the people adhere to it. But even its appeal was not universal, and the nationalist leaders were inspired less by Islam than by secular Western political theories. The divisions within colonial Indonesian society proved a most serious barrier to nationalism. For example, the small middle class in the professions and civil service found itself torn by conflicting tendencies. Its life was essentially the product of Western influence, but it was separated from the Western sectors of society by race, social barriers, and a comparatively low economic position. It tended therefore to turn for fraternization and support to the native groups from which it had alienated itself in daily life—a difficult integrating process. From this educated and dynamic section of society came the leaders and propagandists of nationalism.

A second native group consisted of the aristocracy of the native states, whose members had a common faith in their ancient, custom-encrusted institutions. Much as they despised the colonial rulers, the aristocrats also distrusted the Western-educated intelligentsia. Where the aristocracy was poor and its prestige falling, it tended to associate with religious leaders and to identify itself with the native masses. Where it was rich and dependent for its survival on Dutch interests, it tended to look to the Dutch for support and

to inhibit native consciousness. Only where modern ideas had penetrated it, as was to some extent true in the large principalities of Java, was the aristocracy willing to look to nationalism and its middle-class leaders for guidance and association.

The third main social group consisted of the Indonesian masses in their village communities. Except for the *Kampongs* of plantation laborers and urban wage-earners, the native settlements remained largely untouched by foreign governmental systems. Since the Western-imposed economy did not penetrate deeply into the traditional, closed village community, sectionalism and custom continued to form the basis of Indonesian public life. But despite these retarding factors, nationalist sentiment spread with rapidity to even the most remote islands and kampongs. Constantly recruiting new leaders from the growing Indonesian intellectual group, the nationalist movement matured and spread until it represented more and more of the inert masses of the people and included virtually all Indonesians who had any political opinions. In May 1939 a Congress of the movement established a federation of those parties which had not been suppressed, thus achieving unity between the two major wings, "conservative" and "radical," or more exactly "co-operative" and "non-co-operative." It was a movement that included youth and women's organizations, labor unions, schools, and cultural groups.

In reacting to Indonesian nationalism the Dutch had relied strongly on a policy of repression. Serious outbreaks during 1926-7 had been put down by force, and in the late twenties and early thirties a large section of the nationalist leadership, including Sukarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir, was transported into exile, many to the notorious Upper Digul concentration camp in New Guinea. Those nationalists not in exile found themselves struggling within a system of Dutch laws which barred all except the most innocuous political activities and strictly prohibited the expression of pro-independence sentiment. A thorough system of police informants and espionage made nationalist activity extremely dangerous. The policy of repression did not bear fruit. Despite difficulties, the nationalists constantly broadened their support. In the late thirties they sponsored mass campaigns for political autonomy, culminating, as already noted, in the achievement of nationalist unity through federation in 1939. The Dutch applied their policy even more vigorously during the tense period after the occupation of the Netherlands in May 1940. In the Netherlands, the growing strength and progress of Indonesian nationalism remained largely unperceived.

When the Japanese arrived, the Indonesian people possessed only the barest semblance of self-government. There was a *Volksraad*, a popular assembly at the central government level, which possessed limited co-legislative powers with the governor general, who held a final veto. But the Indonesians, comprising ninety-eight per cent of the population, had only half the seats in this body (the rest went mostly to the Dutch and a few to

Chinese and Arab representatives). A large number of the members were appointed, and the remainder were not chosen through a broad franchise or direct popular elections. The limited powers of the Volksraad completely failed to meet the aspirations of the growing Indonesian élite, which continued to attack the rigid police and censorship system, found insufficient place for itself and too slow advancement in the civil service, and met great difficulties in penetrating European business enterprise except in the lowest posts. In general, then, the transfer of political and economic power to the Indonesians had hardly begun when the Pacific War broke out.

This situation in many respects favored the Japanese effort to win Indonesian support after the swift occupation of the islands early in 1942, but the Japanese program actually proved a complete failure. The occupation brought economic chaos and new misery to the people standards of living deteriorated seriously, village manpower was drained by calls for forced labor, and the most essential goods were in very short supply. Politically, the independence promised by the Japanese proved a sham. But Japan contributed significantly to shaping the future by enlisting the collaboration of leading nationalist elements. With rare but important exceptions—the most notable were Sjahrir and Sjarifuddin—almost all Indonesian leaders took posts under the Japanese and paid at least verbal respect to Japanese slogans and wishes. In return, they were allowed considerable freedom of movement and received an excellent opportunity to reorganize and consolidate the nationalist movement and to propagandize among the masses for their own ends. It is important to note that the standards used to define quislings in the West during World War II did not automatically hold among Asian subject populations. In this case the overwhelming endorsement of Sukarno by the Indonesian people after the war, despite his prominent role under the Japanese, shows that his collaboration was accepted as arising from national rather than servile or personal motives.

The Dutch returned to Indonesia after the war with pledges of extensive reform in the structure of the Netherlands empire and in the political and economic life of the Indies. They promised the Indonesians greater employment opportunities, as well as aid in relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction, and brought with them fairly elaborate plans for light industrialization, population resettlement, and other economic changes. To the Dutch there seemed to be a prospect for a return to prewar "normalcy", but from the very beginning Indonesian nationalism and the struggle for independence were overwhelming factors in the life of the archipelago.

The suddenness of Japan's surrender caught the Allies by surprise in South East Asia. In Java a group of nationalist leaders, headed by Sukarno, Hatta, and others, quickly proclaimed the independent Republic of Indonesia on August 17, 1945. Because of the military weakness of the recently liberated Netherlands, the Allies delegated to the British South East Asia Command the acceptance of the Japanese surrender in Indonesia. But the

Republic was more than a month old by the time British forces began to trickle into Java late in September 1945. Despite the Dutch view that the Republic had been made in Japan, and was led by extremists incapable of governing effectively, the British soon realized that it had overwhelming Indonesian support and was really functioning—in any event in Java and in areas of Sumatra.

One over-all effect of the British operation in Indonesia was to pave the way for the military and political re-entry of the Dutch. But because the United Kingdom was obliged to spread its military resources through Burma, Siam, Malaya, and southern Indochina, as well as Indonesia, British field commanders gave limited recognition to Indonesian Republican authorities and accepted their aid in disarming the Japanese, releasing Allied internees and war prisoners, and maintaining law and order. At the same time the British permitted a few and then increasingly large numbers of Dutch troops and officials to return and establish themselves in the cities of Batavia, Bandung, Semarang, and Surabaya. The entrance of Dutch forces set off Indonesian resistance. While a section of the Republican government moved to the interior city of Jogjakarta, leaving negotiations with the British and Dutch in the hands of Prime Minister Sjahrir in Batavia, regular and irregular Indonesian forces in Java engaged the British and Dutch troops at many points. Many British units, composed mainly of Indians, proved unreliable for political reasons. The subsequent British use of Japanese troops as auxiliaries in armed actions, the furious Indonesian counteractions following this move, and resulting British military retaliations soon brought Indonesia to the world's attention.

A proposal for an investigation by the United Nations Security Council, submitted by the Ukraine and backed by the U.S.S.R. in January 1946, was subsequently voted down. The British had, in fact, already decided to seek an end to warfare through diplomatic intervention. They made it clear to the Dutch in December 1945 that further British military aid, and support of over-all Netherlands colonial policy, depended upon Dutch willingness to negotiate a settlement with the Indonesians. In the meantime Washington—embarrassed by public criticism of the use of lend-lease weapons and United States-trained Dutch troops against the Indonesians—had supported London's pressure for negotiations. Late in December 1945 The Hague officially accepted the idea of negotiating with the Indonesian Republic.

In February 1946 the Netherlands advanced a plan for reorganizing its empire as a "commonwealth" of equal partners under the Crown—a concept first outlined by Queen Wilhelmina in 1942. The plan offered certain concessions to Indonesia, but made no reference to the Republic and would have allowed genuine self-determination only in the indefinite future. Negotiations went forward, however, on this basis. The Netherlands cabinet of Premier Schermerhorn and Minister of Overseas Territories Logemann, and the Indies governing group under Lieutenant Governor General Hubertus J.

van Mook leaned towards a policy involving a far greater shift of power to the Dutch authorities in Batavia than Netherlands conservatives were generally inclined to grant. Since the Batavia authorities were willing to make concessions to the Indonesian nationalists for the sake of co-operation, this would have encouraged a tendency towards conciliation.

Such an approach was attacked unceasingly by Dutch conservatives, and a parliamentary commission of investigation which went to Indonesia blasted as weak the policy of van Mook and his Batavia advisers towards the Republic. Dutch public opinion—isolated from world trends for years, confident of the wisdom and superiority of Dutch rule in the Indies, and aroused by reports of the manhandling of former Dutch residents—on the whole backed the conservatives. In May the cabinet announced a plan quite similar to that advanced in February, but providing for *de facto* recognition of the Republic as part of an Indonesian federation, which would be joined in a union with the Netherlands. The Republican counter-proposals, involving an armistice, an end to troop reinforcements, and in effect *de jure* recognition of Republican independence, were not acceptable to The Hague, and negotiations ceased. A new election in the Netherlands pushed the cabinet to the right, and in Indonesia an unsuccessful attempt at a *coup d'état* temporarily disturbed conditions.

While talks were in abeyance, the Dutch proceeded to organize so-called self-governing states in territories outside the Republic: Borneo, Celebes, the Lesser Sundas, and the Moluccas. The object was to enhance Dutch control in areas to which the Republic had originally laid claim and, in a long-term sense, to build counterweights to the Republic in the event that a federation of Indonesia was later created. In October 1946 negotiations were resumed. Under continued British prodding, intensified by the announcement that British forces would soon withdraw, a military truce agreement was reached. By its terms the Indonesians agreed to permit the Dutch to increase their forces in Java to the total of the British troops that were leaving—about one hundred thousand at their maximum. The Indonesians had about twice as many men under arms, but the Dutch were superior in training and equipment. On November 15, 1946 the Netherlands and the Indonesian Republic initialed a political agreement at Linggadjati. On November 30 the last British troops withdrew from Indonesia.

Under the Linggadjati terms The Hague recognized the Republic as the *de facto* government of Java, Madura, and Sumatra. The Dutch were gradually to hand over to the Republic the areas they held on these islands, and the process was to be completed by January 1, 1949 at the latest. By the same date the Netherlands and the Republic were to establish a sovereign, democratic, federal state, the United States of Indonesia (U.S.I.). This state was to consist of three parts: the Indonesian Republic, the State of Borneo, and the State of East Indonesia. Any territory whose people decided by democratic methods not to join the U.S.I. could arrange for a special relationship with

the U.S.I. and the Netherlands. A constituent assembly of "democratically nominated" representatives of the three parts of the U.S.I. was to draw up its constitution.

By January 1, 1949 the parties were also to establish a Netherlands-Indonesia Union, headed by the Crown and consisting of the sovereign U.S.I. and the Netherlands Kingdom (Netherlands, Surinam, Curacao) in an equal and indissoluble partnership. Joint governmental bodies were to deal with questions of common interest, and the Republic agreed to restore the rights and property of all non-Indonesians in Republican territory. The Netherlands declared that, immediately after the formation of the Netherlands-Indonesia Union, it would sponsor the U.S.I. for membership in the United Nations. Should any serious disagreement arise in implementing the Linggadjati terms, the dispute was to be submitted to third-party arbitration. The arbitration clause aroused widespread hopes, in the United States in particular, that the Indonesian issue could at last be settled peacefully. The many gaps and vaguenesses in the Linggadjati Agreement were passed over rather lightly.

Fighting continued in Java and Sumatra after the agreement was initiated, while each side accused the other of violating the truce lines. "Trade regulations," which the Dutch announced in January 1947, had the effect of establishing a thoroughgoing blockade of all Republican ports. In establishing this blockade, which caused the Republic great economic hardship, the Dutch charged the nationalists with exporting the produce of Dutch-owned properties and insisted on their right to examine and, if necessary, to confiscate such exports. The Dutch also proceeded at this time with the unilateral development of "states" in the Outer Territories, while the Republic, contrary to the Linggadjati terms, extended its contacts abroad.

From the moment it was initiated, the Linggadjati Agreement faced the attacks of militant elements in Jogjakarta and conservatives in The Hague. Under domestic pressure, the Netherlands announced a set of reservations. For example, the provision for "co-operation with the Republic" was taken to mean that the Netherlands alone had final responsibility in Indonesia until such time as the new U.S.I. was established. The use of the word "federal" was also taken as meaning that the other states of the U.S.I. were entirely equal to the Republic. The Republic, for its part, conceived of the Agreement as implying joint responsibility in the formation of the U.S.I. and a dominant position for itself in the federation.

In these ominous circumstances the Linggadjati Agreement was signed in Batavia on March 25, 1947. Britain and the United States responded by granting limited *de facto* recognition to the Republic. During May the negotiations to implement the Agreement moved towards a breakdown. A number of factors had a marked effect—the Dutch blockade, the continued Dutch development of "states," the Republican diplomacy abroad, the succession of charges and countercharges of violation of truce lines, and Dutch

accusations that the Republic would not restore Dutch-owned property and was almost causing famine in Dutch-occupied areas by preventing rice shipments from the Republic. The Dutch regarded the Republic as deliberately obstructionist, while the Republic watched with growing anxiety the steady reinforcement of Netherlands troops in the islands.

On May 27 the Dutch sent an ultimatum to the Republic, demanding an immediate interim federal government in Indonesia, with large powers for the Dutch and Dutch-supported "states" in foreign, military, and economic affairs. In a reply of June 8 the Republic accepted the concept of an interim government, but opposed many of the Dutch terms. In a personal effort to save the negotiations, Prime Minister Sjahrir now sent two notes to the Dutch, indicating further concessions the Republic might accept. On June 27, a day after the Republican legislature voted against his offer, Sjahrir resigned; but the legislative left bloc, the *Sajap Kiri*, quickly changed its position to one of support for Sjahrir's stand, and President Sukarno backed this approach in a note to the Dutch. On June 27, also, an American *aide-mémoire* urged Republican acceptance of the Dutch terms and said that the United States was willing to consider financial aid for an interim government. Despite the Republican offers of concessions and a last-minute Republican invocation of the arbitration clause of the Linggadjati agreement, the Dutch adhered to their military plans. Evidently one important factor in Dutch thinking, in addition to the precarious position of the Dutch-held cities in Indonesia, was the crisis in the Netherlands economy. The economic effects of World War II on the Netherlands, the loss of the former German market, the continuing military burden in Indonesia, and the desire to revive Indonesian exports as a source of dollars all played a large role. Since the Dutch did not expect serious Indonesian resistance and misjudged the international effects of their course, they believed it would be easy to destroy what their press sometimes called the "castle of cards in Jogjakarta."

This proved not to be the case. During its first two years the Indonesian Republic had been unexpectedly successful in establishing a popular, peaceful rule. The nationalist government seemed genuinely representative, even though it was appointive in all its branches because of the impracticability of elections. At its head stood Sukarno and Hatta, president and vice-president respectively. There was a provisional legislative body, the "Central Committee of the Republic," whose five-hundred-odd members were apportioned among the various parties, sections of the country, minorities, occupations, and cultural groups. The cabinets that held office were modeled closely on the composition of the Assembly, as was the Working Committee, a relatively small body through which the unwieldy assembly mostly functioned. Throughout this period, despite some exceptions, national unity was the keynote of Republican domestic politics.

Economically the Republic placed great reliance on state control, as was indicated by a Ten-Year Plan announced in April 1947. This ambitious

statement of objectives looked towards minimum-wage arrangements; extensive activity in the fields of education, health, and co-operatives; government credit for industry; and the spread of government-owned utilities. At the same time there was much emphasis on Indonesia's need for foreign investments. Careful consideration was paid to Chinese economic interests, and important Indonesian-owned private commercial establishments were formed. Another feature of the Republic was the strength of the labor movement. The Central Labor Organization claimed a membership of 1,200,000 in the spring of 1947. This organization favored nationally owned public utilities and a policy of state Socialism modified by concessions designed to attract foreign private investment.

This was the state against which Dutch land, sea, and air power went into action on July 21, 1947. By August 4, when the "police action," as the Dutch termed it, was halted at the order of the United Nations Security Council, only about one third of the area of Java was left under Republican control. This territory was mostly in the central part of the island, with a population of roughly twenty million people. In Sumatra, while the Republicans retained the larger part of the interior, the Dutch had occupied the main seaports and valuable plantations and oil facilities. By June 1947 the military forces of the Republic, long characterized by the Dutch as operating loosely, had been co-ordinated under a central command. The Dutch attack forced a new separation of the Republican army into rather independent units, often poorly linked with each other. These armies, ill equipped and organized to wage a slow guerrilla war of attrition, were no match for the well-trained, mechanized, and amphibious Dutch. But the immediate results did not give the full picture of Indonesian resistance, as became apparent in later months.

There were swift international reactions to the use of force by the Dutch. Intensive British and American efforts at mediation, designed to forestall presentation of the issue to the Security Council, failed. On July 31, 1947 India and Australia brought the case to the Council's attention. The Council, meeting amid general criticism of the Netherlands, passed a resolution on August 1, demanding the immediate cessation of hostilities. The parties were called on to reach a settlement by peaceful means and to keep the Council informed of the progress of their efforts. While this resolution disregarded the pleas of the colonial powers that what happened in Indonesia was a matter of Dutch domestic jurisdiction, the measure lacked teeth and was simply an exhortation to the parties involved.

It soon became apparent that the cease-fire was not being carried out. The Dutch spearheads stopped advancing, but in the areas overtaken by these spearheads Dutch mopping-up operations continued against large bodies of Republican troops. The Dutch now insisted that these territories, lying within what was called "the van Mook line" (the line marked out by the points of farthest advance of the Dutch armies), be under their control. In the Security Council's deliberations of August 1947 the positions of the various members

were clearly outlined. The colonial powers—Britain, France, and Belgium—held that the Council had no authority to intervene within the domestic jurisdiction of the Netherlands. The Soviet-Polish bloc, on the other hand, advocated withdrawal of the conflicting forces to the positions they held before the “police action,” and the creation of a Security Council commission, empowered to arbitrate. Australia, Syria, and Colombia leaned towards the Republic and were backed by the Philippines and especially India (both non-members, invited to participate because of their special interest). This left the United States, leading China and Brazil, in a middle position. The compromises sponsored by the United States were usually accepted in the voting.

These compromise arrangements, and the later actions of the Security Council which followed from them, coincided with the top concessions The Hague would agree to of its own accord. This situation reflected in part the veto power that two of the colonial powers held, and that France had used to defeat one proposal unacceptable to the Dutch. But it was due mainly to the existing “cold war” situation in which Indonesian developments were being considered. To policy-makers in Washington at this time America’s global interests made firm pressure on the Dutch by the United States or the Western powers inadvisable. The United States therefore sought agreement on the basis of the maximum terms the Dutch were willing to concede; and the Council’s actions were effectively limited to these terms by American influence. This approach left the Dutch with a wide bargaining range.

On August 25, 1947, with Russia, Poland, and Syria abstaining, the Security Council passed a United States-sponsored resolution under which the Council was to tender its good offices to the Netherlands and the Republic. A three-member Committee of Good Offices was now established. The Netherlands and the Republic chose Belgium and Australia respectively, and the two latter governments then selected the United States as the third member of the Committee. On December 8, 1947, while frequent skirmishes were still occurring in areas enclosed by the Dutch spearheads, the Committee of Good Offices initiated formal meetings with Republican and Dutch delegations aboard the U.S.S. *Renville*, an American transport, in Batavia harbor. A month of discussions produced a truce and an agreement on political principles. In these negotiations a large role was played by the American representative, Dr. Frank P. Graham, then president of the University of North Carolina and later a United States Senator. The Australian member was Justice Richard Kirby; and the Belgian Dr. Paul van Zeeland.

In January 1948 the Renville Agreement was sent to the Security Council. The document retained the basic principles, as well as some of the loopholes and vaguenesses, of the Linggadjati Agreement. The truce terms provided for a cessation of hostilities and the creation of a demilitarized zone between the Dutch and Republican forces. The group of eighteen political principles reaffirmed the Linggadjati concepts concerning the establishment of a

United States of Indonesia and a Netherlands-Indonesia Union. Until authority was transferred to the U.S.I. the Netherlands was to be sovereign in Indonesia, but it might at an earlier date grant powers to a provisional federal regime, which would represent all the states fairly. The Committee of Good Offices was to continue to aid the parties in implementing the terms, but only if they so requested.

In addition, the armed forces of both parties were to be reduced gradually, but there was no requirement that troops be withdrawn to positions they had held before the "police action." The latter idea, together with a proposal that neither party take further steps to create states or to settle political relationships in the contested parts of Java and Sumatra, had been suggested by the Committee during the Renville talks, but had been rejected by the Dutch. Under the Renville terms plebiscites or free elections were to be held in these disputed areas within six months to a year. This gave the Republic a theoretical chance to recoup its territorial losses. In the period before the plebiscites the parties pledged freedom of political expression and declared that no change would be made in the administration of any territory without the consent of its people. A constitution for the U.S.I. was to be drafted by a convention in which the various states would be represented according to population. Finally, normal trade and economic activity were to be restored as soon as possible.

Both the American and British governments praised the results of the work of the Committee of Good Offices; and, in a speech of February 3, 1948, the Queen of the Netherlands declared that colonialism was "dead." But many members of the Security Council were critical of the Renville terms and doubted that they would work. The U.S.S.R. violently denounced the Agreement, declaring that the United States was aiding the Netherlands to colonialize Indonesia. The Philippines, India, and—almost as strongly—Australia, Syria, Colombia, and China showed concern that the Dutch might not really carry out the terms. But despite misgivings and the fact that the Netherlands was being allowed to keep areas that had been occupied in violation of the Council's cease-fire order, the Renville Agreement was adopted by a vote of seven to nothing, with Colombia, Syria, the Ukraine, and the U.S.S.R. abstaining. The simultaneous adoption of a Chinese resolution, calling on the Committee of Good Offices to observe and report on political developments in West Java and Madura—areas of Dutch-fostered separatist activity—suggested the disquiet prevailing among many of the members.

In fact, Dutch moves in building up a network of states to encircle the Republic contributed to the sense of frustration and apathy that became manifest in the political negotiations almost immediately after the Council approved the Renville terms. In May 1948 the Committee of Good Offices reported that, while fighting had virtually ceased, no progress had been made towards a political settlement. The atmosphere soon resembled that of the

period between the signing of the Linggadjati Agreement in March 1947 and the Dutch military move in July of that year. After unsuccessful attempts to break the impasse in June and July 1948, the Committee subsided into near quiescence for a number of months. In its July report to the Security Council it reported no further progress and stated that the continued Dutch blockade of Republican areas was preventing Indonesia's economic rehabilitation. The Dutch vigorously and bitterly denied the allegations. But with political negotiations suspended, they proceeded even more actively than before to carry out their own plans in the Outer Territories and in areas recaptured from the Republic. In these efforts they met with fair success. At the same time, in its greatly reduced and overcrowded area, the Republic faced a mounting succession of domestic difficulties.

Until the Dutch military action of July 1947 the Republic, largely under Prime Minister Sjahrir's leadership, had maintained a large measure of efficiency and stability. Sukarno had adroitly kept a political balance between the two broadly equal combinations—the left-wing bloc, known as *Sajap Kiri*, and the right-wing group, *Benteng Republik*. It is noteworthy that the "moderates"—supporters of Sjahrir's policy of negotiation with, and concessions to the Dutch—had then included not only the Socialists, but also the Communist and Labor parties; while the bulk of the opposition had come from the National party and *Masjumi*, a Moslem religious federation of parties, generally conservative on economic and political issues but militant in their attitude towards the Netherlands.

Serious fissures began to appear in the Republican political structure soon after the 1947 attack and particularly after the signing of the Renville Agreement. These fissures resulted from the steady deterioration of conditions inside the Republic (reflecting the Dutch military action, the loss of Republican territory, and the economic effects of the blockade) and from discord among Indonesian leaders concerning the orientation of the Republic in a world increasingly divided between two blocs. The most serious internal repercussions were felt in September 1948, when a rebellion broke out in Surakarta and Madiun. Led and inspired by the Indonesian Communist party, and supported by various other leftist groups and leaders (all organized into a "Democratic Popular Front"), the movement met the full opposition position of the Republican army. The background of the rebellion lay partly in the fact that the Communists had been able to capitalize on widespread dissatisfaction in the Republic as a result of the Renville Agreement and the prevailing hardships. The rebellion occurred shortly after the return to Indonesia of an Indonesian Communist leader named Muso, who had spent two decades of exile in the U.S.S.R. Upon his reappearance Muso took over the leadership of the Communist party. Although challenging the very existence of the Republican authority, the uprising was obviously premature and ill staged. By early November it had been crushed decisively by loyal Republican forces, and its leaders had been captured or killed. Among

these the best-known was the ex-prime minister and left-Socialist leader, Amir Sjarifuddin.

The Republican regime had withstood this internal threat. How effective would it be in dealing with the growing external menace of another Dutch military campaign? In November 1948 the Committee of Good Offices succeeded in briefly reviving the stalled negotiations. The last meetings were held at the highest level, with the participation of Premier Hatta of the Republic and Foreign Minister Stikker of the Netherlands. But the talks failed. The Netherlands charged that the Republic was powerless to control its armed forces and that its refusal to place these forces under Netherlands authority in the interim period preceding formation of the U.S.I. violated the recognition of interim Netherlands sovereignty in the Renville Agreement. The Hague declared that it would therefore promulgate a decree establishing an interim federal government. The Republic stated that it had gone far in making concessions, that the Dutch did not seek a bilateral agreement but unconditional acceptance of their own terms, and that they were about to form an interim federal government without formal negotiations, contrary to the Renville terms.

On December 13, 1948 Premier Hatta forwarded to Mr. Merle Cochran, the American member of the Committee of Good Offices, a letter offering further Republican concessions. For example, if definite standards were laid down, the Republic would recognize the right of a Netherlands Crown representative to exercise a veto and certain emergency powers during the interim period preceding the establishment of the U.S.I. On December 17 the Netherlands stated that the Republican concessions were unsatisfactory and demanded complete acceptance of its own terms by 10 p.m. on December 18. At 6.45 a.m. on December 19, while the Republic was drafting a reply, Dutch paratroops landed near Jogjakarta, the Republican capital. By the afternoon they had captured the city and had seized the most important Republican leaders, including President Sukarno, Vice-President and Premier Hatta, members of the cabinet, and the commander-in-chief.

The Committee of Good Offices reported to the Security Council that, in launching military operations, the Netherlands had violated its obligations under the Renville Agreement. It said that it knew of no concentration of Republican forces which should have caused alarm and precipitate action by the Netherlands; that since the Dutch operations must have involved considerable planning, it was difficult not to conclude that military plans had been under way during the exchange of correspondence since December 12; and that the negotiations under the Committee's auspices had been inadequately explored, and certainly not exhausted.

There is little doubt that the military action was inspired primarily by Dutch army elements, who believed they could easily complete the interrupted campaign of July 1947. But the Dutch reckoned without the strength and resilience of the Republican armed forces and guerrilla bands,

particularly on Java, the reaction of the federal states, and the international repercussions. The Republican population was placed under martial law by the Dutch, who imposed rigid curbs on them. Any disturbances brought ruthless repression and immediate reprisals. But the triumph of the Dutch army was ephemeral.

The main military fact was the continued existence of the Republican forces. Avoiding extermination, they withdrew from the cities of Java and set out to move across the demarcation lines. The net effect of the Dutch drive into central Java was to bring Republican formations into the eastern and western Java areas the Dutch had captured in 1947. In Pasundan (Western Java), for example, the Republican forces soon controlled the countryside to such an extent that the recently created "state" government at Bandung became powerless to rule without their approval and consent. As early as January 1949 Jogjakarta and Surakarta were under heavy attack at night, and in several instances quarters of these cities were recaptured temporarily by Republican forces. In Sumatra, too, large Republican formations roamed the countryside. By the early spring of 1949 it was evident that the Republican armies were an impressive barrier to Dutch control of Java and Sumatra. Moreover, the destruction wrought to estates, plantations, industrial and other economic establishments, and service installations by guerrilla actions was becoming so great as to cause Dutch business interests—until now staunch supporters of the "police actions"—to wonder about the wisdom of a policy of force.

Nor did the federal states react entirely as had been expected. Immediately after the attack of December 19 the Pasundan cabinet resigned in protest against Dutch policies. The cabinet that then replaced it proved unduly affected by Republican influence and resigned under Dutch pressure. In February 1949 civil authority in Pasundan was assumed by the Dutch commander at Bandung. A third cabinet that was created was still not devoid of Republican influence. In East Indonesia the prime minister, Anak Agung, resigned in protest against the December action. Later, although returning to office, he continued to oppose Dutch policies that seemed contrary to the Linggadjati and Renville terms. It became quite clear in the winter and spring of 1949 that the states held a kind of balance of power and that without Federalist approval the Dutch could not even approach control of the political situation. This approval the Federalists withheld. Republican recognition of the nationalism that now seemed to pervade the Dutch-created "Federal Consultative Assembly," meeting in virtually continuous session at Bandung, was indicated by the Republic's eventual agreement to admit the Federalists officially as a third party in future negotiations with the Dutch.

At the same time that the Indonesian military and political situation was developing in this fashion, international repercussions of the new Dutch military action were being registered at The Hague. At the request of the

United States, the Security Council was called into session on December 19, 1948, the day of the Dutch move. The Council considered a resolution presented jointly by the United States, Colombia, and Syria, calling for a cessation of hostilities and immediate withdrawal of armed forces to the respective sides of the demilitarized zones under the Renville Agreement. An Australian amendment, sponsored by Syria, also proposed immediate release by the Dutch of the Indonesian president and other Republican prisoners, and instructed the Committee of Good Offices to observe and report on the execution of this order, as well as to ensure that there were no reprisals against individuals. This resolution was the first ever seriously considered by the Council that proposed the imposition on one of the parties of a decision clearly unacceptable to it. The fact that the United States vigorously sponsored the resolution indicated a shift in American policy on Indonesia.

Washington was impelled partly by concern at Dutch disregard of the Council's earlier recommendations. More important, the latest Dutch move seemed likely to have the effect of encouraging the spread of Communist and other pro-Soviet influences in Asia. The United States government increasingly appeared to feel that only a policy of accepting the nationalist sentiments of millions in Asia could provide a basis for containing Communism in that part of the world. In addition, in considering the local merits of the Indonesian situation, American officials and observers who were in the best position to report found very little to say in favor of the Dutch stand. As a result, on December 22 American economic aid to Indonesia under the European Recovery Program, administered separately from aid to the Netherlands in Europe, was "suspended pending further developments."³ Aid to the Netherlands, however, continued.

The strong resolution in the Security Council was supported by China, India, Australia, Canada, and even the United Kingdom, as well as by its sponsors, but failed when the Soviet delegate employed the veto to defeat it. As if in retaliation, the abstentions of the United States, Britain, and their supporters killed a strong and very similar Soviet resolution shortly afterward. On December 24 the Council finally adopted by a seven-to-nothing vote, with Belgium, France, the Ukraine, and the U.S.S.R. abstaining, a compromise resolution that combined a portion of the joint resolution with the Australian amendment. The resulting resolution called for the cessation of hostilities, immediate release of the Indonesian president and other political prisoners, and full reports by the Committee of Good Offices concerning compliance by the Dutch. After the passage on December 28 of further resolutions relating to a cease-fire order and the release of prisoners, the Dutch representative, Mr. van Royen, stated on December 29 that hostilities would cease in Java on December 31 and on Sumatra a few days later. On January 7, 1949 the Committee reported that Netherlands orders terminating the hostilities were unsatisfactory and that Republican officials remained under detention.

The Security Council debated the Indonesian question daily from January 7 to January 28, with seven members (China, Cuba, Egypt, Norway, United States, U.S.S.R., Ukraine) and four out of five invited nonmembers (Australia, Burma, India, Philippines) severely critical of Dutch policies. At the same time there were strong reactions from Asia at developments in Indonesia and the apparent inability of the Security Council to achieve effective results, despite its vigorous mood. Under the leadership of India a conference of Asian, African, and South Pacific nations met at New Delhi on January 20, 1949 to discuss the Indonesian question. Representatives of nineteen countries—including Australia and New Zealand—attended as participants or observers. Although American diplomatic influence had the effect of toning down the conference decisions, the members called for restoration of the Indonesian Republic, establishment of an interim federal government, general elections for a constituent assembly, a transfer of sovereignty, and the withdrawal of Dutch troops—all within specified and quite limited time periods.

This action of the Asian governments had its repercussions in the Security Council which, on January 28, 1949, passed a new resolution sponsored by the United States, China, Cuba, and Norway. Under its terms the Council called for the immediate cessation of military operations by the Netherlands and the simultaneous discontinuance of guerrilla warfare by the Republic. Political prisoners were to be released and returned to Jogjakarta, where Indonesian leaders were to have full freedom of administration of the Jogjakarta area and to use their authority to stop military action. The resolution also called for early negotiations on the basis of the establishment of an interim federal government with powers of "internal government in Indonesia" by March 15, 1949; the completion of elections to an Indonesian Constituent Assembly by October 1, 1949; and the transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia not later than July 1, 1950. To assist in this program, the Committee of Good Offices was to be reorganized as the United Nations Commission for Indonesia. It would act by majority vote and possess wide powers of consultation, observation, and recommendation.

There was much debate on this resolution. The Netherlands representative continued to maintain that the Council lacked authority; but he also announced that his government expected to revise its timetable for progress in Indonesia. On the other hand, Cuba, Egypt, the Soviet Union, and the Ukraine expressed concern because the resolution did not require immediate withdrawal of Netherlands troops to the Renville lines. Still other governments, such as India, the Philippines, and Australia—all nonvoting observers—preferred the New Delhi conference proposals, which were somewhat stronger than the terms presented to the Council. The resolution was finally approved by votes ranging from a ten to nothing on some paragraphs (France abstaining) to seven to nothing on other provisions (Argentina, France, the Ukraine, and the U.S.S.R. abstaining).

The resolution underlined the fact that the United States was giving up its policy of searching for the lowest common denominator of agreement acceptable to the Dutch for one of using pressure and inducement to impose on the Dutch, if necessary, terms considered desirable by the United States and the Council. The Dutch did not immediately respond and seemed to be following the statement made by their representative in the Council just before adoption of the resolution; namely, that the Netherlands government would carry out the resolution only "to the extent to which it is compatible with the responsibility of the Netherlands for the maintenance of real freedom and order in Indonesia, a responsibility which at this moment no one else can take over from us."⁴ On February 26, 1949 the Netherlands government issued a plan that was, in effect, a substitute for that of the Security Council. Named after Dr. L. J. M. Beel, High Representative of the Crown in Indonesia, the Dutch plan proposed an early conference (including Republican and Federal delegates) at The Hague. The purpose was to discuss an accelerated program for independence, envisaging transfer of sovereignty by May 1, 1949. But the Dutch emphatically rejected the idea that the Republican government should return to Jogjakarta. The Beel plan fell upon deaf ears through nearly all of Indonesia.

On March 1, 1949 the United Nations Commission for Indonesia reported to the Council that no agreement had been reached on the establishment of an interim government. This situation, it was said, resulted from "the failure of the Netherlands government to accept the procedures of the resolution of January 28, and not from a mere difference of viewpoint on details of governmental structure and functions."⁵ The majority of the Security Council reacted to this situation with nothing more than an innocuous resolution on March 23, 1949. But under the force of the various pressures within and outside Indonesia, Dutch policy was beginning to shift ground, and over a period significant changes took place in top Dutch personnel concerned with the Indonesian question.

When Dutch Foreign Minister Stikker visited Washington on March 31, Secretary of State Acheson spoke to him in the strongest terms about the urgent need for the Dutch to adopt an Indonesian policy more attuned to the realities of the situation, as well as to the wishes of the Security Council and the great powers. Pressure in the United States Senate for a change in the Dutch attitude was strong, and there can be little doubt that events in Indonesia were held up to the Dutch as an obstacle to ratification of the Atlantic Pact. The Dutch tendency to alter their policy was no doubt partly dictated by the rejection of the Beel plan by the Federal Consultative Assembly at Bandung. To add to these pressures, India and Australia on March 31, 1949 referred the Indonesian case to the United Nations General Assembly. This was a development the Dutch had been most anxious to avoid.

On April 14, 1949 Dutch-Republican negotiations were finally launched in Batavia under the sponsorship of the United Nations Commission for

Indonesia. A week later the Dutch agreed to the return of the Republic to Jogjakarta if the Republic simultaneously accepted a cease-fire order and participation in a Round Table conference at The Hague. The size of the restored Republic was at first a subject of dispute, but the Dutch finally agreed to let the Republic resume authority in the Residency of Jogjakarta, an area of 3,168 square kilometers and approximately 2,500,000 people. Starting in 1945 with control over Java and Sumatra and a claim to the whole of Indonesia, the Republic had been steadily whittled down until four years later, for the moment at least, it was territorially only a fragment of its former self.

The Dutch concession opened the way for the Rum-van Royen Agreement, signed at Batavia on May 7, 1949. Under its terms the president and vice-president of the Republic, although still exiled on Bangka Island, gave their personal assurance that they favored the issuance of a cease-fire order to the Republic's armed supporters; Republican co-operation in restoring peace and maintaining law and order; and Republican participation in a Round Table conference at The Hague, designed "to accelerate the unconditional transfer of real and complete sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia."⁶ Sukarno and Hatta undertook to urge adoption of such policies by the Republic "as soon as possible after its restoration to Jogjakarta." For its part, the Netherlands agreed to co-operate in facilitating the return of the Republican government to Jogjakarta; to cease all military operations and to release immediately and unconditionally all political prisoners arrested in the Republic; to refrain from establishing states in territory that had been under Republican control before December 19, 1948; to favor the existence of the Republic as a state that would take its place in the United States of Indonesia and to let this state be represented by one third of the members of the representative assembly of the U.S.I.; to do its utmost to promote the holding of the projected Round Table conference at The Hague immediately after the Republic's return to Jogjakarta; and to allow Republican civil, police, and other officials still operating in areas outside the Jogjakarta Residency to continue to perform their functions in these places during the transition period.

On the Republican side only Sukarno and Hatta (not the Republican government or, most important, its army commanders in the field) had subscribed to the agreement. And in Holland, joining Beel in his protests, many in the key Catholic party expressed disappointment and general lack of confidence in the government's policies.

The restoration of the Republican government to its former capital was the first step necessary to implement the agreement. From his exile in Bangka Premier Hatta gave absolute authority to the sultan of Jogjakarta, who had been a supporter of the Republic since its inception in 1945, to take over the Jogjakarta Residency from the Dutch and to prepare it for the return of the government. In Java the United Nations Commission for Indonesia and its

various technical subcommissions worked out the details of the transfer of authority. Dutch and Republican delegations at Batavia agreed on exact steps for the evacuation of civilian personnel (mostly Chinese who had collaborated with the Dutch and preferred to leave Jogjakarta before the Republican return), the evacuation of Dutch forces, and the return of Republican troops. On July 3, 1949 the Republic was finally re-established in its capital; and amid scenes of great popular enthusiasm authority was restored officially to President Sukarno and the Hatta cabinet.

The next two weeks witnessed a speedy and orderly reconstitution of the Republic. The Republican Emergency Government, which had operated partly from Sumatra and partly from India since December 1948, returned from Sumatra. It had fulfilled its work of maintaining contacts with the guerrilla leaders, the Republican delegation at Batavia, and the Republican missions abroad. At this time, too, the guerrilla commanders from all parts of Indonesia assembled for consultations, the Republican cabinet prepared for its first meeting since December 1948, and the various political parties and factions determined the positions they would adopt towards the Rum-van Royen Agreement at the forthcoming meeting of the Republican legislative assembly.

Elite Republican troops resumed their patrol of Republican territory, and it became evident that no irreparable or even serious breach would develop in Republican ranks. On July 13, 1949 Sjafruddin Prawiranegara, head of the Emergency Government and a possible rallying point for Army and guerrilla opposition to the Sukarno regime, handed back his mandate to the president. The leaders of the armed forces ranged themselves squarely behind Sukarno and Hatta, and on July 14 the government formally accepted the Rum-van Royen Agreement. For the moment, at least, the government faced no difficulties from the Communists, who had been defeated the previous October in the Madiun rebellion. The only serious criticism and opposition in Jogjakarta came from the moderate Socialist party of Sutan Sjahrir. The government, however, was not distressed at this opposition, which performed the signal task of rallying dissatisfied intellectuals and others who might otherwise have joined the Communists.

The next step in negotiating a settlement was a cease-fire agreement, announced on August 3, 1949. This accord somewhat alleviated the fears of a large sector of Dutch opinion that negotiations with the Republic would prove futile. But very strong reservations were still expressed in Holland, especially on the large conservative side of the lower house, pending "full and complete" compliance by the Republic with the cease-fire terms. In the Republic, on the other hand, emphasis was placed first of all on political results, and military results only later. This reflected the fact that in the minds of millions of Indonesians there could not be complete peace until there was a real political settlement; i.e., a final, unconditional transfer of sovereignty.

Meanwhile major local events were taking place in Indonesia. Late in July 1949 representatives of the Republican government and the Federal Consultative Assembly met in a series of conferences called successively at Jogjakarta and Batavia. These two sectors of Indonesian nationalism reached almost complete unity of views on the nature of the new state to be created in Indonesia after the transfer of sovereignty. Their agreement was embodied in a provisional constitution of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia, which was formally adopted by the Federal Consultative Assembly and the Republican delegations on October 29, 1949, shortly before the end of the Hague Round Table Conference.

The provisional constitution envisaged a federal state, the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (R.U.S.I.) based on the existing states (*Negaras*), including the Republic, and autonomous territories. The provisions for the division of powers indicated supremacy for the federal government. In the structure of the latter, the principle of the separation of powers was followed, and provision was made for a regionally constituted legislature, an executive department dominated by a president with wide authority and only partially accountable to the legislature, and a judiciary with powers of review. Fundamental democratic rights were guaranteed. Finally, a constituent assembly was to meet as soon as possible after the transfer of sovereignty to draw up a permanent constitution for Indonesia. At best the provisional constitution was a temporary, makeshift document, more calculated to meet present requirements than the problems of the future. Even before the actual transfer of sovereignty, the new state-to-be was wrestling with the difficulties of a federal form imposed from the center and not from the states themselves; it was finding in the Indonesian body politic little of the spirit and few of the conditions necessary for a workable federalism.

As a result of the Republican-Federalist conferences, the Indonesians stood united at The Hague on all major issues regarding the structure of the new Indonesia, its relations with Holland, and the methods of transferring sovereignty. After nearly two months of long and sometimes acrimonious debates the three delegations of the Republic, the Federal Consultative Assembly, and the Netherlands—all encouraged and frequently prodded by the United Nations Commission for Indonesia—concluded a set of agreements at The Hague on November 2, 1949. The results of the conference were embodied in a charter for the transfer of sovereignty; a statute for a Netherlands-Indonesia Union, including agreements for future collaboration between members of the Union; agreements making operative the transfer of sovereignty and dealing with the many problems arising from so radical a change in relationships; and various special and additional points.⁷

In the charter for the transfer of sovereignty, the Netherlands undertook to hand over full power to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia by December 30, 1949 at the latest, and to recognize the new state on the basis of its constitution as a fully independent and sovereign state. Western New

Guinea, concerning which the delegations were unable to agree, was excepted from the transfer of sovereignty. At the prompting of the United Nations Commission for Indonesia, and despite many expressions of dissatisfaction from both sides, it was agreed that the status quo in New Guinea would be prolonged for another year, during which the Netherlands and the R.U.S.I. would negotiate a settlement. This decision left the projected Netherlands-Indonesia Union with a very large and difficult political task at the moment of its inception.

The statute of the Union established "organized collaboration between the Netherlands and Indonesia on a voluntary basis and with equality of status and rights." The parties were to remain sovereign and independent states, collaborating in foreign relations, defense, finance, and economic and cultural policies. The Queen and her legal successors were to stand at the head of the Union. The Union would have as its principal organ a periodic conference of ministers of both parties. This conference, whose members would remain entirely accountable to their respective governments, might establish commissions to further its work. The statute of Union further provided for regular consultations between members of the Dutch and Indonesian parliaments and prescribed a permanent secretariat headed, in rotation, by appointees of both parties. Differences between the parties arising in the implementation of the Union statute were to be settled by binding decisions of a Union arbitral court (composed of six members, three appointed by each party), to which the president of the International Court of Justice might appoint an extra member with the power of decision in the event of a deadlock.

To the statute of the Union there were appended detailed agreements on collaboration in foreign affairs (a commonly oriented foreign policy), defense (mutual aid in training and equipment, exchange of military missions), economic and financial relations, commercial policy, calculation of the Indonesian debt, and cultural relations. In one of the major decisions the R.U.S.I. recognized and undertook to re-establish the rights, concessions, and privileges accorded under the law of the former Netherlands Indies and still in effect at the date of the transfer of sovereignty. The R.U.S.I., however, was to have broad powers of review over these foreign economic rights and might curtail them if they were in conflict with the general welfare. It undertook to nationalize enterprises only in cases of general need and after due process of law and compensation.

The agreements implementing the transfer of sovereignty included the following decisions: Indonesian nationality was established for Indonesian, and certain other, subjects of the Netherlands; each territory in Indonesia was given the right either to accept the Indonesian constitution or to establish a special relationship with the R.U.S.I. and the Netherlands; the self-governing rulers were relieved of their obligations to the Netherlands Crown, and the obligations of the latter towards the rulers were recognized and assumed by the R.U.S.I.; and the R.U.S.I. agreed to assume the obligations under

international law undertaken for Indonesia by the Netherlands government. In addition, the position of Netherlands civil servants in Indonesia was guaranteed for two years; the Netherlands armed forces were to withdraw from Indonesia as rapidly as possible but would, upon request, furnish assistance to the new Republic in the maintenance of law and order and the organization of its own armed forces; and the Netherlands government was to sponsor the admission of Indonesia to membership in the United Nations.

Under the military agreements the function of the Netherlands armed forces in Indonesia was declared terminated, and they were to be evacuated, if possible within six months. Upon the request of Indonesia, as indicated above, the Netherlands would assist in maintaining law and order and in constructing and organizing the new R.U.S.I. armed forces. The armed forces fostered and established by the former Netherlands Indies government were to have an opportunity to go over to the R.U.S.I. forces on a voluntary basis, their matériel and equipment being transferred to the new government. The Dutch naval base at Surabaya was transferred to the R.U.S.I., to become its main naval base, but it was to be commanded initially by a Dutch naval officer appointed by and responsible to the R.U.S.I. government. Preceding discussions on the subject, Dutch naval properties at Surabaya were to remain Netherlands possessions.

When the Round Table conference ended only a few weeks were left before the end of 1949 for the transfer of sovereignty. Feverish activity now began both in the Netherlands and in Indonesia. The bulk of the work in Indonesia was carried out by a National Committee for the Preparation of Independence, representing all the federal areas. The most weighty problem was the maintenance of law and order in the period immediately preceding and following the transfer. To facilitate the execution of this task, which was entrusted to the sultan of Jogjakarta, Republican armed forces were dispatched to many large cities and population centers and made to work closely with Federalist police and the forces of the former Netherlands Indies government, which they had lately opposed in the field. Despite the danger arising from activities of the Darul Islam, an extremist Islamic movement in central and especially western Java, the weeks preceding the transfer and the day itself passed entirely without incidents.

The first political task had been to ratify the Hague agreements. During November and early December 1949 the six federal *Negaras* (East Indonesia, Pasundan, East Java, Madura, East Sumatra, South Sumatra) and the nine autonomous territories (Central Java, Bangka, Billiton, Riouw, West Borneo, Dayak, Bandjar, Southeast Borneo, East Borneo) belonging to the Federal Consultative Assembly ratified the agreements, mostly by acclamation. On December 14, after several days of debate, the parliament of the Indonesian Republic (then also about to become a *Negara* in the federal R.U.S.I.) ratified the Hague agreements by a vote of 226 to 62, with 32 abstentions. The members of the Socialist party, led by Sjahrir, who had

earlier opposed the Rum-van Royen Agreement, this time decided to abstain. The bulk of opposition came from the extreme left and the extreme Islamic right. No serious danger to the government's policy developed.

In the Netherlands the second chamber of the States General ratified the agreements on December 9 by a vote of 71 to 29, with the extreme right (Antirevolutionaries and a majority of the Calvinist Christian Historical party) and the Communists in opposition. The first chamber ratified by the extremely narrow margin of 34 to 15 (one vote above the two thirds majority required for passage) only a few days before the projected transfer date.

On December 16, at Jogjakarta, Sukarno was elected the first president of the R.U.S.I. by the duly empowered representatives of the sixteen *Negaras* composing the Federation. The next day Sukarno appointed Hatta premier and minister of foreign affairs *ad interim*; the sultan of Jogjakarta minister of defense; Anak Agung minister of internal affairs; and the sultan of Pontianak minister of state. The full formation of the cabinet followed shortly. It appeared to be a cabinet of national unity, representing various regions and parties, and dominated by Republicans.

On December 27, 1949 sovereignty was officially transferred by the Queen at Amsterdam to Indonesian Prime Minister Hatta; and by Lovink, the Netherlands representative of the Crown at Batavia, to the sultan of Jogjakarta, representing the Indonesian government. Almost immediately a number of governments, including the United States, Great Britain, India, Canada, Belgium, the Philippines, Australia, and Pakistan, recognized the new state. But shortly before this a motion approving the results of the Round Table conference had been vetoed in the Security Council by the Soviet Union (which in January, however, extended recognition to the new state). On December 28, after four years of absence, President Sukarno made his triumphal reentry into Batavia, now renamed Jakarta, and the new government began to operate in its capital.

What were the conditions confronting Indonesia when independence came? The Indonesian people had suffered through years of Japanese occupation, political disorders, blockade, and war. In many areas the land had been ruined and the economy devastated. The nationalist movement therefore faced unparalleled problems of reconstruction. In a sense, the real test of Indonesian nationalism began on January 1, 1950.

The major problems confronting Indonesia in the first half of 1950, and the major efforts of the government⁸ to solve them, can be discussed briefly under five broad headings:

1. *Maintenance of authority, internal peace, law, and order.* This was an imposing task in a large and heavily populated territory in which, until recently, lawlessness and sabotage of authority had been the order of the day. The Indonesian armed forces, moreover, were ill equipped, ill organized, and ill trained, experienced mainly in guerrilla warfare. The government began as rapidly as possible to rationalize and reorganize its army, to incorporate

within it former members of the Dutch-sponsored Indonesian forces (psychologically a difficult process), and to transform it into a modern, efficient armed force capable of waging positional warfare and defending Indonesia from external or internal aggression. Late in January 1950, forces privately recruited and led by a former Dutch army captain, Westerling, seized Bandung for a day in protest against the new government; in April and May there were armed rebellions by elements of the Dutch-sponsored Indonesian forces in South Celebes and the South Moluccas;⁹ but despite these difficulties the government was able to maintain generally satisfactory conditions of law and order throughout Indonesia in the first half of 1950.

2. *General welfare.* Indonesia faced a formidable shortage of consumer goods and a persistent and vicious inflation. These hardships produced labor unrest that threatened the efficiency of Indonesia's production and the sound revival of her economy early in 1950. The government took steps in March to curtail the highly inflated supply of money, and followed up with quasi-devaluation measures designed to bring hoarded export goods to market, thus improving the country's foreign exchange position and import capacity. Consumer goods, however, remained in very short supply, so that the prevailing condition of public welfare left much to be desired. The economic problem was aggravated by the large number of soldiers who had to be reabsorbed into civil life. Strict governmental control of the economy was somewhat offset by the lack of a proper distributive apparatus and the increasing domination of the market by Chinese middlemen.

3. *Economic reconstruction.* Indonesia looked abroad for most of the assistance needed for long-range reconstruction. Shortly after the transfer of sovereignty the new nation obtained an American Export-Import Bank loan of one hundred million dollars, and several important reconstruction projects were announced as the year progressed. Indonesia also began negotiations for aid from other foreign governments, and tried to encourage the investment of foreign private capital.

Indonesian production, the key to economic solvency and progress, rose steadily in the first half of 1950 and began to approach prewar levels in certain fields. But threatening clouds remained on the horizon. Labor was restive; machinery, equipment, and transport were lacking. East Sumatra, a crucial export region, was suffering from a labor shortage and a squatter problem. Many estate managers and operators were driven away by the continuing threat to law and order, notably in West Java; political conditions remained unsettled in the outer islands of East Indonesia and Borneo. Most important, perhaps, were the problems faced by estate owners who wanted to secure favorable land-lease contracts in order to plan future production. Many of these difficulties were no doubt closely related to the high prices of consumer goods confronting the peasant land-owners of Java and Sumatra.

4. *Internal state structure and politics.* Early in the year it became evident that the federal state structure envisaged in the provisional constitution of

1949 could not survive in an independent Indonesia. Under overwhelming popular pressure, the *Negaras* of East and West Java, as well as the autonomous territory of Central Java, disbanded in the first quarter of 1950 and were absorbed by the Republican *Negara* centered in Jogjakarta. Pressure to the same end soon began in the federal areas of Central and South Sumatra and Borneo, and eventually spread to East Sumatra and East Indonesia, although in East Indonesia this political process was accompanied by serious disturbances including considerable fighting in Celebes. The broad popular movement in the states to join the Republic tremendously enhanced Jogjakarta's position and diminished the influence of the central federal government at Jakarta. Indonesia had a long tradition of centralism but none of federation; the unwieldy, costly federal structure was also inextricably linked in the public mind with Dutch colonial policy. With this in mind, Indonesia's leaders decided that only a unitary structure of state could provide stable, efficient, and popular government. By the middle of 1950, negotiations between the Republic and the central federal government were advancing towards the replacement of a federal by a unitary state, and a new constitution was being drafted.¹⁰ Through this period the Republic continued to assert its supremacy over the federal government at Jakarta.

Meanwhile the domestic political life of Indonesia seemed threatened by the multiplicity of parties and the excesses of extremist elements, whether leftist revolutionaries, ultranationalists, religious extremists, or die-hard federalists. On the extreme left was a reviving Communist Party (P.K.I.) and a strong non-Stalinist revolutionary party (the Murba); but the parties of the moderate left (Socialist), the center, (National party),¹¹ and the religious right (Masjumi, United Islamic party), continued to enjoy the greatest popular support and the most effective organization. The government gave promise of remaining, at least for the immediate future, in the hands of moderate and, by now, experienced politicians.

5. *Foreign orientation.* In its international relations the new Indonesia attempted to initiate a policy of "positive neutrality" and to avoid participating in blocs. Its course appeared to follow India's closely. It also refused steadfastly to intervene or take positive positions on any questions except those affecting its own immediate interests. Efforts continued towards gaining admission to the United Nations.¹² The new government carefully avoided any step that might antagonize the Soviet Union, despite the latter's hostile attitude at the time of the transfer of sovereignty, and negotiations were begun for the exchange of diplomatic envoys between the two countries, as well as between Indonesia and Communist China. Meanwhile Indonesia maintained an attitude of cautious friendship towards the Western powers and counted heavily on American aid for reconstruction and development. Avoiding a positive stand in favor of the Communist-dominated Viet Minh in Vietnam, Indonesia nevertheless left little doubt as to its own strong

anti-French feeling and its sympathy for the independence struggle in the neighboring state.

Relations with the Netherlands in early 1950 were not of the best, despite a fairly successful but relatively unimportant first meeting of Union ministers in March. These relations were embittered by the activities of Captain Westerling (who received support from certain unreconciled Dutch military quarters) and by revolts in Celebes and the Moluccas (also abetted by certain Dutch elements). There were other grave problems in Dutch-Indonesian relations: the integration of Dutch-sponsored Indonesian troops into the Indonesian army; the future of Dutch civil servants and generally of all Dutch and Eurasian inhabitants of Indonesia; and, finally, the future of Western New Guinea, the most pressing question in Indonesia's foreign policy. Throughout the first half of 1950 the Indonesian government firmly asserted its claim to this territory, invoking the grounds of racial affinity, historical and cultural ties, and strategic interests. Pressing the question brought Indonesia to the verge of a serious diplomatic conflict not only with the Netherlands but also with Australia. It remained uncertain whether Indonesia could successfully withstand such a diplomatic conflict at this early moment in its independent history.¹¹

Indonesian nationalism will probably continue to be deeply influenced by the heritage of its struggle for freedom and by the experience of the original Republic of Indonesia. The nationalist heritage has produced a pervasive, and easily understandable, suspicion of Dutch motives and actions and a fairly general skepticism of Western intentions. For a while at least, political alignments may continue to be based on past and present attitudes towards the Dutch rather than on positive goals for an independent society. There may also be a continuation of conspiratorial politics, including the formation and use of armed groups. One example is the Darul Islam, whose activities seriously threatened the authority of the new nation on the morrow of its independence.

The country's leaders are likely to be recruited largely from Republican ranks, in part because there are very few other potential leaders. Long the banner-bearer of independence, the Republican groups enjoy the overwhelming support both of the masses and of the articulate. A potentially large threat to the development of a democratic structure in Indonesia is provided by the Indonesian Communist party, which has continued to follow Moscow's strategic and tactical wishes. Never very large, the P.K.I. became important because of general conditions and the fact that it was able to attract sizable segments of the former Socialist party (once led by Amir Sjarifuddin), the Labor party, and the youth movement. Complete defeat of the Communist-led revolt of September-November 1948 undermined the P.K.I.'s strength and decimated its leadership. The grant of sovereignty to Indonesia at the end of 1949 undoubtedly further curtailed the party's appeal.

But any undue delay in alleviating unsettled conditions and the prevailing misery in Java might once more restore its following. New leadership, from the rather large group of intellectuals and younger politicians still wavering in their loyalties to the present Republican leaders, might then arise to direct a renewed attack against the democratic Indonesian regime. This prospect, enhanced by the victories of Communism elsewhere in Asia, can best be deferred and eventually negated by firm and wise policies of social reconstruction on the part of the Indonesian authorities, and by aid from the Western powers to the extent merited by Indonesia's importance in the maintenance of the security of the democratic world.

Notes

- 1 This chapter was completed by Mr. Kattenburg in New Haven in August 1950. References to subsequent Indonesian developments will be found in several footnotes inserted by the editor.
- 2 H. B. D. Derksen and J. Tinbergen: *Calculations About the Economic Significance of the Netherlands Indies for the Netherlands* (New York, Netherlands Information Bureau, 1947).
- 3 *New York Times*, December 23, 1948.
- 4 Security Council, *Official Records*, January 28, 1949, p. 19.
- 5 United Nations Commission for Indonesia, Report of March 1, 1949, S/1270 (mimeographed).
- 6 *Department of State Bulletin*, May 22, 1949, p. 654.
- 7 *Resultaten van de Ronde Tafel Conferentie; met bijlage: Ontwerp der Constitutie van de Republiek der Verenigde Staten van Indonesie* (Kolff, Djakarta, 1949).
- 8 The Hatta cabinet was replaced, early in September 1950, by the first cabinet of the unitary Republic of Indonesia, led by Premier Mohammad Natsir of the (Moslem) Masjumi party. The new cabinet was controlled by moderate politicians and parties.—*Ed.*
- 9 The rebellion of the self-proclaimed "Republic of the South Moluccas," established late in April, was ended only in November 1950, after the occupation of the island of Ambon by Republican forces from Java.—*Ed.*
- 10 The unitary Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed at Jakarta on August 17, 1950, five years after the proclamation of the original Republic of Indonesia by President Sukarno. It operated under a new but still provisional constitution, which incorporated most of the provisions of the former federal constitution as well as some of the more crucial features of the old Republic's constitution (particularly with regard to social welfare).—*Ed.*
- 11 The National party, which was not represented in the Natsir cabinet, swung sharply to the left in the second half of 1950 and, by the end of the year, had become a part of the leftist opposition to the government in parliament.—*Ed.*
- 12 Indonesia was admitted to the United Nations on September 28, 1950.—*Ed.*
- 13 The issue of Western New Guinea remained unsolved after the deadline (December 27, 1950) set by the Round Table Conference Agreements as the target date for a solution by bilateral negotiations. Both Indonesia and the Netherlands continued their respective claims to sovereignty over the territory, and the deadlock seriously threatened the future of the Netherlands-Indonesia Union and Dutch-Indonesian co-operation.—*Ed.*

DUTCH CHARTER FOR THE INDIES

Raymond Kennedy

Source: *Pacific Affairs* 16(2) (1943): 216-23.

In the present arguments over the postwar disposition of colonial areas, the Dutch alone have come forth with a logical, straightforward plan. They offer not a panacea for all colonial areas, but a practical program for their own possessions. In the March issue of *PACIFIC AFFAIRS*, Dr. George H. C. Hart, Chairman of the Board for Economic and Financial Affairs of the Netherlands Indies, Surinam, and Curaçao, explained this plan and defended it against some other alternatives.

The Netherlands "charter," as Dr. Hart calls it, provides for the convening of a conference as soon as possible after the war for the purpose of reorganizing the Kingdom of the Netherlands into a Commonwealth. In this Commonwealth, it is expected, each of the component parts (the Netherlands, the East Indies, Surinam, and Curaçao) shall have equal partnership and complete freedom of conduct in internal affairs, but all shall stand ready to render mutual assistance. Each part, presumably, is to possess its own complete system of government, including cabinet and legislature; but supreme joint administrative organs are to be set up for general affairs of the entire Commonwealth, such as foreign policy and military defense.

"The precise form and machinery" of the new Commonwealth are left purposely vague, on the ground that details must be decided by representatives of all the peoples involved, most of whom are now under enemy domination. Because of this vagueness, it is difficult to discuss the proposal intensively, and even the general outlines are not clear at certain points. Hart states that the ties of the Indies with the Netherlands "will probably be of a different nature" from those binding the Dominions with the British Empire, and goes on to say that the Indies will be "the physical embodiment of the Netherlands Commonwealth" in the Pacific, as Holland will be in Europe. Apparently this means that the bonds within the Netherlands Commonwealth will be much closer than those within the British Empire. Indeed, it would seem that, although separated by half a world, the Indies and the

Netherlands would constitute virtually a single national state, absolutely equal in all ways.

This, on the surface, appears to be a remarkable proposal, deserving of the fullest consideration by all fair-minded judges.

Like the British, the Dutch wish to keep their colonial possessions. Why they want them is a question that may be passed over here. National pride, financial stakes, perhaps even some humanitarian ideals of a civilizing mission are all involved. In any case, no Dutch spokesman has yet proposed letting the Indies go free. Unlike the British, however, who also do not wish to "liquidate the Empire," the Dutch are ready to pay a price, and sign the note in advance, to ensure retention of their colonies. The proposal outlined by Hart, and reviewed here, is the bargaining base they apparently intend to use in the postwar settlement of colonial problems.

In considering the future of the Indies, it is best to begin with the question of independence. Immediate independence would be the most extreme possible solution on the one hand, a return to the *status quo ante* the most likely solution on the other. On this point, I agree with Hart and most other authorities, that the Indies simply will not be ready for sudden and complete independence directly after the war. This means that they must be placed under some sort of tutelage until ripe for self-government; which in turn leads to the question of how this can best be arranged, for the good of the Indonesians and the world.

Hart, speaking for the Dutch, wants to have the Indies returned to the Netherlands, but under a new arrangement of "linked independence." He has two excellent points to strengthen this proposal. The first is that the Dutch are experts in Indonesian administration. I will vouch for this unreservedly: they know the Indies better than any other nation knows any of its overseas possessions. The formidable task of reconstruction and reorganization is difficult enough, even for practiced hands; to assign it to strangers would be the height of folly. Hart's other point is also impressive, although more subtle and perhaps more open to argument. It is that the linking of the Netherlands with the Indies will help to cement the bonds between the Occident and the Orient. As he puts it, the combined-Commonwealth plan will be "instrumental in preventing an ever deepening chasm dividing the West from the East." Of course, there is danger as well as hope here, for the chasm would be less deep now if West and East had never met on the basis of imperialism. But assuming that the equal partnership promised in the Dutch "charter" is honored, there may well be hope for the establishment of a new and significant pattern of friendliness and cooperation between the Orient and the Occident. Indeed, so attractive is the vision that one is tempted to speculate on the possibility of applying the same scheme to other colonial powers and their possessions: France, Belgium, Portugal, perhaps even America with the Philippines. If Britain were to give dominion status to some of its present colonies, it would achieve a somewhat similar end.

Despite these favorable features of the Dutch program, it invites criticism, or at least questioning, on several points. Setting aside for the moment consideration of possible alternative plans, the main query is what the Dutch intend to do about the internal reorganization of the Indies. After all, most sweeping plans of this kind sound high-minded and promising when pronounced in general terms; but would the present one turn out to be as liberal in practice as it appears in theory? I think we may take the word of the Dutch that they are fully prepared to call the conference and set up an equal-partnership Commonwealth. But the details concerning voting privileges, policy towards nationalistic agitation, education for responsible citizenship, and the like are not discussed at all in the plan as outlined. Yet it is the handling of these aspects which will determine whether the new scheme will bring true democracy to the Indies or stand merely as a fine façade behind which the old system will continue to function relatively unchanged. The forces of conservatism, very strong in the Netherlands and among many of the Dutch in the Indies, are sure to swing into action after the war and interpose obstacles to liberalizing the colonial policy.

Very desirable, therefore, would be a more detailed statement of Dutch intentions. As the program now stands, it would be quite possible for the Indonesian part of the Commonwealth to continue to be governed by the very small, mixed oligarchy of Netherlanders, upper class natives, and prominent alien Asiatics who ran the Indies before the war. The Indies, as such, would have equal partnership in the Commonwealth, but the internal administration of the islands would not *necessarily* have to be altered or democratized at all. Much more important than the general outline of policy already announced would be a statement by the Dutch concerning their plans for the internal government of the Indies. If the latter is not liberalized, then the Commonwealth structure will be a mere façade covering a return to the previous situation.

Actually, the "charter" as it stands offers relatively little change from the old system. The Indies are already classed as a component part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and not as a colony. They have their own government—with executive, legislative, and judicial branches—and their own budget. The only changes involved in the Commonwealth plan are (and here I interpret the vague statement rather liberally): (a) greater freedom of legislation for the Indies Parliament, removing the ultimate veto power now held by the Netherlands Parliament and Crown; (b) an equal voice for the Indies in policy-making for the whole Commonwealth. But no mention is made of any reforms in the Indies government itself. Will the Governor-General still be appointed by the Crown, or will there be an elected chief executive? What about voting privileges, the system of representation, and educational development within the Indies? The matter of educational plans for natives is of basic importance, for without better and more extensive schooling,

particularly higher education, it will be impossible to make of the Indonesians an intelligent voting populace. In short, the plan as outlined could be applied in such a way as to leave the Indies about where they were so far as self-government is concerned, except for an increased degree of autonomy in legislating for local affairs and a greater share in general Commonwealth administration.

Another fundamental criticism of the program as it now stands is that no provision is made for possible eventual independence of the Indies. Granting that after a period of "equal partnership" in the Commonwealth the natives may wish to make the arrangement permanent, there is also a chance, probably a likelihood, that they will, sooner or later, wish to move for complete separation from the Netherlands. This eventuality the Dutch apparently refuse to consider, and no mention is made of it by Hart. Yet the question of "right to secession" will have to be, and should be, considered in the general statement of policy. If the Dutch wish and intend to exclude this right from the constitution of the Commonwealth, they ought to announce their stand at the start, so as to avoid future misunderstanding. This is a question of decided importance, for on its decision will rest the fate of nationalistic movements. If "secession" is outlawed, then separatistic nationalism will be legally treasonable. A sizable body of the more advanced Indonesian nationalists have a crucial stake in this matter.

These are my principal doubts, arising not from what has been stated by Hart and others, but from what has *not* been said of the details of the plan, particularly as regards the internal government of the islands. The Dutch say that these must await the end of hostilities. In the meantime we are left with an exceedingly sketchy blueprint which lacks some of the most important specifications.

As for alternative plans, space is lacking here to discuss them in detail. We have already mentioned one, immediate complete independence, and found it impracticable. Hart considers two others: "internationalization" of the Indies under a mandate scheme; and establishment of a new independent state of South East Asia, including the Indies, the Philippines, Malaya, and perhaps Burma and Thailand. As for the latter, in my opinion the time will not be yet ripe for such a development immediately after the war. Indonesia itself will not be ready for independence. But, contrary to Hart, I can see no ultimate reason why a "Malaysian" state should not arise sometime in the future, after the Indies, the Philippines, and Malaya have matured politically. Hart disposes of this possibility summarily, however, on several grounds which I consider untenable. He claims that there are no "historical, political, cultural, or religious ties" to justify such unification. Many students of the history and culture of the Malaysian area would dispute this statement. Actually, these three regions together constitute a well-marked "culture area," to use the anthropologist's terminology. The differences in religion, language, and culture between the Philippines, Malaya, and the Indies are no

greater, in sum, than those existing among the various parts of the Indies themselves. It is indeed strange to find Hart arguing for a union of the Netherlands and the Indies on the ground that the Dutch and the Indonesians "have notable traits of character in common," and opposing the establishment of a Malaysian state because the Filipinos and Indonesians are so different. Have the Dutch some hidden Oriental cultural traits of which we have not yet heard?

Hart also uses economic contentions against a Southeast Asiatic union, principally the claim that, being producers and exporters of the same raw materials and primary products, the countries there are natural competitors. This is a dubious argument that might easily be turned to a point in favor of unification.

The other alternative Hart mentions is placing the Indies under a mandate, with international supervision. He passes over this rapidly as undesirable to all concerned. Nevertheless, this would be one possible means of controlling Dutch policy in the Indies for the good of the Indonesians and the world at large. A workable mandate scheme would probably require some sort of international organization for central administration or supervision. Moreover, if the Indies were "internationalized," the colonial possessions of other powers should be treated likewise. Both of these prerequisites—an international body and a world-wide mandating of colonies—involve so many problems that adequate treatment is impossible here. The British colonies would raise an immediate question. Persuading the present British Government to yield its colonies to international control would obviously be a formidable task, and without British cooperation the whole scheme would have to be abandoned.¹ This is merely one of the great number of provisional factors upon which the feasibility of any such plan would depend.

If we are to plan courageously for a brave new colonial world, we may well consider the possibility of a real departure in policy all over the so-called "backward" regions of the earth. Assuming the existence of a powerful international body, each formerly colonial area could be "internationalized," in the sense that no one state would be its owner or solely responsible for it. The goal in each case would be complete self-government, independence within the framework of the international body, as soon as possible. Each former colony would be administered, or rather prepared for independent statehood, by the nation which had owned it before the war, the reason for this provision being that such nations are already experienced in governing their particular possessions and know local conditions and requirements.

To ensure that the nation in charge of each mandated colony would really set about fostering democratization with a view to the earliest possible emancipation, the international body might be represented in each colonial capital by a committee of representatives of several member states. This committee would work in close contact with the officials of the directing power and

would operate as an investigating and fact-finding body, reporting to the international body at set intervals, annually or more often. In this way, a guaranteed "time-table" for independence could be achieved, and the danger of deliberate obstruction of the emancipation program by the directing power would be guarded against. In the Indies, for instance, the Dutch would be the administering group, because of their experience in the region, and the representative committee would be drawn from several of the most interested nations. Depending upon its size, one might advocate inclusion of representatives of America, Britain, China, the Philippines, Malaya, and India. In the Philippines, to take another case, America would be the directing power, and the resident committee composed of representatives of the Netherlands, Britain, China, and the Indies. These are hypothetical cases introduced here merely as illustrations.

This plan has definite advantages over the "annual-report" mandate system employed by the first League of Nations. We have already witnessed the consequence of allowing certain states to secure territories under mandates which required only periodic "reports of progress." In most cases the reports, often false, were made, but progress was not. The most notorious instance was that of Japan in Micronesia. With a resident international committee in the mandated islands, the Japanese could not have secretly fortified their Pacific island possessions and issued a steady stream of false reports to the League. Moreover, the international representatives could function as a board of grievances for native groups who felt that repressive measures were being employed by the directing power in charge of the development of the former colony. One of the main reasons for making these committees large, including representatives of several nations, would be to obviate the possibility of collusion between the governing state and one of the represented countries. This may appear to be an arrangement based upon a thoroughly cynical and suspicious attitude, and so indeed it is. It has a decided element of "setting a thief to catch a thief" in it, which is not a bad idea in a field where international thievery has been rampant for four hundred years.

Perhaps this rather extended discussion of an international mandate-with-supervision plan is out of place here, but I bring it forth because it seems to me that the Dutch have paid too scant attention to such possible solutions of the colonial problem.

Indeed, the exclusiveness of the Dutch concerning the Indies is so striking that it can be justly regarded as the prime determinant in all their planning for the future. This extraordinary anxiety lest any other nation or any international body have anything whatever to do with the Indies after the war can easily be read between the lines of Hart's paper. The Dutch are not only super-possessive in their attitude towards the islands; they also seem to feel that the system of government and the entire economic and social organization of Indonesia constitute a delicate, intricate structure which would be ruined by any touch with the outside world. Even in such matters as postwar

relief, they seem to be excessively worried by the prospect of any direct contact between the Indonesians and non-Dutch outsiders. So far as the Indies are concerned, the Dutch fervently favor the greatest degree of isolationism possible. Indonesia is their preserve; they cherish it ardently; and above all else they wish to be left completely undisturbed in their possession of it, to develop it in their own way.

Once this underlying Dutch attitude of exclusiveness is comprehended, their entire policy, including the "charter" now proposed for the Indies, appears as a logical derivation from the major premise. The master key to interpretation of Dutch pronouncements concerning postwar disposition of the islands is the fact that they have no intention of sharing control of them with any other nation or with a world organization. Whatever concessions they may make in this matter will be granted unwillingly and with strong misgivings. Thus the present "charter" envisages no linking, however slight, of Indonesia with any other outside power except the Netherlands. Hart, as the spokesman for the Dutch, shows a characteristically strong disinclination to weigh the merits of either a Southeast Asiatic federation or a mandate plan for the Indies. The latter possibility he scarcely mentions; the former he disapproves.

Hart, although he is quite careful to indicate that he "cannot speak in any official capacity," favors a regional council plan for South East Asia, provided that similar schemes are also instituted in other colonial areas, and that they are all related to a central world-wide organization. He offers his approval of this very modest departure from tradition cautiously, hedges it around with provisos—all of them quite fair, to be sure—and is clearly unwilling that the Dutch take the initiative in setting up the council. My impression is that he shows little enthusiasm for the plan and, in line with the general Dutch attitude, would be somewhat relieved if even this very loose "entangling alliance" could be avoided.

For my part, I heartily support a regional council for South East Asia, whatever governmental programs may be established in the individual countries there—whether, e.g., the Indies are incorporated in a Dutch Commonwealth or internationalized under mandate to the Netherlands. My ulterior purpose in advocating a regional council would not accord with Hart's general position, however, for I would look upon the regional organization as a probable forerunner to a unified or federated state of Malaysia, including Malaya, the Philippines, and the Indies.

As I see the problem, the range of possibilities includes, on the one hand, extreme, complete and immediate independence, and on the other, a return to the *status quo ante*. In between lie the international mandate plan, with independence as its goal, and the Netherlands Commonwealth program, with permanent union of Holland and the Indies as its purpose. The mandate plan presupposes a central world organization and identical treatment for all former colonies. The Dutch plan, therefore, would be immediately

much more workable. In fact, the Dutch themselves intend to put it into operation soon after the close of the war, if they are allowed to do so.

The principal fault of the proposal as now stated is that it dodges the most crucial issue, namely, the kind of government program to be established within the Indies. With all its cautiousness and vagueness, however, it is a coherent and logical program and represents a progression in liberalization of the colonial system, even though this be rather slight. The Dutch have played a shrewd opening card in the postwar game, but until they show more of their hand it is impossible to render fair and final judgment on their plans for the future.

Note

- 1 Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that important groups in Britain have recently shown a willingness to accept the idea of "international accountability" and "third-party judgment" in colonial affairs. Cf. also the discussion of the Mont Tremblant Conference of the I. P. R. on South East Asia (*War and Peace in the Pacific*, I. P. R., New York, 1943, pp. 48-62).

AUTONOMY FOR INDONESIA

A. Arthur Schiller

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It was just a year after the invasion of Holland that the Queen and officials of the Netherlands government first promised far-reaching reorganization of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and of the component territories thereof—the Netherlands, Netherlands East Indies, Surinam and Curacao—upon the termination of the war. In the words of the Governor-General of the Indies,¹ on June 16, 1941: "Immediately after the liberation of the mother country, the adaptation of the structure of the Kingdom to the demands of the times will be considered, the internal constitutional form of the overseas territories constituting an integral part of the program." Shortly thereafter, the Queen promised that a conference would be held to advise the Crown upon the relation of the parts of the Kingdom to one another, and upon the revision of the Administrative Acts (constitutions) of the four territories.² Details of the future conference were announced in January 1942: fifteen delegates from the Netherlands, fifteen from the Netherlands Indies, and three each from Surinam and Curacao. Ten of the Indies members were to be appointed upon recommendation by the People's Council, the central representative body of the Indies, the other five to be named by the Government of the Netherlands Indies independently.

Queen Wilhelmina's radio address of December 6, 1942, was, accordingly, but a confirmation of a course of conduct outlined earlier. "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 Curacao 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."³ Once more, the twofold purpose of the conference had been stated, namely, (1) recommendations upon the future relationship of the four parts of the Kingdom, and (2) advice as to the measures leading to the complete autonomy of the individual territories within the framework of the Kingdom. As far as is known, none of the

delegates have as yet been named, nor have any further details of the mechanics of the conference itself or the weight its proposals will have with the Crown been made known.

In view of the significance of Indonesia, as it is now officially designated, in the post-war Pacific area, it is opportune to consider the form this autonomous state might take, and the means by which complete autonomy can be achieved, in the light of the steps towards self-government in the past. A brief survey of the place of Indonesia in the Kingdom is necessary to a full understanding of the subject matter of this article. Since the radio address of the Queen in December 1942, there has been but one anonymous statement by "well-informed Netherlands quarters" regarding the probable recommendations of the imperial conference.⁴ Of more portent is the voluminous exposition of the desires of the Indonesian people that is contained in the report of the so-called Visman Commission, a report that will be referred to repeatedly herein, and that necessarily is fundamental to any discussion of the subject.⁵ The author enters the arena of controversy with some trepidation, but with the conviction that a presentation of the problem is due the English-reading public; for his exposition and suggestions he assumes full responsibility.

The Netherlands Indies delegates to the conference will come well prepared to present the ideas of the Indonesian public on the constitution of the Kingdom, if they but reiterate the views reported by the Visman Commission (Report II, chapter vi). Not that there was any unanimity of desires, save in the striking absence of any demand for complete independence. One group heard by the commission called for a "dominion" status for the Indies; "the relations of Indonesia and Netherlands shall be regulated on the basis of equality of position" (Report II, p. 364). Another small group looked towards "federation" between Indonesia and Holland, without being specific as to details (Report II, p. 363). But the great majority desired the creation of some form of an "imperial council." The more conservative elements would have that body, made up of representatives of the four territories, deal with all matters of general interest, with its findings purely advisory, and the home government—the Crown and the Netherlands parliament—would continue to have the final say, not only with respect to imperial matters but also as to those domestic Indonesian affairs that constitutionally are now within its prerogatives. A second view would see in the "imperial council" a super-parliament with imperial ministers responsible to it, which, together with the Crown, would be the legislative organ for the whole empire. In effect, therefore, the "imperial council" and its ministers would be a substitute for the Netherland States General and the cabinet. Lastly, the great majority of (native) Indonesian nationalist groups also desire an "imperial council" super-parliament, with responsible ministers, but with this radical difference: that such a government, together with the Crown, should be concerned solely with imperial matters such as foreign relations and defense, and

that all internal matters are to be exclusively in the control of the Indonesian government (Report II, pp. 368 ff.)

These aspirations fairly well exhaust the possibilities. It has been pointed out that no serious demand for complete independence, absolute severance from the Netherlands, was voiced in the Indies in recent years.⁶ Foreign sources, indeed, have urged independence but it is clear that such would not be prudent immediately upon the cessation of hostilities. As Lennox Mills has said: "If independence were granted at the end of the war, the result would not be democracy but oligarchy. Some outside power must train the Indonesians for self-government."⁷ The last remark suggests international colonial administration, but there are many objections to such an arrangement. It would hamper the free participation and further training of native officials as future participants in the autonomous state. Furthermore, the differing policies of the leading colonial powers would prevent continuity in the evolution towards complete freedom.⁸ True, one French critic has asserted that a grievous omission in Dutch rule has been the lack of any colonial philosophy, any general conception of the task of the Netherlands in their colonies.⁹ Whether this be true or not, and it has been strongly contested by the Dutch,¹⁰ since the peoples of Indonesia are perfectly willing to work out their salvation within the Netherlands framework, it would seem reasonable and just to let them do so. The one point that the vocal element of the Indies is almost completely agreed upon is the necessity for complete autonomy in domestic affairs. The time is long past when conservative interests in Holland could oppose the extension of self-government in the Indies, going so far as to establish a school for colonial administrative training that would counteract the so-called "liberal" school of Hurgronje and van Vollenhoven at Leiden.¹¹ Nor can there ever again be the "lobbying and browbeating" by private interest, Dutch and foreign, both at The Hague and Batavia.¹² On autonomy the Indonesians are agreed, on the means of arriving at self-government and the eventual form thereof, there are almost as many opinions as there are advocates.

For the past fifty years the Dutch government has been cautiously extending self-government in the Indies, and it is fitting to depict the extent to which this has gone before outlining the deficiencies therein and the steps to be taken in the future. There are two phases to this development, namely, (1) decentralization of government by the formation of local units, and (2) the establishment and evolution of the People's Council.¹³ In both of these the principle of "racial" differentiation has been observed.¹⁴ Public law, and to a certain extent private law, classifies the subjects of the Indies as Europeans, natives, and foreign orientals. Thus, in any representative body, individuals of each of the three groups are included, but not with any relation to their proportionate number.

The first act aiming at decentralizing the functions of the central government was enacted in 1903.¹⁵ In accord therewith, urban governments were set

up, first in 1905, and a limited degree of self-government was granted the village communes (*desas*) of Java and Madura in 1906. However, instead of slowly continuing to grant autonomy to units which were sufficiently politically mature to exercise it, the Netherlands government conceived the idea of introducing limited self-government to the Indies as a whole. The net result was administrative decentralization, which is a far cry from the granting of autonomy to local units. In the next decade and a half, local, territorial and municipal councils, quite limited in authority, lacking adequate financial resources, and composed in the main of appointed rather than elected members—to a large part simultaneously civil servants—were unable to promote local government in the areas they represented or to appreciably expedite governmental administration.

Universal dissatisfaction led to the enactment of a law in 1922, concerning which Minister De Graaff said: "With the formation of representative bodies for communities, whose duties shall be to supervise the area for the benefit of its population and to concern themselves with its desires, the requisite basis of political development shall be established" (Report I, pp. 135 ff.). And further: "The political aim of this reform, the education of the native population towards the exercise of self-government, can be realized in these local bodies." What this means is that political decentralization was to be added to administrative deconcentration. In the following years the directly governed¹⁶ territory of Java and Madura was administratively organized into three provinces, each governed by a Provincial Council, a Board of Deputies thereof to supervise daily administration, and a Governor. And each province was broken up into (1) semi-autonomous regencies, with a Regency Council, a Board of Deputies, and a native Regent chairman of both, and (2) municipalities, with Municipal Councils and Mayors to govern. In all these local councils there were representatives of the three "racial" groups of the Indies, with the Europeans in the majority in the municipal councils, the natives overwhelmingly the largest group in the regency councils, while the municipal councils were wholly elective in character. A measure of local government was granted to these local bodies.

In 1932 plans were laid for the decentralization of the directly governed lands of the Outer Possessions (all of Indonesia save Java and Madura) and were partly put into effect between 1938 and 1942.¹⁷ An overall administrative division into the Governments of Sumatra, Borneo and the "Great East" was proposed, within which group communities and ethnic municipalities were to be set up as soon as the regions or urban centers are sufficiently strengthened and coordinated to undertake self-rule. To 1942 three group communities and seven ethnic municipalities were constituted. In each, local councils were convened, budgets provided—the funds in large part derived from local revenues—and the administration of local affairs, education, public health, public works, agricultural and veterinary services vested in the

local councils. One further aspect of decentralization in the Outer Possessions, often over-looked, was the so-called system of territorial budgets. This related to the establishment of a budget for an area that had not yet reached political decentralization, with the funds to be administered by (government) officials in that locale, expended to maintain police and local administration, to carry on the administration of justice and the like. Practically all the directly governed lands of the Outer Possessions, other than the newly organized local governments described above, were so financed, and it should not be a difficult step from such financial autonomy to local self-government.

It was not until 1918, with the opening of the First People's Council, (*Volksraad*), that the peoples of the Indies began to participate in the affairs of the central government. This body, composed of elected and appointed members, representing the European, native and foreign oriental segments of the population, at first was granted merely advisory functions. It was not long, however, before motions made by members for full legislative authority and the establishment of a government responsible to the People's Council, together with extensive decentralization, led to rash promises of radical reforms by the Governor-General. A Revision Commission was appointed in December 1918 and delivered its report in 1920.¹⁸ The report urged that the People's Council be made a co-legislative body, be given the usual parliamentary powers, and above all, that all legislative powers and administrative control be shifted from the Netherlands to the Indies. However, the Constitution of 1922 and the Administrative Act of 1925,¹⁹ the next steps, did not completely carry out these suggestions. The People's Council was made a co-legislative body, with power of initiative and amendment to a limited degree, but only to a slight extent was the home government's interference with the Indies curtailed. Indeed, by an amendment in the States General, a majority in the People's Council was retained by the European group, contrary to the expressed wishes of the Council and the Indies government. It was not until 1931 that the native element became and continued the majority group, with 30 members as against 25 Europeans and 5 foreign orientals. Over half of these sixty members were elected by a complicated system of indirect balloting, chosen by the members of the various local and municipal councils—themselves partly elected by direct or indirect ballot and partly appointed—with the European, native and foreign oriental electors forming separate electoral colleges. The remainder were appointed by the Government, and although it is repeatedly pointed out that this was done in order to correct the election results, and that frequently persons hostile to governmental policy were named,²⁰ one harsh critic suggests that this is merely to keep the leaders of the opposition under the watchful eyes of the government.²¹

There is no question but that the People's Council had a profound effect upon the activities of the government after 1925, but the fact remains that attempts within its halls to increase the measure of self-rule in the Indies met

with little success. In 1936 the so-called Sutardjo motion²² was laid before the Council, calling for autonomy of the Indies within the Kingdom, particularly by fostering greater political activity in Indonesian society, by establishing an imperial council with representation of the four territories therein, by enlarging the numbers and powers of the People's Council and making department heads—as ministers—responsible thereto. This precursor of the promises recently made was adopted by the Council. But in November 1938 a royal decree disposed of the matter, on the ground that "clarity of aim is lacking in its formulation, and that the calling of a conference in the manner visualized would be contrary to existing constitutional law."²³ The Sutardjo motion did not die, and in the course of time was taken up by a fusion of nationalist parties (*Gapi*) which, after a series of plenary and public meetings, eventually issued at its session of January 31, 1941 a memorandum calling for a full parliament of two chambers, all elected members, to be the highest legislative power in the state.²⁴ Further, the Indonesian parliamentary state was to have its own executive and responsible ministers; a five year period of transition was advocated. This memorandum was placed before the People's Council by Mr. Wirjopranoto.

In the meantime, undoubtedly as the result of increasing demands for complete autonomy urged by various groups among the Europeans and foreign orientals, as well as by the more vociferous native nationalist parties, the Governor-General appointed the Visman Commission, already referred to, to study the desires of the peoples of the Indies with respect to constitutional reforms. The first part of the report, surveying Indies development between the two wars, appeared December 9, 1941, the second part, containing an exposition of the desires of the Indies population, in early 1942. It is meant to serve as a point of departure both for Indonesia's views as to the reconstitution of the Kingdom, as well as the extent of self-government for the individual territory.

It would seem that the definitive report has been provided for the forthcoming imperial conference. True, as far as the chapter devoted to the "imperial council" (Report II, chapter vi). As stated earlier, the desires regarding dominion or commonwealth, with all the ramifications, are presented in such detail that it is unlikely that anything can be added. But there is a very significant factor to which I would call attention. A large number of Indonesian groups favored an imperial super-parliament, which, together with the Crown, would have control of the *external* affairs of the Kingdom and its component parts (Report II, pp. 360 ff.). In other words, none but the Indies government should have any say regarding the *internal* affairs of Indonesia. Netherlands public law has never sharply differentiated between the two (Report II, pp. 176 ff.), but in spite of the difficulties attendant would it not be presumptuous for fifteen Netherlands delegates, six from Surinam and Curacao, together with the fifteen members from the Indies—five of whom will be named by the Government which for a decade opposed

constitutional reform—to discuss matters which a large element of politically conscious Indonesia thinks is none of its business.

As far as self-government for Indonesia is concerned, the impropriety of consideration of this topic by members of the imperial conference is even more striking. Only a fraction of the groups consulted by the Visman Commission desired reforms respecting the internal affairs of government within the framework of the present Constitution and Administrative Act (Report II, pp. 244 ff.). The Commission itself was of the opinion that a new Constitution and Administrative Act was needed, and large groups of the population contemplated a government with its own executive, ministers and a full parliament (Report II, pp. 293 ff.). The question remains, who is to decide upon the form of government for Indonesia?

There is, and can be, but one answer: the peoples of the Netherlands Indies. No Dutch official will publicly deny the eventual capacity of the Indonesians to rule themselves. Such has long been the declared policy of the government, the only reservation being the amount of time that must elapse before the inhabitants are ready for such autonomous rule. That this must be a democratic form of government is clear. It may be true that the slow tempo with which the Dutch introduced democratic ideas was due to the opposition faced in the *mores* of the society itself.²⁵ Yet even heterogeneous peoples, whose native communities at the base are preponderantly communal in character,²⁶ upon which oriental autocracy has been superimposed, can surely be converted to a democratic society in course of time. Nor do I anticipate insuperable difficulties in evolving a nation, because of the presence of the numerically insignificant but economically important groups of Europeans and foreign orientals. The co-operative efforts displayed in the local councils and in the People's Council demonstrate that democratic government is not only possible but inevitable in Indonesia.

In a nation of some seventy million inhabitants it is apparent that the form of government will have to be devised by representatives of the people. There are two types of representative bodies in Indonesia, the local councils and the People's Council. Are these bodies equipped for the tasks? Are they truly representative and have they the capacity to determine the final form of the government of Indonesia at the termination of the war? First, as to the local councils, all of Java and Madura, save the native states, was, in its local affairs, theoretically governed by local regency and municipal councils, under the supervision of the boards of deputies of the provincial councils. A cursory study of these bodies reveals that they were neither representative nor competent to propose governmental reforms. Only a very small number of regency councilmen were elected, and these indirectly. The province of West Java, for instance, with a population of well over 10,000,000 had less than 2,000,000 persons—*desa* chiefs and other village authorities—who select some 25,000 electors to pick a total of 235 members of eighteen regency

councils; 104 other natives were appointed, as were all of the 65 European and 48 foreign oriental members. Just as the council members could not be said to be representative, neither were they sufficiently competent. This was largely due to the fact that they had not had the opportunity to deal with local government as a whole, but only with a minor part thereof, and then subject to revision by superior authorities.²⁷ Whether it be the result of the unwillingness of the bureaucrats of the central government to delegate powers to the local councils, or the desire of the members of the People's Council to retain control in Batavia, it is clear that at present the members of the local councils of Java could help little in producing an adequate constitution.

The same disability in competence and lack of truly representative character applies to the new, and relatively few, group community and municipal councils of the Outer Possessions. Only a few of the older municipal councils and old type regional boards had more than a passing acquaintance with the intricacies of self-government. Furthermore, approximately 8,000,000 inhabitants in the Outer Possessions, plus 4,000,000 in the native principalities of Java, are subjects of 278 self-governing lands, and find no representation in any of the local councils. Indeed, the Dutch made little effort to introduce democratic government into the indirectly governed territory, the so-called native states. The Netherlands government granted a limited amount of self-government to these lands, but left the administration thereof in the hands of the rulers. As a result, the great majority of native states are autocratic or oligarchic in rule. Numerous groups appeared before the Visman Commission demanding democratization of the native states, either by the effort of the central authorities or on the part of the native rulers themselves (Report II, pp. 161 ff.), and it is obvious that this must be done before a vast number of the Indonesian people can express its desires respecting self-government.

The other representative body that exists at the present time is the People's Council. The political composition of the seventh, and last, Council affords an interesting insight into the question whether this body really represented the people. The native nationalist bloc, at the left, consisted of ten members, all appointed; the conservative right consisted of four Europeans, also all appointed. Of the eleven native members elected, six had no party affiliations. The Eurasians accounted for nine (seven appointed) of the twenty-five members of the European group. The above indicates that the People's Council did not represent any clearly defined political views of the population at large. Nor is this to be expected when it is noted that only 200,000 natives were members of any political party. The thirty elected and appointed native delegates were supposed to represent some 35,000,000 persons in Java and another 6,000,000 in the Outer Possessions!

The delegates of the minority racial groups, the Europeans and foreign orientals, were in a somewhat different position. In the first place, the major

portion of these groups resided in municipalities, voted by direct ballot for their racial representatives in the municipal councils, who in turn played a considerable role as electors of their racial members in the People's Council. However, the population of these two groups who reside in rural areas must depend upon government appointed councillors as electors in order to participate in the selection of delegates for the central parliamentary body.

One further weakness in the make-up of the People's Council was the overwhelming preponderance of members resident in Java. To some extent this resulted from the fact that the politically active figures in Indonesian life naturally derived from the island that had longest been exposed to the cultural influences of the Dutch and had made the greatest strides in local self-government. In addition, eighty percent of the electors were members of Javanese local councils. Such a situation is justified on the proportional distribution of the population of the archipelago, but it is clear that the wishes of Sumatra and Celebes will find little chance of fulfillment if they conflict with the opinion of the delegates from Java.²⁸ It is because of the existence of racial as well as regional minority problems that many forward-looking groups, when questioned by the Visman Commission, urged the creation of a bicameral parliament (Report II, pp. 188 ff.).

The remarks devoted to the existing representative bodies have indicated, I believe, that neither is able to fashion, at the termination of the war, the form of self-government that eventually will be established in Indonesia. But during a period of transition these bodies can be developed until that can be achieved. I would suggest that instruction in civics or political science, call it what you will, should be made a substantial part of the educational program.²⁹ The masses must be made aware of the nation; the gap between the *desa* and the civil servants or local councillors must be bridged. Open assemblies to discuss matters of public import should be fostered.³⁰ So, also, should efforts be made to welcome political movements and the creation and expansion of political parties. Indonesian citizenship must, of course, be granted to all (Report II, pp. 98 ff.). It will be necessary to amend the existing Administrative Act immediately after civil government is restored in order to provide the political structure for the period of transition and to specifically enumerate the succession of steps to be taken until the time comes when the nation is ready for complete autonomy. The Indies government, in its present form, working together with the People's Council, should be able to draft a revision that would be acceptable to the Crown.³¹

In conclusion, I should like to present my own ideas as to the changes that might be made in the political structure during the intermediate years. The position of the executive-administrative branch of the Indies government (*Regeering*) should be considerably altered. The intervention of the Netherlands parliament in the affairs of the Indies should cease as soon as the imperial council is fashioned; and the powers of the latter ought to be limited

to external affairs. The dependence of the Governor-General upon the Crown should be curtailed, so that he may become an executive of Indonesia rather than the representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Concomitant with this, the legislative authority of the Governor-General should gradually be lessened. The Council of the Indies, an appointive body advisory to the Governor-General, should be dispensed with,³² and advice sought from the heads of departments. In fact, the Council of Department Heads, already provided for but inactive,³³ should be placed in control of the actual administration of the state. Finally, a beginning might be made in the establishment of a responsible ministry (Report II, pp. 301 ff.).

Since Indonesia eventually will most likely become a parliamentary state, it may be well to increase the membership of the People's Council. Efforts must be made to reduce the steps in the present indirect electoral system, and to extend the direct ballot to an ever-increasing number of citizens. A feature of the People's Council that has outlived its usefulness is the College of Delegates.³⁴ Since the People's Council is to be the primary legislative body, in fairly continuous session, with the members thereof devoted to the one job—which means the disappearance of government officials from it—committees can be named to deal with such matters as necessary. Administration of justice should continue to be separate from the executive and legislative spheres of government, but it should be possible to utilize the judiciary, particularly the Supreme Court, in the determination of the constitutional validity of legislative enactments.³⁵

I have ventured far enough, perhaps too far. I will say nothing concerning civil service in the period of transition, in the relation of the native states to the central government, and a host of other problems that will be pressing when this war is over. Nor will I discuss the ultimate form the Indonesian state will take—whether a federation of autonomous units, a state-federal government, a unitary government, either a dominion or a member of a commonwealth of equal ranking components. My purpose has been to stress the fact that Indonesia is entitled to complete self-government in the shortest possible time, that the people of Indonesia are the ones who shall decide the means by which that shall be accomplished, and the form it will take. Indonesia has had valuable experience with two types of representative bodies, sufficient to demonstrate that in time these could act for the people. The task of the Crown and the Netherlands Indies central government, meaning thereby the executive and administrative personnel and the People's Council, is to foster the political education of a greater mass of the population, in order to create a state that shall play its part in the affairs of the South Pacific and in the community of nations as a whole.

Notes

- 1 Quoted in the Visman Report, *op. cit.*, *infra* note 5, I, p. 113.
- 2 These and the following statements are to be found in *The Netherlands and the Future*, Netherlands Information Bureau (1944).
- 3 *Ibid.* p. 13.
- 4 *Netherlands News Digest*, December 15, 1942, No. 19, p. 473.
- 5 The so-called Visman Report is *Verslag van de commissie tot bestudeering van staatsrechtelijke hervormingen*, Deel I en III (1941-42), a reprint published in New York (1944). Excellent summaries exist in English by Broek, *PACIFIC AFFAIRS*, vol. 16 (1943), pp. 329 ff., and by Vlekke, *Nusantara* (1943), pp. 380 ff.
- 6 van Kleffens, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 21 (1942), p. 100.
- 7 Mills, "Some Problems of Postwar Reconstruction," *Annals*, American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. 226 (1943), p. 140.
- 8 Mills, *op. cit.*, pp. 148 ff.
- 9 Bousquet, *A French View of the Netherlands Indies* (1940), pp. 105 ff.
- 10 Schrieke, *Bull. of the Colon. Inst. of Amsterdam*, vol. 3 (1940), pp. 83 ff.; Meijer Ranneft, *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. 28 (1939), pp. 110 ff.
- 11 Vandenbosch, *op. cit.* *infra* note 13, p. 69.
- 12 Hart, *Towards Economic Democracy in the Netherlands Indies* (1942), p. 48.
- 13 For the general discussion of local councils, the People's Council, the native states, and the Indies government see Vandenbosch, *The Dutch East Indies* (3d ed., 2d printing 1944), chaps. vii-x; Furnivall, *Netherlands India* (1939), pp. 261 ff.; 272 ff.; Visman Report, I, chap. iv.
- 14 Vandenbosch, *op. cit.*, pp. 189 ff.
- 15 *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1903 No. 329.
- 16 The Netherlands Indies is politically divided into (1) areas directly governed by the Indies government, and (2) self-governing native states, which by treaties or covenants acknowledge the sovereignty of the Indies government. See further, *infra*.
- 17 In addition to Vandenbosch and the Visman Report, *cit. supra* note 13, see van Mourik, *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. 28 (1939), pp. 282 ff.
- 18 *Verslag van de commissie tot herziening van de staatsinrichting van Nederlandsch-Indië* (1920).
- 19 *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1923 No. 259, and 1925 No. 415.
- 20 Vlekke, *Nusantara*, p. 347; Hart, *Op. cit. supra* note 12, p. 28.
- 21 Bousquet, *op. cit.*, *supra* note 9, p. 66.
- 22 On this, in addition to the Visman Report, see Statius Muller, *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. 29 (1940), pp. 39 ff.
- 23 Statius Muller, *op. cit.*, p. 43.
- 24 The *Gapi* movement is discussed and the memorandum set forth by Prins, *Koloniale Studien*, vol. 25 (1941) pp. 483 ff.
- 25 van Kleffens, *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 21 (1942), pp. 97 ff.
- 26 Kennedy, *The Ageless Indies* (1942), pp. 86 ff.
- 27 The functions of local government are outlined by Schrieke, *Bull. of the Colon. Inst. Of Amsterdam*, vol. 2 (1939), pp. 265 ff.
- 28 Colijn, later minister, at one time advocated self-government for each of the larger islands and island groups, *Koloniale vraagstukken van heden en morgen* (1928); cf. Bousquet, *op. cit.*, *supra* note 9, pp. 73 ff.
- 29 Generally on education, see Djajadiningrat, *Educational Developments in the Netherlands Indies* (mimeo. 1942), later revised under the title *From Illiteracy to University* (1944).
- 30 Note the criticism of a recent Indonesian Peoples Congress by Meijer Ranneft, *Koloniaal Tijdschrift*, vol. 29 (1940), pp. 113 ff.

- 31 On the constitutional aspects of revising the Administrative Act, see Kleintjes, *Staatsinstellingen van Nederlandsch-Indië*, vol. I (6th ed., 1932), chapter x.
- 32 Others would retain this body, see Gapi-memorandum, *Koloniale Studien*, vol. 25 (1941), p. 491; and again, *Netherlands News Digest* of December 15, 1942, No. 19, p. 475.
- 33 Art. 116 of the Administrative Act, cit. *supra* note 19.
- 34 Pro and con hereon summarized by Samkalden, *Het College van Gedelegeerden uit den Volksraad* (1938), pp. 209 ff.
- 35 There exists a general right of "testing" of legislative acts by the courts, in the Netherlands law, but no well-defined power of the Supreme Court to examine into the constitutional validity of an enactment. Cf. generally, Kleintjes, *op. cit. supra* note 31, vol. 1, chapter xii.

INDONESIA AND THE
NETHERLANDS*J. O. M. Broek*

Source: *Pacific Affairs* 16(3) (1943): 329-38.

In the last twelve months the Dutch Government has on various occasions indicated its general program for political reforms, especially in regard to the Netherlands Indies. To many people, particularly Americans, who only recently had discovered the colonial problems of South East Asia, these pronouncements appeared as the expression of a sudden change of heart, forced on the Dutch by the misfortunes of war. The war naturally has changed situations and attitudes, including those regarding the dependencies, but it is a grievous mistake to believe, for instance, that the Queen's declaration of December 7, 1942 on the future organization of the Netherlands Kingdom drew its inspiration only from current events. The error is serious because it hinders effective cooperation between progressive elements in the colonial empires and those in the United States; the latter are apt to proceed on the assumption that British and Dutch colonial liberal policies are insincere makeshift proposals based on wartime necessities, while the former, put on the defensive, feel that they need to stress the accomplishments of the past and the difficulties in the way of more rapid progress. This bickering threatens to destroy the common front which all progressives, regardless of nationality, should form against the reactionary forces which, after the war, will attempt to re-establish the colonial status quo.

