Australia and the Indonesian Nationalist Movement 1942 - 1945.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the twenty years since Indonesia declared herself independent, Indonesia and Australia have enjoyed a strange love-hate relationship. At intervals in the bouts of brickbat throwing and mutual misunderstanding, both sides have referred to the period 1945–9 as a kind of "Golden Age" when the young Republic of Indonesia had so few friends in the world and counted Australia one of them. While relations were probably at their best during these years, it is necessary to go back further to seek the basis of the relationship between the two countries, for it was during the war, and in the few months immediately after that the tone was set: between the fall of the Netherlands East Indies\(^1\) in March 1942 and the withdrawal of the Australian occupation force from the outer islands in March 1946. Australia has never been able to make up her mind about her large and unpredictable northern neighbour: she was confused in the beginning, and she has remained confused. To try to understand, and if possible explain this confusion, it is necessary to examine closely the events taking place in the early years, the various pressures felt by the Australian Government and people, and their response to them.

Much has been written about the Indonesian struggle for independence between 1945 and 1949, and the Australian role has been examined in detail, from the time the wharfies declared the Dutch ships "black", up to the day the Netherlands finally recognized the Republic of Indonesia as a sovereign state.\(^2\) Although Australia did not take an active part on Indonesia's behalf until 1947, it is generally agreed that the Labour Government was sympathetic to the nationalists all along, although at first its attitude was one of caution, sometimes described as "ambivalence". In reality - confusion.

The question inevitably arises: how did it all begin? Why was this sympathy felt, to what extent was it felt, and why
did it manifest itself when it did? In the following chapters I shall endeavour, at least in part, to answer some of these questions. Australian contact (in the broadest sense) with the Indonesian nationalist movement was not purely a matter of foreign policy; it occurred in multiple ways, and the Australian reaction was influenced by multiple factors.

The most important of these factors was probably the Japanese occupation of the N.E.I., which drove the Dutch colonial government south into exile in Australia. It forced the fact of the Indies' existence into Australian consciousness, and Australia's later attitude to the nationalist movement was very largely conditioned by reactions during this period to the colonial Dutch authorities and the Indonesians they brought with them.

Australian contact with the Indonesian nationalists was made on the non-Government as well as the Government level, and took place in Australia as well as in Indonesia itself. Within Australia the contact was made through the many thousand refugees brought to Australia by the Dutch. A close relationship was built up between these Indonesians and the Australian waterfront Unions, whose action later in boycotting the Dutch ships in September 1945 was well co-ordinated and sustained. To anyone who has discussed these events with Unionists who were involved, it seems obvious that this was not simply another exercise in Government-baiting; it was a cause in which they were emotionally involved. The Indonesians they were helping were not just victims of colonial exploitation, they were personal friends. It was the Unions' support for the Indonesian seamen which forced an official reaction from the Australian Government, up to that time virtually unaware that a foreign nationalist movement was growing apace on its soil.

From this time on contact with the Indonesian nationalists in Australia was on an official as well as an unofficial level, and decisions had to be taken by the Australian Government with respect to these Indonesians. These decisions became part of "policy".
With the Indonesian nationalist movement outside Australia, contact came later, and on the official level, between the Australian Military Forces occupying Borneo, Celebes and Timor, and between diplomatic representatives in the N.E.I. capital of Batavia.

Little is usually said regarding the Australian occupation forces in the Indies. It is generally suggested that the occupation was more or less uneventful, with practically no nationalist activity, ("excepting, of course, some areas of the Celebes"). No doubt this is largely because the troubles experienced by the A.M.F. were so thoroughly overshadowed by events in Java. An examination of the records of the Makassar Force (the Australian Command centred on Makassar in the South Celebes) reveals a different story. Australian commanders with orders to remain neutral, and with practically no warning of what they would have to face, were left to re-establish the Netherlands Indies administration. It is perhaps a reflection of the confusion in Canberra that such contradictory instructions were given. In the end the Dutch were re-established, and neutrality received little more than lip-service. Nor does there appear to be any evidence to suggest that Australian officers were particularly sympathetic to the nationalist cause. They seem to have regarded the occupation as a purely military proposition; the Army as a whole was anxious not to involve itself in politics, which it regarded as none of its business. When it became obvious that it was impossible to ignore the political aspects of the situation, the Army took refuge in declarations of neutrality, which became increasingly meaningless. Individual officers tended to be conservative in outlook, and, accepting Netherlands promises of increased self-government for the Indies at their face value, showed little sympathy for the nationalist leaders' distrust of the Dutch. Any who refused to co-operate were immediately labelled "extremist", and steps were taken to destroy their power and influence.

I shall deal with the role of the Army in some detail, since it demonstrates the lack of co-ordination between the organs of the
Australian Government with regard to Indonesian nationalism, and also because the policy of the Army is almost always overlooked when the assumption of Australian sympathy for the Indonesians is discussed. (The Indonesians themselves have for the most part chosen to ignore the fact that the nationalist movement in the Celebes was all but destroyed by it). In effect, while the Commonwealth Government, through its representative in Batavia, was giving what diplomatic support it could to the nationalists, the Australian Army, an extension of that Government, was actively supporting the Dutch.

This lack of co-ordination reveals itself also in Government policy with regard to specific issues which arose in relations between Australia, the Netherlands and the Indonesians, for example the training of Dutch troops in Australia for the invasion of the Indies, the sale of arms to the Dutch, the repatriation of the Indonesians in Australia, and the active support given the nationalists by the Australian Left-wing.

Because it is useful in attempting to understand the atmosphere in which these often contradictory policies were worked out, I shall begin by sketching briefly the history of the N.E.I. government's move to Australia, and its operations in this country; and, drawing on the main metropolitan dailies and other publications of this time, attempt to form some picture of the way Australians in general (insofar as this term has any reality at all) reacted to the situation.

While the reaction of the electorate represented a major factor influencing the government, there were other pressures to which it was subjected, other reasons for the confusion in Canberra. It is difficult to assess these factors in detail because it is not possible to know all the pressures under which individual Ministers as well as the Government as a whole, were operating, or the extent to which these pressures were effective. If, however, any explanation is to be found for the absence of
co-ordinated policy, some attempt must be made at such an assess-
ment.

In the final analysis it seems that then, as now, Australia was confronted by an essential problem of her foreign policy; should she regard herself as "an outpost of Europe" or "an integral part of Asia"? And is the choice hers to make? Can Australia ever be free to decide this for herself? I suggest that, in attempting to form a policy in regard to the Indonesian nationalist movement Australia faced this problem and its full implications for the first time.
It would probably be true to say that until the Japanese invasion of the N.F.I. the Australian Government did not have any attitude at all to this seemingly remote, scattered Dutch colony. There was no Australian diplomatic representation in Batavia, or N.E.I. representation in Canberra. Trade was small and one sided: in 1938-9 Australian imports from the N.F.I. were valued at approximately £8 million, while exports to the Indies were worth just over £1\frac{1}{2} million. Movement of people between Australia and the Indies was negligible.

With the outbreak of the war in Europe this situation changed somewhat, for when Holland fell, the N.E.I. was completely cut off. The Indies Government commenced to turn to America and Australia. The position became serious when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour; it was obvious that sooner or later the Indies themselves would be threatened. Military preparedness was at a low ebb, and further supplies were not forthcoming from Europe.

On 6 January 1942 van Mook arrived in Sydney, flying to Canberra the following day for talks with Prime Minister Curtin. He told the press he was seeking advice on how to step up the war effort in terms of acquiring arms. It was too late to talk of industrializing the Indies.

van Mook discussed the problem of equipment with Army Minister Forde, and later flew to Melbourne for further talks on supply. There was little Australia could do. Her own defence industries were in the infant stage, and production was not sufficient to enable her to provide the Dutch with the type of aircraft and other equipment which they needed.
It was apparent that some sort of formal diplomatic contact was going to be necessary, and an agreement was reached by which the Commonwealth was to appoint a Representative with full diplomatic status to Batavia, and a N.F.I. Representative was to be posted to Canberra. Relations were also to be established between the Netherlands Government in London and the Commonwealth. On 31 January, Dr. Evatt announced that arrangements had been made for the exchange of Ministers between the Australian and Netherlands Governments, and for the appointment of Lieutenant-Colonel Gorman as Consul-General to the N.F.I. Gorman arrived in Batavia on 4 February; a N.F.I. representative was to be sent to Australia soon after. This well-meaning effort came too late, for hardly more than a month after Gorman had taken up his appointment the Indies fell to Japan.

Meanwhile the Dutch were growing apprehensive regarding future Allied policy, for there were rumours that if Singapore fell, the Allies would retreat to Australia, abandoning the Indies to their fate. Japan invaded Java on 2 March and two days later the joint Allied A.D.A. Headquarters was dissolved, returning command of the Indies forces to the Dutch. Although they were assured that this did not mean that all help was to cease, the Dutch were not convinced. Feeling that it had been deserted, the N.F.I. Government left Batavia for Bandung.

The stream of N.F.I. officials to Australia continued. Hoogstraaden, Director of Economic Affairs arrived 6 March. On 10 March van Mook once again came to Australia for talks with Curtin, who was quoted as saying that he had not yet received any requests on the matter, but that the Federal Government "would give every facility for so gallant an ally to conduct its business in Australia." van Mook was accompanied on this occasion by a party of fifteen which included members of the
N.F.I. Governing Council, military personnel and technical assistants.

The following day it was reported that Bandung had fallen. From that time on Australia became the base for almost all N.E.I. operations. Although Australia made available all facilities required by the Dutch, the association from the beginning was not entirely happy. The Dutch were bitter because, as noted above, they felt that they had been deserted by the Allies. There were also suggestions that Australia had not taken her full share of responsibility soon enough. "Tell Australia," the Dutch were saying, "we hope they will defend the Indies from there." For its part, the Australian Government felt that the Dutch had made a thorough mess of the defence of the N.F.I. In some cases, Australian troops sent up to resist the Japanese advance were not provided with even the barest necessities. In addition to this, the view was taken that the primary duty of a colonial power was to defend its colony. This the Dutch had failed to do.

As far as was possible the N.F.I. Government began to regroup in Australia. The Naval arm of the Indies forces, together with many merchant seamen was brought to Australia. The nucleus of an Air Force was formed in Queensland early in April 1942. The Royal Netherlands Indies Army also established a Headquarters and in June 1942 a contingent of West Indies troops arrived in Australia. Attempts were made to rally support from among the Dutch refugees and a Women's Auxiliary Force was formed and attached to the R.N.I.A. Arrangements were also made for the formation of an administrative group to return to the liberated Indies. van Mook visited Colombo in 1942, where he supervised the planning of this civil affairs section, to be known as N.I.C.A. A course to train civil servants was later set up in Melbourne by the Dutch authorities.
A makeshift Government was also established, situated initially in Melbourne. In June 1942 van Mook announced that it was to be transferred to Brisbane, since this was the nearest point to the N.F.I. By a decree of April 1944, the Netherlands Government set up in Australia a Board consisting of Heads of Departments of the N.E.I. Government, seven in all. In June of the same year, the section of the N.F.I. Government dealing with the establishment and training of N.I.C.A. units eventually moved to Brisbane, leaving the Naval Headquarters and several other Government organizations in Melbourne. The N.E.I. Administration was subject to a good deal of confusion, not only because it was operating under difficult physical conditions, but also because of sharp differences of interest which arose between the metropolitan Dutch and the Indies Dutch. In September 1944 a Dutch Royal Decree setting up a Provisional N.E.I. Government in Australia under van Mook made it quite clear that this Government was under the control of the Dutch Colonial Ministry. In March 1945 the Netherlands Military Administration in liberated South Holland set up a new section of East and West Indies Affairs to organize civil personnel for doing preparatory work in Australia for reconstruction of the N.E.I. after liberation.

To some extent the Australian Government was inevitably and unwillingly drawn into what was really a family squabble. The uncompromising self-righteousness of van Aerssen, the Dutch Minister in Australia, did not endear the Dutch to the Australian Labour Government.

While relations were perhaps strained with the Government, the Dutch in Australia enjoyed considerable support from the public and the press.
CHAPTER III

AUSTRALIAN CLIMATE OF OPINION

It is virtually impossible to speak of the Australian attitude to nationalism in the N.E.I. as though this were something obvious and clearly defined, for there were almost as many different views as there were Australians. Until the Japanese attacked the Indies in December 1941 Australians had not thought very much about the islands immediately to the north, and after that their thinking was conditioned by the hardship of a long, bloody and for Australia, a frightening war. Possibly one thing all Australians would have agreed upon was the strategic importance to their country of the island chain that ran from "impregnable" Singapore to New Guinea, the protective chain that fell to pieces at the invaders first blow.

The Indies fell to Japan in March 1942, the Batavia Government moved to Australia, first to Melbourne and later to Brisbane. For the remainder of the Pacific War the Dutch and the Australians were allies, as the Dutch and British were allies in Europe. There was in Australia at the time a strong feeling for the ties of Empire, together with a feeling of pride that, as the Motherland had provided a refuge for the Netherlands Government-in-Exile, so Australia had been able to give similar refuge to the Netherlands East Indies Government, providing a base from which the Dutch could play their part in the war against Japan, eventually to return in triumph to their colony. In a broadcast on 5th March, 1944 van Mook said:

"We have continuously endeavoured to use all our present, limited forces to participate in this war and to prepare for the relief and rehabilitation of the Indies....The nucleus of a Netherlands Indies Government consisting of Hollanders and Indonesians, will soon be formed in hospitable Australia..."

