

INDONESIA—THE TRUTH

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ON August 17, 1945, the people of Indonesia, the sixth largest state in the world, declared their independence and established their own democratic Republic. Naturally, the former owners, the Dutch colonialists, were not prepared to allow 82 million people and the rich resources of Indonesia (in which £500 million Dutch capital is said to be invested) to slip so easily from their hands. With the help of the British military forces and even using the surrendered Japanese troops, they strove to destroy the young Indonesian Republic.

For the next few years there was continual fighting between the Indonesian people and the Dutch imperialists.* Eventually in 1949 a Round-Table Conference was held at the Hague and on December 27, 1949, the transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of Indonesia was carried out. By the Charter of Transfer of Sovereignty, the Dutch Government 'unconditionally and irrevocably transfers complete sovereignty over Indonesia to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia as an independent and sovereign state'. It was a recognition of the fact that it was no longer possible for Holland to continue its direct control of Indonesia.

However, the 1949 Agreement imposed extremely severe political and military conditions on Indonesia and still left untouched Dutch economic control. This has enabled the Dutch for the past eight years to maintain a constant campaign of economic sabotage, confusion and divisions, subversion, attempts at assassination, the fostering of separatist movements and even military revolts.† Under the Round-Table Agreement the Dutch monopolies maintained their position in Indonesia. With the aid of their 'Big Five' trading companies—Borsumy, International, Lindeteves, Jacobson Van den

*Despite the Lingardjati Agreement of March 25, 1947, the Dutch launched a military attack against the Republic four months later. In December, 1947, a conference, held between the Indonesians and the Dutch, led to the signing of the Renville Agreement. On December 18, 1948, in violation of the Renville Agreement, the Dutch launched a further military aggression. Three months earlier a provocation was organised at Madiun against the Indonesian Communist Party, as a result of which many of the outstanding leaders of the Party were murdered, thousands of arrests were made and the Party forced to go into temporary illegality. This attack, organised by the right-wing Indonesian leader, Hatta, idol of the American and Dutch imperialists, weakened the national front of Indonesia at a critical moment and facilitated the Dutch military aggression.

†To list subversive activities carried out in Indonesia since 1949 would read like a 'cloak and dagger' story (the Westerling Affair, the formation of the A.P.R.A. armed forces, the plot to attack Bandung 1950, the Sultan Hamid affair, the Andi Azis Rebellion, the attempt to establish a 'Republic of the South Moulaccas', the Macassar Events of May and August, 1950, the formation of the armed forces of the Darul Islam with the aim of establishing an Islamic State, the Sukiman fascist plot of 1951, the attempted *coup d'état* of October, 1952, the Lubis military plot of November, 1956, etc.).

Bert and Geo. Wehry—they controlled nine-tenths of the export trade. Nearly all docks and four-fifths of the quays were Dutch-owned. Over two-thirds of inter-island traffic were in the hands of the K.P.M. (The Royal Dutch Steam Packet Shipping Company), which decided its own routes and shipping schedules as it liked. Indonesia is an archipelago of more than 3,000 islands, scattered over an enormous area; control of shipping and sea routes is therefore decisive, both economically and for political and military purposes. The Dutch also owned rubber, tea, quinine, copra, coffee, and sugar estates; banks, railways, insurance; oil and other mineral resources. With such economic power in their grasp the Dutch were able not only to hold up the reconstruction of Indonesia but also to maintain political pressure and organise intrigues to prevent stability and eventually to bring about the downfall of the Republic.

In order to have a permanent base for this purpose they have insisted on holding on to West Irian, the western half of the second biggest island in the world, one-fifth of the total area of the Republic. This is in flat contradiction to the Round-Table Conference Agreement which clearly recognised the complete transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia of the whole of the former Netherlands East Indies and which stipulated that the question of West Irian should be settled 'within one year after the transfer of sovereignty through negotiations'. Negotiations in 1950 and again in 1952 reached no agreement. The Dutch then broke off all talks and unilaterally incorporated West Irian into the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Indonesian Republic, still trying for a peaceful settlement, raised the matter at the United Nations in 1954 and 1955. Each time a majority was secured for the continuation of negotiations between Indonesia and the Netherlands—but not the two-thirds majority necessary in the General Assembly. Faced by the non-co-operation of the Dutch, the Indonesian Government in 1956 announced the abrogation of the Round-Table Conference Agreement and once more demanded the return of West Irian. The recent outburst of national feeling against the Dutch which seemed to come very rapidly was the outcome of months of mounting crisis.