There exists a study on political currents in the Netherlands Indies which, if available in translation, could do much to dispel the suspicions just noted and at the same time form a basis for intelligent discussion of the future position of the Indies. It is a report of an official "Commission for the Study of Political Reforms,"¹ often referred to as the "Visman Report," after its chairman, Dr. F. H. Visman.

The circumstance that led to the appointment of the Commission was, in general, the dissatisfaction of various population groups, particularly

Indonesian nationalists, with the progress made towards self-government. After the Netherlands had been invaded, the Indies obtained practical, though not legal, autonomy. It was only natural that many leaders, now more than ever, desired greater responsibilities to be added to greater duties. The Indies Government did not think, however, that far-reaching reforms should be undertaken in such a critical period; but it declared its willingness to have the whole problem investigated so that a sound foundation would be available for postwar reforms. The Governor-General on September 14, 1940 appointed a commission of seven men: three Hollanders, three Indonesians, and one Indonesian-Chinese. As secretaries, an Indonesian and a Hollander were employed. Of the three Dutch members, one (the chairman) was a member of the Council of the Indies, one the Director of the Department of Justice and the third a Professor of Law. One Indonesian was a member of the Council of the Indies, the second a member of the People's Council and the third a Professor of Law. The Indonesian-Chinese was a former engineer in government service and later a member of the Provincial Council of East Java.

Briefly, the task of the Commission was to investigate the wishes, aspirations, and attitudes of the various peoples, social-economic classes and groups in regard to the political development of the Indies, and to prepare a reasoned report, clarifying the issues involved and commenting on the possible consequences of such proposals for state and society. It is important while reading the report to remember these directives, lest the reader become impatient; the results of the hearings are woven into the discussion, and often one gets the impulse to request the Commission to step aside a little and afford us a less obstructed view of what actually are the desires of the people of the Indies. This is not to say that the Visman Report hides any significant results of the inquiry, but there is a notable disparity between the short resumés of the wishes and proposals aired before the Commission and the weighty comments and long arguments of this body itself. Another difficulty in evaluating the report is that it does not identify the persons or organizations who made the various suggestions or proposals beyond some general indication as "a large Indonesian group," or "some European spokesmen."

The report of some 530 pages consists of two parts: the first is an account of the Indies' development between the first and the second World War, the other, a larger volume, contains the discussion of the wishes of various population groups as expressed before the Commission during the hearings held in 1940 and early in 1941.

The first volume, while retrospective, forms an invaluable background against which the political desiderata must be seen. The first chapter deals with the economic aspects, pointing out the dynamic forces which have brought about such rapid changes in the last twenty-five years. The

fundamental problem, how to harmonize the Western and Eastern economic structure, still exists, but native society has made considerable progress. Above all, modern economic life has been a powerful agent in binding this island world together.

The chapter on public finance shows how vulnerable a raw materials-producing country is when it has relatively high fixed expenses. In the Indies the expenditures for "burdens of the past" (pensions, interest and amortization of the debt) formed, in recent years, around 30 per cent of the total (ordinary) expenses of about 400 million guilders.² In view of the popular impression that the Netherlands Indies did little or nothing about defense, it is worth noting that the ordinary expenditures for this purpose (in other words, apart from the capital budget) amounted to 16 per cent in 1935, 25 per cent in 1939 and 30 per cent in 1940; too late, but not quite too little. The expenditures for general welfare (education, hygiene, public works, etc.) formed about 17 per cent of the general Netherlands Indies budget in recent years, but this figure alone is meaningless because a considerable amount for these purposes is collected and spent by local authorities. Another interesting detail is the estimate of the total income of the population. For the last two years before the war, this is thought to have been about 2 billion guilders, of which 1.4 billion represented the share of the Indonesian population.

Another chapter gives an excellent analysis of significant social forces and trends. The majority of the population is still only a passive participant in modern organization and production; the popular mentality has to change—and is changing—but it is a slow process. Education plays an important role in this evolution but has been greatly expanded only in recent years. According to the census of 1930, only 7 per cent of the Indonesian population was literate. It is estimated that in 1940 about 40 per cent of Indonesian children between six and nine years went to school; yet, far from all these pupils remain in school for the minimum period required for basic education. There is close connection between economic conditions and the period of attendance, and this becomes particularly noticeable in the higher forms of schooling. Of the 777 pupils who graduated from secondary schools in 1939, 204 (or 26 per cent) were Indonesians, as compared to 457 "Europeans" and 116 Chinese and other Foreign Asiatics. Of the 81 persons who received a degree from institutions of higher learning in 1939, 40 were Indonesians. This figure is misleading because most Europeans, and quite a few Indonesians, studied at universities in the Netherlands. Although progress has been made (only four Indonesians received degrees in 1930), the situation cannot be called satisfactory. Naturally this reflects itself in the modest place Indonesians occupy in the ranks of technical and professional leadership. For instance, while not less than 78 per cent of the general Netherlands Indies civil service consists of Indonesians, they hold only 7 per cent of the positions for which an academic degree is required. Whatever one's judgment of the Dutch educational policy in the past, the fact remains that there is as yet lacking a

sufficiently broad basis of moderately educated Indonesians to provide efficient native leadership.

The fourth and last chapter of the first volume describes the political development of the Indies since the first World War and is particularly valuable for an understanding of the discussions in the second volume. The birth and growth of the *Volksraad* (People's Council) and its relation to the central government, the decentralization of the administration and the place of the self-governing principalities (a special form of decentralized government) are described in detail.

Altogether this first volume leaves the impression of a highly dynamic society, a country in rapid transition and, therefore, one of great contrasts and extremely complicated problems. There is the great heterogeneity of its population, but also firm integration by Dutch rule and the rising feeling of national consciousness; there is a broad agrarian, self-sufficient mass of peasants, but also a wide and increasing participation in commercial production. The leadership is still in the hands of "outsiders", but at the same time it is being challenged more and more effectively by Indonesians. Java is still the political center of the Indies, but economically (in terms of export trade at least) it has been surpassed by the Outer Provinces, the inhabitants of which desire greater autonomy than they enjoyed before. Above all, one sees how much this all is a matter of evolution, a vast cultural process; obviously the attending problems cannot be solved by a few simple and drastic changes in policy. The examples of Thailand or tropical Latin America are a warning that political independence or abrogation of colonial rule do not by themselves solve social and economic evils. Neither would even the most reactionary colonial policy be able to stop the present dependent peoples from moving towards self-government. There is no doubt that the war tends to speed up this process. Although we cannot as yet gauge the extent of this change, return to prewar conditions is plainly out of the question.

For this reason, even so recent an inquiry as that of the Visman Commission has already the flavor of history; aspirations, vaguely expressed two years ago, may be determined claims a few years hence, and objections that formerly appeared sound may lose all meaning in the times ahead. Nevertheless, since it is the most complete and authoritative statement on political thought in the Indies and contains clues to the broad postwar reforms announced by the Dutch Government, the second volume of the report deserves careful study.

The discussion in this volume centers around four broad problems of reform in the relations between: (a) the racial components of the Indies' society; (b) local and central government; (c) the legislative and executive branches of government; (d) the Indies and the Netherlands. It is, of course, not possible in the scope of this article to do more than select a few topics for special discussion.

One of the fundamental principles of Dutch policy in the Indies has been to respect native customs as well as those of immigrant groups. Thus the law distinguishes in many instances between "Europeans," "Foreign Asiatics," and "Natives" (or Indonesians, to use the now generally accepted term). This is not a racial distinction in principle: the term "Europeans" includes others, as assimilated Indonesians, also Armenians and Japanese, and the Foreign Asiatics comprise Chinese and Arabs as well as Indians. It is, however, by and large a system by which brown, yellow, and white men are treated in different ways. A similar differentiation also forms the basis for the electoral and representative system.³ This legal pluralism has resulted from an adaptation to existing conditions; in the same way, changed conditions have led in the last decades to the demand that this system be abolished. A number of changes have already been made. Nevertheless, in the words of the Commission: "One of the deepest impressions retained from the hearings was the general urge among non-European representatives for complete equality with the European." While racial discrimination in social life was felt to be even more irritating than that based on the law, it was generally believed that the government should give the example and set the pace by abolishing the legal differentiation.

The big question is whether Indian society has reached a sufficient homogeneity to apply this principle to all phases of life. Here the attitudes of the different population groups towards the legal restrictions on ownership of land are illuminating. *The Agrarian Law of 1870 prohibited the sale of native-owned land to non-natives.* Chinese, and also some Europeans, appearing before the Commission, criticized this differentiation and argued that legal equality should include the right of every Netherlands Indies subject to buy land. On the other hand, Indonesians, however strong their feelings against discriminations, were anxious to retain this protection for the native peasant. Typical for the Indies' heterogeneous society is also the point that practically all groups agreed on the necessity of maintaining the differentiation in private law. Nevertheless, there are various forms of dualism which, it was generally felt, should be abolished or at least mitigated, for instance those concerning criminal justice, education, government and civil service positions, and labor conditions.

The results of the inquiry regarding changes in the internal administration, with greater autonomy for the provinces (some even spoke of a federation of Indonesian states), must be omitted here. Of greater interest to the outsider are the discussions on the evolution of representative government and its relation to the executive branch. The situation before the Japanese conquest was roughly as follows: The Governor-General is in charge of the administration and responsible to the Crown (that is, the Minister of Colonies, who in turn is responsible to the Dutch Parliament). The Governor-General is assisted by an advisory Council of the Indies (*Raad van Indië*) and a number

of department heads. Laws concerning domestic matters must pass the People's Council (*Volksraad*) and be approved by the Governor-General. In case of conflict between the Governor-General and the legislature, the decision lies with the Crown, except in case of the budget, when the Dutch Parliament is the arbiter.

There are, however, several exceptions. In the first place, certain Indian domestic matters are reserved for the Home Government, such as monetary and banking regulations, the tariff and the exploitation of mineral resources. The Indies budget needs the final approval of the Netherlands Parliament. Moreover, any Netherlands Indies law or administrative decree can be annulled by Parliament or the Crown if considered to be "against the general interest." Obviously then, the authority of the *Volksraad* was restricted, even though in practice the strictures were, on the whole, sparingly applied. To gain the right perspective one must see this period, from the first *Volksraad* in 1918 to the seventh at the time of the invasion, as an evolutionary stage in the march towards complete representative self-government. There is no doubt that the future legislature, whatever its name, will have far greater responsibilities. The suggestions regarding its electorate and its composition have, therefore, particular significance.

Again, these problems must be seen against the specific social-economic background of the Indies. Heterogeneity is still the dominant feature of this society. Moreover, political life in the Indies is quite young and has as yet hardly touched the mass of the people. The membership of all Indonesian political organizations was estimated in 1941 at only 115,000. Religious and social-religious associations had about 300,000 members. The number of Indonesians organized in employee and other labor organizations was some 87,500. Malay and Chinese-Malay newspapers had 53,000 Indonesian subscribers, although certainly a much larger number of readers. No definite conclusions can be drawn from these figures (which, moreover, involve considerable duplication); they indicate, however, the great difficulty of creating truly representative government for the seventy million inhabitants of the Indies.

Several Indonesian groups expressed the desire for a direct system of voting for the representatives in the *Volksraad*, instead of the existing indirect system, whereby the members of the central legislature are chosen by the municipal and regency councils of Java and the various local councils of the Outer Provinces. Others, Indonesians among them, doubted the wisdom of such a reform. They felt that the distance between the People's Council and the mass of the voters, 92 per cent of whom are illiterate, was too great to make direct elections feasible. The voter must have some notion of the functions and activities of the organ for which he votes, and certain ideas on general lines of policy. Also, he must have enough interest in these problems to keep an eye on the action of his chosen representative after the elections. This means, in practice, that there must be an organization in political

parties, at least of the more militant individuals, with whom the less active ones can associate themselves at election times. It is true, of course, that even in advanced democratic countries not all voters measure up to such standards, but the situation in the Indies seems far from ripe for direct elections.

It is probably ignorance of the indirect system that has led some foreign observers to believe that there is virtually no franchise. Without in the least maintaining that there is no ground for criticism, it should be said that the situation (especially in Java) is better than is often assumed. The Regency (local district) Councils of Java are chosen by about 80,000 electors (one for every 500 inhabitants), who in turn are elected by the villages. The franchise for the village electorate is adapted to native custom and includes those over twenty-one years of age who either have the right to participate in the elections of village officials or who pay any tax. The number of these voters was about 6,250,000 in 1939, a not inconsiderable number for a total population of some 45 million, where the female voter is more the exception than the rule. The fault lies not in the size of the basic electorate, but in the rapid narrowing down of the number of voters as one approaches the top of the representative organs. In the 1939 election of the *Volksraad*, 106 electoral bodies (district and municipal councils) participated, embracing only 2,228 voters. Of these, 1,452 were Indonesians, 543 Netherlands and 233 non-native subjects who are not Netherlanders ("Foreign Asiatics"). This certainly was an improvement over the elections of 1924, when the electors numbered 1,127 (452 Indonesians, 594 Netherlanders and 81 Foreign Asiatics), but the fact remains that it still was a small corps. In this light the wish for direct elections gains significance. It may be possible, as was suggested before the Commission, to combine the two systems, by granting the direct vote to all who are considered to have the necessary degree of political consciousness (which raises the problem of suitable criteria) and retaining the indirect system for the uneducated mass.

The composition of the *Volksraad* also was a subject of much discussion. This body contained sixty seats (exclusive of the chairman), of which thirty were reserved for Indonesians, twenty-five for Netherlanders and five for Foreign Asiatics. The government appointed ten each of the Indonesian and Dutch members and two of the representatives of the foreign groups. The allocation of seats among the three groups as well as the appointment system were designed, it was claimed, to make the *Volksraad* representative of the predominant political currents in the Indies. In view of the restricted powers of this body, there was no anxiety by the government regarding the relative Indonesian majority, and it also allowed the Governor-General to follow a liberal policy in appointing members; quite often severe critics of the government were appointed when they had not obtained enough votes at the polls. In a politically advanced state such a system might be called a parliamentary farce, but in a country where twenty-five years ago political life was

virtually non-existent, one must be less harsh in one's judgment. It is obvious that the march of events makes return to the situation of 1941 neither desirable nor even possible. The hearings clearly indicated the general wish among the Indonesians, seconded by several spokesmen of other racial groups, for an absolute Indonesian majority in the future *Volksraad*, and an abolition, or at least a considerable diminution, of the appointment system.

This demand, coupled with far greater powers for the legislature, creates naturally a problem for the minority groups, an especially delicate problem in the Indies where Europeans and Chinese wield an economic power far out of proportion to mere numbers. Among the proposed solutions, two seem the more significant: one would leave enough power in the hands of the Indies Executive to check irresponsible acts of the legislature; if the conflict could not be solved in the Indies, it would be placed before a superior organ acting as an arbiter (see below). The other solution is the creation of a bicameral system, in which the lower chamber would be elected by the people as a whole (which would naturally lead to large Indonesian majority), while the upper chamber would resemble the present *Volksraad* in composition and manner of election. This latter chamber, representing social and economic groups, would have a revisionary function and thus act as a balance wheel on the action of the purely political lower chamber.

The final, and for outsiders probably the most interesting, chapter deals with the future place of the Indies within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. While before 1922 the Constitution spoke of the Netherlands and its "colonies," the revised text of that year said in its first article: "The Kingdom of the Netherlands consists of the territories of the Netherlands, the Netherlands Indies, Surinam and Curaçao." This was claimed as the new foundation for an empire consisting of four equal partners; whatever the theory, the Netherlands inevitably retained in practice its leadership. As the years went by, more voices were raised in Holland, as well as in the Indies, for reforming the organization of the Kingdom in accordance with the first article of the Constitution. The actual autonomy which the Indies possessed after the invasion of the Netherlands increased the self-confidence of all population groups. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Commission found "a large majority" to be in favor of drastic changes in the super-structure of the Kingdom. It is also worth noting that "another wish existed without exception by all those heard, namely the wish not to break the bond which had been forged in the course of centuries between the Indies and the Netherlands."

The long association has created many spiritual ties; besides, it was generally admitted, there are material advantages for the Indies in a political link with the Netherlands. In the future period of development there is little danger that a small country like the Netherlands will dominate the relationships between the two parts of the Kingdom. Yet, the Netherlands will have—even after this war—a valuable commercial, economic, technical, and diplomatic

apparatus, and moreover a large international goodwill, all of which can be of great benefit to the Indies. On the other hand, the Indies' own personality is growing. There is an increasing orientation on the Pacific borderlands, economically as well as politically. The intermediary commercial function of the Netherlands is diminishing, as more and more trade is transacted between the Indies and foreign countries. In the last decades the Dutch element—and not only the “stayers”—has increasingly identified itself with the Indies. These “Dutch-Indians” resent as much as the politically conscious Indonesians the guardianship of The Hague. What is more, they wish a voice in the affairs of the Kingdom as a whole. In short, sentiment and utility demand a new relationship between the parts of the empire, now that the Indies is coming of age.

There was, of course, a wide variety of suggestions on how to put these ideas into practice, but the great majority of the persons who appeared before the Commission thought of some kind of supreme body, representing all parts of the Kingdom, a *Rijksraad* or “Council of the Realm” in literal translation (one might call it an Empire Council, although *Rijk* has a more restricted connotation than Empire). Some cautious voices wanted this body to have only an advisory function, but the majority favored a more authoritative organ, even a kind of super-parliament. These latter, more advanced, proposals are of particular interest, because they envisage a construction entirely different from the well-known forms by which colonies have evolved towards partnership in the British Commonwealth.

The desire for a *Rijksraad* was no racial issue. The underlying motives, however, varied and led to considerably different viewpoints on the powers to be conferred on this new council. Some, no doubt, looked mainly for means to strengthen the position of the Indies, while others searched for a strong central organ to balance the growing centrifugal forces within the Kingdom. A number of Indonesian nationalists considered complete autonomy for the Indies a primary condition for a super-parliament. Logic is on their side, because otherwise, as one spokesman put it, “the super-parliament would be like a chair with four legs of uneven length” (the four parts of the *Rijk*). This body would have no authority in purely domestic affairs of any of the parts but would deal only with “imperial” matters. The principle is simple, but in practice the dividing line may be difficult to draw. Relations with foreign countries and defense were generally considered to concern the *Rijk* as a whole, but there were differences of opinion on such subjects as tariff and monetary policy, to mention a few. It was suggested that the *Rijksraad*, together with the Crown, would have to decide on these disputable points.

Others believed that the Indies, in spite of all rapid progress, were not yet ripe for complete self-government. There would as yet remain a need for a certain amount of outside guidance and control, but this control should no longer rest with the Dutch Minister of Colonies and the Dutch Parliament. Whatever the logic and simplicity of other, more advanced proposals, a

practical solution, they argued, would give the *Rijksraad*, in addition to authority over imperial matters, the function of arbiter in cases of conflict between executive and legislature in the Indies. This latter task would be of a transitional nature; with further development of Indonesia the super-parliament would relinquish this function and concentrate on imperial affairs.

Both proposals have in common the idea of pushing back the Netherlands Cabinet and Parliament into the position of "local institutions." Above them—as well as above the governments of the other three parts—would stand the Crown and an Empire Cabinet, the latter responsible to the *Rijksraad*. On the number and composition of this latter body there were expressed all shades of opinion. Some wished "parity" for all parts, or at least for the Netherlands and the Indies. Others suggested, for example, that by a membership of 50, 25 seats would be allotted to the Netherlands, 15 or 20 to the Indies, and 5 or 10 to Surinam and Curaçao. Obviously, the composition and method of election will be critical matters, but it is hardly necessary to go into details at the present.

The creation of a *Rijksraad* was not the only solution advocated. Another large Indonesian group urged "Dominion status" and still others spoke of a "federation" of the Netherlands and the Indies, without however clearly outlining the relations between the two parts. As to the Dominion proposal, the Commission warned against imitating foreign institutions which had developed in an entirely different cultural, economic and political atmosphere. This seems sound advice; new forms are needed, but the new structure must be fitted to the particular situation. This, no doubt, is what Queen Wilhelmina had in mind, when she said in her broadcast of December 7, 1942: "I am convinced . . . that after this war it will be possible to reconstruct the Kingdom on a solid foundation of complete partnership, which will mean consummation of all that has been developed in the past."

Other parts of the text of this pronouncement also indicate that the Dutch Government in London can be expected to support the more progressive suggestions embodied in the Visman Report. Against the background of this study the following quotation from the Queen's speech receives new meaning. She visualized:

... 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 readiness to render mutual assistance . . . [Such] a combination of independence and collaboration can give the Kingdom and its parts strength to carry fully their responsibility both internally and externally. This would leave no room for discrimination according to race or nationality; only ability of individual citizens and needs of various groups of the population will determine policy of government.

Let us hope that Indonesians and Netherlanders will have the wisdom to create the new state in this spirit, to the benefit of themselves as well as to that of the world at large.

Notes

- 1 *Verslag van de Commissie tot Bestudeering van Staatsrechtelijke Hervormingen*, (Ingesteld bij Gouvernementsbesluit van 14 September 1940. No. 1x/KAB.), Batavia, 1941, 2 volumes.
- 2 Pensions alone were about 15 per cent of the total expenditures.
- 3 The electorate as well as the seats in the People's Council are divided into three groups: (a) Netherlanders, (b) native subjects who are not Netherlanders and (c) non-native subjects who are not Netherlanders.

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT IN THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

Frans H. Visman

Source: *Pacific Affairs* 18(2) (1945): 180-7.

After the fall of the greater part of the Netherlands Indies all possible measures were taken in order to be prepared for the time when liberation would come. Headquarters for all Netherlands Indies activities were established in London at the Ministry for Overseas Territories. It was soon found necessary to establish branches in New York and Melbourne. The Board for the Netherlands Indies, Surinam and Curacao in New York, apart from furnishing information about the Netherlands Indies, concentrated on preparations for relief and rehabilitation, especially since organizations and businesses, indispensable to this purpose, were located in the United States. The Netherlands Indies Commission in Melbourne had a similar task in Australia. The basis for a new Netherlands Indies administration was laid in Australia where the majority of those who escaped from the Indies were gathered. Also, the only part of the Netherlands East Indies which could be kept out of the hands of the Japanese, namely the southern part of Netherlands New Guinea, with the town of Merauke as its center, is located just north of Australia. In Australia the nucleus of new services for the different branches of the administration as well as for the army and navy was formed, and training courses for these services were established. One of the first training courses set up was a school for civil affairs officers. The Netherlands Indies Civil Service had always been and would again be one of the main services.

The civil service school in Australia proved to be of great advantage when parts of the Indies were liberated. For these parts of the Indies the Allied Supreme Commander in the southwest Pacific, General Douglas MacArthur, wanted to be supplied with sufficient men to manage the population and to mobilize them for the war effort. To this end the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs, or NICA, was established. Although NICA consists solely of Netherlands Indies personnel—Dutch as well as Indonesian—it is

really an Allied organization. Whenever Allied forces entered Netherlands Indies territories, a unit of NICA, placed at the disposal and under the command and responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief, accompanied them. A NICA detachment, therefore, though a Netherlands Indies organization and as such subjected to Netherlands Indies authorities internally, is simply part of a United Nations task force. The NICA officer in charge of the unit is under the orders of the task force commander. Each detachment handles civil affairs within a designated territory. Liberated areas in the beginning, for as long as military necessity requires, are under the supreme responsibility of the Commander-in-Chief of the Southwest Pacific area. When in the judgment of the Allied Commander-in-Chief, conditions permit, liberated territories will be transferred to the direct administration of the Netherlands Indies Government. From there on NICA, in the liberated areas concerned, acts as an agency of the Netherlands Indies Government.

NICA units land on D day; at times groups go in even earlier to investigate local conditions. It is not surprising then that the personnel is militarized. The head of the unit is assisted by officers for general civil affairs, for jurisdiction, for labor, for propaganda, for supply, as well as by a medical officer, a naval officer and an intelligence officer. A number of military policemen, guides, scouts and interpreters, as well as administrative assistants and a foreman with some skilled laborers, belong to each unit. One of the first duties of the head of the unit, who has legislative powers, is to set up judicial courts for Netherlands subjects.

The chief characteristic of NICA is that no racial discrimination whatsoever exists. All units are composed of Dutch and Indonesians; the officers belong to both races. One of the best group-commanders, for example, is an Indonesian. Dutch and Indonesians do not serve separately. Quite often Hollanders serve under Indonesian superiors. According to all reports the spirit of comradeship and teamwork between members of the units, regardless of race, is excellent.

The same character trait holds for all other organizations. It should be emphasized as well that with regard to judiciary affairs no discrimination exists either. Hollanders, Indonesians and all other representatives of Asiatic races in the liberated parts of the Netherlands Indies are under the jurisdiction of the same courts of law. There is one judiciary system for all of them. No one is entitled to any special prerogatives, no one is discriminated against.

Relief and rehabilitation naturally take a prominent part in the duties of the Netherlands Indies civil affairs units. Japanese domination, with its practices of looting and living off the country, has stripped the islands of even the bare necessities of life. Without relief goods, it would not be possible for the Allied armies to start economic life and to expect services from the population.

A general relief plan has been prepared. This is the Master Plan of 500,000 tons to take care of the whole of the Indies for a period of six

months. It includes the most necessary food items and other necessities, from fishhooks to indispensable means of transportation, all of them destined to get the country back into rather primitive running order, and to enable the people to help themselves. This Master Plan is divided, of course, according to regions. One of these regional subdivisions is the 28,000 Plan, taking care of the essential necessities for the first three months after liberation of the eastern part of the Indies, east of the islands of Celebes and Sumba. The primary necessities to be used in a part of the Indies to be liberated, are procured, stored and transported by the U. S. Army Services of Supply. Immediately after arrival in the liberated territory concerned, they are handed over to the NICA supply officer, who is in charge of the distribution.

Imported goods are urgently needed for immediate relief in each liberated territory. As soon as the first needs have been taken care of, export trade becomes equally important, as most population groups cannot buy the commodities they need if their products cannot be exported. To organize this important economic aspect of the rehabilitation, an official Netherlands Indies central import and export organization, known as the NIGEO, has been created. Its staff consists entirely of import and export experts. They are all former executives or employees of Netherlands Indies' firms. There is, of course, no intention to keep control of import and export trades permanently in government hands. This control is temporarily required for the purpose of rehabilitation of economic life in the first period after the different territories have been freed.

For the present, NIGEO is mainly handling the imports of household articles, foodstuffs, medicines and textiles. Exports for the time being are confined to the few commodities produced in New Guinea, such as copra and crocodile skins. NIGEO also takes an active part in the administration of the local rationing system which guarantees equitable distribution of available foodstuffs. In this, as well as in other respects, close cooperation exists between civic officials and NIGEO. In fact, during the first stage of occupation of newly liberated territories, the local NIGEO men are incorporated into NICA as supply officers.

Immediately after the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs officers began to work in liberated territories they were in need of currency to pay for local produce and labor and generally to serve as a medium of exchange in the restoration of normal economic conditions. In order to meet this need new Netherlands Indies Government guilder notes were issued. The issuance of these notes is in the hands of a newly formed bank under Government control, the Bank for the Netherlands Indies, with its main office in Australia. Officers of the bank operate branch offices in the liberated territories, dealing with all matters of currency and of finance, of imports and exports. The bank also supplies the Allied forces with the guilder currency they need. On

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 Not for redistribution

May 31, 1944 American troops serving on freed Netherlands Indies soil were paid in Netherlands East Indies currency for the first time.

As soon as NICA units in newly liberated territory are in running order, propaganda is carried from the freed areas to neighboring regions still occupied by the Japanese. This is largely done by radio and by the distribution of leaflets, means which are quite effective locally. As radio communications improve, this means of influencing the population and counteracting Japanese propaganda will become an even more important factor. The significance of propaganda by word of mouth, carried by the people who travel from freed to occupied territories, should also not be underestimated. The people, suffering under treatment which is quite in contradiction to the beautiful words of the Japanese, are quick to understand that liberation means considerable amelioration of their present miserable existence.

The first NICA units were landed on invasion day at Hollandia and Tanamerah Bay. Additional NICA personnel joined in the subsequent landings on Wakde, Biak Island and Numfoor Island. Great importance was also attached to the landing on Morotai Island, north of Halmahera. Morotai was the first Netherlands Indies island outside the New Guinea area to be invaded by the Allies. It lies on the fringe of the 'genuine' Indonesia, populated by Malaysians and not by Papuans, as in the case of New Guinea.

The general activities of NICA immediately after the landings can be summarized as follows. Its personnel acted as guides, scouts and interpreters for patrol groups of the Allied forces. They obtained intelligence about the enemy, did their utmost to restore law and order behind the armed forces, and organized the people in order to obtain labor. From the beginning they stimulated and directed production of supplies needed by the Allied forces and the population itself in order to relieve the task of feeding them. They distributed food, clothes and implements for production necessary for the war effort. They instituted price and wage control and thus prevented inflation. They investigated the conduct of the chiefs and officials during the two years of enemy occupation and supervised the arrest and trial of the very few found to have acted treacherously or considered unreliable. The vast majority, however, had remained loyal.

NICA personnel landed on D day and thus ran the same risk as the fighting forces in the first stages of occupation. A number of them were wounded, and several were killed. It should be mentioned that local Papuans, engaged and instructed by NICA, helped by slipping behind the enemy lines and returning with valuable information. On Biak, two Indonesians, who were taken prisoners by the Japanese, managed with the assistance of a Papuan to smuggle to the American lines a map they had drawn of Japanese troop concentrations, Japanese headquarters, and Japanese stores. Before the attack on Liki, an Indonesian member of NICA, dressed as a Papuan, landed on the island in order to locate the Japanese, and afterwards directed the American landing barges to the most suitable place. By questioning the

Papuans, who on the whole were most helpful, the NICA officials received a great deal of information useful to the American forces. In the Maffin Bay area opposite Wakde island, NICA men, again acting as scouts with American patrols, assisted in mopping up and ambushing Japanese pockets of resistance. Patrols of NICA clear liberated territories of Japanese stragglers. Such patrols occupied Arzo, south of Hollandia near the border of the Australian mandate in New Guinea. For weeks before, the district of Arzo had sheltered various stray groups of Japanese, living a precarious guerrilla existence in the jungle, while attempting to reach the few remaining Japanese positions on New Guinea, hundreds of miles to the west.

American army commanders have not been unappreciative of the assistance which they received from NICA while operations were still in progress. Members of NICA have been proposed by the American commanders in the field for the American Silver Star, awarded for gallantry in action. Lieutenant General Robert L. Eichelberger and his senior officers, in citing the Dutch officials, praised the fearless job NICA detachments have done in acting as interpreters, guides and scouts during the Allied operations aimed at liberating all New Guinea from the Japanese.

Thousands of the population in the liberated territories immediately and eagerly reported to the NICA authorities. Those in good health volunteered in large numbers for work, for which they received fixed rates of pay. Valuable assistance was given by local teachers and village chiefs. In the first few weeks after an Allied landing on Biak island, more than 7,000 persons applied to NICA for food and help. As the number was too large to be dealt with locally, a large-scale evacuation to Hollandia was arranged. From these 7,000 the Allies recruited the first laborers to assist the liberation forces in construction work, particularly in the building, enlarging and extending of airstrips in captured areas.

At Hollandia a number of men reappeared who before the war had been appointed by the Netherlands Indies Government as village chiefs. As proof of their authority these chiefs came with belts in the red, white and blue Netherlands colors, which were their distinctive marks under the Netherlands Indies Government. During the occupation they had kept these belts hidden from the Japanese. Fishermen of the Lake Sentani area also asked whether they could again fly the Netherlands flag on their boats, as they did before the war. Deputations from villages in Biak arrived at the NICA camp with Dutch flags and portraits of Queen Wilhelmina which they had kept hidden for two years. After the liberation of Numfoor, men appeared in canoes, also with the Netherlands tricolor at the prow.

A great number of Indonesians who had been brought by the Japanese from other parts of the Indies to New Guinea as slave laborers were liberated. Some of them belonged to the Netherlands Indies army, and were still wearing tattered fragments of their Netherlands Indies army uniforms. These liberated Indonesians were cared for, and many of them, restored to

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good physical shape, were returned to their former Netherlands Indies service.

When the NICA officials arrived in Hollandia with the first waves of American forces, chaos reigned everywhere. Dozens of wrecked Japanese aircraft were still strewn on the major airstrip. Everywhere, equipment had been left by the Japanese. Workers with their wives and children, who fled to the mountains, streamed towards the officials of NICA, offering their services but asking at the same time for protection, food and other necessities, of which the Japanese had robbed them. The Papuans were quite willing to resume work but something had to be done quickly to restore their destroyed villages.

The supply and transport problems had to be handled, and were gradually adjusted after difficult beginnings. NICA units, working against almost insurmountable odds, were able to smooth out the initial difficulties and normalcy has now been achieved to such an extent that on May 18th of 1944 classes were resumed in the school of one of the larger villages in the Hollandia section of liberated New Guinea. Other schools reopened soon after. Hollandia, as the main center of Netherlands Indies activity, is now connected with Australia by a regular service of Netherlands passenger and cargo planes. Shortly after the liberation, the K.P.M., Dutch shipping line, established a shipping agency in Hollandia.

Seven months after D-day the first Netherlands ship with raw materials to be exported from Netherlands New Guinea left this freed territory for an overseas port. For the first time since the Japanese attack, products of the Netherlands Indies were again to be converted into Allied war materials. With that shipment the Netherlands Indies took its place once more among the suppliers of the United Nations.

As the liberation of parts of the Netherlands Indies was now being carried out, the moment seemed appropriate for a more effective organization of government activities. Up to this time the Netherlands Minister for Overseas Territories in London had also been Acting Governor-General of the Indies, since the Governor-General, Jhr. Dr. A. W. L. Tjarda van Starckenborch Stachouwer, who had remained at his post when the Japanese overran Java, had been made a prisoner of war. It proved inappropriate to keep these two functions combined in the same person, the more so as it was felt necessary to organize activities in Australia around an authority in the position of head of a provisional Netherlands Indies Government. The present Minister for Overseas Territories, Dr. H. J. van Mook, has therefore been appointed Lieutenant-Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies. He has left for Australia to assume the duties of the Governor-General as long as the latter is interned by the Japanese.

Dr. van Mook, who in his capacity as Acting Governor-General heads the provisional Government of the Indies, is assisted by a Council of

departmental heads. Before the war, the Netherlands Indies had a Chamber of Representatives, the 'Volksraad.' Apart from this legislative body there existed a Council of the Netherlands Indies, an advisory organ composed of five members assisting the Governor-General. As long as the Netherlands Indies are for the greater part still under Japanese occupation, the functions of both these organs will be exercised by the Council of Department heads. For legislative purposes this Council will be enlarged by the appointment of not more than eight extraordinary members. In this way it will be possible even during the present emergency to discuss and debate measures, which will be taken up by as representative a group of Dutchmen and Indonesians as can be found, including those from the small liberated part of the Indies.

The relation of the Provisional Government to the Allied Commander-in-Chief has been worked out according to the already existing arrangement with NICA. During the military phase of the liberation the authority of the Allied Commander-in-Chief is supreme, but the Provisional Government will assist by providing personnel and material means to handle civilian affairs. When conditions permit in the judgment of the Allied Commander-in-Chief, the Provisional Government will assume responsibility for the liberated territories.

As soon as the Provisional Government is in a position to move its seat to Netherlands Indies territory another decree will come into force. By this decree freedom of religion, freedom of the press, together with the rights of assembly, as well as all other civil rights, will be restored as soon as possible and no discrimination shall be made between the different groups of the population, other than that required by their special needs. (Family law will continue to make differentiation between different groups.) Some age-old principles of Netherlands Indies administration will at the same time regain validity. First of all, the Indonesian population will remain under the immediate guidance of its own chiefs. Furthermore, the land rights of the Indonesian population will continue to receive special protection: according to the traditional Netherlands Indies law, every sale of Indonesian-owned land to any non-Indonesian is null and void. The principle that all Netherlands subjects, irrespective of their race, can be appointed to all civil posts will also be recognized again. Another of the principles to be restored is that education will occupy a foremost place in the administrative set-up. Last but not least, interference of the administration in judicial matters will be prohibited as of old.

This decree for the transitional period of government aims also at the speedy reconstruction of the democratic institutions of the country. Immediately after a sufficiently large part of the Indies is liberated, representatives of the people will be selected. As general elections will, of course, not be possible before the whole of the country is freed, these appointed representatives will have a voice in the Government through a preliminary body, a temporary Peoples' Council (Volksraad). This organ will have all the legislative

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functions of the former 'Volksraad.' All groups among the inhabitants in the by then liberated part of the country will be represented in this body. It will have a large Indonesian majority. The reconstruction and rebuilding of the representative local and provincial government, in which the Indonesians will again have a substantial majority, as well as of an independent judiciary, will also be started without a moment's delay as soon as the circumstances permit.

The Provisional Government of the Netherlands Indies has its seat for the time being in a camp near Brisbane, Australia—the same camp where the American Sixth Army was trained before it started its campaign in New Guinea. The Lieutenant-Governor-General and the department heads visit the NICA units in liberated territories regularly. The Government in its entirety will move to Netherlands territory as soon as some small city such as Ambon on Amboina island or Menado on Celebes is liberated. In these towns, rather than in New Guinea, it will be possible to provide sufficient communication facilities for a government organization which requires regular contact with world capitals.

In the meantime rapid training of additional armed forces and civil affairs personnel is one of the most important tasks. Preparations have been made for a speedy increase of army and navy personnel after the liberation of the Netherlands is completed. In the small liberated part of Holland recruiting has already begun. As far as the personnel for civil affairs is concerned, apart from the younger generation in the Netherlands, which provides an abundant source, there is in the Netherlands a large reserve of civil servants, who as was customary in the Indies, have been placed on the retired list at a rather early age. Most of these experts on the Netherlands Indies will be very happy to give their best efforts to the work of reconstruction and rebuilding.

PROGRESS TOWARDS SELF-GOVERNMENT

Bernard H. M. Vlekke

Source: *Far Eastern Survey* 14(24) (1945): 348-50.

If there was one aspect of Dutch activities in Indonesia that gained the praise of neutral observers, it was the sincere and persistent endeavors on the part of so many Netherlanders to get thoroughly acquainted with the social institutions of the peoples of the Indies. These observers also commented favorably on the absence of the more rigorous and offensive forms of racial discrimination and of the "color bar" mentality which prevailed in so many British controlled territories and is by no means extinct in certain sections of the United States. The Indonesian political leaders, on their part, however vociferous in their attacks on western capitalism and western political superiority, always avoided turning their political action into a war of race against race. They never failed to guarantee that, if they ever gained control, there would be no discrimination against people of the white race or descendants of whites and Asiatics. They emphatically declared, time and again, that in their planned Indonesian state there would be a place and a task to fulfill for Europeans, Americans, and Eurasians. At present, however, we see the ugly spectre of racial war raise its head in Indonesia. It would be a mistake to assume that only Europeans, or even only Netherlanders will suffer in the clash. We may not forget that Indonesian nationalism began as an anti-Chinese movement springing from economic causes. There were already reports of attacks on Chinese inhabitants on Sumatra's west coast. If out of the present political conflict a racial war ensues, the 1,250,000 Chinese in Indonesia may well find themselves in the same dreadful position which became so fateful to the Jews of Europe.

Certainly, this outcome must be prevented. The danger of racial conflict might never have arisen, if it had not been willed by the Japanese and had been permitted to come up by lack of firmness on the Allied side. We still do not know what happened in Java in the month between the acceptance of

unconditional surrender by the Japanese Government and the arrival of the first Allied troops at Batavia. We know only one fact but one of outstanding importance: the Japanese commander permitted the formation of an "Indonesian Republican Government" under Soekarno and apparently he turned over to that government control of the Indonesian auxiliary troops raised and trained by the Japanese during the years of occupation. These acts constitute a major breach of the surrender pledge. If "unconditional surrender" means anything, it means that the defeated army turns over to the victors all troops, arms, equipment, and all positions and territories held by the defeated at the moment of surrender. This breach of promise was condoned by the Allied commanders in South East Asia when they agreed to deal with the self-created Indonesian government instead of sternly demanding the fulfillment of the surrender terms and postponing political decisions until they had gained sufficient control over the island. Events proved that the Allied commanders were obliged to turn to the latter policy anyway a few weeks later, but then the damage had been done and the situation had gotten out of hand.

This was bound to happen, in the first place because the Japanese were playing a double game and secondly, because Soekarno who, encouraged by the weak attitude of the Allied Commander, was putting up a bold front, had no control over the forces behind him. He knew he could not hope to keep the Allies out of Java by force. Thus he decided to resort to further bluff and to try scaring the Netherlanders off by threats against the unfortunate internees, living in camps in the interior, and against all sympathizers with the Dutch in general. He therefore incited the young men under his followers to demonstrations which, as many of these young people were armed, unavoidably led to bloodshed and terrorism. Those sections of the population which, prompted by religious or racial fanaticism, only waited for an opportunity to turn against all foreigners, naturally joined the young "patriots." When the Allies first landed at Batavia, Java was relatively quiet. After Soekarno had begun to use threats against the Dutch, murderous attacks on Europeans and Eurasians occurred all over the island. The ancient Christian Indonesian settlement of Depok was wiped out. Probably these people were guilty of no greater crime than that of loyalty to the Netherlands and of being Christians amidst a Mohammedan majority. Soekarno, clinging to the propaganda line which so far had brought him great results, immediately accused the Dutch of having provoked these murders, an absurd assertion if we consider that the attacks started before any Dutch soldiers landed on the island. I shall refrain from passing any judgment on Soekarno's attitude during the occupation years and on his dealings with the Japanese but it is certainly astonishing that this man who on November 8, 1944, conducted a ceremony at Batavia at which President Roosevelt was burned "in effigie" was permitted to cable accusations against one of America's allies to President Truman, not a year later.

Political background of Soekarno

Yet, it is difficult to believe that Soekarno felt at ease when he saw primitive sentiments breaking loose among his followers. From the beginning of his career he professed advanced social opinions and preached a political creed in which Marx's *Capital* was substituted for Mohammed's Koran. For years he strove to force the Indonesian nationalist movement out of religious into political and social channels. If religious and racial factors got the upper hand in the revolution he had started, he would ultimately fail in his policy. Moreover, it is by no means the intention of the Nationalists to destroy everything that Dutch administration and Dutch energy and capital have created in the Indies. Not the destruction of western enterprises but their expropriation for the benefit of the new socialistic Indonesian state was always Soekarno's ideal. He knew perfectly well that if the whole economic superstructure of Indonesia were destroyed as the result of a merciless racial and religious conflict, probably followed by a violent persecution of the Chinese, Indonesia would be ruined and the common people there would suffer even more than the expelled foreigners. In that case, Indonesia could be rebuilt only with the help of new western capital and new western assistance and, from Soekarno's point of view, this would be driving out Satan with Beelzebub indeed. The nationalists of Soekarno's type want the prize whole, not broken in pieces. They do not intend to leave any freedom to foreign capitalistic enterprise but to subject it to their own purposes. Soekarno's assertion, made a few weeks ago in order to gain favor with American observers, that in the new Indonesian state British and American capitalist interests would be safe is a flagrant contradiction of all principles he has professed during his lifetime.

Dangers of agitation

However, Soekarno was quick to realize the dangers of the agitation he had stirred up for tactical reasons. The method had a tendency of backfiring. The British grew less patient as violence increased and hastened to extend their control. His tactics failed to prevent Dutch troops from landing in Java. Hurriedly he countermanded his incitations to violence and tried to stop the gangs of armed young men who were making Java unsafe for all non-extremists. There is in every community a number of young men, adventurous and unscrupulous, who stand ready to take part in any political disturbance for the profits and the emotional satisfaction they get out of it. War-torn Europe knows all about this type of youth. They claim to be patriots but often do more harm to the patriotic cause than to the enemy. To judge from the available information Java does not make an exception to this general rule.

At the moment these lines are written, the situation seems to have gotten completely out of hand. The British are meeting with armed though rather ineffective resistance and the self-proclaimed national government is unable to curb its followers. The whole development is most deplorable. The rehabilitation of the Indies got off to a wrong start. This could have been avoided and all parties concerned would have benefited by it.

There was no need for violence. The Netherlands Government had pledged itself to thorough and speedy reforms of the prewar political system with the ultimate goal of creating a partnership on equal footing between Indonesia and the Netherlands. The Nationalists had demanded exactly such a partnership in their programs of 1940 and 1941. Their greatest fear was that of Dutch procrastination. Soekarno, in his first communications with the Allied Commanders, sought to justify his attitude with this same argument which was faithfully and naively repeated by Lt. General Christison in his famous press interview after his landing. There were several means by which the Nationalists could guard against that contingency. If they presented an unbroken front when dealing with the Netherlands authorities—for negotiations were indicated and never refused by the latter—and if at the same time they appealed to public opinion in Holland and abroad, they could have prevented undue delay of the reforms. There always existed close relationship between the Indonesian Nationalist movement and some of the Dutch political parties. Soekarno himself took most of his arguments from the writings of Dutch socialist leaders. If there were still Dutch officials who contended that it would take generations before the pledge given by Queen Wilhelmina on December 6, 1942 could be fulfilled, they would have been swept aside by the tide of public opinion and the realities.

The Netherlands were willing to negotiate with representatives of the people of Java. But why should they accept Soekarno and Mohammed Hatta as the true and authorized representatives of that people? What proof can Soekarno show that he really speaks for the majority of his compatriots? No other proof than a Japanese appointment. Mr. Charles van der Plas, who was the first to enter into contact with the Javanese after liberation, declared his willingness to see Soekarno but only as a private citizen, not as an office holder. General Christison insisted upon negotiations between the parties but the Netherlands were perfectly justified in demanding to see spokesmen for more than one Javanese group. The withdrawal of Mr. Soekarno in favor of Mr. Sjahrir, known for his anti-Japanese attitude during the occupation, seems to remove one of the main obstacles to successful negotiations. Probably as long as terrorism is rampant all over the island, few people will dare to disagree with the gang in power, or even to come to Batavia and present their own views. Yet, this is imperatively necessary and, consequently, the re-establishment of order is a prerequisite to successful negotiation.

Report of the Commission

A basis for an exchange of ideas can easily be found. In 1940 the Government of the Netherlands Indies ordered an investigation into the political wishes of the peoples of the Indies and invited all groups of individuals who had any suggestions to make as to the reform of the political institutions of the country to present their views to a Commission, appointed for this investigation. The Report of the Commission shows that nearly all spokesmen, Dutch, Foreign Asiatic, or Indonesian who appeared before it advocated immediate and complete freedom for the East Indian Government in all internal affairs. The majority of the spokesmen demanded an equal share with the Netherlands in the direction of affairs of joint interest for Indonesia. There was considerable difference of opinion regarding the future organization of the internal administration but, here too, the majority of the spokesmen advocated a parliamentary system of government. The main points of disagreement concerned the extension of the franchise and the composition of the future House of Representatives. However, the opinions of the more liberal Dutch groups and the Indonesian nationalists did not differ so widely as not to permit a reconciliation of ideas. All spokesmen without exception demanded the immediate abolishment of the remaining traces of racial discrimination in the law and the vigorous support of the administration for all action tending to combat racial discrimination in social intercourse. Hence, the opinions as presented by Dutch liberals and Indonesian nationalists to the Commission of investigation might well prove a fruitful basis for negotiation in the present emergency. It certainly would be advisable to add an all-embracing plan for the reorganization and future extension of educational facilities, for instance by creating an Educational Fund which would make a substantial sum of money available for the extension of the school system, regardless of the momentary situation of the Treasury.

Trend of opinion

The trend of opinion in the liberated Netherlands seems to guarantee that any promise of constitutional reform, now given by the Netherlands Government on the basis of Queen Wilhemina's pledge, will be loyally fulfilled. There is a small, though energetic, group which opposes all negotiations with Nationalists. The Government strongly resisted pressure from that side, even though this attitude caused the resignation of the former Governor General Jonkheer van Starckenborgh Stachouwer. The large majority of the Netherlanders, as far as we can see from press utterances and opinions presented in the Lower Chamber of the States General, supports the policy of the Government's refusal to deal with Soekarno but willingness to talk matters over with other, not compromised, representatives of the Nationalist movement

and of the people in general. There is a minority willing to make large concessions to the Indonesians right now. They speak of granting independence but hope to see cooperation between the Indies and the Netherlands continue on a new basis, preferably under a common Head of State. The Communist, Rustam Effendi, only Indonesian in the Lower Chamber, adheres to this opinion.

A temporary administration supported by Indonesians and Netherlanders should be immediately created and then, within a definite lapse of time, a new constitution can be elaborated on a democratic basis. Personal susceptibilities of whatever side should not stand in the way of a speedy re-establishment of order. The restoration of welfare and of the productive capacity of the island world is a necessity, not only for the Indonesians and the Netherlanders but for all peoples of the world.

DUTCH PLAN FOR THE INDIES

Raymond Kennedy

Source: *Far Eastern Survey* 15(7) (1946): 97-102.

On February 10, 1946, the Netherlands Government issued a statement of policy which outlined the official Dutch position on the future of Indonesia. Three years earlier, on December 6, 1942, the Netherlands Queen delivered an address on the same subject,¹ and the difference between the two declarations shows how much Dutch colonial policy has been changed by the experience of war in the mother country and the Indies, by the pressure of world opinion on colonial issues, and by the truly amazing show of strength and solidarity in the Indonesian nationalist movement since the ending of the war.

The statement of policy consists of a rather long introductory section followed by seven concise paragraphs dealing with specific points of organization and function. The proposed structure of the Kingdom is to comprise four parts: The Netherlands, Surinam, Curaçao, and Indonesia. Each part is to have complete autonomy in its internal affairs, but all shall stand ready to render mutual assistance. Thus far the statement of policy merely repeats the 1942 declaration. The introductory statement, however, also includes a proposal which is not only unprecedented but, so far as traditional Dutch colonial policy is concerned, revolutionary. The Netherlands Government for the first time recognizes the possibility of complete independence for Indonesia and even gives specifications on procedure for separation of the Indies from the Kingdom. If one remembers that public advocacy of independence has been a punishable offense in Indonesia, and that hundreds of natives have suffered imprisonment or exile to the New Guinea concentration camp on this account, the sudden change is little short of startling.

Because of its fundamental importance, the new policy on independence warrants detailed examination. "The people of Indonesia," it is stated, "should, after a given preparatory period, be enabled freely to decide their political destiny;" and the Netherlands Government will "do everything in their power in order to create and to fulfill as soon as possible the conditions

which will permit such a free decision to be taken and which will assure its international recognition." Two questions arise here. The first is: What is meant by the "conditions which will permit a free decision?" The statement does not give us an answer. The other is: How long is the "given preparatory period" to last; or better: Who is to judge when the time is ripe for a "free decision" to be made? To this we find an answer which is reasonably satisfactory in some respects, but open to serious doubt in others. In the first place, the Netherlands Government, in consultation with "authoritative representatives of Indonesia selected from a large variety of groups" will draft a structure for the Kingdom based upon "democratic partnership." This structure will remain in force for a "given period of time." If my interpretation is correct, this period will be stated exactly in the terms of agreement. But how the "authoritative representatives of Indonesia" will be chosen is not explained, and this is a question of the highest importance. Moreover, the phrasing which implies that the partnership structure will be drafted by the Netherlands Government, with the Indonesian representatives relegated to mere consultation, may not seem entirely satisfactory to the Indonesians.

After the "given period," the partners are to decide independently upon the continuance of their relations. Here we come to another question so far as Indonesia is concerned. Will the decision be made by plebiscite, by vote of the Indonesian Parliament, or how? No specifications on this point are given. As a matter of fact, a loophole is left for postponing the time of decision itself beyond the "given period," for "difference of opinion regarding the question whether that period should be further extended before a free decision can be taken shall be submitted to a procedure of conciliation or, if necessary, of arbitration."

Procedure for breaking deadlock

In other words, when the date set for decision comes, one of two things can happen. The partners may go ahead and decide their future; or either one may call for a postponement of decision. If one wishes to have action taken, but the other does not, then a "procedure of conciliation" will be tried. If this does not succeed in breaking the deadlock, the issue will be submitted to "arbitration," which evidently means submitting the case to impartial outside judgment, perhaps to an international commission formed for the purpose. Here again the statement does not specify precisely what the procedure will be. But a more basic consideration is overlooked. Suppose that the two partners do make a decision, but that the Netherlands favors a continuation of the partnership while Indonesia calls for independence? It seems almost incredible that this crucial question should not be mentioned at all.

Indeed, at this point it may as well be said that the statement as a whole is loosely drafted, whether intentionally or not. Moreover, as can already be seen in the section so far discussed, it abounds in the weasel-words so dear to

diplomats and so frustrating to the impartial student who tries to make an honest appraisal of official documents. An example of loose drafting—it would be unfair to call it intentional chicanery—appears in the inconsistency between a statement in the third paragraph, which reads that “the people of Indonesia . . . should be enabled freely to decide their political destiny” and a later one, in the sixth paragraph, which makes this decision anything but free, by stipulating that the Netherlands must also pass on Indonesia’s political destiny, to wit: “the partners shall independently decide upon the continuance of their relations.” As noted above, this is followed by the further proviso that either party may call for a postponement of decision.

Pattern of local administration

The first of the seven itemized proposals which follow the introductory section states that the “Commonwealth” of Indonesia shall be composed of “territories possessing different degrees of autonomy.” This pertains to forms of local government within the Indies and perpetuates the complicated traditional pattern of Indonesian administration. The immense range of cultural and political diversity among the peoples and regions of Indonesia justifies continuation of the plan of governmental differentiation for dissimilar areas. Thus the urban complexes of Batavia, Surabaya, and other large cities logically require a form of administration different from that of agricultural districts in the hinterland; the great native states of Java a governmental structure divergent from that of petty sultanates in the eastern islands; and the advanced peoples of Minangkabau and Minahasa a kind of system which would not suit the primitive tribes of interior Borneo and Celebes. Teeming Java, with its highly developed agricultural economy and its concentration of commerce and trade, needs an administrative machinery utterly different from that suitable for New Guinea, a vast, largely unexplored island sparsely inhabited by some of the most primitive peoples in the world. The proposal seems logical and should cause no disagreement if interpreted in this manner.

The second proposal marks a departure from established practice regarding citizenship. Whereas in the past the three main ethnic and racial groups in the Indies—European, Indonesian, and Foreign Asiatic—have been legally and politically distinct, so that they voted as units for their own candidates to the Parliament and were subject to different laws and legal procedures, under the new plan there will be a unitary citizenship for all persons born in Indonesia, regardless of race or parentage. This raises a series of questions unanswered in the statement of policy.

The basic query is, of course, what will single citizenship mean in practical terms, as distinct from what has existed before? Will the three ethnic groups continue to vote separately, and elect bloc representatives to the Volksraad? If they do not, and mass suffrage becomes the rule, then the Indonesians,

vastly outnumbering the Europeans and Foreign Asiatics (mainly Chinese), will have the power to elect just about every delegate to the Parliament. That virtually complete Indonesianization of the Volksraad is not intended by the new citizenship rule is directly implied in a following statement that "a substantial Indonesian majority" is contemplated in the legislature. Communal bloc voting will evidently continue, regardless of unitary citizenship. This may be one of the implications of a clause appearing later in the document which guarantees "protection of the rights of minorities." Proper representation may be one of the rights to be guaranteed to the European and Foreign Asiatic minorities.

Will separate court systems and separate laws and legal procedures be retained for the three different ethnic groups? No specific answer is given to this query, but a list of "guarantees" enumerated later on includes "legal equality without discrimination as to creed or race." Does legal "equality" mean a single court system and body of laws for all citizens? If so, what happens to the cherished regard for variations in native customary law which has been so widely praised as the manifestation of Dutch tolerance for traditional cultures? Actually, the only strong objection to legal differentiation in the past has come from the Chinese, who have sought to be assimilated to the European legal and judiciary system, rather than be judged in native courts by native laws. It seems likely, therefore, that the *adat* law scheme, with its careful provision for local variations in native culture, will be retained, but that the Chinese will be completely assimilated to the European legal system. This is speculation, however, as the statement does not go into these details.

Importance of native land ownership

One other question arising from the new citizenship plan is of vital importance to the Indonesians. Probably the greatest material advantage the natives have had has been the legal prohibition against land sale to, or land ownership by, any persons except native Indonesians. If ethnic lines are to be leveled by unitary citizenship, will all citizens, regardless of race or parentage, be enabled to buy and own land in the Indies? It is to be hoped that no such innovation will be introduced, because the principal reason why Indonesian native economy has remained basically sound has been the strong protection of native land ownership. One has only to witness what has happened to the land of the Burmans and Filipinos, who have not been forbidden to sell it to outsiders, to realize the critical importance of native land ownership. As no mention of proposed change in the land laws is made in the statement, it may be assumed that no significant shift in policy is planned for the future.

The Dutch statement concerning Indonesian citizenship includes the stipulation that "Netherlands and Indonesian citizens shall be entitled to exercise all civic rights in all parts of the Kingdom." "Civic rights" are not defined, and one wonders whether, for instance, an Indonesian citizen resident in the

Netherlands would be privileged to vote and hold office there. Probably the clause was inserted to make sure that such rights would be guaranteed to Netherlands citizens resident in Indonesia; but if this is so, then reciprocity could hardly be denied to Indonesians in the Netherlands.

Higher government outlined

The third and fourth of the itemized proposals are very important, as they outline the Dutch plan for the government of Indonesia itself. The supreme organs of administration in the Indies have been the Governor-General, the Council of the Indies, the Cabinet, and the Peoples Council of Volksraad.² The Council of the Indies, an anachronistic kind of "privy council" for the Governor-General, is evidently to be abolished, and the central executive power is to be vested in the Governor-General and the Cabinet.

The central legislature has been the main locus of political power of the Indonesians, and out of it have come most of the enactments which have gradually but steadily pulled Indonesia towards increasing democracy and self-government. The statement of policy has this to say of its future: "for the Commonwealth as a whole the creation of a democratic representative body containing a substantial Indonesian majority is contemplated." The old Volksraad was democratic and representative, but only to a degree. Only thirty-eight of the sixty delegates were elected, and the remaining twenty-two were appointed by the Governor-General. The European population was greatly over-represented, for while Europeans formed far less than one percent of the total population, they held twenty-five, or over forty percent, of the seats. The Foreign Asiatics, with about two percent of the total population, were also favored in the legislature, having five, or almost ten percent, of the delegates. The natives held half of the seats, but they composed over ninety-seven percent of the population.

If the proposed legislature is to be both democratic and representative, a question arises with regard to the appointive seats. Will the Governor-General continue to appoint some delegates, and if so, how many? While appointment of delegates may not necessarily violate the principle of representativeness, it seems hardly consonant with the basic meaning of democracy. On the point of Indonesian representation, we have already mentioned the probability that, despite unitary citizenship, communal voting by ethnic blocs will be retained. This seems to follow logically from the statement that "a substantial Indonesian majority is contemplated." No indication is given as to how substantial a majority the Dutch have in mind.

Reform of the voting system is not even mentioned in the statement of policy. Before the war, election of delegates to the Volksraad was carried out on the basis of an electorate severely restricted by income and property qualifications, which affected the natives almost exclusively. Moreover, the method of election was so indirect that true mass representation was far

from achieved. Especially indirect was the electoral procedure for Indonesians.³ If a truly democratic and representative legislature is to be established in the Indies, these impediments must be removed. Another and most crucial question which is bound to arise in relation to the Indonesian Parliament concerns the veto power formerly exercised by the Governor-General; but this had best be considered below, along with the other proposed powers of the Governor-General.

Position of cabinet

The statement of policy calls for "a Cabinet formed in political harmony with the representative body." The prewar Indonesian Cabinet was appointed by the Governor-General, except for the Ministers of War and Navy, who were named by the Crown. The Governor-General in turn was appointed by the Crown, so that the entire central executive branch was a creature of the Netherlands Government. Contrary to the customary European principle of Cabinet responsibility to the legislature, the Indonesian Cabinet was responsible solely to the Governor-General. The Indonesian Parliament had no voice in the selection of Cabinet members and no means of forcing the resignation of an unsatisfactory Cabinet, although it might pass a vote of no confidence in a minister. The Governor-General could act on such a vote in his discretion. Under the proposed plan, the Cabinet, once installed, will still retain its parliamentary immunity, and the appointment of ministers will still remain in Dutch hands; but evidently the legislature will be given a chance to pass on the suitability of Cabinet members proposed by the Governor-General. This seems to be the sense of the clause "a Cabinet formed in political harmony with the representative body."

The powers of the Governor-General were immense in prewar Indonesia, and among them the greatest were the veto he could exercise over acts of the Volksraad and his right to issue executive orders having the force of law in case of emergency. He might, indeed, modify or suspend any or all of the laws of Indonesia, if he deemed that a state of emergency existed. Such emergency actions of the Governor-General were subject to confirmation by the Volksraad at its next meeting; and, if the legislature voted adversely, the Crown then arbitrated the disagreement.

The Governor-General's veto over acts of the legislature is not mentioned in the present statement of policy, and yet it has been perhaps the single most "undemocratic" aspect of Indonesian government. It is, of course, the standard bulwark against truly democratic legislative power in every colony; even those, like Burma and Ceylon, which have advanced to a considerable degree of home rule. The way the system has operated in the Indies has been as follows: either the Governor-General or the Volksraad might initiate a bill; in case of disagreement the bill, if pertaining to finances, went to the Netherlands Parliament for approval or rejection; if not a budget bill, the

issue was resolved by a royal decree. In either case the balance of power rested in Dutch hands, and it seems probable that a change in this system will be demanded.

The section of the statement of policy which defines the Governor-General's special powers should also give pause to the Indonesians. "The representative of the Crown," it is proposed, "shall possess under his responsibility to the Government of the Kingdom certain special powers to guarantee fundamental rights, efficient administration and sound financial management." Exactly what these special powers will be, how they will be exercised, and what means will be available to the Indonesian legislature to control them are all unanswered questions. The matters over which the Governor-General is entitled to exercise his special powers are so broadly defined that they could cover almost anything. He can, on his own initiative, invoke his unspecified special powers to guarantee "fundamental rights, efficient administration and sound financial management." Any Indonesian statesman who accepted such a blanket bill of goods, especially with the memory of the drastic use of emergency powers in 1941 still fresh in his mind, would be a dupe indeed. The danger is palliated not at all by the proviso that "these powers shall be exercised only when these rights and interests are affected," for decision as to when the "rights and interests" are threatened rests entirely with the Governor-General himself. While it might be argued that the President of the United States and the chief executive officers of other democratic nations possess such emergency powers, these are the freely elected leaders of sovereign states; whereas the Governor-General of Indonesia, under the proposed plan, will be an officer appointed by the ruler of a European nation to wield supreme authority over an Asiatic country which is trying desperately to free itself.

By comparison with the section just discussed, the fifth proposal of the statement of policy is straightforward and relatively uncontroversial. It concerns civil rights. "The envisaged Constitution [of the Commonwealth of Indonesia] . . . shall comprise guarantees for fundamental rights such as freedom of worship, legal equality without discrimination as to creed and race, protection of person and property, independence of the judiciary, protection of the rights of minorities, freedom of education and freedom of opinion and expression." Some of the guarantees in this "bill of rights" have been well established in the Indies previously. Thus the Dutch have rightfully taken pride in their religious tolerance and in their careful provisions for the protection of the rights of minority native groups. Although the Chinese minority group has in the past undergone discrimination and even persecution, the record of recent decades has shown a swift and sweeping improvement. Legal equality has been infringed in a sense by differentiations in the laws, the courts, and legal procedure; but these variations have been prescribed for the express purpose of adapting modern concepts of justice to local, mutually dissimilar traditions and customs. As stated above, it seems

likely that the principal change contemplated is the legal reclassification of Chinese into the same category as Europeans. Protection of person and property is a fundamental right that could hardly be omitted in the "bill of rights" of any modern constitution. This provision, and the one guaranteeing independence of the judiciary, represent no innovation.

Educational needs

Freedom of education has not been violated in Indonesia in the past, with the exception of an abortive attempt by the Government in 1932 to introduce a so-called "Wild School" ordinance. For years before this the Government had been watching with apprehension the rapid increase of "national" schools, i.e., private schools operated by Indonesian political and cultural societies; and this ordinance was designed to check the growth of the movement by forbidding persons not possessing official certificates to teach. The Taman Siswo, largest of the national-education societies, fought the ordinance bitterly and organized a resistance campaign against it, with the result that the ordinance was withdrawn.

The truth is, however, that Indonesia is in less need of freedom of education than of free education. Tuition fees have been required for all school attendance, and this rule, combined with the insufficiency of the school system itself, has kept native education at an astonishingly low level. Literacy never exceeded ten percent in the Indies, and, although the elementary school system began to expand rapidly during the 1930's, provisions for native education were utterly inadequate even by 1940. Very few Indonesians ever went beyond primary school, and university education was beyond the reach of all but an infinitesimal proportion of them. In short, the prewar educational system for natives was scandalously poor, especially for a country with the great natural wealth of the Indies, and for a territory ruled by a nation with such high educational standards as the Netherlands. It is a conspicuous shortcoming of the present Dutch statement of policy that it does not include an outright provision for great expansion of educational facilities and free schooling for all, at least through the primary grades. Without tremendous improvement in education, the Indonesians cannot develop many able leaders, and progress towards real native self-government and full participation on all levels cannot be realized.

The most impressive of the new guarantees is that which promises "freedom of opinion and expression." The censorship laws of the Indies have been almost unbelievable in their repressiveness, and the restrictions on free assembly and free speech have been almost as bad.⁴ Any person or group advocating independence, for example, has been liable to prosecution for sedition, and with the passage of time there was no softening of the rules. Just before the great débacle, in 1940, a government spokesman in the Volk-raad declared officially that anyone who raised the issue of independence

would be subject to legal punishment. Use of the word "Indonesia" was forbidden, as was singing of the "revolutionary" anthem, *Indonesia Raya*. Persons who violated the laws against "seditious" activities were either imprisoned or banished to remote parts of the Indies. The notorious prison camp on the Upper Digoel River in New Guinea held hundreds of political exiles at the outbreak of the war.

The sixth proposal outlines the Dutch plan for the central government of the Kingdom. "The central institutions functioning for the entire Kingdom," it is stated, "shall be composed of representatives of the constituent parts of the Kingdom." The only "central institution" specifically named, however, is a "Commonwealth-Cabinet," establishment of which, with "Ministers from the constituent parts of the Kingdom," is "contemplated." Apparently there will be a local cabinet for each of the four divisions of the Kingdom, and a super-cabinet for the Kingdom as a whole. How the seats in the super-cabinet may be apportioned among the four divisions, who will select the members, and what its powers will be are unanswered questions.

Although there will be a central cabinet, the statement implies clearly that there will not be a central legislative body, for "Commonwealth-legislation" is contemplated "requiring the agreement of the Parliaments of the respective constituent parts of the Kingdom." The precise method of handling such legislation is not explained. There has been considerable speculation as to whether the Dutch would propose a central legislature for the quadripartite Kingdom, or whether the plan as finally presented would follow the pattern of the British Commonwealth, with no central parliament, but with legislative bodies in the several dominions. The answer has now been given. The proposal of a central parliament would have raised a difficult issue, namely, the proportional representation of each of the four parts of the Kingdom. The embarrassing small population of Holland—only about 9,000,000 in contrast to Indonesia's 72,000,000—would have posed the delicate problem of scaling down the per capita representation of Indonesia so as to keep the Netherlands on at least a par with her former dependency. This whole question is avoided by having no central parliament in the Kingdom.

Plan for "Semi-Dominion" status

The final proposal states that after the new Constitution is established, "the Netherlands Government shall promote the early admission of the Commonwealth of Indonesia as a member of the United Nations Organization." This provision would place Indonesia on a level equivalent to that of India in the international hierarchy—neither a colony nor yet a free "dominion" like Canada or Australia. Viewed in combination with the other proposals, it would justify the classification of the new Indonesia as a "semi-dominion." A brief résumé of the points on which Indonesia would diverge from the usual "self-governing dominion" pattern will show how true this is. Although

there will be no central legislature, there will be a central Cabinet and perhaps other Kingdom-wide organs of administration. The Governor-General, appointed by the Crown, will not be a mere symbol of imperial partnership as in British dominions, but a true head of the government. He will evidently appoint the Cabinet, and the Cabinet will be responsible to him rather than to the Parliament. He will have special emergency powers which could become little short of dictatorial. Whether he will also have the right to veto acts of the Indonesian legislature is not stated, but the lack of mention of specific restrictions on his powers may seem ominous to Indonesians. The Parliament will not be all-Indonesian, but will merely have an Indonesian majority. Finally, the right to secede from the Kingdom, which is a main feature of the British Commonwealth system, is hedged about by some very peculiar provisos in the Dutch plan. In all these respects the proposed status of Indonesia falls short of that of the usual "dominion."

In spite of all this, the strongest impression one gets from reading the statement of policy is that the Dutch have come a long way in a short time. Under normal conditions, judging by the slow progress made during the three decades preceding the war, it would probably have taken at least three more for the Indonesians to have forced the Netherlands to grant the concessions embodied in the new policy. The principal criticism of the statement is that it is couched in such devious terminology, and is so replete with provisional and often ambiguous reservations, that it leaves one with a vague sense of apprehension. Indonesian statesmen will undoubtedly look hard and long at the circuitous procedure which is outlined for attaining complete independence. They will also surely scan with a wary eye the vital section concerning the Indonesian legislature: with its indefinite promise of "a substantial Indonesian majority," its avoidance of any mention of reform in the system of voting, and its omission of reference to the Governor-General's former veto power and his right to appoint a large proportion of the members. The Indonesians may well object to a Cabinet merely "formed in political harmony with" the legislature, and responsible not to the Parliament but only to the Governor-General. And, unless they are either very naïve or sublimely trusting, they must demand a more specific definition of the "special powers" of the Governor-General.

A bargaining offer

To the Dutch should go a generous measure of praise for resolving the disagreements between their liberal and conservative elements so judiciously as to produce a statement of policy which, for all its debatable points, represents a truly progressive program. To the Indonesians should go a counsel of caution. The document which confronts them is beset with pitfalls for the unwary. The Dutch make no pretense of concealing their fervent desire to keep the Indies within the orbit of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The

present document, indeed, is a bid for Indonesian goodwill on the basis of the greatest degree of self-government and self-determination which the Dutch feel willing to grant immediately. But at the same time the statement of policy is obviously a bargaining offer, and the very phrasing of its terms shows that they are subject to amendment through mutual negotiation. The Indonesians are in a strong bargaining position, and they should drive hard for what they believe they can justly demand. At this moment in history, they are leaders in the struggle for the emancipation of the subject peoples of the earth.

Notes

- 1 See Raymond Kennedy, "Dutch Charter for the Indies," *Pacific Affairs*, Vol. XVI, No. 2, June 1943, pp. 216-223.
- 2 The prewar organization of the Indonesian government is described by Raymond Kennedy in *The Ageless Indies*, New York: John Day, 1942, pp. 114-125.
- 3 For a detailed description of elections in prewar Indonesia see Raymond Kennedy, "Indonesian Politics and Parties," *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. XIV, No. 10, May 23, 1945, pp. 129-130.
- 4 See Raymond Kennedy, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS FOR INDONESIAN INDEPENDENCE

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Source: *Pacific Affairs* 19(4) (1946): 394-402.

For many centuries the Indonesian Archipelago has attracted foreign settlers who, motivated solely by economic considerations, believed that the Indies offered opportunities to anyone with a spirit of adventure and enterprise, opportunities which the indigenous populations had either completely neglected or inadequately exploited. Indonesia became the *Netherlands East Indies* not only because the Netherlands provided it with industrialists, capital, energy and organizing ability, which are essential to economic development, but also because the indigenous peoples lacked such equipment. Moreover, the Indonesian rulers were interested only in religious, political and military matters; they regarded commerce and industry as the province of those who served, not of those who ruled.

During the period of the Dutch East India Company (1600-1800), the Javanese nobility did not conceal its contempt for the Western merchants or "grocers," as they called them. Their negative attitude remained unchanged after the Company was taken over by the Netherlands government. In 1830 the "Culture System" was instituted, entailing compulsory agricultural production by the peasants, but although under this system the farmer did produce such raw materials as were demanded by the Western colonists, he did so as a serf, a forced laborer responsible not only to his own hereditary chiefs but also to the government, which he continued to refer to as "the Company". The nobility had a part to play in this system, but it was only a tool, useful because of its seignorial status and its feudal power over the peasants. Far from functioning as employer or capitalist, the nobility continued to regard itself as superior to the Western profiteers, in whose activities it felt no real interest.

The situation remained essentially unchanged even after 1870, when the government turned the economic development of the Indies over to private

Western entrepreneurs. Business enterprise remained in Western hands, wholly removed from native society. Because of the cost involved, it was only through sheer necessity that Western capital in the archipelago continued to recruit abroad the human energy required to supervise its investments and to ensure profits. Perpetuation of the colonial status of the local government occurred mainly because Indonesian society, although encouraged to do so, did not cooperate with Western capitalists.

When it became obvious that the indigenous peoples were disinclined to share the responsibilities of the Western capitalists on even a modest scale, the government sought to raise the sights of the peasant above his traditionally low level. In its attempt to improve the status of the Indonesian laborer and small farmer, however, the government misconstrued the character of the indigenous society of that time; it misunderstood the prevailing attitude towards life in general and towards material progress in particular. The civil service, which was primarily responsible for the enforcement of the new ethical policy of bringing prosperity to the "little man", devoted itself wholeheartedly to its task in the hope that the Indonesian would prove to have ambition and an urge to succeed in the world of commerce and industry.

But no matter what the government did or tried to do—whether it abolished compulsory labor, pushed irrigation or other agricultural projects, supplied bulls for breeding purposes, or encouraged industry—it was unable to imbue the indigenous population with its own purposefulness or make it realize that the greater economic possibilities that were being offered could be utilized to develop the country. These opportunities were only translated into population increases which seemingly could not be controlled. What has been said of British India proved true of Netherlands India as well: every natural advantage is eventually neutralized by an increase in population. Thus the policy intended to produce general prosperity, which the government had originally entertained, deteriorated into a hopeless struggle with the population problem. The problem was no longer one of raising living standards but rather of assuring a bare existence for the constantly growing population and of safeguarding it as far as possible from utter poverty. A partial solution was sought in the introduction of a colonization program intended to transfer Javanese from their densely populated island to the Outer Territories. In addition, agricultural methods were improved and commerce was regulated.

Yet the problem proved insoluble because the people themselves did not feel that a problem existed. There was no mutual cooperation in order to discover a solution, as there would be in Europe. A proletariat, which comprehends the relationship between population and prosperity, has not yet awakened in the Indies to a consciousness of its proper role in such matters and is accordingly uninterested in finding solutions.

Before proceeding in this discussion, it should first be noted that the foregoing remarks about "the Indies" are not applicable to the Outer Territories

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without qualification. There are many regions in the Outer Territories where, under Western economic influence, an indigenous middle class has appeared, has absorbed the capitalist spirit, and been vitalized thereby. It is noteworthy that these regions are disinclined to sever their ties with the Netherlands and to liquidate their "colonial status". This attitude is not surprising since these people have something to lose—material prosperity—in the event of a breach with the West. In other words, purely political have been outweighed by economic considerations. In this respect, the attitude of the native middle class resembles that of Western capital in the Indies.

The Javanese nationalists, on the other hand, regard Western capital as their worst enemy. In their eyes, foreign capital is a sinister power that keeps them politically immature, dependent and in bondage. The root of this animosity must not, however, be sought in capitalism as such but rather in the nationalist mentality. Capitalism per se has no political aspirations; it makes use of politics only as an instrument with which to promote its economic interests. It demands safety, legal security, stability. It seeks recognition of its status in Indonesian society. For the rest, it desires to be left alone. It realizes that Indonesia lacks the ability to manage its economy and to handle its affairs satisfactorily; but it has no objection to entrusting those affairs to Indonesians whenever they demonstrate competence—quite the contrary, since it is expensive to import personnel from abroad. Nor does capitalism object to the granting of political independence to Indonesia—on condition, however, that sovereignty of economic over political interests be accepted by the national government, not merely in appearance but in fact.

Here lies the difficulty: the nationalist leaders have relatively little interest in economic affairs. Only purely political problems appear of first importance to them; they pursue political activities for political ends alone. To them freedom means political freedom, political autonomy. Economic considerations are incidental, not ends in themselves.

Had Indonesia remained a homogeneous society, a national community developing from within and untouched by Western capitalist influence, it would probably still display a medieval feudal character. The laboring classes would still be paying their taxes after the manner of serfs, and their growth would be checked by recurrent epidemics, famine and civil wars. The autocratic government would still be able to limit its attention to political and military concerns; it would have little interest in democratic rule. Like so many things in Indonesia, democracy is a Western import and is closely related to the growth of a middle class and a proletariat.

As events turned out, however, Western influences have converted Indonesia into the *Netherlands East Indies*, a country supporting a dual society. Without cooperation from the indigenous society, Western capitalism has established laws and organizations needed to secure its dominion and to

safeguard the world in which it elects to live. The popular rulers themselves have become a subservient instrument in the execution of Western economic policies, an instrument to which little responsibility in economic matters has been entrusted, and to which perhaps very little could have been entrusted.

The Indonesian intelligentsia now wants political independence. Its demand is justifiable and could be granted. In the political sphere it is easy to issue decrees. But the situation is different in the economic sphere. The economy of a country disregards decrees when they do not suit its needs; it has laws of its own which are dictated by expediency. Moreover, the political economy of the Indies has developed beyond the limited understanding of the indigenous peoples. It is a foreign element, Western, alien to the Indonesians. Through the introduction of many new institutions and organizations, which have made the administration complex and top-heavy, the government has come to face in two directions. One side faces East, towards the quiet village communities and their traditions in which the majority of the population lives and feels at home. The other side faces West, towards the hurrying business world which encompasses the globe and has organized itself on Western lines. Because each of these divisions requires a government competent to serve its needs if it is to attain a proper degree of development, the government has had to assume a dual character composed of Indonesian and Western elements.

At present this attempted division appears to have failed in its purpose: Indonesians wish to rule their own country. The Netherlands East Indies must once again become Indonesia. And, again, this wish is justifiable. From the purely human standpoint, Indonesian nationalist aspirations should be respected. From the purely political point of view, the establishment of an independent Indonesia presents no insuperable obstacles. The crux of the matter lies in the safety of economic interests: those of the *past*—the enormous Netherlands, British, American, Chinese and other foreign investments in the Indies; those of the *present*—the important role of the Indies in supplying world markets with vital commodities; and those of the *future*—the need of the Indies for capital and credit with which to develop production facilities.

Cannot, then, the Indies become a homogeneous Indonesian nation once again? Cannot foreign capital investments be withdrawn from the Indies, since they really do not belong in an independent country such as the new Indonesia is to be? Cannot this capital be invested in its own countries instead? Cannot Indonesia be given an opportunity to create a new economy on its own initiative, with its own resources, and in accordance with its own traditions?

These are not academic questions. They have been voiced by many nationalists, sometimes with considerable asperity. For the nationalists realize that they cannot command the manpower necessary to manage Indonesia's

extensive plantations, factories, mines, and transportation systems. Because they know that they have no part in the capitalist economy which ties the Indies to the rest of the world, the nationalists regard it as an unwelcome and unassimilable intruder which should be removed from Indonesian society. Desirable as such a removal may be from one point of view, is it feasible? Or has Western industry penetrated so deeply into the Indonesian social organism that its removal would be fatal to the structure as a whole?

In seeking an answer to these questions, it is advisable to deal separately with Java and the Outer Territories because they differ in important respects. In Java the population has increased during the last 150 years to a point where it has become one of the most densely populated areas in the world. Java's population density (which can be traced back to the pre-Christian era) results from three interacting factors: intense rice cultivation on irrigated land; the limited needs of the people; and the subsistence-type agriculture which they maintain. In earlier days the typical Javanese farmer cultivated only a small field and did not even consider extending his property. It was accordingly possible for large numbers of people to settle in irrigable areas; as the population increased, so did the number of settlements, until it eventually became necessary to bring drier areas under cultivation. Now there is virtually no more new land available for cultivation in Java: the population has reached its maximum density. The swollen population can no longer make an adequate living from agriculture, and the percentage of propertyless persons is rapidly mounting.

In earlier years the uneconomic nature of intensive cultivation was of no concern to the ordinary peasant since he had no financial obligations. Now, however, he has to sell an increasing portion of his crops to pay taxes and to purchase living necessities imported from outside his village. Although he has discovered how little remunerative his farm is, he is compelled to continue his intensive cultivation. His small plot of land¹ does not lend itself to extensive cultivation, and he is discouraged from concentrating on cash crops because he has no direct access to world markets but must instead depend on the good will of middlemen.

It is not surprising, therefore, that 90 per cent of the output of Javanese farmers should consist of food crops, with cash crops constituting the remaining ten per cent. In other words, the cash value of crops grown by the average family of from four to five persons amounts to little more than 60 guilders per year. And since only part—as small a part as possible—of his crops is offered for sale, the money income that a farmer derives from his land is extremely small. In order to earn, or, as he puts it, to “buy” money, he must look for work in addition to his farming. If he turns to cottage industry or to some form of handicraft, his lack of capital and of commercial training forces him into complete dependence upon an entrepreneur (in this case a

buyer-money-lender) who disposes of his product and allows him only a small fraction of its market price. Moreover, the domestic market for his wares is apt to be depressed because of low native purchasing power. The farmer faces further difficulties in his marginal activities since he must compete with those of his countrymen who, owning no land, are able to devote all of their time and energy to industrial work, in which they therefore become skilled. The entrepreneurs prefer to deal with the latter, partly because of their superior craftsmanship and partly because they are freer in their movements than the farmer who is bound to his land. The handicraft industries must in turn compete with the inexpensive products of Western-type industries which may be more attractive even though less durable. In short, the independent small industries represent only an insignificant source of cash income for the Javanese peasant.

There remains but one alternative for the Javanese farmer—employment as a laborer in a Western-type industry, where he can find work not too dissimilar from that which he does on his own farm. His wages may be low, but the plantations offer the laborers great freedom of movement, and, since plantations are scattered all over the interior of Java, there is apt to be one in the neighborhood of most villages. Even on the plantations, the farmer meets competition from his landless countrymen. Since the latter are much more mobile and able to work for sustained periods, they receive better training; but they demand higher wages because for them, unlike the landowning peasant, plantation labor is not merely a source of supplementary income, but their only means of livelihood.

In the years between the two world wars, international and domestic restrictions affecting the most important crops (e.g., sugar, rubber, tea and cinchona) naturally reduced the income of Javanese plantation laborers, yet the Western-type industries continue to afford the agrarian masses in Java their main source of monetary income. This income may add only a few guilders each year to the budget of the average family, but these guilders are indispensable and cannot be earned elsewhere.

To put the problem more concretely, before the Pacific war no more than 65 per cent of the population of Java made their living from small-scale agriculture, and it was a bare living indeed. Of the remainder, ten per cent sought a livelihood in the cities, and 25 per cent stayed in the countryside, leading a hand-to-mouth existence. For this group—one out of every four Javanese—coolie labor in Western-type enterprises was the main monetary recourse; for them the continuance of these enterprises in Java is a matter of life or death.

We must now consider the position of Western-type enterprise in the Outer Territories, where the situation is quite different. The ratio of population to area of cultivable land is much more favorable than in Java. Anyone capable of farming may become a landowner if he wishes. No one needs to work for

Western-type enterprises, and, with the exception of Javanese and Chinese immigrants, very few persons do. For in the Outer Territories shifting agriculture (which entails the burning of uncultivated or fallow land before planting mixed crops) is customary, and since it lends itself to crop rotation, there is ample opportunity for the cultivation of cash crops, especially perennials requiring a minimum of attention. As much as 45 per cent of the pre-war agricultural income of the inhabitants of the Outer Territories was derived from the cultivation of cash crops. Provided with as much money as they need, these farmers are not obliged to work for wages.

Native agriculture has a great future in the Outer Islands, where before the war the natives (and Chinese) grew 100 per cent of the pepper produced, 94 per cent of the copra, 86 per cent of the coffee, and 57 per cent of the rubber. These are such high percentages that it is understandable that the Indonesian nationalists should ask: "If our people have already reached 57 and 86 per cent of total production, why should they not reach 100 per cent? Why cannot the native producer displace Western enterprise?" This argument is not without substance. Collectively, native cultivation has assumed very considerable proportions. In 1925 it was believed, even in official quarters, that native cultivation would eventually force out Western enterprise. Much has happened since that time, however.

Originally established to yield a profit without much labor, the native plantations during the great depression of the 1930's economized further on labor, which is the only factor in production, in addition to nature, that plays an important part in the cultivation of native plantation products. On the Western-type plantations, on the other hand, the depression enhanced the influence of science and technology on production processes, with the result that output per acre rose, expenses declined, and corporate stability increased greatly. By far the majority of the Western plantations became quite prepared to compete with native production and when, after the restoration of normal conditions, the tendency to over-production reappears and the position of the consumer becomes stronger, native estates will face difficult times and some will disappear.

Certain plantations, such as those producing Deli tobacco, palm oil and special fibers, have always been in the hands of Western capital exclusively. They cannot be taken over by the Indonesians because the production processes involved require so much capital and technological skill. This is equally or more true of the mining industry, which is of even greater importance to the Outer Territories than the plantations are. Land, sea and air transport, as well as other facilities for trading in the world's commodity markets, are firmly controlled by Western management. The economic life of the Outer Territories would be completely disrupted if Western capital and industry were evicted. The situation would be less grave there than it would be in Java, but the prosperity of the people would come to a sudden end.

Thus far the discussion has scarcely touched on the fiscal aspect of the problem, although mention has been made of the extent to which the population depends on the wages paid by Western industry. The government must receive a cash income, and the taxes which help to assure this income are a heavy burden on the people, a large part of whose wages is used to pay taxes. Before the war such contributions amounted to nearly one-quarter of total government tax receipts. The remainder, which was obtained from such other sources as European and foreign Asiatic individuals, Western agricultural and industrial enterprises, etc., would be in great danger of disappearing altogether if the economically active Western element were removed from the scene. Such a development would produce a financial upheaval in every part of Indonesia and would result in insufficient provision being made for political and legal administration, public education, welfare and social services, irrigation and interisland communications.

The foregoing argument indicates that, for the good of the Indonesians themselves, the interest of Western capital and industry must be safeguarded, no matter what political solution is arrived at. Unless this basic necessity is realized, no form of political settlement can prove workable. It is no preference for capitalism that inspires this conclusion, but simply a conviction that the development of Indonesia into a truly independent state can result only from the acceptance of Western capitalism—at least as an inevitable stage of transition. Indonesia cannot benefit by the destruction of capital, but only by prudent cooperation with legitimate attempts to employ already-invested funds efficiently and fairly, and by attracting as much new capital as possible. Such capital will have to come from abroad, and the Indonesian government will have to ensure that domestic conditions are such as to attract foreign investors.

Yet even that will not be enough, for even under such conditions there might be no concomitant development of Indonesian society. A national government that has the interests of the country at heart should bend all of its efforts towards the creation of a middle class which will be both willing and able to assume economic responsibilities hitherto entrusted far too exclusively to foreign hands. The revolution now raging in much of Java and Sumatra will prove to be constructive only when it has understood that economics is the mainspring that moves the entire social system.

But if the future progress of Indonesia depends on a revival of Western commerce and industry, and if only Westerners are trained to carry on such activities, how will Indonesia's economic dependence be lessened by the nationalists' recognition of this situation? The answer may lie in the fact that "Western" need not mean "foreign", as the development of Japan, China and India in the twentieth century has so clearly demonstrated. The natural aptitude of the Indonesian is no whit inferior to that of the European; his interests have merely led him in other directions. It is now necessary to

interest and train him in economic affairs. Once this has been done, it should be a question only of time and education before competent, responsible Indonesians occupy all of the positions formerly held in their country by foreigners. The process will take time, but it can and must be achieved.

Note

- 1 The land owned by the average Javanese family totals 3 acres, of which 1.3 acres are irrigated.

RESISTANCE IN INDONESIA

George McT. Kahin

Source: *Far Eastern Survey* 18(4) (1949): 45-7.

Batavia

January 22, 1949

The Dutch attack launched on December 19, 1948, against the Republic of Indonesia was designed to impose a speedy settlement of the Dutch-Indonesian dispute along lines dictated by the Dutch. Enlisted men and officers of the Dutch army were indoctrinated with the idea that once the principal Republican leaders and Republican cities (Jogjakarta in particular) were captured, resistance to the Dutch would collapse. They were told that their purpose was the release of the Sultan of Jogjakarta from three years of captivity within the Republic. Their marching order was "On to Jogja to free the Sultan!"

All the principal cities of Java are now in Dutch hands. But Republican resistance has not collapsed—indeed, it has reached unprecedented proportions. The Sultan of Jogjakarta, who during the past three years has not only been free but has also been one of the most energetic and esteemed leaders of the Republican government, is now a voluntary prisoner in his own palace, refusing to have any contact with the Dutch.

The Dutch did succeed in capturing many of the top Republican leaders: Sukarno, Hatta, Sjahrir, and half the Cabinet.¹ Six cabinet members, however, are now in Republican-controlled areas. Aside from Sjafrudin Prawiranegara, Minister of Economic Affairs, who was in Sumatra during the time of the attack and who was appointed head of the Emergency Republican Government by Sukarno and Hatta shortly before the latter were captured, these escaped leaders include Dr. Sukiman, Minister of the Interior and chairman of the Republic's largest political party (Masjumi), and Supeno, Minister of Youth and Reconstruction.² Many other outstanding political leaders likewise escaped, among them Tan Malaka of the anti-Muso Communists, and the heads of the Indonesian Nationalist Party, the Indonesian Socialist Party, the Proletariat Party, and the Indonesian Islamic Youth Movement.

The thousands of Dutch soldiers with more than two years' service in the Indies who were due to be sent home several months ago are particularly

bitter. Told that they would be sent home once Jogjakarta was captured, they now find that the fighting has just begun, and their feelings towards the "brass" in Batavia are not kindly.³ Java, Sumatra, and even southeast Borneo are surging with resistance. Although their armored columns continue to attack concentrations of Indonesian troops, the Dutch are in general on the defensive. They are losing control of towns to Indonesian forces; plantations are being abandoned, motor roads becoming impassable, and most railroad lines going out of commission. Sea and air are the only safe routes for travel between major cities. The cities of Malang, Bandjanegara, and Tjikampek are frequently reported to have been attacked heavily by Republican army units. The Dutch posts around Jogjakarta and Surakarta are attacked almost nightly. The situation is so critical in the Madiun area that the Dutch are forced to supply that garrison by air. Republican troops are operating close to Cheribon and have made repeated attacks on towns within ten miles of Surabaya, where the Dutch have been unable to garrison the city itself for lack of troops.

Jogjakarta: Three weeks later

The situation in Jogjakarta three weeks after its capture by the Dutch can be reported on the basis of the writer's own observations.⁴ It had become for the most part a city of women, children, and old men. A majority of the young men had gone to the countryside to fight from there; many of the remainder were Chinese. Few people ventured outside their houses.

Jogjakarta is not under complete Dutch control. Its central area and its eastern and northern suburbs are Dutch-occupied, with a garrison whose strength is estimated to consist of one thousand troops, ten Stuart tanks, and a large number of armored cars and Bren carriers. But much of the periphery of the city is either no-man's-land or actually occupied by Republican troops. The Dutch informed the writer that several areas of the city to which he wished to go were "not safe." Both Dutch and Indonesian sources affirmed that in a major attack on the night of December 29, Republican troops penetrated to within four blocks of the city's center. On January 9 the Kemal Battalion of the Republican Army's Siliwangi Division launched a four-hour attack (supported by mortar and heavy machine-gun fire) which penetrated to the very center of the city, where the battalion continued to fight for two hours before Dutch tanks and armored cars finally forced it to withdraw.

Despite the impressive amount of Republican troop activity, the writer was told while in Jogjakarta that the areas around that city and Surakarta are not considered guerrilla areas. Two reasons have prompted Republican leaders to make this decision. First, they do not want the civilian population of these cities to suffer more than is necessary. Second, the Jogjakarta and Surakarta plains are deficit food areas, unable to support large numbers of

Republican troops. Most of the troops formerly stationed in these areas have gone to the east and west, where they are now waging intensive guerrilla warfare against the Dutch. Indeed, the crack divisions of the Republican army are now operating in areas which before December 19 were known as "Dutch-occupied Java."⁵

Although the writer himself was not allowed to visit the environs of Jogjakarta, he talked with Indonesians who had been there. All of these Indonesians reported that a great many villages in the area have been burned by the Dutch, apparently because they have housed snipers who fired on Dutch patrols. On January 7, a day during which Indonesian units made no attack on the city, a Dutch officer informed the writer that nine Dutch soldiers were killed in the vicinity.

Extent of civilian casualties

Civilian casualties have been extensive, particularly in the suburbs, according to the Indonesian Red Cross. The Red Cross, however, has no means of contact with these areas. Its one ambulance was destroyed by the Dutch in the December 19 attack; the Dutch have refused to grant them any replacement. The Central Hospital of Jogjakarta alone reports having treated 108 civilian casualties during the week of December 19-25 and sixty-one of these were treated after the Dutch had officially occupied the city. On December 27, twenty-five civilian casualties were treated at this one hospital, twelve of whom died of their wounds. On January 4, the last day for which the writer could secure such data, six civilian casualties were treated and all of them died.⁶

Food and collaboration

Before the Dutch attack one was accustomed to seeing large numbers of ox-carts driven by peasants from the surrounding countryside, bringing food to Jogjakarta. The writer saw not one of these carts during the period of his last visit. This single fact is the best index both to the peasants' fear of the Dutch and to the status of the city's food supply. According to Mr. B. J. Muller, head of the Dutch Economic Administration in the Jogjakarta District, the food situation is extremely critical. The Dutch, he said, give food only to those who work for them; non-collaborators get nothing. Twenty tons of rice are being imported daily by the Dutch, via convoy from Semarang. Mr. Muller stated that of Jogjakarta's half-million inhabitants only 6,000 persons are working for the Dutch. He estimated that the amount of food coming into the city has dropped fifty percent since the Dutch attack.

Those few peasants who are willing to carry a little rice into town on their backs refuse to accept Dutch currency and will sell only for the Republican rupiah. The few city-dwellers who venture through no-man's and to the

countryside in search of rice carry only Republican money. The shortage of rice in the city has forced up its price. This factor, plus the refusal of many Chinese merchants to accept Republican money during the first days of the Dutch occupation, greatly inflated the Republican currency. But the peasants' attitude and the general confidence in the Republic's survival, a result of the continuing guerrilla warfare, have reversed the inflationary tendency. Most Chinese shopkeepers must accept Republican money in order to buy rice. Whereas shortly after the Dutch attack on Jogjakarta the rate between the Dutch guilder and the Republican rupiah was one to 500, it now averages about one to 130.⁷

The Dutch had counted on securing the collaboration of a large number of Republican leaders once they had occupied Jogjakarta. Their expectations have totally miscarried. Not one of the Republican leaders there has consented to work for them. The Sultan has refused to deal with the Dutch, as has been noted above. On January 1 he resigned as head of the Jogjakarta District civil service. Out of about 10,000 civil servants formerly working in the District, Mr. Muller estimates that at most 150 have agreed to work for the Dutch.

Dutch treatment of the population has certainly done little to increase collaboration. On December 19 a Dutch major lined up nine civilians and shot and killed them with his own pistol. Among them was Dr. Santoso, Secretary General of the Department of Education.⁸ Two weeks thereafter the Dutch offered Dr. Santoso's wife, formerly a Minister of Social Affairs in the Republican government, a cabinet post in the new Dutch-sponsored government in West Java. She refused the offer.

It is unlikely that Abikusno, leader of the second largest Mohammedan political party in the Republic,⁹ will feel inclined to cooperate with the Dutch. On December 25 three Dutch soldiers came to his house, demanded that his two sons hand over pistols which they did not possess, beat them, and carried them off to jail. The next morning the Red Cross informed Abikusno that the bodies of his sons had been found.¹⁰ The official Dutch explanation of this affair is that the two boys were shot because they were out of doors after curfew.

A number of other prominent Indonesians in Jogjakarta have been shot, including Masdoelhak Nasutian, adviser to Prime Minister Hatta; Dr. Hendromartono, a former cabinet minister; and Sumarsono, a high official of the Ministry of the Interior. The latter three were shot in their homes.

Notes

- 1 The seven ministers captured are Hadji Agus Salim (Foreign Affairs), Mohammed Natsir (Information), F. Laoh (Public Works), Djuanda (Transportation), Dr. Leimena (Health), Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo (Education), and Kusnan (Social Affairs).

- 2 Kasimo (Food), Susanto (Justice), and Maskoer (Religion) are in Republican-controlled territory, while Maramis (Finance) is outside the country.
- 3 Conclusions as to the indoctrination and present outlook of Dutch soldiers were reached after personal interviews with many of them, and are reinforced by the experiences of other interviewers in the combat areas.
- 4 After having left Jogjakarta on December 19 following its bombing and invasion by the Dutch, the writer revisited the city from January 6 to January 10 as a correspondent for Overseas News Agency. The Dutch originally authorized him to remain until January 13. He was apparently finding out more than they wished him to know, for on January 9 he was placed under house arrest in his hotel by the chief intelligence officer in Jogjakarta, and on the following day was forced to leave by plane for Batavia.
- 5 The Sungkono Division of 27,000 men has crossed into East Java, while the somewhat larger Siliwangi Division, except for its Kemal Battalion, has crossed into West Java.
- 6 On January 9 the two principal hospitals in Surakarta reported that they were treating 197 civilian casualties, most of whom received their injuries well after the Dutch had officially occupied the city.
- 7 Before the Dutch attack the rate was one guilder to fifty rupiahs.
- 8 These facts were obtained from an eyewitness. Data as to the number of deaths and manner of shooting were corroborated by the Indonesian Red Cross.
- 9 The Indonesian Islamic Union Party.
- 10 Interview with Abikusno, January 8, 1949.

Pernyataan

INDIRECT RULE IN EAST INDONESIA

George McT. Kahin

Source: *Pacific Affairs* 22(3) (1949):227-38.

Since the end of 1946 there has emerged in Indonesia a group of political organisms whose character and status have been the subject of continual dispute between spokesmen for the Netherlands on the one hand and for the Republic of Indonesia on the other. The manner in which this dispute is ultimately settled will be of critical importance for the future of the country.

In the United Nations-sponsored negotiations between the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia during the past year, the body¹ representing these new organisms has, with Dutch support, gained an increasingly important position. The success of the Dutch in sponsoring their protégés, commonly known as the "Federal areas", can be measured best by the terms of the Roem-van Royen Agreement of May 7, 1949, in which the United Nations Commission for Indonesia supported the Dutch insistence that Republican leaders should subscribe to a clause restricting the Republic to one-third of the representation in the projected Provisional Government of the United States of Indonesia, with the Federal areas receiving the remaining two-thirds.

The Dutch maintain that the varied group of states, "special territories", and "autonomous areas" which constitute Federal Indonesia were created spontaneously by their Indonesian inhabitants, enjoy a high degree of self-government and democracy, and truly represent the Indonesian national spirit. These claims are vigorously contested by the Indonesian Republicans. According to Dutch statements, the Federal areas enjoy self-government in varying degree, the largest of them, the State of East Indonesia,² having considerably more than any other because of what they term the reasonable and constructive nature of nationalism there and the fact that it is older than any of the other Federal areas.³

Since several years the nationalist movement in East Indonesia has encountered conditions markedly different from those existing in Java and Sumatra. During the Japanese occupation the area was administered by the Japanese Navy, which sought to suppress the nationalist movement rather than to permit it restricted development, as was the policy of the Japanese Army in areas under its control. Thus the proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia in August 1945 found the nationalist movement in East Indonesia poorly organized. Its leaders immediately declared for the Republic and established contact with Republican leaders in Java. But, lacking adequate arms and organization, they were unable effectively to resist the Dutch, who were supported by Australian troops. The Republican administration on Celebes lasted until April 5, 1946, when the Dutch jailed the Republican governor and his staff. Since the feudal leaders of Celebes also had supported the Republic,⁴ the Dutch at the same time arrested their most prominent members, either jailing or exiling them. Led by intellectuals and those feudal rulers who had not been intimidated, resistance nonetheless continued until January 1947.⁵ Most resistance leaders who were not killed were put in jail, where for the most part they remain today. By mid-1947 the Dutch had replaced more than one-fourth of the feudal leaders (including the most important ones) in heavily-populated South Celebes with less recalcitrant individuals; the remainder were thus convinced that retention of their positions depended upon their supporting Dutch policy.⁶

The fact that East Indonesia is the sole major Federal political unit in which the Dutch have been able to muster enough force to control the whole area must not be forgotten in considering political developments there.⁷ The writer observed the extent of this force and the scope of its application during a visit to East Indonesia in March-April 1949, at which time Dutch army units, constituting an occupying force, were scattered about the islands in battalion strength. Dutch army officers were arresting civilians. All of the senior officers and more than 90 per cent of the under-officers of the police force were Dutch. The Prosecutor General made arrests on orders from Batavia. Dutch Residents over-ruled officials of the Department of Justice. The jails were crowded with political prisoners living under such conditions that the Dutch doctor at Rappang, one of the principal prisons, stated that he could no longer be responsible for their health. Most of these prisoners had been in jail for more than two years without trial; nearly all of them had been imprisoned by order of Dutch military officers or civil officials. Political arrests were still continuing. Members of the East Indonesian Parliament had asked for the number and names of political prisoners but had received no answer. The Minister of Justice, Dr. Soumoukil, told the writer on March 23, 1949, that he did not know how many were in jail. Macassar, the capital, together with several other areas of South Celebes and the entire island of Bali, was still in a "state of war and siege" (*staat van oorlog en beleg*), which

prevented the exercise of basic civil liberties. According to Dr. Soumoukil, the police required five days' advance notice of private political meetings, which could be held only with their permission, and then only if a police officer were present; public meetings could be held only with the permission of the Dutch Resident. Indonesians were not allowed to travel from Macassar to any other town without a pass. Editors who were considered to be too outspoken were jailed and their newspapers closed down. More than 90 per cent of the newspapers were published by the government Information Service, controlled and largely staffed by Dutch civil servants. In areas where the state of emergency had been officially declared terminated, conditions were little better. In the Minahasa area of North Celebes, for instance, troops of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army intimidated the largest pro-Republican party there, the Barisan Nasional Indonesia, from holding public meetings,⁸ while the Dutch Resident allowed Dutch soldiers of both the Royal Netherlands Indies Army and the Royal Netherlands Army stationed in the Minahasa to vote in the local elections of March 6, 1948.⁹ The leaders of the majority of political parties in the Minahasa expressed to the writer the hope that the United Nations Commission for Indonesia would supervise the elections, in July 1949, for the East Indonesian Parliament; they feared that otherwise the elections would not be conducted fairly.