The Argus (Melbourne), replied,

"It will indeed be a grateful task for Australians to furnish, as Dr. van Mook has foreshadowed a hospitable base from which many of his countrymen can play their worthy part in the Pacific phase of the global war..."
If relations between the Australian Government and the Netherlands Indies Authorities became strained during the course of the war, as has been suggested, this is perhaps not an unusual result of the conditions under which both were operating. It has also been suggested, perhaps most articulately by Rupert Lockwood, (a Left-wing journalist), that this strain went beyond the level of government:

"Many Australians... were perturbed and puzzled when they met the Dutch emigres in 1942-45. Trades unionists and liberals were shocked at the absence of humane and democratic spirit among them... Australian soldiers returned with angry reports of the Dutch performance in the war against Japan... in the campaigns to conquer East Indonesia from the Japanese, Australians were followed by the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (N.I.C.A.) officers, and N.I.C.A. arrogance aroused them to fury..." 3

Nevertheless, if the views of Australians in general can be taken as being reflected by the editorial comment in the metropolitan daily press, the Dutch remained, first and foremost, allies.

This is not to say that no thought was given to the future development of the Indies, beyond the return of the islands to the Dutch, although throughout the period under discussion this remained the commitment of the Australian government. 4 Promises of self-government for the Dutch territories, made by Queen Wilhemina in London in December 1942, 5 when the Dutch were under tremendous pressure both in Europe and the Pacific, were taken pretty much at face value in Australia. It was generally accepted that when the war was over the Dutch would return to the Indies, and gradual self-government would be bestowed on a grateful native population, in true British tradition.

While not questioning the right of the Dutch to return ultimately to the Indies, Liberal M.P. Spender raised the question of the long-term importance of the Indies to Australia:

"No one who has been to the N.E.I. could have other than admiration for the colonial administrative ability shown by the Dutch people, and I favour the closest collaboration..."
economically and strategically with the Dutch people. But we have a direct interest in the future development of the N.E.I. We must remember that the native inhabitants have a civilization 2,000 years old. They have survived invasions by Mohammedans and Hindoos, and intrusions by the Chinese. As a nation, those people are of vital significance to Australia, and I emphasize the importance of our developing a recognition and understanding of their problems. Australians as a people are very introspective. During this war we have developed a broader outlook. One thing which we require more than anything else in this country is to break away from the parochial attitude which has characterized us in the past. The future of India, China, Malaya, French Indo-China and Indonesia is of the utmost significance to this country. Having a population of 7,000,000 persons, Australia should always remember that it is surrounded by more than 1,000,000,000 coloured people. If we are to play our part in developing and ensuring the security of this country, we must always give attention to the problems affecting these countries, and assert our interest in them at every possible opportunity. 6

While Mr. Spender's comments indicate that certain sections of the Liberal Party were aware of the potential importance of the (then) 70 million Indonesians to Australia, the extreme Left-wing was thinking along similar lines, and stating the case much more strongly. Dixon, writing in the Communist Review of December 1944, argued that Australia was geographically part of the Pacific, and had need to learn to live with her near neighbours. The ease with which Japan overran the lands to the north, leaving Australia exposed, demonstrated that for Australia to be secure it was necessary that these countries be sufficiently strong to stand up to an aggressor. This was not possible while they were dominated by outside colonialist powers: they must be free and independent.

"We in Australia, cannot idly stand by and see the old Imperialist order restored in the colonies. The burden of the Pacific war, apart from China and Burma, has been borne so far, by America and Australia, both countries whose peoples are interested in the freedom of other nations of the Pacific, not their enslavement. When the Japanese are driven from Indonesia it will be more as a result of the efforts of the Australians, Americans and British and of the Indonesians themselves, than the Dutch. Our contribution to the Pacific war entitles Australia to a major
say in the final settlement. If our representatives are to take the progressive view, and not join hands with the reactionary interests which are concerned only with restoring Imperialist rule in the colonies seized by Japan, the various sections of the labor movement must stand together, and with the progressive forces amongst the other sections of the people show that Australia stands, irrevocably, for the freedom and Independence of the oppressed peoples, whether they be colonies of Britain, France or Holland. The old order of colonial exploitation and oppression must go." 7.

Little was known in Australia of the nationalist movement in the Indies, partly because intelligence was incredibly bad during the war, and partly because the Dutch, themselves apparently utterly convinced that a nationalist outbreak was impossible, had assured their Australian allies that there was nothing to fear from this quarter. This view was stated by van der Plas, President of the Netherlands East Indies Commission established in Australia, in an interview with Crayton Burns in January 1943, when he said that the people of Holland and the N.E.I. were more united and more pugnacious than before. At the express wish of the Queen of Holland, provision had been made for increasing participation by the native races in self government of the N.E.I. 8 In fact the Dutch and their allies had an almost touching faith in the effect on the people of Indonesia of the vague promise made by Queen Wilhelmina. The net result was that, when the news of Sukarno's Declaration of Independence and of his opposition to the return of the Dutch filtered through to the Australian dailies, (at the time preoccupied with the Japanese surrender, the release of Australian prisoners of war, and what ought to be done with Japanese war criminals, together with the problem of getting the troops home as soon as possible) Australians were, to say the least, surprised and not a little disapproving. Who is this Sukarno? they asked. Answers were vague, detail was a long time coming out of Java.

Early reports were that Sukarno was a collaborator, a Japanese puppet; that the nationalist uprisings were Japanese
inspired, did not have wide support, and would collapse as soon as Dutch authority was restored.

One of the earliest reports out of Java came from Eager, and appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 24 September, dated "21 September - delayed" -

"Feeling among the revolutionaries is almost exclusively against the Dutch and Japanese, because the Japanese are preserving Dutch interests.

"Australians are very popular in all quarters. Troops from the prison camp, officially confined to the camp, often slip out, moving along the streets and getting the thumbs up sign from the natives. The Dutch do not dare to do this.

"Some Dutch officers caught in a cafe after dusk waited several hours until they were able to obtain an Australian escort to the hotel...." he wrote.

"There may be a good deal of bloodshed later when the Dutch take over, although I believe that until then there will be no great revolution..."

"The Indonesian Republican Movement is said to be hoping to achieve a constitution similar to Australia's - this backed by the Japanese who flew twenty leading members of the movement to Indo-China on 17 August to meet Count Terauchi, Japanese commander in the South West Pacific. He promised Indonesia independence by 7 September and delegates returned to proclaim a provisional republican government, under Dr. Sukarno, a Javanese, and educated as an engineer in Holland".

"The Dutch say that there are only 50,000 members of the movement, but that estimate seems far too low. The Dutch also claim that the majority of the natives are loyal, but here, where the Republicans are admittedly strongest, there appears to be very good grounds for believing that very few natives are absolutely unsympathetic to Dr. Sukarno". 9

Three days later *The Argus* (Melbourne) published an article by a special correspondent so that readers could be "properly informed of the situation" in Indonesia. Sukarno was ostensibly a collaborator, the correspondent wrote, and had been appointed President of the "so-called" Indonesian Republic by the Japanese, but independence had always been his aim, even under the Dutch. MacArthur, it was recalled, had pointed out that the problem of
war criminals in the East differed from that in Europe, the
implication being that the problem of nationalist revolution was
at the time peculiar to Asia. The "special correspondent"
concluded with a report of
"an assurance of the Dutch people's
willingness to cooperate"
given by Logeman, Minister for Overseas Territories, at The
Hague. He said that
"Netherlands people were willing to
shed Netherlands blood for an independent
Indonesia but not for the restoration of
colonial supremacy." 10

Meanwhile the position had been confused for the press
by the support given the Indonesian nationalist movement by the
Australian waterside workers, who had, on 24th September, placed
a ban on the loading of Dutch ships in Australian ports. While
this may materially have helped Sukarno in his battle in Java,
it did little for his image in Australia. There was much con-
fusion as to whether he was a Japanese puppet or a Communist, or
perhaps both. The Dutch authorities fostered the picture of
Sukarno as collaborator, and made what capital they could of the
hardship likely to be caused to white internees and prisoners of
war in Java by the hold up of the "mercy" ships. The indignation
aroused on this count served further to confuse the issue of the
nationalist revolution in Indonesia. A statement issued on behalf
of a representative of Dutch residents in Melbourne declared that

"the Netherlands Government had always been
a supporter of Indonesian nationalism and
the strikers by continuing their alliance
with the so-called Indonesian Republican
movement were becoming the unwitting
supporters of a carefully planned Japanese
scheme to continue their war objectives by
creating discontent among a native people.
Obviously the strikers had not considered
that by their action they were not only
depieving 200,000 starving and tortured
Europeans in the Netherlands East Indies
of longed-for relief but also were with-
holding supplies from an unknown number of
Australian fighting men". 11

The Sydney Morning Herald, on 27 September, in an editorial
deploiring the actions of the waterside workers, put its view even
more bluntly:

"It is unfortunate that the faction now holding the field in Batavia should be led by Quisling dupes of the Japanese. No decent Australian worker can feel happy about giving indirect aid to former collaborators with the hated ex-enemy."

The Herald, however, added a warning:

"At the same time it is fair to recognise that, aside from particular individuals, Indonesian nationalism is a strong and growing cause, and that the Dutch will need on their return to make generous concessions to it. The old order cannot be installed again unchanged, either in the Indies or elsewhere in the East." 12

As September gave way to October, then November, it became obvious that the situation in Java was more serious than had at first been realized, and there was growing irritation in the press with both the Dutch and Sukarno. Emphasis was placed on the cessation of hostilities, and the need to come to the conference table. Probably at the back of this was a fear that if the fighting in Java was not stopped, Australian soldiers occupying the Celebes and other outer islands would eventually be drawn into a colonial war which could drag on for years. Any delay in "bringing the boys home" meant a delay in returning to a peacetime economy. Australia, after six years, was thoroughly war weary.

Anxiety to have the war over and done with perhaps goes far to explain the irritation felt in regard to the watersiders' ban on the Dutch ships. This action was clearly prolonging the war in Java, insofar as it prevented the Dutch from freeing their ships for use as troop carriers. The corollary of this was that other Allied ships which could be used to bring Australian prisoners-of-war and soldiers home, were being used to transport Dutch troops to the N.E.I.

The unfortunate, almost accidental, shooting of Brigadier Mallaby by a group of youthful extremists at Sourabaya on 30 October brought a surge of anger to the Australian press.
"Hitherto," said The Argus, in an editorial "we have refrained from commenting in this column on the Indonesian situation as such. In that welter of events there was no concrete information to be gleaned that would have permitted comment otherwise than on a basis of undocumented impressions....The Indonesian 'Republic' has now, however, provided us with something concrete; a British officer, Brigadier Mallaby, was murdered on Tuesday last while he was actually arranging, at Sourabaya, details of a ceasefire order in company with Indonesian leaders. Whatever the rights or wrongs of the Indonesian political cause - and in making these comments there is no suggestion that there are not Indonesian rights which in a final settlement will have to be recognised by the Dutch, their particular friends the British, and the other United Nations - this kind of crime simply cannot be tolerated in any community which by a declaration of political independence and the setting up of a government modelled on our Western system purports to subscribe to our form of civilisation and our conception of Law." 13

While cold anger was the tone of The Argus editorial, The Sydney Morning Herald, the following day, was full of forboding. The only "gleam of light" it saw "in the dark skies over Java" was the contact made between Dutch and Indonesian leaders, but even the van Mook-Sukarno meeting "of which the government in Holland now expresses disapproval", had come very late in the day...

Sukarno was unable to control the extremists...

"The Dutch have never believed him to be the true representative of Indonesian nationalism. Their reluctance to negotiate with this rather weak and vain man sprang as much from scepticism about his claims to leadership of the great mass of the Javanese as from dislike of his Quisling record. Now it seems that he is neither the authentic spokesman of the moderate nationalists nor the master of the swarming hotheads, mostly youths with Japanese arms in their hands, who are out for revolution pure and simple. The tide of events may yet sweep Sukarno away, as Kerensky, also a talker got up to look like a strong man of action, was brushed aside by the Octobrist uprising in Russia in 1917..." 14

Throughout these three months in which the two big city dailies had manfully tried to see both sides the Indonesian situation, The Bulletin (with its slogan "Australia for the White Man") had cheerfully led the slanging match for the Right-wing. "There is evidence that the (nationalist)
'movement' was developed by the Japanese at the stage at which the A.I.F. invaded the Dutch East Indies, and Tokyo became convinced that the war was lost. There is evidence that it provided troops who killed Australians..." 15

The Australian people, The Bulletin pointed out, had a very deep concern in this,

"...apart from their natural anxiety for the fate of the Australian prisoners-of-war who may be at the mercy of furious, fanatical, kris-bearing ruffians whose hands are already stained with blood. The events of Indonesia are taking place in a country whose borders run with those of Australian New Guinea, and are sponsored by an international organisation which aims at the destruction of the British Empire through the revolt of native peoples". 16

If The Bulletin was convinced that the nationalist revolution in Indonesia was Communist run and inspired, the Soviet Government was not quite so sure. It was not until December that, by referring to Sjahrir as "Prime Minister of Indonesia", the U.S.S.R. even indirectly recognized the claim of the Republican government to legitimacy. 17 Even then they remained deeply suspicious of this mild, moderate socialist leader; it was only after Amir Sjarifoeddin became Republican Prime Minister that the Soviets felt they could give warm approval.