On November 28, 1957, the United Nations General Assembly passed by 41 votes to 29 with 11 abstentions (Great Britain voted against: the United States abstained) a resolution sponsored by 18 Asian-African nations together with Bolivia calling for negotiations to be renewed between the Netherlands and Indonesia on the status of West Irian: but it was not the two-thirds vote. The knowledge

that the colonial powers in the U.N. General Assembly had once again been able to block the demands being pressed by the majority of mankind roused very strong feelings among the Indonesian people, already angered by the recent attempt on President Sukarno's life.

Hence on December 1, 1957, the K.L.M. Airlines were forbidden to land in Indonesia. On December 2 a 24-hour general strike was called on the initiative of the Action Committee for the Liberation of West Irian—with the full support of the government. The strike was conducted with great enthusiasm and great discipline in all Dutch undertakings. This action was accompanied by workers taking over Dutch-owned companies, offices, banks, etc., while the government 'froze' the transfer back to Holland of Dutch profits. On December 3 the offices of the powerful K.P.M. shipping company were similarly taken over followed by the 'Big Five' trading companies and the Dutch banks. All these were handed over by the workers to the Indonesian government. Since then a decree by the Prime Minister has placed all Dutch plantations and enterprises, apart from shops, under the control and supervision of the Indonesian government and military forces; while on December 12 an organisation for co-operation between trade unionists and the military was established.

The Dutch government (and many sections of the press in Britain and the United States) reacted to these events by ill-informed clamour about 'communist plots'. This propaganda was exposed by the Indonesian Minister of Information, Sudibjo, who said that all this talk about communists being responsible was false.

In reality people of all strata of Indonesia including workers, peasants and youth had taken part in the struggle. The Dutch shouting was not surprising for the imperialists were used to adopting this cheap tune to camouflage their actions.

(December 18, 1957.)

Among the chief singers of this 'cheap tune' is the American State Department, which consistently peddles the story of a 'communist plot'. Is there then a plot in Indonesia? Yes, there is. But a very different one from that painted by the smart boys of the State Department.

When the U.S. Embassy in Taiwan was stormed and partly ransacked by angry crowds last May, a number of documents was lost. Two of those now brought to light and published in the *Bintang Timur* of December 21, 1957, give a lurid glimpse of gun-running from Formosa and Malaya to aid armed uprising against

the State of Indonesia. These embarrassing documents are telegrams sent from the American Embassy in Djakarta (the capital of Indonesia) to the State Department in Washington, and a copy to the American Embassy in Taipeh (capital of 'Formosa'), for increased 'assistance' through 'the available channels'.

The first telegram, dated March 18, 1957, shows the close ties with the leaders of the Moslem party, the Masjumi, dominated by right-wing forces, whose chairman is Natsir. It runs:

Masjumi leaders again insist on the necessity of increasing military aid to the D.I. and T.II forces now operating in Sumatra, West Java and elsewhere in Indonesia. In view of the grave deterioration in the position of these forces, they request that such aid should not be limited to the delivery of arms and ammunition, and suggest the transfer of units from Formosa to help the D.I. forces.

The second telegram, dated March 26, 1957, deeply implicates the former vice-president Hatta, and Sjahrir, leader of the tiny right-wing socialist party, the P.S.I. It reads, in part:

Masjumi leaders have already taken the additional measures to deepen the political crisis. With the support of the individual already known to you, Natsir was able to secure a definite refusal from his Party's central executive to join the new Government. Sjahrir has guaranteed full support for the Masjumis by the P.S.I., both in overturning the National Party and in forming a new Government under the control of the Masjumis and their supporters, and also in the move to discredit Sukarno.

I think that with the help of his agents in the armed forces Sjahrir will be able to get control of the army and replace Nasution by Subroto. In my view assistance to the military councils in Sumatra must be increased through the available channels.

In the event of the Masjumis' failure to seize power, a Sumatran Government could be formed which would then break with the Central Government. The individual known to you will on my advice tour Sumatra next month to establish personal contacts with the leaders of the Banteng and Garuda military councils of the D.I. and T.II forces. He was supplied with additional money for this purpose.

Please inform the appropriate quarters of the Darul Islam leaders' request that arms sent to them from Formosa and Malaya must carry no trade mark and should be placed in containers used locally for agricultural machinery, textiles, canned food and the like.