The economic control of the Netherlands Indies government over East Indonesia has been as effective as the military and police control, which it has helped to maintain. Export-import licenses and foreign-exchange allocations are issued exclusively by the Netherlands Indies government in Batavia and constitute important instruments of political control over the commercial elements of the population. Dutch control of credit sources is equally important. Moreover, since the government of East Indonesia is sharply limited in its means of securing revenue,¹⁰ it must incur a large budgetary deficit which it can meet only with funds provided by Batavia. Estimated income in 1949 of the government of East Indonesia is 59 million guilders as against an anticipated expenditure of 95 million and an additional capital outlay of 14½ million; the deficit is to be met by Batavia. The Secretary-General of the Department of Finance in Macassar told the writer that, although he believed that East Indonesia would have to repay the 14½ million guilders for capital expenditure, he did not know whether it would be required to refund the balance supplied by the Netherlands Indies government. Indonesian officials asserted that it is generally considered impolitic in their departments to exhibit attitudes at variance with those of Batavia when they are dependent on the latter for so much of their operating funds.

Firm in the possession of these means of control, the Dutch have relinquished governmental functions to Indonesians more widely in East Indonesia than in any other Federal area. While the transfer of powers looks impressive (though not sensationally so), the disparity between what appears on paper and what in fact obtains is on the whole very great. The powers

transferred to the State of East Indonesia by Lieutenant Governor-General van Mook on December 31, 1946,¹¹ were almost identical with those assigned to the Indonesian feudal rulers in that area and in Borneo by the Governor-General in 1938.¹² Indeed, the only important difference is that the powers transferred to East Indonesia may be enforced in respect of non-Indonesians as well as of Indonesians. Moreover, whereas the 1938 regulations applied only to those areas under indirect Dutch rule—about 70 per cent of the area of East Indonesia and a somewhat larger percentage of its population—the new regulations govern both these areas and those formerly ruled directly by Dutch civil servants.

At the end of 1947 the powers transferred by the Netherlands Indies government to the state of East Indonesia included responsibility for Finance, Justice, General Economic Affairs, Police, Education, Information, Health, Social Affairs, Industry, Shipping, Forestry and Irrigation; in 1948 Agrarian Affairs was added.¹³ The East Indonesian government has exercised limited initiative in the fields of education, social affairs, health, irrigation and, to a much lesser extent, industry. The exercise of most of the powers theoretically transferred to it is, however, vitiated by the numerous general and particular powers specifically reserved to the Netherlands Indies government at Batavia.¹⁴ Even where it would appear that no reserved powers interfere with the exercise of a delegated power, the East Indonesian government has in some instances been powerless. The ostensible transfer of authority over shipping, for example, means very little as long as the Dutch protect the inter-island monopoly of the Koninklijke Paketvaart Maatschappij, a large Dutch steamship company.

Apart from all this, however, the lack of Indonesian personnel available to the East Indonesian government hinders its exercise of the functions allowed it and facilitates control by Batavia. Since so many of its own people are either in the service of the Republic or in jail, East Indonesia relies heavily on Dutch personnel to execute even the limited duties assigned to it. Although in early 1949 eight of the 11 cabinet ministers were Indonesians, Dutch civil servants occupied the majority of the remaining senior government posts.¹⁵ Certainly some of these Dutch officials, particularly those without prewar experience in Indonesia, serve East Indonesia rather than Batavia; but their actions are likely to be influenced by what they deem to be in the best interests of Holland as well as of East Indonesia. Although Batavia has on occasion supported the prime minister of East Indonesia against high Dutch officials in the employ of his government,¹⁶ most Indonesians in the government appear to be convinced that Dutch officials of East Indonesia commonly act as agents of Batavia and that, in the unlikely event of their decisions being contested by Indonesians, the Dutch can generally count on backing from Batavia.

In administrative affairs a more complete transfer of authority has been in process. Dutch civil servants are being replaced by local councils administering the regulations stemming from both the powers reserved to Batavia and

those delegated to the government of East Indonesia. These local councils are, in addition, receiving certain subordinate legislative powers. At the level of the *daerah* (territory), of which there are 13 in East Indonesia,¹⁷ the authority transferred to the councils is, in theory, to correspond to that formerly exercised by a Dutch Resident; at the next lower level, that of a district, it is to correspond to that of an Assistant Resident. On the *daerah* level (except in Minahasa and South Moluccas, where they are being transferred to directly-elected people's councils, and in Lombok, where authority is to be given to an indirectly-elected people's council) such powers are entrusted to councils of feudal rulers possessing both executive and legislative powers. In theory, this legislative power is shared with indirectly-elected people's councils, but in fact the latter have thus far been largely advisory bodies. At the district level, all legislative authority is reserved to the council of feudal leaders; the role of the people's council here is, even in theory, wholly consultative. Despite the widespread establishment of such councils, Dutch and Indonesian members of the East Indonesian government told the writer that, with the exception of Bali and, to a lesser extent, the Minahasa and South Moluccas, Dutch Residents, Assistant Residents and Contrôleurs who have remained as advisers to these councils continue to exert decisive influence on local affairs.¹⁸

Some Indonesian intellectuals in East Indonesia fear that the Dutch are imposing a political system which will divert their nationalistic impulses into Dutch-controlled channels. In their view, this system will reserve positions of political power for Indonesians who are prepared to compromise national in favor of Dutch interests, and will give such persons a vested interest in maintaining East Indonesia as a pseudo-independent state in which their retention of political power will depend on Dutch support. These intellectuals fear also that the new political system will benefit primarily the Dutch and a small minority of reactionary feudal leaders and political opportunists, and that it will block that social progress which they identify with nationalism. They believe, moreover, that the Dutch are employing not only military force and economic controls, but also political pressure, to gain their ends in East Indonesia.

The political maneuvering is generally regarded as having begun with the Denpasar Conference convened by Lieutenant Governor-General van Mook at the end of 1946, at which time the state of East Indonesia was created. Fifty-five of the 70 members of the Conference were elected,¹⁹ and 15 appointed. Half of the elected Indonesian members were civil servants in the employ of the Netherlands Indies government.²⁰ The Conference elected a Balinese nobleman as president of East Indonesia. These 70 members, plus a later addition of seven appointees of the President,²¹ became the Provisional Parliament of East Indonesia. In the early sessions of Parliament many civil-servant members spoke in terms of undiluted nationalism and enthusiastic

support of the Indonesian Republic; even some of the representatives of the feudal leaders were inclined to advocate progressive legislation. This trend naturally alarmed most of the feudal leaders who regarded such talk of social reform as a threat to their position. The majority of these leaders firmly believed that the Republic stood for the immediate abolition of their wealth and powers, and that their personal security demanded the retention of ultimate Dutch authority in East Indonesia. Thus they were easily persuaded of the necessity for creating a state as completely divorced as possible from the Republic and possessing a constitutional structure that would assure them a dominant and unassailable position therein.

The chief political weapon of the Netherlands in this situation has been its relationship with the feudal rulers. Not only are the latter in most cases dependent upon Dutch military and police power; in addition, they are bound to the Netherlands by a political contract, the "Short Declaration" (*Korte Verklaring*), which requires each ruler to recognize the sovereignty of the Netherlands, to swear allegiance to the Queen and the Governor-General, and to agree to obey whatever regulations applicable to his area may be promulgated by the appropriate Dutch authorities. The importance of this relationship is apparent since approximately 70 per cent of the area and 75 per cent of the population of East Indonesia are governed by these feudal rulers.²² A major objective of nationalist elements in the East Indonesian Parliament has been the removal of this manifestation of colonial status. In their desire to substitute the government of East Indonesia for the Netherlands as the chief partner in the contract with the feudal leaders, many nationalists have overlooked the possibility that in the process they might lose much of what power they already had in the government. They have in fact suffered just such a loss.

In order to maintain their position, the feudal elements have followed a course enabling the Netherlands to secure effective political control over East Indonesia unembarrassed by outward signs of such control. The Short Declarations either have been or shortly will be renegotiated, with the state of East Indonesia replacing the Netherlands as sovereign. In return, however, for accepting this change, the feudal rulers have demanded and obtained a position in the government of East Indonesia, their new sovereign, which not only enables them to defend their traditional privileges but also favors their gaining control of the state, thus replacing the pro-Republican nationalists as the dominant force in its government. Under the provisions of the new constitution now being drafted, their position will be well protected.²³ In addition, a Senate was established on May 28, 1949, in accordance with their demands.²⁴ This body has 13 members, one from each *daerah* government; and since the feudal elements control 10 of these,²⁵ they are assured absolute control of the Senate. While the Senate may not initiate legislation, it may veto any involving government expenditure or the rights of feudal rulers. During its first year of existence it will have an absolute power of veto;

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thereafter its veto can be overridden only by a majority comprising at least two-thirds of the lower house.²⁶ By August 1949 the Provisional Parliament (i.e., the original lower house) will be replaced by a new one whose elected members will have been chosen under a new electoral law which is expected to strengthen the representation in parliament of the feudal elements sufficiently to leave little likelihood of a Senate veto being overridden.

Under the new law elections are to be based on single-member electoral districts, with the lower house to consist of 63 elected members and 10 appointed by the president. Nationalist leaders with whom the writer talked were depressed more by the new election law than by any other feature of the draft constitution. They said that the establishment of single-member constituencies and the gerrymandering of these districts to coincide as nearly as possible with the areas ruled by different feudal leaders would allow the latter to control the elections to such an extent that they can surely increase their representation in the lower house to well over one-third. The nationalists' expectation of interference by the Dutch-controlled police, the impossibility of conducting normal political activities, and the general abridgment of civil liberties, combined with the fact that many of their ablest leaders were in jail and would almost certainly remain there until after the elections, had already dampened their hopes. But when to these handicaps was added the new election law, many of them were inclined to abandon hope altogether. For example, nationalists in Bali with whom the writer talked said that before the announcement of the new election law they had expected the whole island to constitute a single electoral district, with its eight representatives chosen by proportional representation. They believed that, under such conditions, despite all handicaps, they could have elected six of their candidates out of the total of eight; under the new law they would, they thought, be extremely lucky to elect three.

Quite clearly the new Dutch formula for containing nationalism in East Indonesia—a modern adaptation of the old formula of indirect rule—has had considerable success. Certainly the nationalist movement there is much more effectively controlled today than it was six months ago; and it is noteworthy that this increase in control has been won without any comparable increase in the application of physical force. While the Dutch are abdicating their legal sovereignty over the feudal rulers, they are retaining effective control over them through the latter's dependence on Dutch military and police support. But much more important is the fact that, in the process of transferring their legal rights over these rulers to the state of East Indonesia, the Dutch have been assisting the rulers into a position of political dominance which may very likely enable them to control the state that is their legal sovereign. The consequences may be far-reaching indeed.

Hitherto the intervention of the Dutch army and the Dutch-controlled police in the political affairs of East Indonesia and their abridgment of civil

liberties within the state have been strongly opposed by a majority of members of the government. After the installation of the Senate and the new lower house, however, such actions may well be unobtrusively solicited by the group in authority. The Dutch should then be able to act with more grace than formerly in the role of protector of "reasonable" nationalism against the "extremist", "communist-tinged" nationalism which they ascribe to those Indonesians who look to the Republic for leadership. Moreover, since the dominant groups in the government of East Indonesia will have to depend on Dutch assistance for maintenance of their position, the Netherlands should be able not only to expect that its economic stake in the area will be protected but also to count, as it has not always been able to do in the past, on the backing of East Indonesia in the projected United States of Indonesia.

The success of postwar Dutch attempts at indirect rule has not been confined to East Indonesia. Relying more on political force and less on skilful manipulation, the Dutch have applied the basic features of their East Indonesian formula elsewhere in the Federal areas: they have maneuvered into positions of political ascendancy elements whose position depends upon Dutch authority, and have suppressed those who offer opposition to the new order. In general, they have been highly successful, and particularly in the smaller Federal units where force can be applied most effectively. Except in the state of Pasundan (West Java), whose government has been more strongly pro-Republican than that of any other Federal area, Dutch-supported groups have steadily consolidated their authority. A few doubtful areas remain (e.g., East Borneo and Bangka), but in most Federal areas the elements now in the saddle can be relied upon by the Dutch, with whose destiny in Indonesia they have linked themselves.

It is quite possible, therefore, that the projected transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch Crown to a United States of Indonesia, though manifesting seemingly great changes in the legal sphere, will entail no radical departure from the existing pattern of basic power relationships within Indonesia. Transfer to the government of the United States of Indonesia of the important functions now reserved to the Netherlands Indies government may, in reality, mean little more than has the assignment to the government of East Indonesia of the powers held by the Dutch Crown over the feudal rulers. For it is by no means unlikely that, just as a group dependent upon the Dutch for authority is now emerging as the politically dominant element in East Indonesia, so this group, in conjunction with Dutch-supported leaders in other areas, may become the politically dominant force within the Provisional Government of the United States of Indonesia. The fact that two-thirds of the representation in the Provisional Government is being reserved for the Federalists underlines this possibility. With the Provisional Government controlled by the Federalists, it may be assumed that the law which it draws up governing the election of members of the

Constituent Assembly of the United States of Indonesia will serve the interests of the Federalists and the Dutch, and that the Republicans will not elect the large majority of members which their popular support warrants. The Federal-controlled Constituent Assembly that will probably emerge is not likely to frame a constitution very different from that desired by the Netherlands.

Notes

- 1 The Bijeenkost voor Federaal Overlag (Federal Consultative Assembly), which, at the time of the writer's departure from Indonesia in mid-May 1949, consisted of representatives from 14 Federal areas, each of which, regardless of the size of its population, had one vote. Thus, Billiton (population about 100,000) has the same representation as East Indonesia (population approximately 10,000,000).
- 2 The state of East Indonesia, established on December 24, 1946, includes Celebes, the Lesser Sundas (Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Sumba, Flores, West Timor, etc.) and the Moluccas—an area of approximately 135,000 square miles.
- 3 The writer visited the states of Pasundan, East Indonesia, East Java, Madura and South Sumatra, the special territory of Bangka, and the provisional Federal area of Middle Java in the first half of 1949. In East Java and Madura (visited in April) he found that no powers (but only certain administrative functions) had yet been delegated to the governments of these states. In Middle Java (also visited in April) no self-government whatever existed, and he was informed by both the Vice-Chairman and the Secretary of the Working Committee of the Provisional People's Council of Middle Java that the area had been designated a political unit only in order to assure its population separate representation in the Federal Consultative Assembly.
- 4 In November 1945 they addressed a petition to the United Nations, requesting that Celebes be considered an integral part of the Republic.
- 5 Resistance on Bali persisted until mid-1948.
- 6 Many thousands of Indonesians were killed in the pacification campaign. The Netherlands government appointed a commission to investigate charges of brutality on the part of the Dutch forces, but no report has been published.
- 7 In Java and Sumatra, by contrast, the Dutch have been unable to deal similarly with the nationalist movement. For example, only small portions of Pasundan and East Java are under effective Dutch control.
- 8 This information was supplied by leaders of rival political parties.
- 9 This was reported by leaders of three political parties, including Jan Mawekere, Chairman of the Singa Minahasa, the anti-Republican party for which the soldiers said they had voted. (Interview with Jan Mawekere, Tomohon, March 27, 1949.) The Singa Minahasa is composed largely of Minahasan ex-soldiers of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army and their families, who fear that under the Republic their pensions would cease. Leaders of several political parties in the Minahasa told the writer that the local Dutch military commander is the chief adviser to the Singa Minahasa.
- 10 Revenues derived from all export, import and corporation taxes are reserved for the Batavia government.
- 11 Ordonnantie houdende eene voorloopige staatkundige organisatie van den Staat Oost-Indonesië. Tekst van de Regeling tot Vorming van den Staat Oost-Indonesië. *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1946, No. 143.
- 12 Vaststelling van de "Zelfbestuursregelen, 1938". *Ibid.*, 1938, No. 529.

- 13 *Ibid.*, 1947, Nos. 62, 63, 86, 87, 129, 130, 131, 182, 185, 188, 190, 192, and 1948, No. 88.
- 14 These include power over the following subjects among others: foreign relations and anything having "a close connection" with foreign relations; defense, including the proclamation and regulation of states of war and siege; pardons and amnesties; the highest court; the police insofar as Federal interests are concerned; internal travel passes, immigration and emigration; regulations concerning nationality, citizenship and residence; banking and foreign-exchange regulation; foreign trade; import and export duties; monopolies; corporation and property taxes; "directives concerning information, radio broadcasting and supervision over the import and exhibition of films"; "social regulations of a general nature"; and trade, industry, agriculture, forestry, etc. insofar as they concern foreign countries or other areas of Indonesia. (Ph. 3, Art. 2, Ch. I, Regeling tot Vorming van den Staat Oost-Indonesië, *ibid.*, 1946, No. 143.) Later, when the Dutch have transferred sovereignty over Indonesia to a federal United States of Indonesia, these reserved powers will, according to present plans, automatically pass to the latter.
- 15 As of March 1949, the Minister of Finance was Dutch, the Minister of Economic Affairs was an Indies-born Chinese, and the Minister of Health was a Eurasian. Nine out of 11 secretaries-general of the government departments were Dutch.
- 16 One Dutch Resident was transferred elsewhere from East Indonesia at the insistence of the prime minister.
- 17 South Celebes, Minahasa, Sangihe and Talaud Islands, North Celebes, Middle Celebes, Bali, Lombok, Sumbawa, Flores, Sumba, Timur and Islands, South Moluccas and North Moluccas.
- 18 The limited experience of the writer lent substance to this assertion. For example, before a meeting of the District Council of Pangkadjene in southwest Celebes (established in May 1947) the writer was told by the local Assistant Resident that the latter would attend as a guest, not as a participant. In the event, however, the Assistant Resident dominated the meeting: he offered most of the proposals, and all of his proposals were adopted.
- In Bali, where the few remaining Dutch officials really do limit themselves to advisory functions, the Rajah Council has exhibited authoritarian tendencies. In the elections to the Bali People's Council most rajahs were able to secure the victory of their particular candidates. (Thus, more than half of the members of the People's Council are civil employees of the Bali government who must maintain good relations with the executive organ of that government, the Rajah Council, if they are to keep their jobs.) In two rajahdoms, however, a sizable number of pro-Republicans were elected to the People's Council, whereupon the Rajah Council annulled the results of the elections in these areas and ordered new ones held.
- 19 These "elected" members had been chosen by councils appointed by Dutch Residents.
- 20 *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1946, No. 144, lists the occupations of the members.
- 21 As of February 10, 1949. The president may appoint a total of 10 members. Of the first seven, four were civil servants (including a Eurasian), one was a Protestant pastor, one was Dutch, and one was Chinese.
- 22 The areas comprising the *daerhs* of Minahasa, Lombok and South Moluccas were formerly under direct Dutch rule and have no feudal rulers.
- 23 Although the Provisional Parliament has thus far been the constitution-making body, the constitution must be ratified also by the Senate and by the newly-elected lower house. Those sections of the constitution respecting the establishment of a

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Senate and the maintenance of the position of the feudal leaders were drafted provisionally at a joint conference of representatives of Parliament, the feudal leaders and the Dutch Crown at Malino in May 1948. Parliament was instructed to incorporate the decisions of the Malino Conference in the constitution. The character of the decisions arrived at in the conference indicate that the feudal rulers and the Dutch dominated the proceedings.

- 24 A Senate was foreshadowed in the proceedings of the Denpasar Conference in December 1946, but its exact powers were not fixed at that time. Ch. I, Art. 4, *Regeling tot Vorming van den Staat Oost-Indonesië, Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 1946, No. 143.
- 25 In the 10 *daerahs* having Rajah Councils, these bodies choose the senators.
- 26 Information provided by Anak Agung Gde Agung, Prime Minister of East Indonesia, Macassar, March 22, 1949.

According to nationalist leaders, the first-year veto provision was inspired by fear on the part of Dutch and feudal elements that, with its present composition, the lower house might be able to muster the two-thirds majority necessary to override the Senate's veto.

INDONESIA

H. J. van Mook

Source: *International Affairs* 25 (1949): 274-85.

The Dutch in the last three years of the history of Indonesia have frequently been presented as the villain of the play, and I find myself more or less on the defensive when I discuss the subject. Much of the adverse criticism has not always been impartial, and facts have often been garbled and obscured by inaccurate comparisons. On the Dutch side we have made many mistakes; I will not go into the question which of them were made by the politicians at home and which by the people in the field. We very often acted with a deplorable lack of artistry. I do not think, however, that we deserve the role of the colonial aggressor in which we have sometimes been cast at Lake Success. On the contrary, I would rather maintain the opinion that fundamentally the Dutch policy has been justified and will be justified by events.

Some features of the Indonesian problem should be recalled. Notwithstanding all the troubles we have had, all the obstacles we had to overcome, and all the mistakes we have made, I do not think that the civilian casualties in Indonesia amounted to more than one-tenth of the civilian casualties in Kashmir; and I know that the military casualties in Indonesia were under ten per cent of the military casualties in Indo-China, with comparable military forces.

People say, 'Why don't you solve the problem in Indonesia as we solved it in India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Burma, and as the Americans have solved it in the Philippines?' When power was transferred in India, however, India had a legitimate government and an administration which was in running order; it had no problems of revolution to solve before a transfer of authority could be made. In Burma there was a quite substantial British Indian army which had driven back the Japanese and, even there, the British began where they had left off before the Japanese occupation, and then transferred authority in what I might call a regular way. The situation was similar in the Philippines. I do not wish to discuss the consequences of that hurried transfer of

authority—the events of the present time in Burma and in the Philippines; I want to stress that before this transfer of authority, this declaration of independence, took place in Burma or the Philippines, those countries were re-established under a regular, complete, and functioning administration. Things were different in Indonesia.

Very serious problems which apply to many countries in South East Asia, though not to India or Pakistan, were the legacies of Japanese occupation. At a very early date, the Japanese started to eliminate the best civil servants, not only the Dutch officials in Indonesia or the American officials in the Philippines but also the more stable and dependable elements among the Filipinos, Burmese, or Indonesians. Again they took boys of between thirteen, fourteen, and eighteen years of age from their homes, and trained them according to the Japanese military code, as police, as spies, in due course as a kind of auxiliary army; they debauched this youth to such an extent that all the countries in South Eastern Asia are still wrestling with the after-effects.

At the time of the Japanese surrender Indonesia, except for a few places in New Guinea and nearby islands, was still completely occupied by the Japanese. On the day of the surrender the Allied command in the greater part of Indonesia was transferred to Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. South East Asia Command, which up to that moment only included Sumatra, was not prepared to assume this vast addition of responsibility at once, and as a consequence the surrender of the Japanese in Indonesia was not given effect until six weeks after the day Japan gave in. In those six weeks and in the following two or three months a large number of arms—estimated between fifty and a hundred thousand rifles, thousands of machine guns, thousands of tons of explosives and bombs—were either deliberately handed over by the Japanese to Japanese-trained Indonesians, or left behind in dumps when the Japanese soldiers retired to mountain resorts in order to await their victors in comfort, or, to a small but still appreciable extent, taken from them by Indonesians in revolt against Japanese tyranny. The same thing happened in other countries, e.g., in some parts of the Philippines, in Burma, in Indo-China, and elsewhere, but I do not think that it happened anywhere on such a vast scale as in Java, where the Allies failed to get much more than some twenty per cent of the Japanese armaments under control. It happened on a somewhat reduced but still considerable scale in Sumatra, and much less in the other islands. The result was that thousands of people—the majority young, barely responsible, some very idealistic, very nationalistic, some wanting to become professional soldiers living by their rifles, some being just professional dacoits—obtained modern guns and armaments, without constituting a disciplined, or at least a coherent army of Indonesia. A list of the groupings of the several armed forces in Java and Sumatra at one time showed, without being exhaustive, organizations under sixteen headings, not counting the local bosses, the local bodyguards, or the local groups of gangsters around political or criminal figures.

The problem of restoring these people to the community, of restricting the bearing of arms to the army and the police, has been one of the biggest obstacles to the solution of the political conflicts in Indonesia. Although I and several of my collaborators and the Dutch Government at home were conscious of the need to organize independence for Indonesia, we also knew that, whatever solution was found, the organized and unorganized gangsterism resulting from the transfer of armaments had first to be eliminated, since no authority could prevail in Indonesia as long as this situation continued.

Another fact which differentiates the Indonesian problem from the problems in Indo-China, in Burma, in the Philippines, and elsewhere, is that the Dutch have been in Indonesia for some three centuries. At an early stage Dutchmen settled there and founded families, generally of mixed descent; in later years pure Dutch families also made their homes in Indonesia. They returned on occasion to Holland to visit their families, but a growing number of Dutchmen remained in Indonesia permanently. In our legal system and in our social consciousness we make no distinction between Eurasians and pure Dutch, so that the number of people in Indonesia whom we call Dutchmen and who act there in different capacities, governmental or private, is much greater than the same type of, let us say, foreigner in India, Indo-China, or in the Philippines. The Dutch, including the Eurasians, who constitute about two-thirds of the total, are much more integrated into Indonesian communal life than, so far as I know, is the case in any of the surrounding countries. The relationship between Indonesians and Dutch is therefore different, because for so many people, who are legally Dutch, the home country is Indonesia and not Holland, or Indonesia in the first place and Holland in the second. This explains why, notwithstanding the present rather grim conflict, the personal relationship between Dutch, Eurasian, and Indonesian individuals remains much more intimate than would be found outside Indonesia. I will give one instance. At a time when I was head of the Department of Economic Affairs there were eight departments; two of the departmental heads were born in Holland, one was a Hollander of Dutch descent born in Indonesia (myself), four were of mixed descent, and one was an Indonesian; in the Council of Indonesia, which was the highest advisory body under the Governor-General, one member was from Holland, one was a Hollander from Indonesia, one was a Eurasian, and two were Indonesians. This mixture of people was quite different from what would be found say in Indo-China, or in Ceylon, or India.

The Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed on 17 August 1945. The proclamation was prepared by a combination of the general nationalist movement which worked partly underground during the Japanese occupation, and the Japanese-inspired group, to whom some authority had been transferred by the Japanese between the middle of the year and the date of surrender. The Republic, as an idea, spread like wildfire, but as an administration it had

only a very limited authority. It possessed hardly any organization, hardly any efficient services, and it held together only as an opposition to the return of colonialism, which was feared by many Indonesians but which was not the intention of the Dutch Government. As a working government, however, it lacked almost every really sound foundation.

The first Republican Government contained a number of shady individuals and 'collaborators', who were later thrown out by Shahrir when he became Prime Minister. We attempted to negotiate an agreement with this second Republican Government. One of the difficulties we were up against almost at once was that, in recognizing a Republican Government as a semi-legal authority, both the British occupying forces, and later on the world at large, went, in my view, much too fast. It was understandable that the British Allied Forces did not want to get involved in a local political conflict, that the United Kingdom, having so many troubles of her own and carrying so much responsibility in connexion with the post-war situation in Asia, did not want in addition to play an active role in the situation in Indonesia. On the other hand, recognition of the Republic almost immediately after its proclamation gave the impression that the ultimate authority in Indonesia after the withdrawal of Allied troops would be open to doubt. Holland had only been liberated for a few months when Japan surrendered; conditions were not easy, and it took time, more time than we would have liked to take over the task of the Allied forces.

Looking back, we are extremely grateful for what the British did; they indeed saved thousands of lives that would otherwise have been endangered. We now understand better than we did at the time how difficult was the position from Egypt to Indo-China, from India to Indonesia, and how the Allied situation at the end of the war with Japan involved Britain in almost all the trouble spots of the world, whereas the United States had only to take care of Japan itself, which was a model of surrender, and of the Philippines, which were of little concern.

Another difficulty lay in the fact that both countries had been shut off from the world—Holland for some five years and Indonesia for some three and a half years. They both lacked contact with world developments and had to seek their new status and to understand their new relationship without the experience of those who had been outside the occupied areas during the war. Germany and Japan had respectively ruled the countries with a very hard hand, had prevented internal political development, discussion, and contacts, and, in Indonesia, all the Dutch people, including the majority of the Eurasians, had been segregated from the rest of the community; neither country had a clear idea of the world into which it was liberated. It took time in Holland to allow a non-colonial policy to penetrate. Elections had to be held in Holland and a government formed with a constitutional parliamentary majority: the first election in Holland did not take place until the middle of May 1946.

In Indonesia, Japanese propaganda had been so anti-Western, the segregation of the Dutch in internment camps had been so complete, that it took time before a new intimate and fruitful contact could be made between the Dutch and the Indonesians. Although I still deplore that the first draft agreement, made at the time when Sir Archibald Clark Kerr acted as Chairman and middleman between the Dutch and the Indonesians, was not wholly accepted in Holland, and was then rejected by the more extreme section of the Republican Government; although it is a pity that the next agreement, which was initialed at the end of 1946, did not bear the fruit we expected of it, I think we gradually came together more and more closely, and we formulated a policy which could lead to the establishment of an independent nation in Indonesia and at the same time maintain Dutch assistance and mutual co-operation between the two countries.

By the middle of 1947, however, it was no longer possible to expect an agreement as such to be the foundation of a new departure in policy. The Republic had achieved a certain international status, it had been recognized by certain Middle Eastern States, and had developed more and more in a direction of a quasi-independent entity. At the same time, however, it became increasingly disorganized internally; party leaders fought with party leaders; governments were overthrown and replaced by others; armed groups acted on their own in local conflicts; certain parts of the Republic never even had any real contact with the centre—they just drifted along in their own way. Vast smuggling was organized, mainly from Singapore, which somebody has called the biggest smuggling centre in the world, and that also gave rise to rapidly spreading corruption. Not only native products were sold to the other side, but also stocks, tools, and machinery from the estates, the property of people who were not Republican and not Indonesians. In return, there was a growing importation of arms, probably less from Singapore than from Manila where the United States Government had turned over a lot of surplus armament to the Philippine Government of which an appreciable quantity came into the hands of local merchants, who, of course, wanted to sell again. The whole situation deteriorated to such an extent that the Dutch Government was obliged to decide that no progress could be made before law and order were restored sufficiently to make intercourse between the different parts of Indonesia possible, and to guarantee the safety of people of different political opinions.

The police action then undertaken was stopped by the Resolution of the Security Council of the United Nations. I myself think that that was a calamity. A number of Republicans (and I know this because they told me so afterwards and even at the time) expected that, without attempting to destroy the idea of the Republic, we would at least restore law and order in the whole country and make an end to the irresponsible action of armed people. They expected that this police action would have a final character, and that afterwards we would say, 'Now let us sit down together and build this Indonesian

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State'. We were stopped half-way. In this situation the more extreme leaders secured a heavier grip on the people, because they could represent the stoppage of the police action as a victory for themselves. Further, they had the extra 'kudos' of being recognized by the United Nations, as, I will not say an independent State, but at least as a State with a representative at Lake Success.

The next year and a half, from the point of view of reaching a solution of the problem, were practically sterile. We secured an agreement in January 1948, but the agreement again was not fulfilled. We agreed on certain economic rules and regulations; the agreement was not executed. It was very difficult to get into the country, and hardly possible to travel around. The armed groups maintained their hold, and the Republican Government, changing every few months, never achieved real authority over the whole of its territory. The only consequence, which was inevitable to my mind, was that police action had to be resumed, too late to be as effective as it would have been earlier.

Indonesia is a rich country, with about seventy million people, but small in comparison with countries like India or China. It is one of seven countries lying in South East Asia which have much in common: Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Indo-China, the Philippines, Malaya, and Indonesia. They are all countries with a long coast-line, inhabited by people who in the old days travelled and traded and will travel and trade again. They have been deeply influenced by the West. These seven countries, with a hundred and fifty million people, have developed a producing machinery which, before the war, exported twice as much as China and India, with nearly nine hundred million inhabitants. They lie athwart important trade routes; they are strategically important. Although comparatively small, comparatively weakly organized, not much accustomed yet to their new nationhood, they have an adaptability which may enable them to improve their status as independent nations.

In order to achieve that, however, these countries will need the assistance of the West. I think that co-operation is absolutely necessary if they are not to deteriorate, to fall apart, to become riddled with internal strife, internal political and tribal wars; to lose all the prosperity created by the past development of these countries.

If the Indonesians can feel certain that the Dutch Government will not revert to any form of colonialism, and that we seriously wish to establish an Indonesian nation which can hold its own in a dangerous part of the world, I do not think that they will reject close co-operation with the West, close co-operation with the country to which they have been accustomed for so many years.

This is not wishful thinking, because after the first police action a great part of the country was more or less under our control, and within a period of about a year it recovered to a marvellous extent. It is hardly known that this part of Indonesia outside the Republic, outside the reduced Republic of

August 1947 to December 1948, had achieved a positive trade-balance, which is rather exceptional in the world of today. It had started producing again, it had started building houses. It had restored the education and health services, not to their pre-war position but to a very gratifying extent. Moreover, in this part of Indonesia, local government, the government of the people in the several ethnological parts of the country, had reached a stage where we could begin to lay the foundations of the United States of Indonesia. It has often been said that the State of East Indonesia and similar formations in Borneo, Sumatra, East Java, West Java, and Madura, were all puppet governments. It is curious to notice, however, that these people were consistently threatened by Republican propaganda, intimidation and terrorism (and this is not just words: hundreds of people were murdered and kidnapped because they co-operated with us and because they wanted a State government of their own within the framework of a United States of Indonesia), and yet these States came into being, and as they developed the business of Government they improved their personnel and they became more stable every month. I think that along those same lines the republican part of Indonesia will gradually begin to co-operate and that the whole of Indonesia can be organized as a Federal State with our help, with the help of the West; as a nation which really can be, according to Asiatic standards, prosperous, and strong enough to withstand the dangers which surround it.

The hundreds of millions of neighbouring Chinese and Indians are in a way an oppressive idea for the people in these small South East Asiatic countries. I am not saying that India or China want to occupy or subject these countries, but everyone who lives there knows that a vast number of energetic people live in the overcrowded countries to the north of them. Emigration on a large scale from China would simply swamp the country, as it has already half-swamped Malaya. Without feeling any animosity towards India and China, these people want to live their own lives, to maintain their own community; they want to be on a friendly but not on a dependent basis with these vast countries. They have great mutual interests. China and India can provide tremendously important markets for these producing countries in the future. In return, these countries can offer large markets for the industries of India and China. But free and friendly relations can only be made certain and enduring when these small new nations are well organized and governed.

In addition, there is the threat of totalitarian Communism, which would not be very dangerous for a country like Indonesia, consisting of small farmers, Moslems, and Christians, if the country is not reduced to chaos, if the prosperity of the pre-war years can be restored, and if people can feel safe within their own country. But as long as terrorism prevails, as long as economic development stagnates, as long as famine, which has not been known in Indonesia since 1849, recurs and threatens the thickly populated parts of the country, Communism has a good feeding ground. Behind the Communist movements in Indonesia, as elsewhere, there is certainly a distant directing

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control which watches and waits for the opportunity to spread its ideology and to force its totalitarian system upon the people. Without the active and co-ordinated assistance of the West these countries would, I think, very easily succumb to Communist infiltration; with co-ordinated assistance, however, a basis may very well be created in this part of Asia for a really democratic community. They may not be democratic in the sense in which we are democratic, but, if they can lean against strong democratic countries, they can certainly be non-totalitarian.

I find that for many people it is still difficult to envisage a relationship in which we, shall I say, 'interfere' in the affairs of these Asiatic countries by giving them assistance and by having agreements, contracts, and understandings with them, without raising fears that we are drifting back to colonialism. We have so often in the past said that we stood for self-government, that we were trying to establish self-government, and we have so often failed to do precisely what we have said. We have so often postponed the moment on which we were to transfer authority that many of us cannot quite shed our colonial attitude when we think of actively assisting these countries to be independent nations. At the same time we do not want to leave them in the lurch; we want to give them help and to remain in close contact with them. I do not think that such fears and inhibitions should hinder our action. If the Western countries which are mainly interested—the United Kingdom, the United States, France, the Netherlands, and others—could come together and could arrive at a clear understanding of what is needed to keep that part of the world as prosperous as it was in the past and to give it a chance of developing as the strongest and best-integrated part of Asia, then we could achieve a new relationship in which nationalism gets free and fair play, and yet co-operation between the East and the West is maintained.

Summary of discussion

MR H. E. B. CATLEY asked for information on an economic blockade exercised by the Dutch against Sumatra and Java.

DR VAN MOOK explained that the Dutch had not objected to trade as such, but only to a trade in machinery and goods which were not the property of the Republic or the Republicans, and to the counter-trade in arms. The Dutch had proposed to the Republic that there should be regular channels for their traffic; that in certain ports there should be control of outgoing cargoes and also of incoming cargoes so far as arms were concerned. The Republic had refused that proposal. After that the Dutch had instigated control one-sidedly, and had searched ships for loot and arms. If there were no loot or arms on board, the ships had been allowed to leave. If there were, the contraband was taken off and the other cargo was allowed to go through; so that there was no real blockade.

On the other hand, even the Malayan statistics had shown that, for every hundred million dollars' worth of goods that had left the Republican territories for Singapore, the Republicans had received in return only between twenty and forty million dollars, so that the trade itself, apart from being partly illegal, had been very bad business for Indonesia as a whole. In cases where there were difficulties, special regulations had been made for relief ships carrying food or textiles to go through to the Republican territories. In June 1948 a complete system of trade had been worked out between the Republican Minister concerned and the Dutch; it had been agreed to by the technical people on both sides, and was then rejected by the Republic because the agreement did not recognize its complete international independence.

MR A. J. DEVA said he wondered whether the lecturer realized what bitterness and hatred had been created in the minds of Asian people, certainly of India and Pakistan, against the so-called Dutch 'police action'. This attitude of Asia may or may not be justified, but it was an alarming fact. He asked whether Dr van Mook could explain the position of the various political parties in Holland and the non-political organizations in relation to the latest 'police action' in Indonesia.

DR VAN MOOK replied that so far as he knew the political parties in Holland, with the exception of the Communists, had all agreed that police action was necessary. It was very difficult to discuss the question with those who were not familiar with the facts; even the Republic itself would have had to carry out a police action if it had possessed sufficient force and authority to do so. MR DEVA interjected that it certainly would not have done so against its own accredited leaders, and against the Republican movement itself, as was being done now. DR VAN MOOK agreed, but said that it would have done so against many of the followers of its leaders. In fact, it had done so time and again, but it had never succeeded in establishing one firm authority within the country.

MR M. ZVEGINTZOV said that taking a world view, South East Asia was the only area apart from the Western hemisphere which had a potential, and in fact actual, as Dr van Mook had pointed out, export surplus of those raw materials of which the world was in acute shortage. He wondered whether some co-ordination of the economic development of that area by all the main countries concerned could not have been worked out, if it had been started over a year ago; in other words he referred to the practical implementation of Mr Bevin's remarks some two years ago about the pooling of overseas resources by the European and British Commonwealth countries.

DR VAN MOOK said that he would attack the problem from a different angle. He would not be primarily interested in the maintenance of South East Asia as a provider of raw materials and goods to the world, but he would be primarily interested in the fact that the productive machinery in Indonesia was essential to the independence and the prosperity of the country itself. They could only be based on the fact that Indonesia and the other

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countries in South East Asia are big producers of essential goods, rice, tea, rubber, tin, oil, and so on. The problem had to be attacked firstly by the countries themselves, which should be made to see the value of their productive capacity for their own survival, and if they could count on the organized and combined assistance of the Western people who were friendly to their nationalist feelings and familiar with their countries, then surely they would get something done and prosper. It was a lamentable thought that certain countries might not reach a stage where such recovery would be possible for a very long time.

MRS L. V. HART asked Dr van Mook why the Dutch Government had been so bad at making propaganda in its own cause. Having seen Indonesia before the war, she felt that publicity could have been given to information showing the excellent record Holland had as a colonial Power. Indonesia was probably the best example that could be cited of any colonial country, including the Philippines, yet that was never mentioned.

DR VAN MOOK said this was a question that had very often been put, and if he had had to answer it two or three years ago, he would have answered, 'Well, we are backward in publicity matters, we do not know much about it, and we have a lot to learn.' He was now in doubt whether it really was a matter of spreading information even though the Dutch suffered from the big handicap that their language was not very well known. There was indeed a lot of reading matter in Dutch on the subject of Indonesia which nobody could read except people in Indonesia and in Holland. All official documents were written in Dutch; statistics, descriptions, and reports were published in great numbers but they were hardly ever read outside the country, and they could not very well be translated because that would involve a tremendous mass of work, which would moreover be looked upon with a very doubtful eye as government propaganda.

MR NEVILL BARBOUR asked about the standard of living in Java and Sumatra, and also the social conditions; how did education compare with other neighbouring Asiatic countries; what were the relations between rich and poor; how far was the feeling of public spirit developed in the richer classes; how did it compare with other countries of comparable conditions?

DR VAN MOOK answering, thought that Indonesia, in comparison with most other Asiatic countries, had less very rich and much less very poor people. He had never witnessed in Indonesia what he had seen of poverty in other Asiatic regions. There were no big landholders; there were well-to-do people, but there were no abjectly poor people who lived on the very margin of existence, as could be seen from the amount of textiles that were imported every year, which came to something between ten and twelve yards per person; from the standard of living with regard to food which was quite good; and from the absence of serious epidemics like cholera which had not occurred since 1910, or smallpox, which was stamped out at the beginning of the century. The schooling was not as extensive as it was in certain parts of

Asia, for example in the Philippines, but the quality of the education, university and secondary, was quite high since it was on the standard of university teaching in Holland, and students could change from one university to the other without difficulty, and could do their examinations in either. Dr van Mook heard from several Japanese prisoners of war, that, for instance, the Indonesian physicians compared very favourably with the Japanese doctors who came with their armies to Indonesia. In regard to social welfare, there were quite a number of regulations, but the main fact concerning these regulations was that they were really and fully applied.

The Netherlands Indies had had a credit standing at 3½ per cent before the war, and Dr van Mook did not think that their statistics had ever been questioned in international agreements and organizations; he was of the opinion that the country was as free from graft as could possibly be expected in that part of the world.

MR H. WILSON HARRIS thought it was a little hard to reproach the Dutch Government for having failed in propaganda regarding Indonesia because, from some little experience of the matter, he could not conceive what propaganda they could make successfully at that moment. After all, to be successful, propaganda meant getting something into the minds of the public in another country, and how was the Dutch Government to get anything into the minds of the people of Great Britain? He knew of only two ways: through the radio and through the pages of the British newspapers; and official statements from foreign governments, he regretted to say, were not very highly valued in British newspapers. By far the best statement he had seen of the Dutch case was contained in a speech by Lord Milverton in the House of Lords, but even that got very little space in the British Press, owing, of course, to pressure of space. Siding as he did with the Dutch in the matter of Indonesia he would be wholly glad to see them making successful propaganda, but realized the difficulty of doing it efficiently.

He asked if the speaker could say if a shadow Republican government was still functioning; what extent of territory it professed to control; whether the recent police action was held to be reasonably successful; how far was guerilla warfare still going on; and, perhaps more important, what was hoped of the forthcoming conference at the Hague where all parties in Indonesia were to be represented; whether that meant that Dr Sukarno would be free to attend that conference if he wished to, and did Dr van Mook hope that a real forward step would be taken there? What was the effect of the U.N. Conciliation Commission in Indonesia?

DR VAN MOOK answering, said he had become a spectator himself since November 1948 and it was rather difficult to prophesy when you were so far away from the scene of action. He understood that it was intended that everybody who wished to attend the conference at the Hague should go there; so he would suppose that Engineer Sukarno would be free to go there if he were appointed as a representative of his group. He did not know

whether this conference would be rapidly successful; things like that generally needed some time, and he had been struck by the short notice at which the conference had been convened, but it was possible that there had been preliminary talks.

As far as the police action was concerned, Dr van Mook thought that as political reconstruction got under way the disturbances would disappear. This had happened in West Java; there was considerable terrorist activity after the Japanese left in August 1945, which had gradually diminished, and which had only reappeared when the political conflict was intensified and tempers had risen.

He did not feel that the United Nations Commission had been one of the outstanding successes of Lake Success. There was a vast difference between the work of Lord Inverchapel and Lord Killlearn on the one hand, and the work of the Committee of Good Offices on the other.

LORD WAVELL said that as he had been in Java for about six weeks during the war and had seen something of the island and of the Dutch, he thought perhaps he should give his impression of Dutch colonization in Java and Sumatra.

From what he had seen of it during the short time he was there, he had had a most favourable impression. Having come from India, he naturally compared it with conditions in India, and he was very much struck with the appearance of the people. They were much better clothed, much better fed and housed; their villages were very clean and tidy and much better built than in India, and the whole country had given him a feeling of much greater prosperity. The relations between the Dutch and the people seemed to have been very good, so far as he could judge; and he had had several talks with the Governor about it, trying to find out about conditions on the island. There was no colour bar, as Dr van Mook had said. He felt that the Dutch had solved their problems in Java better in a great many ways than we had in India, and so he had been rather surprised that this situation had arisen when the Dutch came back, although it was possible, with Dr van Mook's explanations, to see how it arose.

LORD WAVELL explained that the primary difficulty after the war was that British troops had had to take over at very short notice, and that that was not until a good many precious weeks had elapsed after the Japanese surrender. At the time when Britain was getting a lot of unpopularity over what we had had to do in Java, a very distinguished American had said to him, 'Well, you let us off the hook properly over that. If we had had to go in, if you had not taken it over, we should have had to do exactly the same as you did.'

He pointed out that the whole problem was one of law and order. He did not see how you could possibly carry on fruitful political negotiations on a complicated problem like that in Java until you could negotiate with people who could carry out what they promised, and who had actual visible control, which he did not think was the case at present. Therefore, it seemed to him

that the Dutch were entirely right in thinking that the first problem was to try to restore law and order in that island. Lord Wavell added that as a military man, he could hardly think of any more unpleasant place in which to have to restore law and order than Java, except possibly Malaya.

He concluded by paying a tribute to Dr van Mook, whom he had seen at the time when things were going badly, when the Japanese were overrunning the whole of Indonesia and were obviously likely to take Java. Dr van Mook's stout heart and common sense had aroused the greatest admiration, and indeed all the Dutch in the island had acted well.

LORD HAILEY, the Chairman, thanked Dr van Mook for his lecture, which had to his mind one very special quality—tolerance. He valued that the more because there were many people in England who had had an uneasy feeling about the position into which circumstances had led us when the Japanese were leaving Indonesia. He had found that many of his Dutch friends had strong feelings on the subject, and there was therefore all the more reason to appreciate the attitude which Dr van Mook had taken in his address.

On the question of propaganda by the Dutch public, he thought it was true to say that, in the writings which were available on the subject of Indonesia by English authors, there was nothing except expression of the highest appreciation of what the Dutch had done as a colonizing Power in Indonesia. Up to recent years at all events there had been everywhere in Great Britain the fullest recognition of the benefits that Dutch rule had conferred on Java, and he doubted if more propaganda was needed or would do any good. The criticisms recently heard applied to the action taken by the Dutch in regard to the settlement of the troubles in Indonesia. He pointed out that the troubles were with the one central Republic, for there were many other component units in Indonesia with whom those troubles had not arisen.

LORD HAILEY supposed that everybody in the world suffered from that curious new disease of ideology, and his own particular ideology had always led him to agree with the attitude taken by the Dutch, namely, that order should be restored before negotiations could be made with any chance of success. His own experiences had led him to believe that, though it was our duty to support the gospel of liberal institutions everywhere in the world, yet when a status of political freedom or independence was about to be introduced, it ought to be done on terms that would avoid the danger of chaos, anarchy, and bloodshed. He thought that had been in the minds of the Dutch Government, and he only wished that the British had been more careful on that point elsewhere in their own territories.

INDONESIA AND THE PROBLEM OF SOUTH EAST ASIA

H. J. van Mook

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The Indonesian problem is one out of many that were thrown up by the earthquakes and the eruptions of World War II. Like many others, it fell among a world of nations disorganized and disunited, and therefore unprepared to cope with it along the lines of an agreed and well-tested policy of peace and reconstruction. Its solution was and is primarily the concern of the Netherlands and Indonesia themselves. Unfortunately, both countries, at the end of the war, were weakened and shaken by years of enemy occupation. And as none of the Big Five carried any direct responsibility in this matter, it came to be treated internationally as a problem open to all for debate and interference. So it was exposed to the dislocations that accompanied the winding up of the war and to the growing-pains of the United Nations. But now, at last, the problem seems to have reached a stage where a better understanding of its essentials becomes possible. Agreement on the spot need no longer be retarded by conflicting views and interests among the democratic nations.

It belongs to a group of similar problems in South East Asia concerning dependent or semi-dependent areas in transition to nationhood. As a category they have obtained thus far very little special attention and study from the leading victors and the United Nations. They hardly figured in the fateful conferences before and just after the end of the war. If any concerted policy towards them was tentatively outlined at Yalta, Potsdam, London and elsewhere, it did not get beyond the stage of generalities. Even the Politburo seems really to have tackled these problems only something like a year ago. Ever since the final partition of "backward" peoples on this globe among the late imperialist Powers, any collective interest in Asia by those Powers gravitated to Japan, China and the oil-producing deserts of the Middle East. Peaceful and orderly South East Asia could be left to the care of the

individual western nations concerned, it was thought, and even after the end of the Japanese occupation disclosed the ruinous effects of Japanese co-prosperity, it seems to have been expected of those same nations that each would clear the wreckage within its own sphere of influence.

At first glance there seemed to be sufficient reasons for this attitude. The plight of Europe, the military occupation of the enemy countries, the organization of the United Nations, and the preparation of the peace treaties constituted such a tremendous burden of issues to be solved that it would appear foolish to add to them unnecessarily. The free world had carried on without South East Asia ever since the Japanese invasion; the rehabilitation of the area, though important, was not one of the most pressing needs. Presently the widening rift between the Soviet bloc and the western Powers threatened humanity with a new and possibly final catastrophe and absorbed the anxious attention of the west. And, apart from all this, practically every nation had to face internal difficulties of the most serious order as a result of the spiritual and economic ravages of the war.

So the lesson provided by Japan—that South East Asia survives or perishes as a whole—went unnoticed for the time being. And yet no problem in this region can be properly understood unless it is seen in relationship to the problems of all the tropical islands and peninsulas in the area. In this article I can indicate only briefly a few of the reasons why South East Asia can and must be considered as a whole if we wish to determine its significance and shape our policies wisely.

II

If we look at the map we observe a belt of comparatively small countries—small according to Asiatic standards—stretching around the southeastern corner of that vast continent. They are Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Indo-China, Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines. They have much in common, although there are great differences in geography and population. They are seagirt and easily accessible; they lie athwart one of the greatest and most ancient trade routes; they possess important natural resources. Their inhabitants, however diverse in racial origin, are generally peaceful, adaptable and tolerant. Their civilization has its roots in a long and adventurous history and was fundamentally influenced by China, India and the Arab world long before regular contact with the west was established.

The broken nature of the country kept political organizations limited in size and power, and intensified the popular character of their governmental institutions, even where native princes and rajahs seemed to wield absolute power. They remained outside the vast Asiatic empires of China, Japan, the Moguls, and the successors of Mohammed. Almost every world religion acquired adherents in these countries, but religious strife seems to be alien to the inclinations of the people. They are able and inventive farmers, sailors



and fishermen, easily contented by the continuous yield of a bountiful soil and sea and climate, but as yet with a limited talent for trade and industry.

These lands have been more intensely influenced by the west than any other part of Asia. Ever since Sequeira entered the Straits of Malacca, and Magellan reached the Philippines, in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the fertility of these countries continued to attract the merchant adventurers of many European nations. Colonial empires were founded, and although they sometimes changed hands as a result of distant wars, they welded together extensive territories and developed a modern machinery for government, production and trade, thereby laying the foundations for the new Asiatic states that are now coming into existence. Their nationalism is of recent growth, conditioned by colonial boundaries and modern, democratic education; it superseded the reactionary resistance of the ancient feudal clans by a progressive struggle for nationhood of the younger intelligentsia.

Western influence has made these countries the most prosperous and the best organized of Asia. It has deeply affected their civilization, their internal structure, and, above all, their economy. They produce goods of great value for the world market, both in the west and in Asia. With not many more than 150,000,000 inhabitants, they exported, before the war, nearly twice as much as India and China together, with a population of nearly 900,000,000. When deprived of the rice of Burma, Siam and Indo-China untold numbers in Asia

go hungry; without the rubber and tin of Malaya and Indonesia vast American and European industries suffer; without the vegetable fats from Indonesia and the Philippines and the tea from Indonesia and Ceylon the rations of Europe and England remain insufficient. And apart from those critical goods and other valuable products like sugar, tea, tobacco, pepper, cinchona, teak, hemp, sisal and kapok these countries can, if taken together, provide the oil, coal, iron, nickel, bauxite, timber and fibers necessary for their own industrial development.

It is easy to understand why Japan considered the conquest of these countries the essential condition for her fantastic ambitions towards world power. And if Japanese aggression proved anything, it proved that without a sound and efficient organization of their new national governments, these potentially rich and alluring domains will not be able to defend themselves against future conquerors, whether they try to subject them by force of arms or by political and economic infiltration and enslavement.

The dangers of the situation today are obvious. The newly-constituted national governments in South East Asia, or those to-be-constituted, must inevitably lack experience, a deficiency that will not be made good by enthusiasm alone. It would be hard enough for them merely to carry on the work done by the colonial administrations, which preceded them; but they will have to act under much graver handicaps than inexperience. Their barely acquired authority will need confirmation. With the exception of Ceylon they are faced by the most baffling internal disorders, caused by the Japanese occupation and rendered much more violent by an indiscriminate dispersion of arms. And if they cannot put an end to lawlessness and restore some measure of order and prosperity, their disintegrating economy will offer a standing invitation to those sinister forces that spread the seed of totalitarian Communism wherever the soil is torn up by corruption and discontent.

It is practically unthinkable that present conditions will allow them enough time to overcome the troubles of these formative years without outside assistance; long before they could hope to emerge from the trough of poverty, dissension and bankruptcy, stronger Powers would have intervened and subjected them to a new and worse domination. So the democratic nations of the west are confronted, on the one hand, with the necessity of national liberty for these countries, and, on the other, with the responsibility of offering organized aid and advice for the restoration of law and order, for economic rehabilitation, and for defense against any form of aggression.

In 1945 the democratic world was not nearly ready for such a rôle. It did not know how to combine responsibility for the internal stability of the former colonial areas with the recognition of their right to self-determination and independence. The years of imperialism, during which the fulfilment of nationalist aspirations was constantly deferred on the ground of immaturity, had left the west with a bad conscience. The western nations hesitated to interfere in order to further the realization of nationalist aims, when they

had so often interfered in order to check nationalism. It was equally difficult for the colonial peoples to believe that such assistance would not have as its ultimate objective a renewed supremacy of the west under a different guise. And the propaganda of the Soviets and their agents, posing as the champions of any and every subject race, made many well-meaning people lose sight of the realities of the situation and vie with the Communists in an irresponsible condemnation and rejection of all the achievements of the colonial past.

As a result of this unpreparedness the postwar policy pursued with regard to Ceylon, Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Philippines and Indonesia not only varied according to the conditions in each of those countries, but also showed a different approach by the responsible European and American governments. The United States conceded independence to the Philippines on the appointed date of July 4, 1946, under certain military and economic conditions. At the same time it granted the new nation a large sum in compensation for damages suffered during the war, without bothering much about conditions concerning its use. The result of the grant of independence cannot be judged as long as this bounty covers the administrative and economic weaknesses that might otherwise appear. But the recent murder of Mrs. Quezon emphasizes the fact that peace and order do not reign throughout the length and breadth of the land.

The British preferred a rapid withdrawal of their influence in Burma, which obtained her full independence on January 4, 1948. The effects of this abandonment are not impressive. The country seems to have become well-nigh ungovernable, with several tribal and political factions fighting each other and an increasing spread of dacoity and Communism. A policy of liquidation was not applied to Malaya with its extremely mixed population and its vital economic importance for the foreign exchange position of the United Kingdom. In fact Malaya has remained a colony, and the restraint of Malay nationalism may well come to add its quota to the unrest of Chinese and Communist origin which broke out a year ago. In Ceylon the transition to Dominion status went ahead peaceably, but Ceylon suffered no Japanese invasion and had prospered during the war years.

In Indo-China the French ran into an extremely violent rebellion, partly Communist-inspired. The political situation still remains obscure; law and order prevail only within restricted areas. It is possible that the endeavor to maintain Indo-China within the French Empire, even with an ample degree of self-government, tends to delay the solution of the conflict and to hamstring the full cooperation of the moderates.

III

The approach of the Netherlands to the problem in Indonesia, by far the biggest and the most important of the South East Asiatic countries, is

different from any of these. In a proclamation of February 10, 1946, the Netherlands Government put formally on record its intention to assist the Indonesians towards nationhood and independence. But at the same time it expressed its conviction that independence and nationhood can be achieved and maintained only with continued Dutch material, spiritual and administrative assistance.

The Dutch had valid reasons to reject a policy of simple abandonment. In the course of three centuries the Netherlands built a modern and prosperous community in Indonesia out of a conglomeration of small tribal units, divided by incessant conflicts and rivalries. Before the war Indonesia's credit was more sound, its administration more free from graft, the mass of its population better dressed and fed and housed, its highways and byways were safer than was the case in any other Asiatic country. The Dutch had invested a considerable capital in government-owned buildings, railroads, communications, forests, mines, plantations, institutes of scientific research and irrigation systems. There was also large private investment in agriculture, mining, industry, shipping, trade and aviation. Of course, all this yielded a fair though moderate income to the Netherlands, but it provided a much more important source of income for Indonesia. It shared in the products and services, and there was a well-developed and efficient system of taxation.

The Netherlands are fully prepared to transfer this inheritance to the Indonesians, but they want to transfer it in workable condition and with some guarantees for its maintenance and further development. This policy is obviously influenced, on the Dutch side, by a certain pride in past achievements, a recognition of the Netherlands' interest in Indonesia, and a deep affection for the country and its inhabitants. But it has its ultimate foundations in a relationship between the Indonesians and the Dutch that has no parallel elsewhere in Asia.

The Indonesians have shown in their history a most valuable adaptability and eagerness to learn, a sound capacity for administration, and great civility and tolerance in their social relations. They have acquired a nationalistic sentiment that can bring and hold together the various ethnological and tribal sections of the country, provided that each distinct part retains a sufficient measure of autonomy within the framework of the proposed United States of Indonesia. Their local government is well-developed and the damage done to it by occupation and unrest can be repaired. But the structure of Indonesia is still very vulnerable, especially in its economic and financial management and in the composition and authority of its newly molded federal government.

The Dutch can strengthen these weaknesses without threatening the young Indonesian nation. Numerous Netherlanders have identified themselves with the country; their descendants, pure and mixed, have made Indonesia their homeland. It may be difficult for an Anglo-Saxon to understand a relationship between a white and a colored people from which racial feeling is so

curiously absent and which accepts the children of mixed marriages as the equals, legally and socially, of their parents. But the fact is that even now, after years of Japanese, anti-western propaganda and of revolutionary hysteria, there is no general enmity between Indonesians and Netherlanders. And the necessity of continued cooperation is widely recognized on both sides.

Why, then, did the political conflict in Indonesia drag on for so many years? Why were the Netherlands time and again denounced in the Security Council as imperialist aggressors, and accused of a colonialism that would be foolhardy and incompatible with the spirit of the people, if it had been true? In the first place, the surrender of Japan on August 14, 1945, was effectuated in Indonesia under the most unfortunate and adverse circumstances. The Netherlands had been completely liberated only since the capitulation of Germany in May of that year. As soon as a small part of the Netherlands had been freed from Germany the Government had strained every nerve to recruit and organize an army for war and liberation in the Pacific. Though the Dutch people were worn out by years of German tyranny, their response was excellent. But as long as the war lasted hardly any assistance was obtained from the Allies for training and equipment; the Dutch were even denied the use of their own ships for transportation. Consequently, they were not ready to take over in Indonesia when Japan surrendered, and remained for over a year dependent on Allied—that is to say, British—assistance.

On the very day of the Japanese capitulation the major part of Indonesia was transferred from the South West Pacific Area, under the command of General MacArthur, to the South East Asia Command under Admiral Mountbatten, whose operational theater until then included only the island of Sumatra. The change came very unexpectedly for SEAC; no preparations had been made for the new task. As a consequence the first group of British and Indian troops destined to take the surrender of 155,000 Japanese in Java and Sumatra did not land at Djakarta until September 29. It consisted of less than 1,000 officers and men.

In the meantime, a critical situation had arisen in those islands. On August 17 a group of Indonesians, partly sponsored by the Japanese, partly driven by young revolutionaries, proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia at Djakarta (Batavia). The Japanese Military Government, after a halfhearted countermove, let things slide; certain Japanese actively promoted the movement. An order issued by Lord Louis Mountbatten on September 6 to the Japanese Commander-in-Chief in the southern area, Field Marshal Terauchi, to continue the military administration and to suppress the revolutionary movement was deliberately disobeyed. The Japanese troops began to leave their garrisons for comfortable quarters in the hills, abandoning great stocks of arms to the Indonesians. In some cases the Japanese still maintained law and order locally; here and there they clashed with the Indonesian

irregulars, who in this way sometimes obtained additional arms and munitions by force.

This indiscriminate distribution of arms in a community perverted and impoverished by Japanese misrule, wrought up by anti-western propaganda, and convulsed by a revolutionary upheaval, proved the most serious obstacle on the road to political settlement and economic recovery. The Japanese had seriously damaged the nervous system and poisoned the blood circulation of the Indonesian community. They had ruined its economy, wrecked its administration, and debauched its youth by a totalitarian and militaristic system of segregation and drill. And then they crowned their destructive work by a transfer of some 50,000 to 100,000 rifles, thousands of machine guns, and thousands of tons of ammunition and explosives before the victorious Allies were able to take these dangerous weapons into custody.

Those who obtained them were not an Indonesian army of liberation. They consisted of people with extremely varied background and allegiance. Some were genuine nationalists; many belonged to the Japanese-trained auxiliaries. Others were affiliated with political parties, ranging from Communists to orthodox Moslems. A number formed the private bodyguards of individual leaders and political bosses. Quite a few were ordinary robbers and dacoits. And even the so-called regulars grew accustomed to living by their rifles, and generally obeyed only their favorite officers.

The idea of a republic seemed the embodiment of every legitimate nationalistic aspiration and spread like wildfire. The Republic as a reality, however, lacked almost all the fundamental perquisites of a genuine and responsible government. Its authority depended largely on the continuation of lawlessness and passion. Its propaganda had to picture the Netherlands as the enemy, and magnify the bogey of colonialism, in order to maintain some cohesion in the republican ranks. The *pemudas*, the armed youngsters, terrorized the public life of the community and watched over the 'revolutionary spirit' of the authorities. The republican system developed totalitarian traits: an all-pervading system of spying, organized violence against political opponents, centralized direction of propaganda and the press, isolation from the outside world, if not behind an iron curtain, then at least behind a palisade of pointed bamboos.

There was, however, no ruling party; the only bond that held the warring groups together was a continuous agitation against western—i.e. Dutch— influence. The more moderate elements, who formed the first republican governments, were hardly able to maintain a semblance of public services and could not make their decisions prevail over the gang leaders. The internal dissensions and the general corruption grew worse as a vast smuggling trade with Singapore developed and was monopolized by certain authorities and by the soldiery. All these groups came to depend for their position on the maintenance of a state of unrest and war. And those who wanted to organize the Republic as a more or less normal administration, and recognized the

necessity of cooperation with and assistance from the Netherlands, struggled in vain against the extremists and the profiteers.

This situation was aggravated by the precipitate recognition of the Republic as a quasi-independent government by the commanding officer of the first British contingent landing at Djakarta, who invoked the assistance of the republican authorities and refused to reinstall the legal Netherlands Indies Government. By this action he simultaneously set at naught the military administrative agreement, concluded between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the Netherlands on August 24, 1945, and relieved the Japanese of their responsibility for law and order. This officer was motivated by an understandable desire to avoid an armed conflict with the republicans and to avoid the obviously impossible task of maintaining the Japanese in actual power for any length of time. He could plead military necessity; he could even aver that the lives of thousands of Netherlands and Allied internees and prisoners-of-war depended on the establishment of peaceable relations with the Republic, for he lacked the force to protect these prisoners against the savage partisans. Nonetheless, the effect of this recognition was deplorable in many ways.

Whereas the moderate republicans recognized the desirability and even the necessity of the restoration of a legal and effective government, with Netherlands help, before real independence could be achieved, the recognition by the Allied Commander, however provisional, had a sufficiently international tinge to render the more extreme elements in the Republic completely intractable. It encouraged them in their anti-western attitude by creating the impression that they could count on British sympathy. And it convinced their irresponsible leaders that they could not be doing so badly in their newly acquired functions if a mighty empire solicited their aid.

IV

The Netherlands Government was quite prepared to grant self-government and independence to Indonesia. It could even see valid reasons for the acceptance of republican cooperation. But it wanted to go about the grave business of setting up a nation in an orderly and efficient way. It could not hand over its responsibility to an illegally constituted organization that showed hardly any capacity to provide justice and stability for millions of suffering common people, and was at the mercy of lawless mercenaries. The excessive and uncritical recognition of the Republic, by some of the late Allies, as *the* representative of Indonesia excited a resentment that acquired more justification as increasingly larger parts of the country rejected republican rule. And it was difficult to understand why the legal and effective procedure of restoring the pre-invasion government, before the transfer of authority to an elected national government (as was done in Burma and the Philippines), should be made impossible in Indonesia.

When after endless and patient negotiations the Republic proved unable to implement the Linggadjati Agreement, concluded on March 25, 1947; when it was clear that the republican government could not stop the ceaseless bear-baiting to which Dutch forces had been subjected within their narrow perimeters for 15 exasperating months; when murder and kidnapping of cooperative Indonesians continued and increased, the Dutch resolved to restore law and order by a police action. The moderates had been gradually either eliminated, deprived of effective power, or corrupted. There were too many adventurers and criminals in high places to allow a successful purge of the republican organization from within. The clinical method was no longer possible; a surgical operation was necessary to restore the normal functioning of government. The action was quite successful, but it was stopped halfway by the resolution of the Security Council. The Council may, in its majority, have been convinced that it came to the assistance of the Indonesian nationalists, who were attacked by an imperialist Netherlands Government. In reality, however, it gave renewed countenance to the anti-western, the lawless, and the Communist agitators, who could claim this intervention as their victory over the moderates and over those who sought continued cooperation with the Netherlands.

The outside world went on accepting the Republic at face value, and by doing so supported the extremists against the moderates and against the Dutch. Whatever the Republic did, it could always be sure of acclaim at Lake Success and in the public opinion of great democratic Powers. Its armed forces were looked upon as patriots, fighting for their independence. Its follies and misdeeds were systematically hushed up or ignored, even by the international agencies on the spot. So the republican government could carry on without ever being held responsible for its acts. It could consort with adventurers of every nationality, trade looted property against arms, sell opium for the maintenance of its foreign representatives, and terrorize its opponents without fear of criticism or reprisal. On the other hand, its complaints against the Dutch, which became more violent and absurd as the Government lost its grip on millions of Indonesians, were always painstakingly investigated.

As long as this one-sided attitude was maintained, the interference of the Security Council, however well-intentioned, could contribute little to the mitigation of the dispute. It did not relieve the Dutch from any part of their responsibility. It fostered distrust of Dutch intentions by almost openly doubting the statements of the Netherlands representatives. It inflated the position of the antagonists of cooperation, and branded as traitors and puppets those Indonesians who practised cooperation at the risk of their lives and those of their families. When such Indonesians organized their own governmental representation they were refused a hearing at Lake Success. Certainly, the Netherlands Government sometimes made mistakes; it sometimes showed a lack of perception, and sometimes of decision, when a more

imaginative and firm policy might have shortened the conflict. But those mistakes were small and of a passing character compared with the fundamental mistake of the United Nations in condoning the violence, the graft and the dishonesty of the Republic, and condemning the Indonesians who sought the help of the Dutch against such maladministration.

And yet the results of Dutch policy, although continually thwarted, were not negligible. In August 1947, after the first police action, three-fifths of the country was started on the road to recovery under Dutch protection. And it is worth noticing that the elimination of political and criminal violence in this three-fifths, with 45,000,000 inhabitants, was achieved at the cost of less than one-tenth of the military casualties suffered by the French in Indo-China, where there is a population of 25,000,000. The number of civilian victims of the disturbances in Kashmir was many times larger than that in Indonesia. After law and order were restored, elections were organized and Indonesian Governments chosen in most of the area concerned. There never yet has been an election in the Republic. Production and trade revived; by April 1948 the balance of trade of the non-republican part of Indonesia became favorable. Notwithstanding the terrible financial burden of unrest the country remained solvent. And—most significant of all—the organized Communist movement remained confined to the Republic, where it had thrived from the beginning and had obtained its reward in the republican agreement concluded with the Soviet Government (in Prague) on May 22, 1948, calling for an exchange of consular representation between the two countries. This was in direct contravention of the Renville principles, and after an exchange of sharp notes with the Netherlands Government, the Government of the Republic promised not to ratify the agreement and to recall the envoy, Suripno, who had made it.

If the democratic Powers had at once recognized the necessity of concerted action in South East Asia in order to guarantee the peoples of that region their national freedom, and for that purpose had organized the assistance those peoples needed to stabilize their governments and defend themselves against totalitarian aggression, the Indonesian problem might have been solved much sooner. But what actually happened was for a while a case of too many doctors. Some of them gave excellent advice; others, however, made it almost impossible for the regular family physician to prescribe and to continue the treatment in the best interests of the patient. Others suggested that there was no disease, or failed to prevent the patient from recourse to quacks. And, with few exceptions, there was no frank consultation which might have led to agreement and acceptance of responsibility.

This course of events compelled the Netherlands Government to continue the police action for the restoration of law and order after another year and a half of fruitless negotiation. And so, at last, the reunion of the whole of Indonesia under the rule of law has become possible. And although the first reaction of the Security Council appeared to be hardly less disapproving

than that of August 1947, during the succeeding weeks the facts of the case obtained a better recognition. The resolution of January 28, 1949, though strongly criticizing certain aspects of the police action, did not require the withdrawal of troops from the areas where they were restoring law and order. And as the initial confusion cleared, attention was increasingly concentrated on constructive proposals instead of fruitless recrimination.

By the end of February the Netherlands Government announced its intention to convene a round-table conference of all parties, including the republicans, in order to discuss and to implement the transfer of sovereignty to a representative, all-Indonesian government at the earliest possible date. On March 23 the Security Council, at the suggestion of the Canadian and Chinese delegations, issued new instructions to the United Nations Commission for Indonesia in which the reinstatement of the Government of the Republic at Jogjakarta was made dependent on its willingness to discontinue violence and guerrilla warfare and to participate in the round-table conference. The discussions between the Netherlands and the republican delegations then resulted on May 9 in a preliminary agreement, which can and should lead to final peace.

It was proved by this last negotiation, as had been the case once before at the conclusion of the Renville agreement of January 17, 1948, that the republicans are certainly amenable to reason once their responsibility and the consequences of evasion or bad faith are squarely put before them. In the present agreement they have explicitly promised to publish and enforce orders for a cease fire; they have formally acknowledged that the Republic is only one of the component parts, one of the states of the future United States of Indonesia; and they have expressed their readiness to come together, on a footing of equality, with the representatives of the other states, to discuss, with those of the Netherlands, the formation of an Indonesian government, the transfer of sovereignty, and the future relations between the two countries. In return, they will be enabled to reconstitute themselves as a state government in the Jogjakarta area and they will be accorded one-third of the number of representatives in the provisional parliament of Indonesia, which should be ample considering their loss of influence and adherents in the country.

There is still an extensive job of pacification to be achieved, but the pattern of a free United States of Indonesia, closely allied to the Netherlands, is gradually emerging from the tangle of violent designs and ambitious purposes. Much of that pattern was laid down in the negotiations with the Republic which resulted in the Linggadjati Agreement; on the other hand, a major part of the actual reconstruction originated outside the Republic, where the federalists conceived the first practical plan for cooperation at the Malino Conference of July 1946. When peace is made at last by those who want to rebuild their country on the sure foundations of justice and prosperity, the world may yet come to understand that the Dutch policy was not

impelled by a senseless imperialism, and that the force applied was a necessary minimum to restore a decent nation to health and understanding. We may yet hope that after all these trials, the United States of Indonesia will be preserved as a bridgehead from which democratic liberty will expand through all the seven nations of South East Asia.

THE NETHERLANDS-INDONESIAN UNION

Amry Vandenbosch

Source: *Far Eastern Survey* 19(1)(1950): 1-7.

Netherlands-Indonesian relations have been basically changed as a result of the agreements reached at the Round Table Conference, which sat at The Hague from August 23 to November 2, 1949. The transfer of sovereignty in formal ceremonies at Amsterdam on December 27 brought to an end three and a half centuries of Dutch rule in the East Indies archipelago¹ and brought into existence a Netherlands-Indonesian Union on the basis of sovereign equality.

The agreements achieved by the Conference are incorporated in three main and a number of subsidiary documents. The three chief documents are the Netherlands-Indonesian Union Statute, the Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty, and the Agreement on Transitional Measures. Provisions governing the cooperation between the partners in foreign relations, defense, financial and economic relations, and in the cultural field are embodied in special agreements attached to the Statute. Differences with respect to a number of issues were settled by an exchange of letters.² With the ratification of the three chief agreements, which are considered as constituting a single whole, the special and subsidiary agreements likewise go into effect.

The momentous agreements reached by the Round Table Conference have a long and, for the years since the war, a crowded and stormy background. The Indonesian nationalist movement, which comes to full fruition by these agreements, is not more than fifty years old. The first Indonesian political society was organized in 1908. The establishment of the central representative body, the Peoples Council (Volksraad), in 1918 gave the movement new opportunities to carry on its activities and to make its influence felt. Until 1931 the Indonesian members were in a minority, but from that year on they constituted half of the membership, with the Dutch, Chinese, and Arabs the other half. The Council had only advisory powers at first, but in 1927 it was

raised to a co-legislative body. After that date the Governor General, while retaining a rather wide emergency power, could exercise the general power of legislation only after consultation with the Council and with its concurrence.

The nationalist movement was naturally strongest in Java, but it also developed considerable vigor in certain parts of Sumatra, notably in the region around Fort DeKock (among the Menangkabauers) and on the east coast, the center of large-scale Western agricultural enterprises. It was weakest on Borneo, except for a few urban centers, and New Guinea. In New Guinea and neighboring islands it was practically non-existent at the time of Pearl Harbor. Though it had made great progress in thirty years, the movement as a whole was still weak and immature when World War II broke out in Europe. This was due to a number of factors, among which may be mentioned the heterogeneous character of the population, its distribution over a large number of widely separated islands, the relatively retarded development of many of the peoples, especially in the eastern part of the archipelago, and the restricted educational facilities. The quality of education was high—higher than in most of the surrounding countries—but it was not extensive. Moreover, the nationalist movement had to operate in fairly narrow channels. The Dutch authorities insisted that it proceed along peaceful or evolutionary lines, but these terms were frequently given a narrow interpretation.

Early plans for a confederation

For many Indonesian nationalists progress toward self-government was much too slow. Plans for constitutional reforms looking toward a Netherlands-Indonesian confederation had for some years been widely discussed among both Dutch and Indonesian leaders. These discussions took more concrete form in 1937 when an Indonesian member of the Peoples Council by the name of Sutardjo introduced a resolution petitioning the Netherlands government to call an imperial conference for the purpose of drafting plans for such a confederation, within which Indonesia would enjoy full self-government. The resolution received the endorsement of the Council, but was rejected by the government. Three years later the so-called Visman Commission was instituted to inquire into the wishes of the people of Indonesia with respect to political and constitutional changes. This Commission, whose findings were not published until after Pearl Harbor, reported a widespread desire for some sort of confederation. In 1940 a resolution similar to the earlier one by Sutardjo was introduced in the Peoples Council, but by the time it came up for debate the Netherlands had been overrun by the Germans, and the Indies government declared that so long as the German occupation continued and the Dutch parliament could not extend its approval the resolution was out of order.

All of this was deeply disappointing to the Indonesian nationalists, and tended strongly to alienate them from the Dutch. Probably realizing that

perseverance in this attitude might have serious consequences, the Netherlands government (in exile in London) on June 16, 1941 announced to its dependencies in the East and the West that it planned to call a conference immediately after the liberation of the home territory to consider plans for constitutional reforms both within the dependencies and between them and the Netherlands. The proposed conference would have only advisory functions. Queen Wilhelmina in a radio address from London on December 7, 1942, again promised a conference after the war to consider constitutional reforms. The declaration on this occasion was more specific as to the expected nature of the reforms. The Queen visualized "a commonwealth in which the Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam, and Curacao will participate, with complete self-reliance and freedom of conduct for each part regarding its internal affairs, but with readiness to render mutual assistance." It is interesting to note that the term "Round Table Conference" was used in the address. Unfortunately, Indonesia was now under Japanese occupation; if any Indonesians heard the address it probably made little impression on them.

Postwar Dutch attitudes

The speedy conquest of the Indies, with all that it involved in the way of lost prestige for the Dutch, and the long Japanese occupation made the resumption of Dutch rule in the old form an impossibility. Most Netherlands realized that. But many Netherlands had the feeling that if the Indies had been reconquered by Allied armed forces as was the Philippines, or if the Dutch had had the equipment and the men to move into the Indies immediately after capitulation by Japan, events since then would have been different. On the islands outside of Java and Sumatra the Netherlands were able to establish law and order first and then proceed with political reforms in an orderly and peaceful manner. Not a few believed that this could also have been the course of events on Java and Sumatra.³ For these and other reasons many Netherlands were especially bitter about the intervention by the United Nations. Why should the honorable intentions repeatedly stated, even in solemn declarations by their Queen, be brought into question before the United Nations? And why should their government be asked to deal with "a made-in-Japan" Republic of Indonesia, which after all had de facto jurisdiction over only a part of Indonesia? It is important to understand this point of view of many Netherlands, however erroneously they may have reasoned. Gradually they adjusted themselves to the new situation.

It is not necessary to dwell upon events in Indonesia during the first months after the Japanese surrender. The nationalists immediately acquired a rallying point in the Republic proclaimed by Sukarno and Hatta under Japanese auspices only three days after the capitulation by Japan. Before the

arrival of the first Allied contingent some six weeks later Indonesians had acquired thousands of arms from the Japanese troops—some by force and some by Japanese connivance. Under the circumstances General Christison, who was in charge of the small British force which arrived at Batavia on September 30 for the purpose of disarming the Japanese and evacuating Allied prisoners and internees, extended to the Republic a "de facto" recognition.

The Linggadjati Agreement

The Dutch Government on November 7, 1945 issued a declaration of principles, in which it stated that its object was the rapid development of Indonesia as a partner in a kingdom so constructed that the self-respect of all peoples participating in it would be guaranteed. On February 10, 1946, the Netherlands government made more specific proposals: an Indonesian commonwealth, composed of units with varying degrees of self-government, and Indonesian citizenship, a transition period of ten years, and separate Indonesian membership in the United Nations. Formal negotiations between Lieutenant Governor General van Mook and Prime Minister Sjahrir, under the chairmanship of Sir Archibald Clark Kerr, later Lord Inverchapel, began on March 13. After the arrival of a Commission General from The Hague in September and two more months of negotiations, an agreement was finally reached. The so-called Linggadjati Agreement was initialed on November 15, 1946 but was not signed until March 25 following.

Under the terms of the agreement the Dutch and Republican governments undertook to cooperate in establishing a federal state, the United States of Indonesia, and in forming a Union of two equal partners, namely, the new federal state of Indonesia and the Netherlands, in which the Netherlands with Surinam and Netherlands Antilles (Curacao) would constitute a single unit.

In the meanwhile Borneo and the islands of the eastern part of the archipelago had again come under Dutch authority and Governor General van Mook set to work to organize this area politically. After several conferences with political leaders of this area the state of East Indonesia was set up in December 1946.

It soon became apparent that implementation of the agreement would not be easy. Terrorism continued in Republican territory, leading to appeals for help from several areas under Republican control. The Republic not only did not cease but sought to extend its foreign relations, and it insisted upon controlling its army intact. All of this the Netherlands officials regarded as contrary to the agreement and an indication of unwillingness to implement it. On May 27, 1947 the Commission General presented a detailed set of proposal for carrying out the agreement, including a proposal for the formation of a transition government. To this the Republic made a reply which the

Commission General in a note of June 20 declared "offers no possibility for further negotiations." On July 21 the Netherlands government resorted to police action.⁴

The Renville Agreement

At this point the United Nations Security Council intervened, which led to the appointment of a Commission of Good Offices under whose auspices negotiations between the Republic and Dutch representatives were renewed. The so-called "Renville" Agreement, signed on January 17, 1948, was the outcome. Eighteen political principles, calculated to smooth the way for further detailed arrangements, constituted this agreement.

The Dutch now revised their Constitution in order to make possible the reorganization of the imperial system in accordance with the terms of the Linggadjati and Renville Agreements. This constitutional revision involved the proposal of the changes by parliament, the dissolution of the two Chambers and new elections, and the passage of the revised text by the new parliament by a two-thirds majority. The revision was officially proclaimed on September 21, 1948.⁵ Furthermore, Mr. van Mook resigned as Governor General in October and Mr. Beel, former prime minister, was named High Commissioner of the Crown in Indonesia, the former office being discontinued.

Once again the representatives of the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia sought to implement the basic agreements of Linggadjati and Renville, but again to no avail. The Netherlands government, asserting that the leaders of the Republic were either unwilling or unable to carry out the agreements, again resorted to "police action" on December 18, this time occupying Jogjakarta, the Republic's capital, and taking its leaders as political prisoners. In conformity with a resolution of the Security Council of March 23, negotiations were resumed with respect to the return of the Republican government to its capital, the proclamation of a ceasefire order, and the time and conditions for holding a Round Table Conference at The Hague. On May 7 an agreement was reached in the so-called van Royen-Rum Declarations.⁶ The Netherlands delegation declared the willingness of its government to permit the return of the Republican government to its capital, and both governments agreed to participate in a round-table conference at The Hague with a view to accelerating "the unconditional transfer of real and complete sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia."

In the meanwhile the Indonesian problem had become more complicated by the demand of the non-Republicans for participation in the negotiations. The political leaders outside of the Republican territory were frequently called Federalists because of their desire for a federal Indonesian state, in contrast with the leaders of the Republic, who seemed to prefer a unitary system. The Federalists, before the last "police action," had pressed the

Dutch authorities to proceed speedily with the establishment of an interim federal government, with the cooperation of the Republic if possible, but without it if necessary. They now demanded that the Round Table Conference be preceded by a conference at Batavia in which the Federalists through their provisional organization, called the B. F. O.⁷ (Federal Consultative Assembly), would take part as well as representatives of the Republic. The result was a tripartite conference in June at which the final provisions for the Round Table Conference were agreed upon, and an Inter-Indonesian Conference in July and August at which the Republicans and Federalists consulted upon the general principles and basic structure of the future United States of Indonesia and the proposed Netherlands-Indonesian Union.⁸ At the Inter-Indonesian Conference the Republicans and Federalists ironed out many differences and arrived at a basic common policy to be pursued at the Round Table Conference. Each had its own delegation at The Hague Conference but they presented a common front on all important issues.

The Round Table Conference

The Round Table Conference was officially opened by Prime Minister Willem Drees on August 23. The Conference convened in the historic "Ridderzaal" (Hall of Knights), in which in 1581 the Dutch nation through the States General of the Republic of the United Netherlands declared its independence of Spain. There hung over the conference some of the distrust and suspicion which had exercised so malevolent an influence over previous negotiations and at times the situation in Indonesia became acute because of "cease-fire" violations. But all parties, no doubt realizing how serious would be another failure, worked with determination to achieve a final agreement. The United Nations Committee on Indonesia frequently made helpful suggestions.

There was some difference in point of view between the Dutch and the Indonesians with respect to the work of the conference. Prime Minister Drees summarized the Dutch point of view by stating: "We must come to clear agreements and arrangements, taking into account everyone's dignity, interest and ability." Premier Hatta, on the other hand, stressed the need of a speedy agreement. He felt, in view of the shortness of the time, that an agreement on fundamentals and principles would be sufficient and that the details could be worked out later. The Indonesian, and especially the Republican, delegates would have been satisfied with an agreement on the transfer of sovereignty, leaving to a later date, when their position had been strengthened both juridically and practically by such transfer, negotiations on the other and more detailed arrangements. As a Dutch newspaper put it, "The Indonesians want to take over the house, but without the mortgage." The Dutch delegation, of course, wished to tie up all of the agreements in

one package, since the transfer of sovereignty was its strongest bargaining point. With one notable exception, the Dutch viewpoint on this matter prevailed.

There seems to have been no great difficulty in agreeing on the Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty as such. The Charter states that "The Kingdom of the Netherlands unconditionally and irrevocably transfers complete sovereignty over Indonesia to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia" and thereby recognizes said Republic "as an independent and sovereign State," while the Republic accepts "said sovereignty on the basis of the provisions of its constitution which has been brought to the knowledge of the Kingdom of the Netherlands."

The question of New Guinea

Disagreement there was, however, over the disposition of New Guinea—a vast, sparsely inhabited, undeveloped area whose resources are still largely unknown. The Dutch delegates argued that New Guinea is not a part of Indonesia either geographically or ethnologically, and they insisted that it remain under Dutch sovereignty. The Netherlands delegation probably feared that, having yielded so much, they needed this concession in order to get the necessary two-thirds vote for the agreements in the States General. However, the Indonesian delegates also feared political repercussions at home if they yielded on this issue. It was reported that the Indonesians were willing, New Guinea having been brought under their sovereignty, to make special agreements giving the Dutch extensive participation in the economic development and administration of the territory. Since this remained the only unsettled major question and all parties were eager to bring the conference to a close, it was agreed to add a second article to the Charter providing that New Guinea will remain under Dutch sovereignty until its status has been determined through negotiations, but the issue must be settled within a year from the transfer of sovereignty.

Probably the most delicate issue before the conference was that of the character of the proposed Netherlands-Indonesian Union. The Indonesian delegates wished to make certain that the sovereignty which their new state would acquire by the Charter of Transfer would not be diminished in any way by the Statute of Union. They therefore strongly insisted upon a "loose" union, whose organs would have only a consultative function in fields previously determined. An important section of Dutch public opinion favored a "tight" union, but there were also political leaders who advocated a "loose" union. The more extreme of the former group wanted a union with independent powers and executive organs with jurisdiction over a limited number of subjects, such as defense, foreign policy, and financial and commercial policy. Some even desired to have the union government guarantee civil and property rights and sound administration. Those who favored a



POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS IN INDONESIA

(Approximate status at the time of the Hague Conference. "Republican" areas are those controlled by the Indonesian Republic prior to the Dutch "police action" of December 18, 1948. The status of New Guinea is still under negotiation between the Netherlands and the United States of Indonesia.)

REPUBLICAN	FEDERALIST	FEDERALIST (continued)	FEDERALIST (continued)
Population: 29,000,000	Population: 47,000,000	8. Autonomous Area of Kota Waringin	17. State of Madura
1. Area of Sumatra	1. State of East Sumatra	9. Autonomous Area of Great Dayak	18. State of East Indonesia
12. Bantam	2. Padang	10. Autonomous Area of Banjar	STATUS UNDECIDED
15. Area of Middle Java	4. State of South Sumatra	11. Autonomous Area of Southeast Borneo	Population: 1,000,000
	5. Federation of Banka-Billiton-Rioow	13. State of Pasundan (West Java)	19. New Guinea
	6. Autonomous Area of West Borneo	14. Middle Java	
	7. Autonomous Area of East Borneo	16. State of East Java	

"loose" union argued that looser ties, if wholeheartedly accepted now, would be much more likely to endure. Premier Hatta made it clear in his opening speech that his people were unalterably opposed to anything that looked like a superstate and that his delegation would like to have the Agreement of Union in the form of an international treaty. A compromise had therefore to be found. To find this compromise the Steering Committee spent a week-end "in conclave" in Namur, Belgium.

According to the Statute the Union "effectuates the organized cooperation" between the two countries "on the basis of free will and equality in status with equal rights" and it "does not prejudice the status of each of the two partners as an independent and sovereign State" (Art. 1). The head of the Union will be Queen Juliana and her lawful successors (Art. 5), but this headship is clearly only titular, embodying "the concept of voluntary and lasting cooperation between the partners" (Art. 6). This does not seem to be quite consistent with the revised Dutch Constitution, which states that the "Crown of the Union shall be worn by Her Majesty Queen Wilhelmina," for the term "crown" carries implications of government power. That the headship is to be merely titular is evident from several provisions in the Statute. Disputes or disagreements arising under the Statute are to be referred to a Union Court of Arbitration, composed of six members—three appointed by each of the partners (Arts. 13 and 14). Decisions will be by majority vote (Art. 15). In case of a tie vote the Court shall call upon the President of the International Court of Justice to appoint a person of another nationality as a special member, after which the case will be reconsidered by the Union Court (Art. 15). In cases where both partners consider the Court of Arbitration incompetent or where the Court declares itself incompetent, "the two partners reserve all their rights under international law or otherwise to solicit the decision of an international court or arbitrator" (Art. 19). Moreover, the "Union Statute and the agreements pertaining thereto as well as the joint regulations and future agreements may be presented to the Secretariat of the United Nations for registration in accordance with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations" (Art. 28). Thus the international character of the Union is amply assured.

Chief organ of Union

The chief organ of the Union will be a conference of ministers, normally composed of three ministers from each partner. It will meet twice a year and more frequently if the partners deem necessary. Decisions will be made by a unanimous vote, but they require the approval of the parliaments of the partners, after which they will be executed separately by each country through its own organs (Arts. 7, 8, 9, 12). The common interests which the members of the Union will seek to promote by cooperation are "subjects

lying primarily in the field of foreign relations and defense, and as far as necessary, finance, and also in regard of subjects of an economic and cultural nature" (Art. 2).

Some of the Dutch delegates had hoped that there would also be something in the nature of a joint parliament for Union affairs. The only reference in the Statute to an institution of this kind is the vague provision of Article 10 that "the two partners shall effectuate good contact and regular cooperation between the parliaments of the partners," which apparently means only discussions between representatives of the two partners.

There is to be a permanent secretariat to serve the Union, each of the members to appoint a secretary-general, each to take charge in alternate years.

The Statute contains no provisions directly guaranteeing civil rights to the rather important minorities in Indonesia. The partners do, however, "undertake to base their form of government on the principles of democracy and to aim at an independent judiciary." Furthermore, they agree to "recognize the fundamental human rights and freedoms" enumerated in an appendix (Art. 3). Presumably one of the partners could bring the failure by the other to live up to these provisions before the Court of Arbitration.

The debt issue

The debt issue was one of extreme difficulty, as a very large part of the external debt of Indonesia is held in the Netherlands. The Dutch delegation at first demanded that as long as the Netherlands remained the largest creditor the Dutch government should have some control over Indonesian financial and fiscal policy or an assignment of certain export commodities for payment on the Indonesian debt to Holland. The Indonesian delegation rejected these demands as in effect an infringement of sovereignty. As on so many other issues, both parties made important concessions. The Netherlands acquires no control over Indonesian monetary and financial policy, but the Indonesian government will consult the Dutch government before taking important measures with respect to these matters so long as Indonesia has liabilities towards the Netherlands.

The Indonesian delegation at first refused to consider the assumption by their government of any debts contracted in the past few years by the Netherlands government in the name of Indonesia, and presented counter-claims. Thus the two delegation at first were poles apart on the amount of debt which the United States of Indonesia should take over. Under the terms of the compromise agreement the Republic of the United States of Indonesia will take over a public debt of approximately 4,300 million guilders (about \$1,200 million). This amount includes bond issues totaling 900 million guilders (held in the Netherlands) and 400 million guilders in loans from the United States and Canada. Indonesia assumes all of the internal debt at the

date of the transfer of sovereignty. This is estimated at about 3 billion guilders.

The military agreement gives clear evidence of the fact that "actual and complete sovereignty" has been transferred to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia. Each partner bears the full and exclusive responsibility for the defense of its own territory. Dutch troops in Indonesia are not to be used for military operations after the transfer of sovereignty unless called upon by the Indonesian government, and are to be withdrawn from Indonesian territory within six months of the transfer of sovereignty, or as soon as possible if lack of shipping or technical difficulties make withdrawal within this period impossible. The partners will exchange military missions; a Netherlands military mission will aid Indonesia in establishing and training its armed forces and its members will also serve as advisors on military matters.

Provisional constitution

A provisional constitution for the Republic of the United States of Indonesia was drafted at the Round Table Conference by the Republican and Federalist delegates and presented to the Dutch delegation for its information. The Constitution is an elaboration of the understandings reached at the Inter-Indonesian Conference last July and August. It provides for a democratic, federal system of government, with a president elected by delegates from the component units, a National Assembly of 150 members (with one-third of the seats allotted to the Republic), and a Senate in which each of the federal areas is to have two members. Nine, six, and three memberships in the National Assembly are reserved for the Chinese, European, and Arab minorities respectively. Within a year of the transfer of sovereignty a constituent assembly, whose members are to be chosen in a free and secret election, shall meet to draft a permanent constitution.

The Netherlands-Indonesian Union is indeed a remarkable achievement and a new development in interstate relations. Some wide differences in points of view were ingeniously resolved. While the Union is more formal in its structure and procedures than the British Commonwealth of Nations, its effectiveness is nevertheless just as dependent upon good will between the partners. Both parties yielded much to make agreement on the Union possible; each has much to gain from its successful operation.

Notes

- 1 West (Dutch) New Guinea provisionally remains under Dutch administration; its future status is to be determined by negotiations within the next year.
- 2 Texts of these and other documents, including the provisional constitution, may be found in *United Nations Commission for Indonesia: Appendices to the Special Report to the Security Council on the Round Table Conference*, S/1417 Add. 1, November 14, 1949 (173 pp.).

Perpustakaan
Kebudayaan
Keragaman

- 3 Java and Sumatra account for about 75 percent of the population of the archipelago.
- 4 See *Indonesie, Nederland en de Wereld*, by H. J. van Mook (Amsterdam, 1949), for an account and critical examination of these events by a leading participant.
- 5 For text of the constitutional revision see *Ronde Tafel Conferentie: Feiten en Documenten* (The Hague, 1949), pp. 119-121.
- 6 For text see *Ronde Tafel Conferentie*, pp. 136-138.
- 7 *Bijeenkomst voor Federaal Overleg*.
- 8 See *Ronde Tafel Conferentie*, pages 143-146, for communique issued by the Conference on July 22, and pages 147-158 for communique issued on August 2, 1949.

INDONESIA

Russell H. Fifield

Source: Russell H. Fifield, *Americans in South East Asia: The Roots of Commitment*, New York: Thomas Y. Crowell (1973), pp. 79-86.

American policy toward Indonesia from the surrender of Japan to the Dutch transfer of sovereignty in December 1949 reflected a dilemma. As in the case of the Philippines, the United States was opposed to colonialism, and this attitude eventually dominated American policy. But unlike the Philippines, Indonesia was always a foreign problem and Washington became involved in complex international negotiations inside and outside the United Nations. American policy toward the Dutch in Europe clashed with that toward the Indonesians in South East Asia. The development of the Cold War contributed to the shifts in U.S. posture as Washington weighed the importance of Western Europe and East Asia and the relationship of nationalism and communism. By 1949 the United States sought a settlement of the Indonesian question that would acknowledge Indonesian national aspirations and respect Dutch rights, that would prevent the archipelago from going Communist and support the authority of the United Nations, and that would otherwise protect American interests.¹

Despite Japan's surrender on August 14, 1945,* and Indonesia's proclamation of independence on August 17 allied forces under the South East Asia Command though lacking adequate intelligence did not begin to arrive until September 29.² The British commander recognized the de facto authority of the Republicans the following day, for the Republic of Indonesia was well established in several areas. It also was armed by weapons turned over by the Japanese. The lack of adequate men and shipping not only had delayed the arrival of the British but also limited their success. They were responsible for disarming and removing the Japanese armed forces, for freeing prisoners of war and internees, and for maintaining order in key areas. Just the internees alone, including some 100,000 people, many being Dutch in Java, created very serious problems of security.

The British military authorities tried to keep out of Indonesian political matters but it was impossible. Although London was sympathetic to The Hague, the latter wanted more support under their agreements. The Dutch and some Indonesians, moreover, were angered when the British used armed Japanese in certain areas to maintain order. Mountbatten himself was critical of Dutch policy at The Hague. As a substantial number of the British-commanded forces were Indians, Congress leaders in New Delhi were aroused over Indians clashing with local nationalists in the archipelago. The appearance in early October of several poorly trained Netherlands East Indies army internal security companies—certainly no military threat but symbols of the future—stirred the Indonesians. It was not until early March, 1946, however, that nine Dutch battalions with Mountbatten's approval landed in Batavia.

During the previous November a Republican cabinet under Soetan Sjahrir had been set up. When discussions between the Dutch and Indonesians broke down, the United States on December 19 after consultation with Great Britain publicly urged their speedy resumption. The Ukraine, probably because of Western opposition in the United Nations to Soviet policy in Iran, condemned British policy in Indonesia as a threat to the peace and called for a UN commission of inquiry. Sjahrir himself had appealed to President Truman on December 25 for U.S. aid at the United Nations. During debate in the Security Council, February 7, 9–13, 1946, the position of the Ukraine was supported only by Poland and the Soviet Union. The United States expressed hope that the talks in progress between the Dutch and Indonesians would succeed and that the results would reflect the purposes of the United Nations Charter and the "legitimate aspirations" of Indonesians for "self-government."[†]

The Netherlands on February 10 called for the creation of a "Commonwealth of Indonesia" as a "partner in the Kingdom" in control of domestic matters. The Queen as far back as December 6, 1942, had urged the reconstruction of the kingdom after the war based on "complete partnership." As no mention was made in the statement of February 10, 1946, of the Republic per se, the implementation of the goal was difficult to forecast. Sukarno was detested in The Hague. The Dutch under Lieutenant Governor General H. J. Van Mook and the Indonesians under Sjahrir with British support urged in March a federal state in Indonesia associated with the Netherlands, but the role of Sukarno's Republic in terms of territorial extent and degree of influence was controversial. The French agreement with Ho Chi Minh early in the month was considered a helpful precedent.

First U.S. period

From the end of World War II to the first Dutch "police action" of July 1947 American policy toward Indonesia was relatively passive. The Department of State indicated on October 18, 1945, it did not question the sovereignty of

the Dutch but did not intend to help or participate in forceful steps on their part to impose control. John Carter Vincent outlined essential points in October 1946 with reference to both Indonesia and Indochina: "We recognize the sovereignty of the French and Dutch in those areas but we have also endeavored in appropriate ways to encourage the sovereigns and the dependent peoples to get together in agreements which will permit recovery from the war and at the same time give due consideration to the self-governing aspirations of the Indonesians and Vietnamese."³ The "appropriate ways" were like a driver's use of his low gear in a model-T Ford. Washington desired a compromise settlement, was willing to help, but did not want to shift to high gear. Meanwhile the British at the end of November withdrew their forces from Indonesia and terminated SEAC.

The United States approved of the Linggadjati Agreement finally reached by the Dutch and Indonesians in March 1947. Lord Killearn of Great Britain had played an important role in the negotiations. In April Washington gave de facto recognition to the Republic of Indonesia, and late in June it indicated willingness to provide financial help in return for the political cooperation of the Indonesian nationalists. Earlier in the year an American movie executive, Matthew Fox, had made them a private loan.

Controversy over the implementation of the Linggadjati Agreement reached a boiling point in the summer of 1947. The Hague had greatly increased its armed forces in the archipelago and believed it could lead from strength. On June 16 President Truman asserted that he did not favor joint good offices as proposed by Great Britain though he supported telling the Dutch and Indonesians of the American hope that they would continue efforts to settle their differences peacefully. The next day Secretary Marshall strongly urged in instructions that the Dutch not use military force in Indonesia to try to break the deadlock and that the Indonesians make further efforts toward a settlement. American opposition to the use of force was later reiterated. It was in vain. Beginning on July 21 the Dutch in their first police action enlarged the territory in Java and Sumatra under their control, especially populated territory. The United States now took a more active role in the controversy both inside and outside the United Nations. In fact, President Truman personally approved a policy that led Washington to tender good offices to the Dutch on July 31 and shortly thereafter to the Indonesians. The former promptly accepted but the latter attached conditions which caused the United States to terminate the offer. On July 30 Australia and India individually brought the conflict to the Security Council.

Second U.S. period

From the first Dutch police action and up to the start of the second in December 1948 American policy—in terms of the juridical arguments the United States made at the Security Council and in terms of the political

techniques the latter adopted largely at U.S. urging—"did in fact," according to Alastair M. Taylor, "work consistently to the advantage of the Netherlands."⁴ Washington opposed the withdrawal of troops; it favored the use of good offices in contrast to arbitration. The Dutch took a similar position, believing it worked to their advantage in the archipelago. American officials in Washington and at the United Nations were more favorable in interpreting Dutch intentions than those involved in the discussions under United Nations auspices in Indonesia.

From the beginning Washington had wanted the Netherlands to be moderate in handling the Indonesian crisis. The United States for some time did not urge policies that would run counter to a large and influential body of opinion in the Netherlands. As the containment policy of the Soviet Union was under way in Europe, the strengthening of the Dutch economy and of the influence of the Netherlands in the West was an American objective. At the same time it should be noted that Washington between the two police actions in Indonesia was not simply pro-Dutch per se in the dispute. After the first police action the United States in line with previous steps refused to sell arms to the Netherlands for use in Indonesia;⁵ and both the Dutch and Indonesians experienced at times considerable American pressure.

On July 31 and August 1, 1947, the Security Council debated the Indonesian question, and on August 1 called for a cease-fire by both sides. Although the Dutch and Republicans issued cease-fire orders, the fighting continued. On August 25 the Security Council authorized the creation of a Consular Commission on the spot in Batavia to report on the failure to implement the cease-fire and of a Committee of Good Offices (GOC) to serve in the controversy. By September 18 the membership of the Committee was established—Australia selected by the Republic of Indonesia, Belgium by the Netherlands, and the United States by Australia and Belgium. From now on Washington would have a major role in the field. Dr. Frank P. Graham served on the GOC followed by H. Merle Cochran who also served on its successor, the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI). In October the GOC arrived in Batavia, and helped in facilitating a twofold agreement approved on January 17, 1948, by the Netherlands and the Republic on the U.S.S. "Renville." With additions two days later, drafted by Graham after consultation with the Indonesians, the Renville Agreements provided for a truce and set forth a statement of principles for a permanent political settlement. For a while it had been touch and go with the Dutch threatening to resume military action. Secretary of State Marshall in Washington let the Dutch know he supported Graham.