Regardless of the caution expressed by the Soviet Union, the Australian Communist Party organ, The Tribune, gave prominence to the nationalist struggle, and full support to the watersiders ban on the Dutch ships.

The three pronged impact of Australia on the Nationalist revolution in Indonesia must be viewed against this background of irritation born of mingled weariness and anxiety, of mixed feelings of sympathy for the nationalist cause and obligation to a wartime ally. It was indeed a strange situation when one sector of the community, in this case the waterfront unions, was openly and effectively aiding the Nationalist cause; when the Army, in another sphere was just as effectively opposing it, and the Government lurched from side to side, pulled this way and that by pressures both from within and without. It is no wonder that both the Dutch
CHAPTER IV

THE LEFT-WING IN AUSTRALIA AND THE

INDONESIAN NATIONALIST MOVEMENT

The part played by the Australian waterside Unions in aiding the Indonesian nationalist cause has become something of a legend, and accounts for a very large part of the "reservoir of good feeling" that Indonesians are said to have for Australians. The Australian press at the time was inclined to give full credit to the Australian Unions for the action, virtually overlooking the part played by the Indonesians themselves. The Waterside Workers' Federation and the Seamen's Union leaders emphasize that the initiative was with the Indonesian seamen, and that the Australian Unions simply lent their aid. The question inevitably arises: What was the relationship between the Indonesian Seamen and the Australian waterside Unions? How spontaneous was the ban on the Dutch ships?

The sequence of events itself raises many questions. Independence was declared in Indonesia on 17 August 1945. On 12 September, almost one month later, the Indonesian militia at Casino came out on strike in sympathy with the Independence movement. This was the first reported action on the part of Indonesians in Australia in response to the turn of events in Java.

On 21 September, a Friday, the Dutch ship "Balikpepan" carrying troops and supplies, the first N.F.I. ship to leave Australia following the Japanese surrender, sailed from Brisbane without incident.

The following Monday the Sydney Morning Herald reported that the Waterside Workers' Federation was to meet that morning
to discuss a possible ban on four Dutch ships. The Argus of the same day reported Healy, Secretary of the V.F., as saying, the previous evening, that local Indonesians had asked the Federation to boycott the Dutch ships because they were to load materials for use in suppressing the newly elected Government in the Indies. The Federal Executive of the V.F. met in Sydney on the Monday morning (24 September) and issued an instruction that any vessel where Indonesian seamen were on strike or any vessel carrying munitions or military supplies to the N.F.I. that may be used against the Republic, were not to be loaded. The instruction was issued to all branches. The next day the Seamen's Union declared unanimous support for the Indonesian seamen who refused to man the Dutch ships. To that date the crew of the "General Verspijk" were the only Indonesian seamen on strike in Sydney. Apart from the "General Verspijk", four other ships, the "Japara", the "Patras", "El Liberador", and "Van Swoll" were unable to obtain wharf labour.

On Wednesday, 26 September, a meeting of the Sydney waterfront leaders convened by the Sydney Trades and Labour Council, decided to declare all Dutch ships carrying munitions "black". Hospital ships were to be exempt only if they did not carry guns.

The Argus of 27 September carried a report that two hundred trade unionists and members of the Indonesian community in Melbourne, staged a demonstration at Victoria Dock last night in an attempt to induce the Lascar crew on the Dutch relief ship "Karsik" to come ashore. This they agreed to do the following morning. The Dutch tried to get the "Karsik" away by bringing Lascar replacements from Sydney, but bus drivers and tugmen refused to co-operate. The ship eventually got away under her own steam.

Meanwhile the entire port of Brisbane had come to a standstill. Labour had been refused the Dutch ship "Janssen", and, under
The Stevedoring Industry Commission rules no other vessel in Brisbane could obtain labour until the requirements of the "Janssen" had been met.

The action by the seamen was followed by mutinies on the part of Indonesian militiamen in Melbourne, Casino and Bundaberg.

On 20 September, The Tribune was able to report that fifteen unions had banned work on Dutch vessels, tying up ships in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

This sequence of events raises several questions: why, apart from the isolated action of the mutineers at Casino (and that a month after the declaration of Independence in Indonesia) was there no action by Indonesians in Australia until 24 September? Why did the Indonesian Seamen's Union wait six weeks before it took any action against the Dutch? There were ships in Australian ports all the time, and they were permitted, right up to the Friday before the strike, to go about their business unhindered. Even the troop-carrier "Selikpapan" was allowed to go.

The Indonesian strike action began on the Monday morning. Two hours later the Waterside Workers' Federation had declared its support. In less than four days, fifteen unions had joined the ban. Within a week ships were held up in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne. This spontaneous support for the Indonesian seamen would appear, on the face of it, to have been thoroughly organized. The decision of the Indonesian Seamen's Union to act must have been taken over the weekend of 22-23 September, and almost certainly in consultation with Australian waterfront leaders, who were in a position on the Sunday night to announce that a meeting would be called the following day to discuss the proposed ban. One may be excused for asking just how close was this co-operation, and who really was behind the ban.
There were several thousand Indonesians in Australia during the war, although their exact number has never been determined, and contact with the Australian labour movement dates almost from the time of their arrival. When it became obvious that the Indies could not be held against Japan, the Dutch began moving their ships south, bringing with them the Indonesian crews. In the first three months over two thousand seamen employed by K.P.M. and S.M. (Dutch shipping lines) were brought to Australia. Following a dispute in which the seamen unsuccessfully claimed the same wages and conditions as Australian seamen, many of them were interned, at first in Sydney, Adelaide, Liverpool and Cowra; later they were sent north to Toowoomba, Wallangarra, Blackbutt, and Helidon, as part of the Allied Labour Force, to work under joint Australian and Dutch supervision in ammunition depots.

In addition to the seamen, many of the personnel of the Netherlands Indies Army and Marine Corps were Indonesians. In fact, the ranks of the Indies armed services were largely made up of Indonesians. The Air Force ground staff and maintenance crews also consisted mainly of Indonesian personnel.

The Militia were stationed at various points throughout Australia, particularly at Casino, Brisbane, and Middle Park (Melbourne); the marines were based at several ports, including Sydney and Geelong, and the Air Force at bundaberg, Brisbane and Canberra.

There was a third group of Indonesians brought to Australia by the Dutch, a much smaller but possibly in the long run a more important group: the political exiles from Tanah Merah camp in Dutch New Guinea. These numbered 295, and together with their families totalled just over 500. They included nationalist agitators who had been interned in the jungle concentration camp following the Communist led uprising of 1926-27, and other, non-Communist nationalists who fell foul of the Dutch in the late twenties and early thirties. Some of them had been at Tanah
Merah for as long as seventeen years. One cannot help but wonder why the Dutch bothered to snatch these few hundred political prisoners from the coming Japanese invasion; perhaps they thought that if these men happened to be freed by the Japanese, as was almost certain to happen, they could make a great deal of trouble when the time came for the Dutch to repossess their territory.

Since the idea of political prisoners on Australian soil was not considered likely to appeal to Australians, the Dutch did their best to keep the presence of the Tanah Merah exiles quiet, and when this was no longer possible, they were presented to the Australian public as dangerous Communist extremists, a view accepted by The Bulletin, which described them as "a gang of coloured, knife-wielding Communist leaders, some of whom had been detained for security purposes for years after they helped to stain the soil of Java with the blood of insurrection."

While no doubt there were among them a number of Communists, and perhaps more who would have called themselves Communists, the Dutch view was misleading. Sjafrir, himself interned in New Guinea for many years, said that many of the so-called Communist agitators interned by the Dutch were nationalists whose brand of Marxism would have been unrecognisable to the Marxists of Europe.

These internees, sent in the first instance to Cowra in June 1943, were later, following Union agitation, released and sent to various parts of the country; some, attached to the Army in the Labour Corps went to Toowoomba and Helidon, where they worked with Dutch and Australians. They no doubt seized what opportunities offered to further the nationalist cause among fellow Indonesians with whom they came in contact.

Important as was the contact between the Tanah Merah exiles and other Indonesians in Australia, their contact with the extreme Left of the Australian Labour movement was perhaps more significant
for the success of their cause. They were able to get in touch with the Australian Communist Party almost immediately on their arrival in Sydney; although no doubt this would have been done in due course, the means by which it was achieved owes a certain amount to chance. The story, which has an undeniable touch of romance, is perhaps worth repeating here. Apparently, as the trains carrying Japanese prisoners and internees came through Liverpool station, railway workers noticed that some of the carriages, under heavy Dutch guard, contained dark-skinned people who did not seem to be Japanese. While the train was stopped at Liverpool, a note written by one of their number who had some knowledge of English, was thrown from the window. It was picked up, fortunately for the Tanah Merah exiles, by a member of the Communist Party, who passed it on to the Party Headquarters. The note apparently told simply of the plight of the prisoners, many of whom were weak and ill from long imprisonment and a rough journey to a climate for which they were not prepared.

So in June 1943, the Australian Communist Party took the Indonesian political prisoners under its wing. Not being a Party traditionally accustomed to claim credit for all its actions, its co-operation remained in the background, but was undoubtedly constant and unfailing.

The problem of the Tanah Merah men was handed over to the Secretary of the Civil Rights League in Sydney, Mrs. Laura Capp, who made representations to the authorities in Canberra for the provision of hospital facilities for those who needed them, and release for the others. She claims to have secured the co-operation of Dr. Evatt, who "urged her to go straight ahead with the campaign", and apparently made personal representations to the Dutch on behalf of the Tanah Merah men. Eventually the tuberculosis patients were removed to the Princess Juliana Hospital at Turramurra, while those who were fit enough were attached to the Labour Corps in Queensland.
Some, however remained in and around Sydney where they met together to learn English, discuss world affairs, politics, and plans for the future of Indonesia. Those who were not willing to support a future Republic of Indonesia were not made welcome in the English classes.

"In 1944 these Indonesians were not yet organized for the Republic," one of the teachers recalls, "but they incessantly talked of the Independent Indonesia that would soon arise. Later a few dissidents found their way to the English classes. They were soon rigidly excluded by their fellow Indonesians. As I taught English to these Indonesians in exile in Australia, I could see the Republic growing before my eyes."

As time passed and more Indonesians passed through the English classes, moving out to other centres, the beginnings of organization appeared within the Indonesian community. In 1944, a magazine entitled Penjoeioeh was published by the Indonesian community in Melbourne. In March that year, one issue was published in English, to enable Australians to "know what Indonesians think of the war and its implications for them."

Indonesian clubs and societies were formed, and carried on a kind of guerrilla campaign against the Dutch authorities, seeking guarantees of continuation of the improved conditions gained in Australia, on return to New Guinea. Many of the Indonesians involved were quietly interned by the Dutch at Casino, for their organization was not sufficiently strong to make a protest felt. In May 1945 Soeprapto and Willy Pandi Iroot, Vice-President and Secretary respectively of the Sydney Indonesian Club were arrested under Section 8c of the Immigration Act, after a difference with K.P.M., and were imprisoned in Long Bay Gaol. From there they were taken by train to Queensland for eventual deportation to Dutch New Guinea.

Indonesian protests were made to van Hook; "an Indonesian friend in Brisbane" and the Secretary of the Brisbane Branch of
the Australian Ironworkers' Union got a solicitor and barrister on the men's behalf; the Union also sent a telegram to Senator Collings, Minister for the Interior, urging that the two men be given employment; Mr. Alan Fraser, M.H.R., asked a question in the House concerning the treatment of the two men. These approaches were not successful, and the two Indonesians were flown secretly and under armed guard to Hollandia. Although attempts to help the two Indonesian seamen failed, the fact that a concerted attempt was made on the part of Australian Unions to bring pressure on the Australian Government, and on the part of Indonesian organizations on the Netherlands Indies authorities, illustrates the kind of co-operation which had developed.

In July 1945 the Australia-Indonesia Association was formed in Sydney, initiated by various "progressive" forces, supported by a cross-section of liberal minded Sydney people (including Professor Flkin, Bishop Cranswick, Guy Anderson [President of the N.S.W. Labour Council], and Sydney businessman G. Goddard), with a foundation membership of sixty-four persons. A month later the membership had risen to one hundred and fifty. Many close friendships had by this time developed between Indonesians and Australian families; a few Australian girls married Indonesians, and later returned with their husbands to Java.

While the personal contact was being developed, the Australian labour movement had not overlooked the importance of the written word. Articles appeared in Left-wing publications: Richard Dixon wrote an article on Indonesia in the Communist Review of December, 1944; Gerald Peel wrote a pamphlet entitled Indonesian Introduction, in circulation in August 1945, before the declaration of Independence; the Communist newspaper Tribune reviewed it at length, as well as publishing articles and letters criticizing the Dutch administration in Indonesia and Dutch
New Guinea. These publications by no means had a wide circulation throughout Australia; in fact they were virtually limited to the groups at whom they were primarily directed, the Left-wing and the labour movement. Within these somewhat narrow limits, however, they had considerable effect.

By September 1945 (after the Indonesian seamen had gone on strike and the Australian ban on Dutch ships had been proclaimed) the organization of the Indonesians, the co-operation with the Australian Left-wing, the propaganda drive, came to full flower. When the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed on 17 August, 1945, Indonesians in Australia began to move to support their freed country. The movement's growth was forced when we learnt that the Constitution of the Republic was democratic," explained the Central Committee of Indonesian Independence in a pamphlet entitled Republic of Indonesia. "Although at the time we had not a perfect or complete organization, the preparations proved satisfactory, and therefore, from the middle of the month of September, 1945, our Committees in different places - Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Mackay - were built up at the same time. Eventually, our Brisbane Committee was chosen by all these bodies as their central organization, and became the Central Committee of Indonesian Independence."