Events were to confirm fully the content of these telegrams—the authenticity of which has now been denied by the State Department. During this period, the former vice-president Hatta visited South and Central Sumatra, where a separatist régime had been set up, and made 'personal contacts with the leaders of the Banteng and Garuda military councils'. The American oil monopoly, the

Caltex Company, provided the special plane in which he made his journey. A few days before his departure Hatta discussed with representatives of the American Embassy in Djakarta the possibility of aid for the separatists from the Caltex and Stanvac oil monopolies, the Ford Foundation and foreign estates in Sumatra. That was reported by *Bintang Timur* on July 10, 1957.

The same paper reported further that Natsir had told the executive of his party, the Masjumi Party, that Hatta had assured the Americans that special privileges would be granted them, including oil concessions, if Sumatra were split off from the rest of the country. Further confirmation of moves to break away from Indonesia can be seen in the British press campaign in the past few weeks. For example, John Ridley, *Daily Telegraph* Special Correspondent, on December 23 after praising Hatta, Natsir and Sjahrir, stated that an opportunity might soon present itself for these three to 'come forward'. He added that a 'Communist victory in Java would drive Sumatra to secession', a point that the *Financial Times* had stressed on December 12. Vernon Bartlett writing from Kuala Lumpur in Malaya to the *Manchester Guardian* of December 29, discussed 'if and when Dr. Hatta comes to power', and boosted him as an 'outstanding leader'.

No one—except Mr. Gaitskell?—is likely to be fooled by talk of 'Java going Communist' as being the reason for the growth of the separatist movements. The Taipeh telegrams do not mention a 'Communist plot'; they make it clear that the breakaway will take place if the Masjumis fail to establish a dictatorship in Indonesia. And long before the recent crisis the separatist movement had already started a military struggle against President Sukarno and the central government—which does not include a single Communist.

Again, the various terrorist attacks in recent months should be noted. On July 4, attempts were made to assassinate leaders of the powerful trade union organisation, S.O.B.S.I.; and the same night an attempt was made on the life of D. N. Aidit, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Indonesia, during an attack on its headquarters; which were again a target on July 16. Then on November 30, came the attempt to assassinate President Sukarno; and with him, amongst others, General Nasution, army chief of staff, whom the second telegram asserted Sjahrir's agents were to 'replace'. Amongst those arrested in this connection were members of the Darul Islam movement and of army youth groups

in touch with Colonel Lubis who led the abortive *coup d'état* of November, 1956.

None of this can weaken the determination of the Indonesian people to finish with colonialism once and for all. And 1957 is not 1948, when the Madiun massacre of Communists took place; nor 1951, when thousands of Communists were arrested by the Sukiman fascist government. Today, with one million members and seven million votes in Java alone, it is the second most powerful Communist Party in Asia after China and one of the most powerful in the world. Recent events have not stopped their growth. On the contrary, they have gained in membership and votes, not least in South Sumatra, where recent elections showed a big increase over 1955. On the twelfth anniversary of independence, D. N. Aidit, their General Secretary, stated:

As long as Parliamentary means remain open to the C.P.I., it will take this path, confident that this will lead to the completion of the August Revolution in its entirety, that this will lead to power for the Indonesian people in a Republic of Indonesia which is completely independent, democratic and progressive.

Added reason for confidence is division amongst the imperialists. The recent N.A.T.O. Conference in Paris could do no more than express 'concern', thus revealing their conflicts and difficulties in organising and justifying before the world any frontal attack on Indonesia. Again, the market for Indonesian export products, formerly taking place in Rotterdam, will in future be conducted in Hamburg. To overcome their temporary shipping crisis, the Indonesian Government has concluded an agreement with Japanese ship-owners for leasing ships of 75,000 tonnage together with tankers. Nor are businessmen in Holland unanimous. In a financial report, Van der Werff & Hubrecht, stockbrokers of Amsterdam,

urgently appeal to the whole Dutch business world and the whole Dutch people to urge the Dutch Government to make a friendly gesture and transfer Irian to Indonesia. Time is pressing, and milliards of Dutch interests are at stake.

West Irian must be returned to Indonesia. The issue is one of colonialism, and it cannot be finally ended there until West Irian is re-united with the independent republic of Indonesia. This is not only the demand of Indonesia: the recent Afro-Asian Conference in Cairo shows that 1,800 million people stand firmly behind her just claim. It is this which the Dutch imperialists and American State Department have to take into account.