The Madiun revolt of Moscow-oriented Indonesian Communists which broke out on September 18 had significant repercussions in later American policy toward Indonesia. President Sukarno and Premier Hatta quickly put down the revolt without the assistance of Dutch forces. Washington became convinced that the leaders of the Republic were anti-Communists who would

be weakened and who would become prey to extremists if their nationalist aspirations were not satisfied. Ho Chi Minh in Indochina was already indicating what a wedding of nationalism and communism in a colonial dependency could produce.

Third U.S. period

It was the second Dutch police action in December that precipitated a basic shift in American policy in the Indonesian controversy—a shift very much pro-Republic. Discussions on a political settlement between the two contestants had broken down; the good offices approach had not succeeded. Starting on December 19, the Dutch quickly seized the Republican capital of Jogjakarta and captured Sukarno, Hatta, and Sjahrir. The United States, which had tried to prevent the police action, on December 22 suspended economic aid to Indonesia and took vigorous leadership in the United Nations. The Security Council on December 24 called for a cease-fire and for the release of political prisoners, and on January 28, 1949, it also called for the return of the Republican government to Jogjakarta, outlined a timetable for the Dutch to transfer sovereignty to a United States of Indonesia, and strengthened the field machinery of the United Nations by replacing the GOC with the UNCI.

Meanwhile support for the Republic had been marshaled in January at a New Delhi conference of countries in Asia, Africa, and the Southwest Pacific called by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. In South East Asia the Philippines, Burma, and the Republic of Indonesia were represented, and Thailand sent an observer. Recommendations, indicative of rising nationalism in Asia and Africa, were made to the Security Council.

Although the second police action stimulated a course of events that finally led to the independence of Indonesia at the end of 1949, diplomatic and political roadblocks hampered the achievement of *Merdeka* or freedom. The Security Council acting when necessary and UNCI operating on a day-to-day basis made possible the role of the United Nations as a midwife in the birth of Indonesia. In July the Republican government whose leaders had been released from detention returned to Jogjakarta; and on August 1 another cease-fire agreement was adopted.

A round-table conference having significant and widespread representation officially opened on August 23 at The Hague. Along with the United States, Australia, and Belgium as members of UNCI were the Dutch and the Indonesian Republicans and Federalists. The discussions were complicated, for they reflected a heritage of ill will and a snake pit of conflicting interests. On October 31 the Republicans and the Federalists presented to the steering committee a provisional constitution under which the Republic and other Indonesian states would form a Republic of the United States of Indonesia. On November 2 the conference ended with the signing of documents

including an instrument for the Dutch transfer of sovereignty, a statute for the creation of a Netherlands-Indonesian Union, and a transitional accord. The Dutch States-General barely approved the settlement, reflecting in part the bitterness in the Netherlands over substantial U.S. pressure. On December 27 Queen Juliana in a historic ceremony formally transferred sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia. A new state was born from a vast colonial empire; President Sukarno now had an opportunity to change from being a successful revolutionary to an effective peacetime leader.

The significant shift in American attitude in the Indonesian dispute reflected foreign as well as domestic considerations. Although still emphasizing the importance of Europe and the containment of the Soviet Union, Washington was worried over the impending fall of mainland China to communism and its effects on the rest of Asia. Indonesia, it was stressed, was potentially the strongest country in South East Asia, and nationalism was now considered the best vehicle for keeping it from Communist control. After independence economic and other aid could be effectively used, it was hoped, to help remove the economic and social causes of communism and to help promote political stability. The "speediest acceleration" of trade between Indonesia and the rest of the world had long been urged. Washington was particularly angered over the Dutch use of force in the second police action. For the most part public opinion in the United States and congressional opinion supported Indonesia. The Senate even threatened to cut off economic aid to the Netherlands, and a situation might have arisen wherein The Hague would not accept the North Atlantic Treaty. Pro-Dutch sympathies in some circles of the State Department were greatly weakened. American attitudes toward Indonesia were bipartisan and not the subject of controversy between Republicans and Democrats.

Indonesia was admitted to the United Nations in September 1950. After the President of the General Assembly welcomed the new member, representatives of twenty-eight states joined in the greeting. In reply the Indonesian delegate emphasized the contributions of the United Nations in the winning of his country's independence. As the sixtieth member, Indonesia's in, out, and in role in the world organization would be most unusual.

After *Merdeka*, Djakarta's basic foreign policy was officially termed "independent and active." The republic opposed alignment with any "power bloc," each of the two major world groupings being described in these terms. It became a bitter foe of Western colonialism and a staunch champion of Asian and African nationalism, looking upon the struggle of colonial peoples for independence as the basic issue of the times. Sukarno would later make significant changes in the foreign policy of the country.

The role of the United States in the birth of Indonesia pleased neither the Indonesians nor the Dutch.⁵ The Hague believed Washington did too much to advance the cause of Indonesian independence and Djakarta claimed Washington did not do enough at the right times. Dr. Frank P. Graham was

influential though rather cautious and thought of himself as basically pro-United Nations; H. Merle Cochran was more forceful and in the end more decisive in the controversy. As the United States changed its role and the emphasis of its policy during the long conflict from a relatively inactive stance to an active one, first largely pro-Dutch in effect and then firmly pro-Indonesian in effect, criticism of Washington by the two contestants varied. In a controversy as complex and bitter as the one between the Dutch and Indonesians, the United States could not fully please either party without completely supporting one against the other.

Notes

- * Japan signed the Instrument of Surrender at Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945.
- † The basic position of the United States in the Dutch-Indonesian dispute was defined in a memorandum of December 26, 1945, for the use of the American delegation to the General Assembly in London. See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, Vol. VIII, pp. 787-89. It was noted, *inter alia*, that "in connection with the responsibilities relating to the surrender of the Japanese in the Netherlands East Indies there was no thought so far as the United States was concerned of extending the Allied mandate beyond these specific responsibilities." *Ibid.*, p. 788. For London's viewpoint as of January 25, 1946, see directive of the British government to Sir Archibald Clark Kerr who was being sent on a special mission to Batavia to reach a settlement between the Dutch and Indonesians. *Ibid.*, pp. 802-03.⁶
- ‡ An exception had been a commitment relating to the equipping of a Netherlands Marine contingent training in the United States before V-J Day. A surplus property credit worth \$100 million involving no arms or munitions was extended by the United States to the Dutch in the East Indies on July 11, 1946, to be used before January 1, 1948. Later the United States made available to Indonesia through the Netherlands \$101 million of commodity assistance through the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA).
- 1 "The Problem of Indonesia," *Major Problems of United States Foreign Policy: 1949-1950*, Brookings, Washington, 1949, p. 352.
- 2 For British problems in Indonesia during the early months of Mountbatten's command, as reported to the Department of State, see *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945*, Vol. VI, pp. 1158-92. For the whole period see Mountbatten, *Post Surrender Tasks*, pp. 289 ff.
- 3 Vincent *et al.*, *America's Future in the Pacific*, p. 15. Note also letter relative to Indonesia from Secretary Byrnes to Sol Bloom, Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, May 24, 1946, in *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, Vol. VIII, pp. 822-25.
- 4 Alastair M. Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations*, Cornell, Ithaca, 1960, p. 398. For official American policy in connection with the first police action, see *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947*, Vol. VI, *The Far East*, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1972, pp. 981-1101.
- 5 Compare, for example, Indonesian views in George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, Cornell, Ithaca, 1952, with Dutch views in P. S. Gerbrandy, *Indonesia*, Hutchinson, London, 1950, and Dirk U. Stikker, *Men of Responsibility: A Memoir*, Harper and Row, New York, 1965.
- 6 See *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946*, Vol. VIII, pp. 787-89, for Washington's basic position.

IRIAN IN INDONESIAN POLITICS

Lawrence S. Finkelstein

Source: *Far Eastern Survey* 20(8) (1951): 76-80.

Two months have passed since the close vote in the Indonesian Parliament in January which avoided a possible cabinet crisis over the ticklish question of Indonesia's claim to western New Guinea (Irian). Although this action temporarily removed Irian from the long list of critical political issues in Indonesia, the question of Irian was by no means dead. This was evident from President Sukarno's speech of March 1 calling for national unity as a prerequisite for fulfillment of Indonesia's aspirations in Irian.¹ It was revived also in spasmodic revelations of discussions in the State Commission established by the government to consider broader aspects of Indonesia's relations with the Netherlands as defined in the Round Table Agreements of November 1949,² under which Indonesian independence was acknowledged on December 27, 1949.

Any full treatment of the Irian question must dwell also on its Dutch manifestations, especially the extent to which the recent and continuing cabinet crisis in Holland must be attributed to dissatisfaction over the government's handling of the negotiations. Since this article is written in Jakarta, however, it will be confined to a consideration of the significance of Irian in Indonesian life and politics.

The root of the difficulty

The Dutch-Indonesian controversy over Irian stems from Article 2 of the Draft Charter of Transfer of Sovereignty, which provided that the *status quo* was to be maintained in Irian and that its future status was to be determined by negotiations within one year after the transfer of sovereignty. In a supplementary exchange of notes, it was further specified that the "*status quo*" was to involve Irian's "continuing under the Government of the Netherlands." These arrangements were adopted as a last-resort device to achieve acceptance of the agreements as a whole, to which the Irian issue threatened

to be a stumbling-block. The Irian clause was presumably supported by the United Nations Commission for Indonesia, which held a watching brief, and of which the United States was the most active and influential member through its representative, H. Merle Cochrane, now Ambassador to Indonesia.

During the year which intervened before the final failure of the Irian discussions at The Hague, in December 1950, positions on both sides were hardened. To add to the difficulties, Australia discovered, when it became apparent that the Round Table conferees would be unable to reach ready agreement on Irian, that Australia's national security was vitally at stake in the decision. And the fall of Australia's Labor government resulted in firm Australian opposition to sovereignty being transferred from the Netherlands to Indonesia, on the ground that Australian security against external invasion required stability and strength in Irian.

In Indonesia, President Sukarno was the principal spokesman for the "irredentist" spirit which swept the archipelago, and he was probably its chief inspiration. In a series of impassioned statements, the President promised the Indonesian people that Irian would be theirs by the end of 1950. A more moderate position was taken by Vice-President Hatta, who recognized the consequences which might ensue internally if President Sukarno's promise should not be fulfilled. But during most of 1950 the voices of moderation were few and public passion was aroused to the point where no Indonesian government could hope to survive if it did not maintain the Indonesian claim that sovereignty should be transferred.

This was the situation which the Natsir cabinet inherited when it came into power in September 1950. The following months were notable for the cabinet's success in avoiding serious outbursts of anti-Dutch sentiment and possible violence. The Irian issue was one of the eight points in the new cabinet's program, but the phrasing was moderate: "To aim at the settlement of the Irian question within this year." President Sukarno's speechmaking slackened, presumably as a result of cabinet pressure. On only one occasion did he publicly reiterate the stand which he had vociferously taken earlier in the year. As the December 27 deadline (the end of the one-year period in which the Irian issue was to be settled, according to the Hague agreement) approached, there were proposals for anti-Dutch boycotts, and the atmosphere was generally tense, with the possibility of serious violence. The principal source of agitation was Bung Tomo, fiery and demagogic leader of the Partai Rakjat Indonesia. But the government, on two occasions, made it clear that it did not favor the boycott movement and that it would not allow "threats, instigations, and intimidations to influence the atmosphere in our community."³

All attempts to negotiate the issue between the Indonesians and the Dutch were completely unsuccessful. In brief, the Indonesians would not settle for less than the transfer of sovereignty, although they eventually offered

substantial guarantees of Dutch interests. The Dutch, on the other hand, presumably similarly limited by the demands of internal politics, would not make this concession. Instead they offered progressively greater Indonesian participation in arrangements for a plebiscite in Irian, and finally offered to permit third-party (including UN) assistance.

The pros and cons

The Indonesians argued that Irian was ethnically and economically related to the people of the nearby Moluccas and that it has always been included within the area of the Netherlands East Indies, since the time of the Madjapahit Empire in the 14th to 16th centuries. The Dutch plebiscite proposals were regarded with suspicion, in view of earlier Dutch attempts to frustrate the Indonesian independence movement through the creation of federal territories, ostensibly autonomous, but actually largely manipulated by the Dutch.⁴ But the most telling argument was the certainty that the Indonesians would continue to regard their revolution as incomplete unless Irian were transferred to their sovereignty. The fact that Indonesians almost unanimously believed that Irian was rightfully theirs, and the implications of this belief for future Indonesian-Dutch relations, were far more significant than all the legal, moral, and pseudo-scientific arguments, no matter how valid. The Dutch, on the other hand, pointed to ethnic, geographic, and economic differences between Irian and other parts of Indonesia, noted that Irian had in fact been distinguished from the rest of the country in the Round Table Agreement, and argued that they possessed the means to contribute to Irian's development. Each side claimed that the people of Irian wanted it, and it alone, to be the permanent sovereign.

The attempts at negotiation resulted only in further polarization of views, which were diametrically opposed to begin with. The process began smoothly enough, with the decision at the first Union Conference, in March 1950, to set up a Joint Commission, composed equally of Dutch and Indonesian members. That was the beginning and the end of successful negotiation on the issue. The Commission visited Irian, amid bitter Indonesian complaints of Dutch obstruction. The Commission was unable even to agree on a final report recording the split between the two groups. Separate reports were filed. After prolonged delays, a special Irian Conference was convened in The Hague on December 2, 1950, and there the process was frustratingly repeated. With the failure of this meeting, prospects for an early settlement were dispelled. The situation now is that the two governments have failed to carry out Article 2 of the Charter of Transfer of Sovereignty that the issue should be settled in a year, the Netherlands retains sovereignty and jurisdiction over Irian, and the Indonesian government regards this as an infringement of Indonesian sovereign rights.

Debates in parliament

In the parliamentary debates following the failure of the Hague discussions, which assumed near-crisis proportions, the salient fact was that all parties to the debate were united in their demand that Irian should be transferred to Indonesia. On this there was no disagreement. The issues in the debate concerned the tactics to be followed, and the relative importance to be attached to Irian as contrasted with other features of the Round Table agreements. It became clear that for many members of Parliament, representing an extensive bloc of political parties, the primary issue was not Irian itself, but rather the economic provisions of the Round Table agreements, which imposed certain obligations on Indonesia and granted certain privileges to the Netherlands. There has been considerable disagreement in Indonesia with the Hatta government's willingness to accept what many regarded as economic servitudes as the price for political independence. The Socialist Party (Partai Socialis Indonesia), particularly, under the leadership of former Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir, had bitterly condemned the Round Table agreements on the ground that they achieved only the forms of independence in exchange for a continuation of real economic colonialism. This sentiment emerged very strongly during the Irian debate.

Indonesian government's position

The government's position, remarkable for its firm evasion of the embarrassing dilemma which the failure of the talks created, was clearly presented by Prime Minister Natsir in a statement before Parliament on January 3, 1951.⁵ In the debates which followed, Natsir was revealed as a parliamentary tactician of the first order. But at no time did the government propose any concrete program for realizing the clearly unanimous aim of the Indonesian people to gain full and acknowledged sovereignty over Irian. Nor could it, realistically.

In his statement, the Prime Minister restated Indonesia's claim, described the course of the abortive negotiations, and emphasized that the unsuccessful talks had "deteriorated and . . . brought about a failure in Indonesian-Dutch relations." The government, he said, would continue to press Indonesia's national claim "by means of proper ways." No further conference could succeed, unless it were based on the principle that sovereignty should be transferred. Any negotiations which did not have this result would intensify Dutch-Indonesian tensions. Mr. Natsir then proceeded to announce that the discussions had created a new situation in Dutch-Indonesian relations, and that the relationship would have to be re-examined in accordance with the new facts. The government, he said, was "of the opinion that the Indonesian-Dutch agreements, including the Statute of the Union, need reconsideration and the seeking of new principles." Shortly thereafter, the government

announced the creation of an extraordinary State Commission, composed of prominent citizens outside the government, but including members of Parliament, to re-examine the entire structure of Dutch-Indonesian relationships in order to determine which of the agreements Indonesia could properly and profitably discard. It was made clear, however, that Indonesia did not contemplate unilateral action, and that any changes in the instruments which define Indonesian-Dutch relations would be effected by joint consultation.

The government's program must probably be regarded as having three purposes: (1) to strengthen the government's position in relation to the people and Parliament by espousing the Irian cause; (2) to bring pressure to bear against the Dutch on the Irian issue by threatening modification of the Round Table agreements; and (3) to use the Irian issue as a lever to effect modifications in the distasteful aspects of the Round Table agreements.

Action on Two Measures

Discussion of the Prime Minister's statement centered on two motions which were introduced in Parliament. One, by Kusnan of the Indonesian National Party (Partai Nasional Indonesia), the chief opposition group, urged the government to maintain the claim for sovereignty over Irian, to cancel the Dutch-Indonesian Union immediately, and to reconsider the other Round Table agreements, within a three-month period, with a view to canceling them. The second motion, introduced by Dr. Djody Gondokusumo, of the National People's Party (Partai Rakjat Nasional) was less uncompromising. It urged that the government not resume negotiations unless they should be based on the principle of sovereignty transfer, that the Netherlands be given two months in which to accept this principle, and, if no reply should be forthcoming, that the Union Statute be canceled and the other agreements reconsidered, with a view to canceling those unfavorable to Indonesia.

These two motions differed only in timing and emphasis. The Kusnan motion separated the issue of the Round Table agreements from the Irian issue and made modification of the economic provisions an objective by itself. It called for immediate rather than delayed action. The Djody motion, on the other hand, made modification of the Round Table agreements depend on the Irian issue.

The government opposed the Kusnan motion and private discussions resulted in the decision, at a late stage of the debate, that the Djody motion was so close to the government position as to offer no real alternative; in consequence, it was withdrawn by its sponsor. The debate raged for about ten days. When the vote was finally taken, on January 11, the result was not clear-cut. It early became evident that in order to defeat the coalition supporting the Kusnan motion, which consisted of the PNI, numerically the

second strongest party in Parliament, the Communist Party (Partai Komunis Indonesia), the Trotskyist Partai Murba, and various other fragments, predominantly leftwing, the government would need the support, or at least the abstention, of all the parties which composed the government's majority coalition. Some of the government parties, such as the Partai Socialis Indonesia and the Christian Party (Parkindo), favored the Kusnan motion's emphasis on modification of the Round Table agreements for their own sake, and did not support the somewhat more nationalistic emphasis of the government (and the Djody motion) on the Irian issue. However, their votes for the Kusnan motion would have defeated the government, with the consequent need to form a new cabinet, possibly by the PNI. This would almost certainly have resulted in a prolonged cabinet crisis, judging by Prime Minister Natsir's difficulties in forming the present cabinet in September 1950. Since there were many urgent internal problems—security, inflation, constitutional transition, etc.—which required firm government leadership, both the PSI and Parkindo decided that they would have to support the government, at least by abstaining.

As a result, the government won the day by the narrow margin of 63 votes for the Kusnan motion and 66 against. Thus only 129 votes were cast on this vital measure, out of a total Parliament membership of 224. Significantly, there were a great many absentees, including some members of Prime Minister Natsir's own Masjumi Party. Some observers were led to believe that the lack of solidarity in the principal government party on this issue reflected a significant cleavage within the party, and there have since been several other grounds for suspecting that the Masjumi is far from solid. Recently, for example, another Masjumi leader, Jusuf Wibisono, suggested that the Prime Minister should resign.⁶

The implications of the vote, and the fact that a majority of the members of the Parliament probably actually opposed the government's position, although they were unwilling to assume responsibility for its downfall, point to the seriousness of the tensions which are building up in Indonesian-Dutch relations. During the entire debate, not one member of Parliament rose to suggest that Indonesia could compromise on the issue, or could accept mediation by a third party. A majority of the members present were clearly willing, as indicated by their votes for the Kusnan motion or their abstentions, to proceed to an immediate disruption of the Union arrangement with the Netherlands, partly out of pique over Irian, but perhaps more significantly out of dissatisfaction over the terms of the basic relationship. It was perhaps to have been anticipated that the difficulties encountered by this newly independent country in achieving internal stabilization and greater prosperity for the Indonesian people would lead to pressures to find an external scapegoat. Clearly, dissolution of the Round Table agreements will not solve the many pressing problems which confront Indonesia today. But the significant fact is that many Indonesian leaders seem to think that it will. It

is perhaps to the credit of the Natsir government that it succeeded in channelling the pent-up emotions of the Indonesian people over the Irian issue into an undertaking which may prove profitable. Clearly there are inequities in the existing economic relations, with Dutch monopoly in shipping and near monopoly in international air transport, with special status for Dutch companies and personnel. Inevitably, adjustments will have to be made in arrangements which were forged in the heat of the Indonesian drive for independence.

But it is equally clear that the parliamentary debate did not satisfy the emotional insistence of the Indonesian people that Indonesian independence should be completed by the extension of Indonesian domain, as President Sukarno once put it, "from Sabang to Merauke."⁷ Prime Minister Natsir skilfully avoided the pitfall which the extremists in both Holland and Indonesia had prepared. But the issue will not long lie dormant. It will surely arise again, to plague this government or its successors. And so long as it remains unsettled it will create an emotional smog which renders more difficult the process of rationalizing Indonesian-Dutch relations, a delicate operation which will require clear and rational attention, but which will unfortunately have to take place in an atmosphere of tensions, heightened by the smoldering Irian issue.

In these circumstances, it would seem to this writer that the best interests of both parties require, above all, settlement of the dispute. Available knowledge reveals nothing to support the theory, on which both parties seem to operate, that Irian is worth all the fuss and exacerbated relations. From many points of view, the idea of United Nations trusteeship for the territory, perhaps involving union of Irian with Australian Papua, and with the part of New Guinea which is under Australian trusteeship, is highly attractive. Agreement on such a scheme would remove Irian from the arena of Dutch-Indonesian negotiation. Such an arrangement might go far toward satisfying Australian fears concerning a security threat from this quarter. Finally, and not insignificantly, a trusteeship arrangement would offer the peoples of the world some assurance that the people of Irian do not count for nothing, and that their interests in the matter were likewise being taken into consideration.

Notes

- 1 In a public address delivered in Sukabumi on March 1, 1951. See Aneta News Bulletin (English language edition), March 2, 1951.
- 2 See Amry Vandenbosch, "The Netherlands-Indonesian Union," *Far Eastern Survey*, January 11, 1950.
- 3 Government statement of December 28, 1950. Quoted, for example, in *Indonesian Affairs*, vol. I, no. 1, January 1951, p. 5.
- 4 Cf. George McT. Kahin, "Indirect Rule in East Indonesia," *Pacific Affairs*, September 1949.

- 5 The text of the statement may be found in *Indonesian Affairs*, cited, p. 1.
- 6 See Aneta News Bulletin, March 5, 1951.
- 7 In a speech on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of Indonesia's independence, on August 17, 1950.

Perpustakaan

THE WEST NEW GUINEA ARGUMENT

J. A. C. Mackie

Source: *Australian Outlook* 16(1) (1962): 26-46.

Ever since 1950, calm assessment of the issues at stake in the West New Guinea dispute has to a large extent been obscured by the moral indignation aroused on both sides. Today, as the Dutch-Indonesian conflict develops towards a point where negotiations and an eventual compromise solution at last seem possible¹—indeed, unavoidable, as far as the Dutch are concerned—moral indignation is turning out to be an expensive luxury which Australians, particularly, can hardly afford to indulge in. If concessions are to be made from both sides for the sake of a peaceful settlement, it will be essential for each to abandon the idea that it alone is right and its adversary has no case whatever. This should not be difficult when we recall how evenly balanced the argument is, with no monopoly of virtue on either side in the way the dispute has developed.

The great source of difficulty throughout this dispute has always been the absolute, *a priori* nature of the principles to which each side has appealed. Indonesia has believed that her case is incontrovertibly right because the anti-colonialist arguments to which she refers override (in her view) the Dutch arguments. She has therefore felt justified in resorting to extreme methods of putting pressure on the Dutch—nationalisation of their properties in 1957-59, threats of armed invasion in 1961-62—especially as she feels that the Dutch have manoeuvred her into a position from which she has had no other choice. From the other side, condemnation of Indonesia has extended far beyond her methods, which have certainly been open to strong criticism; we have refused from the outset to admit that she has had any case whatever, thereby encouraging her resort to extreme measures. Because each side has relied on such simple and emotionally charged moral appeals, neither has been willing (or able) to compromise or agree to a phase-by-phase programme of bargaining, which would seem

to have constituted the path of sense, maturity and realism for all parties to the dispute.

The background forces

West New Guinea is a large area of rugged inland mountains and uninviting coastal swamps. Before 1950 the Dutch had established only a few settlements, mostly on the coast or rivers (including the notorious malaria-ridden prison camp at Boven Digoel), and the only productive resource they had significantly developed was the oil-field at Sorong. Even this, however, has never proved as rich as it was originally believed to be and by 1961 it was being abandoned. Some copra is grown in New Guinea and hopes have been held out that both rice and plantation crops could be grown there economically, though the island has nothing like the fertile volcanic soil of Java. But West New Guinea is one of the most expensive and difficult regions on each to open up for development, in terms of transport costs alone. It has been costing the Dutch Government more than £10 million per annum in subsidy for the budget and the sum has risen steadily since 1950. Its exports total about £3½ million and imports £12 million. Dutch capital has shown almost no interest in the region as a field for investment; rumours of potential uranium deposits and other minerals sustained hopes for a few years after 1950 that West New Guinea might prove as profitable as the Congo, but on the whole economic considerations have been far less important than political ones.

Some 350,000 Papuan inhabitants have been enumerated and there may be 700,000 altogether in West New Guinea. Whether these people should be classified racially or culturally as Melanesian or Indonesian has been a matter of controversy. Their languages differ greatly even within small areas and show marked dissimilarities both to Bahasa Indonesia and to the Melanesian coastal languages of the east. Their racial and cultural differences from the Malaysian peoples of Indonesia are undeniable and primarily for this reason the Dutch have insisted since 1946 that the Papuans' lower level of civilisation and similarities with the Melanesians of the east require that they should be treated separately from the rest of Indonesia. The Indonesians deny that the racial differences are important, since racial homogeneity is not the basis for their nationhood; in any case, there is a gradation of racial groupings as one moves east in Indonesia and the Ambonese (highly educated and Christianised though they are) have strong racial affinities with the Papuans. Moreover, from a racial and cultural point of view, the Dayaks of Borneo are in an analogous position to the Papuans, but no-one suggests separate nationhood for them. Argument over the relevance of these racial and cultural differences has been lengthy and bitter, since it epitomises the two conflicting approaches to the wider question of New Guinea's relationship to Indonesia, which Indonesia sees as essentially *historic* (i.e. the

Indonesian nation a historic entity, West New Guinea historically part of Indonesia and colonial rule an outdated survival), whereas the Dutch see it as a problem of the Papuans' cultural identity and advancement, which they believed they could promote more effectively than the Indonesians.

Historical ties always constitute one of the most controversial criteria of nationhood, but although the links between Indonesia and West New Guinea have certainly been loose, they have been definite enough to constitute the strongest part of Indonesia's case. Assertions that some parts of West New Guinea formed part of the Indonesia-wide 14th century empire of Madjapahit are perhaps not very relevant today—though they are based on the conclusions of Dutch scholars! But the claims of the Sultan of Tidore to suzerainty over the north coast of West New Guinea cannot be brushed aside, for his people were almost certainly responsible for introducing certain distinctly Malaysian cultural traits among the coastal Papuans, while it was by virtue of his claims that the Dutch justified their annexation of the area long after a treaty of 1660 had reduced him to the status of a Dutch vassal.

The Dutch maintained the claim mainly for the strategic purpose of keeping foreign intruders away from the eastern border of their wealthier colonies.² They made little attempt to open the island up for trading purposes or even to bring it under direct rule as their treaties with the Sultans of Tidore later entitled them to. For the sake of convenience and economy, the Dutch maintained indirect rule over the area through the legal fiction of Tidorese suzerainty right up to July 1949, when it was clear that Tidore would soon become part of the new independent Indonesia. This sudden concern to hold on to an area which had previously been completely neglected must be seen against the psychological and political reaction to the loss of the Dutch colonial empire between 1945–49.

The cardinal factor behind Dutch attitudes by 1949 was a complex reaction to the loss of their Indonesian colony at large. In part it was a sheer desire to retain a place in the sun—conservatives spoke of preserving 'this last emerald from the girdle of emeralds . . . as the last relic to the Netherlands crown', others wanted to preserve a territory where they could vindicate their good intentions and their pre-war name as the world's best colonial rulers after the bitter calumnies of the four-year struggle with Indonesia. Even the most liberal Dutchmen had been shocked and hurt by the bitterness of Indonesia's reproaches, for they believed they had loved the Indonesians and were loved in return with a child-like devotion. Yet they had other colonies in the West Indies where they could have made amends if that had been the whole story. Instead, it seems that shock and frustration had dried up the springs of love and left, among the diehards, a positive desire to frustrate Indonesia's aspirations towards New Guinea, and, among the moderates, a narrowness of vision which is exemplified in the rigidity shown by the Labour Prime Minister Drees towards every suggestion of compromise after 1949.³ A genuine concern to do something at the last minute for the

long-neglected Papuans was, no doubt; also a factor—and one which conveniently coincided with the need to find new jobs for some of the colonial civil servants. But these dispositions might not have been significant had not events created, first, a very delicate political balance in Holland at the time when parliament had to approve the granting of independence to Indonesia and, second, a situation after 1950 wherein resistance to Indonesia was to prove more popular than further concessions to her.

On the Indonesian side, the basic dynamic all along has been the simple fact that any retention of Dutch colonial rule affronted the principle of nationalism upon which their struggle for independence had been based. The Federalist leaders co-operating with the Dutch (whom Republicans considered Dutch 'puppets') were as vehement as Soekarno on this score and resisted four Dutch attempts between 1945 and 1949 to treat West New Guinea as a separate area to which the proposals for self-government and independence would not apply.⁴ They could not afford to be branded as less genuinely nationalist than the Republicans; Soekarno's opponents would no more have been able to afford this risk by opposing the demand openly in recent years, even if they had been disposed to, which they have not. Nationalists must attach importance to the concept of the national territory, both for symbolic and logical reasons, just as they commemorate the beginning of their independence from the act of proclamation, not the formal transfer of sovereignty by the colonial power.⁵ Opinions differ in Indonesia about the methods and the urgency of incorporating West New Guinea into the national territory, but not about the essential justice of the assertion that it should be incorporated. And here, of course, their claim is in harmony with nationalist sympathies throughout the world, since colonialism is regarded as doomed and damned—so that Indonesians feel both justified and supported by the tide of world history in a way which makes a strong appeal, particularly within the Javanese *weltanschauung*.

That the West Irian issue has to some extent been utilised in Indonesia to distract attention from domestic political problems cannot be denied. But a red herring theory should not be pushed too far. This is certainly not why the Communists have supported it. Nor can we infer that it would have been forgotten if Indonesia had experienced economic progress and political tranquillity, for the reasons given above. A stronger Indonesia might even have been able to assert the claim more effectively. The fact is that the political dynamics behind Indonesia's campaign for the return of West Irian have been highly complex, interwoven with many other strands of domestic politics. The same could also be said of the Dutch, in explanation of their reluctance to achieve a compromise settlement in the early years of the dispute when it might have been possible.

The development of the dispute

The deadlock over West New Guinea developed at the 1949 Round Table Conference at The Hague when two articles referring to the issue were adopted in a form that was deliberately obscure, so that the agreement which had been reached on the major questions of Indonesian independence would not be jeopardised by continued dispute over a minor symbol. Whenever West New Guinea had come under discussion during the previous three years, the Dutch had never forced an issue on their several proposals to give the area a special status in an independent Indonesia. Their Federalist appointees had rejected such a notion at the 1946 Den Pasar conference and the Republic was in a strong enough position to incorporate in the 1947 Linggadjati Agreement a form of words on this matter which could hardly be interpreted as the Dutch desired.⁶ That the Dutch government was able to make an issue of the matter in 1949 and insist that Indonesia accept an unsatisfactory verbal compromise which could obviously be utilised to her disadvantage must be explained in terms of the changed bargaining positions.

In 1949 Holland was yielding the substance of independence reluctantly and it was far from certain that the party coalition supporting the Dutch government would hold together in parliament to ratify the constitutional change by the two-thirds majority required. The government was under strong conservative pressure to salvage something from the wreckage of her colonial empire to sugar the pill as a symbol of continued greatness.⁷ It appears, also, that the UN. Commission for Indonesia played an influential part at the last minute, when the entire Hague Conference seemed in danger of collapsing because both sides were intransigent on this largely symbolic issue, by persuading Indonesia to accept the compromise finally adopted—that a decision be deferred for further talks during the following year and that the Agreement be drafted in such a way that neither party could infer that the wording attributed West New Guinea to it.⁸

As a result the Draft Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty contains the following controversial articles which have since become notorious:

Article 1

1. The Kingdom of the Netherlands unconditionally and irrevocably transfers complete sovereignty over Indonesia to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia and thereby recognises said republic as an independent and sovereign state.

2. The Republic of the United States of Indonesia accepts said sovereignty on the basis of the provisions of its constitution . . .

Article 2. With regard to the Residency of New Guinea it is decided . . . in view of the fact that it has not yet been possible to reconcile the views of the parties on New Guinea, which remain therefore in

dispute . . . that the status quo of the Residency of New Guinea shall be maintained with the stipulation that within a year from the date of transfer of sovereignty to the R.U.S.I. the question of the political status of New Guinea be determined through negotiations between the R.U.S.I. and the Kingdom of the Netherlands . . .'

The wording of these articles was deliberately left vague in two important points. Article 1 included no definition of the territory of 'Indonesia' and neither referred to the former Netherlands Indies nor excluded New Guinea from the area over which sovereignty was being transferred. In Article 2 the vague term 'status quo' was used instead of 'sovereignty' (and no precise reference was made in the text regarding the status of the Dutch in New Guinea) so that it would be impossible to draw any implications from the wording of the agreement. However both parties agreed to define the term 'status quo' separately in a later Exchange of Notes to mean 'continuing under the Government of the Netherlands'. Again the word 'sovereignty' was specifically avoided. (Actually this official English translation of the Notes mysteriously left out an important phrase from the Dutch and Indonesian texts, which the Indonesian government later translated more fully as 'continuing under the authority of the Government of the Netherlands over the Residency of New Guinea'.⁹) These words were held to cover the continuation of Dutch administration and control, but not *sovereignty*—and it was the legal question of where sovereignty resided after the failure of talks in 1950 that constituted the crux of the dispute.

It is not known whether the Drees government really intended at the time that a compromise might be reached or was already as determined as its parliamentary opponents that this last piece of territory should not be yielded to Indonesia. Some Dutch spokesmen seemed genuinely convinced in late 1949 that a new era of Indonesian-Dutch co-operation was dawning. On the other hand, among the ex-colonial officials who were now dominant in the Department of Overseas Territories, there were evidently some who were already preparing to entrench the Dutch position on a permanent rather than temporary basis. They had earlier detached West New Guinea from the legal authority of the Sultan of Tidore, two months before the Round Table Conference. But a decree for the administrative regulation of New Guinea, issued on 29 December, 1949, a bare two days after the transfer of sovereignty, seemed almost calculated to torpedo co-operation with the Indonesians by gratuitously imposing an old style colonial constitution on the territory with every appearance of permanence.¹⁰ By this time it was obvious that the change of government in Australia would probably tilt the balance in the U.N. Commission for Indonesia in favour of the Netherlands, so that if the 1950 talks deadlocked, the interpretation of the contentious clauses of the Round Table Conference Agreement would probably favour them simply because there was no clear

basis for changing the status quo under which the Dutch remained in effective possession of the territory.

In March 1950, the West New Guinea question was taken up at the first Ministerial Conference held under the Netherlands-Indonesian Union, a shadowy arrangement for consultation between the two states which was intended to have something of the binding effect achieved by the British Commonwealth tie. Despite a number of incidents which had already created friction on both sides since the Hague Conference, the Ministers approached the thorny dispute in an atmosphere of goodwill, but they were unable to reach any solution. In preparation for a 'further and definitive treatment of this question', each side appointed three members to a mixed commission which was to prepare a report for later consideration by a special Union Conference on the matter. But almost as soon as it met, the New Guinea Commission bogged down over procedural wrangles.¹¹ The Indonesian delegation conceived the Commission's function as merely to determine *how* (not whether) sovereignty over the island should be transferred. From this basic divergence of viewpoint, no attempt to reach agreement on details of the problem made any progress. Even the Commission's visit to New Guinea to investigate the wishes of the local inhabitants merely showed that both sides could produce supporters whom the other side regarded as unrepresentative. By July 1950 the impossibility of reaching any worthwhile agreement within the Commission had become clear and the two delegations issued separate and incompatible reports which merely emphasised their basic differences of viewpoint.

By this time, other factors had begun to erode away any hopes that a new spirit of goodwill and compromise on both sides might bridge the gap between the two bargaining positions. Relations were strained by the movement within Indonesia to set up a unitary state in place of the federal R.U.S.I. devised at the Round Table Conference. The Dutch saw this as a breach of the Hague Agreements and a further machination by the Republic to weaken the pro-Dutch elements, especially after the Djakarta government used force to quell resistance to its changes in Makassar and Ambon. On the other hand, Indonesia suspected the Dutch of attempting to subvert the new Republic through such episodes as 'Turk' Westerling's abortive *coup* in January and Dr Soumokil's attempt to form a separate Republic of the South Moluccas. In such circumstances, both governments were more likely to use the West New Guinea question as a stick to beat the other rather than as one which itself required a spirit of give-and-take.¹²

Moreover, the Dutch government was confirmed in its standpoint by two international developments. Australia switched from the hesitantly pro-Indonesian attitude adopted by the Chifley government to a vehemently pro-Dutch position now taken up by both Liberal government and Labour opposition. After Mr (now Sir Percy) Spender's visit to The Hague in August 1950, Australia's opposition to Indonesia's claim was quite unequivocal. It is

doubtful, however, whether Australian prompting played any significant part in inclining the Dutch against compromise with Indonesia in 1950; the major determinants of Dutch policy derived from the pressures of her domestic politics, although Australia's potential influence if the U.N.C.I. were to be recalled would have been a convenience to her. The outbreak of the Korean war also reduced the likelihood that America would give her support to Indonesia, as she had in 1949; consequently her decision to remain entirely neutral in the dispute meant tacit acquiescence in the status quo, from which the Dutch were bound to benefit rather than the Indonesians.

In the interval between the collapse of the New Guinea Commission and the expiration on December 27 of the twelve months specified for discussions under the Hague Agreement, both sides took up irreconcilable debating positions which have not changed greatly in the subsequent years. In August, President Soekarno claimed that West New Guinea was Indonesian territory, illegally occupied by the Dutch. The Dutch denied that sovereignty over West New Guinea had been transferred under the Hague Agreement and insisted that they would exercise it 'until the right of self-determination is utilised by the population of New Guinea'—a date which looked inconceivably remote in 1950 and merely meant an indefinite continuation of colonial rule in Indonesian eyes. In December, a second Ministerial Conference was held in the hope of reaching a last-minute settlement before the twelve month time limit expired. Indonesia offered a seven-point guarantee of Dutch rights and interests in West New Guinea as an inducement to the Dutch to concede sovereignty to her.¹² But the Dutch adamantly refused to go so far. Their greatest concession was a final proposal to transfer formal sovereignty to the nebulous Netherlands-Indonesian Union, under which the Dutch would exercise *de facto* control. Alternatively, negotiations should be continued under the auspices of the U.N.C.I. Even if the Indonesian government had been inclined to compromise (and the two cabinets of 1950 were the most 'moderate' in this respect in Indonesia's history), it could not accept either proposal for both political and dialectical reasons. A transfer of sovereignty to the Netherlands-Indonesian Union was unacceptable, since nothing less than Indonesian sovereignty was compatible with the nationalist basis of her claim, except as an interim expedient. Continued negotiations in the U.N.C.I. were unlikely to help her when two of its three members now favoured the Dutch side. In any case, domestic pressures were building up within Indonesia against a policy of continued negotiation with the Dutch and the Natsir government was highly vulnerable to the attacks of politicians (including the President) who wanted to use the threat of taking over Dutch properties in Indonesia. And so the year prescribed for negotiations ended with less hope than ever of reaching a settlement, for the Dutch now proclaimed, as a result, that 'Netherlands sovereignty and the status quo are maintained'.

Political changes within Holland acted as a further obstacle to compromise at this stage, although many Dutch businessmen in Indonesia were anxious that the dispute should be amicably settled, in the hope that overall relations between the two countries would then improve. One wing of the Dutch Labour Party was taking the same view, but these pro-Indonesian elements lost ground in a cabinet crisis which developed as a result of Foreign Minister Stikker's attitude during the second Ministerial Conference. Stikker was a businessman from the small, middle-of-the-road Liberal Party, which had the closest links with the large Dutch companies with investments in Indonesia; he now came under criticism for his conciliatory approach to the dispute with Indonesia and, in the cabinet reshuffle which followed his resignation, the government coalition stiffened in its resistance to a compromise settlement. Even within the Labour Party, Prime Minister Drees was able to silence the few members who predicted that stubbornness on the New Guinea issue would lead to a breakdown of friendly relations with Indonesia.¹⁴

The last chance to resume negotiations with some hope that both sides might modify their rigid arguments of 1950 came when Indonesia sent Professor Soepomo to Holland for informal talks late in 1951, to be followed by formal discussions on abrogation of the Union and the question of West Irian. This alone was something of a concession by both governments, since it at least implied that the question of sovereignty had not been settled by default as from 27 December 1950. (The Dutch cabinet had previously contemplated submitting the entire question to the United Nations, but was forced to change its mind by parliamentary opposition.) The more flexible mood of both sides was shown also in Indonesia's willingness to drop her earlier insistence that only the ways and means of a transfer of sovereignty were subject to discussion and again in Soepomo's proposal for joint Netherlands-Indonesian 'responsibility for administration' during the course of discussions. However the atmosphere was again disturbed by the timing and wording of a Dutch constitutional change submitted to Parliament in November, in which the official 'geographical' definition of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (now divested of Indonesia) specifically included West New Guinea. Shortly afterwards Indonesia impounded two Dutch ships found to be carrying light arms to New Guinea and both incidents created a good deal of bitterness.

The Soepomo talks were interrupted by an Indonesian cabinet crisis early in 1952 and no further steps were taken before a Dutch election brought representatives of the extremely conservative Anti-Revolutionary party into the Dutch government for the first time since the war. There is a report that unofficial feelers were put out partly on behalf of Dutch business interests in 1952, which found a favourable response in high Indonesian government circles to the idea of a twenty year period of Dutch administration in West New Guinea under the supervision of a five-nation commission, with a plebiscite at the end of it.¹⁵ But the Dutch cabinet was too fearful of public

opinion to take up negotiations on this basis and in 1953 struck out in the opposite direction with talks with Australia on administrative co-operation over New Guinea.

By 1953 the mood of both sides had hardened too much for the moderates to appeal effectively to the advantages of compromise. A decisive shift in the political balance in Indonesia had reduced the political influence of the 'westernisers' who had been most inclined to negotiate with the Dutch.¹⁶ The Ali Sastroamidjojo cabinet which came into power in mid-1953 represented the parties which were prepared to make life more difficult for Dutch capital in Indonesia rather than less. It began to put pressure on Holland by referring the West New Guinea dispute to the United Nations and proceeding with the abrogation of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union. Relations between the two countries deteriorated sharply and only the threat of losing their remaining investments in Indonesia now seemed likely to induce the Dutch to resume negotiations. They for their part seem to have assumed that Indonesia was bluffing—or else they had so discounted their investments there that they were prepared to risk confiscation.

Indonesia submitted the question of West New Guinea to the U.N. General Assembly four times between 1954 and 1957, but without obtaining the two-thirds majority needed to give force to a resolution on the issue. In 1955, a momentary opportunity for negotiations in a more conciliatory spirit over revision of the Hague Agreements was lost when the Dutch refused to respond to Indonesian overtures.¹⁷ Indonesia then proceeded to repudiate the Agreements—and thereby deprived herself of any legal claim to West New Guinea based on the intent of Article II. Both sides were now becoming exasperated and bitter, so that by 1957 the U.N. debate took place against a background of obscure Indonesian threats to take action that would 'startle the world' if the vote again went against her. Domestic uncertainties within Indonesia played a part here in inclining President Soekarno towards a course of action which was embarrassing to the moderates opposing him. But when the U.N. vote again failed, the anti-Dutch campaign was allowed to spill over into the 'take-over' of Dutch enterprises and their subsequent nationalisation in 1958-59.¹⁸

Indonesia had now played her trump card and, unless the Dutch quickly offered to do a deal for the sake of their properties, she could apply no other effective sanction except the threat of force. There are some signs that she delayed the final formalities of nationalisation in 1958, hoping that the Dutch would offer to negotiate. But the latter were in no mood to make concessions—and by that time thoroughly sceptical whether there was any worthwhile future for their investments in Indonesia. An election in 1959 brought into office the most conservative coalition since the war and the policy it embarked on of hastening the independence of West New Guinea was the most effective that could have been conceived to frustrate Indonesia's claim to the area once and for all.

With the promise in April 1960 that the new New Guinea Council would be able to discuss a time-table for ultimate self-government, the Dutch took the decisive step in their 'crash programme' for the creation of a Papuan elite to whom authority could be transferred. They also began to advance beyond the policy of keeping in step with the Australian authorities through administrative co-operation to keep open the possibility of eventual fusion of eastern and western New Guinea, for Australia's programme of political advancement was far less bold than this. After the Dutch-Australian agreement on administrative co-operation in November 1957, the Dutch showed some enthusiasm for the idea of a 'Melanesian federation' and an extension from administrative to political co-operation; but the Australian government was hesitant about the difficulties this would present both in her own colonial territories and in relations with Indonesia. By the middle of 1960, it was quite plain that the Dutch were moving too fast for Australia's liking.¹⁹

The Dutch sent the aircraft carrier *Karel Doorman* to show the flag in New Guinea waters shortly after their decision to proceed with the People's Council there. This gave Indonesia an excuse to claim 'provocation' and intensify her naval patrols in the area. The danger of a serious naval clash now increased greatly, for small guerrilla forces had earlier been infiltrating into New Guinea and Indonesia began to qualify her earlier assurances that she would not resort to force by adding that they did not apply to resisting 'aggression'. Her military build-up took a dramatic turn in December 1960 with a decision to purchase \$400 million worth of arms from Russia, although her Army leaders appear to have taken this decision only after the failure of Tengku Abdul Rahman's mediation efforts, which General Nasution himself had encouraged.

Even then, however, Indonesia's political tactics varied, to some extent in accordance with the see-saw of Army-Soekarno politics in Djakarta. A 'peace strategy' of talks with Dutch businessmen to find the basis for a settlement was tried in mid-1961, in addition to attempts to win American and Afro-Asian diplomatic support.²⁰ But time was no longer on Indonesia's side unless a military conflict was envisaged. The Dutch were having some success in bringing the Papuan leaders to speak out against her and they even felt confident enough to offer in the U.N. General Assembly to transfer sovereignty to the Papuans after a period of U.N.-supervised trusteeship, under which the right of self-determination would be guaranteed. Indonesia was able to muster enough votes to have this motion rejected, but fewer of the new Afro-Asian nations supported her than she would have needed to take the initiative there herself. She reaffirmed her 1957 decision not to submit the issue to the General Assembly again.

The General Assembly's rejection of the Dutch motion left that country with no alternative except to attempt negotiations with Indonesia or contemplate an eventual trial of strength with her in West New Guinea. In the last week of 1961, the Dutch cabinet indicated its preference for the first of

these courses when it significantly modified its earlier attitudes towards negotiations by deciding to hold talks on the West New Guinea issue *without* insisting that the principle of self-determination be accepted as a prior condition. Diplomatic feelers were being put out by both countries even at the time when President Soekarno was issuing his 'command' for the liberation of West New Guinea on December 19. Despite the military build-up of the following weeks, there appears to have been some element of bluff and a good deal of domestic political manoeuvring involved in these events.²¹ But their full significance is shrouded in the secrecy with which both parties began to approach the negotiating table, suspiciously and reluctantly, in early 1962. There is no doubt that some hard bargaining lies ahead before West New Guinea's future is decided, but at least it seems that the deadlock of 1950-61 cannot last much longer.

Assessment of the arguments

What basis for judgment between these two cases should be used, when there is so little common ground for adjudication between the disputants and such a chequered background of motives and politics involved? A body like the International Court would obviously find such difficulty in justifying any single *ratio decidendi* that it would probably refuse to adjudicate or arbitrate. Consequently, the dispute remains so heavily political in character that evaluation of the two cases must be highly subjective. However, it is worth clarifying the moral issues by comparing them as impartially as possible.

On the Dutch side, three basic sets of arguments are relevant to the assessment of rights and wrongs. The first is the legal argument—that Indonesia has no valid claim on the basis of what the Hague Agreement said about the future status of West New Guinea and that sovereignty therefore remains unequivocally in Dutch hands. The only replies to this are of a kind which a court would probably not consider—that the intention of the Round Table Conference was to terminate Dutch sovereignty and that the Indonesians were persuaded to accept the unsatisfactory formula in Article 2 of the Hague Agreement by the suggestion that a solution acceptable to both sides could be found in 1950. Understandably, Indonesia has not submitted the matter to the International Court and in asserting that it is a political rather than a legal dispute, she has stood to gain by shifting the attention to wider aspects of the question which would not come within the purview of a court.

The second set of arguments, based on the Dutch insistence on giving the Papuans a chance to exercise the right of self-determination, do in any case raise the whole question to a broader political level. Rightly, the Dutch began to realise late in the 'fifties that this was their strongest card to play in the political struggle for the votes of uncommitted nations in the U.N. who are inevitably suspicious of colonialism and the status quo. Indonesia has put forward various types of reply to the self-determination argument—that

the politically conscious Papuans performed an act of self-determination when they fought on the side of Indonesia against the Dutch from 1945-49; that the Dutch are using the argument as a mere neo-colonialist device to prolong their control in New Guinea; that the Papuan leaders who are being trained by the Dutch are being given a built-in prejudice against Indonesia which makes spurious the whole notion of self-determination; that the real interests of the Papuans will be as well served if they are incorporated with Indonesia as if they become an independent state. This last issue is really crucial to the whole assessment of rights and wrongs, for none of the other arguments would weigh as heavily in the scales if it could be clearly shown that the people of West New Guinea would be decisively better off under one regime rather than the other. We will return to this question at the conclusion of the paper.

A third and related argument which has often been used by the Dutch and Australian governments is that if the people of West New Guinea came under Indonesian rule, they would still be subject to alien masters, so that a colonial regime which accepts the obligations of Trusteeship under the U.N. Charter would merely be replaced by one which did not. Everything hinges in this case around the question whether the Indonesians should be considered as a 'different' people from those of West New Guinea, so different that in the circumstances the blanket term 'colonial rule' is justified. Relevant to this issue is the previously mentioned conflict between the two facts of both racial difference and some degree of historical association. But so too is the fact that the Indonesians are closer to the people of West New Guinea than the Dutch are in any geographical, cultural, economic or ethnographic sense—closer too in the all-pervasive factor of skin colour, which in situations of political dependence has so often bedevilled the noblest intentions of the rulers. Again, any force that may be found in this argument depends on our assessment of which side will ultimately benefit the Papuans most—or harm them least.

On the Indonesian side, the arguments she has used to support her claim have not had the same *prima facie* moral justification that the self-determination argument has, especially if we confine the issue in quasi-legal fashion to the events that have occurred since 1949—although newly-independent nations would regard the anti-colonialism she appeals to as in itself sufficient justification. Moreover, she has been limited by the circumstances of the debate to essentially *political* arguments, whose moral persuasiveness consists in damaging the Dutch case on some points, rebutting it on others—but but usually on the minor points rather than the central proposition, rather in the way that a guerrilla force harasses a regular army until, despite inconclusive battles, the latter abandons the war. Indonesia's case has rested principally on two claims—first, that the intention of the Round Table Conference Agreement was that sovereignty over the whole Netherlands Indies should ultimately be transferred to her and, second (a proposition she

has had to rely on since she repudiated that Agreement in 1956), that West New Guinea has formed part of Indonesia since the 1945 proclamation of independence and is illegally occupied by the Dutch as a foreign power. There is also the more persuasive assertion that, as West New Guinea has indubitably been linked with her in the past by ties which even the Dutch cited to justify their sovereignty over the area, the Dutch scramble to detach the area from Indonesia at the last moment casts a shadow over their consistency and their motives.

These are essentially negative arguments. On the positive side, Indonesia's case must rest on the answers to more complex political questions—the weight to be given to historic links as against the application of a principle like self-determination, the practicability and meaningfulness of the latter in the circumstances, the motives of the various parties in the dispute, the ultimate consequences for the Papuans, to which we keep on returning. As in so many aspects of this entire problem, no clearcut verdict can be given on these issues.

Judgment of who is right or wrong remains, then, a matter of one's ultimate values or preferences, as much as a matter of demonstrable reasoning. This is even true of the one aspect which most Australians take to be entirely clear-cut, the long-range interests of the Papuan people. The £10 million per annum spent on the region by the Dutch, with their experienced health and teaching services, almost certainly exceeds anything that Indonesia could provide in the present shaky condition of her economy, even though she would probably make a special effort to present an impressive show-window. Since the Dutch at one stage offered to continue their contribution on this scale if the U.N. would assume responsibility (but not to increase it, as the needs of an area becoming more advanced will rapidly require), we have to consider the possibility that an independent West New Guinea might continue to receive substantial international aid. However, Indonesia would probably also obtain some assistance for the region in the same way if she controlled it; the relative sums of money likely to be available under the two dispensations are too dependent on variable factors to be precisely compared. Let us simply assume that West New Guinea would, nonetheless, enjoy substantially better services in the next few years under some form of trusteeship or as an independent state than as part of Indonesia. There still remains a nagging problem about the end results.

The 'crash programme' begun by the Dutch to train a Papuan elite who can take over and run their own country will have to be sustained with massive disbursements of aid for many years if West New Guinea is ever to become a viable state and the social transformation from stone-age tribes to a modern community accomplished without great stresses. If the process breaks down half way, a situation reminiscent of the Congo in 1960 will arise. In view of the international pressures involved and the demands on U.N. resources for underdeveloped areas, it is hard to foresee how the Dutch

programme can be continued for long after they withdraw, as they have clearly been preparing to do since at least 1960. In the circumstances, it is questionable whether the Papuans (either elite or the rest) have been well served by a decade of suddenly increased expenditure which has created new demands and precipitated social ferments; these will probably have to work themselves out under much less favourable circumstances within a few years, with vastly increased social tensions, whether or not the area passes under Indonesian sovereignty. Dutch intentions in devising the 'crash programme' were both enlightened and sincere, but later developments have created the danger that, if it cannot be sustained, the benefits to the Papuans may be outweighed by the social dislocation and uprooting of communities which had at least established some sort of harmony with their environment.

Indonesia will probably not (assuming she will ultimately acquire control) have so vigorous a modernising influence on the Papuans as the Dutch have had since 1950. In broad terms, the entire welfare judgment hinges around one's assessment of this contrast—according to one's preference for the static security of primitive tribal societies or the expanding freedoms, insecurities and birthrates of communities in transformation. Indonesia would probably approach the problem of modernisation in the same manner as she has in Central Borneo. There she makes little effort to penetrate into the Dayak hinterland beyond the up-river towns on the fringe of the developed regions, but the administration encourages Dayaks to come down to the towns, experience the benefits of education and health services, begin to understand the ways of the wider world and then return to their villages to tell their own people and send others down. It is a slower process, but we need to consider whether that makes it substantially less beneficial than the Papuans may expect to experience under other circumstances. No one has complained that the Dayaks are exploited by other Indonesians. Neglected, perhaps—if that greatly worries them. But the regions which complain of exploitation or neglect in Indonesia are the most developed, export-producing regions who suffer from an overvalued exchange rate. Nett importing regions, such as West New Guinea is bound to be under any circumstance, are actually subsidised indirectly under Indonesia's post-war currency system.

Indonesia's economic troubles are such that no one could confidently believe that West New Guinea will benefit economically if it comes under her control. On the other hand, the region must become linked fairly intimately by shipping routes and trade connections with some more advanced centre; if the Dutch are withdrawing (and their shipping lines too?), its orientation will be towards either the east Indonesian or eastern New Guinea ports. Which it will be is largely a matter of politics. West New Guinea must depend on someone, it has been said. It will not be the Dutch much longer. The U.N. has already refused to step into the breach. Australia could barely hope to, even if she would. If a 'Melanesian' solution ever was practical

politics or economics, it is surely too late now. And Indonesia is all too willing to offer her alternative.

* * *

There is, then, no clearcut verdict on the moral issues involved in this question. Moreover, our estimate of what is best for the Papuans cannot be divorced from the realities of practical politics. Australia and Holland *might* have been able to put forward a more persuasive answer to the Indonesian case if they had been willing to pay a high enough price; but it is unlikely that we would have succeeded with anything less than a wholehearted commitment to the Melanesian idea (involving transfer of both Australian territories to a trusteeship and a more vigorous advance towards self-government) with U.N. endorsement and close association. But that should have been undertaken ten years ago, before Indonesia began to build up her pressure. Today our gestures are bound to be suspected because our motives are mixed.

In conclusion, some attention should be given to the political and strategic aspects of the matter from Australia's point of view. Little is now heard of the allegation that the region is vital to Australia's defence, which was so greatly stressed in the early 'fifties.²² The most concrete reason Australia might now have for endeavouring to keep Indonesia out of West New Guinea at all costs is the possible danger that after she has digested this piece of territory she may cast covetous eyes on other fields to conquer. To this one can only reply that the basis of Indonesia's demand for West New Guinea and, to a large extent, the political dynamics which have blown it up to such dimensions have been *sui generis*, and are not likely to be repeated in relation to other territories—with the possible exception of Portuguese Timor, which seems destined to experience the fate of Goa sooner or later. There are countervailing forces latent in Indonesia's power structure which would probably constitute an effective brake on advocacy of external expansion elsewhere as a political safety valve.

These arguments seem in any case to be outweighed by the prudential reasons for accepting with good grace the increasing likelihood that Indonesia will succeed in her claim, either by fair means or foul. For any serious conflict would only 'invite cold war tensions to muddy further the waters of peace', as Dr Subandrio once put it, on our northern doorstep. It is difficult to conceive how anyone would benefit from a conflict except the Communists, who would then be in a strong position to extort economic and political blackmail from Indonesia as the price of their diplomatic support in the U.N. or elsewhere. Similarly, it is the Indonesian Communists (second only, perhaps, to the President) who have made most profit out of the issue in Indonesia's domestic politics, while it is their adversaries who have been most embarrassed by the Dutch stand.²³ Unless one takes the view that Indonesia is irrevocably lost to the Communist cause, or so little to be considered as a power factor in Asian politics that there is nothing to be gained by holding as

much of her friendship as we can, there are cogent reasons for doubting if West New Guinea is worth the trouble it has caused. Indonesia's attitudes to her neighbours will continue to be determined very largely by their stand over West New Guinea, so that our opposition on this score will continue to diminish the goodwill towards us which was once so abundant. Not only will this create an ever present threat to our air links with Asia; it also poses the danger that in the event of a limited war in the Far East, if our adversaries made a bid for her support by dangling before her the prospect of acquiring West New Guinea as a war aim, she would be unlikely to resist. We would then have lost the very considerable strategic advantage of Indonesia's neutrality, which alone could prove so enormously important to our potential capacity for self-defence that West New Guinea seems comparatively nugatory. Our major strategic interest in the future of the islands to our north surely revolves round two elements, avoiding Indonesia's overt antagonism, if possible, and ensuring that the political geography of the region minimises the dangers of instability and international conflict there. Hence the merits and demerits of sharing a common land frontier with Indonesia in New Guinea need to be weighed against those of the situation which will prevail if two (or more?) independent Papuan states emerge within the next generation. Indonesia would be implacably hostile to one of them and set upon bringing about its subversion or accession to her. If either proves unstable, the potential dangers on Australia's northern doorstep would be a constant threat to our security.

Notes

- 1 At the time of writing (mid-March 1962), Dutch policy appears to be veering round towards direct negotiations with Indonesia; their January 2 decision to hold talks without insisting on prior acceptance of the Papuans' right to self-determination was a major change of policy reflecting the fact that no alternative solution to their dilemma over West New Guinea remained (except reliance on military force) after the U.N. General Assembly had refused to take over responsibility for administration of the territory. However, despite the indirect approaches made through U Thant in January and February, the Dutch refused to engage in *bilateral* talks, which Indonesia wanted. Their decision, after Mr Robert Kennedy's intervention, to accept this condition (in modified form, with a third party participating also—presumably U.S.A.) seems to indicate that they are now prepared to make the necessary initial concessions to make a compromise solution possible. Despite her bellicose posture, Indonesia has shown surprising willingness to make interim concessions on the once-crucial issue of sovereignty, although it can now hardly be doubted that she will eventually obtain full sovereignty.
- 2 The history of the Dutch connection with Tidore is sketched in Robert C. Bone, *The Dynamics of the Western New Guinea (Irian Barat) Problem*, Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project, Interim Reports Series, 1958, ch. 2.
- 3 See the discussion of psychological factors influencing the Dutch in their overall negotiations with Indonesia at this time in A. M. Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations*, Stevens & Sons, 1960, pp. 295–305.

- 4 The Dutch attempted at the Malino, Pangkalpinang, Den Pasar and Linggadjati conferences to give West New Guinea a special status, or at least to leave open the formula to establish one subsequently. Not until the 1949 Hague conference were they able to succeed in this—and even then the Federalists resisted as strenuously as the Republicans: see Bone, *op. cit.*, pp. 24–40 and 59–60.
- 5 Americans celebrate their own Declaration of Independence of 1776 as the birth of the nation, not the 1783 Peace of Paris by which Britain accepted the fact. Likewise Indonesians look back to 17 August 1945 as the starting-point of their revolution and disregard the 1949 Transfer of Sovereignty, which they see as a mere 'recognition' or 'restoration' of independence.
- 6 Articles 3 and 4 of the Linggadjati Agreement defined the territory of the United States of Indonesia as 'the entire territory of Netherlands India', with the qualification that if the population of any area indicated by democratic process that it wished not to belong to the U.S.I., a special relationship with the Netherlands and the U.S.I. might be arranged. (New Guinea was one of the areas to which this qualification might have been applied, but an act of self-determination by democratic process was barely conceivable at the time.) The text of the Linggadjati Agreement is printed in Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 464–8.
- 7 The governing coalition (Catholic, Labour, Liberal and Christian-Historical parties) commanded the necessary two-thirds majority in both houses only if dissentients in the two latter parties could be dissuaded from their threats to vote against ratification of the Hague Agreements. Some of them did oppose ratification and it passed by only one vote in the Upper House. The voting figures are given in A. Stempels, *De parlementaire geschiedenis van het Indonesische vraagstuk*, Amsterdam, 1950, pp. 239–244. One can only speculate on the question of whether ratification would have been achieved if the Drees government had not stood firm over West New Guinea. The indications are not conclusive either way.
- 8 The part played by the U.N.C.I. in persuading the Indonesians to accept a compromise is of particular interest, because it was the Australian representative who proposed the general formula which was finally adopted, although both Indonesian delegations were most reluctant to accept it. See Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 235–9.
- 9 Bone, *op. cit.*, pp. 62–3.
- 10 Bone, *op. cit.*, pp. 70–2.
- 11 Part I of the *Report of the Committee New Guinea (Irian)*, published by the Netherlands-Indonesian Union in 1950, relates the dismal story of the committee's proceedings; the long and turgid arguments of the two delegations, separately presented, comprise the bulk of this document, translated into almost unreadable English.
- 12 The events of 1950 are related in G. McT. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*, Cornell, 1952, ch. 14: see also the same author's chapter in W. L. Holland, *Asian Nationalism and the West*, I.P.R., 1953, pp. 111–69. Bone's account (*op. cit.*, pp. 73–96) does not give adequate regard to Dutch grievances during this period.
- 13 Bone, *op. cit.*, pp. 92–3.
- 14 A most revealing account of the pressures in Dutch politics at this time is given by Bone, *op. cit.*, pp. 100–109; see also F. Duynstee, *Nieuw Guinea als schakel tussen Nederland en Indonesie*, Amsterdam, 1961.
- 15 Bone, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
- 16 The significance of 1952–3 as a watershed in Indonesia's political development is revealed in H. Feith, *The Wilopo Cabinet, 1952–3: a turning point in post-revolutionary Indonesia*, Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project,

- Monograph Series, 1958, pp. 93-9 and 208-12. The point is more extensively elaborated in his forthcoming study of the period 1950-56. *The Decline of Parliamentary Government in Indonesia*, Cornell 1962, ch. 6.
- 17 Duynstee, *op. cit.*, pp. 227-36.
 - 18 A comprehensive account of this critical period is badly needed: the outlines are usefully sketched from the Dutch side in Duynstee, *op. cit.*, pp. 249-89 and, less satisfactorily, in Bone, *op. cit.*, pp. 151-61.
 - 19 The idea of a 'Melanesian federation', which the Australian press enthusiastically took up in 1958, has never been endorsed officially by the government; Mr Hasluck poured cold water on the idea after his visit to The Hague in May 1960. See *The Age* (Melbourne) 28 May 1960.
 - 20 See J. A. DeRavin, 'Recent Developments in the West New Guinea Dispute', *Australia's Neighbours*, November 1961.
 - 21 See H. Feith and J. A. C. Mackie, 'The Pressure on Soekarno', *Nation* (Sydney), 27 January 1962.
 - 22 See the analysis of the strategic situation by Lieutenant General Sir Sydney Rowell in *The Age* (Melbourne), 12 January 1962. Another danger to Australia that has been mentioned is the likelihood that Communist ideas will spread throughout New Guinea once the Indonesian Communists are permitted on the island. (See *Nation*, 28 February 1959.) But in any case it will be increasingly difficult to keep New Guinea isolated from these ideas as education spreads.
 - 23 'For so long as West Irian is in Dutch hands, that long will the Communist Party of Indonesia be able to carry on a violent agitation, using nationalism as an excuse, to oppose colonialism and thereby touch the soul of the newly emancipated Indonesian people', Mohammed Hatta, 'Indonesia Between the Power Blocs', *Foreign Affairs*, April 1958, p. 487.

'NEDERLANDS NIEUW-GUINEA' BECOMES 'IRIAN BARAT'

Alistair M. Taylor

Source: *International Journal* (Toronto) 17 (1962): 429-35.

On August 15, 1962 at the United Nations Headquarters, Dutch and Indonesian representatives signed an Agreement to transfer the administration of Western New Guinea to Djakarta after an interim phase of international control. The significance of this treaty justifies a preliminary assessment of its provisions and aims.

After ratifying the Agreement, the contracting parties are to sponsor a draft resolution for adoption at the present session of the General Assembly, acknowledging the role conferred on the Secretary-General and authorizing him to carry out certain tasks. Once the resolution is adopted, the Netherlands will transfer administration of the territory to a U.N. Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA), headed by an Administrator appointed by the Secretary-General and acceptable to the parties. He will have "full authority" to act under the Secretary-General's direction during the period of international administration—when the U.N. flag is to fly and U.N. security forces maintain law and order. The Administrator will "to the extent feasible" employ existing Papuan police and, "at his discretion", use Indonesian armed forces. The Dutch Armed forces are to be repatriated "as rapidly as possible and while still in the territory will be under the authority of the UNTEA."

The period of U.N. administration is divided into two phases. During the first, to be completed by May 1, 1963, the UNTEA will replace "top Netherlands officials"—primarily departmental directors and information heads—with non-Dutch, non-Indonesian officials. The Administrator can retain temporarily all other Dutch Officials wishing to serve the UNTEA, while "as many Papuans as possible will be brought into administrative and technical positions." Remaining posts may be filled by personnel provided by Indonesia. During the initial phase, too, the UNTEA "will widely publicize and

explain the terms of the present agreement" to the population and "the provisions for the act of self-determination." The UNTEA is empowered to promulgate new laws and regulations or amend existing laws after consulting the existing representative councils. The second phase begins after May 1, 1963, when the Administrator has discretion to transfer all or part of the UNTEA administration to Indonesia. According to the Acting Secretary-General's *aides-mémoire* on the modalities involved, such transfer of authority to Indonesia "will be effected as soon as possible" after the date in question. UNTEA's authority ceases "at the moment of transfer of full administrative control" and all U.N. Security forces are to be withdrawn.

With its assumption of "full administrative responsibility" Indonesia can apply its national laws and regulations in the territory. Its "primary task" will be "further intensification of the education of the people, of the combating of illiteracy, and of the advancement of their social, cultural and economic development", as well as to accelerate participation in local government. Indonesia will also be responsible for making the necessary arrangements to enable the people to exercise the right to self-determination. These include consultations with the representative councils on procedures for ascertaining the "freely expressed will" of the people; determination of the actual date of the exercise of free choice but in any case "before the end of 1969"; and formulation of questions as to permit the inhabitants to decide whether they wish (a) "to remain with Indonesia" or (b) "sever their ties with Indonesia." Participating in these arrangements will be U.N. machinery, comprising a Representative together with a staff of experts to advise and assist in arrangements "for the act of free choice". They will assume their duties a year before the date of self-determination and will report to the Secretary-General on the conduct and results of the act. The parties to the Agreement "will recognize and abide" by those results.

Finally, the Agreement contains provisions safeguarding the basic rights of the population, allocating equally to the Parties the territory's budget deficits during the UNTEA administration, and reimbursing the Secretary-General for all costs incurred by the Organization, as well as relevant annexes and explanatory memoranda on such subjects as the cessation of hostilities.

In hailing the signing of this "historic Agreement" U Thant commended the parties on their "spirit of 'give and take'." In the view of most Dutch, however, the Agreement calls on them to do almost all the giving. They have lost the final vestige of a once vast colonial empire in South East Asia which for three centuries had attracted Netherlanders of every walk of life. While the psychological wrench is bound to be felt, it will be less intense than the shock following the losses suffered in 1945-1950. In contrast to Java, Sumatra, and Bali, New Guinea pulled on the purse-strings rather than the heart-strings of the Dutch, who will presently be spared the fairly

considerable outlays in financial and human resources required to administer this primitive holding. Nor should it be overlooked that much of the *raison d'être* of the Dutch insistence at the R.T.C. for retaining the Residency has been eroded by later events. In 1949, Van Maarseveen and his colleagues were deeply apprehensive about their ability to mount the two-thirds majority in both chambers of Parliament required for ratifying the R.T.C. Agreements unless they could point to the retention of some territory. Apart from this face-saving factor, there were strong feelings in Parliament—especially among the religious and right-wing parties—that such territory was required to provide a new base for the now-vulnerable Eurasian and Christian minorities who had espoused (and, in the case of the Ambonese, fought for) the Dutch position during the nationalist struggle. In point of fact, however, the 1950's saw these elements sail by the thousands not to New Guinea but to Holland itself, creating a serious problem of social and economic integration. Again, negotiators at the R.T.C. could scarcely have foreseen that the 1950's would bring about a severance of diplomatic relations and the mass confiscation of Dutch properties. In recent years, political and economic forces have progressively moved in the direction of normalizing relations—including, financial circles hoped, a return of seized Dutch holdings or at least the payment of compensation. (The Indonesian government, however, has recently announced that it has no intention of denationalizing the seized Dutch property.)

On the other hand, the New Guinea Agreement provides for the principle of self-determination minimized in Dutch arguments at the R.T.C. but which became the chief asset in their counter-offensive of the 1950's. Certainly the Agreement falls far short of both the original Dutch plans to advance the Papuans towards self-government in an environment insulated from Indonesian pressures, far less presence (plans which, if implemented fully, might well have resulted in the conditioning of the Papuans to opt for some sort of continued political link with the Kingdom), and, alternatively, Dutch proposals to place the territory during the delicate transition stage from dependence to independence under "the administration of an international development authority". The original Bunker proposals reportedly called for U.N. control for a full year prior to a gradual turnover to Indonesian authority, and the Dutch refusal to accept Subandrio's demands for a shortening of the transition period (so that Djakarta would take over at the beginning of 1963) threatened to bring about a collapse of negotiations. Compromise trimmed the span of full U.N. authority from one year to nine months. The Dutch continue to be, in the words of the Dutch Ambassador, J. H. Van Roijen, "most deeply concerned with the well-being of the Papuans" and emphasize that the Agreement must ensure that the latter are guaranteed, "under active supervision of the United Nations, a genuine and valid exercise of freedom of choice with regard to their future." As subsequent statements in the Dutch Parliament make clear, The Hague's acceptance of the

Agreement was in no small measure dictated by failure to obtain United States' support for its own approach.

Conversely, Dr. Subandrio hailed the Agreement "as a very important national occasion" since with its signing "Indonesian unity has been restored and therefore the basis for struggle for Independence completed." Speaking two days later, on the seventeenth anniversary of the Republic's proclamation, President Sukarno called 1962 the "Year of Triumph", when "the history of Dutch colonialism in West Irian shall come to an end" and "the territory of the Unitary State of Indonesia shall in principle be complete." Paradoxically, however, the very completeness of that "triumph" embodies several inherent liabilities. The acquisition of half of the world's second largest island and an additional three-quarters of a million primitive people will require public expenditure of at least \$30 millions annually and the finding of a large number of administrators and other professionals (especially if the present Dutch civil servants repeat the mass exodus of their compatriots from the Republic in the early 1950's) at a time when the financial and professional resources of the country are dangerously strained.

There is one area of the recent Agreement embodying a fundamental Indonesian concession. This is the key provision to permit the Papuans to exercise the right of self-determination. Previously, the Indonesian position had been that all peoples without exception making up the former Netherlands East Indies had, in the words of Dr. Subandrio addressing the General Assembly on October 9, 1961, "exercised this right sixteen years ago . . . We are now determined to defend this right which we have gained so bitterly, with all our strength and all the means at our disposal." Since West Irian was already "an integral part of our country" and "has its rightful place in the Republic," the right of self-determination "should not be abused in its application and should not be used against the real interests of the people of West Irian by subverting national independence already gained."

Whatever its merits, this position was clear-cut and entailed no constitutional problems for Indonesia had the Agreement called for a simple incorporation of Irian Barat into the Republic. But its provision to exercise a free vote by Papuans on their permanent political status raises certain fundamental questions for which no specific answers have apparently yet been formulated. The Agreement stipulates that following transfer of full administrative responsibility to Indonesia, the latter's national laws and regulations will in principle apply to the territory. At present, the Republic functions under its Constitution of 1945 which, in Article I, declares that "the Indonesian State is a unitary state." The Constitution makes no provision for the exercise of self-determination by the people of any province or region. This does not preclude the granting of special status in certain instances, such as for the Sultanate of Jogjakarta and Atjeh, and it is conceivable that a special status may be granted West Irian, which for some time has been constitutionally established as a province. However, their special

status does not empower the Sultanate or Atjeh to withdraw from the "unitary State".

A related question follows. Inasmuch as the Agreement empowers the Indonesian Government to formulate the actual questions on which the Papuans will vote, is that government permitted to impose limitations on the choices open for such expression? The Agreement would appear to give the Papuans unfettered freedom, but Sukarno declared in his speech of August 17: "When in 1969 a vote is held it will be 'internal self-determination' and not 'external self-determination', which we reject". He did not clarify his interpretation of the Agreement, but the terms used are identical with those employed at the R.T.C. There, the "internal" aspect related to the right of populations to decide freely whether to become part of an existing Indonesian administrative entity or to form one of their own, whereas the "external" aspect related to a population's prerogative not to form part of the Indonesian State but to enter into a special constitutional relationship with the Netherlands. Sukarno agrees that the Papuans will have the freedom to decide whether to remain in, or to leave, the Republic, but apparently he is determined to preclude as a choice their entering into constitutional relationship with any sovereign State other than Indonesia itself. This is hardly a subject of idle conjecture in view of the experience of various minorities who were guaranteed, under the R.T.C. Agreements and the Constitution of the United States of Indonesia, the right of both "internal" and "external" self-determination, with all plebiscites to be conducted under U.N. supervision. But in 1950 the U.S.I. was transformed into a unitary State, and constitutional changes wiped out the right of either form of self-determination.

It might be argued that the situations then and now are not comparable inasmuch as the minorities involved in 1949-50 formed an integral element of the general transfer of sovereignty to the new Indonesia State, whereas the Papuans are being transferred from Dutch to Indonesian authority some twelve years after the U.S.I. came into existence. But in point of fact, the Indonesians claim that Western New Guinea has formed an integral part of the Republic since 1945 and, therefore, irrespective of Dutch interpretation of the second article in the "Charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty," the general transfer in 1949 included the Residency along with the remainder of the former N.E.I. In strict logic, the Indonesians today only weaken their juridical case when they treat the Papuans differently from other minorities in the unitary State by according them the opportunity to vote themselves out of the Republic.

What is the actual status of Western New Guinea under the Agreement? The R.T.C. and its sorry aftermath of conflicting interpretations failed to resolve this central issue of which Party possessed sovereignty over the territory. The Agreement appears to have deliberately left the dispute unresolved. Its text nowhere refers to such terms as "*de jure*" or "sovereignty", but rather

"authority," "administrative responsibility," and "administrative control." During the U.N. phase of administration, the Organization is to possess the "authority" and exercise "control"; subsequently Indonesia will assume "full administrative responsibility." Up to the end of 1962, the Dutch and U. N. flags will fly together; then the Indonesian flag will accompany the U. N. standard until some time after May 1, 1963 when it will fly alone. Are we to infer that the striking of the Dutch flag signifies a surrender of Netherlands sovereignty? Alternatively, is it an implicit admission on The Hague's part that the R.T.C. Agreements of 1949 did in fact include Western New Guinea in the general transfer of sovereignty? If these inferences seem far-fetched, then we are led to conclude that the Netherlands has yet to formalize its altered relationship to the territory in the light of the new Agreement, and may well await the outcome of the plebiscite before doing so. The same question arises concerning Indonesia's no less altered relationship to the territory, whose status may best be described as *sui generis*.

What are the implications of the Agreement for the U.N. itself? According to U Thant, the Organization will have "temporary executive authority . . . over a vast territory for the first time in its history." But again, the Agreement says nothing of the juridical basis on which the U.N. is empowered to act. In the International Trusteeship System, for example, Article 81 of the Charter permits the Organization to act as "the authority" to "exercise the administration" of a Trust Territory (which the western half of New Guinea is not). The Netherlands administered the territory as a Non-Self-Governing Territory and submitted annual reports under Article 73e—but in this area the Charter grants the U.N. no similar "authority" or power of administration—and this prohibition applies, *a fortiori*, in the case of any territory forming an integral part of a self-governing or independent State. The exercise of "executive authority"—however temporarily—is not only a significant political precedent, as U Thant points out; it may well serve as an equally important precedent in international law.

In hailing the Agreement, the Acting Secretary-General also emphasized that the "entire expenses" incurred under its terms would be shared by the two parties and would "not impose a burden on any of the other Member governments"—an assurance which obviously he felt necessary to make on the eve of the convening of a General Assembly session that will have to wrestle with the staggering financial consequences of executive action in the Congo. U Thant likewise drew attention to the benefits accruing to the international community as a result of the peaceful resolution of the long-standing dispute, the institution of a ceasefire on August 18, the easing of tensions in the region, and the resumption of diplomatic relations between the parties.

The Acting Secretary-General might also have singled out yet another "unique feature" of the Agreement. To transfer the Papuans from one national administration to another, prior to ascertaining their own wishes on

the matter, reverses normal practice. Thus, in the Kashmir dispute, the Security Council on April 21, 1948 called on India to undertake a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir on the question of the accession of the State to India or Pakistan. (One can readily imagine the verbal reception which Krishna Menon would have given any resolution that called for the transfer of the State's administration from India to Pakistan for some six years before a plebiscite would permit the population to make known its views.) Again, during the Indonesian nationalist struggle, the Republicans advocated the use of plebiscites in West Java, Madura and other areas where Federalist *negaras* had been installed, but in no instance was the plebiscite coupled with a demand for the prior transfer of administration to their own hands. In every instance they felt certain that popular support would win the day for them.

At this point we come to the heart of the dilemma involved in the Western New Guinea dispute. For decades the Papuans have been accustomed to Dutch administration, education, and attitudes, while being carefully insulated from Indonesian contacts. As a consequence, Indonesian strategy rejected the exercise of self-determination by the Papuans in their existing state of mind, while, conversely, the Dutch insisted upon such action. (Hence the unusual spectacle of a colonial power espousing self-determination and an Afro-Asian State, which had championed the principle in its own struggle, seeking to deny its application.) To offset their concession on this point, the Indonesians have insisted upon implementation only after the elapse of such time as will enable them—they believe confidently—first to neutralize Dutch influences among the Papuans and, within five or six years, to win over their allegiance to the Republic. For their part, the Dutch are unhappy that the transition period under U.N. administration is to be so short, followed by full Indonesian control of events leading up to the plebiscite—including the making of arrangements with the Papuan councils on procedures to be followed, the formulation of plebiscite questions, and the determination of the actual date for holding the plebiscite.

The Indonesians have accused the Dutch of brainwashing the Papuan population for their own purposes; the charge is now being returned by the Dutch against their accusers. That both sets of charges have considerable substance raises the question whether the Agreement has placed first things first: namely, the well-being and advancement of the Papuans themselves. These vulnerable vestiges of a Stone Age culture surely deserve special consideration in our century, and indeed both the League Mandates and U.N. Trusteeship Systems recognized that the international community has a continuing responsibility in such matters. Thus, the Papuans of former German New Guinea were placed under a Class "C" Mandate while today these people belong to a Trust Territory administered by Australia. It has always seemed to this writer that the Papuans west of the 141st meridian were no less deserving of international concern and stewardship, and that the

indigenous interests of both regions would best be served by extending trusteeship to Western New Guinea, preferably with the U.N. itself serving as Administration Authority. At the R.T.C., such a proposal was suggested to members of the U.N. Commission by its Secretariat, of which the writer was a member. It was further suggested that the trusteeship exist for only a pre-determined period, followed by recourse to the Papuans to ascertain their own wishes for their political future. That was in 1949. An internationally-administered plebiscite is scheduled to take place twenty years later, but in very different circumstances. At the signing ceremonies, Ambassador Van Roijen declared: "The judgment of history on what we have accomplished will ultimately depend on the manner in which the provisions of our agreement are carried out in practice." This is no truism when one recalls the history of South East Asia since the Second World War.

EAST TIMOR

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THE EMERGENCE OF A NATIONALIST MOVEMENT IN EAST TIMOR

John G. Taylor

Source: Peter Carey and G. Carter Bentley (eds), *East Timor at the Crossroads: The Forging of a Nation*, New York: Social Science Research Council, and London: Cassell (1995), pp. 21–41.

Introduction

Following the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in December 1975, and the subsequent annexation of the former Portuguese colony, many commentators were surprised both by the extent of opposition and by the ability of the population to resist Indonesian incorporation. Whilst the course of events in East Timor in recent years has been documented in a number of texts,¹ several important issues emerging from the conflict remain unanalysed.

One of the most important of these issues is to explain why, despite such overwhelming superiority, the Indonesian military experienced such difficulties in quelling resistance to its occupation. Various writers have tried to answer this by focusing on issues such as the suitability of East Timor's terrain to guerrilla warfare,² the brutal treatment of the population by Indonesian troops,³ or the desire of the military to maintain East Timor as a counter-insurgency training ground for its troops. Whilst some of these, and notably the first two, are important in addressing this problem, it nevertheless seems to me that we also need to consider other areas. Most notable of these are the following: first, the structure of East Timor society as it emerged in the twentieth century after a prolonged period of colonial control; and second, the nature of the independence movement that developed in East Timor in the early 1970s. Analysing these will enable us to gain a deeper understanding of the strength of resistance to Indonesia's annexation.

Specifically, initial studies seem to suggest that the particular features of Timorese society which enabled it to contain the spread of European

colonial control have continued to operate during the post-1975 period. Furthermore, that the nationalist movement which emerged in East Timor during the early 1970s, by relating itself to these features, was able to develop strategies and policies which resulted in widespread support for its campaign for independence.

What, then, are these aspects of Timorese society, and how are they related to the development of East Timorese nationalism? Answering this question involves us examining briefly a number of features of East Timor's recent history.

Settlement and exchange

Prior to Portuguese and Dutch entry into South East Asia, Timor formed a part of the trading networks centred on East Java and the Celebes (Sulawesi). These networks were tied into commercial links with China and India. The commercial value of Timor is highlighted in documents published during the Ming Dynasty in 1436. The island is described as one in which, 'the mountains are covered with sandalwood trees, and the country produces nothing else'.⁴ Duarte Barbosa, one of the first Portuguese to visit Timor, wrote in 1518, 'There is an abundance of white sandalwood, which the Moors in India and Persia value greatly, where much of it is used.'⁵ Consequently, although other commodities – honey, wax, and slaves – were exported from Timor, its trade was focused primarily on its rich sandalwood reserves.

At first glance, it seems that Timor's role in the sandalwood trade influenced markedly the structure and development of its political system. Schulte Nordholt cites early sixteenth-century reports which seem to indicate that the predominance of coastal kingdoms in the north and south was a direct result of this trade. Each area appeared to be under the control of a chief who supervised all commercial dealings.⁶ This illustrates the forms in which Timorese political organization appeared initially to Asian and European traders, with commerce founding a coastal political hierarchy. Colonial history took this form and adopted it as the basis for many of its subsequent analyses. Yet behind it there seems to have been a more complex political organization which needs to be analysed briefly if we are to understand the basic features of Timorese society.

A Timorese myth recounted by the ethnographer Jonker in Amabi (West Timor) in the early nineteenth century, cited by Middelkoop, begins: 'A long, long time ago there was one ruler of this island in Babiko-Babali' (the southern coastal plain).⁷ The ritual ruler of this realm appears to have had three subordinate rulers (*liurai*) under him, each of whom exercised executive power in his own territory. The first (*liurai*) was located in South Belu (the coastal plain), the second in Sonbai (in the west of the island), and the third in Suai-Kamanasa (in the south-centre of the island). The triad of heads under one ruler had its origins in a substantial migration dating from the

early fourteenth century. Myths describe how the original Melanesian inhabitants were displaced in this period by invaders coming from Malacca via Makassar in the Celebes and Larantuka in Eastern Flores. These newcomers, of Malay origin, settled in the southern coastal plain, and moved north-west and north-east, displacing the original inhabitants, and forming the three kingdoms dominated by 'Babiko-Babali'.

These kingdoms were neither unified nor centrifugal in any sense which would be familiar to European historians. They combined loosely-knit localized territorial groups in a general hierarchy of clans, each related through exchange. These clans were ruled by chiefs who received tribute and organized marital alliances with neighbouring clans. Each clan paid tribute to the kingdom in which it existed. Consequently when these localised groups began to trade with the Dutch and Portuguese in the sixteenth century, their encounter with a more developed economic system, which itself operated through exchange, enabled this latter system to transform the clans' ties with their kingdoms by directing their exchange systems externally. Chiefs who could organize labour to produce and trade in commodities such as sandalwood received in return from the Portuguese trade items such as cloth, furs, and iron tools. This supply from the Portuguese enabled coastal groups to assert their identity over their erstwhile royal rulers. The resultant shifts in political control produced major changes in the distribution of power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These changes provided the backdrop for the turbulent events of this period, in particular the organization of resistance to European invasion.

Before examining the effects of European intrusions on the reproduction of Timorese society, we need to recount briefly the chronology of events.

Colonial interplay

The first Portuguese settlement in the proximity of Timor was on the island of Solor, in 1566. Dominican friars built a fortress, which they filled with their recent converts from Solor and Flores. At this stage the Portuguese made annual trips to Timor to collect sandalwood and trade in finished goods. When their commercial rivals, the Dutch, managed to capture Solor in 1611, the population of the fortress moved to the neighbouring island of Larantuka, whilst Solor experienced both Dutch and Portuguese rule in the seventeenth century, Larantuka remained firmly within the Portuguese orbit.

This relatively settled period of Dutch rule witnessed the consolidation of a group which was to dominate Timor's development in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Dutch termed them the 'Topasses',⁸ and they first appear in colonial history as a 'mixed race . . . the offspring of Portuguese soldiers, sailors, and traders from Malacca and Macao, who intermarried with the local women of Solor,'⁹ and who moved with the Portuguese to Larantuka. After the move, the Topasses, initially with the help of groups of

Dominican friars, began to control the trading networks between Solor, Larantuka, and Timor, particularly the lucrative sandalwood trade. During this process, they began to settle in Timor itself, although their presence was not really felt until after 1642.

This mid-seventeenth century date marked a watershed in Timorese history since it was during this year that the Portuguese invaded Timor in strength, attempting to extend their influence beyond the coast to control the island's internal trade. Justifying their attack by the need to defend recently Christianized coastal rulers, the Portuguese moved directly against the western kingdom of Sonbai, and its parent kingdom, Babali, or Wehale as they called it. Victory was swift and brutal. An observer described the campaign of the commander, Captain Major Francisco Fernandes of Solor, in the following words: 'Laying waste the regions through which he marched with his troops, the Captain Major held out in the face of pursuit by the enemy up to the place where Wehale had his residence; after reducing everything to ashes there he withdrew to Batimao.'¹⁰ Topasse migration to Timor increased markedly after this slaughter. The Topasse community was centred at Lifau (now Occussi or Pontai Makassar) on the northern coast. From here the Topasses prepared to quell any internal threat to their position, either from local communities or from the Dutch, who, shortly after, in 1653, defeated the Portuguese garrison at Kupang in the west of the island, and landed a substantial military force in 1656. Unlike the earlier Portuguese invasion, the Dutch met with stiff resistance: Topasse families were provided with European weapons to contain the Dutch advance. They routed the Dutch in a short and brutal battle near Kupang which forced them to move to the neighbouring island of Roti, thereby giving effective control of Timor to the Topasses. Opposition to Topasse rule could now come only from three groups: the Portuguese merchants, the Dominican friars, and the Timorese themselves. The merchants tried to wrest control of the sandalwood trade from the Topasses, with the blessing of the Portuguese crown; the Dominicans attempted to build their own separate power base; and the Timorese kingdoms rose in periodic revolt against both the 'white' and 'black' (Topasse) Portuguese. Throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, conflicts between these groups were interspersed with periods in which their participants united in opposition to the spread of Dutch influence.

Thus, after the fall of Kupang, the Portuguese embarked on a campaign of enticing chiefs away from the Topasse sphere. This culminated in attempts to introduce a governor on to the island in Lifau in 1695 and 1702. On both occasions he was forced out by the combined efforts of the Timorese and Topasses. Subsequently, in 1720, the Dominicans were largely responsible for removing the governor. In 1729 another governor and his forces were besieged and defeated in Manatuto, after which the Portuguese withdrew until 1748.

Meanwhile, the Dutch had once again begun to reassert themselves in the western half of the island. Their spread of influence amongst local tribes in the 1730s culminated in their rebuilding Fort Kupang by 1746. Unlike earlier conflicts, the campaigns against the Dutch in 1735 and 1746 had only a limited impact, hence the Topasses turned to the Portuguese for assistance and invaded Dutch areas in 1749. The outcome of this invasion was a ferocious engagement which came to be known in Timor as the Battle of Penfui. The result was a Dutch victory, and a strengthening of Dutch presence in the west of the island. Indeed, with Dutch assistance, the kingdom of Servião was able to remove Topasse control. Penfui (1749) laid down a distinct territorial division of the island, with the Dutch in the west and the Portuguese in the east. The fact that the Topasses had requested help from the Portuguese ensured the latter a stronger political presence, and led to a reduction in Topasse power. The healthy respect engendered by the one for the other meant that neither attempted to extend their influence beyond the *liurai* (kingdom) level, thereby leaving Timorese society relatively free from incursion and disruption.

The structure of Timorese society

By the end of the eighteenth century Timorese society had thus managed to retain many of the features that had characterized its social, political, and cultural systems, prior to European contact. Although the island contains as many as eighteen distinct ethnolinguistic groups, these shared common features, whose reproduction rested on a number of mechanisms and were unified through elaborate systems of exchange. The basic structures of these systems can best be illustrated by focusing initially on the features of the Timorese economy.

The organization of production was profoundly influenced by the nature of the Timorese terrain. The main topographical feature of the island is its mountainous spine, interspersed with fertile valleys and permanent springs. To the north, mountains protrude into the sea, whilst in the south they give way to a broad coastal plain. Lowland areas are also found in the north and west. In this terrain the flow of water is seasonally based. The vegetation produced by the climate and terrain varies from savanna and grassland in the plain areas to bush land on the hill slopes, and to evergreen and tropical forests in the mountainous areas. Under these conditions only a limited amount of land use was possible. Irrigated cultivation could be undertaken only where water supplies were available from flood plains, in the vicinity of springs, or on swamp land. Most cultivation was of the swidden (slash and burn) type, with land use being rotated to preserve the soil. Several crops were grown: rice, maize, cassava, yams, sweet potatoes, and a variety of fruits. Livestock – pigs, goats, sheep, and buffalo – were grazed on the hill slopes. Production was mainly for local subsistence, but goods were regularly

exchanged at local markets. The units in which production occurred were the household garden, the field, and the irrigated *padi*. Economic organization was based primarily on the extended family, which was responsible for the maintenance of each type of unit. Throughout the agricultural cycle, the low technical level necessitated extensive cooperation in the use of labour. Production took place in both extended kin and village contexts, each being characterized by distinct sexual divisions, and governed by ritual. In the cycle of rice cultivation, for example, planting was undertaken by women, and harvesting by men. Outside the agricultural cycle, weaving was a female task, whilst men produced iron implements, and so on. Economic relations were not solely influenced by divisions in the production process, however. They were also affected by a system of exchange which involved both goods and individuals. Goods were exacted from Timorese communities as tribute due to the chiefs of the various princedoms and kingdoms. In the Wehale kingdom, for example, through his officials the *nai boot* or 'lord of the land' granted land to families for their own use, in return for which they paid a token rent, of *raiteen* (literally, 'excrement of the land'). Goods were also exchanged for women and men in marriage. This exchange was only possible if the goods required could be produced in return for the provision of men and women in the village unit. Villagers had to work beyond the time required to produce their own subsistence crops, in order to produce the goods to be exchanged. In this fashion, the products of surplus labour time were exchanged for means of reproduction, and the elders, through their role in exchange, were responsible for distributing these products. Thus, in addition to the economic relations generated by production, there were also those generated by exchange and the consumption of goods exchanged.

These relations were expressed in systems of kinship and status distinction between various groups in each of Timor's kingdoms. Although these systems varied somewhat, their basic essentials were the same, having their base in a common structure of production and exchange. Kinship, for example, assumed varying forms. By the end of the seventeenth century, there were variations from a patrilineal system with patrilocal residence in the north and east, to a matrilineal system in the south, where matrilineal kinship combined with uxorilocal residence.¹¹

Whatever the form taken by kinship, the exchange of men and women between groups was channelled through tribal elders, who arranged supplies of goods varying from buffaloes and horses to swords and gold ornaments. Consequently, just as the chiefs of the princedoms were able to gain status from their collection of surplus labour through tribute, so also were elders through their role in the system of kinship exchange. Although status accrued to individuals in other ways, such as size and fertility of land cultivated, knowledge of tradition, possession of sacred objects, accumulated wealth, and age, the most important hierarchy remained that generated by production and exchange. Thus, in Timor's political system, the

predominant positions were occupied by the most elevated individuals in the tribute and exchange systems.

This political system had three main administrative levels: the village, principedom, and kingdom, each with its own head. Other sources of political power resided in clan leadership, and a royal and aristocratic status accorded to some kingdom and principedom leaders. The village comprised several hamlets, spread over a wide area. Each hamlet contained the members of a particular clan, generally tracing itself to six generations. Ruled by a headman in association with a council of elders, the village was part of a principedom (*suco*) headed by a family which was itself subject to the ruler (*liurai*) of the kingdom in which it existed. In kingdoms and principedoms where the *liurai* and princes possessed a royal or aristocratic status, the extended royal and aristocratic families distinguished themselves from the mass of the population, the latter being divided into commoners (*dato*) and, in certain cases, slaves (*ata*), mostly captured in wars between clans, principedoms, and kingdoms. In this system, those with the greatest political power were those in receipt of the most tribute and/or those in the most strategic positions in the kinship exchange system.

Each Timorese kingdom, principedom, and clan possessed value systems whose ideologies highlighted the importance of exchange, and justified the hierarchy influenced by this exchange. In the kingdoms of Belu and Servião, for example, tribute paid to the rulers controlling trade focused particularly on gifts at the end of the harvesting period. These gifts were called *poni pah* (literally, 'rice baskets of the land'). Similarly, gifts of 'homage' or *tuthais* were given to rulers whose political prominence had been established by their success in arranging marital exchanges. The exchange of gifts in return for access to means of production (land) and reproduction (the creation of new family units) was also expressed in the cultural rites accompanying birth, marriage, and death, all of which were combined in a value system relating them to the place of the tribe in the cosmos. In death rites, for example, the dead person's descent group acted as an intermediary between its wife-givers and takers, coordinating exchanges between them, making 'death payments' to the deceased person's matrilineal kin. Just as marriage was characterized by an exchange of gifts for means of reproduction, so too were death rites part of a value system whose ethos centered on the notion of exchange. In marriage, food was exchanged for means of reproduction. In death, it was offered to spirits who, in exchange, ensured the fertility of the earth. The products of this fertility were then offered to different spirits who ensured the best climatic conditions for growth, and so on. Life was viewed as a system of inter-linked exchanges whose enactment was essential for the maintenance of economic and social stability.

Reproduction and resistance

Bearing in mind these general characteristics of Timor's social structure, and examining the events we have recounted earlier from the history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, several trends emerge.

Whilst trade in the pre-sixteenth century period had led to a gradual increase in the cultivation of goods for export, the political and social effects of this had been minimal, largely confined to a limited increase in the political influence of the heads of coastal kingdoms. Inserting themselves into existing trading patterns, the Portuguese intensified this process, with the long-term aim of undermining the Timorese kingdoms, producing smaller, less powerful units, more amenable to European control. Throughout the sixteenth century, however, Portuguese attempts at divide and rule had only very limited success, and it was not until the mid-seventeenth century, with the defeat of the Wehale kingdom, that the control by kingdoms over their subordinate princedoms (*suco*) was lessened.

This decline in the kingdoms' powers enabled the invading group of Topasse families to take over the senior positions previously occupied by kingdom and princedom heads in the exchange of tribute, services, and men and women between clans and villages. Through their increasing assumption of this role in the course of the eighteenth century, the Topasses were able to exercise political influence within the Timorese princedoms.

The emphasis on the value of exchange in pre-Portuguese influenced Timor was thus reinforced by the Portuguese spreading the net of exchange economically downwards from the kingdom level, and by the Topasses reinforcing the system of kinship exchange for the purposes of their own political control. Consequently, although the Timorese economy was directed to external needs, and although control of its political system shifted to an external grouping, the effects of these changes were limited. What, in other societies, might have produced fundamental structural changes, resulted rather in the maintenance of basic aspects of Timorese society. This seems to indicate how Timorese society was able to reproduce its indigenous economic, cultural, and social systems despite foreign control. Once established, this co-existence of external control with indigenous structural reproduction continued throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The history of this period is marked by the success of Timorese communities in restricting Topasse, European, and Chinese influence and control to the political sphere of princely kinship alliances.

This resistance took many forms. Throughout the eighteenth century, opposition focused largely on the Portuguese, with attacks on Portuguese troops launched from sheltered mountain areas. One of the most renowned battles took place in the mountains of Cailaco in 1726, when four thousand troops under Portuguese command were contained by a Timorese army less than a quarter its size.¹² As a result of such encounters, by the middle of the

eighteenth century, the Portuguese had given up their attempts to administer the territory in any effective way. In 1769 they were routed in Lifau and moved their administrative centre eastwards to Dili. With the Portuguese threat reduced, the Timorese then found themselves defending their territory against the Topasses, who tried to extend their political control through kinship agreements. Topasse families tried to entice Timorese kingdom rulers by awarding them Portuguese titles such as '*Coronel*' (Colonel) or '*Brigadeiro*' (Brigadier), and providing them with military support for tribute exaction. Their success, however, was limited. Resistance continued into the nineteenth century as evidenced in eyewitness reports.

In 1825, a young Dutch lieutenant, Dirk Kollf, visited Dili. In a detailed account of his visit, he described how, 'the inhabitants of Dili expressed to me their strong desire to be freed from the hateful yoke of the Portuguese.'¹³ At the end of the 1850s, the English traveller Alfred Russel Wallace spent several months in Timor during his travels in the 'Malay Archipelago'. Witnessing one of the regular attacks on Dili, he concluded that, 'Timor will for many years to come remain in its present state of chronic insurrection and misgovernment.'¹⁴ When the naturalist H.O. Forbes travelled in Timor in 1882, he reported that the country was 'apportioned out under certain chiefs called Rajahs or Leoreis (*liurai*), each of whom is independent in his own kingdom.'¹⁴ Their independence was attested by Forbes being conducted through the country without the presence of any Topasses or Portuguese, except in Dili. He noted that the Timorese had 'learnt' many of the customs of the Portuguese, in order to 'outwit' them more effectively. Forbes' observations on the 'independence' of the Timorese kingdoms, and on their ability to control Topasse or Portuguese encroachment, illustrate the constant complaints of Portuguese officials that they were unable to maintain with any degree of success their administrative posts in the interior.

Pacification: The two political systems

At the end of the nineteenth century, however, this situation began to change, as the Portuguese tried once again, this time with much greater determination, to extend control over their colony. Colonial history initially recorded this as a 'reaction' to the assassination of a newly-appointed governor, Lacerda Maia, in 1887, but its causes ran rather deeper.

Faced with the rapid economic development of most of Europe, Portugal tried to improve its economic position by a more systematic exploitation of its colonies than had previously been the case. For Timor, this resulted in an expansion of cultivation for export, persuading villagers to increase their yield and diversify into new crops such as cocoa, copra, and rubber, and introducing plantations to grow coffee. Forced labour was used to develop the infrastructure, cultivate crops, and extend the trading system.

The success of these policies required a more widespread political control

than previously. Yet the extension of Portuguese authority encountered a barrier. This was described by the Governor of Timor Affonso Castro in 1882 in the following terms:

*Marital exchange is our government's major enemy because it produces . . . an infinity of kin relations which comprise leagues of reaction against the orders of the governors and the dominion of our laws. There has not yet been a single rebellion against the Portuguese flag which is not based in the alliances which result from marital exchange.*¹⁶

Exchange and the kinship system, which had been maintained throughout the years of Portuguese control, were now seen clearly by the Portuguese as the most important barriers to the extension of its administrative framework. Portuguese policies at the end of the century thus had two objectives: to undermine the indigenous kinship system, and to create a basis for the systematic exploitation of its colony.