Here again there was delay until mid-September, as with the seamen's strikes. In the case of the political committees, whose function it was to organize political resistance, the delay is more understandable. The proclamation of the Republic itself happened almost by accident on 17 August. While it had been planned in the long term sense, the opportunity had been seized by Sukarno and his supporters when it arose, and although the Indonesian nationalist cells in Australia were no doubt expecting something like this, the timing would have taken them by surprise. In addition, they could have had no real notion of the form which the revolution in Indonesia would take. They
had to wait and plan their actions against the Dutch accordingly. Then, in co-operation with the Indonesian Seamen's Union (whose membership almost certainly overlapped the political committees to some extent) the Indonesian seamen had to be told of the situation, and their resistance organized. Many of them were virtually illiterate, and not really politically aware. "It took time to get them to understand," was the way one Australian waterfront leader put it. Once the explanation was understood, however, there was little doubt as to how they felt about the situation.

The organization of the Indonesian seamen has so far been mentioned only in passing or by implication. It represents an extremely important sphere of co-operation between Indonesians and the corresponding section of the Australian labour movement, the Australian Seamen's Union. Assistance given to the Indonesian seamen by the Australian Union dates back to the early days of the Pacific war, when Dutch ships with Indonesian crews began to call more frequently at Australian ports. The first instance was the case of the "Boissevan", the crew of which claimed a war risk bonus from the Dutch shipping company. The Australian Union supported their claim; the Dutch promised the bonus. However, on return to the Indies the crew were imprisoned, and the "Boissevan", with a new crew, and under the old conditions set sail once more.

In the first quarter of 1942 the Dutch ships with Indonesian crews fled south. At the beginning of April, some 2,000 Indonesian seamen, realizing that their working conditions were far inferior to those of Australian seamen, went on strike for conditions similar to those applying to Australians. Again to no avail. Unorganized and inexperienced, many of the Indonesian seamen were interned. One estimate put the number interned at 80%. Following Union "representation" to the Australian Government their release was secured.
It was by this time obvious that nothing substantial could be achieved on behalf of the Indonesian seamen until they had a union organization of their own. The Australian Seamen's Union encouraged them to form such an organization and early in 1942 two or three of them, led by a youth named Tuklivon, went to see Fliiott, General Secretary of the Australian Seamen's Union, and sought his assistance in the initial formation of the Union. "We held a meeting in an old Hall down near Miller's Point," Fliiott said. "There were about a hundred to a hundred and fifty Indonesian seamen there, and that was how the Indonesian Seamen's Union was formed."

After that various concessions were gained from the Dutch shipowners, and conditions for the Indonesian seamen were to some extent improved.

The close relationship between the two Unions continued, and was no doubt one of the most powerful, open links between the Indonesians in Australia and their Australian sympathisers.

By the time Independence was declared there was a fine network of Australian-Indonesian co-operation, reaching along the east coast from north Queensland to Melbourne, built on personal friendship and everyday contact along the waterfront, extended by these people into allied Left-wing unions. There was also valuable though initially limited support from within the Universities and from various churchmen.

When the news of Independence having been proclaimed was heard in Sydney, picked up on a radio receiver at the home of Tuklivon, this network came to life. This was, in a sense, the very purpose for which it had been developed. Although the Australian public was unaware that anything was going on until that Monday at the end of September, the Indonesians in Australia and their Australian allies were not idle during the intervening six weeks.
The following day Tuklivon and two of his fellow Unionists went to see Elliott, to inform him that the Republic had been declared, and that they intended to support it. "Fraternal aid was immediately promised to the struggle for Indonesian Independence in conformity with the declared policy of our Union." The problem at that time revolved around the charter of the Dutch ships. There were twenty-five based in Australia during the war, manned by Indonesians, carrying Australian and United States troops and supplies from Australia all over the South West Pacific. These ships were under charter to the Australian Government, and it was intended, after the Japanese had surrendered, to use them to repatriate the A.I.F. However, immediately the Japanese surrendered, the Dutch cancelled the charter of their ships to Australia, preparing to return them to Indonesia "with arms, ammunition, war equipment and Dutch service personnel." While the Indonesian seamen were prepared to continue to work the ships if they remained under charter to the Australian Government, they were not prepared to take the ships back to the Indies for the Dutch. The Dutch, however, refused to renew the charter. When the attitude of the Dutch became known, Tuklivon, about a week after his first visit, called again on Elliott, and "on behalf of the Indonesian Seamen's Union in Australia sought an opinion from the Seamen's Union of Australia as to what the Union's policy would be toward a general strike of Indonesian seamen against the movement of the Dutch ships from Australian ports to Indonesia. The Seamen's Union of Australia left Tuklivon in no doubt of its solidarity in the struggle for the Republic against colonialism."

Shortly after this interview Elliott and Tuklivon went to see Healy, General Secretary of the Waterside Workers' Federation, and told him "that the two Seamen's Unions, Indonesian and
Australian, intended to boycott the Dutch ships and sought the co-operation of the Waterside Workers' Federation.

"Jim Healy offered unstinted support. But, as with the Seamen's Union of Australia the approval of the governing executive of the Union, in this case, the Federal Council of the W.W.F., was necessary. (Responsible Seamen's Union of Australia leaders in the major ports had already indicated approval.)"

The next development on record in the preparations for boycott was a meeting of the Sydney members of the W.W.F. at their Sussex Street offices, on 20 September, when Union officials outlined the history of the Indonesian nationalist movement. A resolution was moved by the Sydney Treasurer, Stan Moran, which called on the watersiders to "place an embargo on all ships carrying munitions or any war materials to be used against the Indonesian Government... Further, we call on the Labour Council to support the struggle by deputation to the Dutch Consul demanding that the Indonesian peoples should be given the right to elect their own government."

One can only ascribe the silence and apparent calm following the meeting between Elliott, Healy and Tuklivon to the preoccupation of the waterfront Unions with their own troubles. (When the boycott began on 24 September, the W.W.F. was already out on strike on another issue, and the first action on behalf of the Australian trade union movement was taken by the shipyard trade unions who walked off Dutch ships under repair) and to the need for slow and careful groundwork on the part of the Indonesian Union. However, by the weekend of 22-23 September the balloon was all set to go up.

In Sydney a circular under the imprint of the W.W.F. branch of the Communist Party was being prepared, stating the case for boycott. It was distributed first thing on Monday morning to
watersiders assembling for strike meetings on industrial issues. But Sydney, although perhaps the noisiest of the centres, was not to be the port to lead the action. This was left to Brisbane. Lockwood explains that Brisbane was the port in which the tightest control of the ban was possible, as both Sydney and Melbourne were having their troubles with slightly less enthusiastic, less Left-wing points of view.

That same weekend, Indonesian seamen in Brisbane prepared to come out on strike, which they did early Monday morning. Immediately the Brisbane branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation declared the Dutch ships in port "black". A telegram notifying him of their decision was sent off immediately to Healy in Sydney, followed the same day by a letter informing him of the resolution carried by the Brisbane executive:

"That this meeting of the Executive of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia (Brisbane) Branch recommend to membership that we refrain from supplying labour for the working of Dutch vessels in port pending a guarantee satisfactory to the Indonesian people working in Australia, that the Dutch government in Australia shall not interfere with the government at present established by the Indonesian people themselves, and, further, that the justified demands made by the Indonesian seamen in Brisbane, who are on strike as from 8 a.m. this morning, are acceded to."

Healy also received a telegram from the Indonesian Political Exiles Association in Mackay, requesting Waterside Workers' Federation support for the struggle against the Dutch. Healy provisionally endorsed the boycott pending the decision of the governing body, the Federal Council. Within a little over twenty-four hours telegraphed votes of support had been received from all members of the Council, except Chapple, a non-Communist from Melbourne. "The Melbourne Branch" writes Lockwood, "was then under extreme Right-wing leadership, creating a problem which progressive trades unionists on the Melbourne waterfront
were able to overcome." This vote meant that fifty Australian ports would support the boycott.

On 26 September a circular was sent to all Federal Councillors and Branches, officially notifying them of the Federation's decision to support the Indonesian seamen's action with a boycott. The resolution passed to this effect and to which the Federal Council had agreed, read as follows:

"The Federal Executive unanimously decided that it be a recommendation to the Federal Council that in view of the representations made to us by the Seamen's Union of Indonesia that our members should be directed not to work any vessels involved in the strike by the Indonesian Seamen's Union and not to handle any munitions or military stores being loaded for Indonesian ports which might be used against the Republic."

It may be noted that the resolution passed by the Federal Executive in Sydney banned a) work on Dutch ships on which Indonesians were on strike and b) handling of munitions and military equipment for use against the Republic, while the resolution passed earlier in Brisbane banned work on all Dutch vessels, until a satisfactory guarantee should be given to the Indonesians that the Dutch would not interfere with the Republic, a more forthright and sweeping demand altogether. This is perhaps an indication that the Indonesian seamen and the Australian watersiders regarded the ships rather than the cargoes as vital in the dispute, as they themselves claimed the Dutch regarded them. As time passed the cries of "No munitions!" from the Unions, and "Let the mercy stores go!" from the Dutch became louder and more frequent, but the ships remained throughout the real issue: the Dutch needed them as troop carriers, the Indonesians had a vital interest to see that they failed to get them. The arms and the mercy supplies were useful propaganda weapons to whip up support.

To return, however, to Brisbane where the labour movement was falling in behind the Watersiders' lead: Monday, 24 September
found the Disputes Committee of the Queensland Branch of the Trades and Labour Council, together with representatives of the Unions involved, meeting to endorse the policy action of the Waterside Workers' Federation and pledging "full support" to the Indonesian seamen. The meeting decided to approach Unions of the ship repair services and the A.C.T.U., and to issue leaflets seeking public support. On 25 September Macdonald and Mick Healy of the Labour Council organized a meeting of the twelve Unions likely to be involved. The meeting was also attended by the President and the Secretary of the Indonesian Seamen's Union, Prawito and Pinontoan. The following Friday, after only four days of boycott a meeting of the Trades and Labour Council decided that it would not be possible to carry on the present method of strike organization, since Union officials, completely occupied with the strike, did not have time to carry on normal Union business.

Three committees were therefore set up: a Propaganda Committee to issue leaflets, press statements and arrange public meetings; a Finance Committee to raise money to support the strikers; and an Entertainment Committee to arrange food and accommodation for Indonesian strikers ashore in Brisbane. (At the height of the boycott there were approximately six hundred Indonesians ashore in Brisbane).

While Brisbane and Sydney were swinging into action (or more appropriately, inaction) Melbourne was doing its best to prevent the departure of the currency ship "Karsik", but, as has been indicated, all was not progressive in the Victorian Branch.

"Despite the attitude of the Branch leadership, the supporters of the Federation's policy, along with kindred Unions, were able with the support of the rank and file to prevent the cargo being shipped," wrote Mr. Charlie Young, present Secretary of the Melbourne Branch of the W.W.F., and then one of the two Federal Councillors from Melbourne. "In all, a great job was done on the Melbourne waterfront, and here I pay tribute to the
militant supporters from the Transport Workers' Union and the Federated Clerks' Union, who, when it was possible to assist the cause with information to the wharfies, did so. This enabled the wharfies to pinpoint the cargo that the opposition was trying to get through."

There are apparently very few records in the Melbourne offices of the W.W.F., a Branch of the Union that was torn this way and that through the fifties by factional strike, and no list was kept of the ships held up in Melbourne. One advantage that Melbourne had, according to Lockwood, was that there were fewer Dutch troops available for strike breaking.

A resolution was eventually carried by the Melbourne Branch Executive on 11 October, endorsing the action taken by the Federal Council in support of the Indonesians.

The Indonesian Independence Committee in Melbourne, however, was not idle: a meeting was held in the Savoy Theatre on 30 September, a Sunday, which was very well attended. Among the speakers was the Victorian President of the Communist Party, Gibson. Three resolutions were carried: 1) that the Australian Government should make representations to the British Government urging the withdrawal of British forces from Indonesia as soon as they had disarmed the Japanese; 2) that it should oppose the continuance of Dutch concentration camps for Indonesian political prisoners in Dutch New Guinea and 3) that it should prevent arms being sent from Australia to Indonesia. In addition £240 was collected to aid the campaign for independence.

Two days later The Argus reported mutiny of Indonesians in the N.E.I. Army and Navy, and the arrest of those involved: 23 soldiers from the Dutch Army camp at Middle Park, 30 sailors from the Naval centre at St. Kilda. In addition, nearly 60 Indonesians working for official Dutch establishments in Melbourne resigned.

Australian workers' support extended beyond the waterfront. Dutch aircraft at Bundaberg, Rosebay, Brisbane and
Mascot were also affected, although there is no record of the number involved. A series of incidents occurring at Bundaberg are recounted by Lockwood: apparently a number of Indonesians in the Dutch Air Force stationed at Bundaberg demonstrated in support of the Republic. The leaders of this revolt were deported. A later attempt to force a second group of demonstrators aboard an aircraft resulted in violence. Queensland Trades and Labour Council officials went to Bundaberg to investigate and discovered that ten Indonesians flown from Casino had been bashed. The R.A.A.F. mechanics, witnessing this, stopped work; upon being persuaded to resume they refused to take orders from Dutch officers. Allegations that the Brisbane Trades and Labour Council had instructed the Indonesians at Bundaberg to go on strike were denied by the Secretary of the Council, Healy, on 1 November. The Indonesian Independence Committee had advised him, he said, that the dispute would probably extend to Bundaberg, and he in turn had advised the representative of the trade union movement in Bundaberg of the likelihood of trouble affecting unionists there.