Thus, between 1884 and 1890, a programme of road construction was organized with the use of forced labour (*corvée*). In 1897 a trading company (Sociedade Agricola Pátria e Trabalho [SAPT]) was set up by the governor, José Celestino da Silva (in office, 1894–1908), which introduced coffee plantations into Ermera, in the north-west. From 1906, a head-tax was levied on all Timorese males between eighteen and sixty. The only way in which this could be paid, of course, was by peasant families cultivating and selling goods over and above their subsistence needs.

The introduction of these measures, and particularly the use of forced labour, produced widespread resentment amongst the Timorese. Kingdoms united under the leadership of a *liurai* from the southern district of Manufahi (Same), named Dom Boaventura. The rebellion simmered for sixteen years (1894–1910), culminating in a major uprising which lasted throughout the colony for two years (1910–12), until Boaventura's forces were defeated in August 1912, an estimated 3,000 Timorese dying at the hands of the victorious Portuguese troops.¹⁷ With resistance quelled, the Portuguese introduced their policies to undermine the system of political alliances produced by kinship exchanges. The position of the *liurais* was undercut by the abolition of their kingdoms. The colony was redivided into administrative units, based generally on *suco* boundaries. A measure of administrative power was thus given to the unit below the kingdom level in the indigenous hierarchy. This enhanced the position of the leaders of the *sucos*, although their election as administrators was now subject to Portuguese approval. The Portuguese created two new, additional administrative levels: the *posto*, comprising groups of *sucos*, and the *concelho*, which controlled *postos* via a Portuguese administrator. By these means, the Portuguese tried to replace the Timorese political system with one whose structure and hierarchy could be independent of kinship alliances. Thus, the essence of Portuguese

'pacification' was its attempted destruction of a crucial feature of Timor's social system, whose existence limited the influence of Portuguese control.

With pacification under way, the Portuguese turned to their Dutch colonial neighbours, and completed border discussions with them in 1913. This resulted in the 'Sentença Arbitral', a decision of the ICJ in The Hague 25 June 1914 which was signed in 1915. This divided the island equally, with the Dutch in the west and the Portuguese in the east. The Portuguese retained the enclave of Oecussi Ambeno on the north-west coast (the site of the former, pre-1769, Portuguese capital of Lifau), and the islands of Atauro and Jaco.

By these measures, the Portuguese hoped that, finally, they would be able to exercise a more effective control over their colony. In the coming years, however, it soon became apparent that the impact on the subsistence sector of the economic policies required for cash-crop cultivation was relatively minor, as were the social effects of these policies, with the sole exception being the regular demands for forced labour. Furthermore, although the kingdoms had been formally abolished, the ideologies legitimizing the traditional political hierarchy and the rituals of exchange were perpetuated; *sucu* heads, for example, had to ensure that they were supported by the *liurai* and his retinue. Consequently, two political systems, the colonial and indigenous, co-existed in a rather uneasy truce. Whilst the former was sanctioned through coercion and the use of force, the latter was underpinned by a powerful set of cultural traditions. Whereas in Portuguese East Timor, by such means, most of the population in the Dutch-controlled western part of island (present-day West Timor) were resettled by the end of the 1920s.

Invasion

The political changes accompanying the emergence of Dr Salazar's *Estado Novo* in 1926 had only a marginal effect on the co-existence of the two political systems. A handful of Timorese, a mere 0.25 per cent of the population, were brought into the Portuguese administrative system through their gaining *assimilado* status during the period leading up to the Second World War.

The Japanese invasion of East Timor in December 1941 encountered widespread resistance, organized within the framework of the indigenous political system. Whilst history has recorded the gallant campaign of 400 Dutch and Australian commandos in resisting 20,000 Japanese troops, little has been written about the participation of the Timorese.¹⁸ As several of the commandos have subsequently stated,¹⁹ their operations would have been impossible without the support of the Timorese, who suffered severely from harsh Japanese reprisals when the last group of commando units withdrew in February 1943. By the time the Japanese surrendered in August 1945, 60,000 Timorese, or nearly 14 per cent of the pre-war population had died, and many of the towns and villages had been destroyed.

Whilst West Timor became part of the Indonesian Republic when control was transferred from the Dutch in December 1949, East Timor remained under Portuguese rule. The rebuilding of East Timorese society was undertaken mostly within the indigenous system during the 1950s. The Portuguese recruited compulsory labour from the villages to reconstruct government buildings and port facilities, but their primary concern was to improve the conditions for the cultivation of export crops.

During the 1960s, Portuguese policies aimed to promote a further, but still very limited, recruitment of East Timorese into the colonial administration. Faced with the successes of independence movements in their African colonies, together with an increasingly heavy burden of military expenditure, the Portuguese attempted to create a political elite which could rule East Timor as an 'overseas territory' within a federal framework under Lisbon's benevolent tutelage, as an alternative to independence. Consequently, there occurred a limited extension of education at the secondary and tertiary level,²⁰ together with an increased recruitment of Timorese into the army, the health service and the lower echelons of government administration. Although the objective of socializing Timorese into the values of Portuguese culture as a precursor to federal rule was modified after the Armed Forces Movement (*Movimento das Forças Armadas*) coup of April 1974,²¹ the overall aim of decolonization remained to ensure progress through the inculcation of Portuguese values.²²

Party formation

Consequently, several of the early political initiatives undertaken in East Timor after April 1974, most notably the creation of the first political party, the Timorese Democratic Union (*União Democrática Timorense, UDT*) on 11 May 1974, exhibited the Portuguese perspective of progress towards independence through the gradual acquisition of metropolitan culture by elites whose members would be recruited from the indigenous system. The co-existence of the colonial and indigenous systems would thus be superseded by the gradual assimilation of the latter into the former, principally through the recruitment of leading *liurai* and *suco* leaders.

It was in this context that, on 12 May 1974, the Association of Timorese Social Democrats (*Associação Social Democrata Timorense, ASDT*) was formed. This party, which subsequently became the *Frente Revolucionária de Timor-Leste Independente* (Fretilin) on 12 September 1974, differed from the other political groups emerging during this period in its policies, strategy, and attitudes towards East Timorese society.²³ Rather than attempting to incorporate aspects of East Timorese culture, politics and society within the framework of Portuguese metropolitan culture, it directed its policies towards what it regarded as important areas of indigenous society, taking them as the basis for its organization and strategies. In doing this, it began

tentatively to create a qualitatively new political culture, by combining elements of the indigenous value system into a nationalist ideology. Furthermore, basing elements of its programme for political and economic development on the institutions of indigenous society, Fretilin attempted to build upon what its leaders saw as the strengths of this society in resisting colonial control, most notably its system of kinship alliances. This attempt to take traditional East Timorese culture and social organization as the basis for the development of a nationalist movement, seems to have formed the central part of Fretilin's project. In pursuing this, its support amongst the population increased steadily, particularly during 1975, the year leading up to the Indonesian invasion. Initially, Fretilin drew most of its support in the countryside from the central mountain peoples, in particular the Mambai and Makassae, the northern upland Ema, and the Tetum-speaking peoples of the south and west. The members of the majorities of East Timor's remaining twelve ethnolinguistic groups tended either to be aligned with none of the new political parties, to favour the UDT, or, in the case of some of the northern Tetum in the border villages, to support the minuscule integrationist Apodeti (*Associação Popular Democrática Timorese*) party. By the end of 1975, however, and particularly during the period August–December 1975, when Fretilin administered East Timor following the departure of the Portuguese, support for the movement increased dramatically, extending to all ethnic groups, even the Fatuluku people at the eastern extremity (*Ponta Leste*) of the island. This growing support, together with the organization it created, enabled Fretilin to sustain a campaign of resistance in the years following the massive Indonesian invasion in December 1975.

Fretilin's programme

The nature of this support can best be illustrated by referring briefly to aspects of the development of Fretilin's programmes during the period from September 1974 to the Indonesian invasion in December 1975.

One of the most important areas of Fretilin's work was its programme to tackle widespread illiteracy which affected 93 per cent of the pre-1974 population. From October 1974, Fretilin members travelled widely, collecting material for a literacy handbook in Tetum, the most widely used of East Timor's many languages. Focusing on words in common use, the handbook, entitled *Tai Timor Rai Ita Niang* ('Timor Is Our Country'), broke these words into syllables, and then placed them in different contexts of village life, together with associated words. The essence of the handbook was its description of aspects of everyday life in the villages, as provided by the Timorese themselves.

The way in which this literacy campaign was undertaken illustrated the approach taken by Fretilin: ideas and notions in common use in East Timorese society were adopted as a means of improving the preconditions

for development. A similar case was the health programme in which treatments to deal with East Timor's most common diseases, tuberculosis, malaria, elephantiasis, were introduced in a framework which combined modern treatments with the use of traditional cures.³⁴

In the early stages of Fretilin's development, the idea was mooted of introducing rural cooperatives as a basis for economic development. As a result, several experimental cooperatives were set up, notably in Basartete, Aileu, and Bucoli. In these villages, Fretilin members, several of whom had given up their jobs in Dili and Baucau to work in their home areas, after consultation with *suco* leaders and villagers, selected areas to be worked collectively. Half the crop was delivered to the cooperative and half to the families involved in cultivation. The cooperative then marketed the crop, and, after distributing the income to the families, spent the remainder on expanding output. In Bucoli, cooperation was developed initially at the distributive level. A journalist visiting the cooperative in October 1974, reported that,

*Bucoli people were planning a cooperative for next year's harvest. Villagers will pool their surplus crops [after deducting family needs] for sale in Dili for higher prices than they would get through Chinese middlemen. The receipts will be used as the villagers decide, to buy a truck perhaps, or build a cooperative store to buy wholesale basic necessities, or to buy a small tractor.*³⁵

In developing this cooperative movement, Fretilin adopted methods similar to those in its other campaigns: beginning with rather vague, general notions, ideas for future development were concretized through the accumulated experiences of their members in working with villagers in areas where they had local links.

This stress on developing ideas for programmes through work in the villages was accompanied by the creation of an administrative system which emphasized political decentralization. As opposed to the UDT, in which power was held by Dili-based elites, Fretilin devolved a considerable degree of power over decision-making to regional committees, particularly in the areas of education and health. This decentralization enabled the regions of East Timor to be involved in the direction of the nationalist movement's development, yet to retain a considerable degree of autonomy in both organization and implementation of policies.

Fretilin's popularity

During the initial phase of party formation and development, from April to June 1974, the ASDT remained much less popular than the UDT, although both attracted far greater support than the Indonesian sponsored party, Apodeti. This remained the case until the period from October to November,

when the ASDT (now renamed Fretilin) began to be viewed by both East Timorese and foreign commentators as the party with the greater support, although it was not until the elections for village heads, held in July 1975, that this support was confirmed in a 55 per cent vote for Fretilin candidates. Throughout 1975, during the coalition with UDT from January to May, and after the coup attempt by the UDT in August followed by the departure of the Portuguese administration to Atauro island, Fretilin enjoyed a high degree of popularity within the population, as attested by a variety of visiting commentators, journalists and politicians.²⁶

The reasons for this popularity owed much to the movement's attitude to indigenous society. As distinct from the UDT, whose leadership base was to be found in the lower echelons of the colonial administration, and amongst coffee plantation owners and *liurai* in the agriculturally richer areas of Ermera, Maliana and Maubara, Fretilin moved increasingly into the regions. Building up regional power by working with existing political alliances based on kinship, and taking concepts and ideas prevalent in traditional society as the bases for the development of its programmes, Fretilin emerged as a nationalist movement with extensive popular support and an effective decentralized political structure. Despite some support for more centralist notions of power put forward within Fretilin during the early months of 1975, when it was involved in its coalition with UDT, especially by a group of East Timorese sergeants from the former Portuguese army, Fretilin maintained this decentralized approach. Indeed, in recent years, it has been reemphasized by the movement's present leadership, stressing the importance of ethnic group identities and culture, despite the ethnic intermixing enforced by the Indonesian military through its resettlement programmes.

The Indonesian invasion and its aftermath

In a series of campaigns carried out between 1975 and 1981 to 'pacify' the territory (1975-7), to 'encircle and annihilate' the population outside Indonesian-held areas (1977-8), and to hunt down Fretilin groups through 'fence of legs' (*pagar betis*) operations (1981 to present), the Indonesian government maintained a heavy military presence in East Timor.²⁷ In actions which have been thoroughly documented by refugees and visitors to the territory, the Indonesian army has exercised a brutal rule, trying to coerce the population through massacres of villages, saturation bombing, and widespread human rights abuses.²⁸ The administration set up by the military has attempted a 'resocialization' of East Timor through the enforced movement of the population into strategic hamlets, the reorganization of the economy, and a systematic outlawing or undermining of East Timorese culture and society.²⁹

Throughout all this, opposition has been widespread, with a progressive alienation of almost all social groups from the Indonesian occupiers. The

nationalist movement resisted the invasion, maintained substantial areas of the territory under its control until the end of 1978, and after devastating serial and ground attacks against it, managed to rebuild a framework for the organization of resistance in the early 1980s, which exists to this day.³⁰ Here, the support of the broad mass of East Timorese society has been crucial. There are many examples of this.

During late 1976 and the early months of 1977, the resistance movement's national framework began to be weakened as Indonesian forces maintained troop concentrations in strategically located villages. In this situation, as many refugee accounts have noted, the movement's successes in creating strong regional power centres, based on pre-existing political alliances, enabled it to maintain its areas despite the weakening of links between them.

Similarly, during the 'encirclement and annihilation' campaigns of 1977-8, the maintenance of Fretilin and its rebuilding in the eastern part of the territory were only possible because Fretilin members were protected and shielded by villagers.³¹ Again, one of the most successful areas of the nationalist movement's strategy has been its development of systematic links with support groups, known as *núrep* (*núcleos de resistência popular*), inside the resettlement villages established by the Indonesian military. The groups have organized opposition and supplied the movement with information on Indonesian military intentions. In most cases, the cohesion and organization of these groups has depended to a considerable extent upon kinship ties which have been maintained despite attempts by the military to undermine them (principally through splitting up population from the same village, and settling groups on areas distant from their original villages).

Perhaps some of the most supportive actions, however, came during the 'fence of legs' (*pagar betis*) operations in 1981. In these, according to many refugee accounts, almost the entire male population between the ages of 16 and 60 was recruited to march across the territory in lines, with groups 500 metres apart, in front of Indonesian troops, in an attempt to round up Fretilin members. Despite the extent and duration of these campaigns, few Fretilin troops were captured. Refugees have documented a remarkable process in which Fretilin groups passed through the 'fence' unnoticed by the military, assisted by East Timorese 'human chain' conscripts, who either hid them or led the military away from their encampments. By such means, many Fretilin groups avoided capture.³²

Such actions typify both the strength of support for the nationalist movement within the population, and the ability of the East Timorese to frustrate Indonesian objectives through a systematic social organization.

Conclusion

The pattern outlined above seems likely to continue and there seems to be little doubt that East Timor will continue to resist Indonesian incorporation

for many years to come. Its capacity to resist owes much to the way in which its social structure developed during Portuguese colonialism. This, in turn, resulted from the nature of the trading contacts with Portugal and from the Timorese ability to 'play off one colonial faction against another, as well as their capacity to organize resistance through political alliances based upon kinship ties.

In the twentieth century, Portuguese attempts to undermine the reproduction of indigenous societal structures were unsuccessful, whilst the strength of East Timorese resistance to the Japanese invasion and occupation revealed again the ability of indigenous societal structures to contain attempts at incorporation.

With the demise of Portuguese colonialism, a nationalist movement emerged, drawing increasingly widespread support through policies aimed at developing aspects of the indigenous social structure and value systems in a largely successful attempt to create a national economy and community. The movement was able to mount its campaigns of resistance to the Indonesian occupation and reorganize itself under the most unfavourable conditions in the early 1980s, both because of the popularity of its policies and because of the strength of its organization within indigenous society.

The Indonesian military seems to have had only a very limited understanding of the nature of East Timorese society when its troops invaded, and was clearly taken aback by the strength of popular opposition to its annexation. Faced with such strong resistance, the military gradually realized that its main hope of success lay in the destruction of existing social structures and their replacement by ones more amenable to Indonesian control. Consequently, from the end of the 1970s, the military began its intensive re-socialization and restructuring campaigns of economic reorganization, control of family life, resettlement, the undermining of East Timorese culture and a systematic inculcation of 'Indonesian' (i.e. 'Javanese') values. These campaigns were carried out brutally, and were accompanied by widespread military intimidation. They have been disastrous for the East Timorese, as many well-documented accounts of the results of the invasion and occupation have shown.³³

Despite their determination, the Indonesian military have neither succeeded in fully controlling the territory, nor in establishing any meaningful support for its annexation amongst the wider East Timorese population. In spite of its policies, the social relations and values of the pre-invasion period persist, providing a framework for continuing opposition. Indeed, recently, opposition to the occupation has been led by a younger generation raised during Indonesian rule and largely Indonesian educated.³⁴ This has particularly angered military leaders, many of whom had pinned their hopes on a successful socialization of the second generation.

The success of the nationalist movement in maintaining opposition to the occupation under extremely adverse conditions and despite overwhelming

Indonesian military superiority, is a truly remarkable achievement. The preceding analysis has indicated ways in which the strength and depth of opposition to Indonesian rule can be understood.

Notes

- 1 See, for example, J. S. Dunn, *Timor: A People Betrayed*, Milton (Queensland): Jacaranda Press, 1983. See also C. Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, *The War Against East Timor*. London: Zed Books, 1984; J. Jolliffe, *East Timor: Nationalism and Colonialism*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1978, and *Timor, Terra Sangrenta*. Lisbon: Editora O Jornal, 1989; J. Ramos-Horta, *Funu: The Unfinished Saga of East Timor*. Trenton (New Jersey): Red Sea Press, 1987.
- 2 See, for example, Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, *War Against East Timor*, Ch. 3.
- 3 See Dunn, *Timor: A People Betrayed*, Ch. 10. Also J. G. Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor*. London: Zed Books, 1991.
- 4 Groeneveldt, W. P., *Historical Notes on Indonesia and Malaya, compiled from Chinese Sources*. Jakarta: Bhatara, 1960, p. 116.
- 5 Groeneveldt, *Historical Notes*, p. 117.
- 6 In similar vein, Groeneveldt (*op. cit.*, note 4) cites a Chinese report of 1618, which claims that trading could not begin until a figure he calls 'the king' appeared: 'When they see their king, they [the Timorese] sit down on the ground with folded hands,' and only then could negotiations over trading transactions commence.
- 7 Middelkoop P., 'Trektochten van Timorese Groepen', *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal, Land en Volkenkunde* (Batavia/Jakarta), 85(2) (1952), p. 52.
- 8 The term 'Topasse' originates either from the group's role as interpreters (from the Dravidian word *Tupasse*, 'interpreter'), or from their mode of dress (from the Indian *Topae Walas*, 'hat-men'). See C.R. Boxer, 'The Topasses of Timor', *Koninklijke Vereeniging Indisch Instituut (Medeling)*, 73(24) (1947).
- 9 Boxer, C. R., 'Portuguese Timor: A Rough Island Story, 1515-1960', *History Today*, 10(5) (May 1960), p. 351.
- 10 Cited in H. G. Schulte Nordholt, *The Political System of the Atoni of Timor*. (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), p. 166.
- 11 See G. Francillon, 'Some Matrilineal Aspects of the Social System of the Southern Tetum', PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1967.
- 12 See M.A.R. Rodrigues, 'Da Campanha de 1726 às Pedras de Cailaco' [From the 1726 Campaign to the Stones of Cailaco], *Independência*, 5 (1987).
- 13 Kolff, D. H., *Voyages through the Southern and Little Known Parts of the Moluccan Archipelago, and along the previously unknown Southern Coast of New Guinea, 1825-26*, ed. G. W. Earl. London: Madden, 1840, p. 35.
- 14 Wallace, A. R., *The Malay Archipelago: The Land of the Orang-Utan and the Bird of Paradise, a Narrative of Travel, with Studies of Man and Nature*. New York: Dover, 1962 [originally published by Macmillan (London), 1869], p.153.
- 15 Forbes, H. O., 'On Some Tribes of the Island of Timor', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, No. 13 (1883), p. 404.
- 16 Cited in S. Forman, 'East Timor: Exchange and Political Hierarchy at the Time of the European Discoveries', paper presented at a conference on 'Trade in Ancient South East Asia' (University of Michigan, 1976). Later published in K. Hutterer (ed.), *Economic Exchange and Social Interaction in South East Asia*, Ann Arbor (Michigan): Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1978.
- 17 This figure is taken from a report published in the *Melbourne Argus*, August 1912.

- 18 Notable exceptions are Dunn, *Timor: A People Betrayed*, pp. 22–7, and Michele Turner, *Telling East Timor: Personal Testimonies, 1942–1992*. Kensington: New South Wales Press, 1992, pp. 1–30.
- 19 See, for example, B. J. Callinan, *Independent Company: The 212 and 214 Australian Independent Companies in Portuguese Timor*. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1953, and Turner, *op. cit.*, note 18, pp. 1–50. Also, Interview with C. Morris, former commando, on Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) Radio, Melbourne, 6 April 1977, reprinted in *Retrieval*, No. 36 (April–May 1977), p. 14.
- 20 For analyses and data on this process, see Helen Hill, 'Fretilin: The Origins, Ideologies and Strategies of a Nationalist Movement in East Timor', MA thesis, Monash University, 1978, pp. 43–51.
- 21 Although, of course, this 'socialization' remained as a general aim for some months after the coup. Furthermore, elements of it were retained in General António de Spínola's notion of a 'Lusitanian Federation', to which the governor of East Timor, Colonel Mário Lemos Pires (in office, Nov. 1974–Dec. 1975), subscribed.
- 22 Colonel Lemos Pires, on his appointment as governor of East Timor in November 1974, was given instructions that, no matter what the political outcome, he should try to preserve the legacy of Portuguese culture and traditions in East Timor.
- 23 In addition to the ASDT and the UDT, there were four other parties: the Indonesian-sponsored *Associação Popular Democrática Timorese (APODETI)*, the *Klibur Oan Timor Aswain (KOTA)* (literally, 'The Sons of the Mountain Warrior Dogs'), the *Partido Trabalhista* (Labour Party), and the *Associação Democrática Integração Timor-Leste Austrália (ADITLA)*. Apart from APODETI, whose support came from the border district (*suco*) of the pro-integrationist *liurai* of Atsabe, Guilherme Gonçalves, and from a small number of Dili-based administrators and members of the capital's tiny Moslem community, the other parties could never boast more than the most minuscule following.
- 24 Knowledge obtained in developing these cures was later used widely in Fretilin-held areas after the invasion, particularly from 1975–8, as refugees subsequently testified, see Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War*, pp. 81–2.
- 25 Evans, Grant, 'Portuguese Timor', *New Left Review*, (London), No. 91 (May–June 1975), pp. 67–75.
- 26 Apart from visiting journalists, detailed reports were published after visits by delegations from the Australian Trades Union Movement and the Australian Parliament, in May and September 1975, respectively. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also visited before and after the UDT coup attempt in August 1975, and produced a report.
- 27 Indonesian troop numbers during this period varied from 30,000 to 40,000.
- 28 See, for example, Amnesty International, *East Timor: Violations of Human Rights*. London, 1985.
- 29 For detailed discussions and refugee testimonies on this issue, see Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War*, pp. 80–92.
- 30 For the most insightful reports on the condition of Fretilin, see the articles written by the Australian Trades Union lawyer, Robert Domm, following his meeting with Fretilin leader Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, in September 1990. In particular see the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 October 1990, and *Indonesian News Service*, No. 267. Maryland (USA), 1 November 1990.
- 31 See Amnesty International, *East Timor: Violations of Human Rights*, London, 1985, pp. 29–34.
- 32 This, of course, did not prevent these *pagar betis* campaigns from being accompanied by the most brutal actions committed by Indonesian troops. See, for

- example, Cristiano Costa, 'Timorese Refugee on Indonesian Operations since 1975: The Aitana Massacre', *Tapol Bulletin*, (London), No. 87, June 1988.
- 33 See, in particular, Budiardjo and Liem Soei Liong, *War Against East Timor*, Ch. 5; and Taylor, *Indonesia's Forgotten War*, Ch. 9.
- 34 During the visits of the Pope, in October 1989, and the United States Ambassador to Indonesia, Mr. John Monjo, in January 1990, demonstrations against integration were led by young people in Dili (see below Donaciano Gomes' account). A similar pattern also occurred during a demonstration held at the end of a Mass to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Dili diocese. The Mass, attended by Mgr Canalini, the Apostolic Nuncio in Jakarta, and the Governor of East Timor, Mário Carrascalão (in office, 1982-92), took place on 4 September 1990.

INDOCHINA

FREE FRANCE, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND THE FUTURE OF FRENCH INDO-CHINA, 1940-45

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During the abortive US-Japanese negotiations of 1941, Japan's penetration of Indo-China was a decisive issue in the descent to Pearl Harbour. Yet once America entered the conflict, for the Allies, the federation of French Indo-China quickly receded into relative obscurity, there being little prospect of any decisive action against the Japanese occupation forces until 1944.¹ Though both overt and covert US-British military interventions in Indo-China were limited before the closing stages of the Pacific war, in the light of the Vietnam tragedy, it is little surprise that several, principally American, historians have been drawn to the Allies' wartime discussions over the future status of the federation.² As is well known, US President Franklin D. Roosevelt saw in Indo-China, particularly in the three Vietnamese territories of Tonkin, Annam and Cochin-China, the worst excesses of European colonial rule. From May 1942, Roosevelt cited financial neglect, pre-war political repression and a near-feudal system of agriculture to condemn the French presence in South East Asia.³

The stark contrast between Roosevelt's principled criticism and the later American effort to prop up French authority in the Cold War struggle against Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh coalition forces has nurtured the image of an opportunity lost. Far from becoming the destroyer of Vietnam, the United States might have been its saviour. The British and Americans were, of course, instrumental in returning French forces to Indo-China in 1944-45, both to assist in the final defeat of Japan and to oust the Democratic Republic of Vietnam announced by Ho, with his famous emulation of the US declaration of independence on 2 September 1945. But, while American motives in Indo-China have been heavily scrutinized by English-speaking

scholars, those of Charles de Gaulle's Free French movement, and of the British government, deserve closer scrutiny in their own right. Thus far, only Peter Dennis and John Dreifort have undertaken this task using a combination of British and French archival sources.⁴

There remain several common historical assumptions regarding the Anglo-Free French approach to Indo-China. First among these is that de Gaulle was determined to restore the French empire intact in order to utilize a reconstructed imperial prestige in his quest for status among the victorious allied powers. The General's wartime rhetoric certainly lends weight to such a conclusion.⁵ Secondly, it is widely recognized that Britain needed an imperial Ally in South East Asia in order to strengthen its own case for retention of colonies. In addition, British officials could draw favourable comparisons between British rule in India, Burma, Ceylon and Malaya and the rigidities of French colonial control in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. In both cases, policy was driven by narrow calculations of self-interest by the metropolitan power. Though these characterizations may be partially true, they leave little room for any considered evolution of Free French and British plans for Indo-China. This article traces the development of these Gaullist and British policies from the fall of France in 1940 to the end of the Far Eastern war five years later. The purpose is to indicate that Gaullist and British policies were more sophisticated and complex than might first appear.

Until recently, in France, detailed accounts of Free French plans for Indo-China tended to draw upon personal recollection rather than the archival record. Concerned by limited French domestic interest in the objectives of France's war in Indo-China between 1946 and 1954, three of the key wartime figures in French policy published accounts which derived from personal experience. The former Vichyite Governor of Indo-China, Admiral Jean Decoux, completed his war memoirs in 1949.⁶ While revealing about Vichy policies and his relations with the Japanese military missions in Hanoi and Saigon, Decoux, perhaps inevitably, made little comment about Free French plans. The Admiral's memoirs were followed in 1952 by two more objective accounts. These were written by the historian Philippe Devillers, who spent much of the war in Saigon, and by Gilbert Sabattier, divisional commander of colonial forces in Tonkin, who later became head of the French military resistance in northern Indo-China.⁷ 1952 also saw the first publication of a more popular work, *Histoire d'une paix manquée. Indochine 1945-1947*, by Jean Sainteny, head of the French military mission in Kunming, south China, in 1945, and then principal French negotiator with Ho over the winter of 1945-46.⁸ More recently, French historical interest in de Gaulle's plans for Indo-China was much stimulated by the publication of a landmark *colloque* in 1981.⁹ Understandably, none of these French works utilized the rich vein of Free French archival material at the Public Record Office in London. These British sources, in addition to French Foreign and War Ministry records, provide the basis for what follows.

In brief, the official British attitude to the course of wartime events in Indo-China was nicely summarized by Walter Cheshire, head of the Royal Air Force section of the allied disarmament commission sent to Saigon in September 1945:

The confused and delicate situation then existing in F[rench] I[ndo-]C[hina] had its origins in 1941. Because Vichy France was susceptible to Axis pressure, the Japanese were able to secure an unopposed entry into French Indo-China. In return for this accommodating attitude, the French were allowed to exercise local authority in FIC. This enforced partnership between Vichy and Tokyo continued, apparently undisturbed, until the end of 1944 or early 1945, at which point the French began to appreciate that they had, willingly or unwillingly, backed the wrong horse. Their attitude towards the Japanese then hardened, with the result that they found themselves unseated and replaced by the Japanese [in March 1945].¹⁰

This skeletal account reveals two of the key tenets of British, and indeed Gaullist, policy towards Indo-China. Firstly, there was the almost fatalistic belief that between 1941-44 Indo-China was effectively beyond the pale. Secondly, it was conventional wisdom within Whitehall and Free French headquarters at Carlton Gardens that France was no longer master of its own destiny in Indo-China. Either the French would be ousted by the Japanese or restored by an allied victory, provided, of course, that Roosevelt could be made to stomach the idea of a French return. To a degree, this mirrored Vichy's inability to lend material support to Admiral Decoux. Throughout late 1940 and 1941 the Minister of Colonies, Admiral Charles Platon, liaised closely over Indo-China with the Minister of Marine, Admiral Jean-François Darlan, who retained overall responsibility for Vichy imperial defence planning. But so long as Britain's naval blockade of Vichy persisted, their support for Decoux's loyalist administration was minimal.¹¹ In Hanoi, Decoux was thus left to his own devices to a greater extent than any other major French colonial Governor.

Schemes formulated by the British government and the Free French national committee altered in response to the mixed messages about Indo-China sent out by Roosevelt's administration. On 13 April 1942, acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles informed Vichy's Washington Ambassador, Gaston Henry-Haye, that America hoped to see the French empire maintained intact. Yet Welles was himself a supporter of the trusteeship system propounded by Roosevelt as a preferred alternative to the continuation of European colonialism in South East Asia. In May-June 1942 the French national committee's foreign affairs Commissariat and Adrien Tixier, Free French representative in Washington, discussed the potential benefits of sending de Gaulle to the US to confer with State Department officials. Tixier

disparaged the idea. He characterized the State Department as divided, ill-informed and enthralled by the former Quai d'Orsay Secretary General, Alexis Léger. A formidable diplomat, characterized by Raoul Aglion as *éminence grise* of the Third Republic dignitaries exiled in Washington, Léger was a known opponent of de Gaulle.¹² As Tixier noted, since Roosevelt ultimately controlled foreign policy formulation, it would be unwise for de Gaulle to meet him without first making sure that the two men could find common ground. Over Indo-China, this remained impossible.¹³

As allied planning for military intervention in Indo-China gathered pace from 1943, so the contradictions in US policy became harder to unravel. Operatives of the American Office of Strategic Services (OSS) had established contacts within Tonkin and Annam with both Vietnamese and French resisters.¹⁴ British Special Operations Executive (SOE) personnel acted in a parallel, if uncoordinated, fashion with other pro-Gaullist groups and had created a French-staffed mission to Indo-China under the auspices of SOE's "Force 136" based in India.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Roosevelt stood apart from the developing clash over Indo-China policy between the State Department's Office of European Affairs and its newly-established Division of Southwest Pacific Affairs.¹⁶ By 1944 the contradictions inherent in allied planning for Indo-China were compounded by the proliferation of Gaullist diplomatic and military missions with both Chiang Kai-shek's China command at Chungking and Admiral Louis Mountbatten's South East Asia Command (SEAC) in New Delhi. Since Chiang harboured imperialist objectives of his own in Tonkin, the division of allied responsibility between the Chinese nationalists and British forces under SEAC was bound to be difficult.¹⁷ Even more serious in the long term, the Americans, the British and even the Fighting [Free] French were woefully ignorant about the strength, popularity and objectives of the Viet Minh. Far better informed, the Vichy authorities had no intention of revealing how precarious their own position had become.¹⁸

Another peculiar feature of the Free French perspective on Indo-China is that de Gaulle perceived short-term and long-term threats to French sovereign control which were at variance with one another. While the obvious immediate threat to French sovereignty was an unbridled Japanese takeover, so long as the Allies defeated Japan, this might be discounted, except insofar as an interim period of Japanese rule might enhance the strength of certain pro-Japanese nationalist groups such as the emergent Dai Viet party in Hanoi.¹⁹ In the longer-term then, the greatest danger seemed to lie in Roosevelt's tenacious idealism. Lacking reliable intelligence, what de Gaulle and the Free French Commissariat of foreign affairs tended to overlook was that nationalist politics in Vietnam were being transformed by the stresses of the war. Moreover, although a Gaullist military mission was assigned to Chiang Kai-shek's headquarters in Chungking by 1944, de Gaulle remained remarkably sanguine about the likelihood that Chiang would pursue irredentist claims within Tonkin if Chinese Nationalist forces were allowed to enter

northern Vietnam as part of an inter-allied strategy. Yet both the Gaullist military mission in China and its Giraudist equivalent, loyal to de Gaulle's major political rival, General Henri Giraud, repeatedly warned that Chiang hoped to annex at least part of Tonkin. Nationalist maps even represented northern Tonkin as part of metropolitan China.²⁰ A further problem was that Admiral Decoux's regime was slow to shift its allegiance in response to rising allied fortunes in the war. This was hardly surprising. De Gaulle joined the Allies in declaring war on Japan in December 1941. If Decoux were caught making contact with Gaullists, whether locally, or by emissary to London or Algiers, his administration was sure to be overthrown by the Japanese.²¹

In many respects, Free French inability to make any strategic impact upon French Indo-China between 1940-43 merely repeated a familiar refrain in French Far Eastern policy. During the late 1930s, French strategic plans for Indo-China were frustrated by insuperable problems. Firstly, the Quai d'Orsay experienced great difficulty in predicting the views of the Chinese Koumintang. Unsure of the plans and capabilities of Chiang Kai-shek, after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in July 1937, France placed little store upon China's capacity for resistance. As a result, from autumn 1937, France intermittently forbade the transit of arms and supplies through Indo-China to Yunnan in a vain effort to win Japanese favour. As Alexis Léger, then still at the Foreign Ministry, admitted in November 1939, France, though broadly sympathetic to Chiang Kai-shek, considered that such *ménagements* of Japan were essential.²² By July 1940 Decoux and his predecessor as Governor General, Georges Catroux, bowed to the demands of the Japanese military mission installed at Hanoi. Both Governors prohibited the trans-shipment of war material to the Chinese nationalists.²³ Prior to the war, French association with the USSR through the 1935 Franco-Soviet Pact also soured relations with Japan.²⁴ Unable to build any meaningful detente with the Japanese, as the French strategic position worsened, so the tendency to vest undue hope in British and American diplomatic and military support increased. Though the French discussed combined defensive plans with their British counterparts in Singapore in June 1939, this merely revealed how powerless both nations really were without the assurance of US intervention.²⁵ After Japan's seizure of Canton in late October 1938 and its subsequent occupation of Hainan and the neighbouring Spratly islands in February-March 1939, it was obvious to Paris and Tokyo alike that France could in no circumstances reinforce Indo-China sufficiently to protect it from either a southerly Japanese military advance into Tonkin or possible Japanese amphibious landings anywhere between Saigon and Haiphong.²⁶ As the European situation deteriorated, so Indo-China slipped further down the list of French strategic priorities.

Hence, de Gaulle's dependence upon British and US support did not mark any major departure in French strategic planning for the preservation of

Indo-China. Military reliance there had long been, but *de facto* French political subordination to Britain and the USA was, of course, something new. The French could at least claim that they were the first to resist Japan militarily. Under duress, Admiral Decoux's administration gave way to Japanese demands for transit rights and base facilities in September 1940. But Japanese units deployed in China's Kwangsi province to the north-east of Tonkin immediately contravened this agreement. During a few days of fighting from 22 September, the French garrisons at Dong Dang and Langson mounted a heroic, if hopeless, defence. Though the Langson incident illustrated the precarious nature of Franco-Japanese coexistence in Indo-China, it also confirmed the tenacity of the French commitment to remain sovereign there.²⁷ Over the winter of 1940-41 the French garrison also mounted audacious operations against Thailand after the Thais, with Japanese encouragement, asserted territorial claims to tracts of Laotian and Cambodian territory west of the Mekong river.²⁸ But as in September 1940, so in February 1941 Decoux's administration eventually caved in under Japanese pressure, ceding territory to Thailand after bruising negotiations with Japan's "intermediary", Matsumiya.²⁹ From Tokyo, Britain's Ambassador, Sir Robert Craigie, speculated that Decoux's effort to delay negotiations was guided by the hope that British naval victories over the Italians in the Mediterranean might lead to a more rapid reinforcement of Singapore, curbing Japanese and Thai ambition in the process.³⁰

In fact, Gaullist recognition that the British could do nothing to assist French Indo-China without direct US support explains the muted Free French response to Decoux's worsening predicament in 1941.³¹ At this early stage, the Free French Empire Defence Council—the main Gaullist imperial policy-making body in the twelve months prior to the formal creation of a French national committee on 20 September 1941—was convinced that Free French or allied intervention in Indo-China would be counter-productive. Gaullist incursions "would risk driving Japan to an immediate extension of its invasion, an extension which the French Indo-China authorities would not appear capable of opposing with their regular forces".³² Lacking any real alternative, the Empire Defence Council confined itself to the observation that solidarity between the European colonial powers was essential to their long-term survival in South East Asia. Pointing out that the Free French Pacific territories banned the export to Japan of strategic raw materials, including vital nickel from New Caledonia, de Gaulle maintained that the Free French empire was doing all it could to counter Japanese aggression. This amounted to a subtle plea for the British government to take the French role in opposing Japan more seriously.³³ Though the British had little scope to intervene, in the early months of 1941 the Chiefs of Staff and the Foreign Office Far Eastern department concluded that Decoux should be offered moral support in his limited stand against the Japanese. De Gaulle and his foreign affairs Commissioner, Maurice Dejean, accepted this without

complaint. Moreover, since the British could not effectively blockade Indo-China owing to Japan's local naval dominance, Churchill's government increased British purchases of Indo-China's export produce, rubber above all, to prevent it falling into Japanese hands.³⁴ The Free French even advocated a partial relaxation of the British naval blockade of Vichy Africa to permit some reinforcement of Decoux's garrison with troops and aircraft stationed in other Vichy colonies. In fact, in its tangential support for Decoux, British policy amounted to little more than a temporary withdrawal of British backing for existing Gaullist organizations within Indo-China, Shanghai and Hong Kong.³⁵ As yet, covert Anglo-Free French operations had made no real local impact. During 1941 SOE operatives in Singapore planned to establish British agents within Indo-China with minimal Free French involvement. But when Singapore fell in mid-February 1942, SOE's Indo-China planning fell with it.³⁶

America's entry into the war stirred Free French Far Eastern policy to life. Still, de Gaulle preferred to exploit Decoux's further capitulations to Japanese economic and military demands upon Indo-China in May and July 1941 to justify the French national committee's declaration of war upon Japan on 8 December 1941. Henceforth, the Free French attempted to balance encouragement of allied plans for the liberation of Indo-China against the obvious danger that the US government might act alone, or with Chiang Kai-shek, to evict the Japanese without incurring any commitment to uphold French sovereignty. From January 1942 the French national committee claimed a voice in allied planning for Indo-China, confirming the final reversal of the previous Gaullist acceptance of Decoux's authority. This shift was prefigured in March 1941. The Empire Defence Council then announced that it considered any Vichy transfers of colonial territory, and any agreements concluded under duress with the Axis powers, to be null and void. De Gaulle duly insisted that, in collaborating with Japan, Decoux's administration forfeited its right to govern.³⁷

On 17 January 1942 de Gaulle informed the Foreign Office liaison mission to his Carlton Gardens headquarters that General Catroux was conducting talks in Beirut with a senior French colonial officer. Commandant Coudrais, who had organised support for Free France within Cochinchina and Cambodia before he was forcibly repatriated in September 1940. Coudrais proposed to return to Indo-China to re-establish an active Gaullist partisan movement capable of attacking Japanese targets and lines of communication in the event of allied operations in Thailand or Indo-China itself. Until this occurred, Coudrais' followers would relay local intelligence to the British.³⁸ The War Office responded favourably to Coudrais' offer. Though little hardware could be sent from British redoubts in Burma to Free Frenchmen in Indo-China, the War Office Directorate of Military Intelligence was eager to improve its intelligence-gathering capacity across South East Asia as a whole. In late February Coudrais and four other Gaullist Lieutenants were

offered transport from the U.S. and Beirut to begin covert activities in Indo-China.³⁹

By the time Coudrais arrived at Britain's India Command headquarters in Delhi on 11 April 1942, Free French plans for Indo-China had come unstuck. As was feared, there was insufficient British equipment locally available to support Coudrais and his potential followers. Furthermore, by early February, with British garrisons at Singapore and Rangoon soon to fall, Decoux faced mounting pressure from Iwataro Uchiyama, Japanese Minister in Indo-China, and his deputy, Fujio Minoda, Consul General in Saigon, to permit additional Japanese reinforcement of Indo-China and more generous export quotas to Japan. Provision for such *ad hoc* arrangements was built into the Franco-Japanese "common defence" agreement signed at Vichy by Deputy-Premier, Admiral Darlan and Japanese Ambassador Kato on 29 July 1941.⁴⁰ Another obvious obstacle was the continuing US refusal to sanction any Free French operations. This acquired further significance after the fall of Singapore in mid-February 1942, and the consequent redeployment of General Archibald Wavell's Combined Far Eastern Command to India, since Britain and the US accepted that Indo-China and Siam were notionally within Chiang Kai-shek's are of strategic control.

To work effectively, Coudrais had to move to Chungking. He could then resume the work of Commandant Jean Escarra, former Free French representative to Chiang Kai-shek, who had travelled to Manila and Singapore in November 1941 for consultations over Indo-China with General Douglas MacArthur, British China Station Commander-in-Chief, Sir Geoffrey Layton, and Britain's Far Eastern commander, Air Chief Marshal, Sir Robert Brooke-Popham. However, Pearl Harbour intervened to prevent Escarra from consolidating these early ties.⁴¹ Unfortunately, when Britain's Chungking representative, Sir Horace Seymour, discussed Coudrais' attachment to the Chinese Nationalist government on 25 April 1942, Chiang Kai-shek made plain that he would only sanction those foreign military missions which worked under his direct authority. It was this disappointing response that prompted an agreement later that same month between General Wavell and the French national committee to establish a separate French military mission under British remit when local conditions allowed. This laid the foundation for General Roger Blaizot's subsequent military mission to Admiral Louis Mountbatten's South East Asia Command (SEAC), itself officially opened in New Delhi on 16 November 1943.⁴²

Whereas in 1941 Free French and British plans for Indo-China amounted to little in practice, during 1942 their policies converged only to be immediately undermined by Britain's dismal military standing in the Far East and by the US inclination to lend most immediate aid to Chiang Kai-shek. After Britain's loss of the *Prince of Wales* and the *Repulse* in the Gulf of Siam on 10 December 1941, the Chiefs of Staff sub-committee, somewhat optimistically, confined Britain's regional priorities to the defence of Burma and the

Malay barrier stretching from the Malay peninsula to northern Australia.⁴³ As Japan overran South East Asia, so Free French broadcasting stations in Hong Kong, Manila and Singapore were lost.⁴⁴ French Indo-China seemed more remote than ever. The difficulties in securing first Coudrais' and later, Colonel Zinovi Pechkoff's, attachment to Chungking added to Free French suspicion of Chiang Kai-shek's expansionist designs upon Tonkin. Drawing upon information derived from the newly-established Free French *service de renseignements* intelligence network for South East Asia, on 23 March 1942 Carlton Gardens advised Admiral Georges Thierry d'Argenlieu, High Commissioner for the French Pacific territories, that Chiang might even conspire to undermine the development of effective French resistance within northern Tonkin.⁴⁵

Though the Free French administered a substantial African and Levantine empire by 1942, their influence upon allied policy in the Far East remained marginal. After the Wallis islands, north-east of Fiji, rallied to de Gaulle in late May, Tixier was instructed to remind Admiral Harold Stark, soon to be appointed US representative to the allied governments-in-exile, that Free French Oceania added to US Navy Department facilities in the Pacific. In fact, in stressing the importance of these tiny island outposts, the Free French only emphasized their own impotence.⁴⁶ From December 1942 Gaullist representatives in Washington confined themselves to repeated statements that the French national committee considered all political and territorial changes effected in Indo-China since the 1940 armistice to be illegal. On 4 December a Free French delegation led by Pierre Laurin, adviser on Indo-China to Colonial Commissioner René Plevin, attended the opening of an Institute of Pacific Affairs conference in Washington. In a vain bid to cultivate US sympathy, Laurin and his colleagues spoke of the Gaullist commitment to end forced labour, to democratize the administration of Indo-China and to bring renewed vigour to France's civilizing mission in the Far East.⁴⁷ These empty promises merely confirmed that the Free French had made little impact upon US policy hitherto.

After the frustrations of 1942, the creation of a unified French Committee of National Liberation (FCNL) in Algiers on 3 June 1943 rekindled Gaullist interest in Indo-China. The FCNL provided the broad framework of a provisional French government. Furthermore, allied war material was by now arriving in Morocco and Algeria on a scale sufficient to enable planning of major French strategic operations. As a result, the U.S. government conceded formal (if equivocal) recognition of the FCNL soon after the August 1943 Quebec conference. With a renewed access of confidence, de Gaulle's foreign affairs Commissariat worked harder to stake the Free French claim to involvement in the Pacific war.⁴⁸ Similarly, the Free French were by this point receiving much valuable intelligence from Indo-China likely to be of direct assistance to the Allies. This intelligence drew upon information from disaffected French colonial troops. Free French agents, organized into a

service d'action based in India, collated and relayed the intelligence gathered. Under Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Boucher de Crèvecoeur, this organization would later expand into the French Indo-China operations section of SOE's Far Eastern network.⁴⁹ Apart from the Gaullist *service de renseignements*, René Plevin's Commissariat of Colonies now boasted an expert Indo-China section directed by Pierre Laurin. On 2 March 1943, Colonel Pierre Billotte, head of de Gaulle's military staff, offered the US Navy Department detailed plans of the Japanese defences at Cam Ranh Bay north-east of Saigon. These details were derived from information relayed by a Major Bourgoïn, the engineer formerly in charge of public works in the Hanoi administration. Bourgoïn submitted further reports on strategic defences both direct to General Joseph Stilwell, chief of staff at the China theatre command in Chungking, and to the nascent SEAC headquarters at New Delhi, whose creation was only formally approved at the Quebec conference in August 1943.⁵⁰

The Viet Minh coalition acted upon the FCNL's repudiation of Decoux with an appeal in December 1943 calling upon "the Frenchmen of Indo-China loyal to France" to join them in a "systematic sabotage" of Decoux's administration. Envisaging the creation of a broad anti-fascist front, the Viet Minh declaration implored French settlers and garrison troops to "give up the abhorrent flag of fascism and join the Indo-Chinese revolution [in order] to cast off the Japanese yoke".⁵¹ Though encouraged by these developments, as in 1942 the Fighting French saw no alternative but to advance their Far Eastern interests in London above all. Tixier warned from Washington that any attempt to bargain Free French intelligence in return for a US commitment to let Fighting French forces participate in the war against Japan was doomed to failure.⁵² On 8 September 1943 Pierre Viénot advised the Foreign Office French department that the FCNL wished to dispatch a new military mission to Britain's developing SEAC administration under Mountbatten and General Auckinleck at New Delhi.⁵³ Formerly a Giraudist and, like Coudrais, a divisional commander within the French colonial infantry, the proposed mission chief, General Blaizot, was commander-designate for the French Far Eastern expeditionary force that slowly took shape over the course of 1944.

The British responded coolly to the FCNL request. General Sir Henry Pownall, chief of staff at SEAC, convinced the War Cabinet to delay its approval for the Blaizot mission until SEAC was fully functional and the Fighting French could make a significant military contribution within the Far Eastern theatre. As a sop to de Gaulle, Prime Minister Winston Churchill and the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, finally accepted a longstanding Gaullist request for Fighting French representatives to attend meetings of the Pacific Council in London whenever issues directly affecting Indo-China were discussed. Since the London Pacific Council had met only twice and was a pale imitation of its namesake in Washington, this concession did little

to diminish the War Cabinet's rebuff over the Blaizot mission.⁵⁴ The wider course of the war at least worked in Fighting French favour. The successful allied landings in French North Africa on 8 November 1942 prompted Germany's occupation of Vichy France three weeks later. Marshal Philippe Pétain's Vichy regime continued to decline in 1943. Meanwhile, the conclusion of the allied campaign in Tunisia in May 1943 opened the door to the preliminary allied landings in Italy two months later. When Viénot first raised the Blaizot mission idea in early September, an Italian armistice was only a fortnight away. With Vichy discredited and German forces in retreat, both the British government and the French national committee expected the Japanese to reinforce their own strategic position in South East Asia, dismissing Decoux's administration in order to establish an iron grip upon Indo-China. In short, at the very point when the FCNL proposed an extended Fighting French role in Indo-China, Britain's India command and SOE operatives in the Far East, far from introducing additional French undercover forces, planned to evacuate French intelligence operatives from the area.⁵⁵

In its recognition of the FCNL the British government confirmed the right of the Algiers authorities to administer all French overseas territories. Churchill promised that Fighting French representatives would be admitted to inter-allied strategic planning on this basis. In their more qualified statement of recognition, the US government stipulated that the FCNL's right to representation in inter-allied discussions would "be reserved for consideration in each case as it arises".⁵⁶ Alarmed at the all-embracing tenor of Roosevelt's criticisms of European colonialism in Asia, with Eden's backing, the Far Eastern department took up the cause of the Blaizot mission to argue the case for clearer British identification with de Gaulle's followers over Indo-China. By then, the Washington Pacific War Council—from which the Free French remained pointedly excluded—was Roosevelt's preferred forum for his attacks on the colonial empires of South East Asia. On 21 July 1943 the President used a Council meeting to elaborate upon his ideas for an international trusteeship over Indo-China. Though Roosevelt conceded that Churchill had yet to assent to his scheme, US plans for self-government in liberated Indo-China were essentially comparable to similar proposals for the post-war Philippines.⁵⁷

Though loathe to argue the matter openly, the Far Eastern department and the Foreign Office Permanent Under-Secretary, Sir Alexander Cadogan, advised Churchill to place less emphasis on pleasing Roosevelt and more upon bolstering the common imperial interests of Britain and France in South East Asia.⁵⁸ This Foreign Office advice was driven by the developing clash of military priorities between SEAC and the US China Command at Chungking. One facet of this dispute was the matter of strategic authority over Indo-China. In July 1943 the Far Eastern department drafted a memorandum supporting the French claim to Indo-China for submission to

Deputy Prime Minister Clement Attlee's inter-departmental Post-War Settlement Committee. In fact, this paper was withheld for a further six months before its presentation to the War Cabinet on 16 February 1944.⁵⁹ The memorandum stressed that Indo-China policy should be concerted with the Dominions in order to help restore their faith in Britain's long-term commitment to South East Asia. But the Far Eastern department also emphasized the benefits of Anglo-French unity in Far Eastern affairs as a means to offset America's military superiority. This was the clearest statement yet made that Britain's policy over Indo-China ought to serve British imperial interests and should be consistent with the anticipated Anglo-French collaboration in the preservation of post-war security in western Europe.⁶⁰

While these policy discussions continued in Whitehall, the FCNL took up its case for a role in Far Eastern war planning with Roosevelt's administration. As former head of the Quai d'Orsay's Far Eastern section, Henri Hoppenot, principal FCNL representative in Washington, was well placed to argue the case for French participation in the Pacific War Council. When he duly raised the matter between 10–13 October 1943 with State Department officials including legal adviser, Stanley Hornbeck, and the former US Chargé to Vichy, H. Freeman Matthews, Hoppenot met a surprisingly warm response.⁶¹ Six months earlier, de Gaulle's plans for Free French infiltration of Indo-China had been rejected as unrealistic by a number of senior US staff officers introduced to the General by Admiral Stark in London. Now there seemed a glimmer of hope that the State Department might accede to Gaullist pressure prior to Roosevelt's departure for the imminent Big Three meeting at Tehran.⁶² But State Department views were unlikely to prevail while Roosevelt remained unconvinced of the strategic imperative behind Fighting French participation in the Pacific War, particularly if according a role to de Gaulle implied a snub to Chiang Kai-shek. The Chinese leader warned Mountbatten in early November that to acquiesce entirely in SEAC jurisdiction over Indo-China would be widely regarded by Chiang's forces as an insufferable humiliation.⁶³ With the status of their military mission still unresolved, on 17 November the FCNL announced the creation of a *Corps Léger d'Intervention* (CLI) of some 1,000 troops to serve under Blaizot in Indo-China. Though Churchill was reluctant to antagonise the Americans, from SEAC headquarters—which were re-located to Kandy in Ceylon in April 1944—Mountbatten abandoned his earlier caution and openly supported the Blaizot mission as a means to limit Chinese influence in the affairs of Indo-China.⁶⁴

Like Mountbatten, the Far Eastern experts within the Foreign Office—Cadogan among them—were convinced that Chiang Kai-shek would eventually seize upon any combination of Japanese weakness and a collapse in French colonial control to advance his own territorial ambitions in northern Indo-China. In March 1943, Chiang had finally severed relations with both

Vichy and Decoux, infuriated by the latter's cession of base facilities at Kwangchow Bay to the Japanese. Thereafter, little attempt was made to conceal historic Chinese claims to Tonkin and Annam. This raised the worrying prospect of Britain supporting a French expeditionary force in Indo-China whilst the US either agreed to, or acquiesced in, a *de facto* extension of Chinese sovereignty in Tonkin.⁶⁵ Further complicated by Roosevelt's indictments of French colonial oppression, the problem of SEAC and Chungking command boundaries turned on the reliability of the accords reached between the US-directed China Command and the British authorities at SEAC. Technically, the China Theatre agreement of January 1942 placed Indo-China firmly within Chiang Kai-shek's, and hence America's, strategic purview. The only modification to this was a subsequent verbal accord concluded between Mountbatten and Chiang in October 1943 which left both commanders equally free to mount attacks against Thailand and Indo-China as opportunity allowed.⁶⁶ It would clearly be stretching this unwritten agreement to infer that Chiang had thus authorized the British to support Fighting French efforts to organize a nationwide resistance against the Japanese in Indo-China.

Mountbatten was keenly aware of this difficulty. Yet he was optimistic that the Blaizot Mission and the CLI could pursue operations under his aegis, provided that SOE served as the conduit between SEAC and CLI units, and that Blaizot's activities were strictly confined to Indo-China. In Mountbatten's view, the advantages of French expertise and the operational potential of an organised French para-military force established behind Japanese lines were worth the risk of confrontation with Chiang, Stilwell and the latter's successor, General Albert Wedemeyer. Those Free French representatives already based at Chungking were not expected to oppose a more pre-eminent role for their colleagues attached to SEAC. There was little direct rivalry between the two. Though very much a serving officer, General Zinovi Pechkoff, a close colleague of de Gaulle who was then acting as Ambassador to Chiang Kai-shek, was not averse to the Blaizot mission directing Free French operations in Indo-China. Since his arrival at Chungking in October 1943, Pechkoff had been unable to carve himself an operational niche without admitting the *quid pro quo* of greater Chinese military involvement in his plans.⁶⁷ In November 1943, the FCNL appointed Pechkoff the nominal organizer of French internal resistance in Indo-China. But during 1944 it became clear that Blaizot and de Crèvecoeur at SEAC HQ were the preferred conduits for the development of an internal resistance network.⁶⁸

Unease over the likely US reaction to any such operations continued to dictate Churchill's scrupulous caution towards Indo-China strategy. The Prime Minister always distanced himself from Roosevelt's criticism of French rule in Indo-China. But before 1943 the Free French did not produce any comprehensive proposals for colonial reform with which to challenge Roosevelt. Both René Pleven's announcement on 13 October of the FCNL's

intention to convene a conference to discuss colonial reform, and the Brazzaville conference that resulted between 30 January and 8 February 1944, were substantially driven by the need to undermine US anti-colonialism.⁶⁹ Brazzaville was a rather disappointing affair; timid and vague in its conclusions. This reflected the fact that its sessions were effectively extended meetings of Gaullist colonial governors. Nationalist representatives from French Africa and Indo-China did not attend. But symbolically the conference was pivotal. The FCNL could justifiably claim that it had turned its attention to post-war imperial reform and reconstruction.

From December 1943 onwards, Eden warned Churchill that the Indo-China problem could no longer be swept under the carpet pending a final settlement at an allied peace conference. In January 1944 Esler Dening, Foreign Office liaison officer at SEAC, emphasized the perils inherent in the ambiguous British policy Churchill seemed to favour: "To employ Frenchmen for our own ends in Indo-China if we share the President's view about not returning the territory to France would be regarded as treachery by all Frenchmen and would in addition be dangerous to us".⁷⁰ In May Churchill vented his frustration at the rising inter-departmental pressure for a more assertive policy by criticizing SOE enthusiasm for attachment of Blaizot's CLI to SOE's command centre in India. The Prime Minister chose not to criticize Mountbatten or the Foreign Office directly. By this point, SOE's Force 136 attached to SEAC was ready to begin the infiltration of the trained French volunteers recruited to its Indo-China section.⁷¹ Churchill's continued hostility retarded SOE's plans for Indo-China by at least six months. The PM considered it imperative to keep SOE and FCNL demands in abeyance: "It is erroneous to suppose that one must always be doing something. The greatest service that SOE can render us is to select with great discrimination their areas and occasions of intervention". With landings in north-west Europe imminent and allied post-war planning gathering momentum, it was not a propitious moment to make an issue of Indo-China, largely to de Gaulle's benefit.⁷²

Churchill's cautious approach was certainly defensible given the overriding requirements of cordial Anglo-American strategic co-operation. But the continued frustration of Free French planning damaged Anglo-Gaullist relations and effectively weakened the position of SEAC and SOE relative to the Chungking Command and the developing OSS network within Indo-China. In late July 1944, William Mack, long a key Foreign Office liaison officer to the FCNL, highlighted the flaw in the British position:

H.M.G. are pursuing a stronger policy. They have said they want to see a strong France; they have stated that it is their intention to restore the independence and greatness of France; and the P.M. has described France as having the fourth place in the Grand Alliance. The French Committee [of National Liberation] is exercising gov-

ernmental authority in France as liberation proceeds. Yet the French are not considered worthy to have a military mission to SEAC.⁷³

By this point, Churchill was isolated within Whitehall's civil, military and intelligence establishment. Yet only Eden and the SOE chief Lord Selborne judged Indo-China of sufficient importance to tackle the Prime Minister personally. Under Selborne's direction, SOE headquarters in London tried to persuade Mountbatten to plead Blaizot's case more strongly with the Chiefs of Staff.⁷⁴ This was pointless. Though the service chiefs saw advantage in making greater use of French troops and shipping in the Far East, Churchill was unmoved. In his eyes, neither SOE nor Mountbatten took a sufficiently panoramic view of the primordial requirements of allied co-operation. For the foreseeable future, Roosevelt was not to be offended over such a comparatively minor question as Indo-China.

During August 1944, René Massigli, now installed as Ambassador in London, several times reiterated the French request for a more active role in Far Eastern war planning. De Gaulle regarded a substantial French military contribution to the liberation of Indo-China as the sole means to dampen US hostility towards any resumption of French sovereignty in Hanoi.⁷⁵ From mid-1944, armed with better intelligence from de Crèvecoeur's emissaries in Indo-China, SOE's Force 136 tried to persuade the service chiefs that the French colonial garrison, which totalled some 54,000 ill-equipped troops, should be cultivated as the best hope of containing Japanese reinforcements both prior to—and during—any allied offensive towards Indo-China. Complemented by CLI advance units, these combined French forces were to conduct behind-the-lines operations to harass the Japanese. They were ordered not to risk capture or annihilation in any pitched battle encounter.⁷⁶ This was consistent with the instructions relayed by de Gaulle's envoy François de Langlade during a covert mission in July 1944 to General Eugène Mordant, the French military commander in Indo-China. It was hoped in Algiers that if Mordant's secret role as resistance leader were officially confirmed, he might bring over the bulk of his troops. In August 1944 he was duly appointed *Délégué Générale de la Résistance* by a French "Action Committee" formed in Algiers to co-ordinate policy towards Indo-China.⁷⁷ Mordant immediately found himself in an impossible position. He was caught between Decoux's eagerness to establish contacts of his own with de Gaulle and the continuing requirements of co-operation with the Japanese. This dilemma only strengthened his own pessimism regarding the prospects for long-term internal resistance.⁷⁸

On 29 August the French provisional government issued a further declaration on Indo-China. This denied the validity of Vichy's earlier cession of arbitrary powers to Decoux and thus refuted a Japanese governmental announcement issued on the previous day which stipulated that, in accord with Decoux, Indo-China was now "an autonomous province" of Japan's

empire.⁷⁹ Additional, though ultimately fruitless, contacts between Gaullist supporters, members of the *Parti Communiste Français* and the Viet Minh in late 1944 appeared to indicate that the provisional government commanded widespread support across Indo-China.⁸⁰ Perhaps Mordant's pessimism was unjustified after all.

Encouraged by Eden, who confessed himself "disturbed and embarrassed" by Anglo-American failure to meet French requests, the Chiefs of Staff once more supported the immediate dispatch of the Blaizot mission. The insertion of specialist French forces to Indo-China promised manpower savings and valuable local expertise for Mountbatten. Furthermore, since the battleship *Richelieu*, fresh from a US refit, was now serving with the British Far Eastern fleet, the French were already participating in the war against Japan in fact if not in name.⁸¹ Having raised Indo-China with Freeman Matthews at the State Department on 28 August, Lord Halifax was informed two days later that, although the US service chiefs agreed with their British colleagues, Roosevelt refused to discuss the French requirements. Tired of such obstructionism, Eden immediately approved Massigli's earlier suggestion that Blaizot be allowed to proceed to Kandy for informal discussions with Mountbatten over the future activity of the French military mission. Blaizot duly sailed from Algiers with a skeletal mission staff on 5 October. Formal acceptance of French involvement in SEAC operations would clearly have to await the outcome of Churchill's meeting with Roosevelt at their forthcoming second conference in Quebec.⁸²

As Esler Dening reported in early September, the continued exclusion of the French was having tangible effect upon British operational planning and SOE's covert missions within Indo-China. SOE was unable to secure vital backing from local Gaullist networks across southern Indo-China. The Fighting French also seemed determined to expand their independent radio propaganda station at the French enclave of Pondicherry in southern India, whose broadcasts were bound to compete with British transmissions organised by the Political Warfare Executive.⁸³ Still more prejudicial to SEAC interests was intelligence information decoded through ULTRA, indicating that Pechkoff's mission to Chungking had opened secret talks with Chiang promising China special economic privileges in Indo-China, including the establishment of a Chinese treaty port concession at Haiphong. In return, the Chinese were asked to recognize French sovereignty, to support French military operations and to suppress Viet Minh activities within southern China.⁸⁴ If the Blaizot mission was not quickly established, the Free French were bound to concentrate upon Chungking at SEAC expense.

Faced with this evidence of French disaffection, the Foreign Office Far Eastern Department grew bolder in its support for French participation in the Far Eastern war. For the British service chiefs, SEAC headquarters and SOE, there was much to be said for this. J.C. Sterndale-Bennett summed up department thinking on 28 October:

From the political point of view there are strong reasons for encouraging French participation in operations in the Far East, and more particularly in the liberation of Indo-China, so far as this can be done without real interference with the movement of our own troops to the Far East. Apart from the future of French co-operation in Far Eastern reconstruction, it is to our advantage to do what we can to assist the French in restoring confidence in their Army and its efficiency as the best safeguard against the establishment once more at some future date of a hostile power within range of London.⁸⁵

British military justification for supporting French operations also increased appreciably in late 1944 as the Paris authorities further clarified the extent of their likely military contribution. In a wildly over-optimistic statement, on 13 September, the French Committee of National Defence approved the formation of two divisions—of up to 26,000 troops each—to be ready for service in the Far East by January and March 1945. These were to be based upon colonial troops scheduled to be withdrawn from the 1st and 9th colonial infantry divisions then in France. These soldiers from French North and West Africa were to resume colonial service in order to make way for the incorporation of *Forces Françaises de l'Intérieur* soldiers into metropolitan units.⁸⁶ Eager to re-assert British imperial authority unaided, the British Chiefs of Staff rejected any French involvement in their planned liberation of Burma under Operation DRACULA. But this sensitivity to the importance of prestige generated an understanding of French enthusiasm for involvement in the liberation of Indo-China.⁸⁷ Within days of the Committee of National Defence announcement, Admiral Raymond Fénard's French naval mission to the Joint Chiefs of Staff committee in Washington proposed that a French naval task force be allowed to participate in Far Eastern operations from January 1945 onwards. Led by the *Richelieu*, the proposed force was a large one, including three heavy and four light cruisers. The Admiralty was much taken with the French offer. The First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Andrew Cunningham, overruled the objections of the British staff mission in Washington to any extension of the French naval presence in the Pacific theatre. On 1 January 1945 Churchill backed the Admiralty line. The Prime Minister thus endorsed French naval operations against Japan before he assented to French land operations in Indo-China.⁸⁸ But the core problem of Roosevelt's opposition to the restoration of French colonial authority remained. Neither the President nor the US service chiefs regarded Pacific naval co-operation with the French as tantamount to support for French claims upon Indo-China. In an "off-the-record" discussion with Halifax on 4 January, Roosevelt reiterated his determination to avoid any measures likely to favour the post-war restoration of French sovereignty in Indo-China.⁸⁹

In their policy discussions in the three weeks prior to Yalta, Churchill's military advisers within the Joint Planning Staff were again ahead of the Prime Minister in their readiness to challenge Roosevelt's stance:

The French are claiming the fullest share in world counsels and it may be that De Gaulle will blow up soon about the Far East. If so it might be rather a good thing. The President has recently suggested that the French should retain sovereignty over New Caledonia but not be entrusted with its defence. We rather think that he has been trying out our reactions on the relatively unimportant New Caledonia, in order to see what support he would get on Indo-China.⁹⁰

In early January 1945 American forces attacked Luzon in the Philippines. Meanwhile, a diversionary naval raid against Cam Ranh Bay added to Japanese uncertainty regarding the overall thrust of the US advance.⁹¹ As the American liberation of the Philippines proceeded in early 1945, Japan's South China command sent additional divisions to reinforce the Japanese 38th Army in occupation of Indo-China. If an American invasion force descended, the 38th Army was under instructions to draw US forces further into Indo-China, diverting them from any northward advance towards metropolitan Japan. But once the American assault on Iwo Jima began on 19 February, it became clearer that Admiral Chester Nimitz's advancing fleet did not consider Indo-China a major short-term priority.

Imperative strategic requirements none the less shaped Japan's decision to mount the a military coup against Decoux's government on 9 March 1945.⁹² This marked a major reversal of policy. During 1943-44, though Indo-China was a Japanese military supply route, the Japanese garrison command pursued a policy of "quiet order" (*seihitsu*). In 1943 General Tojo stated publicly that Japan did not wish Indo-China taken from French control, although at local level the Japanese authorities in Hanoi and Saigon pursued numerous contacts with Vietnamese nationalists.⁹³ But as the US Navy took a stronger hold upon the South China Sea, so the Japanese attached greater importance to land communications between China and South East Asia. Indo-China was again the principal bridge between southern China and the Malaya front. Mountbatten pointed this out to Wedemeyer in a telegram sent on 11 January 1945,

I understand that if the Japanese construct a through railway from HANKOW to FRENCH INDO-CHINA, it might be completed by June 1945. If the sea-route to Japan from South East Asia is cut as a result of operations in the Pacific, the land supply route via this railway and via the F.I.C. coastal line would then be the principal channel for supplies to all forces in Burma, Siam, Malaya and Sumatra. Supplies over this route, taken in conjunction with supplies

already in this theatre, might enable the Japanese to continue fighting on the same scale as at present for some time.⁹⁴

To the British Chiefs of Staff this made it imperative to secure Roosevelt's final acquiescence in the dispatch of the CLI (now also using the appellation of "5th Colonial Infantry Regiment") to Indo-China as part of wider SEAC operations against the Japanese.⁹⁵

After Yalta, Churchill was more willing to underwrite these proposals. He was persuaded by the War Office Directorate of Military Operations which insisted that CLI raids in Indo-China could inflict considerable damage upon Japan's extended lines of overland supply, sufficient to make a strategic impact upon the Malaya campaign.⁹⁶ But it had long been obvious that any French colonial forces which refused to comply with the Japanese demand for their immediate disarmament would be unable to sustain armed resistance without additional supplies of equipment.⁹⁷ The Japanese coup was accompanied by a coordinated effort to disarm the French colonial garrison. Those French units which tried to resist the Japanese forces made limited contact with the SOE-backed resistance networks. Within a fortnight of the coup the French were in general retreat.⁹⁸

In late March 1945 the French provisional government increased its pressure upon London and Washington. Military plans for Indo-China were also subjected to regular reappraisal by a standing Ministerial Committee chaired by François de Langlade.⁹⁹ The British were again pressed to endorse the immediate deployment of the CLI. In addition, the Paris government amplified its commitment to post-war colonial reform in anticipation of the imminent change of leadership in the White House. On 24 March, Plevin's successor as Minister of Colonies, Paul Giacobbi, declared that the population of Indo-China would be granted imperial French citizenship, greater political rights and employment opportunities within the structure of "French Union". Though still under review by a commission of the French Constituent Assembly, Giacobbi's mention of a French Union implied that the French government was entirely serious about placing the post-war empire on an entirely new footing as part of the general constitutional regeneration of France.¹⁰⁰ Giacobbi's declaration was, in many respects, vague and unrealistic, not least in its failure to delineate precisely how the French government proposed to govern the five constituent regions of the Indo-China federation. Nevertheless, it lent weight to the provisional government claim that imperial renovation lay at the heart of French planning for post-war reconstruction.¹⁰¹ Fortified by this promise of enlightened reform, Admiral Fénard urged the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington to permit the French a greater role within the China command. Fénard enjoyed a good relationship with Roosevelt and the former US Ambassador to Vichy, Admiral William Leahy. Formerly Admiral Darlan's personal representative in Algiers in 1942, it was in his capacity as head of the French

mission to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 1944 that Fénard arranged de Gaulle's first quasi-official visit to Washington in July of that year.¹⁰² As such, Fénard represented something of a bridge between America's formerly indulgent policy towards Vichy and its present uncomfortable toleration of de Gaulle. He capitalized upon a previous US request for payment from Decoux's administration to finance covert OSS operations within Indo-China to advance suggestions of his own regarding support for French resistance activities by General Claire Lee Chennault's 14th US Air Force based at Kunming in southern China. By 19 March Fénard had persuaded Roosevelt and General Marshall to sanction US air sorties to supply the French resistance within Indo-China. Fénard's inclination to place French eggs in a US rather than a British basket was echoed in Paris. This was hardly surprising after eighteen months of waiting for a decisive British commitment to join Anglo-French operations in Indo-China under Mountbatten's command.¹⁰³

Ironically, Churchill was by now prepared to support the French with minimal reservations. In mid-March, he and Chief of Imperial General Staff, Sir Alan Brooke, lobbied the US service chiefs in an effort to prevent the final collapse of French resistance inside Indo-China. The Prime Minister took up with General George Marshall the cause of the French garrison at Moncay which had beaten off Japanese attacks since 9 March but was fast running out of ammunition.¹⁰⁴ Only the 14th US Air Force at Kunming could deliver supplies in time. By association, Wedemeyer's conspicuous reluctance to sanction SEAC jurisdiction over French military intervention in southern Indo-China was made to appear both mean-spirited and unimaginative. In fact, it was increasingly clear that Wedemeyer knew little about the nature of the French resistance inside Indo-China, still less about the French administrative support for it organized via SEAC and SOE's Force 136.¹⁰⁵ With Roosevelt ailing, American opposition to the formal accreditation of the Blaizot mission to SEAC was finally broken. But the collapse of French military resistance to the expanded Japanese army of occupation forced the remnants of General Gabriel Sabbatier's Tonkin garrison to flee into China's Yunnan province where they immediately fell under Wedemeyer and Chiang's theatre command.¹⁰⁶ The American reception for these troops was decidedly frosty. Pechkoff was immediately informed by the US Ambassador to China, General Patrick Hurley, that he considered Sabbatier's force to be "undisciplined, unequipped and destitute refugees and almost useless". It was with great difficulty that Pechkoff finally secured limited accommodation for the newly arrived troops.¹⁰⁷

Ill-informed, Wedemeyer, too, was always inclined to dismiss the French resistance in Indo-China out of hand. During a brief stop-over in Washington in March, he informed Britain's Joint Staff representative, Field Marshal Wilson, that the French in Indo-China were unreliable and "rotten to the core". As he put it, "There is no potential "Maquis" in the country, and anything we want done there we shall have to do ourselves."¹⁰⁸ In fact,

previous US aerial bombardment of cities across Indo-China, including Saigon and Pnom Penh, in late January and early February 1945, considerably hampered the work of the urban resistance networks directed by Pechkoff and de Crèvecoeur.¹⁰⁹ Only after Roosevelt's death in April did Wedemeyer show any inclination to employ local French forces constructively. Sabattier's troops in China were clearly too depleted to take much action in the short term. The formal French acceptance that Sabattier's units could only be usefully deployed under Wedemeyer and Chiang Kai-shek's ultimate authority was thus a relatively painless concession.¹¹⁰ More ominously, on 4 June Wedemeyer confirmed to Sabattier that China command reserved the right to determine the redeployment of French regular forces within Indo-China as a whole. The 6,000 troops under Sabattier's direct command in China were now unlikely to be substantially re-equipped so long as Chinese Nationalist forces were still engaged against the Japanese.¹¹¹

These decisions added to Wedemeyer's reluctance to brook any separate role for CLI forces infiltrated into central and southern Indo-China as a preliminary to a British-directed invasion. But in separate visits to Washington in May, both French Chief of Staff, General Alphonse Juin, and Foreign Minister, Georges Bidault, worked hard to reconcile Harry S. Truman's new administration to French military operations co-ordinated by SEAC. This attempt to circumvent Wedemeyer made obvious sense to the British, since it was increasingly obvious that the General did not intend to mount any major operations into Tonkin from neighbouring China.¹¹² For his part, Mountbatten refused to expose British clandestine operations within China to Wedemeyer's scrutiny. Such was the tension between the two commanders that both the British and US Chiefs of Staff speculated about possible damage to strategic planning in Asia.¹¹³

As the SEAC-China command stalemate persisted, from April 1945 the French government attached increasing importance to Jean Sainteny's military mission at Kunming. Sainteny helped supervise the regeneration of the ousted Tonkin garrison. More importantly, he became a vital point of contact between Paris and the Viet Minh leadership. Though Sainteny was a capable intermediary, he lacked the authority to cement co-operation with Ho Chi Minh. More worrying, Sainteny was convinced by July that the French government did not fully appreciate the extent of Viet Minh power and the speed with which events were unfolding on the ground.¹¹⁴ This would become fully apparent once the Viet Minh assumed political control in Hanoi in late August.

Between May and July 1945, SEAC continued its planning of French offensives in Indo-China in collaboration with Blaizot's mission staff. These were not ultimately put into practice. At Chungking, problems of re-equipment and ultimate command of French forces caused friction right up to Japan's final surrender in August. On 26 July 1945 General Marçel Alessandri, French supreme commander in China, learnt that all French

equipment requests for their forces in Chinese territory had to be formally sanctioned by Chiang Kai-shek's associate, Marshal Ho Ying Ching.¹¹⁵ A clash of interests between Chinese Nationalist irredentism in Tonkin, covert OSS co-operation with the Viet Minh inside Indo-China and the French claim to military authority throughout their colonial territory seemed hard to avoid. But just as SEAC and China command schemes were overtaken by the Japanese coup in Indo-China on 9 March, so at war's end the Potsdam conference superseded previous operational planning. The creation of separate interim British and Chinese administrations in southern and northern Indo-China respectively once again marginalized the French in Indo-China.¹¹⁶ It was only after de Gaulle reiterated the French claim to sovereignty in Indo-China in a note to the State Department on 11 August that the Truman administration instructed US representatives in Chungking to assist in the return of French forces to Hanoi.¹¹⁷ In line with Anglo-French governmental statements, SEAC's Joint Planning Staff quickly agreed to set clear limits to the responsibilities of British Commonwealth forces in Indo-China, leaving the French to resume eventual administrative control. Both the British and Chinese occupiers were clearly expected to withdraw once they had disarmed and evacuated all the remaining Japanese forces in Indo-China. But the eventual political reconstruction of French Indo-China remained in doubt, not least because of the August revolution which culminated in Ho Chi Minh's historic announcement of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on 2 September.¹¹⁸

While British and Free French objectives in Indo-China were broadly consistent, their plans were frustrated by the remoteness and relative strategic insignificance of the Indo-China Chinese peninsula for much of the war. There was little conflict of interest between the British and the Free French over the future of the colony, but for much of the war, neither Britain nor Free French could turn their Far Eastern aspirations into tangible policy. What the British accepted and de Gaulle's followers did not was that only American military power would unlock the gates to Indo-China. By contrast, the Free French executive, first in London and then in Algiers, attached undue weight to the CLI and the French garrison within Indo-China. Though never deluded into the belief that France could liberate Indo-China alone, de Gaulle certainly over-estimated the benefits to be gained from introducing token French forces to the Far Eastern theatre. Governed by the overweening requirements of Anglo-American relations, British support for French military operations was, at best, equivocal. Only in the realm of covert operations did Anglo-French co-operation prosper though, here too, the results were less than either partner had hoped. United by a common desire to restore their imperial influence in South East Asia, Anglo-French attitudes towards Vietnamese nationalism were equally blinkered. While the British tended to be dismissive rather than openly hostile towards the Viet Minh, this none the less left the field open for French plans to quash

Vietnamese independence both during the war and after it. As commander of allied land forces in South East Asia, General Sir William Slim was quick to realise after the end of hostilities that the French in Indo-China had apparently failed to adapt to the changed post-war climate of colonial power. Indigenous nationalists had proven themselves as at once capable leaders and the most effective opponents of Japanese rule.¹¹⁹ Without making allowances for this, the French were doomed to repeat their earlier colonial mistakes.

Notes

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- 2 See, for example, the work by John J. Sbrega, *Anglo-American Relations and Colonialism in East Asia, 1941-1945* (New York: Garland, 1983), and his articles: "First Catch Your Hare": Anglo-American Perspectives on Indochina during the Second World War", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 14, 1 (Mar. 1983): 63-78; "The Anticolonial Policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt. A Reappraisal", *Political Science Quarterly* 101 (1986): 65-84; "Determination versus Drift: The Anglo-American Debate over the Trusteeship Issue, 1941-1945", *Pacific Historical Review* 55, 2 (May 1986): 256-80. See also, Gary R. Hess, "Franklin Roosevelt and Indochina", *Journal of American History* 59 (Sept. 1972): 353-68; W. Lafeber, "Roosevelt, Churchill and Indochina, 1942-5", *American Historical Review* 80 (Dec. 1975): 1277-95; Christopher Thorne, "Indochina and Anglo-American Relations, 1942-1945", *Pacific Historical Review* 45, 1 (Feb. 1976): 73-96 [this also appears as chapter 4 in C. Thorne, *Border Crossings* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988)]; William J. Duiker, *U.S. Containment Policy and the Conflict in Indochina* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994); Donald Cameron Watt, *Succeeding John Bull. America in Britain's Place. 1900-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 194-219; Dunn, *First Vietnam War*, pp. 69-112. For a summary, see Tønnesson, *Vietnamese Revolution*, pp. 13-19.
- 3 Thorne, *Border Crossings*, pp. 90-91; Sbrega, "First Catch Your Hare", pp. 66-68.
- 4 Peter Dennis, *Troubled Days of Peace. Mountbatten and South East Asia Command, 1945-46* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987); John E. Dreifort, *Myopic Grandeur. The Ambivalence of French Foreign Policy towards the Far East, 1919-1945* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1991). A more detailed work is Stein Tønnesson's excellent *Vietnamese Revolution*, though his focus is upon the internal dynamics of the Vietnamese nationalist movement. Most recently, Martin Shipway has examined the break-down of French plans for reform and reconstruction in Indo-China from the 1944 Liberation to 1947, see his *The Road to War. France and Vietnam, 1944-1947* (Oxford: Berghahn, 1996), part II. In works on the Free French, reference to Indo-China is scanty. Neither François Kersaudy's *Churchill and De Gaulle* (London: Collins, 1981), nor the excellent new study by Jean-Louis Crémieux-Brilhac, *La France Libre. De l'Appel du 18 Juin à la Libération* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), makes any mention of Indo-China at all.

- 5 D. Bruce Marshall, *The French Colonial Myth and Constitution-Making in the Fourth Republic* (London: Yale University Press, 1973), pp. 133–34.
- 6 Admiral Jean Decoux, *A la barre de l'Indochine. Histoire de mon Gouvernement Général (1940–1945)* (Paris: Plon, 1949).
- 7 Philippe Devillers, *Histoire du Viet-Nam de 1940 à 1952* (Paris: Editions le Seuil, 1952); Gilbert Sabattier, *Le Destin de l'Indochine, souvenirs et documents 1941–1951* (Paris: Plon, 1952). Devillers did not write his own “documentary record” of wartime events in Vietnam until 1988: *Paris-Saigon-Hanoi, les archives de la guerre, 1944–1947* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988). His earlier history was, like Sabattier's, very much written from a personal perspective.
- 8 Sainteny's *Histoire d'une paix manquée. Indochine 1945–1947*, was reprinted by Fayard (Paris) in 1967.
- 9 Institut Charles de Gaulle, Gilbert Pilleul (ed.), *Le Général de Gaulle et l'Indochine 1940–1946* (Paris: Plon, 1982).
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- 12 Raoul Aglion, *Roosevelt and de Gaulle. Allies in Conflict. A Personal Memoir* (New York: Macmillan/Free Press, 1988), pp. 128–29, 184–90.
- 13 MAE, Archives Privées, Papiers Maurice Dejean, vol. 25, tel. 420, Tixier to de Gaulle, 1 June 1942.
- 14 Richard Harris Smith, *OSS. The Secret History of America's First Central Intelligence Agency* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).
- 15 Charles Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 122–36.
- 16 Duiker, *U.S. Containment Policy*, pp. 10–14, 22–26.
- 17 This is analyzed at length in Thorne, *Border Crossings*, pp. 89–90, 98–100.
- 18 Claude Hesse d'Alzon, *La Presence Militaire Française en Indochine, 1940–1945* (Paris: Service Historique, Vincennes, 1985), pp. 85–87; SHAT IP34/D7, Amirauté Française, section militaire, procès verbal, réunion interministerielle, 5 Oct. 1940. From Bastille Day, 1942, the Free French movement formally adopted the name “France Combattante”—“Fighting France”. In this article, the terms “Free French” and “Fighting French” are used interchangeably.
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- 20 Sainteny, *Histoire d'une paix manquée*, pp. 25–30; Christophe Babinet, “L'action du général de Gaulle en Indochine à partir de la Chine”, in *De Gaulle et l'Indochine*, pp. 43–45.
- 21 Emissaries were sent to Algiers and Paris in 1943–44, but achieved minimal success, see Tonnesson, *Vietnamese Revolution*, pp. 47–48.
- 22 Public Record Office, London (hereafter PRO), War Office Directorate of Military Intelligence files, WO 208/3040, F11986/87/10, Sir R.I. Campbell, Paris, to R.G. Howe, FO, 16 Nov. 1939.
- 23 MAE, Vichy-Asie, vol. 261, tel. 1, Charles-Arsène Henry, Tokyo, to direction politique, Vichy, 22 Jan. 1941. The US government had been relatively sympathetic about these French capitulations; see Julian G. Hurstfield, *America and the French Nation, 1939–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 20–21.

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- 25 PRO, Air Ministry correspondence files, AIR 2/4128, Joint Naval and Air Staff sub-committee, "Report of Anglo-French Conference at Singapore, June 1939", 23 June 1939; *Documents Diplomatiques Français*, 2nd ser., vol. XVII, pp. 42-55.
- 26 Laffey, "French Far Eastern Policy", pp. 141-43; Dreifort, *Myopic Grandeur*, pp. 146-54.
- 27 Dreifort, *Myopic Grandeur*, pp. 212-13. The Japanese attack on Langson stemmed from division between Japan's South China Army and the High Command in Tokyo, see Sachiko Murakimi, "Indochina: Unplanned Incursion", in *Pearl Harbor Reexamined. Prologue to the Pacific War*, ed. Hilary Conroy and Harry Wray (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990), pp. 141-48.
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- 32 MAE, Guerre 1939-1945, série CNF Londres, vol. 70 Indochine, Commissariat aux affaires extérieures, "Memo, relatif à la situation en Indochine", 20 Jan. 1941; Affaires extérieures "Memo, relatif à l'Extrême Orient", 24 Feb. 1941.
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- 34 SHAT, 1K401/C5, Rapport du Capitaine Caille, "Généralités: attitude Britannique vers l'Indochine", 1 June 1941.
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- 39 PRO, FO 371/31771, F908/582/61, War Office to Far Eastern Dept., 24 Jan. 1942; FO to Sir A. Clarke-Kerr, Chungking, 26 Feb. 1942.
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- 41 MAE, CNF Londres, vol. 70, Escarra, Singapore, to de Gaulle, Rapport no. 1, 25 Nov. 1941. In 1943 Escarra went on to establish a Free French mission at Kunming, though he made little political impact. Regarding the wider Anglo-American strategic talks taking place in Manila in November-December 1941, see, Ian Cowman, "Defence of the Malay Barrier? The Place of the Philippines in Admiralty Naval War Planning, 1925-1941", *War in History* 3, 3 (1996): 413-17.
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- 60 *Ibid*; Thorne, *Border Crossings*, pp. 96-97.
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INDOCHINA

Ellen Hammer

Source: Lawrence K. Rosinger et al., *The State of Asia: A Contemporary Survey*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf (1951), pp. 221-67.

When the war ended in August 1945 the French Empire seemed, for many Frenchmen who were still smarting under the defeat of 1940, to promise a new power, prosperity, and prestige for their country. And no part of the empire outside North Africa seemed more desirable than Indochina. South of China and east of Thailand, Indochina extended over an area a third larger than France, and was inhabited by some twenty-five million people. It was the third most important exporter of rice in the world, and it also exported large quantities of rubber and maize. Its wealth lay not only in agriculture but also in minerals and timber; it had anthracite coal (most of which it exported), as well as iron ore, tin, zinc, phosphates, and tungsten.

Frenchmen had a privileged position in trade and investments in the country, with other foreigners virtually excluded from land ownership and mining.¹ Rice cultivation remained the province of the Indochinese and the Chinese, but the great rubber plantations in the south and the mines in the north were in French hands. The Indochinese economy was dominated by French banks, chief among them the powerful Bank of Indochina. In 1938 investments from abroad amounted to \$384,000,000, of which more than ninety-five per cent was held by Frenchmen.

The French had made a substantial economic and cultural investment in the country. They had built roads, bridges, and other public works. On the eve of the war 365,000 hectares of land were irrigated by a French-built irrigation and drainage system that was being extended to another 150,000 hectares. The French had constructed a dike system covering more than 80,000 hectares. They had also established two Pasteur Institutes, devoted to medical research and clinical activities, and the French School of the Far East, which studied Asian civilizations; and they had implanted French culture among the upper classes. Vietnamese nationalists were to criticize many, if not all, of these accomplishments as falling far short of the country's

needs, but the investment that they represented for the French was an impressive one.

Nor was this the whole of the French interest in Indochina. During the First World War Indochina had provided more than half the loans and gifts made to France by its colonies, and more war material than any other part of the empire except North Africa. More than forty-three thousand Indochinese soldiers and almost forty-nine thousand workers had been sent to Europe. Indochina in 1945 appeared a valuable reservoir for France, which was rich neither in men nor in materials. And possession of Indochina meant a foothold in Asia—a "balcony on the Pacific," as Frenchmen were fond of saying—important not only militarily, but also for less tangible reasons of influence and prestige in Far Eastern and world affairs. Never well informed about or much interested in their extensive empire, Frenchmen in Europe tended to regard Indochina as a rich and exotic land vastly improved by French efforts and inhabited by a population friendly and grateful to France. This was the picture that had been left with them when the fall of France cut off Indochina from Europe.

The Indochinese Union was composed of five countries.² In Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina, along the coastal plains of the Indochinese peninsula, lived the Vietnamese, a people closely related to the Chinese.³ Today they number some eighteen million, almost three quarters of the total population of Indochina. Bordering on Thailand, to the southwest, lay Cambodia with a population of some three million and, in the northwest, Laos with a population of a million, both with cultures influenced by that of India. A number of ethnic minorities also lived in Indochina, notably the Thai peoples in the mountains of northern Tonkin and the Moi in southern Annam.

Few bonds held the Laotians and the Cambodians to the Vietnamese, other than those constituted by their French rulers. The Vietnamese had once been united under the imperial court of Annam, but under France the three Vietnamese countries were kept administratively almost as separate from each other as from Laos and Cambodia. Cochinchina, which was occupied in the middle of the nineteenth century, was a French colony with a French representative in the Chamber of Deputies in Paris. Tonkin and Annam were acquired later in the century, when other ideas of colonization prevailed, and became protectorates; but in practice Tonkin, like Cochinchina, came under direct French rule, leaving only Annam to the nominal jurisdiction of the emperor at Hué. Cambodia too was a protectorate with a native king, as was the kingdom of Luang Prabang in Laos, the rest of that country being ruled directly by France.

Regardless of labels, effective authority was entirely in the hands of the highly centralized French administration. Policy was laid down in France, sometimes by parliament, more often by ministerial decree. It was implemented in Indochina by the French bureaucracy, which extended downward

from the governor general, the resident superior of the protectorates, and the governor of Cochinchina to a network of lesser officials. At the lowest levels it included a "white proletariat," which filled jobs left to the native population in the colonies of other powers. The five areas of Indochina were represented in a Grand Council of Financial and Economic Interests; there was also a Colonial Council in Cochinchina; and other councils were to be found in the protectorates. All of these bodies contained Frenchmen as well as members of the indigenous population, were concerned generally with local economic affairs, and had advisory powers only. The old Vietnamese communal organization still survived in the villages, but it had no influence on the making of French policy for the country and was stripped of much of its one-time autonomy.

Indochina remained subordinated in every way to metropolitan France. Only a handful of Indochinese acquired French culture; few met the qualifications for French citizenship, and some who were qualified did not request it; the mass of the people had no representatives in the governments of either France or Indochina and were not literate in their own or any other language. As elsewhere in colonial Asia, a money economy was grafted upon the traditional subsistence economy. Taxes estimated in terms of the needs of the Western administration were imposed upon a population geared to another economic system, with the result that peasants paid as much as one fifth of their meager annual income to the government. The intrusion of Western economic and legal practices disrupted the traditional social and legal framework within which the people had regulated their lives. The small Gallicized elite found itself uprooted from the indigenous society; some of its members participated in the economic and administrative superstructure with which the French overlaid Indochina, while others became active nationalists opposed to French rule.

The Indochinese peasant lived generally in poverty, barely able to feed himself. He suffered under a grinding burden of debt, and French efforts did not alleviate his abject dependence on the usurer. Public works were built by native labor and paid for by native taxes, but they did not raise the miserably low living standards. Most of the population was crowded into Tonkin and northern Annam around the Red River delta. Famine was endemic there despite two annual rice harvests; and the north was dependent on rice exports from the rich and less populous province of Cochinchina. As in many other colonial countries, there was an overemphasis on producing raw materials and foodstuffs for export. Although "dry" secondary crops like maize were encouraged to vary the rice monoculture, they were largely exported. Industrialization, which might have helped to raise living standards, was not far advanced beyond such processing and light industries as sugar refineries, rice mills and distilleries, and paper, cotton, and cement factories. The French treated Indochina pre-eminently as a source of raw materials for France and as a market for French manufactures.

Cambodian and Laotian rulers had chosen French control in the nineteenth century as protection against possible encroachments from the Vietnamese and the Siamese; they were slow to find fault with the structure of French authority as it developed in their country. This was not the case in the Vietnamese lands. Vietnamese nationalism dated back to centuries of wars against Chinese invaders who had occupied the country for some thousand years; and the Vietnamese never fully accepted the French occupation. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Vietnamese guerrillas battled France sporadically, led by mandarins who were impelled mostly by xenophobia and had little mass support. The ideal of these officials was to return to the old days when civil and religious power was vested in the emperor of Annam and exercised by the mandarin bureaucracy.

This goal changed and broadened as the twentieth century advanced and foreign influences filtered into the country from southern China, Japan, and republican France. From China the Vietnamese learned of reform and then of revolution. The victory of the Japanese over Russia in 1905 encouraged nationalists, a number of whom began to look to Japan as a model and guide and organized the Vietnam Restoration League, headed by Prince Cuong De, a member of the Vietnamese royal family who had taken refuge in Japan. From France educated Vietnamese learned of democracy and the French Revolution; and in France Vietnamese workers and students made their first contacts with left-wing political parties and doctrines.

Canton in the 1920's became the center of the Vietnamese nationalist movement. Ho Chi Minh, a young Vietnamese who had been active in French Socialist and Communist circles (under the name of Nguyen Ai Quoc), arrived there after more than a year in Moscow and organized a Vietnam Revolutionary Youth League, which trained revolutionaries who went home to set up revolutionary cells. In 1930, in Hong Kong, he presided over the establishment of the Indochinese Communist party. A number of intellectuals and officials became Communists, attracted by the militant opposition of Communism to French imperialism; and they succeeded in extending the roots of the party into the peasantry. The Indochinese Communist party was said to be some fifteen hundred strong in 1931 and to have a hundred thousand peasants affiliated with it through peasant organizations controlled by the party. It had links with the Comintern Far Eastern Bureau at Shanghai and with Communist movements in Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaya which Ho directed in 1930 and 1931 as chief of the Southern Bureau of the Comintern. In April 1931 the Indochinese Communist party was welcomed officially into the Comintern.

In the meantime, another party, the Vietnam Nationalist party, which was modeled on the Chinese Kuomintang, had been active in Tonkin. Founded in 1927, it attempted two years later, at Yenbay in Tonkin, an uprising that was put down by the French. This was followed by Communist-organized peasant demonstrations and a Communist attempt to set up their own regime in

two provinces of Annam, which led the French to label 1930 the year of the Red Terror. The year 1931 was marked, in its turn, by what Communists and nationalists called the White Terror, as the French administration moved against them with the full weight of its military and judicial machinery. The year also saw the arrest of Ho Chi Minh in Hong Kong, but he was soon released. He disappeared from the political limelight, and after a while the word came that he was dead.

Tonkin and Annam were relatively quiet after this. The center of Vietnamese political activity shifted to Saigon, the capital of Cochinchina, where the press and politics had a certain freedom. Tran Van Giau⁴ (who was later to play an important role in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam) arrived fresh from training in Russia to lead the Stalinist Communists, and a young Vietnamese student, Ta Thu Tau, returned from France in 1932 to lead a Trotskyite group.⁵ One wing of this group joined the Stalinists the following year in drawing up a list of candidates for the elections to the seats open to Vietnamese in the Saigon municipal council. In the north, meanwhile, the Communists gradually revived their organization, keeping up their contacts in China and Laos.

In Europe the Communists decided to co-operate with other parties in the struggle against Fascism and a Popular Front government came to power in France in 1935. That same year, at a congress held at Macao, the Indochinese Communist party reaffirmed its adherence to the Comintern. It accepted the new Popular Front line which, in the French colonies, required native revolutionaries to work with, not against, their European rulers.

The French Popular Front ushered in a period of optimism among Vietnamese nationalists and Communists. They were encouraged by the promises made by Marius Moutet, the new Socialist colonial minister. But their optimism was short-lived, since few of the reforms for which they had hoped were carried out, and they received neither freedom of association nor the right to organize trade unions. The Trotskyites, who had refused to join the Popular Front, ran on their own independent ticket in Saigon in 1939 and won a sweeping victory. The Popular Front fell in France that year, and its Indochinese counterpart, which included a broad coalition of reform and revolutionary parties, went underground. When war broke out in Europe in September 1939, and the opposition of the French Communist party to the war led to the outlawing of the party by the French government, the Communist party was also declared illegal in Indochina. The French colonial administration threw into jail all the Communists and Trotskyites upon whom it could lay its hands.

There were some forty thousand Frenchmen in Indochina when the war began—members of the administration, the military, planters, traders, and others with financial and economic interests in the country. An uneasy minority, they were sandwiched in between two groups that far outnumbered them: the indigenous population in which they placed little trust, and the

Japanese troops in China whose aggressive designs on Indochina were no secret. Many Vietnamese nationalists were in French jails. The French made little attempt to rally the Indochinese in opposition to Japan, missing what was to be their last chance to create a united front with the peoples of Indochina.

From 1940 to 1945 Japan gradually extended its control over Indochina. In June 1940, after his efforts to obtain aid from Great Britain and the United States had been rebuffed, Governor General Georges Catroux forbade the shipment of military supplies on the railroad connecting the Tonkinese port of Haiphong with Kunming in south China over which the hard-pressed Chinese had been receiving war material. He also had to accept the stationing of a Japanese control mission on Indochinese territory. But his insistence on independence of action combined with his known Gaullist sympathies antagonized the men around Marshal Pétain, who ordered him to resign. Admiral Decoux, his successor, a firm supporter of Pétain, tried in turn to withstand further ultimata and also failed. Vichy finally accepted a face-saving formula on August 30, 1940, by which, in exchange for Japanese recognition of French sovereignty over Indochina and of the territorial integrity of the country, France recognized Japan's special interests in the Far East, pledged itself to discuss economic conventions, and agreed to grant military facilities which the Japanese promised to evacuate once they had defeated China.

On September 22, 1940 Decoux yielded to Japanese demands that a "limited" number of Japanese troops be allowed to land immediately at Haiphong and that three Japanese air bases be established in Tonkin, garrisoned by 6,000 troops. This did not stop the Japanese Canton Army, already on the Indochinese frontier, from launching an all-out attack on the Tonkinese cities of Langson and Dong Dang. The drive met slight resistance, but French protests brought a rapid Japanese withdrawal and new Japanese assurances that French sovereignty would be guaranteed. French dealings with the Japanese were henceforth to be conducted by bargaining and negotiation, with the French surrendering more and more of the substance of sovereignty in exchange for nominal confirmation of its outward forms.

Thailand also took advantage of French weakness. A long-standing dispute over Cambodian and Laotian territory that Thailand had been forced to cede to France at the turn of the century was revived by Marshal Pibul Songgram, the Thai dictator, who launched his campaign against France to coincide with Japanese pressure. Undeclared war between Thailand and Indochina began in January 1941. The Japanese stepped in and imposed an armistice which was formalized on May 9, 1941 by the Treaty of Tokyo under which the three rich rice-growing Cambodian provinces of Battambang, Siemreap, and Sisophon went to Thailand, as did parts of Laos on the right bank of the Mekong River.

During 1941 the Japanese extended their control to the south when their

troops arrived in force to occupy strategic areas in Cochinchina. After Pearl Harbor Decoux agreed that the French administration would do nothing to hinder the Japanese war effort against the Allies. In a series of economic accords supplementing these military control agreements, the Japanese promised to take Indochina's surplus in rubber, rice, and minerals in exchange for manufactured and industrial products, which were badly needed in Indochina. The demands of the Japanese under these accords became more exorbitant annually; they succeeded in milking the country economically, while few of the products they had promised to supply ever arrived. Even this one-sided tribute stopped as Allied bombs disrupted land and sea traffic between Indochina and Japan.

It took the French a long time to set up any organized resistance to the Japanese. A few Frenchmen, at great personal risk, sent information to the Allies from within the country, and a few others escaped to join the Free French; but the majority of the French in Indochina, if not happy (for racial as well as economic reasons) about their subordination to Japan, were not unsympathetic to the Fascism and defeatism preached by Vichy. Only in 1944, when an Allied victory appeared more than probable, did they change their tune. French military men headed by General Mordant began to prepare almost openly for the day when they could move against the Japanese. De Gaulle asked Admiral Decoux to continue in power in order to hide from the Japanese the activities of the growing French resistance. But as the Japanese military position worsened and an Allied invasion seemed imminent, the Japanese could not tolerate an opposition movement at their backs. On March 9, 1945 they presented Decoux with another ultimatum, this time that he join them in the "joint defense" of Indochina. Decoux tried to temporize as he had in the past, but the Japanese were no longer in a mood for maneuvers. They unseated the French administration and took over the country. The French put up a scattered resistance, only a small force under General Alessandri fighting its way out to the Chinese frontier.

The Decoux regime had served the Japanese so well that for a long while they made little attempt to find support among nationalist groups in Indochina, as they had in other parts of occupied South East Asia. But in 1945 the Japanese turned to their friends among the Vietnamese. Some of these looked to Prince Cuong De, the royal exile who was still in Japan, to assume leadership in the Vietnamese lands, but in March 1945 the Japanese (apparently anxious to preserve continuity of leadership) passed him over in favor of Bao Dai, then ruling as emperor of Annam. On March 11 Bao Dai proclaimed the independence of the empire of Annam, uniting Tonkin and Annam; and the country was soon given the old name of Vietnam, in an effort to capitalize on nationalist sentiment. The king of Cambodia declared his country independent on March 13, and the king of Luang Prabang in Laos followed suit on April 20.

The Japanese allowed an increasing amount of autonomy to these native regimes. Cambodia and Laos, where there were few Japanese troops, achieved real self-rule; this was less true of the Vietnamese provinces. The fact that the Japanese kept direct control over Cochinchina contributed to the weakness of the Bao Dai regime, and few Vietnamese nationalists joined it. Bao Dai tried vainly to bring back as his premier a prominent Catholic layman, Ngo Dinh Diem, who had once resigned from that office rather than be subservient to the French. Tran Trong Kim, whom Bao Dai finally appointed, was a respected scholar; because he was a leading Freemason, he had been harshly treated by the Decoux administration acting under Vichy decrees (which it followed as blindly against Jews and the Free French). With Tran Trong Kim, Bao Dai adapted himself to the Japanese, trying to win concessions for Vietnamese nationalism. He was supported by Cuong De's Vietnam Restoration League, as well as by some other nationalist groups, but his government had no real power. The country's grave economic difficulties (resulting from the interruption of rice imports from Cochinchina due to Allied bombing attacks, the dispersal of rice stocks by the Japanese, and floods) led to famine with which Tran Trong Kim was at a loss to cope.