Australian Union action was not confined to a kind of supporting role against the Dutch: pressure was also brought to bear on the Australian Government with varying degrees of success in a number of instances, including the repatriation of Indonesians to Republican held territory; the demonstrations against the landing of Dutch troops from the "Stirling Castle"; and agitation for the closure of Casino camp. The Unions also moved into the somewhat dangerous area of strike action against the Government itself in the Garden Island dockyard in February 1946. When the Government transferred a number of corvettes to the Dutch, the Unions at Garden Island declared the corvettes "black". "The fact that no Australian trade unionist was charged before a court with boycott of warships at naval and civil dockyards was testimony to the breadth and resolution of the trade union counter offensive on those who made ready for armed
overthrow of the Indonesian Republic," writes Lockwood.

Testimony also, perhaps, to a Government that was not at the time terribly determined to enforce Labour discipline.

Although Union support for the Indonesians was widespread and commanded a great deal of sympathy, it faced opposition from the Right-wing of the labour movement, who resented the speed with which the Communist-dominated Left-wing had committed the Australian labour movement to support of the Republic. A Sub-Committee of the New South Wales Trades and Labour Council set up to organize the Unions' part in the boycott was suspended on 13 November on the grounds that it had not been properly constituted, a claim hotly denied by the Sub-Committee itself, the Chairman claiming that it had been "democratically elected at a conference of the waterfront Unions two months ago." The Chairman, Grant, of the Boilermakers' Union, added that Labour Council officials had asked the Sub-Committee to take charge of the Indonesian dispute because at the time they had been pre-occupied with the then current Sunnerong, Commercial Steel and other industrial stoppages. Be that as it may, by mid-November the Executive was having second thoughts. Official Labour supporters on the Council were apparently disturbed by what they regarded as the Communists' too ready support of Sukarno. They felt that insufficient investigation had been made by the labour movement into Sukarno's "credentials", especially regarding his association with the Japanese. They had, of course, Labour's electoral position to consider, and were acutely aware that association with even suspected collaborators would not find favour among the voters; nor would the electorate be happy about a labour movement that appeared to be dominated by Communists.

The struggle continued into 1964, with the moderate wing of the A.C.T.U. under pressure from Evatt to have the ban lifted. While there were still Australian soldiers in the Indies, and white internees in need of medical supplies, the idle ships and the stores on the wharves remained a stick with which to beat the
Left-wing. There was however sufficient support for the boycott, and the Left-wing had sufficient organizational strength, to withstand any pressure from the Right-wing. Giving evidence before the Victorian Royal Commission on Communism in 1951, Sharples said that, in March 1946 the National Congress of the Australian Communist Party "decided to call off the ban; it was later reimposed, again by decision of the A.C.P., and last of all lifted, in part because the Communist Party officials at the Unions wanted to get on good terms with the Federal Cabinet which had been pressing for the withdrawal of the ban". By this time however, the boycott had virtually achieved its objective.
CHAPTER V

POLICY OF THE AUSTRALIAN OCCUPATION

FORCES IN THE N.E.I.

Australia's part in the occupation of the Indies was a last minute arrangement, almost an accident, which arose from the change in Command boundaries in the area. The Australian forces in the Pacific had been part of the South West Pacific Command under General MacArthur, and remained so until August 1945 when the South East Asia Command under Lord Mountbatten, was extended to include the Netherlands East Indies. The Australian forces were then transferred to his command. The decision to extend the British command to cover the Indies was made during consultations between British and American Governments, the former eager, as a great power, to have a bigger part in the liberation of Asia and the Pacific from the Japanese, the latter anxious both to avoid involvement in the restoration of the Dutch in the Indies, and to ensure that America's own colony in the area was occupied only by American troops. The change in arrangements also suited MacArthur who wanted to concentrate on the drive northward towards Japan itself.

The Australian Prime Minister, Chifley, was informed on 1 August that the decision had been reached to extend the British command to include Borneo, Java and the Celebes, (if the Dutch agreed), and to include the Australian forces formerly under MacArthur in the new S.E.A.C.

The Australian reaction was on the whole one of approval that Australian forces should be part of a British command, but some protests were voiced at Australian troops being relegated to "mopping up" operations instead of participating in the main thrust against Japan.

The extent to which consultation of the Dutch was actually carried out is not clear, but there are indications that they felt their views had not been taken sufficiently into account, considering that their colonial possessions were at stake.1 In time they
became increasingly bitter as a result of the way the British handled the situation in Java, since they felt that had a firmer line been taken with the nationalists their position in the Indies may have been stronger. Their relationship with the Australian occupation forces was entirely different because the situation in Borneo and the Celebes together with the Australian policy of "neutrality", worked in favour of the restoration of Dutch authority, rather than against it.

The division of control in the Indies between Britain and Australia was left to Mountbatten and Blamey, who decided that Australia should be responsible for all the Netherlands Indies "east of and exclusive of Lombok, plus Borneo...", in effect, Borneo, Celebes and Timor. It was agreed that the British should gradually take over from the Australian forces, and that the Australian occupation would come to an end in October.  

The Australian 9th and 7th Divisions and the 26th Brigade shared the responsibility for Borneo. The rest of the Australian area was divided among five forces; Timor Force with responsibility for the islands from Soembawa to Timor; Ambon force, which covered Buru, Ambon, Ceram, Tanimbar and the Aru Islands; Menado Force, responsible for Menado and part of the northern peninsula of the Celebes; Makassar Force responsible for Makassar and the southwest Celebes, and finally Ternate Detachment covering Ternate and adjacent islands of northern Moluccas. The Australian Headquarters was based at Morotai. These forces were strategically placed in the larger centres, since it was not possible for sufficient Australian troops to be made available at an early date to take over immediately from the Japanese. The result was that a large area of the Celebes was left in the hands of the Japanese administration; a similar situation occurred in the area under control of Timor Force. The need to rely, even for a short time, on the defeated enemy for assistance in the administration of the occupied territory only served in the long run to make the task of completing occupation more difficult since the Japanese were placed
in a position which made effective administration and maintenance of law and order in many areas virtually impossible.

The objectives of the Australians were strictly limited, with a view to a short, clean, occupation and a speedy withdrawal. They were, briefly, to accept the surrender of the Japanese forces and supervise their concentration in specified areas; to free prisoners-of-war and internees, and to maintain law and order while handing over civil administration to the Dutch. The Dutch authority was represented by the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration, a corps of administrative officers set up by the Dutch government and trained for the purpose of taking over in the liberated Indies. Many of the N.I.C.A. officers were former officials of the N.E.I. Government regrouped in Australia. The relationship of the Australian forces to N.I.C.A. was based on the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Agreement between the British and the Dutch. The agreement provided for a "military" phase during which the Supreme Allied Commander would have "full authority to take any measures made necessary by the military situation." N.I.C.A. officials were to be placed under his command, and civil administration was to be carried out by him through these officials. Later, when the Supreme Allied Commander considered it practicable, the Netherlands Indies Government was to take over administrative and judicial functions, co-operating with the Allied Military Command. This position was stated clearly by the A.M.F. in September, 1945:

"The Netherlands Indies Government has organised Civil Administration Units (N.I.C.A's) as units of the Netherlands Indies Army and has made them available to assist Allied Army and Base Commanders in the discharge of their responsibility for Civil Administration and relief in occupied areas. The N.I.C.A. units have the authority of the Netherlands Indies Government for administering, disciplining and employing the population in the area of operation in the manner best contributing to the success of the common effort against the enemy. They are not combat forces but are provided to relieve combat forces of the burden of civil administration." 4

The N.I.C.A. units, the instruction continued, had a twofold
function relating to the civil administration and control of all non-military individuals, native or European, in re-occupied areas and the procurement, control and administration of civilian labourers. This relationship was defined in the expectation that occupation forces would be taking over from a still belligerent enemy, and provided simply for a division of labour which would enable the fighting forces to give their full attention to the primary task of defeating that enemy. The possibility that the civil population might refuse completely to co-operate with the N.I.C.A. was apparently not considered.

If anything, the Australians were less prepared than the British for the extent of nationalist opposition to restoration of the Dutch with which they were faced, for the British at least had the reports of R.A.P.W.I., which had gone into Java ahead of the military occupation. Intelligence operations in the Indies throughout the war had not been blessed with a vast degree of success, probably because of poor co-ordination between the various agencies involved. For the most part reliance had been placed on Dutch reports which were later discovered to be frequently incorrect. What little information they did provide referred to possible opposition from those Indonesians who were collaborating with the Japanese, and they seemed generally reluctant to believe that opposition could be more widespread. Some misgivings were perhaps indicated in a handbook prepared for (but never issued to) Australian troops. While dealing mainly with a history of the N.E.I., and their own Administration, creating the impression of a vast, ignorant but generally well meaning population who, having suffered for nearly four years under the Japanese would be ready to welcome the Dutch with open arms, the writer apparently felt bound to add a brief chapter entitled "Areas where Hostility of Natives is Possible". These areas included the northeast Celebes where in 1938 a Rajah was banished for permitting Japanese to smuggle weapons onto the island and Gorontalo, also in the north, where the local police "arrested the Dutch community after the
invasion of Minahassa in January 1942. The people in the South-east, particularly around Bone, reacted in the same way. (Quite a dossier on the ruler of Bone was eventually prepared by the Dutch and presented to the Australians in an effort to have this "collaborator", whose influence was so extensive, removed). Nor was much assistance to be expected from the Makassar area, which had been the base of the Japanese administration in the Celebes.

As late as 7th September, an intelligence report stated that although hatred of the Japanese was fairly general, they had not met much opposition from the people because of tactful handling of the situation and respect for their cultural standards. Although according to the Japanese, native leaders had been appointed to high administrative posts, these were thought to carry virtually no authority. While as in other parts of the Indies the Japanese had plans of a sort for granting independence to the Indonesians, the report claimed that

"the scheme appears to have gone no further than the establishment of Advisory Councils (composed of Japanese appointed native representatives, 'privileged' to make suggestions on political and economic affairs to the naval administration) and the setting up of independence preparatory committees to look into the question of final independence".

While it is certainly true that the Australians in Borneo, Celebes and Timor did not have to contend with anything like the nationalist opposition which faced the British in Java and Sumatra, it is equally incorrect to assume that "the Dutch encountered little difficulty" or that

"there was little or no nationalist opposition expected or found in these islands, so that Australian forces could be employed in smaller numbers and consequently landed earlier than the forces of South-East Asia Command in Java and Sumatra."

The opposition was there, and it was active; it was not, however, so well organized as in Java and Sumatra, and was therefore somewhat easier to crush; it was still sufficiently strong to keep
the Australians in the Indies until February - March 1946, when they had planned in terms of an occupation lasting at the most two months.

Australian commanders accepted the surrender of Japanese forces in the early weeks of September, and began, with small forces, to set up headquarters in the larger towns; they were concerned with the release of prisoners, and assessments of the situation regarding food, transport and communications. For the first few weeks there was practically no reported nationalist activity, and areas like Ternate and Ambon, traditionally loyal to the Dutch gave no trouble at all. One report, made at the beginning of October, described the situation at Makassar, to become in a matter of weeks one of the most difficult areas, as being "under control with public utilities manned and working," and the N.I.C.A. established.  

An N.I.C.A. report of late October described the situation in each area as being on the whole 'quiet'; in the case of Borneo, there was a certain amount of nationalist activity going on but no incidents; in Timor there was, according to the N.I.C.A., nationalist activity at Soembawa and Soemba which had the support of the local rulers, one of whom, the Sultan of Soembawa had "committed himself already by collaborating with the Japanese invader." Makassar was described as "unstable but in hand", and it was suggested that, should the Australians establish themselves at Bone, the activity of the nationalists would be very much restricted.  

By the middle of October, through November, nationalist influence became more obvious and manifested itself to some degree, however limited, in virtually all areas approached by Australian and Dutch personnel. The explanation for the early calm which proved so deceptive probably lies in the fact that the nationalists in the eastern part of the Indies did not have the same opportunities to organize themselves under the Japanese occupation as their fellows in Java, and the Japanese surrender found them unprepared to put up any resistance.

Added to this, communication with the Republican forces in Java,
though existing to some extent, was not sufficient for them to receive much support from this quarter; nor, for that matter, was communication between the various areas of the Celebes good enough to permit a properly co-ordinated movement, even had other conditions for such organization been present. One of the basic weaknesses of the nationalist movement in the outer islands was its lack of unity. It is probably true to say that the movement was more anti-Dutch than pro-Republican, and while the local leaders paid lip service to the Republic in Java and support for Sukarno, their principle objective seemed to be to rid themselves of the Dutch and gain control of the administration themselves.

Although communication with the outside world was poor, it was still sufficient for the Indonesians to hear of the boycott of the Dutch ships by the Australian waterside workers. It seems that they construed this as Australian support for their cause, and no doubt they waited quietly in the early weeks of the Australian military occupation in the hope that the Australian Army would be equally sympathetic. They made it quite clear that they were prepared to co-operate with the A.M.F. during the period of the occupation, but that they would not co-operate with the Dutch. In Makassar, a letter to this effect was sent to the Commander, Brigadier Dougherty, on 12 October from the head of the communications service in Makassar, informing him that the communications officials were on strike because they were opposed to the attitude and behaviour of the Dutch government "in former times and at present". He pointed out to the Brigadier that the task of keeping law and order, disarming the Japanese and expelling them from the region required "contacts with abroad and with the inland", and declared that his staff were willing "to continue...work again on orders of the Australian Army, but not by intermediary or under the Dutch functionaries".13

This attitude was taken by all the major leaders: by Dr. Ratulangie, appointed Governor of the Celebes by Sukarno soon after the declaration of independence; by the Rajahs of Bone and
Lowe; by Wartabone at Gorontalo, and leaders at Poso and other centres along the east of the island.

While there were outbreaks of violence from time to time, violence was not the principal characteristic of the nationalist opposition in the Celebes. Such incidents as took place were almost invariably directed against the Netherlands officials or the Japanese, and often were caused by the actions of the Ambonese troops in the Netherlands Indies army, as for example the disturbances which took place in Makassar on 15 October. The Ambonese, a race which had not had traditionally harmonious relations with their fellow inhabitants in the Indies, had an aptitude for fighting which the Dutch had put to good advantage. A large number of soldiers in the ranks of the R.N.I.A. came from Ambon, and, fanatically loyal to the Dutch, tended to be thoroughly intolerant of any demonstration of support for the nationalists. In the instance referred to above, the R.N.I.A. troops had tried forcibly to remove the red and white Republican rosettes being worn by Indonesian nationalist supporters. There was a clash involving a number of casualties. Dougherty's reaction was to order the R.N.I.A. troops in Makassar returned to barracks pending further orders, and to forbid R.N.I.A. soldiers to carry arms outside barracks, or to be used in street patrol, with or without arms. Instances of similar trouble occurred in Gorontalo, an especially difficult centre in the north-east Celebes, where complaints were made to the Australian commander by the local Indonesian population about the behaviour of native N.E.I. troops; the Netherlands officials were warned that if they didn't want further trouble from Gorontalo, it would be advisable for them to keep a tighter reign on their coloured soldiers.

Clashes with the Japanese in many cases involved Indonesian attempts to capture arms and ammunition, of which they were woefully short. There were a number of small incidents reported by the Japanese Second Army in Celebes, and at one stage they requested more arms for themselves, protesting at further reduction in the
size of their garrisons. This was supported by the Australian commander who argued that the size of the Japanese garrison had very little bearing on its potential for subversive activity, while if the numbers were reduced too far, the Japanese would be quite incapable of controlling the Indonesian population.

Most of these incidents involved only a few men on either side, but in January in the Timor area groups of two hundred and four hundred attacked Japanese patrols in an attempt to capture weapons. The first of these attacks took place at Gempe on 1 January; others occurred at Sape and Raba, where a group of eighty Indonesians speared a Japanese sentry who had approached them, enquiring their business.

For the most part the Australian troops themselves were not met with violence, and any incidents in which they were involved usually began as clashes between Indonesian and Netherlands forces, as in the case reported in the Sydney Morning Herald when an Australian was killed and three others injured, protecting a number of Ambonese troops from the nationalists. Care was usually taken by the Indonesians to distinguish between Dutch and Australian forces, and the difference made was underlined whenever the opportunity arose. This was particularly noticeable at Palopo when the surveillance party, (under Australian command but including Netherlands officials) arrived there on 26 November. The party was warned by the Japanese commander in charge of the administration that because of the presence of N.I.C.A. officials their reception was likely to be hostile. This proved to be the case, and the N.I.C.A. officials had to be placed under armed escort for the rest of their stay. Another surveillance party, arriving at Gorontalo on the same day were told by three informers that a section of the population were armed and it would therefore be unwise for the N.I.C.A. officials to enter the town. This warning
was repeated by the local police chief (a nationalist supporter) and by the local president of the Free Indonesia Movement (as it was called), who added that the Australians would be quite safe. While as far as possible Netherlands and Australian officials refused, at least openly, to be put off by such threats, they were aware of the danger. A report made in late October by the N.I.C.A. on nationalist activity in the Australian area said, with particular reference to the southern Celebes, that it was

"not advisable for N.I.C.A. or Netherlands Indies Government officers to travel into the interior if not adequately escorted." 15

While tension was high some violence was virtually inevitable. For the most part, however, the nationalists preferred to use other means less likely to bring them up against the much better armed and equipped occupation forces. One of the most useful weapons was rice. Food stocks and their distribution was one of the first problems the occupying forces had to face.

"The civil affairs problems of the (Makassar) Force are of considerable magnitude, owing to size and importance of Makassar and the important agricultural resources of the area. The main problem is the re-establishment of adequate food supplies". 16

Although these supplies were available in outlying areas, "a considerable transport organization" was needed to effect distribution. 16

Time after time the nationalists ambushed or diverted rice trucks and boats.

"The situation became impossible, in that N.I.C.A. were unable to carry out any of their functions either in the inland districts or in the city. Foodstuffs were prevented from being brought to the city and no headway was being made in the re-establishment of public utilities, trade or commerce". 17

In an effort to deal with the situation the Commander of the Makassar Force, Brigadier Chilton, summoned the Rajah of Goa, a nationalist leader from a district just outside Makassar, and ordered him to stop interfering with the rice trucks. The
Rajah of course promised at once to comply. A similar approach was made to Dr. Ratulangie a couple of days later. According to Chilton, Ratulangie promised among other things not to interfere with the rice for a trial period of three weeks. According to Ratulangie, he gave no such undertaking, but he did appeal to the Rajahs and Chiefs in his area to cooperate. During this same three weeks, however, the Netherlands officials claimed to have intercepted a telephone conversation between Ratulangie and the Rajah of Pare Pare during which Ratulangie gave instructions for some 200 tons of rice to be diverted, and for care to be taken to prevent the Australians from finding out. At Palopo also the Rajah refused to supply the N.I.C.A. with rice.

The Indonesians were not the only ones to use the scarce rice as a weapon: the N.I.C.A.; where they were able to establish control over the supply of rice in a district, forced cooperation on the local rulers by making them come to the N.I.C.A. for rice (and also for petrol, another extremely scarce commodity, the lack of which hampered the nationalists considerably). According to a report on the political situation in the Makassar area, this went a long way towards re-establishing the authority of the N.I.C.A. 18

Another thorn in the side of the occupying forces were the itinerant agitators who moved around attempting to whip up import for the nationalists in the outlying areas. Time after time, when Australian surveillance parties arrived at their destination, it was to find a simmering town, and reports that "two (or more) F.I.M. agitators had been in the area but left the day before", or more infuriating, that they had left that morning, "just before the surveillance party arrived."

Road blocks and instructions to Japanese commanders not to let suspected nationalists move about, together with constant patrols on the part of Dutch and Australians, while no doubt making it difficult for the nationalists, had little effect in stopping their activity altogether.

Although the occupation began uneventfully, it was not long
before it became clear that the restoration of Dutch authority was not going to be the simple matter at first supposed. With the situation in Java as warning of what might happen, the Australian Army was determined not to get involved in a Dutch colonial war. Many of the Australian troops in the Indies were "five year" men, eager only for a passage home and discharge from the Army. The official position of the Australian Military Government with regard to the Indonesian demands for independence was declared to be one of neutrality. Detailed instructions were given to the Force commanders setting out clearly the limits within which assistance could be given to the Dutch. It was recognized that it was necessary for a small Australian force to accompany each N.I.C.A. unit and officially "install" it, in order to emphasize its authority and attempt to increase its prestige, but such an escort was to be withdrawn within a week. The "arrival of Australian troops...had a very decided effect on the population", and minimized the likelihood of overt opposition. It was however made quite clear that no attempt was to be made to establish the N.I.C.A. where it could not maintain law and order, and if a situation should develop with which the N.I.C.A. and accompanying N.E.I. troops were unable to cope, the force was to be withdrawn. Australian military personnel were on no account to be used to maintain law and order in such circumstances.

The Dutch, aware that the longer they took to establish themselves, the more difficult their position would be, were anxious to set up N.I.C.A. posts in as many centres as they could within the shortest possible time. As the number of R.N.I.A. troops in the eastern islands increased, pressure to expand Dutch control grew stronger. The Australians however remained firm: the R.N.I.A. were coming to relieve Australian forces. (Once the idea of October withdrawal had been abandoned, new dates in January and February the following year were set for the relief of Australian forces in Celebes, first in the outlying areas and finally Makassar; Timor force was to
be withdrawn in March). Instructions were therefore issued to the effect that deployment of R.N.I.A. companies was only to be made for the relief of outlying A.M.F. companies and not for occupation of new areas. As it happened there were no areas reported to have been abandoned, at least for the duration of the Australian occupation. The Dutch, once established and in control of the food supply were able to cope with most opposition. (One possible exception to this rule was the case of Palopo, to which I shall refer later).

Australian methods of breaking the nationalist hold were effective, at least as long as military government lasted.

While the Dutch may have been irritated by some aspects of Australian "neutrality", insofar as they may have wanted more military support, they could not (and did not) complain about the way in which the military administration was handled.

Neutrality is a difficult position to maintain in almost any circumstances, but in the case of the Australian Army in the Indies it was a false position from the beginning, since the declared objective of the occupation force was to hand over administration to the Dutch.

"The Australian Military Forces are not concerned with the eventual form of government to be set up in the N.E.I., and will maintain a completely impartial attitude on that question. Thus it is no concern of ours if Indonesians express a desire for a Republican or any other form of government." 24

By the same token, a deaf ear was turned to all Dutch requests for the arrest of politically undesirable individuals. No arrests were to be made on purely political grounds.

However, while Indonesians were entitled to "express a desire" for a Republican government, they were not permitted to hold processions or demonstrations, display symbols, publish newspapers or hold meetings in order to further this desire. While "purely political" offenders were not to be arrested, offenders against law and order and the military government were
certainly liable to arrest. There was a very fine line between the two.

The extent to which bans on nationalist activity were imposed was left to the discretion of the commander in each area, and in some cases restrictions were minimal.25

Disputes over the flying of the Republic flag were probably more frequent than over any other single point at issue. Only at Gorontalo were the nationalists sufficiently strong to wring a concession on this point: in order to break the deadlock and gain nationalist co-operation permission was given for the red and white flag to be flown, although only on private buildings, and only if the Dutch flag was flown beside it.

One of the strictest bans on nationalist activity was the Proclamation issued by Brigadier Chilton, Commander of Makassar Force, on 29 October following disturbances in the town of Makassar the same day. Any person carrying weapons of any kind (not being a member of the police force or the Allied Forces) was liable to be shot. A similar fate was promised anyone found interfering with military installations or public utilities. Holding processions or demonstrations, wearing of uniform, and drilling or participating in military training of any kind were prohibited, as was interfering with the free use of public highways, refusing to sell food and other necessities, threatening violence, robbery and looting.26 It may be argued quite fairly that such measures were necessary to preserve law and order, one of the primary functions of the A.M.F. In the circumstances, however, a policy designed to preserve law and order coupled with a refusal to recognize nationalist leaders inevitably was a policy which supported the Dutch, and weakened the nationalists.

While official Army policy had the effect of strengthening the Dutch position, some elements in the Australian forces sympathized with the Indonesians. (Many of the men in the ranks did however support army policy. One in a letter home said he could write pages on what he and his mates would do to the Indonesian supporters in Australia
who appeared only to be trying to "find them another fight".)

The 7th Division in Borneo showing signs of Communist infiltration appeared to be much more sympathetic to the Indonesian cause. Both The Tribune and the Maritime Worker published letters from men in Borneo in support of the nationalists. One such letter read:

"The overwhelming majority of our chaps here have a tremendous amount of sympathy for these people whose life is one of continuous squalor under the harsh domination of the Dutch imperialists." 28

Another report from the Australian interpreter for the R.A.A.F. at Tarakan told of notices erected in Australian camps at Dutch instigation forbidding natives to enter to beg for food or worn out clothing. According to him, the Australians disregarded these notices,

"but any food or old clothes given (the Indonesians) was forcibly taken from them by the Dutch who patrolled the native villages for this purpose." 29

In Pontianak, within hours of the Australians' landing, propaganda leaflets in Malay, printed in Melbourne, were being spread among the natives. 30 There were other reports of pamphlets printed by the Committee for Indonesian Independence in Brisbane, found in Labaun, an area to which repatriated Indonesians could not have penetrated.

At Balikpapan, on 14th November, a crowd of several thousand Indonesians gathered in the N.I.C.A. compound and raised the Republican flag. A number of Australian soldiers, disregarding the "no fraternization" order, were reported to be inciting the nationalists, but by the time the Australian military police arrived, there was no sign of them. 31

Army Public Relations admitted in November that Dutch reports that Australians were selling arms to the Indonesians contained more than an element of truth. 32 Since Australians had to surrender pistols on return home, however, sympathy with the nationalists need not necessarily have been their principle motive.