Many of the active and experienced nationalist and revolutionary Vietnamese withheld their support from Bao Dai. They were opposed to the Japanese as well as to the French. The Communist party had attempted a rising in Cochinchina during 1940 which was put down by the French. There had been anti-French uprisings in the Langson area of Tonkin and at Duo Long in northern Annam, but those too had failed. Weakened by French military and police action, and by the jailing of many of their leaders, Vietnamese revolutionaries shifted operations once again to southern China. There, in Luichow in March 1941, the Communists along with other groups set up the Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh Hoi, the Vietnam Independence League, to fight against Vichy and Japan on the side of the Allies. After more than a decade of political obscurity, Ho Chi Minh reemerged in Vietnamese politics to head the new organization which came to be known popularly as the Viet Minh.

The Chinese government welcomed Vietnamese revolutionaries, not just for their help in the war against Japan, but also because the Chinese had little enthusiasm for the French in Indochina. Only in part was this the result of Chinese ambitions to return to Tonkin, which they once had occupied, for the Chinese had several scores to settle with France. They resented the French for their prewar economic penetration of Yunnan Province, for closing the Haiphong-Kunming Railway, and for permitting Indochina to become a Japanese base in the war against China. The Viet Minh, however, independence-minded though it was, was not much to the taste of the Chiang Kai-shek government, which distrusted its left-wing leadership. In October 1942, in an effort to restore more of a balance among Vietnamese nationalist leadership and so counteract the influence of the Viet Minh, the

Chinese sponsored the creation at Luichow of what they intended as a more docile Vietnamese coalition, the Vietnam Revolutionary League. Most of its members belonged to the old Vietnam Nationalist party, but they also included people from other groups, among them two parties working with the Japanese: the League for the Restoration of Vietnam and the Great Vietnam Nationalist party.

Members of the Viet Minh also joined the new league. In 1942 Ho Chi Minh was in a Chinese jail, where he remained for more than a year, charged with being a French spy; when he was released he became a member of the central committee of the Vietnam Revolutionary League. The Viet Minh, as a section of the League, received a Chinese government subsidy and military training and arms for its members. But in China the Viet Minh co-operated only nominally with the other parties in the League; its organization inside Indochina it kept separate and under its own exclusive control.

It began to help downed American pilots get out of Indochina, and received some military aid from the Americans in Kunming. The Viet Minh claims to have started operations against the Japanese in northern Tonkin in 1944. In any event, by the summer of 1945 it had large guerrilla forces, the principal leader of which was Vo Nguyen Giap, a Communist who had learned the techniques of guerrilla war in Yenan, the capital of Communist China. In northern Tonkin Giap and Ho organized the Vietnamese, as well as a number of the minority peoples who lived in the Tonkinese mountains.

The Viet Minh program was a commentary upon eighty years of French rule in Indochina. In protest against decades of arbitrary police methods, political arrests, few personal liberties, and little freedom of press or assembly, it called for a popular representative assembly to draw up a republican constitution guaranteeing democratic rights and privileges. It promised an end to French taxes which were to be replaced by others based on "democratic principles." The aim of the Viet Minh was a national economy, with industry developed and agriculture modernized and improved. With this was to come a program of social legislation, not unlike that which the Popular Front had brought to France, but revolutionary for Indochina—the eight-hour day, unemployment insurance, a minimum wage, aid to large families. Education was to be developed at all levels, as was intellectual life generally. Medical facilities were to be increased. The Viet Minh concluded its declaration of policy by asserting its belief "in the sacredness of those principles for which the world has already shed and is shedding so much blood, and which are defended by the great democratic world powers—the United States, Britain, Russia and China."⁶

After March 9, 1945, the Viet Minh invited the French of Indochina to join them against the Japanese, but only a few accepted. Putting to effective use the contacts and apparatus it had inherited from the Communist party, the Viet Minh reestablished a framework of organization. It created a liberated zone of six northern Tonkinese provinces in May 1945. Ho Chi Minh

had set up his headquarters in northern Tonkin by then, and there was some guerrilla war throughout the north and center of Tonkin. In August 1945, at the time of the Japanese surrender, the Viet Minh held a national congress. It appointed a People's National Liberation Committee to establish a new regime and unanimously elected Ho Chi Minh president.

The fall of Japan led to political upheaval throughout the Vietnamese lands. The Viet Minh was a broad national movement at that time and the Tran Trong Kim government did not have sufficient popular support to stand in its way. Kim declared Cochinchina a part of Vietnam, then resigned on August 15, 1945; and Bao Dai kept his throne only a little longer. He abdicated on August 26, stating: "Henceforth we shall be happy to be a free citizen in an independent country. We shall allow no one to abuse our name or the name of the royal family in order to sow dissent among our compatriots."⁷ Viet Minh-sponsored local committees sprang up in Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina. Although it was generally a peaceful revolution there was sporadic violence, particularly in the south against Vietnamese who had held high office or much property under France or whose politics had antagonized local revolutionaries.

At Hanoi, the capital of Tonkin and one-time capital of the Indochinese Union, Ho Chi Minh reorganized the National Liberation Committee, bringing in several moderate nationalists, one a Catholic, to form a provisional government. Of its fifteen members, eight belonged to the Viet Minh and five of these were Communists. Bao Dai, who had renounced his title and was known as Citizen Vinh Thuy, was appointed Supreme Political Adviser. On September 2 the new Democratic Republic of Vietnam, claiming authority over Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina, issued its declaration of independence. It began with the ringing words of the American Declaration of Independence: "All men are created equal. They are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, and among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

In later years, when Frenchmen looked back over the events of 1945, they singled out three happenings to explain their postwar difficulties in Indochina. Vietnamese nationalism long pre-dated the war, but had these three things not occurred, it probably would not have erupted, as it did, into open and far from unsuccessful revolution. First, there was the Japanese coup that brought to an end French rule over Indochina. No matter how far the French administration had come under the thumb of the Japanese before March 1945, it had succeeded in preserving intact at least a formal sovereignty, and the Indochinese peasant did not stop to question whether the power behind his local administrator was centered in Tokyo or in Vichy. After March 9, however, the administrators ceased to be Frenchmen, and the illusion of European supremacy, once shaken, would be hard to reestablish.

Second, there was the decision made at the Potsdam conference in July 1945 to send British and Chinese troops into Indochina, dividing the country

at the 16th parallel, to disarm Japanese troops and liberate Allied war prisoners. This was a job that had to be done, and there were not enough French troops on hand or near by to do it. Bringing in foreigners, however, underlined to the native population the weakness of the French at a time when they needed, above all, to appear strong if they were to reassert their prewar authority. Worse, from the French viewpoint, it placed Indochina under two separate regimes; and if the British had some sympathy for their French allies, as Europeans and fellow rulers of empire, the Chinese, who were neither, had not only little reason to sympathize with French difficulties, but good reason to try to exploit them.

Third, neither the British nor the Chinese arrived in Indochina immediately after V-J Day. They were there before the end of September but by that time the Democratic Republic of Vietnam had proclaimed its independence and the French position in the country had been seriously, if not irredeemably, compromised. French authority had not only been overthrown, but had been replaced by a new authority. The Republic maintained peace and order almost undisturbed throughout Vietnam and it operated the public services. If the French were to return to Indochina, they had no longer simply to fill a political vacuum, they had to expel the elements that had already filled that vacuum; and to accomplish this in the fall of 1945, they were dependent almost entirely upon the British and the Chinese.

The 16th parallel separating the Chinese zone of occupation in the north from the British in the south bisected Annam, leaving Cochinchina and Cambodia to Britain, Tonkin and Laos to China. Although Cochinchina had not been united with the rest of Vietnam until mid-August, it too had groups that attempted to use Japan to further the ends of Vietnamese nationalism. Notable among them were two religious movements, the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao. The former, which was the more influential, was believed to have one million members; the Hoa Hao or Dao Xen Buddhist sect claimed another four hundred thousand. The Cao Dai was a highly eclectic cult that drew for its doctrine upon the great religions of East and West and worshipped God in the form of an eye. When Pham Cong Tac took over leadership of the Cao Dai in 1936, he and a small group of leaders oriented it towards Cuong De (See p. 225) and Japan. The French were wary of the movement and when war broke out they exiled Tac to Madagascar. They placed strict controls upon the Caodaists, but Cao Dai leaders continued to work with the Japanese, swinging support to them openly after March 9, 1945.

When Japan capitulated to the Allies, representatives of the Cao Dai and the Hao Hoa and others, including the Trotskyites, took over power in Saigon. They were challenged a few days later, in the name of the newly established republic in the north, by a Communist-Viet Minh coalition. Negotiations between these two groups led to a broader coalition, which set up a Committee of the South to rule Cochinchina under the aegis of the Ho Chi Minh government in Hanoi. Immediately confronted with a major

problem, the impending landing of British troops to take over from the Japanese, most members of the Committee of the South adopted the position that independence could be safeguarded by negotiation once the British arrived. The Caodaists and the Trotskyites, who disagreed violently, wished to oppose the landing. Against both these dissident groups, the majority of the coalition in the Committee of the South took forceful military and police action.

The Committee of the South concentrated on establishing good relations with the Anglo-Indian occupation troops headed by General Douglas D. Gracey. In this they were unsuccessful. The British had no political mission other than to maintain order, but to do that they had first to decide which groups to support and which to oppose. Order to the British seemed to mean re-establishing the prewar status quo; it meant active support of the French who arrived with them and of the other Frenchmen left over from Decoux's regime whom the Japanese had interned and whom the British found in Saigon, still disarmed.

When clashes broke out between the French and the Vietnamese, Gracey declared martial law. He supported the French and armed them; he even used Japanese soldiers against the Vietnamese. On September 23 he permitted a French contingent to move on the headquarters of the Committee of the South and take over the government of the city. Guerrilla warfare broke out between the French and the Vietnamese. French troops landed in Cochinchina in the fall and winter of 1945 under the command of General Jacques Leclerc, the liberator of Paris, to continue what Leclerc called "mopping up" operations; and Admiral Georges Thierry d'Argenlieu, an ardent Gaullist and Carmelite monk, arrived in Indochina to be high commissioner (the postwar name for governor general).

By March 1946 the British had returned formal control over Cochinchina to the French. They had done their job well, as far as France was concerned—better than many Frenchmen, who feared possible British designs on Indochina, had expected they would. Legally, the position was clear; Cochinchina was French once again. Practically, the situation was much more obscure; war raged throughout the countryside—even Saigon was not entirely safe for the French—and the Committee of the South, operating out of secret headquarters, claimed to rule over Cochinchina in the name of the Republic.

In Cambodia the French had more success. Son Ngoc Thanh, premier of that country under the Japanese, had held a plebiscite soon after V-J Day in which the people voted to end the French protectorate; but he did not remain premier long. The British permitted the French to seize and then deport him. A new administration assumed power under King Norodom Sihanouk, and on January 7, 1946, France and Cambodia signed an agreement re-establishing French control over the country.

North of the 16th parallel, under the Chinese occupation, events took a different turn. The Ho Chi Minh government remained in power, and its

police and army were permitted to keep their arms. It singled out three serious domestic problems to deal with—imminent famine, widespread illiteracy, and the need to broaden its political base. To avert the famine that was widely expected, it launched a nationwide campaign aimed at supplementing the inadequate rice yield by planting such dry crops as sweet potatoes, maize, and soybeans, which could be harvested before the rice was grown. All land lying fallow was requisitioned by law and turned over to anyone who would cultivate it; it reverted to its owners after the harvest. Men and women of all ages and different social groups, soldiers as well as civilians, worked together in the fields and on the dikes. There is no way of checking Vietnamese claims as to the amount by which they increased their food production, but one thing at least is certain—the famine did not come.

At the same time, while the Chinese were still in Indochina and economic difficulties were acute, the Republic set about reducing illiteracy. Before the war some eighty per cent of the population was illiterate. The Republic ordered compulsory instruction in reading and writing Quoc-ngu, the romanized script in which the Vietnamese language is written, and imposed a series of penalties on those who did not learn to read and write.

The Republicans also tried to place their government on firmer popular foundations. Although Bao Dai's membership in the government provided a certain continuity with the old imperial regime, Ho Chi Minh sought a mandate from the people. He immediately announced plans for general elections—the first in Vietnam's history—in which all men and women over eighteen years of age could vote.

All of this was done with the tacit assent of the Chinese, who had no intention of making it easy for the French to come back to Indochina. They disarmed all Frenchmen and would not allow French administrators to enter Tonkin. The Chinese had their own plans for Vietnam. A number of Vietnamese nationalists had come to Tonkin with the Chinese forces, and through them the Chinese hoped to win control of the new Vietnam Republic.

The Vietnamese who arrived in the train of General Lu Han's Chinese armies were the leaders of two parties. One was the old Vietnam Nationalist party, which still enjoyed a certain prestige in Vietnam. The other, which took the name of the wartime Vietnam Revolutionary League, was a smaller group. Both parties were strongly xenophobic, far more bitter against the French than was the Viet Minh, and opposed to any compromise with France. Supported by the Chinese army, they gained control over large areas of Tonkin in the fall of 1945. Ho Chi Minh could not ignore the strength they represented. He promised the Vietnam Nationalist party fifty seats in the national assembly to be constituted after the elections, and the Vietnam Revolutionary League twenty seats.

The elections that were held on January 6, 1946—clandestinely in Anglo-French-occupied Cochinchina, openly in Chinese-occupied Tonkin

and north Annam—resembled a plebiscite rather than the organized elections by secret ballot known in the West. But the wide popular response they awakened was unmistakable, as was the enthusiastic support given to Ho and others who stood, often unchallenged, as candidates. Meeting for the first time on March 2, 1946, the newly elected national assembly approved Ho's new "national union cabinet," which, though drawn mostly from the Viet Minh, also included members of the Vietnam Nationalist party and the Vietnam Revolutionary League.

The French by this time had made substantial concessions to persuade the Chinese to leave Indochina. These were formalized, after months of negotiation, in the Chinese-French agreements signed at Chungking on February 28, 1946. France renounced all extraterritorial rights and concessions in China, guaranteed exemption from customs and transit duties to Chinese merchandise shipped over the Haiphong-Kunming Railway, promised a free zone for Chinese goods at Haiphong, and agreed to give to China ownership and management of the Chinese sections of the railway which the Chinese government had requisitioned during the war. Also at issue between the two countries was the status of the more than four hundred thousand Chinese resident in Indochina and prominent in its economic life. In Indochina, as throughout much of South East Asia, they were the middlemen of the country. They were active not only in trade and usury, but also in industry; they owned most of the rice mills in Indochina; and their affluence and enterprise, combined with their practice of sending their profits home to China rather than investing them in the countries where they had been amassed, did not endear them to the native population. The Chinese-French agreement confirmed and stabilized the existing position of Chinese nationals in Indochina. They were assured the legal and judicial rights of French nationals, and the fiscal rights of Indochinese.

The French, in exchange, were free to bring back their troops to northern Indochina. The Chinese, at least, had agreed to that. But what about the Vietnamese? Would the French have to fight before they could set foot in Tonkin? Negotiations between France and the Republic had started in August 1945 and had never really stopped; even when war broke out in Cochinchina, French emissaries in Hanoi continued to see members of the Ho government in Hanoi. The pressures on both sides were strong for compromise. The French were concerned, above all, with landing peacefully in Tonkin and with protecting the more than twenty thousand Frenchmen living there. The Vietnamese, for their part, needed a breathing spell; they had to attend to serious economic difficulties brought on by flood and the imminence of famine. In addition, they knew that if the French did not come, the Chinese would be free to strip the country and might even take it over.

Opportunism on both sides thus dictated the agreement that was signed in Hanoi on March 6, 1946. France recognized the Democratic Republic

of Vietnam as a "free state with its own government, parliament, army and finance, forming part of the Indochinese Federation and the French Union." The French promised a referendum to determine whether the three Ky (provinces)—Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina—should be united. In return, the Vietnamese agreed not to oppose the French army when it arrived in Tonkin and northern Annam to relieve the Chinese. An annex to the March 6 agreement fixed the number of troops in the north at twenty-five thousand, of which fifteen thousand were to be French and ten thousand, Vietnamese, under over-all French command. Permitting the French army to return unchallenged to Vietnam was a major step backward from independence, which Ho had a hard time justifying to some of his supporters. But the Vietnamese counted on the provision specifying that French troops were to remain only a short time. They were to be withdrawn in five equal annual installments; none would be left in Vietnam by 1952.

In Laos, as in Vietnam, the Chinese occupation had provided a protective screen behind which a nationalist regime had consolidated itself in power. A Free Laotian movement forced the abdication of King Sisavong Vong, set up its own more representative government, and then brought him back to the throne as the constitutional leader of an independent country. Only after the Chinese withdrew could the French return to Laos, and the Chinese troops were in no haste to leave. China did not withdraw the last of its troops from Indochina until midsummer of 1946. The French promised Laos, as they had Cambodia, to restore the areas taken by Thailand in 1941;⁵ and in both countries they played upon the fear of Vietnamese and Thai aggression. On August 27, 1946 they signed an agreement with Laos (recognizing the union of the country under Sisavong Vong, formerly king only of Luang Prabang) much like that with Cambodia, by which they restored the prewar protectorate in modified but not radically changed form.

By the summer of 1946 the French had thus reached agreements with the three regimes ruling Indochina—the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, and the Kingdom of Laos—but the area was not quiet. Free Cambodians and Free Laotians (known as Issaraks or free men), dissatisfied with the accords signed with France, took to the bush against the French, and a number of them fled to Thailand. In Vietnam, clashes were unavoidable with French and Vietnamese troops so close together. Had an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation existed between the two peoples, these might have been smoothed over, but the accord of March 6, 1946 was little more than an armistice that provided a transient illusion of agreement where no agreement actually existed. Even though the March 6 treaty had allowed French troops to move peaceably into Tonkin and north Annam, the situation was potentially grave. Cochinchina was still nominally under French control, the French were trying in vain to pacify the area, and no referendum was in sight.

"Unity and independence" was the demand that the Vietnamese put forward at conferences with the French, first at Dalat in Annam during the spring of 1946 and later in France at Fontainebleau during July and August 1946. By unity, they meant the unconditional inclusion of Cochinchina within Vietnam, not merely the promise of a referendum at some indefinite date (it would be held as soon as peace was restored, the French said). They claimed Cochinchina by ethnic, cultural, and historical right as well as by economic necessity. The French, however, had good reason for wanting to separate Cochinchina from Vietnam: the separation would safeguard their considerable economic interests in the province and emasculate the Republic from the start. Cochinchina, with its large rice fields and rubber plantations, was the most economically developed and therefore the richest part of Vietnam, and three fifths of all French holdings in Indochina were in Cochinchina.

By the March 6 agreement, the Vietnamese had accepted limitations on their independence—they were to have a "free" (not an "independent") state, and it was to belong to the Indochinese Federation and the French Union. But only at Dalat and Fontainebleau did either side get around to telling the other what it had in mind by these words. Use of "free" was a semantic compromise; how free Vietnam would be depended upon how many of the attributes of sovereignty it would have to share with the Indochinese Federation and the French Union. The latter, the new postwar name for metropolitan France and its empire, had not yet come into legal existence, for the French did not adopt a constitution for the Fourth Republic until October 1946. But if the place of Vietnam within the French Union could only be guessed at during the French-Vietnamese negotiations, each side had its own definite idea of the Indochinese Federation. The Vietnamese saw it as little more than a formal link between the several independent parts of Indochina; the French wanted it to be a real entity with considerable power through which France would continue to exercise a decisive control over Vietnam (with or without Cochinchina), Laos, and Cambodia. They used federation as an excuse for attempts to break up Vietnam, proposing the establishment of a separate *Moi* state in 1946. Two years later they encouraged a minority group in Tonkin to proclaim itself a separate Thai state. Within the framework of federation the French hoped to counterbalance the power of the Republic by keeping Cochinchina separate, by maintaining French influence in Laos and Cambodia, and by insisting on a direct French voice in the working of the federal machinery. Thus, on independence, as on unity, the French and the Vietnamese were diametrically opposed during the spring and summer of 1946.

French policy in these crucial days was made in Paris and in Saigon, and it was not always the same in both places. In France, liberal ideas of empire had evolved among the Free French during the war. These ideas had a following not only among leftists but also among those who wanted to

strengthen the empire against threats to French control, both from nationalists in the colonies and from critics abroad (notably in the United States, which the French suspected of desiring to see Indochina under an international trusteeship). The French Provisional Government had promised on March 24, 1945 to transform the Indochinese Union into an Indochinese Federation after the war, to develop it economically, culturally, and socially, and to give it broader economic and administrative autonomy. Politically the structure of French control was not to be substantially altered, and the country was to remain divided into five parts. But the proclamation of the Vietnam Republic six months later and the March 6 accord, which recognized the Republic, turned much of the March 1945 declaration into a dead letter. The old colonialism was out of date. That, at least, was the viewpoint of a number of officials in Paris and of some of the emissaries sent out to Indochina. It was not the view of Admiral d'Argenlieu or of most of the men around him.

The majority of the Frenchmen in Indochina, colonists and administrators alike, refused to recognize that their position in the country had changed since the war. They were opposed to making any concessions to Vietnamese demands. D'Argenlieu himself seemed never to have wholly accepted the March 6 accord as superseding the 1945 French statement of Indochina policy. He pursued an independent course, supporting groups and individuals who opposed the Republic. He made abortive efforts to persuade the Annamese royal family to return to the throne. Among the small Cochinchinese bourgeoisie, he found an unrepresentative group of Cochinchinese separatists, almost all of them French citizens, who feared the encroachment of the Hanoi government upon their privileges. He drew upon them to set up a puppet regime in Cochinchina, and on June 1, 1946 recognized this government as a "free republic." He permitted French troops to move into the Moi Plateaux in southern Annam, despite an agreement with the Republic to maintain the military status quo, which would have left these minorities under Vietnamese rule. And finally, in August 1946, he convened a second conference at Dalat, a so-called "federal" conference of Laotians and Cambodians as well as people from Cochinchina and southern Annam, areas claimed by the Republic but still governed by France.

D'Argenlieu seemed to be trying to settle the status of Cochinchina and the organization of the Indochinese Federation, the very subjects the Vietnamese had come to discuss with the French at Fontainebleau. To the Vietnamese delegates in France the second Dalat conference seemed designed to confront them with a *fait accompli*. Encouraged by the French leftwing parties and press, they broke off negotiations with France. All that was salvaged from the months of negotiations since the March 6 agreement was a *modus vivendi* signed in Paris on September 14, 1946 by Ho and Marius Moutet, the minister for Overseas France, which provided safeguards for the economic and cultural position of Frenchmen in Vietnam—equality of treatment and

status with the Vietnamese for French nationals and property, priority for French advisers and technicians, no change in the status of French property or enterprises without the approval of the French government, and the free functioning of French schools in Vietnam. It also provided for an Indochinese customs union and a single Indochinese currency. And it called for an end to all acts of hostility and violence in Cochinchina. But even this agreement, which skirted the major issues between the two governments, was never fully carried out.

Inside Vietnam, during this period of negotiations with France in the spring and summer of 1946, the alignment of political forces changed. The Viet Minh took military and political steps to consolidate itself in power. As members of the Ho government, some leaders of the Vietnam Nationalist party and the Vietnam Revolutionary League had shared responsibility for the March 6 agreement, but they soon made clear their opposition both to it and to the Viet Minh. By this time, however, their Chinese friends had left the country, and the French troops who replaced them did not share the Chinese army's feelings for its Vietnamese protégés. Convinced by the militant xenophobia of the Nationalist party and the Revolutionary League that the two groups constituted a serious threat both to internal order and to the March 6 agreement, the French joined the Viet Minh in police and military action against them; and some of their leaders fled to China. When the National Assembly met for its second session in October, the Vietnam Nationalist party filled only twenty of its fifty seats, the Vietnam Revolutionary League seventeen of its twenty. Having taken advantage of the months of relative peace ushered in by the March 6 agreement, Vo Nguyen Giap had by this time strengthened and extended the Vietnamese army.

The National Assembly adopted a constitution at its fall session, declaring Vietnam to be a democratic republic that included Cochinchina, Tonkin, and Annam. The constitution provided for a single-house legislature, cabinet government, and a president. It guaranteed democratic liberties to its citizens and paid special attention to the problems of the ethnic minorities inhabiting the country. But the Vietnamese had little respite from war in which to try out their constitution.

Report had it that Vo Nguyen Giap and an extremist wing of the Viet Minh had taken over control of the country, imposing upon Ho, when he returned from France, a policy of more intransigent opposition to the French than the President would have liked. But there is little evidence that Ho at any time lost control of his government. Relations with the French worsened rapidly in the fall of 1946, and this situation was reflected in the new Vietnamese cabinet, announced in November 1946, in which the number of Communist seats was increased from two to five.

There was no mutual trust between the French and the Vietnamese, and the uneasy armistice inaugurated by the March 6 agreement could not go on indefinitely. It was breached violently in November at Haiphong where the

French had established their own customs control, in violation of the September *modus vivendi*. At first, the local French and Vietnamese commanders achieved a peaceful settlement of the Haiphong incident, but this was upset on orders from the French high command, which decided to teach the Vietnam Republic a lesson. The French bombarded the city on November 23, killing thousands of Vietnamese. There was also a bloody incident at Langson the same month. In Cochinchina there was still no sign of a referendum. When the first president of the Cochinchinese "republic," Nguyen Van Thinh, hanged himself for lack of support and lack of power, the French replaced him with another puppet, Le Van Hoach. Tension and distrust of the French heightened among the Vietnamese, who in their turn attacked the French in Hanoi on December 19, 1946. War spread throughout Tonkin and north Annam, and flared up again in Cochinchina.

In France, a government of Socialists, a party that sympathized with the aspirations of the Vietnamese, was in power; and it was Léon Blum, long an apostle of a liberal colonial policy, who found himself leading the war against Vietnam. Early in January 1947 Blum was succeeded by a coalition under Paul Ramadier, another Socialist. Although it included Socialists and Communists as well as members of the Popular Republican Movement (M.R.P.), this government—presumably because of its dependence on center and right-wing support—did not seem anxious to undertake negotiations with Ho. It discounted peace overtures that came almost immediately over the Vietnamese radio, and from the Vietnamese delegation in Paris. Late in December 1946 the Socialist minister for Overseas France, Marius Moutet, made a trip to Indochina which had been scheduled before the outbreak of hostilities, but he did not meet any members of the Ho government. Cabinet changes in 1947 oriented the Vietnamese government further to the right and Ho gave up the ministry of foreign affairs (which he had held himself) to a Socialist, Hoang Minh Giam. Only in April 1947 did the French government reply to a Vietnamese proposal for an armistice with a concrete offer of terms, brought secretly to Ho by Paul Mus, a noted scholar. This led to a brief but fleeting optimism among the Vietnamese until they discovered that it was a demand for capitulation.⁹

Despite early French victories, it was soon evident that the French could not hope to win by military means alone in Vietnam; they found themselves at a military stalemate. Only by a political offensive could they hope to defeat Ho Chi Minh. In a memorandum to the Paris government soon after full-scale fighting broke out on December 19, d'Argenlieu proposed returning Bao Dai to the throne.¹⁰ D'Argenlieu himself was replaced in March 1947; among French leftists and the Vietnamese, who blamed him for torpedoing the Franco-Vietnamese negotiations, he was regarded as a symbol of reaction and bad faith. But although d'Argenlieu was no longer in favor, his idea of using Bao Dai to checkmate Ho appealed to a number of influential people in France. It was left to d'Argenlieu's successor, Emile Bollaert—a

Radical Socialist and long-time civil servant whose appointment seemed to promise a more conciliatory French attitude—to work out the Bao Dai policy.

Bao Dai, in name at least, was still an adviser to the Ho government, but he was no longer in Vietnam, having been sent by Ho in March 1946 on a mission to China from which he had not returned. His value to France depended upon the number of Vietnamese he could split away from Ho Chi Minh and persuade to accept terms less damaging to France's position in Vietnam than those demanded by Ho. But only if Bao Dai took a nationalist stand could he win over any of Ho's supporters. He had, in other words, to be nationalist enough to win friends among the Vietnamese, but not too nationalist to lose them among the French.

The ex-emperor, in 1947, was living in Hong Kong, where he laid the foundations of the reputation that caused critics to label him the "night-club emperor." He had little personal following in Cochinchina or Tonkin. Even in Annam, the seat of the imperial dynasty, his support was not widespread. But Bao Dai seemed the one person around whom a number of minor disaffected political groups might be rallied in opposition to Ho. Neither powerful nor popular, these groups formed a fluctuating series of coalitions that they called national union fronts.

Among them were the Vietnam Revolutionary League and the Vietnam Nationalist party (see pp. 237-8), one favoring a constitutional monarchy, the other a republic. Large sections of both, however, supported Ho in the war against the French. Elements of the Cao Dai and the Hoa Hao, which signed a pact in January 1948 setting up separate zones of action in Cochinchina, also joined the Bao Dai camp. But theirs was only a conditional and noncommittal promise of co-operation, which left their organizations free to do as they pleased. Their private armies provided the anti-Ho movement with a military force, but both were far more anti-French than pro-Bao Dai, and they could not be counted on for disciplined or reliable support for the ex-emperor. The two million Catholics of Vietnam, who might have been expected to join forces with any group offering an alternative to the Communists in the Viet Minh, were nominally represented by the Catholic League, headed by Ngo Dinh Diem, formerly premier under Bao Dai. Diem was active in the Bao Dai movement only during its early stages; afterwards he took no part in it and the majority of his co-religionists continued to support Ho.¹¹

As the French captured areas in Tonkin and Annam from the Republic, they set up administrative committees, many of whose members were nationalist adherents of Bao Dai. There were also supporters of Bao Dai in the French-controlled Cochinchina government; but they looked to the ex-emperor to protect them against the Vietnamese nationalist movement, not to take over its leadership. Le Van Hoach, the second president of the Cochinchinese "republic," a prominent Caodaist, took a leading part in the

Bao Dai movement. Nationalism was strong among so many of Bao Dai's supporters that the separatists among the Cochinchinese had to pare down their demands to Cochinchinese autonomy within a united Vietnam. General Nguyen Van Xuan, the third president of Cochinchina, who assumed office in October 1947, did his best to give his regime a more nationalist complexion, even taking over the Republican nomenclature and calling Cochinchina South Vietnam.

Although Bao Dai was in touch with the French early in 1947, he delayed making commitments to the various groups that appealed to him for leadership. He announced that he was neither for nor against the Viet Minh and would not return home unless the people wanted him. Emile Bollaert favored a generous French gesture that would have permitted a truce with Ho Chi Minh and negotiations with him as well as with the Bao Dai groups, but the high commissioner was overruled by the French government. When Bollaert made what he called a final offer, at Hadong in September 1947, it envisaged such limited French concessions that Bao Dai's group, as well as the Republic, rejected it. But another part of Bollaert's speech was an appeal to all political, intellectual, and social groups in Vietnam, and to that Bao Dai responded more favorably. He announced that he was prepared to negotiate with France in the interest of unity and independence. In December 1947 he left for Europe for talks with the French government, which formally announced its intention henceforth to confine its negotiations to persons outside the Ho government.

In their political counter-offensive against the Republic, the French envisaged Bao Dai as a key figure; the majority of the country, however, still supported Ho. Despite the strong and entrenched Communist minority in the Republican government, by far the greater part of non-Communist Vietnamese nationalists regarded Ho as their only possible leader in the struggle against the French. Bao Dai appeared so much a creature of French policy as to make it extremely difficult for him to win support among his own people.

Bao Dai promised that the Vietnamese would decide their own regime as soon as peace and order were re-established. He was, he assured them, only a mediator and a negotiator, sub-ordinating all lesser considerations to restoring peace. Unity by now had become so vital a part of any nationalist platform that the French reluctantly recognized that Bao Dai could not even hope to succeed unless he brought Cochinchina back to Vietnam. On May 20, 1948 the pro-Bao Dai groups, with the ex-emperor's approval, set up what they called a Provisional Central Government of Vietnam, linking Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina under the presidency of Nguyen Van Xuan. Bao Dai was on hand when, on June 5 aboard a ship in the Bay of Along, Xuan and the French signed an agreement recognizing "the independence of Vietnam [as an associated state within the French Union], whose task it is now fully to realize its unity."

The French had at last accepted the principle of unity for Vietnam. The problem was to translate that principle into practice, for Cochinchina was still legally a French colony and its status could not be changed without the approval of the French parliament. The word "independence" appeared for the first time in a Franco-Vietnamese treaty, but it was an independence hedged about by qualifications. The French, it was true, had finally given up their insistence on creating a strong Indochinese federation. The idea of federation had become so indistinguishable from French attempts to control the country that it had lost the little Indochinese support it may once have had. In the Bay of Along agreement, federation gave way to the concept of associated statehood within the French Union for each of the three states of Indochina. Only in August 1948 did the French premier, André Marie, endorse the agreement of June 5.

Negotiations with Bao Dai dragged on in 1949. By this time the victories of the Communists in China had brought them close to the northern frontier of Vietnam, and Ho Chi Minh would soon have powerful friends across the Chinese border. The French had to break up the nationalist-Communist alliance quickly if they were to break it up at all. They urged Bao Dai, who was then in France, to go home and rally his people around him. But no one would rally to Bao Dai if he returned to Vietnam with empty hands; he refused to leave Europe without more generous terms than the French had yet been willing to offer with regard either to unity or independence. On March 8, 1949 he finally reached the Elysée agreements with France, which took the form of an exchange of letters between Bao Dai and Vincent Auriol, the French president. When ratified, they would bring Vietnam into the French Union as an associated state.

Associated statehood was far removed from independence. Evidence of this could be found not only in the Elysée agreements but also in other agreements signed with Laos and Cambodia.¹² According to the French constitution, control over the foreign affairs and the armies of the associated states was to remain in the hands of the French Republic.¹³ Each of the states was to have representatives in the new Assembly of the French Union and in the High Council of the French Union: both of these bodies, however, are advisory only, and the latter is not yet in existence. The other prerogatives of sovereignty—what the French call internal sovereignty—were theoretically to remain with the associated states, but this was far from the case. The associated states were not permitted to interfere with French property and enterprises already in their territory, without the permission of the French government. When Frenchmen and foreigners protected by special treaty with France were involved in legal cases, they were to be tried under French law and before mixed courts in which Frenchmen would sit. Despite the change in French policy, the project for an Indochinese federation was far from dead. The associated states of Indochina were not guaranteed individually the right to control their treasuries, communications, foreign trade

and customs, immigration, or economic planning: these were reserved for a later "interstate conference." The three states were to be joined in a monetary and customs union. Although Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia were to have their own armies, French Union armies were to be stationed in each country, free to circulate between their bases and garrisons; and in time of war the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Laotian forces would be under the control of French officers.

Within the framework of the postwar agreements signed by the French with Laos and Cambodia, considerable governmental changes took place. Both countries became constitutional monarchies under constitutions adopted in 1947, with popularly elected assemblies and responsible cabinets. Although their kings retained considerable power, the change in political forms was marked, giving opposition elements for the first time a legal medium for the expression of their views. French control in both countries was still strong, however, and certain elements never accepted the agreements with France. The greater part of the Laotian guerrilla movement, which was based largely on personal rivalries within the royal family, seems to have collapsed in 1949 and made its peace with the Laotian government and with France. The Cambodian Issarak, who have links with influential members of the Democratic party, the country's largest political group, collaborate militarily with the Viet Minh.

In Vietnam the concessions made by France had little immediate effect. Bao Dai had accepted the Élysée agreements only on condition that Cochinchina be united with the rest of Vietnam. In March 1949 the French Assembly passed a law providing for a territorial assembly to meet in Cochinchina and vote upon its future status, a procedure required by the French constitution. Only a strictly limited electorate was permitted to vote for members of this assembly and, of those qualified, less than twelve hundred French and Vietnamese actually voted. But even the assembly they elected favored union with Vietnam. On May 21, 1949 the French National Assembly voted to end the colonial status of Cochinchina, which was to be "attached to the Associated State of Vietnam in accordance with the Joint Declaration of June 5, 1948 and the Declaration of the French Government of August 19, 1948."

With unity assured, Bao Dai departed for home, ending his three years of self-imposed exile on April 28, 1949. On June 14, at a ceremony in Saigon, he formally exchanged documents with Léon Pignon (who had replaced Bol-laert as high commissioner the previous October), bringing the Élysée agreements into effect: they had still to be ratified, however, by the French government. There had been a time when Bao Dai had presented himself as a mediator between the Vietnamese people and the French, and there had even been speculation that he might make peace between France and Ho Chi Minh. But if Bao Dai ever actually had such ideas, he had clearly abandoned them. He acted as though he had never abdicated, announcing his

intention to retain provisionally the title of emperor. The future constitution of Vietnam, he declared, would be decided by "the people [who] have fought heroically for the independence of their homeland."¹⁴ In the meantime he proclaimed himself chief of state. The ineffectual Xuan government, which had failed in its attempt to win popular support, resigned in his favor, and Xuan became Bao Dai's vice president and minister of national defense. But the new cabinet seemed little better off than its predecessor. For a government that claimed to represent all Vietnam, it included an unduly large number of people from the area of South Vietnam. It was unable to attract many outstanding Vietnamese, no matter how opposed they might be to Ho; and, having few of the attributes of power, it did not wield any effective authority even over areas under French control.

Bao Dai was home at last but the struggle in Vietnam, contrary to French expectations, was slow in taking on the aspect of a civil war. The major antagonists were not Bao Dai and Ho Chi Minh and their respective followers, but the French army and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, led by Ho Chi Minh. Some 150,000 soldiers were fighting on the French side in Vietnam (more than one quarter of the entire French army). They included not only Frenchmen, but also a number of Indochinese; there were Germans who had exchanged the swastika for the tricolor of the French Foreign Legion, and Moroccans and Senegalese from Overseas France.¹⁵ With these forces the French managed to control the centers of the major cities and the important lines of communication. But on the roads Frenchmen could travel only in convoys and then were not sure of reaching their destination. In the cities no French or Vietnamese opponent of the Republic was safe, particularly at night, and such a French stronghold as Saigon was honeycombed with Ho's supporters, who even collected taxes from the Chinese and Vietnamese inhabitants. The French were spending more than half of their military budget in Indochina, but still the guerrilla war went on, and by the end of 1949 the greater part of the country was in the hands of the Ho forces. The situation of the French in Indochina was grave, for neither by military force nor by political maneuver had they succeeded in bringing peace to the country.

As events laid bare the meagerness of France's resources, the war in Indochina became a major international concern because of the victories of the Communists in China. The French and the Vietnamese until then had fought their war in relative international obscurity. At the very time when the rights and wrongs of the Dutch and Indonesians were being hotly debated before the United Nations, a curtain of silence seemed to have dropped over Indochina. There were various reasons why the Democratic Republic of Vietnam could not find any champions during the first years of its existence. Unlike Indonesia, where both Americans and Englishmen had substantial investments, Indochina was almost exclusively a French economic preserve; no other nation had any serious stake to involve it in Indochinese affairs. But the United States did have a tremendous stake in France, which it regarded

as a key to the defense and recovery of Western Europe. The State Department, as a result, despite American traditional opposition to colonialism, was sympathetic when Frenchmen argued that if they lost Vietnam, they would lose North Africa and most of their empire as well, with disastrous economic and military results to the mother country. Further, a "soft" policy towards Ho Chi Minh, according to French opponents of such a policy, would lead to the overthrow of any "Third Force" government in France and bring to power either General Charles de Gaulle or the Communists. When to this line of reasoning was added the fact that the Communists played a key role in the Vietnamese resistance, the American government was not inclined to be openly critical of French policy. It contented itself with expressing a wish for peace in Indochina.¹⁶

The Communist issue was generally played down by the Vietnam Republic, with the collaboration of the Communists, during the period of its negotiations with France. The Indochinese Communist party had been dissolved in November 1945 (in order to conciliate the Chinese Nationalists then in occupation of part of the country, as well as non-Communist international opinion generally) and had been replaced by an Association for the Study of Marxism. Ho Chi Minh refused to say whether or not he himself was still a Communist. His government was a broad coalition drawn from diverse groups which for a considerable period of time steered a middle course in its propaganda (its equivalent of more formal foreign relations) and was careful not to become identified either with the Soviet bloc or with the West.

But the leading position of the Communists in Vietnam could hardly be denied. An emergent nationalist movement like the Indonesian, preoccupied with its struggle against the Dutch, was fearful of being tarred with the red brush and regarded the Vietnam Republic with official caution, as did other Asian governments. The Soviet Union also did not see fit to raise the Vietnamese question. The French Communist party, which belonged to the governing coalition in France, trod gingerly on political eggs after the outbreak of fighting in December 1946; it was critical of the war against Vietnam and yet it remained in the French government until May 1947. Even after that time it did not give up the hope of achieving a Communist government in France. For that reason the Communists were determined not to offend the nationalist sensibilities of the French electorate; they offered the Vietnamese little more than verbal support both during the 1946 negotiations and for some time afterwards; and they were anxious to keep Vietnam inside the French Union. Ho Chi Minh himself had asked for no more than membership in the French Union after the March 6, 1946 agreement, but for the Vietnam Republic this was a retreat from the full independence it had expected in 1945.¹⁷

With no help from abroad, either from the Communists or from the Western powers, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was thrown on its own resources. After the events of December 19, 1946 the Ho government found

it more important than ever to have a noncontroversial program on which the different elements opposing the French could unite—whether they were Catholics or Communists, Socialists or Democrats, former members of the imperial court at Huế, peasants, or bourgeois. It was important also not to antagonize China and Thailand, both of which were friendly to the Vietnamese, or any other foreign country that one day might help the Republic. They therefore concentrated on the struggle with France, on growing food, combating illiteracy, and maintaining the dike system against the ever present menace of floods.

As the war went on, the watchword in Vietnamese politics was national unity. The Viet Minh was the principal party in the country, having units even at the village level and including widely diversified elements ranging from moderates to Communists, directed by the Tong Bo (the Viet Minh Executive Committee). Some of its members were individuals and others were parties, like the Vietnam Democratic party founded in 1944 and the Vietnam Socialist party founded two years later, both of which held seats in the cabinet. The Viet Minh extended its influence throughout Vietnam by means of a network of "national welfare" organizations of such groups as women, young people, workers, peasants, and soldiers, and also had political commissars in the army. It claimed a membership of nine million people. There were other groups, however, which did not belong to the Viet Minh, and to bring them into the nationalist coalition, a new and more inclusive front, the League for the National Union of Viet Nam (the Lien Viet) was set up in 1946.¹⁸

Within the framework of the Viet Minh, the Communists continued in active leadership of the government. They followed a Popular Front line, collaborating with other parties in the nationalist resistance, although clashing sometimes with their ideological opponents, notably the Trotskyites.¹⁹ The long struggle against the French strengthened the hold of the Communists within the Vietnam government, and to this was added the fact that a Communist regime would soon be in power in China. Disturbed at the spread of Communism in Asia, the United States began to show open sympathy for Bao Dai, while the Vietnam Republic, looking forward for the first time to having an ally on its frontier, promised its people a general and victorious counter-offensive. The Communists in the Viet Minh increased their overt control over the country.²⁰ Vo Nguyen Giap, who had been dropped from his cabinet post, returned as minister of national defense.²¹ Ho Chi Minh sent a delegate to South Vietnam (Cochinchina) to enforce party discipline. In Central Vietnam (Annam) Pham Van Dong, a Communist who had headed the Vietnamese delegation at Fontainebleau, performed a similar job and then, in 1949, became vice president of the government, second only to Ho. And Tran Van Giau, formerly Cochinchinese general secretary of the Indochinese Communist party, assumed the important post of director of the Central Information Service of Vietnam. In France the Communist party

dropped its insistence that Vietnam remain within the French Union and demanded that the French evacuate Vietnam as a preliminary to negotiations with Ho. "Peace with Vietnam" and "the dirty war" were old Communist phrases, but in 1950 the French Communists moved from words to action—the action that they had not chosen to take in 1947, 1948, or 1949—and started a campaign of strikes and demonstrations aimed at obstructing the transport of soldiers and war material to Indochina. When the Ho Chi Minh government sent out requests for recognition to a large number of countries early in 1950, the Chinese Communists recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The Soviet Union followed suit on January 31. The American secretary of state, Dean Acheson, said that this "should remove any illusion as to the "nationalist" character of Ho Chi Minh's aims and reveals Ho in his true colors as the mortal enemy of native independence in Indochina."²²

The United States and Great Britain, now deeply concerned by Chinese Communist successes that threatened the balance of power throughout South East Asia, were anxious to stem the spread of Communism. The French recognized this and, hoping for help in their war against Ho, emphasized that they were not fighting a colonial war in Vietnam, but an anti-Communist war. They were the defenders of Western civilization in the Far East, they insisted, and as such were entitled to American aid, not only in Europe (where Marshall Plan dollars released francs for expenditures in the Vietnamese war), but also in Indochina.

The United States was far from unfriendly to Bao Dai.²³ In June 1949 the Department of State welcomed the formation of "the new unified state of Vietnam" and expressed its hope that the March 8 agreements would "form the basis for the progressive realization of the legitimate aspirations of the Vietnamese people."²⁴ And the following January, Philip C. Jessup, United States ambassador at large, delivered a message to Bao Dai in which Secretary of State Acheson wrote that the United States was looking forward to establishing closer relations with the Bao Dai government.

This was not the only encouragement Bao Dai had received from abroad. In October 1949 his government had been elected as associate member of the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. Malcolm MacDonald, the British high commissioner for South East Asia, had made a trip to Indochina and brought back an optimistic report on Bao Dai's position which had considerable influence on both British and American official opinion. At the Commonwealth conference in Colombo in January 1950, MacDonald stated that Bao Dai seemed to represent the wishes of the majority of the Vietnamese and was daily gaining new support.²⁵ Of all the delegates present, only Pandit Nehru of India refused to endorse this view. Bao Dai also achieved a diplomatic success at the Vatican. In 1948 French High Commissioner Bollaert had made an apparently unsuccessful attempt to persuade the Pope to call on Vietnamese Catholics to turn against Ho Chi

Minh, but in November 1949 the Vatican announced that the Pope was praying for Bao Dai.

The need of the French for foreign aid had become urgent. But they could hardly ask the United States to support the Bao Dai government when the French Assembly itself had not yet given its support to Bao Dai by ratifying the Élysée agreements to which his government owed its existence. Delays by the French in implementing their promises, so typical of the course of French-Vietnamese relations, served to weaken Bao Dai's position still further. Only on December 30, 1949 did the Bao Dai government sign a number of conventions with France to implement the March 1949 agreements. And finally, in January 1950, the treaties with the three associated states came up before the French Assembly.

The French Assembly debate on Indochina was a violent one, largely because of the Communists and some small left-wing groups who opposed the accords. One of the arguments offered by the government in favor of ratification was that it was a prerequisite to help from abroad. The Socialists proposed a motion calling for an armistice with Ho, but when that was defeated joined the majority of the Assembly in approving the three agreements on January 28 by 401 to 193. The agreements were ratified by the French government on February 2. On February 7 the United States and Great Britain both recognized Bao Dai.²⁶

In Asia, it was difficult to find many friends for Bao Dai. Thailand, which under its present government was acutely fearful of Communism close to its borders, recognized Bao Dai, but only after a cabinet crisis. Other Asian states, like India and Indonesia, did not believe Bao Dai to be the legitimate representative of the Vietnamese people, and refused to recognize him.

American efforts to contain Communism in Asia led to American support of the French military effort in Vietnam. The United States did not desire this role. It tried rather to make a separate policy for Indochina, aimed at strengthening the Bao Dai government and using pressure on the French to grant it a more real independence. The French distrusted American policy towards the French empire generally, fearing American economic inroads into the French colonies. They also feared what they regarded as American anticolonialism, and it was this fear that was uppermost in 1950 in regard to Indochina. They insisted that if American economic aid was to be delivered directly to the Vietnamese, American military aid at least should go only to the French. General Marcel Carpentier, commander-in-chief of the French forces in Indochina, stated: "I will never agree to equipment being given directly to the Vietnamese. If this should be done I would resign within twenty-four hours. The Vietnamese have no generals, no colonels, no military organization that could effectively utilize the equipment. It would be wasted, and in China the United States has had enough of that."²⁷

In May Secretary of State Acheson announced that the United States would grant military and economic aid to restore security and develop

"genuine nationalism" in Indochina. He made a point of saying that this aid would go not simply to France but also to each of the associated states.²⁸ With the outbreak of war in Korea, President Truman on June 27 announced "acceleration in the furnishing of military assistance to the forces of France and the associated states in Indochina and the dispatch of a military mission to provide close working relations with these forces."²⁹

But could the United States really distinguish between the assistance it was giving to France and that which was supposed to go directly to Bao Dai? His government was too unpopular and inefficient to make effective use of any aid it did receive. A few able men did rally to Bao Dai, like Nguyen Huu Tri, the governor of North Vietnam; they did so in the hope that they might yet transform the Élysée agreements into a more genuine independence. "The Vietnamese regard the March 8 agreements as only a stepping stone," Tri told a reporter. "We want full, complete independence." He said that there had been a considerable transfer of administrative functions from France to the Vietnamese in the north, in education, public welfare, agriculture, public health, public works, and some police powers, but "in every sphere, the French keep back something."³⁰

The great majority of the intellectuals and the youth of Vietnam refused to have anything to do with Bao Dai. Ngo Dinh Diem turned down offers to head the new government. He stated publicly his belief that "the national aspirations of the Vietnamese people will be satisfied only on the day when our nation obtains the same political regime which India and Pakistan enjoy. . . . I believe it is only just to reserve the best posts in the new Vietnam for those who have deserved best of the country; I speak of those who resist."³¹ But appeals to resistance elements to join Bao Dai fell generally on deaf ears. Nguyen Phan Long, an influential editor from South Vietnam who became Bao Dai's premier in January 1950, was dropped in May because of his efforts to appease the resistance. He was replaced by Tran Van Huu, who had succeeded Xuan as governor of South Vietnam. The selection of Huu, because he was more amenable to the French and less friendly to the resistance, did nothing to erase the popular picture of the Bao Dai regime as a puppet government honeycombed with mediocrity and corruption.

Bao Dai, for his part, spent most of his time in retreat at Dalat, remote from the day-to-day activities of his government. His behavior was not calculated to increase his following among the people. In June 1950, against the counsel of his advisers and despite the displeasure of the French, he left for France, presumably to see his family; there was also vague talk of affairs of state that took him to Europe. Premier Huu went to France the same month to join representatives of France, Laos, and Cambodia at Pau for discussions on the federal structure that was to be established in Indochina. This conference was originally scheduled to end in August but it dragged on into the fall. Huu and Bao Dai remained in Europe, while their regime fell into still greater disrepute at home. In Saigon the United States Military Mission, as

well as the French, complained of their absence. How could the Americans build up Bao Dai's army when they could not even get final decisions from the Vietnamese officials in Saigon? Still more important, how could the United States help Bao Dai towards greater independence when he himself seemed so uninterested in achieving it? Even Bao Dai's supporters were disquieted. There was talk in some quarters of finding a possible replacement for Bao Dai, and the names of Cuong De and Ngo Dinh Diem were mentioned.³² The nationalism of both men was as unquestionable as their anti-Communism. Diem was much the younger, and was besides a prominent and widely respected Catholic. Neither man; however, seemed to have a following of any size within Vietnam.

The French had not been able to find a Vietnamese who could win over the mass of the nationalist resistance from Ho Chi Minh; and this fact was recognized by many non-Communists in France. In December 1949 a number of prominent French intellectuals, in a letter to President Auriol, had urged an immediate end to hostilities as a preliminary to free elections in Vietnam under international control and within the framework of the United Nations. The independent left-wing newspapers, *Combat* and *Franc-Tireur*, had long been critical of the government's refusal to negotiate with Ho, as had several magazines, notably the liberal Catholic *Esprit* and Jean-Paul Sartre's *Les Temps Modernes*. The French Socialist party had voted at successive party congresses for negotiations with Ho even though it was, until February 1950, a part of the government which led the war against him. At their congress in May 1950 the Socialists passed a resolution in favor of referring the Vietnamese situation to the United Nations. Demands for a French evacuation of Indochina were also heard from groups further to the right who believed it impossible for France to hold on to the country any longer. In the leading conservative newspaper, *Le Monde*, a writer pointed out that the Bank of Indochina, which had dominated so much of the Indochinese economy, had already turned in preference to other areas: "the realism of business circles precedes, alas, that of political circles."³³

A sudden and victorious Vietnamese offensive in September and October 1950 focused French attention with renewed urgency on Indochina. With many of their units reportedly trained and equipped in Communist China, the Vietnamese succeeded in forcing the French to evacuate a series of key posts on the Chinese frontier. Tran Van Huu and Bao Dai hurried back to Vietnam; Jean Letourneau, the French minister for associated states, and General Alphonse Juin, resident-general in Morocco, arrived to study the situation on the spot.

No sooner had Premier Huu returned home than he openly attacked France, alleging an attempt to impose continued French domination on Vietnam during the Pau conference. He demanded complete independence and a new and more equal treaty to supersede the Élysée agreements. "Many people are dying every day because Vietnam is not given independence," he

said. "If we had independence the people would have no more reason to fight."³⁴

In Paris the National Assembly debated on Indochina policy. Some members of the right criticized the government for its conduct of the war; the Communists once again urged withdrawal and negotiations with Ho Chi Minh; and a prominent member of the moderate Radical Socialist party also favored evacuation on the ground that contributing to the defense of Europe was more important than fighting a war in the Far East, and France could not do both. Letourneau, who on his return from Asia was given sole responsibility for the direction of French policy in Indochina, ruled out the appeal to the United Nations favored by the Socialists. He told the French National Assembly that the government of Premier René Pleven intended to carry out the March 8, 1949 agreements with the greatest liberalism. Virtually all of the administrative machinery would be in Vietnamese hands by January 1, 1951, he promised, and the French would hand over power as rapidly as possible to a Vietnamese army. On November 23, 1950 the Assembly approved the government's Indochina policy by a vote of 337 to 187. General Jean de Lattre de Tassigny was installed as high commissioner and supreme commander the following month, replacing and combining the functions of Léon Pignon and General Carpentier.

Early in 1951 the French released official figures on the cost to France of the war with Vietnam. Some nineteen thousand European Frenchmen had been reported killed or missing (information on other nationalities in the expeditionary corps was not made public). And since 1947 the French had spent between \$1,400,000,000 and \$2,200,000,000 on the Indochinese war.³⁵

By 1951 the French were no longer fighting alone in Vietnam; they were receiving substantial aid from the United States.³⁶ The Democratic Republic of Vietnam, however, was also not alone. It had found powerful friends across the border in Communist China, which made it more hopeful than ever of victory. In August 1950 the Democratic Republic of Vietnam celebrated the fifth anniversary of its revolution. Five years before, the Vietnam radio had appealed jointly to Truman, Attlee, Stalin, and Chiang Kai-shek, declaring that its revolution stood above class or party. Ho Chi Minh had once been willing to join an Indochinese Federation and a French Union and to give priority to French capital and French technicians; later, he had insisted that Vietnam would be neutral in the cold war. But that was all in the past.

In 1950 the Republican radio called the Élysée agreements a treaty of treason and demanded a total French evacuation of Indochina. Ho said he was still willing to accept French capital, but "not on oppressive terms." Towards Laos and Cambodia he envisaged "fraternal relations based on absolute equality and mutual respect for independence."³⁷ Under the pressure of international events, the Republic had to decide who were its friends and who its enemies, and it had made its choice. "On our side," Ho Chi Minh

told the people, "a few years of resistance have brought our country the greatest success in the history of Vietnam—recognition of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as an equal in the world democratic family by the two biggest countries in the world—the Soviet Union and Democratic China—and by the new democratic countries. That means that we are definitely on the democratic side and belong to the anti-imperialistic bloc of 800 million people.

"Since the beginning of the war the Americans have tried to help the French bandits," Ho went on. "But now they have advanced one more step to direct intervention in Vietnam. Thus, we now have one principal opponent—the French bandits—and one more opponent—the American interventionists."³⁸ The Republican radio proclaimed: "Long live Marshal Stalin! Long live Chairman Mao Tse-tung! Long live President Ho Chi Minh!" No longer did the Republic minimize the role of the Communists in its affairs. The radio broadcast instructions to the country's propaganda services to acclaim the "Communist and Viet Minh parties who led the victorious revolution" and to stress "the determined leadership of the proletariat. . . . If the Communist Party did not exist, it is certain that there would be no August Revolution nor Democratic Republic of Vietnam."³⁹

But how did the Communists and the Viet Minh maintain their power in the areas ruled by the Republic? The element of force was not absent, but neither was it all-explanatory. Far more important was the fact that Ho Chi Minh stood for independence and that his government had an army in the field fighting the French. Vietnamese nationalists, who constituted the majority of the population of Vietnam, preferred to fight for independence under the leadership of their own compatriots, even if these happened to be Communists, rather than submit to French rule.

Unlike the Bao Dai government, the Republic also had a broad social program that appealed to the peasants as well as to many intellectuals. Reliable information on developments in Republican areas is scant, but the emphases of Republican propaganda give some idea of the problems faced and the methods used to deal with them. Government control is exercised through mass organizations—like the Vietnam Youth Association, the Vietnam Women's Association, the Vietnam General Confederation of Labor (all three affiliated with Communist-controlled world organizations), and the Vietnam Peasants Association—as well as through intensive political indoctrination along strictly Marxist lines, which has been greatly aided by the success of the campaign against illiteracy. There appears to be popular participation through these and similar organizations. A so-called patriotic competition movement rallied the people to outdo one another in fighting the French, famine, and illiteracy. Patriotic competition extended from raising poultry to reducing rents, from sabotage to digging foxholes. In July 1949, at a conference called to improve and direct the movement, there was talk of building up model provinces to spur on patriotic competition. Ho

summoned the people to a new effort in August 1949, not only for victory, but also for the national reconstruction that lay beyond. Patriotic competition, he said, means "simultaneously to serve one's self, one's family, one's village and one's people." It was to operate in all spheres, with particular attention to the principles of industriousness, thrift, honesty, and justice.

The war against illiteracy went on, and it was claimed that only twenty per cent of the people could not read and write, while the Vietnamese press was said to distribute two million copies daily in Republican areas. The government moved ahead to plan a system of popular education for the millions of newly literate persons. At the higher levels a Vietnamese University had faculties of medicine, law, and science; and some technical and vocational schools were reported established. All teaching was in the Vietnamese language; it emphasized Vietnamese culture and helped to intensify Vietnamese nationalism.

While it is impossible to check on Vietnamese claims of accomplishment these indicate, at the very least, the formal program of the government, its estimate of popular needs, and its judgment as to the type of appeal that will win support. It was clearly urgent to attempt to overcome some of the more pressing of the peasant's difficulties; it was necessary also to feed the army. Stringent regulations were placed upon usury, and under certain conditions debts to moneylenders were canceled. Efforts were made to provide the peasant with cheap credit facilities, and co-operatives were encouraged both in agriculture and in industry.

There has so far been little nationalization of land. Tonkin and Annam are mainly populated by peasants who worked their own tiny holdings. Before the war 98.7 per cent of the landowners of North Vietnam (Tonkin) worked their own land, as did 90 per cent in Central Vietnam (Annam). Only in South Vietnam (Cochinchina) was the picture different; the figure was only 64.5 per cent. South Vietnam was dominated by large landowners and a small moneyed bourgeoisie, with absentee landlords, extensive landholding tilled by tenant farmers, and landless agricultural laborers. South Vietnam might lend itself to a widespread redistribution of land, but so far the only land that seems to have changed hands in Republican territory has been that owned by French colonists or by Vietnamese regarded as traitors. There have also been reports of "contributions" of land to the government by rich landowners in Republican territory.

The government has decreed a flat reduction of land rents by twenty-five per cent. The techniques and goals formulated in 1945, at the time of what Republican propaganda called "the triumph over famine," are still in effect. Under this program any land left uncultivated is to be provisionally redistributed to poor peasants. In August 1950 the ministry of economy, in connection with its production drive, called on the peasants to increase the planting of maize, sweet potatoes, tapioca roots, and other dry crops, to fill in the period between rice harvests. Two new taxes were instituted during

1950, a contribution in grain and a progressive land tax based on crop yield. Keeping the dike system in good repair continued to be a major concern.

The Republic is apparently aiming at self-sufficiency on the economic front. A number of government services, army units, and state-owned enterprises are reported already growing their own food. Small industry and trade have been encouraged and rapid increases are claimed in both. Textile production is said to be close to meeting popular needs. The greatest achievements are claimed for the arms industry, with bazookas, other weapons, and explosives all produced locally.

In its fifth year, the war between France and Vietnam goes on. The issues of nationalism and colonialism in Indochina have become inextricably involved in the conflict between the West and the Communists. The future of Vietnam, as a result, may well be determined by events outside its borders.

Notes

- 1 Indochina had accounted for only some three per cent of France's total prewar foreign trade, even though in 1936-8 a little over half of Indochina's imports came from France and its empire, which took roughly the same percentage of the colony's exports. After the war the French looked to Indochina to earn some of the dollars they needed so badly, since it was one of the few colonies in their empire which had exported more than it imported.
- 2 The leased territory of Kwangchowwan on the southeast coast of China, which France returned to China in August 1945, was also included in the Indochinese Union.
- 3 "Vietnam" was the name for the country used by Gia Long when he united Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina under his rule in the eighteenth century. He was the founder of the Nguyen dynasty to which Bao Dai belongs. "Vietnam" means "land of the south." The French called its people "Annamites," of which "Annamese" is an anglicized version, but since the end of the Second World War, "Vietnamese" has come into common usage. It has been used here consistently in order to avoid confusion.
- 4 See p. 256.
- 5 Ta Thu Tau was killed in August 1945 by supporters of the Viet Minh.
- 6 "Declaration of the League for the Independence of Indo-China," translated in Lawrence K. Rosinger: "France and the Future of Indo-China," *Foreign Policy Reports* (New York), May 15, 1945, p. 64.
- 7 *La République*, No. 1, Hanoi, October 1, 1945. Translated in Harold R. Isaacs: *New Cycle in Asia*, New York, 1947, p. 162.
- 8 On November 17, 1946 the French signed an agreement to this effect with Thailand in regard to both Laotian and Cambodian territory.
- 9 The Vietnamese were asked to lay down their arms, to permit French troops to circulate freely in Vietnamese territory and to surrender to the French all non-Vietnamese personnel in the Vietnamese army. Vietnamese troops were to be confined to zones designated by the French command, and French hostages were to be surrendered.
- 10 *Journal Officiel de la République Française. Débats de l'Assemblée de l'Union Française. Séance du 19 Janvier, 1950*, p. 49.

- 11 Certain Catholic areas achieved a virtual autonomy under their own rulers, which was respected by both the French and Ho Chi Minh.
- 12 For Laos, the relevant documents are the exchange of letters between the king of Laos and the president of France (November 23, 1947 and January 14, 1948), and the general convention of July 19, 1949. The Cambodian documents are the exchange of letters (November 27, 1947 and January 14, 1948) between the king of Cambodia and the president of France, and the treaty of November 8, 1949. See "*Notes définissant les rapports des États associés du Viet-Nam, du Cambodge et du Laos avec la France*," *Notes et Études Documentaires* (Paris), 14 mars 1950, No. 1, 295.
- 13 Morocco and Tunisia, as well as the three states of Indochina, were expected to become associated states, but the nationalist rulers of both North African protectorates so far have not joined the French Union.
- 14 *Bulletin d'Information de la France d'Outre-Mer* (Paris), July 1949, p. 3.
- 15 Early in 1951, French official sources declared that there were 63,000 European Frenchmen in their expeditionary force. *New York Times*, January 4, 1951.
- 16 In February 1947 Secretary of State George C. Marshall said that he hoped "a pacific basis of adjustment of the difficulties could be found." *New York Times*, February 8, 1947.
- 17 Vietnamese Communists who had wanted independence in the fall of 1945 were bitterly critical of the failure of their French comrades to help them achieve it. See Harold R. Isaacs: *No Peace for Asia* (New York, 1947), pp. 173 ff.
- 18 It accepted a Viet Minh proposal to fuse the two organizations in 1949. In August 1950 the Viet Minh and the Lien Viet declared their intention to complete their merger before the end of the year.
- 19 The Trotskyites had consistently opposed all concessions to the French, the March 6 agreement as well as the September 14 *modus vivendi*.
- 20 See in this connection Milton Sacks: "The Strategy of Communism in South East Asia," *Pacific Affairs*, September 1950, pp. 227-47; and J. R. Clémentin: "The Nationalist Dilemma in Vietnam," *ibid.*, pp. 294-310.
- 21 He continued to hold the post that he had held without interruption since 1945, that of commander-in-chief of the Vietnam army.
- 22 *Department of State Bulletin*, February 13, 1950, p. 244.
- 23 Many Frenchmen attributed the origins of the Bao Dai policy at least in part to the influence of William C. Bullitt, former American ambassador to France, who, after a trip to Indochina in 1947, conferred with leading government people in France before he returned home to write an article for *Life* magazine proposing Bao Dai as an alternative to Ho.
- 24 *Department of State Bulletin*, July 18, 1949, p. 75.
- 25 *The Scotsman* (Edinburgh), January 15, 1950.
- 26 The British government justified this act of recognition on the grounds that it regarded the Bao Dai regime as the only regime clearly controlling large areas of Vietnam, with a capital city and with a visible government. They were, however, "anxious that rather more independence should have been given to the Bao Dai Government than had, in fact, been given." House of Commons, *Hansard*, 5th Series, Vol. 475, p. 2099.
- 27 *New York Times*, March 9, 1950.
- 28 *Department of State Bulletin*, May 22, 1950, p. 821.
- 29 *Ibid.*, July 5, 1950, p. 5.
- 30 *New York Times*, March 6, 1950.
- 31 *L'Echo du Vietnam*, June 16, 1949.
- 32 See pp. 230, 247.

- 33 *Le Monde*, June 25-6, 1950.
- 34 *New York Times*, October 20, 1950.
- 35 *Ibid.*, January 4, 1951.
- 36 "ECA aid directed particularly towards public works, agriculture, and health programs, is now arriving in significant quantities. Allocations totaling more than \$4,000,000 had been approved by mid-September." *Foreign Commerce Weekly*, Washington, D.C., November 27, 1950, p. 13. In addition, the United States assigned to France "by far the largest single part" of the five billion dollars earmarked for military equipment to be delivered to the European members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. "In view of the importance of the operations in Indochina, the major part" of the approximately one-half-billion dollars appropriated by Congress for military assistance in the Far East "is being used to provide military equipment, including light bombers, for the armed forces both of France and of the Associated States of Indochina. This assistance," according to the official United States communique, "will provide a very important part of the equipment required by the forces contemplated for activation in 1951 in France and for current operation in Indochina. Deliveries of equipment are being expedited and, with respect to Indochina, a particularly high priority has been assigned." The United States also agreed "to make available in support of the French Government's increased military production program assistance in the amount of 200 million dollars, these funds to be obligated prior to June 30, 1951." *Department of State Bulletin*, October 30, 1950. "The final amount of American assistance to support the expanded French defense effort" was still to be determined.
- 37 Peking radio, August 5, 1950.
- 38 Voice of South Vietnam, August 16, 1950.
- 39 Vietnam News Agency, August 10, 1950.

THE FUTURE OF FRENCH INDO-CHINA

Gaston Rueff

Source: *Foreign Affairs* 23(1) (1944): 140-6.

On April 13, 1942, Acting Secretary of State Sumner Welles made a very important declaration in a letter to the French Ambassador, Gaston Henry Haye, to the effect that the United States "recognizes the sovereign jurisdiction of the people of France over the territories of France and over French possessions overseas" and "fervently hopes that it may see the reestablishment of the independence of France and of the integrity of French territory." The meaning of this statement is crystal clear. It applies without ambiguity to French Indo-China, which both technically and in practice was, and is, considered a French possession.

But the people of Indo-China will certainly not be satisfied with a mere return to the old established forms of colonial government. How will France reestablish her jurisdiction once the Japanese are expelled from the country and Admiral Decoux's puppet government has been ousted? And in what way will she give the native people a fair chance to prepare themselves for self-government? These questions must be carefully examined.

II

French Indo-China, it is interesting to note, is unique among the colonies of South East Asia in that it has remained under the administration of its prewar government even though the substance of power has passed to the Japanese invaders. The French community is largely anti-Vichy and anti-Japanese, as are most of the officials and certainly all the petty officials. We can therefore justifiably expect that the reconquest of this territory will be facilitated by the attitude and the actions of the French community and of the French officials and that they will be eager to collaborate with the forces of the United Nations.

It is generally said that Indo-China yielded readily to the Japanese in 1940-41, or even that the French handed over the colony to enable the Japanese to use it as a base of operations for their subsequent moves south. The facts are very far from corroborating such a supposition.

As a result of the increased tension in South East Asia, a parley was held in Singapore in July 1939 between British and French officials, accompanied by military and naval staffs. A joint plan for the defense of Singapore, Hong Kong and French Indo-China was worked out. Unfortunately it was never put into practice. When the war broke out in Europe, Indo-China still was inadequately armed, as were Singapore, Hong Kong, Manila and the Netherlands East Indies.

The French at once mobilized all their nationals and a certain number of natives. The equipment available included light arms and some field artillery, but the supply of ammunition was very small. There were a few obsolete tanks and planes, no medium artillery and not a single modern plane. By the spring of 1940, approximately 18,000 French troops and 75,000 natives were under arms. Their artillery was composed solely of 75 mm. batteries, with at the most 70 to 80 rounds per gun. There still were no medium or heavy guns in Indo-China. There were one modern tank and five armored cars, three of them outmoded; nine modern fighters (Morane 406); six reconnaissance float-planes; one light cruiser (four 6-inch guns), two or three river gunboats, and one submarine. There was not a single bomber.

When France collapsed in June 1940, the Governor-General, Georges Catroux, already a supporter of General Charles de Gaulle, looked to the British for aid. He secretly sent his personal secretary and *officier d'ordonnance* to Singapore to plead for help. But in Singapore the military outlook was far from bright. As Andrew Roth puts it: "In the early summer of 1940, however, the British were in no position to extend the naval cooperation envisaged in the Singapore Agreement of July 1939," nor "in a position to support Hanoi's resistance to Japan, despite Indo-China's strategic position with regard to Burma, Hong Kong, Malaysia and other British possessions in that area."¹ Then on July 17, 1940, the British closed the Burma Road, hoping that this concession might keep Japan from joining the Axis. Governor-General Catroux saw that there was no chance of help from the outside and realized that it was impossible to fight the Japanese with his own forces. On July 20 he handed over his duties to the appointee of the Vichy Government, Admiral Decoux.

Admiral Decoux hoped to limit the scope of Japanese encroachments by surrendering on questions of minor importance but refusing to give in on any major issue. Through Vichy and directly through the French Ambassador in Washington, Count de Saint-Quentin, he appealed to the American Government for assistance, "but apparently American Far Eastern policy was in a somewhat hesitant stage."² On July 26, 1940, the United States extended its export license system to include aviation gasoline and scrap iron,

which was meant of course to handicap Japan; however, this license system did not apply either to ordinary gasoline or to high octane gasoline, which could be turned into aviation gasoline. No positive help was given to French Indo-China. A French mission, headed by Colonel H. Jacomy, had meanwhile been sent to the United States to purchase planes, guns and ammunition; it arrived in San Francisco on July 28, but ran into difficulties and was not allowed to buy a single plane or a single gun.

The struggle against the Japanese seemed more and more hopeless. Nevertheless, Decoux persisted in his appeals to America. In late August he is reported to have sent three telegrams to Washington requesting assistance. Apparently Washington was more receptive at this time, for it is said that on September 4 Secretary of State Cordell Hull declared that if reports were true that the Japanese Government had served a virtual ultimatum on Indo-China, the action would have an unfortunate effect on American public opinion.³ Despite this encouraging statement, the Jacomy mission got nowhere.

Meanwhile, on August 30, 1940, the Vichy Government, probably under German pressure, had signed an agreement in Tokyo. Up to now its clauses have remained secret. Allegedly the agreement was a pact of mutual assistance, allowing Japan to send troops to Indo-China to defend the integrity of the country against foreign aggression. Vichy is supposed to have allowed the stationing of 8,000 Japanese troops in Tongking and to have granted the Japanese the exclusive use of three of the Tongking airports. One of them was the Gia-Lâm airport, the main air base in Hanoi. The agreement is supposed also to have contained a clause providing for the development of commercial relations of the two countries.

Decoux was supposed to sign an agreement implementing the Tokyo arrangement, but he was doing his best to postpone this action. As Foreign Minister Matsuoka put it, in a conversation with Ambassador Grew, "the Governor General continued to be uncooperative . . . and since the Governor General was evidently not acting in good faith and since the Japanese authorities were aware that to foreign consuls stationed in Indo-China the Governor had boasted that he was using obstructive tactics, the Japanese felt it necessary to present an ultimatum."⁴

Decoux finally gave in on September 22. Events now moved fast. Though Decoux had accepted the ultimatum, the Japanese Canton Army crossed the Tongking border that same night. Fighting immediately broke out between French and Japanese troops, and for three days, 2,000 Frenchmen on the Chinese-Tongking border, at Lang-son, Dong-Dang, and Than-Moi, fought the 30,000 men of the Canton Army. But the struggle was too uneven to last long. On September 26, the Japanese landed trained shock troops in Haiphong and battle planes at Hanoi. The fighting ended and Decoux yielded to all the Japanese demands.

At present, the native people are reportedly in incipient revolt against the Japanese rule. Furthermore, despite the fact that Decoux and various high

government officials are Japanese puppets, the petty French officials, as we have noted, can be counted upon to help overthrow the Japanese rule when the time of invasion comes.

III

French Indo-China is unique from another point of view. Unlike other colonies of South East Asia—the Philippines, Burma, Java and Malaysia, for example—it is not a single, homogeneous country, but a federation of five countries in which at least three major races live side by side.

Before the arrival of the French, these five countries—Cochin-China, Annam, Tongking, Cambodia, Laos—had no relationship save that of constant warfare. At the beginning of the Christian era, the dominant race, the Annamite, was a savage and primitive tribe of farmers living in Tongking and northern Annam. In the first century A.D., the Chinese conquered Tongking, subjecting it to Chinese rule and to the authority of the Emperor. Not until a thousand years later did the Annamites shake off the Chinese yoke and live again as an independent people. Their lands were overcrowded, however, and they in turn pushed southward, attacking the powerful Empire of Champa. Little by little they conquered it, destroying its inhabitants, and thus came into contact with the Kingdom of Cambodia, whose inhabitants descended from the famous Khmers. Up to the fifteenth century, the Khmer kingdom was a strong and independent country, but later, with the decay of the Khmer civilization, Cambodia was attacked not only by the Annamites on her southern border but by the Siamese on her western border. These wars continued up to the second half of the nineteenth century, when Cambodia asked France to take her under her protection. The wars then ceased. Cochin-China, which had become a French colony, Cambodia, Annam and Tongking, which had become protectorates, lived together in peace under French rule. Laos, another French protectorate, also combines territories never before brought together under the same rule, such as the Kingdom of Luang-Prabang, and the Princedoms of Vientiane and Bassac.

France has thus established what the French call the *Union Indochinoise*. It is a country united politically and economically. Despite some past errors and failures, French rule has, on the whole, brought it peace and a certain degree of culture, health and prosperity. The abrupt ending of this rule would make new wars between the different Indo-Chinese peoples inevitable, with chaos the certain result.

The white man has lost face throughout the whole of Asia in the last few years; and in this respect the French in Indo-China are no exception. In the past, the white man's rule has rested largely on "prestige," and this prestige will have to be restored if the French are to pursue their policy of educating the natives and hastening their cultural, political and economic advancement. For this purpose it is essential that French troops participate

in the expulsion of the Japanese from Indo-China, and certainly it is the intention and the desire of the Provisional Government of the French Republic in Algiers that they should do so. On December 8, 1943, the French Committee of National Liberation declared: "In conjunction with the United Nations, she [France] will fight at their side until complete defeat of the enemy [Japan] has been achieved and complete liberation of Indo-China accomplished."

French intentions for the period of guardianship during which the natives will be made ready to take over the government of Indo-China have also been made clear. On December 8, 1943, the French Committee of National Liberation referred to the future of the natives in the following terms: "France intends to give them in the bosom of the French community a new political status, in which the liberties of the different countries composing Indo-China will be extended and consecrated in the framework of a federal organization; in which the liberal character of the ways of living will be accentuated, without losing the original stamp of the Indo-Chinese civilization and traditions; in which, lastly, the Indo-Chinese will be able to occupy all ranks and functions in the government offices." At the Colonial Conference held at Brazzaville in January-February 1944, the late Governor-General Eboué of French Equatorial Africa, whose death is so much to be regretted, laid down certain principles to be applied to French African colonies. They likewise definitely describe the policy envisaged for Indo-China: "Treat the less progressive native not as an isolated and interchangeable individual, but as a human being, heavy with traditions, a member of a family, of a village, of a tribe, capable of progress in his own sphere, but probably lost if extracted from it." For the progressive natives, Governor-General Eboué outlined a status "by which they will become real citizens of the colony, and as such called upon to prove their worth in the administration of their community." And for those who no longer fit into the native society because they have progressed more rapidly than it did, and for those who feel ill at ease in it, this expert administrator, himself a Negro, pointed out that the granting of the right to French citizenship constitutes an avenue of access to a different level of civilization.

Traditionally the French have taken great pride in the fact that there has been little racial antagonism between them and the natives in their colonies. They also can be proud of the extent to which French thought and culture have stimulated brilliant students in Indo-China. Native painters, sculptors, writers and scientists have also had a rebirth of their own great traditions. France has welcomed and encouraged this new spirit in Indo-China, not only through her support of such institutions as the School of the Beaux Arts at Hanoi but through many technical, industrial and medical schools and schools of the applied arts. Many promising Indo-Chinese have also been brought to study in Metropolitan France. The interpenetration of French and Far Eastern ways of life is of great value to both.

The best proof of how attached the natives of Indo-China are to France is that in 1940, when France was defeated and her military strength in the Far East was practically non-existent, no insurrections occurred in the country. If the nearly 24,000,000 natives of Indo-China had really wanted to get rid of the 40,000 French, they had a splendid opportunity to do so. But though they were deluged with Japanese propaganda urging them to overthrow the French and take the government into their own hands they remained loyal.

France is aware that mistakes have been made in the past and that conditions, particularly of an economic nature, are seriously in need of improvement. There have been some bloody revolts. The Yen-bai revolt of 1930, for instance, and the repression which followed, left a general sense of dissatisfaction and uneasiness. All such outbursts have resulted from the poverty of the people in certain districts, and their low standard of living. Practically all the popular uprisings in Indo-China in the last 50 years have started in northern Annam and in the Tongkin delta, the most closely populated, poorest and most backward parts of the country. The average density of population in those regions is 450 to the square kilometer, but in some it is much higher—for instance, 2,300 per square kilometer in the Quang-Yen Province. Nearly all the uprisings took place in periods of world-wide depression.

France will have to change her economic policy in Indo-China drastically after the war. The only way to effect a permanent increase in the purchasing power of the people in the over-populated districts of Tongking and northern Annam is to introduce industrialization there on a large scale. French economic policy in the past has been directed mainly to the production of raw materials for use in France or for sale in other countries. Emphasis has been placed on agriculture and mining, and, with one or two exceptions, modern industrial developments have been devoted to the extractive type of industry or to the preliminary processing of raw materials for export. Steep tariffs have been applied to keep cheap products out of the country and to allow high-priced French products to be sold. In short, Indo-China has been tied to the French custom system.

This tie must be severed after the war. Indo-China must be given the right to fix and modify locally her custom tariffs and regulations, without having to take into account the French home tariffs. Preferential rates will have to be abolished. An Open Door policy must be adopted, permitting foreign as well as French capital to enter; and all possible encouragement must be given to the creation of the types of modern industrial enterprise which seem best adapted to the country. The existing modern textile industry is an example of the sort of enterprise that could be expanded, even though at present only 5 percent of the yarn used in the cotton mills of Tongking and Annam is of local origin while 95 percent is imported. The resulting stimulus to the cultivation of cotton, in Cambodia especially, would be of great and general benefit. The manufacture of tires, from rubber produced in Cochin-China and Cambodia, and of jute bags, necessary for the rice exports, the

development of the paper industry, the manufacture of certain chemicals and of artificial fertilizers, and the processing and refining of all the mineral ores produced in the Indo-Chinese mines—such are some of the other possibilities for industrialization. Later on can come the expansion of industrialization to include certain heavy industries.

Such a program will require large investments and French capital will not suffice. The Open Door policy for foreign capital will therefore have to be initiated immediately after the war.

Even so, industrialization will not be accomplished overnight. In the interval, the French will have to take provisional measures to help the overcrowded areas of Tongking and Annam. A certain number of families must be transferred from these districts each year to Cochin-China, and perhaps to certain parts of Cambodia, where they will find more decent living conditions and will also be able to increase the production of agricultural products such as cotton, hemp, jute, corn, copra and tobacco. At the same time, a program of public works must be undertaken in order to equip the whole country with modern facilities—in transportation, for example—as well as a development of the mining industry on a large scale, aimed at giving employment to the peoples of the Tongkinese Delta and northern Annam.

IV

To summarize, Independence cannot be granted Indo-China in the country's present stage of development. France will have to continue her guardianship, but must change certain of her policies, notably her economic policy. In addition, however, it seems plain that some sort of international system will have to be devised to guarantee that the older forms of imperialism have been mitigated and that henceforth serious, consciously-directed and widely-progressive efforts will be made to advance the social and economic well-being of the native peoples and to prepare them for eventual self-government.

Such an international system might operate through a regional organization, perhaps in the form of a Coordinating Council of the Southwest Pacific.⁵ Reports from Algiers indicate that the French Provisional Government is considering such an organization and that it is inclined to favor a system of collective security in the Pacific area. What nations should be the members of such a Council? What functions should it have? How should it carry them out?

The membership should include Australia, China, France, French Indo-China, Great Britain, Malaysia, the Netherlands, the Netherlands East Indies, New Zealand, the Philippines, Russia, Thailand and the United States.

The functions of the Council are less easily specified. First of all, the duties of the Council, apart from its police functions, should be strictly of a

supervisory type. Under no condition should the Council be allowed to have executive functions. Government in the various areas of the southwest Pacific is sufficiently delicate and ticklish without being complicated still more by the direct interference of the Council. The country which has administrative jurisdiction over a colony must definitely have sovereign rights over that country; under no other conditions would normal government of that colony be possible.

The primary function of the Council should be to organize, among the member nations, collective security to avert war. This means that the member nations would have to be bound by a pact of non-aggression and mutual assistance. All disputes between two or more member nations would be arbitrated by a Judiciary Committee and all its decisions would be binding, although there would be the possibility of lodging an appeal directly with the Council in case one or more of the member nations should consider the judgment rendered by the Judiciary Committee unjust. To enforce its decisions, the Council should have at its disposal both economic and military sanctions. The economic sanctions would be applied to a nation which refused to abide by the decision taken by the Judiciary Committee. If they failed to produce the desired result, the Council would have to use force. For this purpose, each member nation should make the appropriate contribution—some would put bases at the disposal of the Council, others would furnish ships, planes, matériel or men. All would share in the expenses of maintenance. Each member nation would have to allow its territories to be used for the establishment of the necessary international bases.

The Council should also have supervisory functions in certain specific fields, such as education, public health, labor regulations and economic relations. To exercise these functions properly it would have to set up a certain number of committees, each sufficiently large to enable at least one member to visit each of the different colonies annually. Once a year, the committees would receive reports from the member nations exercising administrative jurisdiction over a colony. At least once a year (and oftener in cases of emergency) one or two members of each Committee should visit each colonial area and make a report to the Council on the methods by which the member nations are exercising their rule over the colonies which they administer.

The principal function of the Council, in this respect, should be to coordinate the different ways and means by which the member nations are applying in the areas under their jurisdiction the different political, cultural and economic policies advocated by the Council. But the Council should not have the power to enforce directly the Committee's conclusions. This should be left to the member nation in charge of the particular area.

If a member nation refuses to follow the policies recommended by the Council, the latter would have to take measures to enforce acquiescence. However, this step would be taken only after the member nation had the opportunity of explaining its attitude at a general meeting of the Council.

Should these explanations not be satisfactory, the Council would then take action. The first measure of enforcement would be the exclusion of the recalcitrant member nation from the Coordinating Council; next the Council would pronounce and put into effect financial and economic sanctions, which would last as long as the member nation refused to alter its policies.

Under such a system, France would have sovereign jurisdiction and administration over French Indo-China, under the supervision of the Coordinating Council of the Southwest Pacific. The machinery described would enable the Indo-Chinese people to move steadily in the direction of social and economic independence and ensure them of eventually achieving their ultimate goal, self-government.

Notes

- 1 Andrew Roth, "Japan Strikes South." New York: Institute of Pacific Relations, 1941, p. 49 and 56.
- 2 *Op. cit.* p. 58.
- 3 *Op. cit.* p. 64.
- 4 Joseph C. Grew, "Ten Years in Japan." New York: Simon and Shuster, 1944, p. 331.
- 5 In the opinion of the author, the Coordinating Council of the Southwest Pacific would be only one of the four Regional Councils (European, Pan American, African, Southwest Pacific) and would have to be linked to a World Council.

INDO-CHINA: FRENCH UNION OR JAPANESE 'INDEPENDENCE'

Eleanor Lattimore

Source: *Fur Eastern Survey* 14(10) (1945): 132-4.

The declaration issued on March 24 by the French Provisional Government in regard to the future status of Indo-China departs radically from traditional French colonial policy. This declaration was made shortly after three fresh developments in the colony: the arrest by the Japanese on March 9 of the Governor General, Vice Admiral Decoux, and the commanders of his army, navy, and air force, the substitution of a wholly Japanese regime for the French puppet administration, and the "grant of complete independence" by Japan to Annam and Cambodia, two of the five states comprising the Indo-Chinese Federation.

Although Admiral Decoux had actively collaborated with the Japanese from 1940, and especially after Pearl Harbor, he had apparently been sufficiently encouraged by the turn in the tide of war in 1943 to begin obstructionist tactics. After the liberation of France, Decoux attempted to get in touch with General de Gaulle and, although the gesture seems to have been ignored, tried to organize a resistance movement and to form contacts with China. In spite of these moves, however, the Japanese did not take action until they became perturbed by the possibility of Allied landings on the coast of China and of Indo-China itself, aware that an Allied blow at this strategic hub of their empire would be profoundly serious. The network of railways and highways connecting Indo-China with both China and Thailand enables Japan to ship men and material from south China to Malaya.

Japan strengthens forces

Japan's first step was to increase her forces in Indo-China from 20,000 to some 40,000, after which the Japanese commander-in-chief formally requested Admiral Decoux to carry out France's "obligations" under the

treaty of July 21, 1941 for the joint defense of the colony. According to Pertinax, in a story published on March 27, Admiral Decoux replied that the treaty had been concluded under duress and that French forces could not be expected to fight either their own countrymen or their American and British allies. He was immediately arrested and the complete disarmament of the French troops ordered. These troops consisted of some 10,000 French legionnaires and 30,000 natives.

In the few large cities the Japanese succeeded in surrounding the military barracks and seizing all war material. In a number of outlying regions, however, French officers and their men escaped to the open country to join the forces of liberation. According to Tokyo and Siagon radio reports, strict martial law was immediately clamped on the entire colony, with a sunset to sunrise curfew. People were forbidden to hold meetings or "to walk in groups of more than three", and an order was issued that "doors of homes, apartments or rooms must be left open."

Not very much is known about the underground activities of the native civilian population. It may be assumed, however, from recent reports concerning the League for the Independence of Indo-China that there has been for some time a considerable amount of underground activity against the Japanese on the part of the Indo-Chinese and that this has doubtless been accelerated by recent events. The *Allied Labor News* of March 8, 1945, referred to a call for guerrilla warfare against Japanese occupation contained in a manifesto of the League, dated January 1944, a copy of which has only recently reached Bombay. This League, which includes a number of anti-fascist and nationalist organizations, is reported to have held a conference in 1943 at which it adopted a program calling for: 1) organization for the anti-fascist struggle; 2) preparation of an insurrection by the organization of the people into self-defense corps; and 3) the formation of guerrilla bands and bases.

Appeal for outside aid

On March 14, 1945 General de Gaulle appealed to the United States and other Allies to provide arms and supplies to the ill-equipped resistance forces which were battling in numerous small engagements in the Northeast and Northwest. The hope was that the Fourteenth Air Force could get arms to the resistance forces in Indo-China as British and American planes had to resistance forces in France. Although this appeal was accepted in theory, it is difficult, practically, to get help to these small bands, although it is reported that there have been increased raids on Indo-China by the Fourteenth Air Force.

Notwithstanding the lack of outside aid, there appeared at first to be considerable resistance in the border regions. As supplies became exhausted, however, many of the French troops, according to report, escaped into

China. As late as April 8 the Ministry of War of Metropolitan France issued a communique saying that "French troops were obliged to evacuate Luang Prabang in Indo-China after a month's heavy fighting during which heavy losses were inflicted on the enemy. The people's love for France was demonstrated by 2,000 volunteers coming forward. As a reprisal the Japanese set fire to most of the town." Since that date little has been heard; and it is feared that there are few French troops left to resist.

Following the substitution of the French administration with a Japanese regime, the disarming of captured French troops, and the announcement of "complete independence" for Annam and Cambodia, Emperor Bao Dai of Annam officially announced on March 11, according to Japanese broadcasts, that the Franco-Annamese treaty of 1886 had been abrogated. This was followed by a proclamation pledging cooperation with Japan "who had made the nation of Annam possible, in construction of the Co-prosperity Sphere". On March 13 King Norodom Shanouk of Cambodia announced the abrogation of the Franco-Cambodia treaty of protection and the formation of a new cabinet. The establishment of Luang Prabang as an "independent" nation, with a certain amount of authority over the rest of Laos, was announced on April 8. The Saigon radio stated on April 18 that "for the time being the Japanese government . . . has appointed Japanese officials to important positions to supervise administrative affairs" in these three states. However, "capable natives are gradually being appointed to more and more key positions" and eventually there will be "no Japanese resident superiors in these areas".

The declaration by the French Cabinet on March 24 that Indo-China after the war would become a semi-autonomous dominion in the new French Union or commonwealth of nations came at a strategic time. Although France's new colonial policy was discussed both in the Consultative Assembly at Algiers in 1943 and at the Brazzaville Conference early in 1944, and although General de Gaulle on December 8, 1943 had promised Indo-China a "new political status", announcement of the details of this new status may have been accelerated in order to counteract the effect on the Indo-Chinese of the Japanese "independence" moves.

Composition of French Union

The French Union, according to the declaration, is to consist of France and all parts of the "imperial community". Indo-China is to have a "federal government, presided over by a governor-general and composed of ministers responsible to him. The ministers will be chosen from among the Indo-Chinese as well as Frenchmen resident in Indo-China." It will control its own national affairs and its own budget but will remain dependent on France in matters of defense and foreign relations. The functions of a state council, apparently appointed, and of an elected assembly appear to be advisory.

Dual citizenship in the Indo-Chinese Federation and the French Union is promised, with all government positions open to citizens on the "sole grounds of merit". With the aid of France, the Federation will establish land, sea, and air forces in which qualified Indo-Chinese shall have access to all ranks. The more important general principles of the declaration look forward to the establishment of: Indo-Chinese laws based on the "democratic freedoms"; an economic autonomy permitting industrialization and foreign trade without discriminatory tariffs; closer and friendlier relations with China; obligatory primary education; independent and effective inspection of labor; and the development of labor unions. Details of political structure and policy are to be determined after consultation with qualified bodies in liberated Indo-China.

Unsolved questions

There are aspects of the new status not entirely clear. The governor-general apparently retains actual control, presumably being responsible, as formerly, to the French Government. No specific provision is made for any radical change in the representation of native as opposed to French interests. The crucial question of defining citizenship is left for future determination by the French Constituent Assembly, although the intention is apparently to broaden the basis of citizenship, which was formerly restricted to French residents and to a few Gallicized "natives" who had clearly demonstrated their loyalty to France. No revision of the organization of Indo-China into five separate states is projected, although this division is partly artificial and its preservation exposes the French to the charge of fostering division among the native peoples. The Paris *Combat* remarked editorially on March 24 that the declaration of the French Government "only establishes certain principles and it remains to be seen how these will be carried out in practice".

The Japanese grant of "complete independence" is obviously intended to embarrass the French, who are offering, on paper, somewhat less: Japan's action puts the French in the position, on paper, of having to reconquer for the French empire, or the French Union, three "free" countries, rather than liberating them from Japan. The Indo-Chinese will, however, probably have had enough experience of Japanese "independence" by the time the war is over to trade it without reluctance for French "dominion status". Nevertheless, they will understand that their new "autonomy" is actually more limited than may appear at first glance, and they will, after a period during which the French will indeed seem liberators, undoubtedly ask for a promise of something better.

The announcement in March of this plan for a French Union has been interpreted by many, according to a Paris dispatch to the *New York Times*, as a gesture by which General de Gaulle hopes to anticipate the unwelcome ideas of "international trusteeship of colonies" under discussion at the San

Francisco Conference, by liberalizing the organization of the French Empire while simultaneously drawing its parts into a relationship of organic unity with the mother country. Whatever its purpose at this time, and whatever its shortcomings, it cannot be denied that the concept of a French Union represents a revolutionary departure from the traditional French policy of "assimilating" colonies, or associating them with France in a highly centralized empire, towards a policy of both cultural and economic decentralization and autonomy.

Jean de la Roche, former French colonial administrator in Africa, writing in the March 1945 issue of *Pacific Affairs*, points out that the legal relations of France and her colonies will in the future rely on a spirit of cooperation rather than on the fact of subordination. He says:

Such a community would differ from the old Empire not only by its idealistic and emotional basis, which is the idea of union rather than domination, but also by a wide measure of economic and political decentralization, by a great development of education and sanitation, by the exploitation of the various territories for the benefit of their inhabitants rather than of the mother country, and by the rapid evolution of popular government.¹

Note

- 1 Jean de la Roche, "Indo-China in the New French Colonial Framework", *Pacific Affairs*, March 1945, p. 71.

INDO-CHINA IN THE NEW FRENCH COLONIAL FRAMEWORK

Jean de la Roche

Source: *Pacific Affairs* 18(1)(1945): 62-75.

The broad lines of French colonial policy were studied at the Brazzaville Conference and some general conclusions, embodied in the form of recommendations, were reached. Although most of the questions raised were studied solely in their relation to Africa, a few of the recommendations made can be given a wider application. In respect to Indo-China the only official statement was one made by General de Gaulle, President of the Government of the French Republic, on December 8, 1943. It is worthwhile to quote a paragraph from this statement, for it is a succinct formulation of the principles which will govern French policy after the liberation of the Indo-Chinese union.

France intends to give a new political status within the French community to these peoples who have thus shown their national feeling and sense of political responsibility. The liberties of the various countries belonging to the Union will be extended and reaffirmed within the framework of a federal organization, and the liberal character of their institutions will be emphasized without losing the original imprint of Indo-China's culture and traditions, and finally, the Indo-Chinese will be given access to all public offices and positions in the State. Together with this reform of the political status there will be a corresponding reshaping of the economical status of the Union. This reform will be based upon a regime of customs and fiscal autonomy and will ensure each country's prosperity while contributing to that of its neighbors. Friendly and good-neighborly relations with China and the development of our cultural relations and our business connections with this great country will contribute towards the secure and fruitful future to which Indo-China is entitled.

"In close and free association with the Indo-Chinese people France thus intends to carry out her mission in the Pacific."

Some people have both thought and said that this statement is vague. It is true that it was conceived in general terms, but that is the case with all official statements, whose style, though terse, must leave to the expressed thought all its meaning and implications.

Many Indo-Chinese, be they Annamites, Tonkinese, Cambodians, Laotians or Cochinese, have seen in it a wide program and a proof that France intends, as soon as the land has been liberated, to inaugurate a new phase of political action.

The Laotians and Cambodians are eager to see France, under whose protection they placed themselves, recover for them the provinces of Battambang, Sisophon and Siem-Reap as well as the right bank of the Mekong, which Japan obliged them to cede to Thailand. These peoples, gentle and honest by nature, lovers of peace and faithful to their plighted word, do not understand how the Franco-Siamese treaty of 1907, which definitely settled all territorial disputes between the two countries and forbade all further claims, can be broken by an aggression so inglorious and dishonorable. They are confident that France, although she was not able at the time to give them the needed help, does intend in the future to restore their territorial frontiers as they were settled in 1907 by the decision of the American arbiter, Mr. Strobel, who was the legal adviser of the Siamese Government.

The Tonkinese find in General de Gaulle's statement reason to believe that through close and cordial relations with China they will secure with the new economic status a fruitful development of the resources of their country.

Indo-China naturally has its place in the wider French community and its liberties will be extended without interfering with the special conditions required by the variety of civilizations and the traditions beloved of the peoples who make up the Union. The ethnic, cultural and religious differences of the Indo-Chinese populations must be taken into account. Cambodian, Laotian and Annamite institutions vary greatly in spirit and in structure and their historic evolutions have been very different, so that the measures to be taken in extending the political franchise to insure the greater freedom of expansion necessary to democratic reality and a greater participation for all in public affairs must be conceived broadly, if they are to be flexible enough to fit local conditions.

The political organization of the French Empire reveals a will to preserve as far as possible the authority of France over the affairs of the colonies while at the same time setting up in them wider administrative and economic liberties. It is assumed that the people of the colonies must have the experience of liberty and that their sense of responsibility must gradually be developed and heightened, so that they may eventually share in the conduct of public affairs. It was on the basis of these ideas, formulated in the general program of the Brazzaville Conference, that a committee of experts was created to study the question of representation in the colonies by means of a new Constitution. This work was to be based on the following ideas:

- (1) It is essential that the Colonies be represented in the Assembly which is to prepare the new French Constitution.
- (2) It is essential that such colonial representation be much more widely and more effectively guaranteed than in the past.
- (3) A priori, reforms which would only tend to improve the system of representation that existed on September 1, 1939, that is to say: colonial deputies and Senators sent to the French Parliament, High Council of Overseas France would be inadequate and sterile.
- (4) The new organization to be set up, whether it is a Colonial Parliament or, better still, a Federal Assembly, must assert and guarantee the indissoluble unity of the French world and also respect local customs and liberties in each part of the France-Colonies block.
- (5) The legislative régime of the colonies, that is to say the respective place given to laws, decrees and administrative ordinances, though it cannot be precisely fixed until the respective powers of the central and local authorities are settled, must embody a trend towards administrative decentralization that will prepare the various territories for full political responsibility.

As to the internal organization of the colonies, the Brazzaville Conference considered that the solution to the problem of creating representative institutions lies in the hands of the Governors, whose duty it will be to find who and what groups are fit to give a competent opinion, and to make every effort to extend such necessary political consultation.

Lastly, the Conference pointed out that it is absolutely necessary to create the means of political expression, so that the colonial leaders, who must have the widest possible initiative in administration, may be able to depend, both in Europe and among the colonial peoples, on a well-balanced and legitimate representative system. However, it was recognized that such representation must be based on election and that as far as possible universal suffrage should be employed wherever this seems at all possible.

A commission of political experts, all men well versed in constitutional and colonial law, met from May to July 1944 to consider, in the light of the recommendations of Brazzaville, the means of integrating the Empire into the French Constitution. The discussions and the report which probably concluded the work of the Commission have not been made public, and consequently they cannot be used to throw light on the detailed plans of the government as to the relations of the mother-country with the overseas territories. Nevertheless it appears from certain articles which have been published recently in the French and in the foreign press, and from the debates of the Provisional Consultative Assembly of Algiers, that the formula of a French Community, or Federation—the name given to the future institution is unimportant—has found most favor.

Those who favor such a plan believe that it is both necessary and possible to create between France and her overseas possessions bonds at once strong, flexible and new; strong because of a generous policy towards the people, flexible because diversity will be respected, and new because the bond will be that of a Federation. These were the terms used by Mr. Lapie in presenting his plan for a Federation.

In spite of many differences of opinion in regard to detail, there was a widespread eagerness to formulate and act upon the principle of a French Community. This principle draws its strength from the unwavering loyalty of the French overseas territories and on the conception which they have acquired of their own personality and their close interdependence.

One of the characteristics of the French conception, as opposed to British and Dutch ideas, is that, in conformity with the tendency of assimilation, it seeks to include in its new Constitution the whole French domain. But, in reading the recommendations of Brazzaville and the articles and speeches published both in the official and the private press, it is clear that the importance of the doctrines of subjection and of autonomy will be greatly modified by the fact that the legal relations of France and her colonies will in the future rely on a spirit of cooperation rather than on the fact of subordination. The maintenance of a single supreme authority will be tempered by wide local franchises, which will be allowed to develop freely.

A number of studies, written by various authors who know the colonial field and who have been won over by long experience to the idea and the reality of colonies, show, however, differences of opinion as to the legal aspect of the future French Community. Nevertheless, and however paradoxical it may seem, in spite of the tendency of the French mind to generalize, these studies point out the diversities and inequalities of the overseas territories by dividing them into several categories, whose relations with the mother-country are differently conceived according to their political maturity. In a general way, the divisions accepted are as follows:

- (1) The overseas provinces, such as Algeria, Reunion, Martinique, Guadeloupe and Guiana, which are to be considered as prolongations of the metropolitan territory, would have a very wide administrative freedom and would, in addition to their representation in the French Parliament, have a separate representation in the Federal Assembly.
- (2) The Federal countries, such as Indo-China, Madagascar and New Caledonia, whose political maturity and natural individualism would allow an immediate accession to political personality, would be given a Constitution which would clearly fix the degree of their autonomy, and would foresee, in addition, a democratic representation in the Federal Assembly.
- (3) The Federal territories, such as French West Africa (French Equatorial Africa), French Oceania, French Somaliland and the Territory of Inini, which are still lacking in political maturity, would acquire the status of

full political personality only after a period of education under a tutelar system, more or less rigidly applied according to the progress made. Nevertheless, these Federal Territories would be represented in the Federal Assembly.

- (4) The International Protectorates and Condominium, namely Tunisia, Morocco, and the New Hebrides, would have a special place in the French Community because of the contractual laws on which they depend. Yet it can be presumed that the spontaneous movement of populations and the need for closer relations with the mother-country will permit these territories, through an evolution of their own, helped by administrative measures of assimilation, to be considered as Federal countries, represented as such in the Federal Assembly.
- (5) The French Settlements in British India could only keep their present status, with increased local liberties.

Other studies view this division of territories, and the nature of the local liberties given to each category, in a slightly different way. But these are details which are of little importance, since the basic problem of the relations of the mother-country with the colonies lies in the question of the legislative and executive powers of the French Community.

In this connection, a Federal Assembly, quite distinct from the French Parliament and from the local Assemblies, has been foreseen, and this implies the co-existence, parallel with the federal laws and decrees, of local laws, passed either by the local authorities and assemblies, or by consultation with these.