Lockwood suggests that a class division within the Australian
Army was the explanation of the officers support for the Dutch and the ranks support for the Indonesians. There is little evidence, however, to suggest that this division of sympathy existed in such a clearcut manner throughout the Australian occupied area. As was noted above, there were some groups in the ranks who were definitely anti-nationalist. It is also quite possible that the officers, having a definite responsibility with regard to the preservation of law and order were not in a position to act as they may have wished. One Instruction to officers of the Makassar Force pointed out that demonstrations and public meeting were forbidden

"not because of our desire to suppress political aspirations, but because in the present state of the country they are liable to lead to mob action and breaches of law and order." 34

The proclamation of offences against military government and the banning of demonstrations of nationalist support were only one of the methods used by the Army to suppress the nationalist movement. These measures were designed to prevent overt activity; it was also necessary to gain the cooperation of the local population. This they attempted to do in two ways. The first method was to seek the support of the local Rajahs and Chiefs, who could be said to have had some legitimate authority. Many of the native rulers were willing to co-operate once it had been explained that the rule of the N.I.C.A. was not meant to be permanent. Others, like the Rajahs of Bone and Lowoe, and also the local ruler at Palopo, were less inclined to believe in the good intentions of the Dutch, and refused to have anything to do with them. The other means by which the Australians hoped to suppress the nationalists was by isolating the nationalist leaders politically, and by exploiting any divisions there might be in the movement. This double pronged policy was followed wherever trouble appeared in the outlying areas, but the best illustration is probably the situation in Makassar, the largest centre in the Australian area and the stronghold of the nationalist movement in the Celebes.
The nationalist leader in Makassar, Dr. Ratulangie, had before the war been South Celebes representative in the Council in Batavia, but had fallen foul of the Dutch and been removed. When Japan occupied the Indies, he returned to the Celebes, where he had acted as adviser to the Japanese administration. In June 1945 he became Vice-Chairman of the "Nationalist Party", of which Bone was the Chairman. The party was not encouraged by the Japanese, and before it had had time to organize itself, it was suppressed. In August Ratulangie was appointed as one of the Celebes representatives to the Indonesian Independence Preparatory Committee. Following the Japanese surrender, he was left in control of the civil administration, and was confirmed in that position by Sukarno who appointed him Governor of the Celebes.

The Rajah of Bone was one of the most influential local rulers, with a record of opposition to the Dutch, including active co-operation with the Japanese in February, 1942 when they first entered his area. The extent of his influence was recognized by the Dutch who, in the first weeks of the Australian occupation had advised the early establishment of Australian forces at Bone.

"This would obviously restrict the illegal activity of the Free Indonesia Movement, including the Youth Movement..." 35

In the first week in October, the N.I.C.A. Commander summoned several Indonesian leaders to assemble in Makassar for a conference with him. A number refused, saying they were willing to carry on the administration under Australian orders, but would not co-operate with the N.I.C.A. The Australian Commander, Brigadier Dougherty was requested to meet Ratulangie and confer with him.

Instead Dougherty, calling a meeting of Rajahs and Chiefs from the surrounding areas, reiterated that the N.I.C.A. authority was the only one he recognized.

"It was impressed on them that N.I.C.A. was an army unit, that it was a temporary measure for re-establishing the community on a peacetime
basis, and would be disbanded when the final lawful government, whatever form that should take was established." 36

They were asked to give their full co-operation to the Allied Military Government, and to the N.I.C.A. as part of that government.

A deadlock had been reached: the Indonesians refused to have anything to do with N.I.C.A., and the Australians refused to take action that could be construed as recognition of any nationalist claims to be a legitimate government. The situation in Makassar deteriorated, and on 29 October there were incidents and outbreaks of violence in the town throughout the day, resulting in the issue of the proclamation by Brigadier Chilton (who had taken over from Dougherty) referred to above.

Shortly after this a meeting was at last arranged between Chilton and Ratulangie, 37 the Australians emphasizing that they regarded Ratulangie only as a private citizen albeit an influential one. The Australian and Indonesian reports of this conference differ markedly, but according to the Australian records, Ratulangie told the Brigadier that the meeting with the N.I.C.A. Chief had not taken place because he and several other nationalist leaders had not been able to agree on what they wanted to discuss with Hoyenn and what stand they were going to take on certain issues. This no doubt only served to confirm the Australian view that

"there does not appear to be any closely knit party or movement, but rather there are a number of political groups with no common leadership and often at variance with each other". 38

The Brigadier suggested to Ratulangie that if during a trial period of three weeks he showed that he was willing and able to control his followers, and maintain law and order which included guaranteeing the rice supplies, military government would be more inclined to look favourably upon his claims to leadership. The Australian records claim that he agreed to this, but as noted earlier, Ratulangie denied giving any such undertaking, although
he requested local rulers to co-operate. There are few indications, however, that either the Indonesians or the Australian Command put very much store by the three week "truce", for during this period Ratulangie allegedly gave instructions for the diversion of the two hundred tons of rice, while at Makassar Force H.Q. there was considerable pressure from the Dutch to remove him to New Guinea, a suggestion which Chilton supported, but to which the Australian Headquarters refused to accede.

The alternative was to make it appear undesirable to the other Indonesian leaders to continue supporting Ratulangie, since it was judged that if his influence was removed, any cohesion the movement may have had by virtue of its nominal allegiance to the Sukarno regime in Java (whose appointee Ratulangie was) would disappear.

It was therefore decided that Ratulangie should be rigidly excluded from any further conferences or meetings, and that it should be explained to those invited that he was not included because he held no official position, whereas those summoned did.

Chilton then, on the advice of Headquarters, sent a letter to all Rajahs and chiefs in the Makassar Force area, including that portion under Japanese administration. He again outlined the relationship between the N.I.C.A. and the A.M.F. With regard to the future government of the Indies, still to be decided, he wrote:

"The more capable you prove yourself of assisting the A.M.F., R.N.I.A. and N.I.C.A. to bring about economic prosperity for yourselves and the people of your districts, and to preserve law and order, the more chance there is that your views will be given consideration in forming the new constitution".

The present lack of co-operation, he told them prejudiced their reputations as responsible leaders, and was a contravention of his orders. They were therefore ordered to co-operate. The alternative was made quite clear.

"If you do not co-operate fully it may shortly be necessary for me to take strong action to ensure economic prosperity and law and order,"
and to place under restraint or remove from his present location any person, irrespective of his position, who fails to co-operate". 39

The Brigadier also shrewdly included a list of those who had already agreed to co-operate.

This threat had the desired effect, for none of the local rulers were willing to forfeit what power they had for the sake of either Ratulangi, whose leadership had been more or less thrust upon them, or of a movement directed from Java.

The Rajah of Bone was one of the first to agree to co-operate, carrying his Council and personal following with him, on 29 November. Once Bone had capitulated, others were more willing to do so.

On 13 December, thirty-two chiefs in the Makassar area signed a declaration undertaking "to co-operate fully with the Allied Military Government", and acknowledging the N.I.C.A. as part of that Government. Three days later twenty-eight chiefs at Pare Pare signed a similar declaration.

This could be said to be the end of organized resistance during the period of Australian occupation of the Indies, but it was not the end of the nationalist movement. Perhaps one mistake made by the Australian military administration, and by the Dutch, was their belief that once various individuals had been removed, and a series of agreements to co-operate had been collected and filed away, the entire movement would simply die. It had certainly been disorganized to such an extent that the Dutch were able to take over again, but the determination of a hard core of nationalists (who took to the hills with their captured arms,) to make life as difficult as they could for the Dutch officials was as strong as ever. It is difficult to believe that such leaders as the Rajahs of Bone, Lowoe, Goa and others could have had such a change of heart as to wholeheartedly support the N.I.C.A.

It is not unlikely that the readiness of the Indonesians to
co-operate, apart from being a retreat in the face of superior forces, was a result of their peculiar faith in the Australians. No doubt they felt that while the Australian Army was present the Dutch would be constrained to make some show of living up to their promises of giving the Indonesians a greater share in the administration. As the time drew nearer for the Australians to withdraw from the Indies, there were reports of outbreaks from several areas. Palopo, a troublesome area which had been reported quiet and co-operative for several weeks, erupted on the eve of the departure of the Australian Liaison party, on 23 January 1946, and nationalists captured a large section of the town; fortunately for the Dutch there was a company of R.N.I.A. troops in the vicinity who were able to come to the rescue, and control was re-established after several tense days marked by sporadic outbreaks of violence.

A similar reaction was reported from Semaoe, in the area commanded by Timor Force, where it was reported that Indonesian seamen landed there early in January were growing restless following reports that the Australians were preparing to pull out, and were flying the Republican flag, disregarding the N.I.C.A. who were already installed in the district.

Throughout January, the Australians in Celebes gradually withdrew to Makassar, leaving the Dutch in control of a gently simmering population. Makassar Force closed its headquarters on 2 February. Timor Force, the last to leave, was withdrawn on 19 March. After a five month occupation the Australian army had achieved its main objectives; the Japanese had been concentrated in various areas, and the N.I.C.A. had been installed throughout the eastern islands. Within a month of the Australian withdrawal the Dutch arrested Ratulangie and his staff, along with most of the other Rajahs and Chiefs who had supported the Republic, and either imprisoned or exiled them. The resistance continued until, in 1947, the Dutch finally felt themselves strong
enough to embark upon a pacification campaign which involved
the wholesale slaughter of thousands of Indonesians. (Dutch
estimates give the number killed as 10,000; the Indonesian
figure stands at 29,500). 40

The policies followed by the Australian occupation force
undoubtedly weakened the nationalist position considerably, but,
although the Dutch were formally installed in their old territory,
their control was not sufficiently strong to avert the bloodbath
which followed. It is doubtful whether the policy of the
Australian Army of occupation had any more lasting effect than
to postpone the day of reckoning.
CHAPTER VI

CANBERRA'S "INDONESIA POLICY"

1. Pressures on the Government

From the early days of their struggle for independence the Indonesians regarded Australia as a friendly power, largely on the basis of the wharfies' boycott of the Dutch ships but also because of the stand taken by Dr. Evatt at San Francisco. While it seems certain that the Australian Government was basically sympathetic to the Indonesian cause, its international attitude was one of caution, and it was not until after the first Dutch police action of July 1947 that Australia intervened in the Security Council in an effort to bring about a peaceful settlement of the dispute. Following the second Dutch police action, Australia began advocating transfer of sovereignty at the earliest possible date. Not only did it take the Government a long time to decide to give open international support to the Indonesians, it took a long time for any policy statement to be made at all. The Republic was declared on August 17, 1945, but, despite repeated demands in the press and in Parliament, no policy statement was made until the Minister for External Affairs announced in March 1946 that "Australian policy as regards the Indonesian dispute was to assist in a settlement and discourage acts of provocation and violence", which was, in effect, a declaration of neutrality.

What then is the basis for assuming that the Government was sympathetic to the Indonesian Republic? What were the reasons for this sympathy, and why was the Government so reluctant to state its position publicly?

The line followed by the Government with regard to the training of Dutch troops, the repatriation of the Indonesian refugees, the wharfies' boycott of the Dutch ships, and the instructions given the Australian representative in Batavia all reveal a measure of sympathy for the nationalists. Each of these instances will be dealt with in more detail later.
There were at least three factors, each in a way related which gave rise to this attitude. First, the Australian Labour Party, in power at the time, was ideologically inclined to sympathy with peoples seeking self-government. "We have been told," said Senator Grant, "that the native peoples of the East are to have an 'Atlantic Charter'. At present there is some trouble amongst the Indonesians. I do not know whether the gentlemen in Java whose name has been publicized recently has been a Japanese 'quisling' or not. That has nothing to do with the question at issue....I am concerned as to whether we have fought the war against Japan so that white imperialism may be established in the East once more".  

Second, there was a general feeling that the Dutch had failed miserably in their duty to their colony regarding both administration and defence. This feeling had given rise, towards the end of the war, to suggestions from some quarters that Australia herself should take over the Indies: "With regard to the campaign against the Indonesian islands the Australian military command persistantly urged the United States commander to use Commonwealth ground and naval forces... According to MacArthur the attitude of the Australians stemmed from designs of annexation vis-a-vis the Indies, fostered by a powerful group centred around the Australian commander in chief, General Sir Thomas Blamey. It was suggested that to leave the richest of all Asian colonies in the hands of a nation as weak as the Netherlands was tantamount to inviting another aggression in the future".  

The Commonwealth Prime Minister, Curtin, did not support the plan, but the very fact that the suggestion had been made and that the Dutch came to know of it could not have improved Dutch-Australian relations. It is also likely that at times of extreme exasperation with the Netherlands authorities, the idea seemed particularly attractive to Australian Ministers. An assurance made by Dr. Evatt in the House of Representatives that Australia supported the return of the Indies to the Dutch did little more
The third factor, strained relations between the Commonwealth Government and the Netherlands authorities, mentioned earlier, was also important in that it inclined the Australians to be more receptive to the nationalist point of view than might otherwise have been the case.

Why, then, was the Government not more positive in its support for the Indonesian Republic? An attempt to answer this question really comes down to a discussion of what factors influence the formation of foreign policy, for no government is absolutely "free" to pursue any policy it pleases; there are pressures from without and within, to which a government must needs adjust. The Chifley Government was no exception; in fact, it may be argued that it had to cope with more than its fair share of pressure.

Before discussing these influences, it should perhaps be noted that, although the Government tended to support the Indonesian case against the Dutch, the solution it visualized was a compromise which gave the Indonesians more control of their own affairs, along the lines of the later Linggadjati Agreement. There was only a small minority group which advocated full self-government for the Indies - this view was not adopted by the Government until much later.

Externally, pressure was placed on the Australian Government by the British, and of course, the Dutch.