Such decentralization, much wider than has existed in the past, is looked on as one of the surest ways of securing a certain amount of autonomy without giving up the principle of assimilation, which is so desirable and so compatible with the development of these territories. The Federal Assembly might be conceived as made up of representatives of the mother-country and representatives of each of the overseas territories. The federal deputies from the mother-country could be chosen either by the Parliament or by universal suffrage. The representatives of the overseas territories could be chosen according to the internal laws of each country, by methods as democratic as their evolution will allow.

As to the structure of the Federal Executive Power, the federal idea carried out rigidly would lead to: (1) A purely local government for Metropolitan France; (2) For matters concerning the French Community, a purely Federal Government, of which each ministry would have jurisdiction, within the limits of its competence, over the total area of the territories. This system would be much like that of the United States of America.

Other systems are equally possible. The first, modeled on the British type of union, would consist of a homogeneous Cabinet, formed of representatives of the mother-country, some of whose departments would in practice

exercise federal authority, while others would be merely national in scope. The other system, modeled on the Dutch, would consist of the union in a single Council of federal and national Ministries.

Without seeking to prejudice any choice which may eventually be made among these systems, it is nonetheless worthwhile to stress the fact that a political education which would fit the various Ministries to exercise authority over the entire imperial territory would involve a very considerable adaptation of mind and spirit. This is a danger necessarily involved in giving power to organizations which have centripetal tendencies and the habit of viewing all matters, political, social and economic, from a purely national standpoint. The colonial point of view is reserved in the present system to the Ministry of the Colonies.

These are the most important general ideas which have recently been expressed on the subject of a French Federal Community.

Before estimating them as to value or pointing out their advantages and disadvantages, we should, if we are to have a comprehensive view of colonial policy, consider the purely indigenous aspects of colonial policies, for these are the instruments, the real means of securing for the indigenous peoples the much needed development which alone can enable them to share in the public and private affairs of their country.

With regard to these problems of local policies, the Conference of Brazzaville formulated a doctrine, at least as concerns the African colonies. This doctrine was expressed in a number of recommendations, of which the most important dealt with the means of deciding what elements constitute colonial society, with the respective places to be given to European and to indigenous peoples in colonization, the organization of indigenous society, the question of traditional institutions, the administrative framework, with family and social customs and with the part to be played by indigenous courts of justice.

What should primarily be noted in that respect for the indigenous way of life, and efforts for its progress will continue to be the foundation of our whole colonial policy and that, while keeping a place for European activities, what we must strive for is the development and the flowering of the indigenous races. In this respect, the Brazzaville Conference passed recommendations which stressed the following points: on the one hand, progress in Africa depends on the development of African populations which must be helped by proper education to reach a point where all kinds of employment will be open to them. On the other hand, it is obvious that this progress can take place, in the near future, only with the collaboration of a great many non-Africans and by the development of non-African activities, yet it is greatly to be desired that executive positions should be filled as soon as possible by Africans whatever their personal status.

As to the structure of African society, it cannot be denied that it consists in actual fact of two elements; on the one side the masses, which are still

faithful to their age-old institutions, and on the other an élite, which has developed by contact with the French. The great problem is how to find safe means to develop these masses in the direction of an ever greater assimilation of the principles which form the common bases of French civilization, and more particularly, how to set them on the way to acquiring political responsibility.

In addition it would be highly desirable to give the indigenous élite an opportunity to try out its ability as soon as possible by giving it contact with the hard realities of administration and command.

For these reasons it has been urged that the traditional native political institutions should be kept, not as desirable in themselves, but as means of allowing municipal and regional life to find immediately vigorous expression. The Administration must follow the working of these institutions, so as to direct their rapid evolution towards political responsibility among the colonial peoples. The principles formulated in Governor General Eboué's memorandum of November 8, 1941, seem to be best fitted to obtain this result.

On this subject, it is obvious that the first condition for success is to have a population which is not only healthy, stable and peaceful, but which is growing in numbers and progressing materially, morally and intellectually, so as to furnish both the collaboration of an élite and the support of the masses, without which improvement will never be more than a word. A population must, then, be established on such bases that the whole colony will prosper.

But though medical aid better understood and carried out, though moral teaching, education and sanitation better organized and more systematically distributed would, no doubt, do much to correct the more obvious evils, yet the fundamental cause of these evils will remain until a policy which is conceived solely for the benefit of the colony is put into practice.

There can be no question of making or remoulding a society in our own image or even in accordance with our own mental habits—to do that would be to invite failure. On the contrary, we must try to create a well-balanced society by looking on the people as persons enriched by traditions, as members each of a family and of a village and quite capable of progress in their own sphere. We must try to develop in them a sense of their own dignity and responsibility within the framework of their own natural institutions.

Obviously the political constitution and the policy in regard to the political development of the people are two aspects of a single problem—aspects which are mutually complementary and whose respective evolutions are closely related. The importance of all measures that would promote the evolution of indigenous society, both by respecting traditional institutions and by forming an élite able to share in the conduct of political and administrative affairs, cannot be over-emphasized.

The Brazzaville Conference studied political, economic and social problems particularly in relation to their incidence and character in Africa; yet

the general ideas which inspired all its recommendations have a universal application which puts them on the same plane as the principles that govern French colonial activities, and they are, moreover, in line with the oldest French tradition.

We can safely conclude that the idea of a French Community will dominate the relations of the mother-country with the other territories of the Empire. It is, therefore, useful to estimate the federal formula as it has been put forward by a certain number of persons, all experts in colonial questions, but of very different backgrounds. Such a general estimate, when collated with the favorable and unfavorable factors inherent in the state of the five territories of the Indo-Chinese Union, will furnish more definite views as to the possibility of incorporating it into the French Federation and as to the best means for achieving this by developing existing institutions. First of all, before going on to such a critical examination, we would like to quote the opinion of an American publicist, Mr. Paul Winkler, who, in an article published in the *Washington Post* on the subject of colonial problems in the organization of peace, declared that the French plan for "creating a security group which would include 110,000,000 French people living in all parts of the world has some chance of success because in the past the colonial policy of France has been to make the natives share in the culture of the mother-country while at the same time respecting their traditions and customs, so that these populations might have the impression that they were a part of France instead of merely being her subjects."

We will not dwell too much on this flattering opinion because we believe that even if the sentimental factors might lead to the belief that a federal organization would be practical, the conditions which exist at present do not allow it to be applied literally. Legally, such a federation implies equality between peoples very different in race, religion, education and economic conditions. The federal conception, whose generous value cannot be questioned, may, then, represent the final stage at which we aim, which will eventually create the strong, flexible and new links which we wish to see between the various parts of the French Community.

Some people may consider that the federal idea is prematurely announced, since only states that are already organized can be federated, and that, therefore, an initial effort at education should be made, so as to give to the territories in question a political life of their own and so put them on the needed footing of equality. This objection, which is dictated by the force of reality, is, after all, only a formal one. It does not affect the deep significance and wide bearing of the federal idea, but only the practical means conceived for putting it into practice. There can, of course, be no question of creating federal ties such as those which exist between the 48 states of the United States of America, each of which already had its own institutions, on which the federal organs of government, both legislative and executive, created by a

like procedure and calling for equal cooperation from all the members of the union, were simply superimposed.

The great diversity and the unequal development of the French colonies would make such uniformity impossible. In fact, it might well be a source of weakness among institutions whose mandatory powers would differ greatly in validity from the point of view of sovereignty.

This opinion may be too greatly influenced by the French philosophic outlook, which is deeply imbued with the principles of the French Revolution. It may also be distorted by purely continental conceptions and by the influence of a long history of representative institutions. Nevertheless it has at least the merit of opposing the coherence and logic of a theoretical system with the actual physical facts and of underlining the limits of any possible realization.

Yet, in spite of its difficulties, the idea of a Federation must be preserved, for it embodies a new mystical sense of a greater France which, by developing the idea of a genuine solidarity of all the French peoples, would help to set up in the immediate future a Community somewhat like the British Commonwealth, a Community which would be different both from the Empire of yesterday and from the Federation of tomorrow.

Such a Community would differ from the old Empire not only by its idealistic and emotional basis, which is the idea of union instead of domination, but also by a wide measure of economic and political decentralization, by a great development of education and sanitation, by the exploitation of the various territories for the benefit of their inhabitants rather than of the mother-country, and by the rapid evolution of popular government. The use first of Councils of headmen and leaders, then of electoral bodies, then of universal suffrage, and, at last of the full responsibility of Ministers to the local Parliaments would mark the successive stages of this evolution.

But this Community differs from the Federation of the future by the absence—considered as temporary—of a federal legislative and executive power. In this respect it would be like the British Commonwealth. The Community declares that its aim is to become a Federation, but that until this can be brought about by the development of the federated peoples, all matters of federal importance, such as national defense, diplomacy and evolution according to a general plan, must remain in the hands of the sovereign Parliament of the Community and of the Executive Power which is responsible to it—that is to say, in the hands of the mother-country.

The Community aims at a maximum freedom for its members and its evolution is guaranteed, during a time limit by the solemn declaration of the French Parliament that its eventual aim is Federation, and that as soon as any member of the Community has reached such maturity that a local constitution can be set up, the bond between that State and France will become federal. Such a Community is realistically conceived, yet at the same time allows for idealism.

These criticisms, these schematic conceptions limited in their scope, are in close agreement with the teaching of history, which seems to prove that evolution itself is subject to the same kind of rules and progressions. The British and the Dutch imperial systems are explained and justified by this point of view, and while we should preserve the French character of our own conceptions, we ought to be able to benefit by the example which these other systems furnish.

The plans of these two friendly and allied nations take account of the various tendencies which have influenced their colonial policies in the past. In the same way the French colonial policies will necessarily follow the lines laid down by our history. It seems that these three countries are all moving towards a like federal policy, although by different methods.

That is why, although a Federation, with all its legal implications, is not possible today, we can foresee that, underlying the individual political structures of the various territories, which spring from a decentralization that is allied to autonomy, there will be a wider political structure, a common organization, in which all the French territories will be represented in a manner corresponding to the extent of their evolution and their political organization, one in which they will be able to make their wishes heard on matters concerning the whole Community.

This is the sense in which General de Gaulle's statement of December 8, 1943, should be understood. This is also the meaning of the declaration of October 25, 1944, when the Head of the French Government said: "The policy of France is to lead each of these people towards a development which will enable it to administer its own affairs and later to govern itself. I do not speak of a French Federation, for the word may give rise to controversy, but of a French system, in which each will have its part to play."

The ideological value of such a system is evident from the fact that its principles could be applied equally well in Madagascar, in Continental Africa, and in Indo-China.

Indo-China is a part of the French Community. It has, in fact, thanks to the fruitful efforts of many leaders, administrators and technicians who have followed each other there, become politically, economically and socially one of the most important parts of that Community and one where the federal idea can most readily find a stable base.

It is because such elements exist that a new political Constitution can be set up there which, within the framework of the federal organization, will allow the growth of liberty in the various countries of the Union and increase the liberal character of their structure, without losing the particular aspects of the Indo-Chinese civilization and its traditions.

As to the political and administrative structure, the factual evolution must follow a pre-existing act. Each stage in the political education of the masses must be marked by an increase of liberties and an extension of representative

institutions. So far, only the commune has organizations competent to take care of its interests independently. A question, then, arises as to whether reforms on the provincial and regional levels are possible or desirable. The question is entirely one of fact and the answer must be given with reference to the special conditions that exist in the various parts of the Union.

In Cochin-China, which already has a colonial constitution that gives full and entire sovereignty to France, the problem of constitutional reform is simple. All that is needed is to ascertain how far the political and civic education of the population will allow an increase of liberty, for the existing consultative organs harmonize both in structure and composition with the principle of a representation of interests. Such reforms as a wider electorate to choose the members of the various councils, some liberal changes in their powers, and an increase of Cochin-Chinese representation are obviously possible and even necessary.

From another point of view, the part to be played by the French administration would depend on the amount of decentralization that will eventually be brought about in the relation with the Governor General and his staff and with the federal institutions of the French Community. A considerable autonomy for the regional bureaucracies, combined with the existence of a general bureaucracy, common to all the territories, would produce a dualism flexible enough to allow Cochin-Chinese interests to be dealt with independently without interfering with the work of coordination in regard to general problems. But these questions are bound with that of a general Constitution, which can only be evolved after discussion between the representatives of France and of Cochin-China.

These considerations, which are equally applicable to the Protectorates of Annam, Tonkin and Cambodia, raise the question of representation for the Indo-Chinese Union in the consultative bodies which assist the Governor General. They are also applicable to Laos, whose internal constitution, though more like those of the colonies than those of the Protectorates, differs from both of them because of the fact that the Principality of Luang-Prabang is a Protectorate. In Laos the demographic factor, both cultural and political, would not permit so wide a practice of representative principles.

Although a certain number of French functionaries and technicians should be kept, it would be highly desirable to bring more Laotians into the French administration. This could be brought about by a better and more appropriate education. A progressive development of elections within the framework of traditional institutions is also to be desired.

In Cambodia, the form of the Protectorate as fixed by treaty gives the King the power to promulgate whatever reforms are needed, on the advice of France. French action in this matter should, therefore, be confined to protecting French interests and the general interest of the Union by an enlightened and flexible control of the administration. The continuance of a Resident General and of provincial Residents who advise and control but do not

supersede the Cambodian authority, the existence of technical services employing an ever greater number of Cambodians as an educated élite is formed, a wider development of the system of elections and a progressive widening of the electorate will allow full play to traditional institutions along lines drawing ever nearer to Western conceptions.

In Annam and Tonkin the problems of French relations with the local authorities are somewhat alike although in practice differences must be recognized between the two countries, since the first is administered under the direct authority of the Emperor while the latter is administered by the Resident General acting by imperial delegation in the place of the Kinh-Luoc. In any case, in these countries France is bound by treaties and it is obvious that the improvements to be effected in the internal constitution in conformity with the declaration of December 8, 1943, must be brought about by the Emperor. He must himself be free to introduce the necessary reforms in his administration and in the mandarinat, on the advice of France. But, on the other hand, it is for France to take steps to affirm the strict maintenance of the treaty, keeping a French Administration only to make sure of the loyalty and integrity of the mandarins. This principle, fully recognized and often proclaimed, can only be put into practice by reforms which would give more authority and prestige to the various ranks of the administration, reforms to be completed by a modification of the Constitution.

The need of these measures is clear, for in order to carry out the policy of association in the spirit of the French Community the traditional institutions must be reorganized, perfected, modernized, prepared to enrich the Annamite mentality by contact with the good qualities of the West. Along these lines a Constitutional Monarchy can be foreseen, in which the Emperor as chief executive would govern under the control of the Protectorate, by means of Ministers who would be responsible to him and to the representative Assembly. This Assembly, which would be a modification of the representative Chambers of the People that now exist, would be based on a suffrage which, though it might not be made universal at once, would be as wide as possible, so as to guarantee a genuine representation of all parts of the population.

Without infringing on the special status given to each of the countries of the Union, the link with France would be established through the Governor General, who would embody French sovereignty. He would head the civil services and direct matters of general interest with the help of a Council of Government, which would be a kind of federal executive, and of a deliberative Assembly representing all the federated countries, as well as both French and native interests. The existence of such federal and local institutions would obviously involve a limitation and a sharing of competence by the regional bodies in regard to certain special problems. Nonetheless, the principle of autonomy would be preserved, even if its scope were restricted, and this would be enough to give a moral and political foundation to the

various peoples of Indo-China, now become an integral part of the French Empire.

The changes which must be brought about to solve the problems of administration and sovereignty can be summed up in a brief formula: respect for the Indo-Chinese nations in the framework of a French Federation.

These reforms, whose main lines were expressed by General de Gaulle and approved by the Brazzaville Conference, follow the traditional generosity which has always characterized French policy. They will carry on the political development of each country of the Union so as to make it a true nation which, in the words of his Excellency the Minister Pnam-Quynh, will be offered by its inhabitants to France to be incorporated forever in the French Community.

POSTWAR PROBLEMS OF FRENCH INDO-CHINA: ECONOMIC ASPECTS

Gaston Rueff

Source: *Pacific Affairs* 18(2) (1945): 137-55.

It is generally acknowledged that the permanent raising of the standard of living of the backward countries of South East Asia can only be obtained by the industrialization of these countries, and Indo-China is no exception. The problem is not an easy one and the execution of any program of extensive industrialization will necessarily have to be spread over a long period of time, despite the fact that a few industries can be started in a relatively short period.

The areas in Indo-China where the population is the most miserable and the most underfed are the Tongkinese Delta and Northern Annam. These areas are precisely those where ideal conditions exist for the establishment of industries. They have an abundance, and even an over-abundance of population; raw materials and commodities are plentiful and varied; lastly, coal and, consequently, electric power is cheap and abundant.

The populations living in the over-crowded areas of the Tongkinese Delta and North-Annam amount to approximately 11 million—9.5 to 10 million of whom are farmers, 150,000 industrial workers and one million handicraft workers. It is out of these 10 million farmers that new industries will have to draw their manpower. One can easily conceive that one-third of these would be available for industrial work, leaving approximately 6 million to cultivate rice, corn and the other crops raised in Tongking and Northern Annam. The 3 million who would be available for industrial work should be much more than sufficient when industrialization starts. It is only when the whole program of industrialization is completed that industries will need more workmen. But by that time the population of these regions will have risen, the increase now being between 125,000 to 150,000 inhabitants a year.

Furthermore, the Annamite, and more specially the Tongkinese, is a very skillful worker and once taught a craft will execute his work with more preci-

sion and very often more conscientiousness than a European workman. On the other hand, he is physically much less strong than a European and, consequently, has a smaller output; but on the whole he makes a good industrial worker.

Raw materials produced in Indo-China include cotton, hemp, wood and woodpulp, rubber, gum-lac, sticklac, hides, copra, fish oils and all sorts of minerals, among which are tin, zinc, manganese, chromium and tungsten.

Until now, electric power has been produced exclusively by burning coal. Anthracite deposits are very extensive in Tongking and very easy to work. The known reserves are estimated at more than 120 million metric tons, of which one-fifth is very easily mineable. In the years before the war Indo-China mined from 2 to 2.5 million metric tons annually, two-thirds of which were exported. Even if one did not discover new coal deposits, which seems hardly likely, there would still be enough coal in Indo-China to produce sufficient electric power to run all the new factories likely to be erected. Moreover, the proximity of the mountains and of very large rivers points to the possibility of getting electric power through water power. Much research has already been done in this direction and projects drawn up, but little has been put into practice. The authorities will be faced with the responsibility of seeing that these projects come out of the blue-print stage and are transformed into realities, so as to economize Indo-China's resources of coal and use a (probably) very cheap form of electric power.

Let us now see which are the industries which should be established in French Indo-China in the interests of the Indo-Chinese people. The first industry to be developed on a large scale is the textile industry. This already exists, but its capacity will have to be greatly increased. At present the Indo-Chinese are on the whole very poorly clothed. Practically all the 13 million inhabitants of Tongking and Annam go naked in the summer and are only covered with rags in the winter. The need for very cheap cotton goods is therefore most urgent. Before the war, France exported cotton goods to Indo-China¹ but these were too expensive to be purchased by the peoples of the overcrowded areas of the Tongkinese Delta and Northern Annam. The existing Indo-Chinese textile industry manufactures cheaper goods, which are still too expensive for the Indo-Chinese. What Indo-China needs is a textile industry producing very cheap goods in very large quantities.

One of the big drawbacks is that cotton is grown only on a very small scale and that 95 per cent of the cotton yarn has to be imported. Nevertheless, if we look into the picture more carefully, we will see that the drawback of reliance on imported cotton is more apparent than real, for the cheap labor compensates largely for the cost of importing foreign cotton yarns. We must not forget that Japan, which is one of the largest producers of cheap cotton goods (which the poorest peasant can buy), has to import all her cotton yarns. So, if Japan is able, in such conditions, to turn out cheap goods, there

is no reason why Indo-China, where conditions are very similar, should not do the same.

Next to the manufacturing of cheap cotton goods for clothing, we should like to see the establishment of factories turning out jute (gunny) bags, necessary for the exporting of rice. Before the war Indo-China imported yearly from British India over 20,000 metric tons of jute bags. British India had a kind of monopoly of this product, growing the jute and manufacturing the bags. We feel that Indo-China must grow her own jute. Meanwhile she can at least manufacture her own bags, by importing from India the necessary raw material.

The paper industry, which already exists on a very small scale, will have to be greatly expanded. The paper now manufactured is of a very fine quality but, in the future, all qualities will have to be produced and local needs entirely satisfied by the Indo-Chinese paper industry. Some of the finer qualities could be exported to neighboring countries, to Europe and to America.

The feasibility of establishing a rubber industry is shown by the erection of a tire factory in Batavia (Dutch East Indies), which has been working for some years quite successfully under conditions very similar to those prevailing in Indo-China. The large production of rubber in Cochin-China and Cambodia seems to indicate the desirability of establishing the industry in Saigon. (Of all the new industries to be developed, this is probably the only one which will not have to be established in Tongking or Northern Annam). The manufacturing of tires and inner tubes to fill the needs of Indo-China would have to be a first stage, followed later on by a second stage, when this industry would be able to meet orders for exports to neighboring countries in South East Asia and to China.

Next, we look forward to the establishment of an extensive chemical industry. There already exist two or three concerns manufacturing chemical products, but Indo-China will have to produce all the chemical products she needs: Kali, for her paper industry; sodium carbonate, for her soap industry; nitric acid, formic acid, and ammonia for her rubber plantations; mineral acids for her alcohol industry; hydrochloric acid for different uses; and so on.

Artificial fertilizers should also be manufactured despite the fact that natural phosphates are extracted in great quantities from the soil in Tongking and Cambodia and can be used as they are to manure the fields. Artificial fertilizers, to increase the quality and the yields of the crops, are already in use on large plantations.

The chemical industry could produce different by-products intended to destroy the parasites and the bugs which attack the crops, and chemicals necessary to treat the diseases which attack certain trees, like the hevea and the tea bushes.

The manufacturing of coco-oil and fish-oil can and must be greatly expanded, as there is a practically endless demand for such products.

Coco-oil comes from the copra of the coco-trees, which are very abundant in Indo-China. There are enormous reserves of fish in the rivers, lakes² and ponds of Indo-China as well as in the surrounding seas. Until now, the manufacturing of fish-oil has been done only on a very small scale, mostly by Indo-Chinese or Chinese, but in the future the manufacturing of fish-oil ought to be done in large factories, producing very pure fish-oil, for the purer the product, the easier the sale of it will be.

Before the war the cement industry was already very large, and Indo-China exported each year relatively large amounts to neighboring countries - China, Java and even Japan. With the enormous construction and reconstructions programs which will take place not only in Indo-China but also in all the Far East, we think Indo-China will be called upon to furnish still larger amounts of cement than before the war and that she must be ready for such an expansion in the first two postwar years.

At present nearly all the minerals which are extracted from the Indo-Chinese mines are exported unrefined and even unconcentrated. This makes no sense, as the concentrating, the refining and even the smelting of the minerals ought to be done at the mines themselves or very near by, so as to economize on freight. It is to be expected that after the war at least tin and zinc will be refined in Indo-China and not in Singapore, as was the case for tin, or in France and Belgium, as was the case for zinc.

It seems still too early to establish a large metallurgical industry in Indo-China in the present state of industrial development. The establishment of heavy metallurgical, mechanical and electrical industries should wait until the previously mentioned industries have been well started and are running satisfactorily. Iron and coal, the two principal material requirements, are abundant in Indo-China. Therefore a small metallurgical and mechanical industry need not be long deferred. These would furnish Indo-China's industry and agriculture with all sorts of small implements and tools, and Indo-China's households with all sorts of kitchen and home utensils. These used to be produced in France and exported to Indo-China, costing much more than if they were produced locally with cheap raw materials and labor. We think it would be to the advantage of Indo-China to produce all the types of simple instruments and to go on importing the more or less complicated machines, such as cars, engines, sewing machines, refrigerators.

Lastly, we would like to point out that Indo-China's industrialization need not kill the handicrafts, which occupy in the whole of the country an average of over 5 per cent of the population (approximately 1,350,000 out of a total population of 24,000,000), and in Tongking nearly 10 per cent. In this respect Japan offers us a very good example, for in Japan the tremendous and rapid growth of big industry has in no way ruined the handicrafts. On the contrary, many of the latter work for the big industries as sub-contractors. This is more especially the case in the silk industry, the textile industry, the lace industry, the paper industry and the rubber industry.

The authorities will require to encourage by all possible means the establishment and development of all new industries which are economically viable. In the first place, all necessary tariff protection must be established, so as to enable industries to get started. Later on these tariffs should be lowered or even completely abolished, when the corresponding industries are running normally and on a full production basis. All discriminations, quotas or drawbacks, which favored similar French or foreign products, and which henceforth are to be manufactured in Indo-China, will have to be abolished. Special advantages will have to be recognized in favor of Indo-Chinese products manufactured solely from local raw materials and with local labor.

We very much hope that French manufacturers will have a long-sighted view of the Indo-Chinese situation and of their own real interests, and that they will establish, in Indo-China, factories on a similar basis to those they have been operating in France and which used to export part of their production to Indo-China. Before the war, French manufacturers were always afraid of the eventual competition of Indo-Chinese industries. They constantly sought from the authorities protective treatment in favor of French products (tariffs, quotas, drawbacks, and so on) and discouraged the establishment in Indo-China of factories and new industries, which might produce goods which would compete with those produced in France and exported to Indo-China.

Such a policy was very short-sighted for it was absolutely certain that such an economic tutelage could not last indefinitely and that the day would come when Indo-China would start on an industrialization program despite all French opposition. On the other hand, the establishment of certain industries, especially those using local raw materials and transforming them into semi-finished or finished products, would bring about an increase in the economic activities of Indo-China, entailing the formation of new wealth and, consequently, of new purchasing capacity among new classes of the population. The French manufacturers would in the long run have profited directly or indirectly by this increase in local purchasing power. It is therefore certain that, in case of extensive industrialization of Indo-China, though the percentage of imports of French manufactured goods to total goods would decrease, the value and tonnage of these imports would constantly and probably very substantially increase, by reason of the increase in wealth brought about by the industrialization of the country.

We hope, therefore, that French manufacturers will, after the war, take a more realistic view of the problem and themselves participate in the industrialization of Indo-China. If they do not, the program of industrialization will be done without them, with other French capital and also foreign investments. We think that it would be very useful for the French manufacturers to ponder on what has happened in the Indo-Chinese tobacco industry in the past fourteen years.

In 1930, practically 100 per cent of the ready-made cigarettes smoked in French Indo-China were imported. As Indo-China produced very large quantities of tobacco, there seemed absolutely no reason not to manufacture cigarettes in the country itself and stop all these imports. This seemed the more possible since over 80 per cent of the imported cigarettes were manufactured in Algeria and contained approximately 50 per cent foreign tobacco. If, therefore, one could manufacture cigarettes with Indo-Chinese tobacco (even if it were necessary to add foreign tobacco to improve the taste), it would be more advantageous and cheaper to manufacture cigarettes in Indo-China.

For such reasons, a French group started manufacturing cigarettes in Saigon in 1930. The Indo-Chinese authorities encouraged the new industry by decreasing the excise tax on cigarettes made of 100 per cent Indo-Chinese tobacco. Thanks to the lower cost of tobacco, labor and taxes, the "native" cigarettes retailed for less than half the price of the cheapest Algerian cigarettes sold in Indo-China. The Algerian manufacturers retorted by putting pressure on the authorities to have the protection on the local cigarettes taken off. For four years the Indo-Chinese manufacturer and the Algerians fought, cut prices and tried to get the authorities to side with them. In the end, the Algerians gave up and finished by doing what they should have done at the start: they opened up factories in Saigon, to manufacture their own brands in Indo-China. Today 90 to 95 per cent of the ready-made cigarettes smoked in Indo-China are manufactured in Indo-China and everybody is happy: the Indo-Chinese, who have cheaper cigarettes, the Algerian manufacturers, who not only have recuperated the losses incurred by the stoppage of their exports from Algeria but are making bigger profits than ever before, and lastly the Government, which is collecting more taxes, since the cheaper cigarettes have greatly expanded the volume of sales of ready-made cigarettes.

Taking this industry as a typical example, we see many possibilities for French manufacturers to transplant factories to Indo-China, where the cheapness of labor, of commodities and raw materials, and of coal ought to enable them to have the same successful results as those experienced by the Algerian cigarette manufacturers.

But the encouragement of French manufacturers will not be enough, if we want to see Indo-China's industrialization progress rapidly. An Open Door policy will be required to put into effect immediately after the war, so as to enable foreign capital and technicians to participate in the industrialization of Indo-China and establish factories and concerns on exactly the same footing as the French. In particular, it is probable that American investors will want to invest capital in Indo-China. For instance (and this is only one example), the United States, which lacks tin, will certainly be interested in obtaining tin from Indo-China, where it can be extracted and produced at a relatively low cost. American capital will therefore be able to extract the mineral and put up refineries to concentrate and refine the metal. Perhaps, in

certain circumstances, Franco-American cooperation may prove very successful, not only for Indo-China, but also for French and American interests, for the French, having a much better knowledge of the country and of the manners and customs of the people, will be of invaluable help to the Americans, less accustomed to invest in dependent countries and to work in tropical climates.

An extensive program of industrialization will take a long time, at the very least five years, to get started and a very much longer period to get completed. One cannot hope to see an improvement in standards of living from the industrialization of Indo-China, before a very large number of the peasants, now tilling the land, become industrial workers. This cannot be done in a year or two, but will take at least from five to ten years, even under the best of circumstances. During such a very long period of time, it is impossible to do something to raise the standard of life of the population. Let us therefore see what temporary measures will have to be taken, in the postwar period, to relieve the miserable and undernourished populations of the Tongkinese Delta and of North Annam.

Among the temporary means which might be adopted immediately after the war to relieve the plight of the populations living in the over-crowded areas of the Tonginese Delta and of Northern Annam, the most important is the settlement of a certain number of Indo-Chinese each year in less densely populated regions. A second desirable objective is an increase in the mining industry, which will need more labor and consequently necessitate the displacement of populations from the agricultural districts to the mining districts. Lastly, there will be the need for the Indo-Chinese authorities to prepare and carry out a large and extensive program of public works, which will give Indo-China all possible modern facilities and equipment and, at the same time, employ an important number of workers.

Considered only from the standpoint of the density of population, Tongking has 76 inhabitants per sq km, Annam 40, Cochin-China 75, Cambodia 19, and Laos only 4. But the actual density of the population is not the real criterion and it is much more significant to consider the "nutrition density," that is, the relationship between the number of inhabitants and the area of the cultivated lands and, in the case of Annam, the area of the rice fields, as these correspond to well over 85 per cent of the cultivated areas.

Tongking has only about 1,200,000 hectares of cultivated land, so the average nutrition density is about 737; in Annam, these figures are 775,000 and 748; in Cochin-China, 2,500,000 and 198; in Cambodia, 800,000 and 418; for Laos we will not give any figures, as the small population (982,000) is out of all proportion to the area of the land fit for cultivation.

These figures point out very distinctly what direction the emigration from the overcrowded areas should take. Populations from Tongking and North Annam could be transplanted to Cochin-China, Cambodia and Laos. But

from a political point of view Annamite emigration to Cambodia and Laos cannot, for the time being at least, be carried out on a large scale, for the Cambodians and the Laotians are inclined to consider the Annamites as an enterprising and grasping race. Furthermore the animosity of the Cambodians towards the Annamites is still too strong to enable the authorities to press for big settlements of Annamites in Cambodia. From a psychological point of view, the Annamite does not like to go inland and more specially hates the mountainous regions. His preference, if he must emigrate, is for the areas which most resemble his own – the lowlands like the Tongkinese Delta or the Cochin-China Delta.

Considered therefore from both angles, political and psychological, it seems that, under present circumstances, Cochin-China must be the principal outlet for the overcrowded areas of Tongking and Northern Annam. The already existing lands fit for cultivation and those which the French authorities expect to reclaim, as a result of their program of canals and waterworks, are largely sufficient to provide for the settlement each year of a couple of hundred thousand Annamites from the North.

Two experiments, made on a relatively large scale, have been done thus far in Cochin-China. They have taken the form of village settlements: one was in the Rachgia Province, the other in the Hatien Province. The object of the Rachgia settlement was to try to settle landless farmers, fathers of large families and unemployed ex-servicemen. The authorities aimed at giving these people, who had neither home nor resources, a place to live and work. According to the scheme adopted in this particular case, any individual of the above-mentioned category could lease a piece of tillable land for an initial period of three years. The lease could be prolonged for an equal period of time or cancelled. After six years the land allotted could be given permanently to the settler, if he had shown himself to be deserving and had cultivated the land regularly for the six years. In order to avoid speculation, land granted under these circumstances was unassignable. The experiment started in 1931 and has proved entirely successful.

The second experiment was made in the Hatien Province where 3,000 workers were living in most miserable conditions after having been dismissed from an undertaking in a nearby island. All had been recruited in Tongking and the greater part were Catholics. The authorities conceded to these people sufficient land to allot each family nine hectares of land suitable for cultivation of rice and a plot of 99 hectares for the construction of dwellings necessary to house the 3,000 of them. Furthermore, a communal house was built, two warehouses and a market erected, wells sunk and roads built on other plots of land. The cost was initially financed by a government loan, but all the work was carried out by the settlers themselves. The whole scheme was worked out under conditions as identical as possible to those prevailing in Tongking, from where these people came. The experiment started in 1936 and has also proved most successful.

Lots of other schemes have been carried out in Cochin-China and in Southern Annam, but on a lesser scale, and all have proved their worth. Some others are still in progress, having started very satisfactorily. All these experiments can now furnish a very good basis for the further settlement of populations, which will have to take place in the postwar period. Even the contract-laborers on the rubber plantations are now living under conditions far superior to anything the Tongkingese farmers could ever have dreamed of. Returning laborers have proved to be much fatter and wealthier than when they started, and they bring back a relatively large sum of money, coming from deferred pays, which is refunded to them when they are repatriated.

Lastly, the completion of the Trans-Indo-Chinese Railroad enables the people to travel from Tongking to Cochin-China and vice-versa, with much more ease than in days gone by and without having to take a sea voyage which they dread.

For all these reasons, it is to be hoped that in the post-war period the settlement of large numbers of farmers from the north in the southern districts will be accepted much more wholeheartedly than has been expected.

Nevertheless, it will be most important to respect the traditional organization of the Annamite way of life: the family and the village. Emigration should be organized in family groups and even, wherever possible, whole sections of villages ought to be transplanted at the same time. Special privileges should be reserved for family and village life, while steps should be taken to prevent families and family ownings from being broken up by inheritance. The family should be granted the possibility of acquiring possession of the land they work and live on, in a given time, and if specified conditions are satisfied.

Anti-malarial measures should always precede any settlement. Communal houses, warehouses, and markets ought to be built, wells sunk, and roads traced before the emigrants arrive. Accustomed as he is to collective effort, the Annamite peasant is more or less lost when it comes to doing something by himself, which he is not accustomed to doing, and to surmount difficulties which he has never before met. He must therefore be constantly guided by special civil servants who will have to see to it that the peasants are properly directed in all their tasks and are not burdened with administrative formalities.

The French authorities will also have to protect the emigrant against usury. In the Far East, credit plays a much more important role than in the Western countries. The rates of interest are practically always excessive and for that reason credit is one of the causes of the permanent poverty of the peasants and one of the obstacles to progress.

As things actually stand, after a normal harvest the peasant working on a small plot of land can live for only four or six months, after which he must borrow money to eat. It may therefore be said that the Annamite peasant

suffers from a permanent need of money all through his life. From whom can he borrow? Until very recently, practically only from rich Annamites or more often from Chinese money-lenders. The latter are at the same time those who buy his rice crop and sell him the necessary food and clothing which constitute the poor farmer's strictly necessary requirements.

Formerly the legal Annamite rate was 3 per cent per *month*. French legislation restricted the rate to 8 per cent per *year*, but the Annamites and the Chinese seem to observe the latter rate very seldom and the rates practiced vary from 36 to 120 per cent a year. Two things are necessary to improve the situation: to combat usury directly by reducing the rates of interest on loans, and combat it indirectly by providing the Annamite farmers with official credit at moderate rates. Both these methods have been practiced in the last twenty years with more or less success. They will have to be pursued, in the post-war period, by providing still more credit at very cheap rates and by reducing the number of forms which the Annamite peasant must fill in, in order to obtain these loans, and which have led him to prefer the Chinese money-lender, despite the appallingly high rates of interest, for the Chinese does not ask him to sign receipts or fill in questionnaires. It is to be hoped that, by persevering in the application of such methods, matters will be made more and more difficult for money-lenders and that in time usury will disappear from Indo-China.

Settlement schemes can only succeed if they enable the emigrant people to live on the land with the least possible help. First of all attention must be devoted to growing subsistence crops, especially rice. Later on the farmers will be able to turn to other crops or to stock-breeding, fishing or even to handicrafts. Furthermore, the farmers will come from the rice-growing districts of Tongking and Northern Annam and it will be essential to bring the least possible changes in their ways of existence. Therefore the majority will have to go on growing rice, as they did previously. But the authorities must see to it that the peasants progressively start growing other crops which will be more useful to Indo-China's economy than rice, which is already over-abundant and which, in certain years, is rather difficult to sell and export.

Among these other crops we consider the most important to be corn, tobacco and coco-trees. Indo-China's corn, if properly cultivated, that is, if the proper seeds are selected, the land well chosen and good cultural methods adopted, is of very good quality. Furthermore, it can easily be exported to Europe and Africa, where its low price and average good quality enables it to compete with the other countries' products. Better quality tobaccos ought to be cultivated than those now produced in Indo-China. At the same time, the peasants will have to learn the best methods in picking, drying, fermenting, sorting and packing the leaves. The outlet for Indo-China's tobacco in Indo-China itself is enormous and could be further increased by exports to certain European countries like France, Belgium,

Italy. As for the coco-trees, they give copra and coco-oil, for which there exists a very large demand.

These three products will of course necessitate a certain expenditure to enable the peasants to start their cultivation and wait till the sale of the harvest enables them to live on their own and prepare for the next harvest. These sums will have to be advanced by the authorities, either directly or indirectly, through official institutions or cooperative banks. Such loans ought to bear no interest for the first one, two or three years, depending on the crops raised, and thereafter very moderate rates (3 to 4 per cent maximum). The scheme should provide for a moderate amortization, so as to in no case over-burden the settler. In case of bad crops, the interests and/or the amortization would have to be waived. After a reasonable period of time – two years for rice and corn crops, three years for tobacco, five years for coco-trees – the peasants should be able to care for the normal payments of interest and amortization and at the same time make a decent living for themselves and their families.

Though the ideal would be to have no contract labor in Indo-China, we think it still advisable, in this transitory period, to increase the number of contract laborers on the southern plantations. New crops will have to be developed on a very large scale to enable Indo-China to be self-supporting, and to vary her crops and not rely entirely for her exports on one major crop-rice. We would advocate the extensive cultivation of cotton, jute, hemp and tea.

We have seen that cotton is required in big quantities by the Indo-Chinese textile industry which now has to import most of its raw materials from abroad. Cotton-growing was tried in the twenties, in Cambodia, but rather unsuccessfully. But we feel certain that with more perseverance, money and technical help, cotton could be grown very successfully in Cambodia and in Cochin-China. The quality depends on the selection of the plants, which is "up to" the Agricultural Department. The yields already obtained in previous experiments are very high, and the prices are low, if one is to compare them with other large-scale plantations in Indo-China.

Jute, absolutely necessary if Indo-China wants to have her own jute bag industry, should grow very well in Cochin-China, Cambodia and South Annam. Conditions are very similar to those under which jute grows in British India. Cost prices of jute will also certainly be low. Hemp, for which there is a very large demand, ought to grow satisfactorily in Cambodia and Cochin-China. Conditions are the same as in the Philippines or Sumatra, where hemp is very successfully cultivated.

Lastly, tea, of which there are already a few plantations in Indo-China, can still be developed, for we think that the demand for that product will be very high after the war, when Russia and China, who ceased buying tea long before the war, will start importing tea again. Tea can be cultivated

advantageously on the plateaus of Annam and South Laos, where there still remain vast rich lands, now uncultivated.

The labor conditions existing on plantations at present are on the whole very satisfactory. Contract labor is very well treated, the workers happier and healthier than in the areas from which they came. The yardstick by which the improvement of the working and living conditions on the plantations can be measured, is given by the percentage of workers who, at the end of their contract, choose to stay on the plantations as free laborers or renew their contracts for one, two or three years. In 1925 the average percentage was 5 per cent. In 1939 it was over 40 per cent, and on certain big estates reached 75 to 80 per cent. This shows that the contract laborer lives now in good and decent conditions on plantations and that it is by no means a retrogression to increase the number of contract laborers in order to decongest the overcrowded areas of the Tongkinese Delta and Northern Annam, and to develop the cultivation of new crops necessary to improve Indo-China's economy and indirectly improve the standard of living.

This of course does not mean that nothing more ought to be done to improve the conditions of contract labor. The more decent the conditions of living the easier it will be for the authorities to handle the problem of the recruiting of laborers. We estimate that an average of at least 40,000 to 50,000 workers should in these conditions be hired each year for plantation work in the south.

To increase Indo-China's postwar economy, it will be absolutely necessary to increase its mining industry. Until now only a few mines have been opened and Indo-China's mineral resources have only been very slightly tapped. The importance of the problem lies in its repercussion on the hiring of additional labor (contract or free labor) which will have to come from the overcrowded areas of the Tonginese Delta and of North Annam.

The difficulty arises in the dislike the Annamite farmer has of leaving his environment to go to mountainous regions, where most of the mines are located. Some of the mines, the coal mines in particular, are situated in flatlands and very near the Tonginese Delta. For these the problem of increasing production and manpower will be relatively easy to solve. But for the other mines, mostly situated in Upper Tongking, Upper Annam and mountainous Laos, the problem is very different. The authorities will have to see to it that the mining companies not only apply the labor regulations very strictly, but also make living conditions attractive and pleasant by building villages for their laborers and their families, with individual houses and gardens; putting up markets, where food and all indispensable articles are sold at cost or less; schools for the children; hospitals or infirmaries, and maternities; churches and pagodas; theatres and movie houses; and recreation grounds for adults and children.

If contract-labor is employed, the contract ought not to exceed two years and preferably have a length of only one year, which is quite reasonable, as the mining districts are relatively near the areas from which the workers come. This is not the case of the southern plantation, where the journey is very long and expensive. If free labor is employed, the authorities will have to see to it that the housing conditions are decent and that, where possible, the worker comes to the undertaking with his family.

There are now some 60,000 Annamite workers, working in mines. Two-thirds of these are employed in the Tonginese coal mines. It is very probable that in the postwar period the coal mines will have to increase their output very substantially to cope with the increased local needs due to the progressive industrialization of Indo-China, and with the increase of exports concomitant with the improvement of world conditions and more specially with the conditions prevailing in the Far East. It is probable that the coal mines ought to be able to hire at least 25,000 to 30,000 additional workers.

As to the other mines, it is difficult to give a figure of the additional labor needed. Nevertheless one can assert that the figure of 20,000 representing the number of workers actually employed in mining concerns other than coal mines, will certainly be multiplied three or four times as soon as Indo-China's mining resources get properly developed.

In the immediate post-war period, the French authorities will be faced with the necessity of studying and carrying out an extensive and well conceived program of public works to equip Indo-China with all the modern facilities she still lacks. Such a program should cover a relatively long period of time, at least five years, to be executed according to a carefully prepared schedule. We have reason to believe that such a program has already been studied by the French authorities and that the blue prints will be more or less ready when Indo-China is liberated from Japanese occupation.

One of the first parts of this program should be the equipment of the Indo-Chinese ports. In the first place, the port of Saigon will have to be equipped so as to be able to handle efficiently and quickly still larger quantities of incoming and outgoing traffic. New warehouses will have to be built; special silos erected for the storing of the cereals Saigon exports in such enormous quantities; tanks put up for the storing of latex, fish-oil, coco-oil, so as to enable these to be pumped directly into the tankers. New and powerful cranes, additional railroad sidings, repairing facilities, such as a large dry-dock and one or two large floating docks, will have to be added to the existing equipment.

A new and very large port should be established in Tongking, presumably in a site slightly north of Haiphong. This last port has become too small to handle efficiently all the incoming and outgoing traffic from Tongking, as well as the transit traffic from Yunnan Province (China), using the railroad connecting Haiphong to Kunming. One could, of course, attempt to enlarge

the Haiphong port and increase its equipment, but one of the main drawbacks of this port would remain: the channels leading up to Haiphong are too narrow and are constantly clogged up with mud, despite very frequent draggings. It seems preferable to choose a new location, which will not have such inconveniences. The new port will have to be very well planned to be able not only to handle quickly and efficiently all the international traffic and coasting trade, but also to furnish the site of a free-port which will take care of all the traffic going into and coming from China. This free-port will have to be linked to the Haiphong-Kunming Railroad and will thus constitute the normal outlet not only to Yunnan Province, but also of Yunnan's hinterland – the Provinces of Szechuan and Kwangsi. The construction of such a port would employ a very large number of workers for a long period of time and bring prosperity to all the neighboring region.

The other ports of Indo-China, apart from Hongay, Campha, Port-Redon and Port-Wallut, handle coasting trade and will only need minor improvements such as better cranes and bigger warehouses. These four important ports are privately owned and only handle coal. They are already sufficiently well equipped by their owners, the large coal companies.

Next to the ports, the railways will have to be improved; new and faster engines will need to be provided, as well as more comfortable passenger cars, and bigger freight cars.

Certain lines, such as the Saigon-Pnom-Penh line and the Tanap-Thakhek line, will need to be completed. The Saigon-Pnom-Penh line is the last link of the Trans-Indo-Chinese line and would enable a through traffic from the Cambodian-Thai frontier to the Tongkinese-Chinese frontier. The Tanap-Thakhek line would correspond, on one side, to the Lakhone-Korat-Bangkok line in Thailand, and on the other to the Trans-Indo-Chinese line, and would thus provide a very short connection between Hanoi and Bangkok.

Other lines could also be planned and constructed. Such a line as the Saigon-Kratie-Savannakhet-Thakhek, for instance, would enable the opening up of certain rich regions, poorly inhabited and where settlements could be established. At the same time, such a line would provide a new connection between Saigon and Hanoi, as soon as the Tanap-Thakhek line is completed. This connection would not follow the Annam coast, as the Trans-Indo-Chinese line does, and therefore would not be exposed to all the atmospheric hazards (typhoons, cyclones, etc.) or to the possibility of naval bombardment in time of war.

The network of roads, already very well developed and one of the largest in the Far East, will have to be completed and improved. Certain of the colonial roads will have to be enlarged and all of them asphalted. All the ferries and provisional bridges of the colonial roads will have to be replaced by permanent bridges, capable of supporting big loads. Most of the existing dirt roads will have to be transformed to hard-surface roads. New dirt roads will have to be built, so as to provide an easy penetration into the very

remote up-country districts, which up to now have remained more or less uncultivated and unworked, and which may still contain unknown riches.

The reconstruction of the urban districts will also have to be one part, and not the least, of the program of public works. It is important that the authorities should reconstruct the most disreputable quarters of the principal towns, leaving the smaller urban centers to the attention of the local authorities. We consider that the program of public works should comprise the reconstruction of certain districts of Saigon, Cholon, Hanoi, Haiphong and Pnom-Penh. Reconstruction should be planned to provide the inhabitants with big, clean and well-ventilated dwellings, good plumbing, large streets and efficient water and sewer systems.

At the same time, it will be necessary to erect new dwellings for workers in the industrial towns and districts; new lodgings for students, in Hanoi more specially to enable them to be decently housed near the University; new houses for settlers in the new areas opened for settlement. Schools, hospitals, clinics, maternities and nurseries will also have to be erected wherever they are needed.

The network of canals, waterways, and waterworks, necessary for the good irrigation and draining of the lands fit for cultivation, located in the Tongkinese, Annamite and Cochin-Chinese deltas, will have to be kept up, improved and completed. Much work remains to be done, despite the very extensive development of canals and dikes accomplished in the past thirty years, and many areas of marshland can still be reclaimed and used for cultivation.

Electrification, which is still in infancy in Indo-China, must be greatly developed. Until now, the main source (99.1 per cent) of electric power has been coal, by reason of the cheapness and proximity of the Tongkinese anthracite deposits. But electricity through water-power has great possibilities in countries like Tongking, Annam and Laos, where the mountains are near, the rivers numerous and the rainfalls important. Lots of prospecting has been done and some blue-prints are already prepared and can rapidly be carried out. But much investigation is still required. There will be a large number of barrages and dams to be built and waterworks to be erected in the postwar period. Certain big waterfalls, like the Falls of Khône, will perhaps be able to be so equipped as to provide cheap electric power not only to Laos and to Cambodia, but also to the far-distant regions of Cochin-China and Thailand.

Lastly, there is the need to build airports at Saigon and at Hanoi. These will have to be provided with all modern facilities and devices, to enable them to handle the heaviest international traffic. If we look at a map, we see that French Indo-China is one of the focal points of the Pacific and at the crossroads of all major air lines. Additional airports at Tourane and Vientiane should also be built, but these are less important and will not need the same extensive and complicated equipment and devices. Furthermore, Indo-China will have to be equipped with installations enabling night and blind-flying.

The meteorological stations will have to be perfected and equipped with the best modern facilities.

Such a vast program will naturally employ very large numbers of workers, some of whom will have to be hired on the spot, while others are recruited in Tongking and North Annam. Once the whole program we have described gets fully under way, at least 50,000 and perhaps as many as 100,000 Tongkinese and Annamite workers will be employed each year.

The financing of this program will require loans specially raised for this purpose and guaranteed by the Indo-Chinese Government. Numerous parts of the public works program will very rapidly pay for themselves and bring in profits which will enable a quick redemption of the corresponding loans. This is more especially the case with the improvements brought about in the railroads, the electrification program and certain of the port improvements and construction of canals and waterworks. As to the others, like the construction of a new port in Tongking, the reconstruction of urban centers, the construction of hospitals, schools and airports, if they do not show a direct profit, the improvements which they bring to the general economic life of the country should produce an indirect increase in the wealth of Indo-China, which will enable the Government to pay off the corresponding loans, thanks to a rise of the general level of prosperity. This will in turn show in an increase of the volume of taxes.

It is generally recognized in all countries that a well-conceived program of public works does always, in a more or less long run, benefit the country even if some parts of the program never pay. The authorities will therefore have to plan their program as a whole and not examine if each part of it can pay direct dividends.

New York, December 1944

Notes

- 1 In 1938, the imports of cotton goods from France amounted to 249 million francs.
- 2 The Ton-Le-Sap (or Great Lakes), in Cambodia, is one of the biggest reserves of fish known in the world.

POSTWAR PROBLEMS OF FRENCH INDO-CHINA: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

Gaston Rueff

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It is widely taken for granted that the peoples of the prewar colonial areas should not be returned to the position they occupied before the war. In the writer's opinion, this will certainly be the case of French Indo-China, when it is liberated from Japanese occupation.

In a not too far distant future, Indo-China expects and is entitled to become a self-governing country. In this respect, French intentions have been made clear. On December 8, 1943, the French Committee of National Liberation declared *inter alia* in respect of French Indo-China: "France intends to give them [the peoples of French Indo-China] in the bosom of the French community a new political status, in which the liberties of the different countries composing French Indo-China will be extended and consecrated in the framework of a federal organization; in which the liberal character of the ways of living will be accentuated, without losing the original stamp of the Indo-Chinese civilization and traditions; in which, lastly, the Indo-Chinese will be able to occupy all ranks and functions in the government offices." Time and again, Mr. René Pleven, the Secretary for the Colonies of the French Provisional Government, has declared that the ultimate goal of the French was the Government of the Indo-Chinese, by the Indo-Chinese and for the Indo-Chinese.

Obviously, however, autonomy cannot be granted overnight to Indo-China, without running the risk of seeing the country fall into chaos and anarchy. It would certainly be most dangerous to leave the Indo-Chinese govern themselves under present conditions, especially in a country like Indo-China where so many racial, political and economic problems still exist.

France must therefore retain her control over the country until the indigenous community has made such progress as will enable it to share political power with the French minority in terms which can be regarded as fair to both sides. On the other hand, one must point out the fact that to allow certain sections of the population (the Laotians, for instance) to exercise an undue share of political control might seriously prejudice a majority, which is often living in a very primitive condition. It would only mean exchanging the more or less liberal administration of the French for a local government, under the leadership of a very few, who might turn out to be of a more or less dictatorial type.

The majority of the population of French Indo-China, however, are still at a stage in which their primary concern relates to their standard of life. Political institutions cannot be built on a foundation of poor material resources, of insufficient health and of undeveloped minds. Much progress has already been made in the past forty or fifty years, but there still remains a great deal to do. There must, therefore, still be a period of tutelage during which France must adopt policies which will succeed, better than in the past, in winning the confidence and respect of the Indo-Chinese people and during which she will have to improve their health, educate them, raise their standard of life and finally politically prepare them to take over the government.

In the field of public health, the French authorities have a double task to contend with. First of all, there is the problem of teaching the Indo-Chinese to understand and appreciate the benefits of medical care, for it is completely useless to have doctors going around the country treating people and distributing medicines, if people do not want to take advantage of such things. In many of the big cities and in some of the country districts the people are now fully aware of the usefulness of medical care and go frequently and of their own free will to the hospitals or clinics to consult the indigenous or the French physicians. But up-country, and among the backward tribes (partly nomadic, partly settled), who live in the mountains, Western medical care is utterly unknown and all the attempts made until now to treat these peoples have more or less failed. It is in this respect that the task of the authorities will be the most difficult. The French authorities have just begun sending out mobile medical units to try to tackle the problem. These experiments should be pursued and, if successful, increased so as to cover all the up-country districts and give the peoples the possibility of being looked after.

The second task facing the authorities is the development and the improvement of the whole medical organization of French Indo-China. The following figures show the progress which has been made in this respect in the last 25 years.

The establishment in Hanoi of a medical faculty attended by both indigenous and French students has done much towards improving and propagating medical care in Indo-China. The students who succeed in their

FRENCH INDO-CHINA: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

	1914	1940
Number of French physicians	114	139
Number of indigenous physicians	36	239
Number of French hospital attendants	11	100
Number of indigenous hospital attendants	492	1,856
	1914	1938
Big hospitals	8	29
Small hospitals and clinics	58	426
Maternities	22	219
	1914	1940
Patients treated	75,000	485,000
Consultations	1,700,000	14,800,000
Vaccinations against smallpox	11,000	7,350,000
Vaccinations against cholera	—	1,350,000
Vaccinations miscellaneous	—	50,000

examinations and come out as medical doctors are quite the equivalent of French medical doctors who have followed courses in the Paris Faculty. The indigenous doctors succeed very often much better amongst their fellow-citizens¹ than a French physician and that is one of the numerous reasons why the authorities must take steps to increase the number of indigenous doctors in Indo-China. This can only be achieved by a development of the general standard of education and consequently by a larger attendance at the medical faculty; but it must not mean a lowering of the level of the studies.

An equally important requirement is a large increase in the number of hospital attendants and of nurses, for it is on them that falls very often the task of treating the peoples and persuading them of the necessity of following the prescriptions of the doctor and of keeping themselves and their households clean. The efficiency of these attendants has been very much raised in the past ten years and the authorities will have to see to it that an increase in their number does not mean a diminution of their efficiency.

The figures shown above indicate a very important increase in the number of hospitals, clinics, and maternities. New efforts will have to be made so as to assign to each region the necessary medical units sufficient to take care of the entire ailing population. Until now, most of the work has been done in the urban centers and in the densely populated regions. Here the task will still have to be completed. But it is especially the remote and mountainous districts, as well as the poorly populated regions, on which the authorities will have to go to work.

The populations of the up-country regions and the nomadic tribes will best be reached by the use of mobile medical units, travelling by car and truck and transporting the necessary equipment to treat the patients, operate

on them and especially give them vaccinations. Some units will be equipped to tackle malaria by spraying oil, collecting mosquitoes and giving advice on the cleaning up of streams and water pools and on the upkeep of dwellings. If certain cases need hospital care which the mobile medical unit cannot give, these people will have to be evacuated by ambulance to the nearest hospital or clinic. But this should only be done in case of serious emergency, as the removal of such primitive peoples from their villages would certainly frighten the others and entice them into running away as soon as a medical unit comes into their district. In any case, the authorities will have to take great care always to bring back to their villages, by ambulance or by car, the persons whose hospital treatments have been finished, and under no circumstances let them walk back, even if the distance is not great. This is of the utmost importance, as a person who has been properly attended to, cured and brought back to his village will be the best of all propagandists of Western medical methods amongst his fellow-tribesmen. The first mobile units ought to be under the supervision of French physicians. Experience has proven that indigenous peoples prefer new methods to be applied to them by a white man than by a man of their own color but of a different race, as would be the case with the mountainous tribes of the interior, if they were to be treated by indigenous doctors, the majority of the latter being Annamites while the mountainous tribes are mostly Indonesians.

Vaccination has performed miracles among indigenous populations. It has been greatly developed in the past fifteen years, but will still have to be greatly expanded. The ultimate goal would be to vaccinate the whole population against smallpox, cholera and tuberculosis (B. C. G. vaccine).

The fight against malaria, which is an endemic disease affecting large sections of the population, will have to be followed up. Already the Institut Pasteur has done a stupendous job in tracking the anophel, the mosquito through whose medium malaria is transmitted from one man to another. Special public works will have to be undertaken to dry up and drain certain swampy regions. Rivers, lakes and ponds will have to be cleaned up, as they are the general breeding ground for anophels. The authorities will not only have to distribute large doses of quinine and synthetic products to the Indo-Chinese, but also, and more especially, see to it that they take them and do not throw them away, as is so often done.

The three prophylactic clinics (at Saigon, Hanoi, and Hue) for the treating of syphilis have already done a magnificent job, but they are quite insufficient to cope with all the persons suffering from this disease. Their number will have to be brought up to eight or ten at least, so as to enable people all over the country to be treated and cured.

The sale and use of opium should be drastically prohibited, for its use undermines the health and energy of those who are addicted to it. The French Committee of National Liberation already in January 1944 gave

written assurances that such a prohibition will come into effect as soon as Indo-China is liberated.

Certain urban districts are still very primitive, especially in the interior of the country. Sanitary facilities, good sewer systems and adequate water supplies must be set up in all towns and communities of 5,000 inhabitants or more. But it will be of little use to put in good sanitation, if the dwellings remain primitive and unhealthy. Therefore many urban districts will have to be rebuilt under more hygienic and modern conditions, and decent dwellings given to the inhabitants. Even towns like Saigon, Hanoi, Haiphong and Pnom-Penh still have districts which need rebuilding. In certain districts of Pnom-Penh for instance the dwellings are so appalling that every year cholera breaks out in these parts of the town.

In other districts, housing is inadequate and insufficient to lodge decently the whole population. This is more specially the case in some industrial, mining and agricultural areas. In these areas, in the writer's opinion, the authorities should require the companies operating the factories, mines and plantations to give their workmen and their families the necessary housing facilities, together with the corresponding infirmaries, maternities, shopping centers, recreation grounds and gardens. Part of the program has already been accomplished on some of the big plantations and on the coal mines, but there still remains a lot to do. It will be the responsibility of the authorities to see to it that the necessary legislation is adopted to enforce such a program and that the companies and concerns abide by it.

The funds which have been made available in the Indo-Chinese budgets for health and medical care have been steadily increased in the past years. Their percentage in regard to the total expenditures of the budgets has gone up from 2 per cent in 1914 to 4.5 per cent in 1930 and 8.5 per cent in 1938. This last percentage is fairly substantial, but it will still have to be raised if the program outlined in this section is to be accomplished in a short period. This must be the aim of the French authorities in the postwar period; we consider that a percentage of 13 to 15 per cent should be adequate to cover such needs.

Certain aspects of labor regulations relate themselves so very intimately to health problems that we will add here a few words concerning the improvements which must be made.

Let us say first of all that the existing labor conditions in French Indo-China are very satisfactory and give the indigenous employee, especially when his employer is European, sufficient and adequate protection. Most of the recommendations concerning the minimum standards of social policy in dependent countries, adopted by the International Labor Organization's conference held at Philadelphia in April-May 1944, have already been adopted and enforced in French Indo-China. Some improvements can of course still be made, so as to bring the Indo-Chinese labor regulations in full

accord with the International Labour Organization's recommendations, but the improvements are only minor ones.

The most important requirement, however, is for the authorities to enforce the labor regulations all over the country. At present, the labor inspectorate has been reduced for reasons of economy and partly replaced by civil service administrative officers. The actual task of inspection, which should involve constant touch with the workers, is generally entrusted to the assistant administrative officer, who is already over-burdened with office work which gives him little time to make tours of inspection. Moreover, he is generally transferred to another post every time he returns from leave and therefore does not have the necessary continuity to enable him to pay close and constant attention to labor matters. In addition, his neighborly and friendly relations with the plantation, mining and factory managers rarely leave him that independence of mind necessary for ensuring strict compliance with the regulations. It is therefore absolutely necessary to reestablish in full the labor inspectorate and give them the necessary authority and independence to strictly enforce the labor regulations.

On the whole, the big companies and practically all the European concerns comply with the labor regulations more or less completely. It is the indigenous and the Chinese employers who practically never apply them. The present writer has time and again seen children under twelve years of age working in Chinese rice-mills; women working at night at very strenuous tasks in Chinese and Annamite shops; women and children in Chinese factories working at jobs much too hard for them and which ought, under present regulations, only to be assigned to grown men; safety devices lacking in Chinese and Annamite work shops; conditions for the protection of the health and welfare of the worker neglected in the majority of the Annamite and especially in the Chinese concerns.

It is in this respect that the efforts of the authorities will have to be directed. It is a major task, which will have to be done by a relatively large staff of labor inspectors. These can be French or indigenous, but we think it would be best to start with French staffs as the enforcement of labor regulations on the Annamite and especially on the Chinese employers will bring forward some very difficult problems, for it means up-rooting century-old traditions and habits. Therefore for a few years after the war the labor inspectorate should be composed only of French inspectors and of some indigenous assistant-inspectors, who would little by little learn their job, so as to be able to take over later.

A final problem is that of the gradual replacement of contract labor by non-contract labor. The French authorities have always considered contract labor as being of a transitional nature in Indo-China, destined progressively to give way to the ordinary system of employment, under the provisions of the common law. But such a replacement cannot take place in the near future. Two questions must be settled first: the creation of a spontaneous

current of emigration between Tongking and Cochin-China which would provide the concerns in the south with an adequate supply of non-contract labor; and the settlement near agricultural concerns of the workers already employed.

Of course many people argue that the contract system is more desirable and that it gives the laborer better guarantees. The contract system has advantages: it compels the employers to fulfill certain legal obligations towards their workers, more particularly with regard to health conditions; it presupposes strict supervision and gives the authorities adequate power to deal both with the employers and with the workers. But these advantages are purchased at the cost of considerable restriction on the liberties of the workers. The employer's point of view is that he cannot recover the heavy expenditures involved by his legal obligations for the protection and welfare of workers, unless he can be sure of retaining them in his service for a certain number of years. This explains the long duration (three years) of the contracts, the system of advances, the coercive measures concerning the regulation of labor conditions and the penal sanctions.

It would seem that the solution of the problem would be to retain as many as possible of the advantages of the contract system for the workers and of the guarantees it offers, while gradually lessening the strict compulsion which it implies for him; in other words to get gradually closer to the non-contract labor system without abandoning the advantages the contract system gives the workers. But this will only be possible by very gradual changes, if one does not wish to disrupt the normal functioning of the agricultural concerns which employ contract labor almost entirely.

When the French arrived in Indo-China in the last century we can safely say that education did not exist. Scarcely one-tenth of one per cent of the population knew how to read and write. French authorities started at the end of the last century giving the population some educational facilities. Progress was slow at first and limited to the urban districts. At the beginning of this century, approximately two per cent of the children of school age enjoyed some kind of elementary schooling or were educated by missionaries, but it was only after the first world war that a real effort was made to educate large sections of the population. By 1930, 8.5 per cent of the children went to school and by 1940 that percentage was doubled, 17 per cent of the children going to school. Since then new progress has been made, and in 1942-43 nearly 20 per cent of the children received some kind of education.

Education in French Indo-China is not a state monopoly. Missionary and Chinese schools exist as well as government schools. Nevertheless the former represent only a small fraction of the total educational facilities and are not increasing. The pupils attending government schools represent approximately 88 per cent of the total, the remaining 12 per cent being nearly evenly divided between missionary and Chinese schools. Since the latter are not

increasing but have remained stationary for a long time, we shall speak only of government education, neglecting completely the missionary and Chinese schools whose influence in the last twenty years has only been of minor importance and is becoming less important as years go on.

Education is classified in four categories: elementary, secondary, high school, technical and vocational training. Here are some comparative figures of what had been done before the second world war.

<i>Elementary Education</i>	1913-1914	1929-1930	1937-1938
Number of schools	782	5,136	7,065
Number of French professors	43	234	339
Number of indigenous professors	267	9,028	12,063
Number of pupils	46,000	328,000	474,500

We would point out that nowadays the great majority of the professors are indigenous. In Tongking, Annam, Cochin-China and Laos, those who want to be professors are trained in special schools, which turn out 2,000 new professors every year. In Cambodia, the teaching is done through the Buddhist priests, who remain under the supervision of the French educational authorities and teach the same subjects as are taught in the other elementary schools of Indo-China. School attendance is very high in Cambodia, thanks to this system, which unfortunately is only possible in Cambodia and not applicable to Cochin-China, Annam or Tongking.

The number of pupils has increased further since 1937-38 and in 1942-43 there were more than 600,000 pupils. Though these figures show a steady and encouraging increase, they still are far from satisfactory for the total number of children of school age is probably over 3,000,000 although there exist no accurate statistics on the subject. Why then has the progress been so slow, despite the genuine efforts of the authorities to make education available to all? To answer this question we must look into the conditions prevailing in the different sections of the country and see what the school attendance is in each of them.

As in the case of health problems, we must, from the educational point of view, divide the country into three regions: the urban centers, the agricultural districts, and the mountainous regions.

It is of course in the urban centers that school attendance is the greatest. In towns like Saigon and Hanoi, approximately 70 to 80 per cent of the children go to school and it is to be hoped that, in a very few years, 100 per cent of them will obtain education. In the urban centers, children are not put to work so young as in the agricultural districts, where it still seems inconceivable to the peasants to send their children to school when the rice crop must be brought in.

It is probable that immediately after the war the authorities will be able to enforce compulsory school attendance for children up to 12 or perhaps even 14 years of age, living in urban centers of 5,000 inhabitants or more. This should be the beginning of a universal compulsory school attendance, which must be the ultimate goal of the French authorities in Indo-China.

The problem which the authorities have to face in the urban centers is, relatively speaking, an easy one. They will have to build a few more elementary schools and make education more attractive by adopting methods that we shall discuss in detail when we examine the educational problem in the agricultural districts.

Let us now turn to the agricultural districts where the problem is most complex. From time immemorial the indigenous peoples have sent their children as soon as they are six or seven years of age out in the fields to help with the planting, transplanting and harvesting of the crops. When they are very young, they run around doing minor errands, bringing the food out to their parents, keeping the cattle; later they have to pick and harvest; ultimately the older ones (over 10 years of age) carry heavy loads and work like their parents. It is therefore inconceivable for parents, who do not even know what reading and writing mean, to send their children to school and thus lose help which does not cost them a penny. The tradition of having the children working the fields is so deeply rooted in the population that it seems very difficult to overcome it in a short period of time. How then can the authorities tackle the problem?

First of all, we would stress that educational progress can only be realized if, at the same time, the standards of life of the agricultural populations are raised, for one cannot ask a farmer to send his children to school if he has not enough help to harvest sufficient food to enable him and his family to have decent living standards; nor if he has not enough money to hire additional help to replace the children attending school. So we see that progress of education and improvement of the standards of life are interlocked and that one of them cannot improve if the other lags behind.

The authorities will therefore have to take steps to make school attendance easier and more attractive. In agricultural districts, the school months must be so organized as to enable the children to go into the fields, when they are the most needed, and attend school when the field work is light. This is particularly easy in the rice districts, where the heavy work comes at very definite periods.

Steps will have to be taken to make studies more attractive. The lessons in the elementary schools have until now been in French and vernacular; they will continue being in two languages, but the material should be chosen to interest the young people and induce them to come to school without undue compulsion. Certain lessons ought to be accompanied with pictures or, if possible, by movies. In this respect, as it seems impossible to furnish every elementary school with film projectors or still less with sound-film projectors, the authorities should have a few hundred mobile units equipped with

sound-film projectors, which could go around the country giving educational shows at all elementary schools and which would be reserved to children attending school regularly.

Radio loud-speaker installations should also be set up in all elementary schools to enable the children to hear certain radio programs which will win their interest and make them enjoy school. Each elementary school should also include a library, composed of books chosen so as to be of a particular interest for children of 6 to 12 years of age. The elementary schools should also provide recreation grounds, where the children would find play facilities, such as trapezes, see-saws, footballs, etc.

We feel certain that if efforts are thus made on the one hand to adapt school terms to the periods of rice-planting and harvesting, and on the other to render the schools and the studies attractive and interesting, the authorities will be able to raise very rapidly the percentage of school attendance and achieve amazing results.

Perhaps, in certain very poor districts and in certain cases it will be necessary to give small allowances to the parents of children going to school. Such allowances ought to be given locally and under the supervision of the civil service administrative officer so as to be certain that such funds are not squandered but are effectively employed.

In the mountainous regions the problem is the same as in the agricultural districts, only much more difficult and complex. For in these regions live some of the most backward people of Asia; people who do not wish to make contact with any other people than their own, who prefer to abandon their houses, land and villages rather than to live with or amongst other populations or other civilizations.

The same methods will have to be adopted as in the agricultural districts with still more emphasis put on the recreational side of education. Special sound-films, partly in vernacular, partly in French, should be prepared for each of the different tribes inhabiting the up-country districts. Progress will be very slow, despite all the efforts which the authorities will be able to make; but one ought not to let oneself be discouraged by the first meager results for we feel certain that, in the long run, most of the mountainous tribes will end by accepting the Western educational system.

The studies followed in the Indo-Chinese *lycées* and colleges, which give secondary education, are very similar to those given in the *lycées* and colleges in France. These schools are open to French and Indo-Chinese alike, without the slightest discrimination, and the classes are mixed, boys and girls sitting on the same benches. The professors are French or Indo-Chinese and get a special, severe and long training, before being allowed to teach in the secondary schools. The French authorities have done their best to increase the proportion of Indo-Chinese professors and have succeeded in a large measure, as the following figures show.

FRENCH INDO-CHINA: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

<i>Secondary Education</i>	1920-21	1937-38
Number of institutions	2	8
Number of pupils: boys	40	1,600
Number of pupils: girls	—	437
Number of professors: French	61	44
Number of professors: Indo-Chinese	—	126

The number of students has been steadily, though slowly, increasing. This kind of education is reserved for boys and girls who are specially bright and intelligent and who are not contented with their elementary studies; children whose parents want them to get a better education; boys and girls who want to complete their education by studying law, medicine or science in special schools or faculties.

In the future these studies should be made available to a greater extent to the average Indo-Chinese, so as to increase the number of pupils and not restrict the secondary education to an élite of the population. The number of *lycées* and colleges will have to be increased so as to have at least one secondary school in each important urban center. The studies will have to be made more attractive and more interesting to the students. Already the subjects studied have been more or less adapted to the needs of an Asiatic country. In this respect, certain sections have replaced the study of Latin by the study of the Chinese and Annamite languages and literatures. In this way, secondary schools are preparing students for their future tasks in their daily life by a very successful synthesis of classical studies (absolutely necessary if the students want to study law, medicine or engineering), and of the studies of Far Eastern subjects.

Hanoi has a university, composed of three institutions giving instruction at the university level. The three institutions are: a legal institute; a medical and pharmaceutical school; an academy of fine arts.

The legal institute, which educates and trains the future lawyers or those who wish to enter the Indo-Chinese civil service, is open to Indo-Chinese and French students alike. In 1937-38 there were more than 400 students and in 1942-43 more than 750, four-fifths of whom are Indo-Chinese. The standards of the institute are very high and approach those of similar legal institutes in France.

The medical and pharmaceutical school trains the doctors and chemists. Like the legal institute, the medical and pharmaceutical school is open to both Indo-Chinese and French students, the latter representing approximately one-fourth of the total. In 1938-39 the school was attended by some 250 students, and in 1942-43 by about 450. The standards here are also very high, the studies and exams being very similar to those in France, except that the accent is put on tropical diseases and hygiene in tropical and sub-tropical backward countries.

The academy of fine arts has three sections: architecture, painting, and sculpture. They are under the direction of famous French masters, and in addition to painters and sculptors they turn out architects, who can find an outlet either in the civil service or in private practice. The studies are very difficult and the standards are very high, which explains the small attendance of the academy; but quality here replaces quantity. In 1938-39, approximately 75 students followed the courses and in 1942-43 there were around 125 students, most of them Indo-Chinese.

In 1942-43 Hanoi University had some 1,325 students, of whom more than 1,000 were Indo-Chinese. These figures will have to be raised further after the war. This should happen as a result of the increase in students attending secondary schools. The authorities will nevertheless, have to encourage attendance by granting a large number of bursaries and scholarships, and special allowances to secondary school students, who by their ability have shown themselves worthy of doing more extensive studies and whose families lack the necessary means.

Before the war, students desiring to complete their studies in a faculty of literature, a faculty of science or in an engineering school were required to go to France. By reason of the small number of students following such courses it was considered impossible to put up such institutions in Indo-China and maintain the same high standards as in France. After the war, if the number of students increases appreciably, such institutions need to be established in Hanoi. But for the time being the old system can work satisfactorily.

The authorities have already made great efforts to make technical education and vocational training available to all the population. Handicrafts have been encouraged, their methods improved and their standards raised. There exists a superior school of general sciences, with three major sections (public works, agriculture, forestry), having an attendance of more than 1,000 pupils, who intend to be foremen, overseers and ultimately surveyors in these three professions.

There exist numerous handicraft schools, where the people can learn any handicraft or improve their skill. Every craft is taught in these schools, from drawing, carving, woodworking, cabinet-making, founding, smelting, blacksmith, mechanic, stocker, to painting, lacquer, engraving, needlework and lacework. In Cochinchina, Tongking and Laos, there are several schools for mechanics. They have quite large attendances and train the mechanics who run the railroad engines, drive the cars and the river boats, and work in the electrical stations and substations.

To improve these facilities the authorities will merely require that the number of schools be increased, to cope with the steadily increasing number of Indo-Chinese who want to follow their courses. In 1935, there were over 1,500 students, in 1939, over 3,000 and in 1943, over 5,000. It is probable that postwar figures will be five and ten times larger.

To sum up, we have seen that the biggest efforts after the war will have to be made to increase the attendance in the elementary schools. Some efforts, but on a smaller scale, will also have to be made towards developing the secondary, high school and technical educations.

The sums devoted to education in the Indo-Chinese budgets represented only 3 per cent of the total expenditure in 1913-14, 5.4 per cent in 1925-26 and 11.1 per cent in 1938-39. This last percentage, though already reasonably high, will still have to be raised to enable the authorities to deal adequately and rapidly with the problem of educating the majority of the population. Presumably a percentage of some 15 per cent should be enough to enable the authorities to get well started with the program we have outlined.

But it will be of very little use to educate large sections of the population if, once they have passed their exams and obtained diplomas and certificates, they find it impossible to practice the profession or craft for which they have been studying. In the past, indigenous engineers, lawyers, etc. have often been unable to find a job corresponding to their ability and, to earn their living, have been obliged to accept any inferior employment, badly paid and necessitating no special knowledge. The writer holds the opinion that in the future the authorities should see to it that these persons find the employment they deserve at the end of their studies, even if it means putting out of jobs Frenchmen occupying posts which Indo-Chinese can fulfill as efficiently. Either through legislation or through persuasion, the French authorities will require to bring pressure to bear upon the banks, the big commercial, industrial, agricultural and mining concerns, the associations of medical doctors, lawyers and teachers, so as to oblige them to take each year a certain number of these freshly trained Indo-Chinese and put them in posts corresponding to their ability and skill, and enjoying corresponding pay and authority.

No study of the postwar problems of Indo-China would be complete without a brief survey of some of the political problems which Indo-China will have to face after her liberation from Japanese occupation. The administrative organization and popular representation with which Indo-China is at present endowed have already furnished her with a framework which, without being perfect, does present numerous advantages and has enabled the political, social and economic evolution of the country to proceed up to now in a normal way and without too many shocks. But this organization will need a certain number of reforms and modifications in order to adapt itself to new events and circumstances and to continue to fulfill its role and to develop political and social institutions in such a way that Indo-China can rapidly attain its independence within a French Federation of which she will be one of the members.

One of the chief reforms should consist in proceeding to a pronounced decentralization of power. This decentralization, already begun in the course of the present war by force of circumstance, must be consolidated and

enlarged. The powers of the colony must be increased at the expense of those of France who must limit herself to a supervisory role only. The functioning of the political and economic machinery of Indo-China should be autonomous and independent of direct interference from France. However, the Ministry of Colonies and the French Parliament, in which Indo-Chinese representation should be considerably increased, would presumably keep their higher right to raise questions for discussion and especially a right of veto on all questions having a bearing on national defense, collective security and on relations with foreign countries.

This reform should be accompanied by a more pronounced separation of legislative and executive power. The latter would continue, as in the past, to be exercised by the Governor-General, who would remain the representative of France in Indo-China. However, the decentralization of power, of which we have just spoken, should give the Governor-General greater authority and independence, while divesting him of some of his privileges which enabled him previously to legislate in certain domains.

Legislative power should be progressively and entirely transferred to the representative assemblies of Indo-China in proportion to their political evolution. The Governor-General, as supreme head of Indo-China, would of course keep the authority necessary to oppose the putting into application of certain unreasonable measures which would risk involving the country in external complications or give rise to developments which would lead to Indo-China's leaving the framework of the French Federation.

This general increase of authority of the Governor-General would make it necessary for the French government to choose a man whose high qualities and authority could not be questioned and who remained at the head of Indo-China for a relatively long period. It is to be hoped, in fact, that frequent changes of Governor-Generals will become only a memory of the past,² and that in the future a Governor-General will remain head of Indo-China for a minimum of five years.

On the other hand, the representative assemblies should see their status and their scope enlarged in a manner that will permit them really to exercise their legislative power within the framework of a French Federation. Indo-Chinese popular representation in the French Assemblies should be increased; each of the provinces of Indo-China should elect a certain number of representatives who will be seated at Paris in the French Senate. These Indo-Chinese Senators will be the guardians of the interests of Indo-China in the French Parliament.

As for the other popular assemblies—more especially the *Grand Conseil des Intérêts Economiques et Financiers* and the *Chambres de Représentants Indigènes*—they should all be constituted by an *elective* method. None of their members should be nominated or appointed by the French or Indo-Chinese administration. Popular representation should be assured here in

such a way as to permit a reasonable representation of ethnic minorities (French, Chinese and indigenous minorities).

The *Grand Conseil des Intérêts Economiques et Financiers* (which now bears the title of *Conseil Fédéral*) should, in particular, undergo a thorough reform in a way that will enable it to become in reality the Indo-Chinese Parliament a short time hence. Its members should be elected by universal suffrage, at first by a restricted electoral college, then, in proportion to the political development of the country, by an electoral college including the whole Indo-Chinese population. Its powers should be progressively extended in such a way as to permit it to legislate on all the political, economic, financial and tariff questions pertaining to Indo-China. Its autonomy should be complete and its deliberations entirely free. Yet it should conform to a certain discipline when it is concerned with questions relating to the whole of the French Federation in which case it will have to proceed by mutual agreements that will permit a respect for the positions and respective interests of the different members of the French Federation.

Nevertheless, as we have indicated above, the Indo-Chinese Parliament would not be able to legislate on questions bearing on national defense, collective security and relations with foreign countries. These would remain under the jurisdiction of the French Parliament, which will in fact constitute the Parliament of the French Federation. Yet the Indo-Chinese Parliament would, of course, have the right and even the duty to raise these questions, deliberate on them and address resolutions to the French Parliament.

As for the representative assemblies of each of the five provinces of Indo-China, they should see both their method of election and their privileges equally enlarged and obtain some legislative powers. Moreover, it is to be hoped that the Annamite and Cambodian monarchies, whose former absolutism has already been greatly tempered by the French protectorate, will evolve towards the form of constitutional monarchies. But this evolution must, as in the past, respect the civilizations which were found on arrival in Indo-China. It is important, in fact, to do nothing to destroy the original institutions of the Indo-Chinese provinces, from the communes—primitive and living cells, with an organization already democratic—up to the mandarins, whose dignity, conferred on them by their role of priest and guardian of Confucian faith, should be preserved.

Notes

- 1 We mean an Annamite doctor with Annamites; a Cambodian doctor with Cambodians, etc.
- 2 From 1866 to 1940 there were no less than 61 governor-generals, titular or provisional.

ERROR IN LAOS

Germaine Krull Ivens

Source: *Far Eastern Survey* 16(11)(1947): 121-4.

The "Military victory" of the French troops in Indochina is "complete," as has been affirmed in France and in official circles. The cities, the ports, the coast of Annam and Cochinchina are in the hands of the military; even the important roads are "under control." Yet no Frenchman can leave a town without a military escort; no plantations are in operation, because the planters must have an armed military guard; the coolies do not report to work, and no Frenchman is certain that his coolie, if he shows up, is not going to cut his throat while he sleeps. The control of roads is indeed possible with armored columns. To travel in an automobile from one city to another is, however, impossible. One travels from Saigon to Dalat by plane, because one cannot go by road. And in Saigon, Hanoi, and other cities, bombs burst, depots burn, and people are found dead on street corners.

An entire people is ready to become guerrillas. Those who aided the resistance in France against the Germans, who held the cities, know the meaning of the Maquis and how impossible it is to dislodge guerrillas. We French are a handful beside all the people of Viet Nam. There is hatred in the eyes of any Vietnamese—women, child, old man or young man. There is hatred in the eyes of the colonials and the French soldiers, where Annamese are concerned. The outcome of this impasse cannot be foreseen.

The Indochinese Federation comprises Tonkin and Annam, which form the Republic of Viet Minh; Cochinchina, which was a part of the Viet Republic and was made by the colonial conspiracy into a Republic of Cochinchina (although it seems that, apart from its president and the members of the government who were appointed by the French, there are no other adherents); the Kingdom of Cambodia, which signed a modus vivendi opposed by members of the intellectual class, organized as the Cambodians Issara; and the Kingdom of Laos, whose entire government is in exile and whose French-appointed government has accepted a modus vivendi unrecognized by the government in exile.

Of all Indochina, Laos is the most peaceful and the closest to the French. "We want our independence. We love France, but she must make us free. We wish to continue to think and speak in French. . . . Let France speak with us, let her lean over us like a great friend to whom we once entrusted ourselves. Let her help us to stay as we are: a country which is French in thought and in culture." Such are the words of almost all the Lao-Issara. (*Issara* means "free.")

"There is no Laotian question," say the French colonials. "The Laos are happy children; it is the sweetest country in the world. What they need is a good king, good princes, reasonable taxes, peace to cultivate their rice—just enough to eat sufficiently—and time to play the *khène* (a musical instrument resembling a flute, peculiar to Laos) and to sing songs to their lovers."

"It is a country where nothing has been spoiled by civilization. These are the most amiable people in the world: not warlike, not ambitious; caring little for work and a great deal for singing; tasteful and endowed with an innate sense of the beautiful; hospitable, frank." These are the words, with little variation, of everyone who has been to Laos, from old colonials to recent parachutists, from tourists to residents. There are, however, some Issara Laos who have fought and who are fighting again. Why have these people, of whom everyone—even the most embittered colonials—says nothing but good, revolted and why have they taken up arms? Recent communiques mention Laotian battles and junctions with the Vietnamese.

Laos is a small country of a few million inhabitants who are of the Thai race. The Mekong River is the frontier between Laos and Siam. The mountains are the natural frontier between Laos and Annam; forests separate it on the north from Tonkin. In the south Cambodia is its neighbor. The Laos are Buddhists, like the Cambodians and the Siamese. For centuries this country has been subject to invasions of conquering Annamese and the Siamese. During these centuries the kings and princes of Laos have been either powerful allies or docile vassals to the kings of Siam. Because of these two turbulent neighbors, Laos depended on France for protection.

French role in Laos

For fifty years France did not do a great deal for Laos. No attempt was made to develop the country. There is natural wealth in Laos, but French capital has preferred the easy profit of rich Cochinchina and southern Annam. They built some roads, but the roads served only people with motor-cars—and perhaps strategy. People who have succeeded nowhere else have always been sent to Laos as residents and functionaries. Some schools were built, but so few that only ten percent of the people are literate. A few sons of mandarins and princes were permitted to go to the University of Hanoi. The French governors, or "Residents," had no desire to do anything because it "did not pay" either in honor or in money. The administrators thought only of

"getting out" of this "black hole" as quickly as possible. The French policy in Laos was to take the easiest way to obtain the best returns. Laos placed its faith in France as a friend, an educator. There are intelligent and educated Laos who have spent their lives struggling to have France help them, instruct them, train them. France for the Laos was the great nation which must help them to become a more civilized and educated people; France has done little to satisfy this desire. The lassitude of the administrators succeeded in having it said that all was well in the best of worlds in letting the Laos alone because "they love songs and detest work and trouble."

The Laos do not reproach France for having exploited them—and with good reason, as France has done little; they reproach France, on the contrary, for not having developed the country, for not having done something with the natural wealth of the country. They reproach France for having treated them as inferiors; for not having aided them in their education; for not having made of them what they could have been: a people of high attainments. France did not take care that the Laos spoke and learned French. They reproach France for vexations of all kinds, for not considering them equally qualified when they had succeeded in obtaining the same diplomas as the French. They reproach her for their having been obliged, if they were rich enough, to educate their children at their own expense, and for having neglected the bulk of the population.

The Laos are people who have a profound sense of honor and a natural pride which make them feel these things very strongly.

France's greatest mistake was having failed to take account of the national feeling of the Laos where the Annamese are concerned. The Laos have not forgotten the Annamese invasions. They know that the Annamese, more restless, more aggressive, and more industrious, are a danger to them. Moreover, the difference in religion is important. Instead of considering this and making the Laos auxiliaries of the French, the French administrators preferred to have recourse only to the Annamese as native functionaries. Wherever the administration needed auxiliary functionaries, it brought Annamese from Hanoi or Saigon, effecting a peaceful "invasion" of Laos by the Annamese. Why? Because it was easier, more "accommodating," simply to employ an Annamese who was already trained, who spoke French, instead of training Laotians. This Annamese "invasion" is one of the most important complaints brought by the Laos against the French.

Another complaint is that France liberally disposed of various provinces of Laos which she "placed under the administration" of Cambodia or of Annam. This dismembered Laos without reference to the unity of the kingdom itself.

On the other hand Laos has a regard for Siam—primarily sentimental, for the two peoples speak almost the same language and they have the same form of Buddhism, which is a profound tie. France has done everything, for political reasons, to create a gulf between Siam and Laos. "Divide and rule"

has been the French policy, particularly towards Laos. And this policy continues. They say to the Laos. "If we do not protect you, the Annamese and the Siamese will swallow you up." It is because of such a policy and such propaganda that the Laos still hope that France will protect them, rendering justice.

The slogan of the Lao-Issara is: negotiation. The birth of the Lao-Issara movement took place in 1940. Under the pro-Vichy regime of Admiral Decoux the policy of good relations with the Japanese on the part of the French administration forced some Laos to leave the country in order to join the Allied forces in China or to join with Siam. Moreover the Laotian provinces which were ceded to Siam by Vichy felt a freedom of life for the first time: the Laos in these provinces were equal to the Siamese, and they felt that here there were no functionaries who scorned them because of the color of their skin; they had escaped from the French "colonial" policy.

Independence under the Japanese

The real drama of Laos—like that of all Indochina—began in March 1945. On March 9, 1945, the Japanese effectively seized power in Indochina. The French troops stationed in Laos did not fight against the Japanese. They were simply interned like the civilians. A few took flight, and it was the Laos who aided their escape through the jungle. At this time the Laos felt that France—which had promised them protection against all aggressors—was abandoning them. The Laos hated the Japanese. It was at that moment that the Lao-Issara movement became active. Some, the intellectuals and a few princes, joined the resistance—French, Allied, and Free Thai in Siam, which began to collaborate with the Allies.

During that period the King declared the independence of Laos, on the initiative of Japan. Once independent, the Laos had to administer their country themselves. They were obliged to train their own people to replace the Annamese who had been placed in the whole administration by the French. The Japanese were amazingly aloof how participation in the government of Laos.

After the defeat of the Japanese, French parachutists freed the French internees. The Chinese troops which were to occupy Indochina above the sixteenth parallel had not yet arrived in Laos. The former Resident Superieur of Laos presented himself on August 29, 1945 to the Laotian government to resume his functions "in the name of France." "The same man who fled before the Japanese and left us alone facing them came back as arrogant, as self-confident, as colonial as ever," the Laos said. "We want no more of it." Some strongly anti-French Annamese elements wished at this time to exterminate all the French. The Laotian government and the most important members of Lao-Issara insured the security of the French and defended their lives, and it was the Laos who facilitated and effected the evacuation of all the French to Siam on August 31, 1945.

On September 6, 1945, the Lao-Issara troops occupied the towns to emphasize their desire to maintain the independence which the King had acquired under the Japanese. Already the leaders of Lao-Issara were in contact with some French parachutists and submitted to them their desire to win freedom for Laos, at the same time finding some workable method of collaboration between the two parties. The conversations never seemed to end conclusively. During this time the King of Laos, under the influence of some French parachutists, declared the continuity of the protectorate.

During the month of September a series of conversations took place between the French in Laos and the Lao-Issara. Everything could have been arranged if the French had been wise. But the arrogance of the old colonials made the situation impossible. Faced with the fact that the King had returned to a French protectorate, the whole people spontaneously joined the Lao-Issara. Between September 6 and November 10 a series of internal events occurred. In the face of the hesitation and weakness of the King a people's committee was formed with a popular assembly and a provisional constitution. This assembly and the Council of Ministers asked the King to become a constitutional monarch. Some days later this same assembly, and the same council of ministers, announced the deposition of the King because of a pro-French conspiracy. Finally, on November 10, the King and Crown Prince Savang abdicated and recognized the popular government as the only legitimate one.

Throughout this period there were only a few engagements between the French troops and the Lao-Issara troops. The situation was complex. The French were hampered in their action by the Chinese occupation troops. The whole country was in the hands of the Lao-Issara; the country, independent, was administered by the council of ministers of the Lao-Issara as the only legitimate government, with a constitutional monarch restored to the throne at the request of the Lao-Issara government.

The Sino-French agreements having determined the departure of the Chinese occupation troops from above the sixteen parallel, the French troops returned to Laos. Violent battles took place everywhere, and the Lao-Issara troops were obliged to retreat.

After losing the towns—not the countryside—the Lao-Issara retired to the jungle. On April 25, 1946, the King officially recognized the Lao-Issara government—the popular government—as the only legitimate one. It was the last act of the King of Laos.

The whole Lao-Issara government took refuge in Siam. Crown Prince Savang signed a *modus vivendi* with the French and practically returned the country to the French. But it seems that the King had signed no document with the French and had taken no political action since his final declaration, that of recognizing the Lao-Issara government.

Since then the affairs of Laos have gone badly. No government is really established. There were elections, but they took place only in the towns; the

population of the towns is greatly diminished because many people left Laos with the government. (The number of Laotian refugees in Siam indicates this sufficiently.) Some are continuing guerrilla fighting. During the struggle the Lao-Issara came to an agreement with the Viets.

The Lao-Issara regime has on every occasion for more than a year attempted to make official contact with the French government. An interview between the principal representatives of the Laotian regime and an unofficial envoy from Saigon took place at Bangkok on November 17 and 18, 1946. At the conclusion of this interview it was agreed that the Lao-Issara troops would abstain from all action against the French during the negotiations. This agreement was very rigorously adhered to by the leaders—sometimes even against the will of the troops. In spite of the resumption of hostilities between the Viets and the French, the Laos kept their promise. For five months there was no sign of life on the part of the French government and Saigon. On the fresh initiative of mutual friends a new interview took place on March 6, 1947, this time with official envoys from Saigon and Paris.

The representative from Saigon wanted the Laos to have their independence within the framework of the French Union, in the Indochinese Federation, based on "an interpretation" of the *modus vivendi*.² The error of the French representative was that he was firmly—and honestly—convinced that the question was one of "men" and that it would suffice to obtain an understanding between the Crown Prince Savang and the head of the Lao-Issara government; that this was possible. In spite of the fact that the Laos have said repeatedly that it is not a question of persons, the representative believed: "Laos is a happy country, the people are friendly; they want nothing; it is necessary only to bring two or three men together."

The policy of the French ostrich continued: the French believed that they could obtain acceptance of what they think is the truth by ignoring the truth. That was the end. The Lao-Issara, who kept their word for more than five months, temporarily resumed the struggle everywhere. And they resumed it on a larger scale.

If the French say that the Laos are rebels, the Laos can say that they have been warned, and that the Laos have done everything to negotiate: a letter to Premier Bidault in October 1946, an interview with an unofficial envoy in November 1946, an appeal to the United Nations, an interview with an official envoy in March 1947.

The myth of "dangerous neighbors," like the Annamese wishing to invade Laos, or the Siamese wishing to annex Laos, no longer holds. The Lao-Issara have a fighting agreement with the Viets and they have good relations with the Siamese.

When will the French consider that the men of Indochina are not children, and that their demands are not to be dealt with by colonials who assume that their wishes are realities?

Notes

- 1 At the time of the elections there were 30,000 Laos refugees in Siam. Since then many have returned and there are only about 3,000 left in Siam.
- 2 At the time of the interview one group of Lao-Issara wanted independence within the framework of the French Union. Another group wanted only to become a country in a Federation of South East Asia. They all agreed they would never return under the existing *modus vivendi*.

THE UNITY OF VIETNAM

*George Sheldon*Source: *Far Eastern Survey* 17(11)(1948): 125-8.

Since September 1945 there has been no peace between France and the Vietnam nationalists in Indochina. A preliminary convention, signed by the responsible parties to the dispute on March 6, 1946, permitted the peaceable entry of French troops into Tonkin, the stronghold of the Vietnam revolt, while Vietnam was recognized as a free state within the French Union. Nevertheless, "police action" by French forces continued in Cochinchina, the southernmost of the three Annamese-speaking provinces, where a "coup de force" shielded by British arms had enabled France to secure a military foothold in 1945. This area was beyond any doubt an integral part of the historical and cultural unit which for more than a century had been known as Vietnam, and the *de facto* Democratic Republic of Vietnam protested repeatedly against military operations directed towards the elimination of nationalist influence from Cochinchina.

A so-called *modus vivendi*, the rather noncommittal achievement of subsequent negotiations in Paris, was signed on September 14, 1946. The terms of this agreement, including a cease-fire provision, were to take effect on October 31, but localized hostilities continued until December 19 when a clash between French and Vietnamese troops at Hanoi touched off a full-scale war throughout all of Vietnam.

The failure of negotiations centers in the question of Vietnamese unity, both in terms of territory and political allegiance and with particular reference to the relationship between Cochinchina and the Republic of Vietnam.

Before World War II, Cochinchina had been a colony (Annam and Tonkin were protectorates) and for this reason, combined with the fact that it provided the richest field for French investments among the three provinces, Cochinchina was the object of particularly strong French attachments, both sentimental and material.

This political distinction, however, has never been recognized by nationalist leaders. For them, "Vietnam" has been the symbol of a national unity

long antedating the French conquests of the nineteenth century. "Vietnam!" was the final cry of the insurgents who faced the guillotine following the abortive uprising at Yen-bay in 1930.

The first indication of what view France intended to take in the postwar period regarding the territorial unity of Vietnam came in a proclamation made by General De Gaulle on March 24, 1945 in which reference was made to "the five countries which compose the Indochinese Federation and which are distinct as to civilization, race and tradition. . . ." The distinction was apt only with respect to the interior provinces of Laos and Cambodia. Such an interpretation did little to encourage the Vietnamese then engaged in active resistance to the Japanese forces of occupation to view with confidence French promises of a liberalized postwar regime.

Since the re-establishment of French control in Saigon following V-J Day Vietnamese spokesmen have changed that the policy which France is pursuing is consistent with the implications of the March 24 Declaration—that it is one of "divide and rule" directed towards the encouragement of a separatist movement threatening the territorial integrity of Vietnam.

At a conference held in April 1946, French delegates readily circumvented Vietnamese arguments as to the historical and cultural unity of Vietnam by bringing forward the reasonable view that, however important these matters were, the will of the inhabitants of Cochinchina took precedence and that this would be expressed in the referendum on the issue, to be held in accordance with the terms of the March 6 agreement.

Cochinchinese "Nationalism"

But the borders of Cochinchina remained closed to the representatives of Vietnam despite earlier promises of free and peaceable political activity and no serious preparations for a referendum were ever made. The Vietnamese produced an apparently authentic copy of a directive to the French-operated Radio Saigon which ordered the station "not to employ hereafter the expressions "military operations," "Vietnamese troops," and other expressions which the propaganda sources of Hanoi may take as a basis for demanding the cessation of hostilities between French and Vietnamese troops."

The Vietnamese press found it strange that Nguyen Van Thinh, whom the French had recognized as leader of Cochinchinese nationalism, should be a Free citizen. Attention was called to the conspicuous fail over a period of many months of several French division to pacify an area in which a popular movements for autonomous government under French protection alleged to exist.

There is indeed little doubt by this time that such movement has no popular roots. Both French and neutral observers have, in one form or another, expressed the view of ex-Ambassador Bullitt, who, though friend of Vietnam, admitted that "up to the present time the French have permitted to function

freely only those Annamese politicians whom they think they can control."¹ The conservative Paris paper *Le Monde* found that "it must be recognized that Cochinchinese separatism has absolutely no popular foundation."² The London *Times* declared that "[President] Ho Chi Minh and his colleagues have proved difficult to deal with but they are still the only people with whom a binding agreement can be concluded."³

Consequences of the War

Nevertheless, the French authorities declared that the generalization of hostilities in December 1946 demanded a military solution and that no negotiations would be undertaken with the government of Ho Chi Minh. The consequences of this policy have been the aggravating of an existing economic crisis and a constantly stiffening resistance on the part of Vietnam.

The early phases of the war brought important coastal areas of Tonkin and Annam under French control, including the much-prized Hongay coal deposits and the cement factory at Haiphong. Thus far, however, production in these areas has been barely sufficient to meet local needs. In terms of foreign trade the economic situation is even worse than it was immediately after the Japanese surrender. With the exhaustion of stockpiles exports have slumped. Nor has the importation of vast quantities of tobacco products, wines and liquors proved a blessing to a subsistence-level population. A French information bulletin reports that "no amelioration of the agricultural situation has developed in Cochinchina . . ."

The Vietnamese have applied scorched earth tactics extensively but with a discrimination that implies a high degree of optimism as to the eventual outcome of the struggle. Rail and road communications have been the favorite targets of sabotage, while buildings likely to provide shelter for French troops have been rendered uninhabitable by the painstaking removal and stacking of the roof tiles.

In other more significant phases of resistance activity, the Vietnam army has proved equally resourceful. To understand the scope of these military operations it must be realized that France maintains an army estimated at 110,000 troops in Indochina. The size and cost of such a force (3 to 4 billion francs a month) point both to the severity of the French task and to the improbability that a continuation of the present policy will, even if successful, yield proportionate material advantages.

The French pretext

Whatever the cost, France continues to find justification for her policy in the traditional "*mission civilisatrice*," which, in this context, takes the form of a war against alleged totalitarianism and communist domination of the nationalist government. The question of communism is closely related to

that of Vietnamese unity, since the charge has been made that, through typical communist tactics, a majority has involuntarily fallen under the control of a ruthless clique who have suppressed those elements of the population who might otherwise declare for France or for some other brand of local autonomy.

It is well established that several of the leading figures of the Vietnam government, including President Ho Chi Minh, have communist backgrounds, but there is no evidence that the matter goes beyond this. The Communist Party of Indochina declared itself dissolved in November 1945 "in the interest of national unity." No significant steps towards nationalization were taken. Cultural institutions such as the Pasteur Institute, which had come under the control of the Vietnam government, were restored to the French in conformity with the terms of the *modus vivendi*. The "party line," so far as it exists, seems to be one of praise for the United States and democratic France. The stated position of the Vietnam government is that its quarrel is not with France but with an outmoded colonialism and that it is prepared to offer special privileges to French investors and technicians.

In 1942 the Communist Party was incorporated into the Vietminh League, which took the leadership in resistance against the Japanese. Since the formation of the Republic of Vietnam in August 1945, additional parties have broadened the coalition government. Official French sources have called attention to the rude elimination, at the instance of the Vietminh, of certain political parties of Chinese affiliation, but it was precisely these parties which had adopted the most rigorously anti-French policy. Following the expulsion of ultra-rightist elements in June 1946, an official French statement reported that relations had appreciably improved.

The nature and strength of political parties other than the Vietminh cannot be accurately assessed. Nominally at least, they enjoy representation in the Vietnam cabinet and National Assembly, the latter body having been elected in January 1946 by the vote of all men and women over eighteen. A more precise indication of the breadth of political tolerance is the support accorded the Vietnam government by the large native Roman Catholic population. Many prominent Vietnamese Catholics, among them bishops, have declared their allegiance to Vietnam, a trend which the French considered sufficiently grave to warrant a special visit to the Vatican by High Commissioner Bollaert in January 1948, allegedly to enlist papal support for France in her effort to win over the Vietnamese Catholics.

On the whole, there has been little opportunity for the expression of opinion in Cochinchina with respect to the question of a unified Vietnam government. In Saigon censorship has taken the form of paper rationing and, wherever "unionist" sentiment has grown too bold, suspension of publication. On April 2, 1947 some furor was caused by an "Open Letter to M. Bollaert" which appeared in the native press. Written by a prominent Annamite well-qualified to speak for the moderate elements of

Cochinchinese opinion, the editorial carefully analyzed and declared bankrupt the French policy of repudiating the Hanoi government and substituting another "scorned by the people."

Nevertheless, the policy of supporting a hand-picked Cochinchina government has been pursued consistently despite criticism and the blow given it in November 1946 when Dr. Thinh committed suicide in protest against the "comédie" which he had been asked to play.

A successor was found in Le Van Hoach, whom Vietnam sources identified as having once served as a police official under the wartime Japanese regime. On February 4, 1947, Cochinchina was officially proclaimed a "free state associated with France within the framework work of the Indochinese Federation and the French Union" and continued under the nominal direction of Dr. Hoach until September 18, 1947, when a cabinet dispute over the separatist issue shifted Nguyen Van Xuan, the present incumbent, into the presidential chair.

Overtures to Bao Dai

Co-ordinated with the separatist policy in Cochinchina has been the search for "qualified representatives" of Annam and Tonkin. A number of discussions took place between High Commissioner Bollaert and the former Emperor Bao Dai, the latter having taken up residence in Hongkong following the establishment of the Vietnam government. Discussions with Bao Dai were complicated by the fact that, in accepting the emperor's abdication, the Vietnam government had appointed him Supreme Councillor of the Republic and provided him with an annuity. This move was less a bid for political talent (the emperor's duties under the French regime had been confined to certain mortuary ceremonies) than it was a gesture in the direction of tradition and the conciliation of monarchist elements as against any eventual French overtures towards them.

In the latter respect, Vietnam's tactics seem to have proved effective. After over a year of periodic meetings between French officials and Bao Dai in Hongkong, Geneva, and Bangkok, coupled with efforts to rally anti-Vietnam elements in a so-called "National Congress," matters appear to have progressed little, if at all. As late as October 13, 1947, a Reuters dispatch from Saigon stated: "According to a high official of the French administration here, the present military operation is aimed at facilitating French negotiations with Bao Dai. Ho Chi Minh finds himself well nigh encircled, and should flee very soon if he wants to be safe. It is likely that the French authorities will be willing to grant Bao Dai his claims for unity and independence. We also expect a sporadic resistance to continue after we have broken down the present set-up, but we entertain the steadiest hopes of seeing a quick rally of the popular masses, who have for so long been suffering, to a new national government presided over by Bao Dai." Whether Bao Dai

has advanced any such claims remains uncertain, but subsequent developments have definitely demanded a revision of such a sanguine estimate of France's military position.

Vietnamese and French representatives have made plain the terms on which each is willing to resume conversations with the other, but as yet no common ground has been discovered. Vietnam calls for independence (meaning full sovereignty with guarantees for French cultural and economic interests) and unity (which means all three Annamese-speaking provinces) within the framework of the Indochinese Federation (which will comprise Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) and the French Union. Membership in the French Union, according to the official organ of the Vietminh part means a fraternal rather than a filial relationship with France, although France will be regarded as the "elder brother." These terms were embodied in an appeal for United Nations intervention which the Vietnam government made on September 12, 1947.

Two days earlier, Bollaert had stated the French position in what was termed a "last appeal," calling for the surrender of Vietnamese armed forces and an autonomous Vietnam government under French sovereignty.

The Vietnamese felt that this ultimatum did little justice to the strength of their position, which they were given an opportunity to demonstrate when the French launched their greatest military offensive, employing an estimated 40,000 troops in Tonkin alone during the winter of 1947-48. Although the campaign was timed to coincide with the dry season, the French forces were stopped and eventually pushed back with heavy losses. Such is the situation today: military-political stalemate and economic devastation.

Most recently, there has appeared some indication that an amicable and constructive solution may be in the offing, with the arrival at Hongkong of Louis Caput, official delegate of the French Socialist Party in Indochina, presumably for the purpose of approaching Vietnamese representatives. The exact nature of the mission is uncertain, but it is known that M. Caput is a personal friend of Ho Chi Minh and has long favored a policy of negotiating with Vietnam. It is encouraging that the French authorities in Indochina may at last have evinced some readiness to concede what has already been taken for granted almost everywhere but Saigon—that no forcibly imposed peace is possible in Indochina and that the only native government capable of concluding such a peace with France in the name of the entire Vietnamese people is the government headed by Ho Chi Minh.

Notes

1 *Life*, December 29, 1947.

2 August 2, 1946.

3 January 2, 1947.

FRANCE AND VIETNAM: THE INEVITABLE WAR

Anthony Short

Source: Phil Melling and Jon Roper (eds), *America, France and Vietnam: Cultural History and Ideas of Conflict*, Aldershot: Avebury (1991), pp. 32-55.

A review of a recent book on the origins of the Vietnam War claims it is clear why the author thought it was necessary to look back to the French conquest of Indochina.

In that long-term context the war of the 1960s appears as one more act of Western intervention against what ought to have been the autonomous development of Vietnamese nationalism under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh. Such an interpretation fails to come to terms with the divisions that existed among the Vietnamese themselves, and the genuine anti-communism of the groups to which the Americans decided to offer protection. [1]

Substituting the conditional 'might' for the pejorative 'ought' would have been somewhat closer to what the book said, but however one looks at it, it was obvious at the end of 1946 that France had failed to come to terms with embattled Vietnamese nationalism, no matter how unrepresentative its leaders might have been; and as the United States in effect took over where France left off in 1954 it may at least be agreed that the Vietnam War began on 19 December, 1946.

Equally obvious is that one must look at causes as well as events; and for the sufficient cause the Second World War will do. July and August 1944, for example, were encouraging months for nationalists in Vietnam. Unfortunately, the sentiments and ambitions were mutually exclusive. In July, rather ingenuously, the French had asked for Japanese permission to celebrate the liberation of Paris. In August Ho Chi Minh crossed the border from China into North Vietnam to resume contact and influence with the

Vietminh in northern Tonkin. There was, apparently, enough revolutionary enthusiasm to support the idea of launching an insurrection from there within a couple of months. Ho, cautiously, turned down such a premature example of left-wing adventurism and, like the French, waited to see how the balance of power would change.

For the French, putting an end to the uneasy and ignominious relationship with the Japanese was something that most of them, Vichy and Gaullist alike, looked forward to with some impatience. For de Gaulle, apparently, the sooner the better; and although this may be straining the comparison, on the analogy of Badoglio's Italy, one wonders whether the French in Vietnam were hoping to work their passage towards the status of a fully fledged ally and away from the uncomfortable ambiguities of their compromised position. According to his memoirs de Gaulle willingly envisaged that hostilities would begin in Indochina; 'French blood shed on Indo-Chinese soil would give us an important voice . . . since it did not harbour the least doubt as to Japan's ultimate aggression, I desired that our troops should fight, no matter how desperate their situation'. When, however, the hostilities did begin, for most Frenchmen it ended, even more ignominiously, in imprisonment by the Japanese. But for those in the north who, together with their Vietnamese riflemen, fought the Japanese with exemplary heroism, dying in beleaguered garrisons or making a fighting retreat to the Chinese border, their fate precipitated the most unpleasant or at least the most unfortunate disagreement so far between the various allied powers.

By the time of the Japanese coup on 9 March 1945 the United States had already become an important actor in the play that was to determine the future of Vietnam. A large part of the trouble lay in the overlapping and by no means clearly defined responsibilities for operations in Vietnam between US forces operating in support of the Chinese in the 'China Theater', and South East Asia Command; more particularly, the disagreements between the American General Wedemeyer and Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten. Although his attitude towards the French seemed to change somewhat before he died, Roosevelt had effectively delayed them in their attempt to return to Indochina. Whether or not his opinions actually percolated down to subordinate commanders, many of them seemed to share his beliefs about keeping the French out; or at least, in an interesting reversal of roles in the First World War, treating France as an associated rather than an allied power. Small numbers of French had been parachuted into Indochina under SEAC auspices before the Japanese coup but a much larger and perhaps more effective intervention by the French *Corps Léger d'Intervention*, a specialist unit of some five hundred men recruited and waiting in Algeria, was frustrated for various nominal reasons; the effective one, however, was that the United States, until the very last moment, was unalterably opposed to French units participating in the war against Japan: and, especially, if this involved Vietnam.

The result, in the aftermath of the Japanese coup, was that immediate help to the French who were now fighting the Japanese in Vietnam was denied them: at a time when the US 14th Airforce in southern China could be seen by the French in Laos and Vietnam as they flew on their predetermined attacks on the Japanese elsewhere in South East Asia. It would, of course, be far fetched to compare the plight of the French fighting the Japanese in Vietnam with that of the Polish Home Army who had been destroyed fighting the Germans in Warsaw in 1944 although, in one respect at least, the failure of the proximate military power to lend assistance meant that others who were more responsive to the plight of the Poles and the French offered what they could from a distance. Again, in the case of Vietnam, this was accompanied by bitter political acrimony, at least on the operational level, between the Americans on the one side, the British and French on the other, the cause of which was, in effect, whether or not the French fighting in Vietnam were to be regarded as allies and whether or not the French had any entitlement to resume their pre-war position in Indochina. [2]

Although it was not appreciated at the time when the Japanese swept away the administration, the power and the remaining claims to sovereignty of the French in Indochina, the Second World War in Asia had entered its final six months. In this period, and before the events which may be described as 'the August Revolution', there were, in retrospect, at least two others which assume a momentous character. The first was that on 11 March 1945, two days after the Japanese coup, the Emperor Bao Dai proclaimed 'that from today the protectorate treaty with France is abrogated and that the country reassumes its rights to independence'. It was, of course, a somewhat limited independence with the government of Vietnam announcing its trust in the loyalty of Japan and considering itself to be part of Japanese Greater East Asia. It was also limited in the sense that the Japanese appointed a Governor of Cochinchina, a resident-superior of Tonkin and advisers to Annam, Cambodia and Laos. Nevertheless it had broken the thread by which the country had been tied to France, and although it might be claimed that, as in Burma during the war or in Indonesia at the end of the war, it was a spurious independence and part of Japanese mischief making, nevertheless Vietnam was now in a formal sense independent if not exactly free.

The French, too, responded to the Japanese coup with a formal declaration of their intentions for Vietnam. To some extent, perhaps, they were the victims of their own official attitude to what was happening – as when the French Ambassador in London told Eden that a French civil and military resistance organisation in Vietnam had the general support of the army and the civil population: whether this was the French or the Vietnamese population was apparently not specified – but in their Declaration of 24 March 1945 the Provisional French government implied that all the peoples of Indochina were fighting for a common cause: which was that of the entire French community. It was thus acquiring additional rights 'to receive the

place for which it is destined' but, instead of independence, there was the rather less exciting prospect of an Indochinese Federation which would 'enjoy the liberty and the organisation necessary to the development of all its resources'. Not only was France here, and on many subsequent occasions, unable to pronounce the word 'independence': on this occasion she did not even pronounce the name 'Vietnam'. It would, by implication, be one of five constituent parts of the Indochinese Federation – which means that Vietnam itself would be divided into three portions – and they, together with other parts of what were called the 'French Community' would form a French Union. The interests of the Indochinese Federation outside the Union would be represented by France. Inside the federation 'in the interests of each the Governor General would be arbiter of all'. [3] (As Irving points out, it was frankly anachronistic: more or less what Edouard Daladier had demanded after the disturbances in Indochina in 1930.) [4] In any case the interests of Vietnam – or, one might say, the non-interest in Vietnam – had been subsumed and constrained in France's Brazzaville Declaration of January 1944 which said, unequivocally,

Whereas the aims of the work of civilization accomplished by France in her colonies rule out all idea of autonomy and all possibility of development outside the French Empire; (therefore) the eventual constitution, even in the far off future, of self-government in the colonies is out of the question. [5]

As the most advanced part of the French colonial empire Vietnam, in 1945, might, by a sort of inductive leap, have been the first French colony to become independent. In hindsight, that is. At the time, however, in France it was practically unthinkable and one may surmise that while France itself might have recovered from the debacle of 1940 there was added point to her recovery of Vietnam after the humiliation and tragedy of March 1945. One may also argue that the situation was increasingly beyond her control.

In Vietnam the loss of a small intelligence network to the Japanese had made it essential for operational purposes that it should be replaced; and it is at this point that Ho Chi Minh and the American OSS found each other. The practical services rendered by each side to the other do not seem to have been all that large although there is still considerable speculation as to the volume of weapons with which the Vietminh were supplied. [6] Of equal importance, it can be argued, to the Vietminh cause was the half dozen Colt .45's which Ho had obtained from American sources; together with a signed photograph of the US 14th Airforce Commander, General Chennault. Charles Fenn, the American OSS agent whose instructions were to disregard Franco-Vietnamese politics and re-establish an intelligence rescue network regardless, reckons that the three months after the Japanese coup were perhaps the most significant in Ho's career. [7] Irrespective of what may have been

divergent political objectives, the obvious goodwill between Ho and the Americans, the limited but successful training teams that they provided for Vietminh guerrillas, and the obvious sympathy which many Americans – in particular, it seems, the OSS – had for the cause of Vietnamese independence, not to mention corresponding doubts of the French title to Vietnam: all of these understandably encouraged the Vietminh in their political objective of the accomplished fact. As Truong Chinh is said to have told the 'Peoples Congress' in August, 'we must wrest power from the hands of the Japanese and their stooges before the arrival of the Allies in Indo-China, and, as masters of the country, we shall receive the Allies who come to disarm the Japanese'. [8]

In his biography of Ho Chi Minh, David Halberstam says that Ho realised what few others did: that it would all derive from August 1945: 'for it was then that the Vietminh had in one quick stroke taken over the nationalism of the country, that Ho had achieved the legitimacy of power'. The 'nationalism of the country' would seem to be an acceptable figure of speech; but in practice it was centred on Hanoi. Twelve months earlier when Paris had been liberated, communist members of the Resistance in France had wanted to strike before the French army and de Gaulle arrived: and thus present them with an accomplished fact. Such a capture of French nationalism would probably have been impossible in Paris but in Hanoi circumstances were combining to make it a reality. At least, in those extraordinary days between Hiroshima and the Declaration of Vietnamese Independence, hardly anyone, except the French garrison who were still imprisoned, first by the Japanese and then by the Vietminh, could be found to contradict this assumption of power and by the time it took place, or at least was claimed, another thread in the French connection had been broken. On August 25th the Emperor Bao Dai had abdicated. At the point of a gun, says one author [9] but not according to Bao Dai himself. 'The people', he said, 'possess a very sure instinct which, in historic hours, conducts them towards those whose mission it is to guide them. The Vietminh had seemed to bring it off as if by a miracle. Was not their incontestable success the sign that they had received the mandate of heaven?' [10]

Even before Bao Dai's abdication his nominal government, which had taken office after the Japanese coup, had resigned. Instead of government there were now centres of power and it was to one of these, in Hanoi, that Bao Dai addressed his reply to the Vietminh. Not knowing their address, he says, he addressed it simply to 'The Committee of Patriots'. For Ho Chi Minh, formerly 'Nguyen the Patriot', it was an accolade that corresponded to reality; but of all the 'objective circumstances' which might be held to account for even a temporary communist victory in August 1945 at least the most striking and immediate was the political vacuum into which they moved. The general insurrection was proclaimed on August 14th by the Central Committee of the Vietminh. It was, they said, the moment for the

people to rise up in arms and obtain independence, and even though this begged the question against whom they would use these arms, there was no doubt, as the Central Committee said, that it was a moment of exceptional opportunity. [11] A fortnight later they announced themselves as the Provisional Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and a few days after that, on September 2nd, as the climax to weeks of stupendous political demonstrations, Vietnam declared its independence. How had it been achieved? In what sense was it a reality?

Perhaps, and perhaps contentiously, it was because the general insurrection had not taken place at this time; at least not in the sense that it involved trial by battle. What had been happening was an assumption of power on the part of the Vietminh and the demonstration that a communist party could seize the opportunity to capitalise on the power of nationalism at a moment of unparalleled opportunity. Like Leclerc's forces waiting outside Paris in 1944, Giap's forces hurrying towards Hanoi in August 1945 discovered that the city was in the process of liberating itself. But the appearance of Giap's armed guerrillas marching in more or less regular military formation seemed to confirm that, already, the Resistance had won; and the spectacle of tiny little Vietnamese dressed in boy scout uniforms, even though they may have been 'Vanguard Youth', carrying placards bigger than they were which said 'Independence or Death' was just another element in the enthusiasm which can equally well be described as revolutionary nationalism or national revolution. Was it, because it was orchestrated by the Communist Party, invalid? Certainly, there were examples of transparent deception: for example, when, as proof of their transcendental patriotism, the Indochina Communist Party dissolved itself and announced it had become the Association for Marxist Studies. It was also obvious that the Vietminh were running rings around the rather remote and ineffectual nationalist parties who had appeared, as it were, as returning émigrés in the baggage train of the occupying Chinese armies: although nominal partners in the great enterprise of securing national independence they were in reality excluded from any partnership in a coalition government. Much of the success, perhaps, was due to superb stage management, as in the organisation of demonstrations, but the fact that the Vietminh emerged as leaders of Vietnamese nationalism may be attributed to their sheer ability as a revolutionary party. [12] Under this heading one must include a capacity for malevolent violence which, in Duiker's rather chilling and non-committal words, meant that where power was seized, people's liberation committees were established and 'class enemies were punished'. [13] In many places there were at least elements of spontaneity and although Duiker compares it with Trotsky's description of the Bolshevik revolution as, for the most part, being a 'revolution by telegraph', Khanh says that most places acted without instructions from the Central Committee. Where revolutionary committees existed much of their impetus reflected the organising ability of the Party. By capitalising on the natural

and man-made disasters of flood and terrible famine which may have left at least a million dead, and on Vietminh seizure and distribution of rice from guarded granaries, the Party was able to discredit existing authority, both French and Japanese. The number of their supporters, if not activists, was enormously enhanced by the way in which the Vichy regime had mobilised the country's youth in patriotic but hitherto innocuous associations which now underpinned the revolution; perhaps even to the point where youth was as critical a factor in the Vietnamese revolution as it was, at the same time, in Indonesia.

Another factor of immense importance was the widespread availability of arms; but to understand how and why these became available one must first look, as Ho did, at the balance of international forces which had created this moment of opportunity. Here, as was done at Potsdam in July 1945, one may divide Vietnam into north and south. For Truman, Stalin and Churchill it was an operational decision so that the Chinese armies could operate in the north and SEAC forces in the south. Hardly anyone had expected the Japanese to surrender quite so quickly and, when they did and for the moment, as far as the Allies were concerned, hardly anything happened. It was this temporal hiatus, as much as anything, which allowed the Vietminh to assume power, particularly in the north, but when the KMT Chinese armies of occupation moved in, nominally to take the surrender of Japanese troops but in fact to remove almost everything of value that was portable, they existed side by side in fruitful collaboration. That is to say, although the Chinese did not recognise the new people's republic, the Vietminh assumption of power was not challenged. It may be said, then, that it is China who, again, and at this point, determined the fortunes of Vietnam. In exchange for large quantities of the only acceptable currency, gold, the Chinese armies also provided considerable quantities of their own weapons, presumably surplus to requirements, and were less than meticulous in their recovery of weapons from the Japanese armouries.

From all of this, as from Potsdam and Yalta, the French were excluded. To all intents and purposes, that is, because the French garrison in Hanoi was still there but imprisoned in the citadel and guarded, first by the Japanese, and then by the Vietminh. When, after notable delays, the first Free French representative Jean Sainteny, arrived in Hanoi from Kunming he had apparently already been informed by his travelling companion, Major Archimedes Patti of the American OSS, that as the Potsdam agreement made no mention of French sovereignty over Vietnam the French therefore had no right to intervene in affairs which were no longer their concern. [14] For the time being at least this was almost exactly how the French were regarded by the Americans in Vietnam: of little or no account and if not exactly in the 'out' tray at best their position was 'pending'. In the meantime, genuine American sympathies for Vietnamese independence were much in evidence. As it claimed to be the functioning government of Vietnam it was hardly

surprising that US officers, particularly OSS, maintained fairly close contact with the Vietminh and perhaps there was a genuine basis for the American-Vietnamese Friendship Association; and when the senior American officer, General Gallagher, was persuaded to sing at one of their meetings and, apparently, broadcast on Vietminh radio, this, too, was in itself a comparatively innocent exercise. Cumulatively, however, the aura of association with the United States was of immense political benefit to those who called themselves a provisional government but who were still skating on the thin surface of political respectability and had by no means attained a state of acknowledged legitimacy. As is now widely known, when, on 2 September, Ho Chi Minh made his declaration of Vietnamese independence his opening and acknowledged quotations were from the American original. But what is less widely known is that, at this moment, two American P-38 Lightnings appeared, their star insignia clearly visible, and, although it may have been coincidence, even to the sophisticated in a crowd of some hundreds of thousands, it must indeed have appeared that the mandate of heaven had assumed its newest form.

As Ho Chi Minh presented the case, the people who had fought side by side with the Allies, as well as against the French for more than eighty years, were entitled to their independence. For the moment, in the north, it could be maintained by Chinese approval, or at least complaisance, and by keeping the French out. In the south, it was to be a different story and with Vietminh claims recognised neither by the British/Indian forces who arrived first nor by the French who followed not long after, and with Japanese forces for the most part under much tighter control, the reassertion of French sovereignty, at least in so far as this might be done through the possession of Saigon, did not have long to wait. General Gracey, who commanded the 20th Indian Division, has been presented as a no-nonsense sort of general. For example, he was unimpressed by Vietminh claims to be the *de facto* government and to have resisted the Japanese; and for a while at least he believed, mistakenly, that they were in fact Japanese puppets. He, no more than General Christison in Java, was able to operate in a political vacuum but at least the French in Saigon were treated as allies rather than as one time enemies although, in the absence of sufficient numbers of Frenchmen, Japanese troops were required to fight Vietnamese who, as in Hanoi, were intent on the politics of a *fait accompli*.

Apart from taking the Japanese surrender and recovering Allied prisoners of war, General Gracey's third task was to maintain law and order; and in this he was to recognise the sole authority of the French. Unprepared for the circumstances which he would encounter he was assured by them that the Vietminh would not resist and that Cédile, the French Commissioner in the south, had tight control of his forces. Neither, unfortunately, was true. The southern Vietminh, no less than those in the north, were to resist both principle and practice of the French return to power; the French were

unprepared for any alternative; and Gracey's forces were effectively caught in the middle. On 17 September, a fortnight after Gracey's arrival, the Vietminh attempted to paralyse Saigon by calling a general strike. On the 22nd Gracey's forces assisted the French in what, despite what was claimed at the time and subsequently, was an almost bloodless coup by which they occupied the Town Hall and other central points; and two nights after that about a hundred and fifty French civilians, including many women and children, were massacred by Vietnamese who burst into the Cité Héraud district past indifferent Japanese guards. [15]

Whether it was the Vietminh, the Binh Xuyen, [16] or, most likely, Trotskyists, who were responsible, it obviously shattered any confidence that the restoration of French power could be achieved without such savage resistance. [17] On the British side there was a string of adverse comments on French performance and attitudes from newspaper correspondents, although the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent was not being particularly sensational when he reported on the unnecessary brutality of the French and concluded, 'the solution of the problem of rule in Indo-China will depend primarily upon French ability to exercise tact and conciliation'. [18] Much more remarkable, however, were Gracey's comments when it became obvious that his earlier hopes – 'if only the French would promise progressive sovereignty . . . say two or three years and the Annamites would be equally ready to meet them' (an almost exact parallel, so he thought, with Burma) – stood little chance of fulfilment. General Leclerc's troops had shown great skill and speed, he said, but much unnecessary brutality and they were in fact leaving 'a pretty good trail of destruction behind them'. French measures 'know no such thing as minimum force'; and a Divisional Intelligence Summary described the senior French officer as 'small-minded, lacking in imagination and pig-headed' and, more important, said that the other allied troops had begun to distrust both the French forces and the civil authorities. [19]

In the preface to another intelligence report, the SEAC Assistant Director of Intelligence addressed himself squarely to some of the political problems which were being faced. For example, that it was hard to explain to the Vietnamese how large numbers of Vichy French were back in positions held during the war; and although he was convinced that there was conclusive evidence that Japanese intelligence organisations were behind the Vietminh and their revolt he also said that throughout their handling of the situation the French appeared to lack every vestige of imagination. He also added: 'provided the French are prepared to deal with the Annamites as human beings and not as chattels for exploitation as in the past, there is every reason to believe that the leading Annamites will not only listen to them, but will help them'. [20]

When the French and the Vietminh came face to face in the south there was, apparently, no room for compromise and conflict was almost immediate. On the rare occasions when French and Vietminh met and when local

concessions might have helped at least to improve the atmosphere – for example, the release of hostages taken by the Vietminh – the Vietminh for their part denied all knowledge that any had been taken, while violent incidents were either attributed to forces outside their control, which may well have been true, or else to the anger of the people which again may have been true but did not improve matters much. Behind this, and the Vietminh demands for the complete restoration of their government and the disarming of French forces, there was, as Dunn puts it, the insoluble problem: 'the Vietminh wanted full sovereignty and the French delegates could not negotiate it'. Furthermore, 'Both sides were stuck – neither was empowered to negotiate without instructions'. [21] In the meantime fighting continued both in and around Saigon and, increasingly, as more and more French troops arrived, throughout Cochinchina. Gracey's British/Indian forces eventually totalled over twenty thousand men and by December the French had about the same number in Vietnam. Much of the fighting, however, involved the Japanese forces who were acting under Gracey's command but there were significant numbers, too, fighting for whatever reasons on the Vietminh side. Apart from armoured columns the French navy had joined in as well and on at least one occasion the battleship *Richelieu* was in action against land targets. Whether it would have been possible against this background of practically continuous fighting in the south for either side to have modified its objectives to the point where compromise could have been reached and full-scale war avoided, is a difficult question. After its outbreak, in retrospect, certain events suggest a remarkably high risk of collision.

On the French side one may begin in Paris with the emotional response of the Consultative Assembly to the cable which de Gaulle read out on 20 March 1945, from one of the French garrisons fighting for their lives in Tonkin. As the Assembly rose to its feet 'amid shouts and tears' few of them would have realised that it was sixty years almost to the day since the Assembly of the Third Republic had responded in much the same way to the Tonkin crisis of 1885. Then it had produced the tide of feeling which landed France in Vietnam. Now, it was responding to what de Gaulle had called the solemn pact which was at that moment being sealed 'in the suffering of all the blood of the soldiers' between France and the peoples of the Indochinese Union; and to his belief that 'not for a single hour did France lose the hope and the will to recover free Indo-China.' [22]

Of equal importance, perhaps, was the assumption that France would, as a matter of course, recover Indochina; and although it might be described as 'free' the status of Indochina or Vietnam or, as it happened, part of Vietnam, would, as the French saw it, be determined by its membership of the French Union. This was a concept that was formally introduced in the declaration of the Provisional French Government of 24 March 1945. And it was to be within that Union that 'Indo-China will enjoy appropriate liberty'. A year later the issue of 'appropriate liberty' and indeed the nature of the French

Union itself was still unresolved but by this time a Preliminary Convention had been signed between the Government of the French Republic and what was described, and recognised, as the Government of Vietnam. The Republic of Vietnam was accepted as a free state having its own government, parliament, army and finances. At the same time, it was recognised as 'forming part of the Indo-Chinese Federation and the French Union'. As far as either side was concerned, were the two concepts of freedom and membership of the French Union compatible? And, most important of all, by freedom did one mean independence? If not, conceptually, was there any prospect of real agreement?

Almost everything about the French mood in 1945 suggests that unqualified independence was just about the last thing that anyone envisaged for any part of the French colonial empire. The pattern may look more obvious after the event but it is worth pointing out that the French war in Vietnam in 1946 is sandwiched between their bombardment of Damascus and the eruption at Setif in 1945 and their violent repression of the nationalist revolt in Madagascar in 1947 after similar claims had been made for independence within the French Union. At the same time as they were re-establishing themselves in Vietnam the French were finally being evicted, as they saw it, from Syria and the Lebanon and while these were League of Nations mandates rather than parts of the French Empire proper, their loss was no less bitterly resented. An attempt was made, at least by de Gaulle, to link riots in Syria in May with what happened in Algeria on VE Day; but the scale of the French reaction in Algeria to the murder of over a hundred European settlers and associated atrocities left at least a thousand, and perhaps as many as six thousand, Algerian dead. [23] Although Algeria would later prove to be the scene of the last ditch French resistance to decolonisation, in the mood of the country in 1945 independence for Vietnam was equally inconceivable. It seemed, as much as anything, to be a matter of principle. Not only was France a republic, one and indivisible, but so was the French 'community' which comprised France and its colonies. In any event, and no matter what reforms were contemplated, the issue that was posed by Marius Moutet, pre-war Minister for the Colonies in the Popular Front and shortly to become Minister for Overseas France, was whether or not France really considered herself to be a nation of a hundred million and whether or not she was to be a great power. Others, like Bidault or de Gaulle, had no doubt: but for this even to be approximately true the contribution of her overseas territories was indispensable. [24] De Gaulle at Brazzaville in 1944 may have believed that France, of all the imperial powers, would choose nobly and liberally in a new era; on a more mundane level, and on the same occasion, it was agreed that 'access to the riches of all that bears the French name is the most certain measure of our country's return to grandeur'. [25]

It would seem from the record, therefore, that France was not prepared to dismantle its colonial empire. That is to say no French government and

probably no French political party at this time was willing to concede the principle of secession; and the permanent loss of Indochina would obviously have made it harder to hold on to French North Africa and even to Black Africa. In Vietnam, however, after the war had ended, half of the problem was how to regain half of the country that was still under Chinese occupation and here, one might argue cynically, the French Union was indispensable. And even if it was not it allowed both sides an extra nine months in which to strengthen their positions.

The agreement of 6 March 1946 between Jean Sainteny and Ho Chi Minh in effect postponed the basic disagreement between France and the Vietminh. The situation that produced it was comparable to that which was to lead to a similar agreement between the returning Dutch and those who had proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia: in both cases neither side was prepared, there and then, for all-out war when the last British forces left Indonesia or when the Chinese armies in Tonkin were finally persuaded to go. In Indonesia a large part of the argument, which led on two occasions to undeclared war, turned on the federal nature of the new state. In Vietnam, it was the same argument, and with many of the same features, that underlay the nature of the French Union.

In so far as the French Union was a federation which would group Indochina, Black Africa and North Africa, it was, as Raymond Aron pointed out, a grandiose objective [26] but at least in the original proposals of the drafting committee (which included a former governor-general of Indochina, Alexandre Varenne) it was to be a union based on free consent. To that extent it might in principle have been acceptable to the Vietminh government: but probably only to the point where, in practice, it was powerless to circumscribe the sovereignty of the Democratic Republic. In a memorable analogy the black African nationalist (and socialist) leader Leopole Senghor had said that the French Union must not be built like a cage that no one would care to enter; but in the Ho-Sainteny agreement the Vietminh were in effect being asked to sign the lease of a building that had not yet been constructed. Perhaps with a generous spirit on both sides some sort of accommodation might have been reached, but before the possible constraints of the French Union became important there were more ominous developments, first in Vietnam, then in Paris, which would make a full-scale confrontation more likely.

The Ho-Sainteny agreement, momentous in that it allowed a temporary reoccupation of Tonkin by French forces, was nevertheless reckoned to be a preliminary. When the two sides met again at the hill station of Dalat in April 1946 it was obvious that the immediate disagreement was on the nature of the Indochina Federation and whether or not the Government of Vietnam, which the French had already recognised, was anything more than the Republic of Tonkin. Both sides had agreed that the unification of the three parts of Vietnam would be subject to a referendum. It was now becoming

increasingly clear that the French were determined at least to hold on to the richest part, namely Cochinchina, or at least this was the unmistakable objective of the new French High Commissioner, the implacable Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu. As much if not more Gaullist than de Gaulle, d'Argenlieu was not only a regular naval officer but also former prior of a Carmelite monastery. His faithfulness to de Gaulle, and to Gaullist ideas on empire, was unshakeable: and so, apparently, was his position in Indochina even after de Gaulle himself had demitted office in January 1946. D'Argenlieu, it seems, was practically unstoppable in pursuit of his ideas about France's place in Indochina. He was also, apparently, uncontrollable, at least by the government in Paris, but although his actions were widely condemned at the time and subsequently, it is a more open question whether his objectives were so much at odds with those of his government.

When they returned to Cochinchina the French began by treating it as a restored colony and with Cédile, the French Commissioner in the south, and Moutet in Paris both anticipating, or frustrating, the results of the promised referendum, there were increasing prospects that it would be retained for French economic interests in the form of a nominally autonomous government. The creation of such a 'free state' of the same order as the one which the French already recognised in Hanoi was bound to reflect on French good faith and again to call the unity of Vietnam into question. When the negotiations began at Dalat it was Giap who assumed the principal role on the Vietnamese side and while, as communists, they might have accepted a smaller but communist state that could conceivably have been free of the French, it was as nationalists that the Vietminh argued their case for indissoluble national unity. To lose Cochinchina, they said, would be like France losing Alsace-Lorraine; and with the French stepping up their efforts to create the impression of autonomy in Cochinchina the conference ended in total disagreement. In Cochinchina, as in Tonkin, French, Vietminh and nationalist forces were in close proximity and as long as Vietnam's political future was in doubt clashes were almost certainly inevitable. The Vietminh argued that the French in Cochinchina had never observed either the spirit or the letter of the Ho-Sainteny agreement. The French replied that the devastation and terrorism that continued was not all the fault of 'dissident' Nationalist Vietnamese or bandits; and although it might not have the status of an 'official' armed struggle the results were indistinguishable. And it was to restore order, as much as anything, that a nominally Vietnamese administration provided at least the facade of an 'independent' Vietnamese government.

Admiral d'Argenlieu, who regarded the Ho-Sainteny agreement as the equivalent of Munich, was temperamentally opposed to negotiation and was obviously ready if not anxious to put differences with the Vietminh to the test of battle. General Leclerc, however, was not, and believed not only that the reconquest of Tonkin even in part was impossible but that a negotiated

settlement was essential even if it conceded independence. [27] For the moment, however, there was still an outside chance that when the nationalist and communist members of what was described as a good-will parliamentary mission from Hanoi – and Ho as President – arrived in the more liberal and relaxed atmosphere of Paris an understanding might have been reached. But by the time the delegation set out for Paris, the French Draft Constitution had already been rejected – and with it the principle of free consent on which the French Union was to be based – and while he was still en route to France Ho learned that a Provisional Government of Cochinchina had been announced. [28] By the time negotiations finally got under way at Fontainebleau, elections for the new Constituent Assembly in France had resulted in a victory for the Catholic MRP, with the Communists in second place and heavy losses for the French Socialist Party. Neither d'Argenlieu nor Ho led their respective sides at Fontainebleau but an agreement seemed no more likely between their substitutes: Max André, with his interests in the Banque de l'Indo-Chine, or Pham Van Dong.

André, the friend of the new French Prime Minister Georges Bidault, had apparently been told that he could not concede the fundamental issue of independence. [29] For Pham Van Dong, who was to succeed Ho on his death, and for the large and varied delegation which came to Paris under the title of the Popular National Front (Lien Viet) everything, practically, turned on the question of Cochinchina. Perhaps, as Ho said later, all that was needed was for the French to pronounce one word: independence. But on both sides this was a fraught and emotional issue. It was unlikely to be conceded by Bidault and the MRP; Thorez and the communists were not particularly interested; and the only socialist member of the French team at Fontainebleau resigned after two hours. [30]

As at Dalat in April, the Fontainebleau conference failed entirely on substantive issues. Bidault, it has been said, leader of the Resistance in occupied France, may have been unaware how the world outside had changed during the war; but in any event regarded Ho as a threat to France's post-war international position. Pham Van Dong in Paris, as well as Giap in Hanoi, had a comparable distrust of French intentions and, since elections of a kind had been held in January 1946, [31] the Vietminh had been busy consolidating communist power at the centre of a nationalist movement which, in its external aspect, impressed many observers with its moderation. Internally, it was a different matter, where ultra-nationalist rivals and critics of temporary accommodation with the French, as well as those who were suspected of favouring them, were being liquidated in purges which were probably as bloody as most in Eastern Europe; and on some occasions it seems the former were killed as a result of Franco-Vietminh collaboration. [32] In most other respects, however, joint efforts to keep the peace (such as they were), let alone to share the responsibilities of government, were coming to an end. In Tonkin, as well as in Cochinchina, both sides ignored the other as well as the

general terms of their March agreement. Thus, and apparently removing all doubt about French intentions to dismember Vietnam, when d'Argenlieu convened another conference at Dalat on 1 August to discuss Indochinese problems, there were representatives of Laos, Cambodia and Cochinchina as well as the dubious, shadowy entities of 'Southern Annam' and the Montagnards of the southern plateau – but no Vietminh. [33] This was to provide the occasion on the Vietnamese side for terminating the Fontainebleau exercise. After their return to Vietnam a constitution was approved for the Democratic Republic which completely ignored the Indochina Federation and all mention of the French Union – but which affirmed that 'the territory of Vietnam . . . is one and indivisible'.

Years later, when Sainteny returned to Hanoi, Le Duan recalled these words, which he attributed to Ho Chi Minh, and which may stand as his memorial inscription: 'the Vietnamese nation is one and indivisible'. As much as anything it represents the conviction which took the communist leadership of a proto-state into and through two cataclysmic conflicts with a tenacity and disregard of human life that has characterised religious, revolutionary and patriotic wars. It was opposed, on the French side, by virtually the same principle which, for all the emotional resurgence of Jacobin principles that may have suffused France at the end of the war, had faded by comparison with the raw and remorseless nationalism that was waiting to engulf the French from one end of Vietnam to the other. Given these irreconcilable purposes it is Pham Van Dong and Giap, to take two symbols of Vietnamese intransigence, rather than Ho Chi Minh, who represented the reality of Franco-Vietnamese relations in the four or five months before the all-out war began in December 1946; even though it is tempting to consider how, up to the last minute, conflict might have been averted – or at least postponed. [34]

Two authors who have recently addressed themselves to this topic are Philippe Devillers and Stein Tonnesson. The first, in his book *Paris-Saigon-Hanoi* (Paris, 1988) presents what he calls 'the Archives of the War, 1944–1947' and, in having a second look at the origins of the Franco-Vietnamese war, seems to underline the mutual incompatibilities. In Paris, the Ho-Sainteny accord – which was regarded as an unwelcome *fait accompli* – was taken as the basis for negotiating a more favourable position. In Hanoi, in spite of Ho's protestation – 'I am a faithful friend of France' – they were determined to secure the unity and independence of the entire country. General Leclerc may or may not have been right when he argued that once France pronounced the word 'independence' the greater part of the problem would be resolved; but, in any event, affairs of Indochina were in the hands of Admiral d'Argenlieu who declared: 'the principle objective of our mission is to re-establish the authority of France not only in law but in fact'.

Obviously, therefore, French and Vietnamese concepts of sovereignty were totally at odds and if neither side was prepared to concede to the other's

claim then there was bound to be some sort of conflict. As General Valluy said: 'the situation is eminently unstable. At any moment we could be attacked as the result of some trivial incident'. Each French garrison commander, therefore, was ordered to draw up security plans; and from here it was a short but fatal step to move, as Valluy put it, from the scenario for a purely military operation to that of a coup d'état. The trouble, of course, with a contingency plan is that sooner or later someone may try it out although even with the most shameless war of aggression some pretext is usually given. Devillers argues that it was, in fact, a war of aggression – French aggression – and one of the most significant developments was when the French claimed that it was they who were no longer the victims of provocation but of premeditated aggression.

With a government in Paris that was unwilling or unable to bring the High Commissioner in Saigon to heel it is no wonder that events in Vietnam developed their own momentum; nor, when that government in Paris changed, that the time seemed ripe to the French administration in Vietnam for a pre-emptive strike, before they themselves were called to account. When Leon Blum became the first post-war Socialist Premier of France on 12 December 1946 he had in fact exactly seven days in which to avert the Vietnam war; and it is these seven days which are the climax of Tonnesson's book; *1946: Déclenchement de la guerre d'Indochine* (Paris, 1987) with its subtitle 'The Tonkin Vespers of December 19'. Tonnesson, on the basis of this brilliant and definitive exposition, has used the French civil and military archives to provide an intense and detailed study of the hours which led up to the Vietnamese attack on the power station in Hanoi and the general conflict which began that night.

Only this may not have been the beginning of a general conflict; and among the intriguing possibilities discussed by Tonnesson is that it was the local irregular units in Hanoi who may have precipitated the attack which was not otherwise intended by Ho's government: at least not at this time. A conflict, furthermore, might have been averted if telegrams between Ho and Blum had taken their swift and normal course. Even after the fighting had begun, and this is by no means the least intriguing possibility, Tonnesson and Devillers both wonder whether, even then, the fighting might have stopped if the two sides had been prepared to return to the *status quo ante*.

As it was, both sides were waiting for the other to give the order for a cease-fire. In the event, certainly on the French side, that order was pre-empted because, as Blum's emissary, Moutet, said, it was necessary to have a military decision. Or, as Admiral d'Argenlieu wrote to his patron, General de Gaulle, 'praise God M. Moutet has had no personal contact with the Ho Chi Minh crew'. For d'Argenlieu, now, as he told the French in Indochina, the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam no longer exists; and in all official documents, and if possible in the press and even in conversation,

the name 'Vietnam' was to be proscribed. How the name was to be retrieved was something that would occupy almost the next thirty years.

Notes

- [1] R.B. Smith reviewing A. Short, *The Origins of the Vietnam War*, Longman, London 1989 in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 15 December 1989. This chapter is substantially based on material from that book.
- [2] The controversy has continued for the last forty years. See, for examples, Bernard Fall, *The Two Vietnams*, Pall Mall Press, London 1963; Peter M. Dunn, *The First Vietnam War*, Hurst, London 1985; Ronald H. Spector, *United States Army in Vietnam - Advice and Support; The Early Years 1941-1960*. Center for Military History, Washington DC 1983; and Charles Cruickshank, *SOE in the Far East*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1983.
- [3] Allan W. Cameron, *Vietnam Crisis*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1971, pp. 33-35.
- [4] R.E.M. Irving, *The First Indo-China War*, Croom Helm, London 1975, p. 4.
- [5] *Ibid.*
- [6] David Halberstam claims that there is considerable evidence that five thousand weapons were air-dropped to the Vietminh in the summer of 1945 by the Allies. Presumably this was mostly, if not entirely, by the United States. David Halberstam, *Ho*, Random House, New York 1971, ch. 4.
- [7] Charles Fenn, *Ho Chi Minh*, Studio Vista, London 1973, p. 82.
- [8] Cited in Cameron, *Vietnam Crisis*, p. 27.
- [9] Brian Crozier, *de Gaulle: The Warrior*, Methuen, London 1973, p. 364.
- [10] Bao Dai, *Dragon D'Annam*, Plon, Paris, p. 119.
- [11] Rima Rathauskay (ed.), *Documents of The August 1945 Revolution In Vietnam*, Australian National University, Canberra 1963, p. 53.
- [12] In an article 'The Vietnamese August Revolution Reinterpreted' Huynh Kim Khanh says that the ICP skills in revolutionary analysis, organisation, propaganda, and leadership were undoubtedly superior to all save none, of Vietnamese political parties. The Japanese coup was equally important: but by destroying French colonialism it merely provided the Vietnamese revolution with an opportunity, a chance for success. The rest was up to the Vietnamese revolutionaries themselves. *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol.xxx, no. 4, August 1971.
- [13] William J. Duiker, *The Communist Road to Power in Vietnam*, Westview Press, Colorado 1981, p. 91.
- [14] Quoted in Bernard Fall, *The Two Vietnams*, p. 68.
- [15] Starting with the *a priori* assumption that the French should not have returned to Vietnam, Harold Isaacs, an American journalist in Saigon at the time, suggests that numbers of Vietnamese were killed in the September coup. This is denied by Dunn who provides a most credible account of what was happening during the British occupation. Harold Isaacs, *No Peace For Asia*, M.I.T. Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1967 and Dunn, *The First Vietnam War*.
- [16] For years one of the armed factions of Vietnamese political life who paraded proudly under a voluminous banner which said 'Binh Xuyen Pirates'. See D. Lancaster, *The Emancipation of French Indo-China*, Oxford University Press, London 1961, p. 137.
- [17] Lancaster, *The Emancipation of French Indo-China*, notes that, as part of the general turbulence in Vietnam at this time, another of the armed religious sects,

the *Hoa Hao*, some fifteen thousand or so, had attempted to set up their own 'kingdom' early in September but had been repulsed by the Vietminh and the Japanese. On the deadly rivalry between the Vietminh and the Trotskyists, Lancaster says that the Vietminh leader in the South, Tran Van Giàu, was responsible for the mass arrests and executions of the Trotskyist leaders. *Ibid.*

- [18] Dunn, *The First Vietnam War*, p. 196.
- [19] *Ibid.*, p. 286, 293, 309.
- [20] *Ibid.*, p. 263.
- [21] *Ibid.*, p. 251.
- [22] D. Bruce Marshall, *The French Colonial Myth and Constitution-Making in the Fourth Republic*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1973, p. 135.
- [23] See Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, Macmillan, London 1977, ch. 1.
- [24] See Marshall, *The French Colonial Myth*, chs. 5, 6 and 7. Also, Clark W. Garret, 'In Search of Grandeur: France in Vietnam 1940-1946', *The Review of Politics*, vol. 29, no. 3, July 1967, pp. 303-323.
- [25] Marshall, *The French Colonial Myth*, pp. 103, 110.
- [26] Garret, 'In Search of Grandeur', p. 317.
- [27] Irving, who had access to the papers of Jean Letourneau, the MRP Minister of Overseas France, quotes from the Leclerc report of 30 April 1946. See *The First Indo-China War*, p. 19.
- [28] Philippe Devillers, *Histoire Du Viet-Nam*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris 1952 gives one of his chapters the title 'Le Chevauchée Cochinchinoise'. Rather than a cavalcade, however, the Provisional Government may be seen as a charade with very little power and doubtful popular support. See also E. Hammer, *The Struggle For French Indo-China*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1954, and Lancaster, *The Emancipation of French Indo-China*.
- [29] According to André's interview with Irving, *The First Indo-China War*, p. 27.
- [30] Hammer, *The Struggle for French Indo-China*, p. 167.
- [31] Duiker says, without comment, that ninety-seven per cent of the electorate voted, *The Communist Road to Power*, p. 117. This would have been a spectacularly high figure even allowing for the excitement of Vietnam's first general election. Hammer, *The Struggle for French Indo-China*, says 'It was, in fact, impossible to talk of real fairness and accuracy in a country-wide election held in conditions of quasi-war and among people who had no knowledge of the techniques of democracy', p. 143. Devillers gives a qualified answer to the question 'Can one speak of free elections?': 'Yes and no'. Be that as it may, he says, from now on the Vietminh had their democratic facade, *Histoire Du Viet-Nam*, p. 201. Lancaster, *The Emancipation of French Indo-China*, concludes that in spite of many irregularities the results 'were probably fairly indicative of the state of public opinion at that time,' p. 127.
- [32] 'Even before the armed conflict blanketed the entire country, the communists felt perfectly justified in equating opposition to the Vietminh with anti-state activity. Though the communists introduced radical democratic reforms, they had no compunction about imprisoning or even murdering those who tried to use these reforms to oppose them'. Joseph Buttinger, *Vietnam: A Political History*, Praeger, New York 1968, p. 258.
- [33] The Dutch, by coincidence, had just convened a similar meeting at Malino to contain and dilute the strength of the Indonesian Republic within a federal structure. But, having chosen the delegates, the Dutch were apparently surprised by their demands for genuine independence.
- [34] The events that led up to the outbreak of war on 19 December are dealt with in two brilliant and fascinating pieces of historical reconstruction by the

Norwegian historian Stein Tonnesson, *The Outbreak of War in Indochina 1946*, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo 1982, and 1946: *Déclenchement de la Guerre d'Indochine: Les Vêpres Tonkinoises du 19 Décembre*, Harmattan, Paris 1987.

THE ROOTS OF FRENCH- AMERICAN DISCORD OVER VIETNAM

Marianna P. Sullivan,

Source: Marianna P. Sullivan, *France's Vietnam Policy: A Study in French-American Relations*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press (1978), pp. 33-61.

France's reaction to American involvement in Vietnam in the 1960s was rooted in an earlier historical period. Undoubtedly, the erosion of their rule in Indochina¹ during World War II and their subsequent defeat by the Viet Minh impressed the French with the futility of opposing Vietnamese nationalism. Furthermore, American ambivalence regarding France's efforts to reassert its authority in Indochina in 1945-46 aroused resentment among French leaders. In particular, General de Gaulle, who headed the French Provisional Government in 1945, was frustrated and angered by American policy in this regard. Unfortunately, French-American differences deepened as the Indochina war progressed. Finally, at the 1954 Geneva conference, the French were dismayed by what they regarded as a lack of American diplomatic support. All of these experiences contributed to French skepticism about subsequent American policy in Vietnam.

The outbreak of war in Indochina

French rule in Indochina is interrupted

It is instructive to recall the events leading up to the first Indochina war before examining how French and American policy there differed from 1940 to 1954. During World War II, the exercise of French sovereignty over Indochina was interrupted for the first time in nearly seventy years. In 1940, the representatives of Vichy France in Indochina and the Japanese concluded a series of collaboration agreements that allowed French forces to remain

nominally in control. However, on March 9, 1945, as the war in the Pacific neared its end, the Japanese moved suddenly to disarm the French. Two days later, they set up a puppet regime under Vietnamese Emperor Bao Dai who declared Vietnam independent of France.

Hence, the immediate goal of the French in 1945 was to reassert their authority in Indochina as quickly as possible. Towards that end, on March 24, 1945, General de Gaulle announced the creation of the Indochinese Federation, which was to have a new status within the French community.² However, events continued to overtake French policy. Before the French could regain power from the Japanese, an indigenous group, led by Ho Chi Minh and strengthened by the confusing situation of the war years, had come to power in the northern area of Vietnam.

Ho had spent the years between 1938 and 1945 in China; he returned to Vietnam in May 1945.³ He and his guerrillas increased their activity against the Japanese and set up "peoples' regimes" in six Vietnamese provinces. On September 2, 1945, they proclaimed the birth of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. Bao Dai renounced his imperial title and became a counselor to the new government. The existence of this rival regime in Tonkin complicated the task of the returning French. Aware of the difficulties of the situation, General de Gaulle ordered General Leclerc, his appointed commander of the French forces in Asia, to proceed first to Cochinchina, postponing occupation of Tonkin until later. Before the war, Cochinchina, the southernmost part of Vietnam, had been administered directly by the French because of their important economic interests there; it was also the area in which Ho Chi Minh and his followers, who became known as the Viet Minh, were weakest. In contrast, the northernmost sector, Tonkin, was the site of the Viet Minh headquarters in Hanoi and the area of its greatest strength. De Gaulle correctly assumed that the returning French forces would meet far less opposition in the south than in the north.

Tonkin was not reoccupied by the French until March 1946, two months after de Gaulle had retired temporarily from French politics. However, he had laid down to General Leclerc three conditions to be fulfilled before the French returned to the north. These were: "(that) the situation be clarified, the population thoroughly exasperated by the presence of the Chinese, and relations settled between (de Gaulle's representative) Sainteny and Ho Chi Minh."⁴

By March 1946, all three of de Gaulle's conditions were fulfilled.⁵ First, the Vietnamese government seemed to have control over the major parts of Tonkin and Annam. Moreover, French representatives in the area, including Pierre Messmer, then a French official who parachuted into Vietnam in August 1945 (and later premier of France under Georges Pompidou), and Jean Sainteny, the French commissioner for Tonkin and Annam (1945-47), attested to the fact that Ho Chi Minh and his collaborators had captured considerable public support.

Second, the Vietnamese were fed up with the Chinese occupation. Chinese troops had arrived in the northern sector of Vietnam in September 1945 in accord with the Allied agreement at Potsdam the previous July. Simultaneously, British troops had occupied the southern sector of Vietnam for the Allies.

The Chinese occupation was officially neutral between the Vietnamese revolutionaries and the French; hence, the Chinese incurred the wrath of both parties. The French did not believe that the Chinese were energetic enough in hastening the restoration of French sovereignty.⁶ They preferred the actions of the British who, led by General Gracey, assisted General Leclerc in the reassertion of French authority in the south and promptly withdrew in December 1945. In contrast, the Chinese did not evacuate their troops from the north until June 1946. By this time, the Vietnamese were equally disillusioned with the Chinese occupation force. The Chinese government had refused to recognize Ho Chi Minh's government, so that its neutral policy actually acknowledged the ultimate return of the French.

The Vietnamese leaders, who had spent most of the war years in China, had hoped for a more sympathetic attitude on the part of the Chinese.⁷ This failing, the Vietnamese were happy to see the Chinese leave. As Ho Chi Minh told Paul Mus: "It is better to smell the feces of the French for a little while than to eat Chinese excrement all of one's life."⁸

Third, by March 1946, the rapport between the French representative in Hanoi, Jean Sainteny, and Ho Chi Minh made an accord possible. Sainteny, a French businessman in Indochina before the war and later a member of the resistance, was assigned in 1945 by General de Gaulle to lead a French mission in Kun-ming, China; his goal was to return French authority to Indochina as quickly as possible. Sainteny and a few comrades arrived in Hanoi at the moment when Ho Chi Minh was setting up his government in August and September 1945. Sainteny became well acquainted with Ho, and the two men held a series of private nocturnal meetings to negotiate the French return to northern Vietnam. Sainteny and Ho reached an accord, which they signed on behalf of their governments on March 6, 1946. Its first provision read:

The French government recognizes the republic of Vietnam as a free state having its government, its parliament, its army and its finances, forming part of the Indochinese Federation and the French Union. In that which concerns the Union of the three "Kys," the French government agrees to ratify the decisions taken by the populations consulted by referendum.⁹

The French had made two important concessions. First, they acknowledged that Vietnam was entitled to the status of a "free state," implying an independent character. Second, they promised not to interfere with the unity

of the three keys of Vietnam (Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina) which would be decided by referendum. In return, the Vietnamese agreed to postpone the exercise of independence and "to welcome amicably the (returning) French army."¹⁰

The vague terms of the March 6 accord were to be interpreted into specific arrangements during future meetings between the two sides. However, these negotiations were beset with difficulties; at meetings in Dalat, Vietnam, and Fontainebleu, France, in the summer of 1946, it became clear that the French and Vietnamese were not prepared to negotiate on the same basis.

The Vietnamese regarded the provisions of the March 6 accord as the principles on which future agreements would be based; they saw the accord as a beginning. They agreed to less than complete independence because they relied on French promises to proceed towards that goal. French recalcitrance at subsequent meetings caused the Vietnamese to feel betrayed. Further evidence of France's bad faith was its cooperation in the establishment of an independent republic in Cochinchina on June 1, 1946, as the Fontainebleu conference opened. This action directly violated the French promise on March 6 to preserve the unity of the three keys.

Clearly, the French viewed the March 6 accord as the maximum they would agree to in order that their returning troops meet no armed resistance from the Vietnamese. The French army occupied the northern area of Vietnam on March 18, 1946; once reinstated on Vietnamese territory, they were inclined to take the narrowest interpretation of their concessions to Vietnamese independence. They viewed the Vietnamese position at the Dalat and Fontainebleu conferences as an attempt to obtain further concessions beyond the terms of the prior accord. Therefore, agreement between the two sides was impossible.

Ho Chi Minh, who had traveled to France for the Fontainebleu meetings, was disappointed at the failure to reach a satisfactory accord. In September 1946, he beseeched his friend Sainteny not to let him return to his country empty-handed. Nevertheless, the *modus vivendi* signed by Ho and French Overseas Minister Marius Moutet on September 14 was no substitute for a detailed and binding agreement.

In the months following Ho Chi Minh's return to Vietnam, the situation rapidly deteriorated. Fighting broke out in November in Haiphong, a major port where Vietnamese and French forces coexisted uneasily. After several incidents involving conflicts over exercise of the customs function, the military commander in Haiphong, Colonel Dêbes, issued an impossible ultimatum to the Vietnamese forces, leaving them only two hours to comply. When they failed to do so, he opened fire using land and naval artillery. In response, General Vo Nguyen Giap led the Vietnamese in a large-scale surprise attack against the French in Hanoi on December 19, 1946. The first Indochina war had begun.¹¹

The lost peace

Sainteny's account of the events of 1945-46 is titled "History of a Lost Peace" (*paix manquée*); this phrase suggests that the outbreak of hostilities might have been avoided. However, the events of the period from March 1945, when the Japanese disarmed the French, to December 1946, when full-scale war erupted between the French and the Vietnamese, moved with the rhythm of a Greek tragedy. Armed conflict seemed inevitable even though moderates, such as Ho Chi Minh and Jean Sainteny, hoped for a peaceful solution incorporating both Vietnamese and French interests. In spite of efforts to reach such a solution, the extremists on both sides prevailed; they had several compelling advantages.

First, the moderates were a very small group. It is probably an exaggeration to argue that many of France's leaders were prepared to give Vietnam complete independence, even in a distant future. Even those Frenchmen with some sympathy for the Vietnamese cause envisioned a continuing dependence on France. In turn, the extreme elements in Vietnam were strengthened by French recalcitrance on the independence issue.

Second, the French commanders in the field were ardent colonialists who were eager to reassert forcefully French authority in Vietnam. Colonel Dèbes, who ordered the French attack at Haiphong on November 23, disliked the Vietnamese and they "thoroughly detested" him.¹² With such lack of sympathy for the Vietnamese on the part of local French officials, it is doubtful that violence could have been avoided.

Third, the instability of the French government prevented the adoption of a consistent policy towards Vietnam after World War II, especially one that recognized the Vietnamese desire for self-determination. Four men headed the French government in 1946; Charles de Gaulle, who resigned in January; Félix Gouin, who held power from January to June; Georges Bidault, who was in office from June to December; and Léon Blum, who succeeded Bidault. De Gaulle and Bidault were pro-colonialist, while Gouin and Blum were inclined to favor national self-determination. Governmental instability, which became typical of the Fourth Republic, caused these four men of different persuasions to alternate in office during 1946: first a colonialist, then an anti-colonialist, and so on. The Gouin government approved of the March 6 accord with the Vietnamese; the Bidault government did not and hence did nothing to facilitate agreement with the Vietnamese at Fontainebleu in July.¹³ When Blum took over in December, it was too late to avert violence. The unstable political situation in Paris had strengthened the extremists on both sides and hastened the outbreak of war.

Furthermore, continued governmental instability gave the war its hopeless character. The goal of retaining Vietnam as a French colony was unrealistic in view of Ho Chi Minh's military and political strength. After 1949, France

supported a rival regime led by Bao Dai but refused to grant him the independence that would have been the condition of his success.¹⁴ Yet the French were unable to shift to a more realistic policy. This lack of direction and coherence was endemic to a political system in which successive coalition governments postponed decisions rather than risk loss of parliamentary support. The natural advocates of Vietnamese independence, Communists and Socialists, had been handicapped by the necessity of maintaining their positions in the French government. Communist participation in cabinets prior to 1947 silenced the extreme Left at the moment when, in the spring and summer of 1946, Ho Chi Minh tried to negotiate a solution. Later governments remained divided on this issue and resisted major changes of direction in the Indochina policy as elsewhere. Thus, "the war was not directed at all. Because the government was divided and its plans were confused, the war was fought without a goal."¹⁵

Separate French-American perspectives in South East Asia, 1940-54

Wartime planning and allied occupation of Vietnam

The first juncture at which French and American policy over Vietnam conflicted was during wartime planning. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was convinced that France's inability to defend Indochina destroyed its right to regain control of its colony.

When France fell to the Germans in June 1940, the United States was officially neutral in the war between Allied and Axis powers; its policy in the Far East was governed by this fact and by the belief that the Japanese would not use force against the French in Indochina. These latter calculations were disproved when in September 1940 the Japanese attacked two French fortresses inflicting 800 casualties on the brave but hopelessly outnumbered French garrisons. Although the Vichy regime had no alternative but to conclude an agreement permitting the Japanese to station troops in Indochina, in the minds of Allied statesmen French collaboration was regarded somewhat resentfully.¹⁶

President Roosevelt's view that Indochina should be placed under international trusteeship was well-known. In January 1944, he bluntly remarked to the British ambassador to the United States, Lord Halifax: "for over a year, (I have) expressed the opinion that Indochina should not go back to France but that it should be administered by an international trusteeship."¹⁷ Furthermore, Roosevelt had discussed the future of Indochina with the Chinese at Cairo and with the Russians at Teheran, that is, in forums where no representative of France was present. Finally, this American attitude was in sharp contrast to frequent American promises that France would retain control of its colonies after the war.¹⁸

Naturally, General de Gaulle, head of the French Provisional Government, was furious over this American attitude. In addition, he was frustrated by Washington's refusal to provide transport to the Far East for the French troops training in Africa and Madagascar despite, in his words, "the incessant representations of the French government."¹⁹ The French later blamed this United States refusal for the delay in their return to Indochina.

Meeting in Potsdam in July 1945, the Allies (without France) decided that Indochina should be divided for the purpose of occupation at the sixteenth parallel; occupation duties north of this line fell to the Chinese and south of it to the British. The decision to divide the country at that point was due to military considerations; the nature and location of the boundary between the two halves of Vietnam would later become a controversial political question.

General de Gaulle objected to the Potsdam arrangement on the grounds that French troops should be the agents of liberation in the French colonies and because he believed that China's reluctance to permit the complete restoration of French control in Indochina might lead the Chinese authorities to sympathize with indigenous revolutionary movements.²⁰

Events seemed to confirm de Gaulle's apprehensions in the latter regard. It was in the Chinese sector that Ho Chi Minh proclaimed an independent Vietnamese republic. The officially neutral Chinese, whose policy left Ho dissatisfied, nevertheless permitted the rebel government to exist. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, Chinese officials in Hanoi, led by General Lu Han who did not agree with his government's neutral policy, made life difficult for the French mission in Hanoi under Jean Sainteny.

United States officials, especially Colonel Patti, head of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in south China, had frustrated French efforts to reassert control in Indochina since the Japanese moved against the French in March 1945. At that time, the retreating French forces in Indochina asked Sainenty (then head of the French mission at Kun-ming, China) for air cover. He relayed the request to Major General Claire L. Chennault, Commander, Fourteenth United States Air Force who refused on orders from Washington.²¹ Furthermore, Colonel Patti repeatedly delayed Sainenty's return to Indochina; in Sainenty's words: "he did all he could to stop me."²²

When he finally reached Hanoi in August 1945 Sainenty found himself a virtual prisoner, though, as he put it, in a gilded cage.²³ His movements watched, unable to make contact with the French population of Hanoi, and forbidden to fly the French flag, Sainenty found it difficult to attain his objective, viz., the reassertion of French authority in Vietnam. In the eyes of the Allies, "the representatives of France at Hanoi, on French territory, (were) . . . only a simple mission, openly ignored, systematically obstructed by a constant sly hostility."²⁴ Thus, Allied policy, for which the United States was particularly responsible, undermined French authority in its own colony.

Furthermore, the French believed that the United States supported the Vietnamese revolutionaries. The OSS had contacted Ho Chi Minh while

the latter was in China, and, during the period from July to September 1945, the OSS supplied Ho with a small quantity of small arms.²⁵ At the national day celebration in Hanoi on September 2, 1946, two American planes flew overhead during the ceremony, a signal to the Vietnamese gathered below of American sympathy for their cause. All of these signs convinced the French that the United States had adopted an anti-colonialist position in Vietnam in disregard of France's interests.²⁶

United States support for France during the first Indochina war

American policy gradually became more sympathetic to the French position in Indochina. An important factor in this connection was the British attitude. Itself a colonial power, Britain defended France's right to participate in the liberation of Indochina and, during the wartime conferences, refused to agree to an Allied declaration on colonial self-government. Under British influence, the United States decided, early in 1945, that Indochina's fate should be left in France's hands.²⁷

The shift in American policy from insistence on the concept of international trusteeship to a willingness to let France determine the fate of its Indochina colony was indicated by President Roosevelt's statement of April 3, 1945. Referring to the Yalta Conference, Roosevelt stated that the United States felt trusteeship should be the status of the territories mandated after World War I, those taken from the enemy in World War II, and "such other territories as might *voluntarily* be placed under trusteeship."²⁸ In the French view, especially that of General de Gaulle who headed the French government at that time, this belated American willingness to defer to France on a matter concerning a French colony was far from reassuring.

After the outbreak of hostilities, the United States urged the French to deal positively with the nationalist aspirations of the Vietnamese in order to avoid a protracted conflict. Nonetheless, American policy continued to defer to the French regarding Indochina. The final shift in American policy—from deference to France to active support of the French war effort—took place in early 1950. At that time, France granted the Bao Dai government a degree of autonomy and requested United States aid. The French argued that active support for their forces was the only way to oppose the spread of Asian Communism in Indochina.

The United States commitment to aid the victims of Soviet Communist aggression had been spelled out in sweeping terms by President Truman in March 1947; however, the Truman Doctrine was not immediately applied to Asia. In fact, United States intelligence estimates could find no evidence linking Ho Chi Minh to Soviet Communism. As late as the fall of 1948, a report of the Intelligence and Research Division of the United States State Department could find no direct links between Vietnamese and Russian Communists and could offer no explanation for their absence.²⁹

The Communist victory in China in December 1949 provided the necessary "proof" that the Soviets were spreading their system of government to Asia. Henceforth, direct ties or not, it became necessary to defeat Ho Chi Minh. Two months after Mao's victory, the United States recognized the Bao Dai regime and, in May 1950, stated its willingness to support substantially the French/Bao Dai forces. On May 11, 1950, Secretary of State Acheson announced plans to implement a \$60 million program of economic and technical assistance to South East Asia together with an undisclosed amount of military aid. Thus, a month before the start of the Korean War, the United States was committed to oppose Communism in Asia.

From 1950, when its support of the French effort solidified, until 1954 when France signed an armistice with the Viet Minh, the United States pursued two incompatible aims: "1. Washington wanted France to fight the anti-Communist war and win, preferably with U.S. guidance and advice; and 2. Washington expected the French, when battlefield victory was assured, to magnanimously withdraw from Indochina."³⁰ French policy suffered no such incompatibilities; its sole aim was to reassert French power in Indochina. Thus, during the first Indochina War, French and American policy differed in basic purposes.

The United States was compelled to channel its aid to the Bao Dai government through the French because of the emperor's weakness and French insistence. Jealous of their prerogatives in Vietnam and suspicious of American intentions, the French maintained a free hand in the employment of all military and economic aid. Hence, the United States Military Advisory Assistance Group (MAAG) headed in 1954 by Lieutenant General John Wilson (Iron Mike) O'Daniel, was peripheral in importance.

American officials realized that it was necessary to counter Ho Chi Minh's nationalist appeal in order to defeat him; hence they tried to convince the French to give more authority to the Bao Dai regime. The French easily resisted United States pressure in this regard; an ultimate threat at their disposal was to withdraw from Indochina altogether. American policy at this time was dictated by events outside of Vietnam—in Korea and Europe. United States participation in Korea and the turmoil it produced in America precluded a similar action in Vietnam except, possibly, in the event of direct Chinese participation. Hence support for the French in Indochina was the only alternative to a Communist victory there. Unwilling to fight the Viet Minh itself, the United States could not countenance a French withdrawal and subsequent Communist takeover.³¹ Furthermore, in the early 1950s American policy makers sought increased French participation in the Atlantic Alliance as well as French receptivity to German rearmament. In the hopes that France would ratify the treaty establishing the European Defense Community (EDC), American officials avoided actions that might incur the wrath of the French National Assembly. Thus, American officials were compelled to support the French effort in Indochina on France's terms.

This support did not resolve the basic ambiguity in United States policy and its disagreement with French policy. The two countries agreed only on the necessity to win the military struggle, not on the purposes for which victory was sought nor on the consequences for French rule after the war was over. As the Defense Department analysts state: "The fact that the American and French means—pushing for military victory—converged in 1950–1954 obscured the fact that the ends of the two nations were inherently incompatible."³² This disparity between French and American policy became obvious in the context of the Geneva negotiations.

Geneva 1954

The negotiations

In late 1953, there were indications that both the French and the Vietnamese wanted negotiations. On November 29, 1953, the *Stockholm Expressen* carried an exchange of telegrams between its editor and Ho Chi Minh in which the latter mentioned a willingness to seek a solution of the Vietnamese conflict by negotiations. Ho's interest in peace talks was shared reluctantly by the French who had concluded that military victory was impossible. At their insistence, and over American objections, the Indochina question was placed on the agenda of the 1954 Geneva conference which was to discuss Korea.³³

The conference discussed Indochina from April to July 1954,³⁴ and throughout the negotiations, the divergence between French and American policy was pronounced. The two countries differed on three essential points: the purpose of the negotiations, the possibility of American military intervention in Indochina, and the United States diplomatic role at the conference.

The purpose of the negotiations

Under pressure from political opinion at home and adverse military developments in Vietnam, Premier Joseph Laniel's government was committed to negotiations as the only viable option. Especially after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu on May 8, 1954, Laniel and his successor, Pierre Mendès-France, were determined to secure the best solution available at the conference table.

In contrast, the United States wanted negotiations only after the French had secured a favorable military position. American policy sought to avoid a French withdrawal on terms that would constitute surrender to the Communists. Reflecting on their own experiences in negotiating with the Communists over the Korean issue at Panmunjum, American officials believed that concessions from them could be won only on the battlefield, not at the

conference table. In accord with this estimate, the United States stiffened its opposition to the negotiations as the military situation worsened for the French. Thus the allies drew further apart.

The possibility of American military intervention

Immediately prior to and during the negotiations, the military situation declined seriously for the French. This prompted discussion of possible American military intervention—either unilaterally or as part of an international force. The French, seeking to forestall imminent military defeat, argued for a quick, unilateral American military strike on behalf of their besieged forces at Dien Bien Phu. They were extremely wary of any wider action. The United States, on the other hand, sought to deny the Communists control in Vietnam permanently by instituting a multilateral action, involving troops of its allies in Europe and Asia, which would internationalize the conflict. This came to be known as the "united action" plan.

United States feasibility studies regarding the advisability and timing of American intervention in Indochina began early in 1954. In a March 29 speech, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles raised the possibility of united action in Vietnam. This course seemed preferable to unilateral American intervention because it would avoid the large-scale commitment of American ground troops that might seem unacceptable both to the American public and to international opinion.

Nevertheless, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Arthur W. Radford, conceived a plan for a unilateral American strike at Dien Bien Phu. Operation Vulture, as the plan was called, consisted of an air strike against Viet Minh artillery positions on the hills surrounding Dien Bien Phu; only through destruction of these sites, from which the Viet Minh was gradually cutting the French off from supplies and reinforcements, could the fortress be saved.

The process by which the American government opted for united action instead of the Radford plan was accelerated by a meeting which Secretary of State Dulles held with members of Congress on April 3, 1954. An account of this meeting by *Washington Post* columnist Chalmers Roberts appeared in the September 14, 1954, issue of the *Reporter*. Roberts maintained that President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles sought a joint congressional resolution that would permit the use of American air and naval power in Indochina. Reportedly, Dulles had a copy of such a resolution in his pocket during the meeting. However, after Admiral Radford presented his plan for an air strike in relief of Dien Bien Phu, the congressmen, led by minority leader Lyndon B. Johnson, insisted that Dulles first seek the agreement of allied nations who would be willing to participate in a joint operation. Thus, the meeting began an intensive three-week effort by the administration to head off disaster in Indochina by seeking allied approval of a joint strike.³⁵

This version of the meeting, its purpose, and its aftermath has been challenged in a study by Robert F. Randle. Randle maintains that neither President Eisenhower nor Secretary Dulles wanted a joint congressional resolution at that time and that Eisenhower's absence from the meeting is significant in this regard. Presumably, if the president had wanted to convince Congress of the necessity of the resolution, he would have come in person. In fact, Randle argues, neither Eisenhower nor Dulles approved of Radford's plan and they called the congressional leaders' meeting to engineer an excuse to veto those activists in the administration, including Vice-President Richard Nixon, who favored the action. In his view, Congress did not impose conditions and did not determine national policy on this issue.³⁶

Randle's argument, highly favorable to Dulles throughout, maintains that the secretary sought predictable congressional reactions to the Radford plan to bolster his previously formulated intention to seek allied approval for an intervention. Subsequent United States policy is presented in this account as prudent, cautious, and consistent. In contrast, Roberts concludes that Dulles' own preference for action was inhibited by congressional restraints and that America's pre-Geneva policy was a frantic effort to secure the allied approval that would make intervention possible. Randle's version, equally plausible from the available data, is not necessarily more definitive. However, it is interesting because of its emphasis on the domestic pressures that influenced Dulles, Bidault, and Eden during their pre-Geneva quarrels and made united action, either military or diplomatic, impossible to achieve.³⁷

Whatever history's verdict on the wisdom of Mr. Dulles, his policies in the spring and summer of 1954 appeared, in French eyes, to perpetuate the contradictions that had characterized United States actions in Indochina since 1940. The plan for an American strike at Dien Bien Phu was conceived by Admiral Radford and presented to his rather startled French counterpart, General Paul Ely, who visited Washington in late March 1954. The French favored the plan and repeatedly sought to have it activated, particularly as the situation at Dien Bien Phu deteriorated. Instead, the American proposal was modified to provide for the cooperation of several allied countries in a collective venture.

Naturally, the French suspected that the United States was once again pursuing a policy contrary to French interests. They favored swift, unilateral American intervention to improve their immediate military position, but disapproved of multilateral action that might prolong the war and would inevitably dilute their authority in Indochina.

The French were very disappointed when the United States abandoned the idea of a unilateral air strike at Dien Bien Phu. They had been led to believe that the United States supported them militarily but "at the moment when this support was needed, the United States had neither the means nor the will to enter into the combat."³⁸ Once again, they felt betrayed.

In May 1954, after the fall of Dien Bien Phu, the possibility was again raised of American military intervention in support of the French forces in Indochina. Discussions between France and the United States proceeded into June, but agreement on the terms of intervention was not reached. In particular, the United States specified seven conditions that would have to be met by the French before American intervention would take place. Most odious among these were the requirements that the French Parliament approve a formal request for American military aid and that the states of Indochina be allowed to leave the French Union. The demand for a parliamentary request for military aid was problematic because such a request seemed to contradict the French policy of seeking a diplomatic settlement at Geneva. The demand that the Indochinese states be granted independence was unacceptable, because their preservation in the French Union was the very objective for which the French fought. Thus, the American position was at odds with French political realities and with French policy in Indochina.³⁹

The United States diplomatic role at Geneva

Finally, the United States and France disagreed on what role the United States was to play at Geneva. Failing a direct military intervention, the French wanted diplomatic support for their position at Geneva. They hoped to use the threat of United States intervention at the conference table and, in addition, to present a firm Western front to enforce the settlement. In contrast to this French position, the United States sought to disengage itself from the negotiating process and to reserve its future options.

Furthermore, American policy looked beyond the immediate situation towards a long-term defense arrangement for South East Asia. The united action proposal became the framework from which the South East Asia Treaty Organization emerged. As early as April 30, 1954, when Secretary of State Dulles left Geneva, leaving the American delegation in the hands of undersecretary Walter Bedell Smith, he told French Ambassador Chauvel: "We must get that pact."⁴⁰ Hence, the United States was already planning for a collective defense treaty for South East Asia regardless of the outcome of the Geneva talks. Furthermore, American ambiguity hindered French efforts to threaten the Viet Minh with possible American intervention in Vietnam. Three days after Dien Bien Phu fell, Dulles suggested publicly that South East Asia could be defended without Indochina. Bereft of his final bargaining point, the threat of American intervention, French Foreign Minister Bidault "sensed that the backbone of his case had collapsed and his position had become untenable. He was heard to mutter something about a "stab in the back".⁴¹

Indeed, the American delegation at Geneva sought to keep itself at some distance from the deliberations. For example, in Geneva on April 25, Secretary of State Dulles threatened that if highly disadvantageous solutions

were proposed, "(we) . . . would probably want to disassociate ourselves from the Conference."⁴² On May 10, Bedell Smith underlined the United States position as an unobligated observer of the talks; he rejected Bidault's call that all conference delegations agree in advance to be guarantors of the Geneva settlement.⁴³

Dulles' absence from Geneva underlined his resolve to avoid participation in the conference and to maintain distance from an accord which the United States might regard as unsatisfactory. Dulles' deputy, Bedell Smith, was recalled in late June 1954 in line with this stance. The French believed that their position at the conference was weakened by this lack of high level American support. Therefore, Premier Mendès-France argued strongly for the return of either Dulles or Smith. The latter did return to Geneva on July 17, 1954, but only after Mendès-France agreed to a memorandum outlining American and British thoughts regarding an acceptable settlement. Far from a supportive role to French diplomacy at Geneva, the United States held itself at arm's length from the conference and limited France's options. The difficult task of negotiating a favorable settlement was complicated for the French by this American posture.

The Geneva accords

Since both the French and the Viet Minh forces held substantial segments of Vietnamese territory, it became clear that the only solution possible was one based on partition. The French government resisted this course and, at first, refused to negotiate directly with the Viet Minh delegation at Geneva headed by Pham Van Dong. The French hoped to achieve a cease-fire, which would postpone a final political settlement and, towards that end, participated in secret informal negotiations with the Viet Minh. Nevertheless, the Geneva conference was stalemated for two months.

Failure to arrange a settlement brought down the government of Premier Joseph Laniel and, on June 18, 1954, Pierre Mendès-France assumed the premiership of France. One of the earliest and most vocal critics of the Indochina war, Mendès-France had declared the impossibility of a military victory in October 1950; in 1954 he led that group of French parliamentarians who advocated direct negotiations with the Viet Minh. The new premier promised Parliament that he would personally go to Geneva and conclude peace by midnight July 20, 1954, or resign. Arriving in Geneva on June 24, 1954, he gave official status to the ongoing secret truce talks and agreed that the search for an armistice would proceed on the basis of a provisional division of Vietnam. His willingness to negotiate on this basis directly with France's adversaries and the approach of his self-imposed deadline hastened the conclusion of an agreement.

The Geneva accords were concluded in a marathon session of the conference held during the night of July 20-21, 1954, so that Mendès-France might

meet his deadline. They consisted of separate truce agreements for Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam, which were signed by the French and Viet Minh authorities with the acquiescence of the Laotian and Cambodian delegates, and a final declaration, which was submitted to all the conference participants. Vietnam was provisionally divided at the seventeenth parallel, a compromise between the original French demand for the eighteenth and the Viet Minh preference for the thirteenth; the forces of each side were to repair to their respective zones. A demilitarized area was to separate the two zones, and the agreement forbade the introduction of new arms or war material or the establishment of foreign military bases in either zone. The International Commission for Supervision and Control (sometimes referred to as the ICC) composed of Canada, India, and Poland was set up to supervise observation of the truces.⁴⁴

In addition to the truce agreements, the Geneva accords included a final declaration that was assented to orally by all the delegations present at Geneva except that of the United States and South Vietnam. This declaration contained the outlines of a Vietnamese political settlement; in particular, it provided that the boundary at the seventeenth parallel was provisional and that elections to unify Vietnam should be held by secret ballot under the ICC's control within two years after the accords were signed.

The Geneva conferees were faced with the impossible task of reconciling conflicting national viewpoints on a complicated series of problems. After months of discussions, the maximum area of common agreement remained narrow so that the resulting accords tended to obfuscate the issues. Beyond the French-Viet Minh cease-fire, there was little upon which the delegates could agree. Unfortunately, the absence of agreement regarding the terms of the final political settlement and the procedures for its implementation necessitated a series of provisions that proved incomplete and unenforceable.⁴⁵

Furthermore, the obligations incurred by the delegates were of dubious legality and force since, except for the truce agreements, the accords were unsigned. Assent to the final declaration was given orally by the delegations' chiefs; the participants of the Geneva conference thereby christened "a new form of legal obligation between states—an unsigned treaty."⁴⁶ Finally, the accords were handicapped by lack of support from the American and South Vietnamese delegates without whom they could not have been enforced.

France withdraws from Vietnam

The elections for a government that would unify the two zones of Vietnam, provided for in the Geneva accords, were to be held no later than July 20, 1956. In the interim between 1954 and 1956, the responsibility for maintaining order in Vietnam and for overseeing the faithful execution of the accords rested with the signatories of the 1954 armistice agreement, France, and the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam. However, the French did not

insist on their prerogatives and, instead, turned over political power in the southern sector to the regime headed by Ngo Dinh Diem.⁴⁷ The latter, supported by the United States, refused even to discuss the proposed elections with the Hanoi government. Three months before the July 20, 1956, deadline, the French expeditionary force had completely withdrawn from Vietnam, so that France no longer possessed the means to interfere forcibly in Vietnamese affairs. Hence, France was powerless to oppose Ngo Dinh Diem when he refused to honor the election provision in the 1954 agreement. In fact, by allowing Diem full power under American tutelage, France abdicated its responsibilities under the Geneva accords and cooperated in the introduction of American military power into the Vietnamese equation.

Naturally, the events of 1954-56 exacerbated French-American hostility regarding Vietnam. After the 1954 accords the United States rapidly moved to supplant French influence in Vietnam. By September 1954, "U.S. policy began to respond to military urgency, and this in turn caused the U.S. to move beyond partnership [with France] to primacy."⁴⁸ After that time, the United States dealt directly with the Saigon government and not through France as before. On October 23, 1954, President Eisenhower wrote to Premier Diem offering him American support; this letter was subsequently referred to by President Johnson as the beginning of the American commitment to defend South Vietnam.

The French resented these American actions which they believed to be misguided and detrimental to French interests. American sustenance strengthened a South Vietnamese regime which was unstable domestically and whose foreign policy was violently anti-French. President Eisenhower's letter to Premier Diem was viewed in France as directed against French interests.⁴⁹ Furthermore, arrangements for the transfer from French to American military advisers of the function of training the South Vietnamese army were delayed because of the misgivings of the French government. An agreement on this point was concluded between General Paul Ely, French commander in Vietnam, and General Lawton Collins, head of a special United States mission to Vietnam (November 1954 to May 1955), on December 13, 1954, but was not accepted by the French government until February 11, 1955. The delay in France's acceptance of this transferral agreement indicates the reluctance with which the French officials saw their functions assumed by the Americans. By April 1956, French troops had completely withdrawn from Vietnam, and French influence had been eclipsed by that of the United States. The loss of their colonial status in Indochina was made more difficult for the French by the installation in their place of an American protectorate.

Clearly, during the years 1954-56 France and the United States perceived their interests in South East Asia quite differently and pursued their policies accordingly. Chief among the points of discord was their attitude towards the Geneva accords and towards the regime of Ngo Dinh Diem.

United States policy was based on the premise that the Geneva accords were, in the words of Defense Department analysts, "a disaster," and that the French defeat required that the United States assume defense of the free world's interests in South East Asia. In the period immediately following the 1954 conference, the United States sought to minimize further Communist gains in Asia. This was the purpose of the defense pact signed at Manila on September 8, 1954, which created the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). Secretary of State Dulles advocated that the three Indochinese states of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam become members of SEATO to the consternation of the French delegation at Manila.⁵⁰ Reminded by the French that Article 19 of the Geneva armistice agreement forbade the Indochinese states from entering military alliances, the United States instead inserted a protocol to the treaty that included the Indochinese states in the area to be protected by the alliance without having them actually join. This created a curious modification of the principle of collective defense in which three states were to be protected by the signatories but not themselves bound by the treaty. Though the arrangement did not technically violate the Geneva agreement, it indicated lack of respect for the goal of the Geneva negotiators, namely, that Indochina be neutralized or freed from further military intervention by outside powers. Subsequently, Cambodia (unilaterally in 1955) and Laos (by international agreement in 1962) rejected their inclusion in the SEATO protocol.

A further element of American policy in the years immediately following Geneva was its support of the government of Ngo Dinh Diem. The United States believed that there was no alternative to the Diem government if South Vietnam was to remain non-Communist. American policy makers entirely concurred in Diem's decision not to hold the 1956 elections lest Ho Chi Minh emerge victorious.⁵¹

Unqualified support for Diem was another indication of United States disregard for the Geneva accords. Although the American delegate at Geneva promised that the United States would refrain from disrupting the accords, subsequent American actions indicated the insincerity of this pledge. On the contrary, if application of the election provision abandoned Vietnam to Communism, the United States was opposed to implementing the accords. The Geneva settlement was useful from the American perspective only insofar as it kept South Vietnam independent and non-Communist—something it was not designed to accomplish. If the Geneva framework subverted this purpose, it was to be ignored.

In contrast, French policy from 1954 to 1956 favored application of the Geneva accords. The French regarded the 1954 agreement as the best that could be obtained under bad circumstances. In the aftermath, they hoped to safeguard their economic interests and to retain some of their political influence in Indochina. However, they were resolved to avoid further military involvement there.

It can be argued that French interests would have been served had the Geneva accords been executed; the Geneva framework permitted a French role in Vietnam, at least until 1956.⁵² Both the extreme Right and the extreme Left in French politics favored a policy that maximized French gains in the post-Geneva situation. Hence, "had the Geneva Settlement been fulfilled, France might have retained a presence and influence in Vietnam that would have mollified both the Right and Left."⁵³ Instead, French influence was replaced by that of the United States.

Although the French agreed with the United States on the desirability of preserving a pro-Western regime in South Vietnam, they were much more pessimistic than the Americans about Diem's ability to survive. Clearly, their negative assessment of Diem reflected his hostility to France as well as his increasing reliance on the United States. Nevertheless, the French could claim some expertise in the area of South Vietnamese politics, and they believed that Diem's leadership was hopelessly inept. Furthermore, Diem had denounced the Geneva accords and had indicated his unwillingness to abide by their provisions. Thus, the French had some cause to seek alternatives to the Diem government.

Throughout the fall of 1954 and the winter of 1955, opposition to Diem was mounting among Vietnamese in Saigon and in France. The latter included the Emperor Bao Dai who still held the office of South Vietnamese president. The French encouraged Bao Dai's attempts to retain his power and to name another premier in Diem's place, and they sought to convince the United States that Diem must go. However, the French refused to use their remaining military forces in South Vietnam to overthrow the Diem regime. The French commander, General Ely, was convinced that Diem had to be replaced but, on orders from Paris, he refused to intervene forcefully. Instead he followed a course which he described to his deputy, Jean Daridan, in the following words: "we must support Diem until the moment when the Americans understand that they must get rid of him."⁵⁴

In the months after the Geneva agreement, the French tried unsuccessfully to convince the United States to replace Diem. Finally, on April 27, 1955, Secretary of State Dulles agreed to consider a change in the Saigon government and so informed the American embassy in Saigon. At this critical juncture, Diem moved forcefully to subdue his opponents in Saigon. His success prompted the United States to reaffirm its support, and the Saigon embassy quietly burned the April 27 telegram. It is notable that General Ely, who commanded 75,000 troops in South Vietnam as of April 1955 did not intervene in favor of Diem's opponents. To have done so, he knew, would have incurred American wrath.⁵⁵

A French-American-British foreign ministers' meeting in Paris in May 1955 was climactic. When South East Asia was discussed, the sharp differences between France and the United States became apparent. Both sides professed their willingness to withdraw entirely from Vietnam rather than

risk straining their alliance with each other. However, it was the French who withdrew whereas, shortly after the May 1955 meeting, the American secretary of state indicated clearly the United States intent to act independently of France regarding Vietnam.

Saying the problem in Vietnam did not lend itself to a contractual agreement between France and the United States, Dulles suggested each should state its policy and proceed accordingly. In effect, said Dulles, the days of joint policy are over, the U.S. will act (more) independently of France in the future.⁵⁶

Thus, less than one year after the Geneva accords were signed, the United States asserted its intent to conduct a forceful Vietnam policy divorced from that of France.

In spite of French hostility to American aims, France was the reluctant partner to United States policy in Vietnam from 1954 to 1956. The French did not fulfill their obligation to see that the various provisions of the Geneva agreements were implemented; instead, they turned power over to Diem, whose dependence on the United States was apparent. Furthermore, transference by France of its advisory functions in Vietnam to the American military violated the spirit if not the letter of the Geneva prohibition against the introduction of outside forces into either zone of Vietnam. Thus the French acquiesced in an American policy which ignored the accords they had so recently negotiated. There were several compelling reasons for France's actions.

First, the French were limited in the options available to them. Enforcing a policy distinct from that of the United States would have required resources which the French did not possess. They were unable to risk further armed involvement in Vietnam; no significant element of French politics or the French public would have favored such a course. Furthermore, even the support of remaining French garrisons in Indochina required American funds. Hence, French policy was necessarily dependent on that of the United States.

After the Geneva settlement, the French initially hoped to maintain good relations with both Vietnamese regimes. A French mission headed by Jean Sainteny, Ho Chi Minh's old collaborator, was dispatched to Hanoi in August 1954 to work out a *modus vivendi* between France and North Vietnam. In the South, the French hoped that the Diem regime might be replaced by a government less hostile to France; however, this possibility became less likely as relations between Saigon and Washington solidified. Furthermore, the xenophobic Diem regime was suspicious of France's approach to the North Vietnamese, and under pressure from Saigon and Washington, the French severely restricted the scope of the Sainteny mission. Hanoi could hardly have approved of French policy which ignored the Geneva accords and established the American advisory role to the Saigon regime. Thus, the

French had to choose between the two Vietnamese regimes; in view of French dependence on the United States, there was no question what that choice would be.

Second, the French were hampered in working out a coherent policy regarding Vietnam after their military involvement by the chronic political instability that characterized the Fourth Republic. Their attitude towards Diem is a good example. The regime of Premier Joseph Laniel and Foreign Minister Georges Bidault was in power when France installed Diem as head of the South Vietnamese government. They were much more supportive of Diem than was Pierre Mendès-France, who took over the French government two days after Diem became South Vietnam's premier. Mèndes-France was succeeded late in February 1955 by the Socialist Edgar Faure and the latter, new in office, was ill-equipped to handle the difficulties that erupted in South Vietnam in April of that year.

Third, the French were preoccupied with other problems. In November 1954, a revolt broke out in Algeria that required the attention of French politicians and the French army. French prestige was at stake in the Algerian war, and military and political leaders were determined not to fail. In contrast, the Indochina war was already lost and best forgotten. This partially explains France's willingness to terminate its responsibilities in Indochina.

Finally, the French could not risk alienating the United States. The Geneva settlement meant that France accepted the end of its privileged role in Indochina, and subsequently, the French had no choice but to acquiesce in a series of developments that led to increased American involvement there. In fact, the French were at pains to demonstrate that they were loyal and competent allies in the wake of their failure in Indochina and of the defeat by the French Assembly of the European Defense Community (EDC) in August 1954. The latter action was graver because it affected the European alliance, which was paramount to both the United States and France. Pierre Mendès-France, premier of France when the EDC was defeated, had refused to make the matter an issue of confidence in his government. Thus, it was crucial that he demonstrate to the United States France's solidarity and his own anti-Communism; he did so by supporting SEATO and by cooperating with United States policy towards Indochina in late 1954.⁵⁷

During the 1954-56 period both France and the United States insisted that their relationship with each other was too important to be jeopardized by differences over Indochina; nevertheless, events in Vietnam increased the hostility between the two allies. In the words of the Pentagon analysts:

the whole episode of French withdrawal from Vietnam, in fact, soured the Western alliance. . . . American policy in the aftermath of Geneva widely alienated affection for the U.S. in France, and created that lack of confidence which the Suez crisis of summer 1956 translated into outright distrust.⁵⁸

The French learned several lessons as a result of their war in Indochina. After their futile struggle with the Viet Minh, they appreciated the difficulty of opposing efforts of national resistance set in motion as a result of World War II; they emerged with a healthy respect for their Viet Minh opponents. Furthermore, France was forced to accept limits on its global domain; for a country to whom empire was the corollary of great power status, the loss of Indochina was a clear indication of France's reduced rank after World War II. The French did not easily accept this fact; only after the 1956 Suez crisis and Algerian independence in 1962 did France definitively reject empire. Finally, the Indochina war left French leaders bitter over American policy. France reproached the United States for Roosevelt's initial opposition to the reassertion of French control in Indochina after World War II, for its subsequent grudging admission that the area lay in the French domain, for its lukewarm diplomatic support during the 1954 Geneva conference, and for its readiness to assume France's place in Vietnam immediately after Geneva. The French believed that the United States had undercut their position in Vietnam and had made them accomplices to the insertion of American military power there. Their bitterness was aggravated by their own inability to frustrate these developments. The first Indochina war left French officials with the clear impression that United States interests in Vietnam after 1940 had been furthered at France's expense. They believed that United States policy opposed the maintenance of French influence in South East Asia. France's attitude towards future American military involvement in Vietnam was rooted in the resentment of this earlier period.

Notes

- 1 Throughout this chapter, unless otherwise specified, the words "Indochina" and "Vietnam" are used interchangeably. Prior to the development of semi-autonomous governments in Laos and Cambodia as well as two rival Vietnamese regimes, the area was commonly referred to as Indochina. However, even in the early post-World War II period, the source of French-American discord was the area more correctly called "Vietnam."
- 2 "Federation" and "community" were vague terms whose meaning in 1945 was far from clear. However, since the federation would be composed of five parties—the three provinces of Vietnam (Tonkin, Annam, and Cochinchina) plus Laos and Cambodia—it entailed continuation of the divide-and-rule policy by which French control over Vietnam had been perpetuated. Therefore the Vietnamese, who favored union of the three provinces of Vietnam in an independent entity, opposed the French idea.
- 3 An account of Ho's activities in China appears in King C. Chen, *Vietnam and China 1938-1954* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), Ch. 2.
- 4 Charles de Gaulle, *The War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, vol. 3, *Salvation 1944-1946* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 262.
- 5 The following discussion is based partly on Georges Chaffard's account of these events in *Les deux guerres du Vietnam; de Valluy a Westmoreland* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1969), pp. 79-80 (note).

- 6 One reason for French resentment of the Chinese was the actions of the Chinese commander in Hanoi, General Lu Han, who did not agree with his country's neutral policy and was not very respectful of French prerogatives. An account of the Chinese occupation policy appears in Chen, *Vietnam and China* pp. 132-154. For a French account of the difficult French-Chinese relations during this period see Jean Sainteny, *Histoire d'une paix manquée* (Paris: Fayard, 1967), pp. 156-177.
- 7 In fact, Chiang Kai-shek had supported President Roosevelt's initial inclination to prevent the French from returning to Indochina.
- 8 Quoted in Chen, *Vietnam and China*, p. 99.
- 9 Quoted by Sainteny, *Histoire*, p. 199.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Colonel Dèbes' decision to use force was in line with the wishes of his superiors from French Premier Georges Bidault on down. The French military commander for Asia, General Valluy, instructed Dèbes by telegram on November 22, 1946, as follows: "By all the means at your disposal, you should extend your authority completely over Haiphong and bring the Vietnamese government and army to repentance." Chaffard, *Les deux guerres*, p. 44. Furthermore, in addition to his military authority, General Valluy was temporarily replacing the chief French political authority in Indochina, Admiral Thierry d'Argenlieu, who concurred with using force against the Vietnamese.
- 12 General Morlière, a moderate who was the military commander in Tonkin and Dèbes' immediate superior, quoted in Chaffard, *Les deux guerres*, p. 58. Morlière's harsh judgment of Dèbes reflects their disagreements regarding the use of force in Vietnam in late 1946. Morlière's dissatisfaction with official French policy in this regard caused him to be relieved of his Vietnamese command early in 1947.
- 13 The switch from Gouin to Bidault took place at the moment the Vietnamese delegation, headed by Ho Chi Minh and Pham Van Dong, arrived in France for the Fontainebleau talks. The delegates had to wait several weeks in Biarritz before proceeding to Paris where the newly organized French government belatedly welcomed them. This indication of France's governmental instability was not an auspicious beginning for the conference.
- 14 The resilient Bao Dai was summoned in turn by the Japanese in March 1945, by the Viet Minh in August 1945, and by the French in June 1949 to provide the governments each sponsored with a symbol of continuity with Vietnam's past.
- 15 Phillippe Devillers and Jean Lacouture, *End of a War, Indochina 1954*, trans. Alexander Lieven and Adam Roberts (New York: Praeger, 1969), p. 19. This theme is reinforced by R.E.M. Irving, *The First Indochina War* (London: Crown Helm, 1975), a study of French political parties and Indochina policy 1945-54. For a discussion of the French Left and Vietnam, see Ellen J. Hammer, *The Struggle for Indochina* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1954), pp. 230-300.
- 16 Bernard Fall, *Street without Joy* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Telegraphic Press, 1961), p. 23. See also his "La Politique Americaine au Viet-Nam," *Politique Etrangère* 20, no. 3 (June-July 1955), pp. 299-322.
- 17 Cordell Hull, *Memoirs*, vol. 2 (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 1957. An account of Roosevelt's discussions of Indochina with Stalin at Teheran (November-December 1943) appears in Charles E. Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), p. 140. Stalin was not altogether in agreement with Roosevelt's idea that Indochina should be taken from France, according to Bohlen, who served as an interpreter at the conference.
- 18 American assurances to this effect were contained in the following communications: "August 2, 1941, official statement on the French-Japanese agreement; a

- December 1941 presidential letter to Petain; a March 2, 1942, statement on New Caledonia; a note to the French ambassador of April 13, 1942; presidential statements and messages at the time of the North Africa invasion; the Clark-Darlan Agreement of November 22, 1942; and a letter of the same month from the president's personal representative to General Henri Giraud." *United States-Vietnam Relations 1945-1967: Study Prepared by the Department of Defense* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), Book I, Part I.A, p. A-13. (This version of the Pentagon Papers was released by the House Committee on Armed Services.)
- 19 *The War Memoirs of Charles de Gaulle*, vol. 3, *Salvation*, p. 190.
 - 20 *Ibid.*, pp. 243-261.
 - 21 Sainteny writes that Chennault himself understood the French position and recommended that aiding France would be in the allied cause. *Histoire*, pp. 34-35.
 - 22 Interview with Jean Sainteny, Paris, July 6, 1973.
 - 23 The title of a chapter in his book.
 - 24 Sainteny, *Histoire*, p. 86.
 - 25 OSS contacts with Ho are discussed in *Hearings on Causes, Origins and Lessons of the Vietnam War, May 9, 10, and 11, 1972*, U.S. Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, pp. 241-340.
 - 26 Actually, the United States ignored Ho Chi Minh's several appeals in 1945 and 1946 to internationalize the Vietnamese issue, and instead, American policy acquiesced in the French return to Indochina.
 - 27 For a discussion of the evolution of Roosevelt's attitude towards Indochina, see Walter La Feber, "Roosevelt, Churchill, and Indochina: 1942-45," *American Historical Review*, 80 (December 1975), pp. 1277-1295.
 - 28 *United States-Vietnam Relations*, Book I, Part I.A, p. A-20. (Emphasis added.) Another factor which influenced the American decision was American concern to retain freedom of action concerning the fate of the Pacific Islands which the United States had captured from the Japanese.
 - 29 *United States-Vietnam Relations*, Book I, Part I.A, p. A-5.
 - 30 *Ibid.*, Book I, Part II.A, p. A-2.
 - 31 *Ibid.*, pp. A-38-39.
 - 32 *Ibid.*, p. A-41.
 - 33 The pessimism of French leaders concerning the war spread to the French public whose support for the war had been based on the goal of retaining Vietnam as a French colony. According to former Ambassador Jean Chauvel (who headed France's permanent delegation to the 1954 Geneva conference), the French were not fighting to keep Indochina non-Communist; if they could not keep it in the French Union, they wanted out of the war. Interview with Ambassador Jean Chauvel, Paris, June 20, 1972.
 - 34 The participants were Soviet Union, China, France, United Kingdom, United States, Cambodia, Laos, Democratic Republic of Vietnam (Viet Minh), and Republic of Vietnam (Bao Dai's government). Neither the Pathet Lao nor the Khmer Rouge delegations were recognized. For an interesting profile of the conference participants, see Devillers and Lacouture, *End of a War*, Ch. 8.
 - 35 Chalmers M. Roberts, "The Day We Didn't Go to War," *The Reporter*, September 14, 1954; reprinted in Wesley R. Fishel, ed., *Vietnam: Anatomy of a Conflict* (Itasca, Ill.: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1968), pp. 29-32.
 - 36 Robert F. Randle, *Geneva 1954: The Settlement of the Indochina War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 63-64, 118-119.
 - 37 In particular, Randle emphasizes the connection between the EDC treaty and the Indochinese negotiations, *Ibid.*, p. 42. The French parliament had not ratified the

- treaty, and Foreign Minister Bidault threatened to oppose it if Secretary of State Dulles did not agree to place Indochina on the agenda of the Geneva meeting. *United States-Vietnam: Relations*, Book I, Part II, pp. A-40-41.
- 38 Interview with Ambassador Jean Chauvel, Paris, June 20, 1972.
- 39 *United States-Vietnam Relations*, Book I, Part III. A, pp. A-16-26.
- 40 Interview with Ambassador Jean Chauvel, Paris, June 20, 1972.
- 41 Devillers and Lacouture, *End of a War*, p. 189. In his memoirs, Bidault characterized Dulles' Indochina policy as "a policy of many tough words but little action." *Resistance* (New York: Praeger, 1967), p. 201.
- 42 *United States-Vietnam Relations*, Book I, Part III. A, p. A-8.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. A-10.
- 44 In Laos, the Viet Minh-Pathet Lao troops were to regroup in two northern Laotian provinces prior to an eventual agreement between them and the Royal Laotian government; Cambodia, more fortunately, emerged with its territory intact and free from subversive elements.
- 45 Bernard Fall, "How the French Got Out of Vietnam," in Fall and Marcus Raskin, eds., *The Vietnam Reader* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), pp. 81-95. Fall demonstrates how the accords failed politically and economically before they failed militarily.
- 46 Devillers and Lacouture, *End of a War*, p. 300.
- 47 Premier Diem had been selected by President Bao Dai as head of South Vietnam's government on June 16, 1954, just two days before Pierre Mendes-France became the sixteenth premier of the Fourth Republic. Bao Dai continued to serve as South Vietnam's chief of state.
- 48 *United States-Vietnam Relations 1945-1967*, Book I, Part IV. A. 3, p. ii.
- 49 Devillers and Lacouture, *End of a War*, p. 295, and Jacques Vernant, "Les Etats-Unis et l'Asie du Sud-Est," *Revue de Défense Nationale*, 20 (April 1964), pp. 706-711.
- 50 The signatories of the SEATO treaty were Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The head of the French delegation to the Manila conference which approved the treaty, Ambassador Jean Chauvel, expressed particular concern because SEATO was signed before the 300 days provided for by the Geneva accords for the regroupment of French and Vietnamese troops had been completed. Prior to this regroupment, any direct violation of the accords might have caused the resumption of hostilities. Interview with Ambassador Jean Chauvel, Paris, June 20, 1972.
- 51 Franklin B. Weinstein, *Vietnam's Unbeld Elections: The Failure to Carry Out the 1956 Reunification Elections and the Effect on Hanoi's Present Outlook*, Data Paper No. 60, South East Asia Program, Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y., July 1966.
- 52 All of the governments present at Geneva—with the notable exception of South Vietnam's—expected France to remain in Vietnam. *United States-Vietnam Relations 1945-1967*, Book I, Part IV A.3, p. ii.
- 53 *Ibid.*, p. i.
- 54 Quoted by Georges Chaffard from Daridan's account to him. *Les deux guerres*, p. 183.
- 55 Paul Ely, *Memoires: Indochine dans la Tourmente* (Paris: Plon, 1964), pp. 318-319.
- 56 *United States-Vietnam Relations 1945-1967*. Book I, Part IV A.3, p. 37.
- 57 Chaffard, *Les deux guerres*, pp. 180-181.
- 58 *United States-Vietnam Relations 1945-1967*, Book I, Part IV A.3, p. ii.

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