The British, when they undertook the liberation of the N.E.I. had not bargained for a healthy independence movement which quickly developed into a colonial war. They were anxious to be done with war in any case, and embarrassed by the whole horrible situation. With India clamouring for independence, they did not feel they could use Indian troops to restore to a European power a former Asian colony. (Certainly, Nehru had warned them not to). They did not however have any available alternative, and consequently were anxious that nothing should be done by anyone,
anywhere, to aggravate the situation in Java, thus postponing the date when the Dutch would eventually take over. Constant approaches were made to the Australian Government to refrain from in anyway offering assistance to the nationalists. A particular thorn in British flesh were the Dutch ships lying idle in Australian ports while British ships carried Dutch troops to the Indies.

The Dutch also tried to exert what influence they could, especially with regard to the boycott of their ships. Trading on their status as Allies, their pressure largely took the form of an intensive propaganda campaign in the Australian press and through such organisations as the Australian-Netherlands Society, and various commercial and manufacturers' organisations. These last were up in arms over the alleged cancellation of vast Dutch orders in Australia on the grounds that they could not be got out of the country.5

Factors influencing the Government on the domestic scene were also present and must be taken into account. Perhaps the principle one, mentioned earlier, but deserving of emphasis, was the necessity for the Government to cope with the dislocation caused within Australia when the war ended. Thousands of men discharged from the Forces had to be absorbed into industry. However much the Australian voters may have wanted to assist the Indonesians (and this is doubtful, at least in the immediate post-war period), they were not likely to take kindly to further delays in getting the consumer goods and services which they had been forced to do without for several years. The pressure to "get the boys home" could not be ignored. To this extent the Government's hands were tied until the last of the Australian troops left Timor in March 1946.

Strong as were the demands of the electorate not to aggravate the situation in Java, the Commonwealth Government withstood all pressure to break the boycott of the Dutch ships imposed by the waterfront Unions, and supported by a very large sector of the labour movement. No doubt the Government had no real inclination
to break the ban anyway, since to some extent at least the principle would have appealed to them. Probably more important, however, was the fear that any action taken to force the Unions to load the ships could conceivably end in a nationwide strike, a risk the Government could not take.

In addition there was a lack of co-ordination within the Government itself probably due in some measure to the increase in size and number of Government Departments, and to the presence of a number of brilliant, individualistic young men, who, in the circumstances created by the war had risen to positions of influence which they did not hesitate to use.

This situation, along with the rivalry which existed between Dr. Evatt and Mr. Calwell led to a controversy over some Radio Australia broadcasts in November 1945. Some two years before, Calwell as Minister for Information, had sought control of the Government's shortwave propaganda station, (later known as Radio Australia). This was seen to encroach on External Affairs territory, and Dr. Evatt was not willing to relinquish to any degree control of foreign policy. A compromise was reached whereby External Affairs controlled policy while Information wrote the scripts. Daily consultations took place for a while, but soon petered out and Information was left to itself. These circumstances made it possible for Geoffrey Sawer (who had taken over direction of the shortwave service) and one Michael Keon to make broadcasts early in November in which British and Americans were attacked for their policies regarding Indonesia and support was given to demands for Indonesian independence.

Considerably embarrassed, Chifley repudiated the broadcasts and apologised to Mountbatten for the criticism. Nevertheless the Government was unable to convince the world at large that broadcasts from a Government propaganda station expressed only the views of the individuals concerned. 6

These then are the principal factors influencing the action taken by the Australian Government during the war, and the six
months immediately following the Japanese surrender. Their effect on Government policy may be seen more clearly by examining certain specific instances.

2. Training Dutch Troops for Liberation of N.E.I.

One of the issues which arose towards the end of the war and contributed to the ill-feeling between the Australian Government and the Dutch was the extent to which facilities were to be made available to the latter for the training of their troops for reoccupation of the Indies, if these facilities were to be made available at all.

When the southern part of the Netherlands was liberated in September-October 1944, volunteers were sought to continue the war against Germany and Japan. The response was apparently satisfactory, but then arose the problem of training, which could not be carried out in Holland. Six months later van Mook wrote to the British naval member of the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington:

"The Australian army was very helpful and agreed to put at our disposal camps, equipment, and training facilities in Western Australia, which were ideally suited for the training of the light battalions we shall need..."

According to van Mook, these troops could not be shipped to Australia because transport had not been made available from the Allied shipping pool. 7

Some three weeks later Major-General L.P. van Temmen, just retired from the Netherlands forces in Australia, made a statement to the effect that one hundred thousand Dutch troops would soon be coming to Australia to train for the invasion of the Indies.

"Already navy personnel were training in England. The Dutch Air Force would be augmented, and all would come to Australia as soon as ships were made available. It was hoped that Australia would be able to equip most of the army personnel". 8

This was the first the Australian public knew of any such
plan, and apparently van Temmen's interpretation was a gross exaggeration of any undertaking on the part of the Australian Government. A letter from the Department of External Affairs to the Netherlands Minister informed the Dutch that Australia had not entered any final commitment.

"It stated that the proposal to base 30,000 troops on Australia commended itself in principle, but the crux of the matter was capacity to do this in the light of existing and prospective commitments. The Commonwealth's limited manpower resources had to be spread over maintenance of Australia's fighting effort, assisting in provision of materials needs of the British Pacific Fleet and U.S. Forces, providing for essential needs of the civilian population, including housing, meeting food commitments for the British people, and providing for production of goods for export..." 9

Van Aerssen published the letter, and accused the Australian Government of a breach of faith.

On 1st August, the Leader of the Opposition, R.G. Menzies asked:

"Can the Prime Minister say whether the Australian Government, or any Minister on its behalf, last year agreed that the Netherlands Authorities should bring to Australia to be accommodated, trained and equipped in Western Australia a large force of troops, said to number about 30,000 from the Netherlands? Has the arrangement now been cancelled by the Australian Government, and if so why?...." 10

Chifley replied that such a suggestion had been made "sometime last year", but "there was nothing very concrete about the proposal." The Government had been guided in its decision

"not by financial considerations, but by the capacity of the Australian nation to meet physical requirements of troops based on Australia. This has been explained to all the Allied Governments concerned, including the Government of the United States of America. There was a point beyond which we could not go. Any decision as to what could be done for our Allies has been based in every case on the capacity of this country to meet their needs." 11

When pressed for more detail the Prime Minister refused to comment further, but promised to go into the matter and see if he could
"make a more complete statement on it later".

In Perth a week later Mr Chifley, restating the Government's reasons for refusing to train the troops, criticized the Dutch authorities for publishing the letter without reference to the Government. "It is highly improper" he said "for any Dutch official to charge the Government with breach of faith."

The Government stand did not go uncriticised in Australia. The Bulletin ridiculed the suggestion that the proposal had been "turned down as 'neither logical nor equitable' because it conflicted with the Government's own plans for sweeping reductions in the fighting forces, A.I.F. and R.A.A.F., and for sending 'if possible' a liberating and avenging force to Singapore. The liberating and avenging were to be done by a 'token force'." 12

The chairman of the executive of the Australian-Netherlands Society, Mr. R.F. Sanderson, also came up in arms. He issued a statement saying

"The society felt it must apologise.... for what some people had suggested was inexperience in the international sphere on the part of our leaders. By those in a position to know it had been stated that by no great effort the wherewithal to house and feed these Dutch troops could have been forthcoming had internal organisation been better." 13

At the time this controversy was raging, through the last months of the war, the Government was unaware of the future implications of its attitude in the light of the nationalist out-break in the Indies. Whatever the reasons for the refusal (and it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the Government was being perfectly honest when it said that it could not cope with the influx of such a large number of troops) and bitter as the Dutch may have been at what they regarded as a breach of faith, the entire situation took on a different hue when it became apparent that the Dutch were going to have to fight their way back to Batavia against Indonesians rather than Japanese. The Australian Government had taken its stand before the extent of nationalist
opposition was realized: it saw no reason to change its mind, and the "Stirling Castle" incident only caused tempers to flare once more.

The matter involved some 1,500 Dutch troops who arrived in Sydney on 4th November on the British ship "Stirling Castle", and were refused permission to land. Waterside workers refused to take stores to the ship, and demonstrations took place on the wharf where the ship was berthed, which ended in troops and demonstrators throwing leaflets/garbage at each other. Van Aerssen said that representations had been made weeks before to Australian authorities to have the ship diverted to Java or Singapore, but had been told that this could not be done. (Also on board were Australian servicemen being returned from Europe). Reports from on board the "Stirling Castle" claimed that it had been intended that the 1,500 untrained Dutch troops should go into a camp near Brisbane. An Australian government spokesman however said that the troops would be transferred to another ship and go north at once. This arrangement had been made, he said, before the ship reached Fremantle. It was also stated that the Commonwealth had not stopped the men from landing, that these orders had been issued by the Dutch commander to avoid possible clashes ashore.14

The Government appeared to be considerably embarrassed by the affair, and wanted the troops transferred and away as quickly and quietly as possible. It was not able to escape the brickbats thrown by Dutch supporters in Australia, and The Bulletin described the Government's attitude as "surly, ignoble and disgraceful".15

Concerning assistance to the Dutch in the form of Australian men and materials, the Government attitude was ambivalent. On 12 November Air Minister Drakesford gave an assurance that no R.A.A.F. men would be sent to Java. At one stage the Commonwealth Government had acceded to a N.E.I. request for the loan of 250 Australians to man an air station until the Dutch could take over. As soon
as it was learned of the disturbances and the government had
"decided on a policy of non-intervention" the agreement with the
Netherlands was cancelled. 16 (It is significant that The Bulletin
did not feel compelled to protest against this decision).

On the other hand, munitions were freely sold to the
Dutch, both off production lines in Australia, and from Australian
stores in the islands. In addition to this a number of fully
armed corvettes were handed over to the Dutch in the early months
of 1946. The only explanation for this inconsistency seems to be,
in the words of a Sydney Union official, "The Chifley Government's
attitude was good, but it was still a capitalist government. You
couldn't expect much else." It is difficult to believe, in the
light of other action taken by the Government, that the sale of
military equipment was a popular course for them to take; whatever
pressures were put on the Government to make this equipment
available to the Dutch, they were obviously too strong to be over­
ridden.

3. Repatriation of Indonesian Refugees

The Government's attitude to the Indonesians who had been
evacuated to Australia was conditioned by the White Australia policy
and a determination that, come what may, it should not be sacrificed.
As early as January 1942, the Minister for the Interior, Collings,
speaking with regard to a War Cabinet decision to admit some
Eurasian and Chinese women and children from "specified areas",
gave an assurance that this decision would not endanger the White
Australia policy. 17 Basically this attitude remained unchanged
when the Dutch were permitted to bring several thousand Indonesians
to Australia. The Government was prepared to tolerate them under
the extreme conditions of war, but when the war was over, it was
anxious to have them shipped back as soon as possible. The problem
became acute when Indonesian seamen walked off ships, and began
wandering through Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. Many were arrested
and charged under the Immigration Act with being prohibited immigrants. The Trades and Labour Council, Brisbane, requested the Prime Minister to suspend the penalty sections of the Immigration Act in relation to the Indonesian seamen. Questioned in the House on 26 September regarding this request, the Prime Minister replied that he had made no decision, and that he intended to discuss the matter with the Dutch authorities the following day. 18

Two days later, Friday 28, questioned again on this point, Chifley said:

"I understand that certain difficulties have arisen in regard to Indonesian seamen, and the Minister for Immigration is looking closely into the matter... The Dutch authorities have asked that these seamen be allowed to go to Sydney so that they may be put on another ship for return to Indonesia, and the matter is now in the hands of the Minister for Immigration..."19

On the following Monday, pressed once more for a statement of Government intention regarding the Brisbane Trades and Labour Council request, the Prime Minister finally told the House what it wanted to hear:

"Steps will be taken to remove from the mainland Indonesian seamen who have left their ships in Australian ports, I understand on strike...One thing I can make clear is that there will be no waiving of the requirements of the Immigration Act in favour of Indonesian seamen."20

Meanwhile the Indonesians had intimated that they were perfectly willing to leave Australia, so long as they could go back to Indonesia, and so long as they were not delivered into Dutch hands. Secretary Stout of the Trades Hall Council, Victoria made representations to the Federal Government on behalf of the Indonesians in Victoria and was told that the Government had offered to take the Indonesians back to Java as passengers on ships flying the British or American flag. 21 They were to be granted an amnesty by the Dutch authorities, and a ship was to be provided the following week. The Indonesians however requested that they be returned to Republican held ports, placing little faith in the Dutch amnesty promise. While the Commonwealth Government wanted to see the
Indonesians out of the country, it had no wish to harm these people, many of whom had been political prisoners, on a platter to the Dutch. This was emphasized in a cable sent by Chifley to the British Commander-in-Chief, notifying him of the decision to repatriate the Indonesians on the "Esperance Bay", and asking his cooperation.

"Up to the present our attitude towards the situation in N.E.I. has been that Dutch and Indonesians must work out their own solution. In any case we were not prepared forcibly to return these elements to Dutch territory. Consistently with our immigration policy we did however make it known that we proposed to deport them to Australian New Guinea and Nauru. All expressed preference for N.E.I. provided that we shipped them on non-Dutch vessels to selected points..."

The Prime Minister added a request that the Indonesians be disembarked "without incident and without risk of punishment by the Dutch."22

The "Esperance Bay" set sail on 14 October, with some 1,400 Indonesians, men women and children, bound for "selected points" in the Indies. Unbeknown to the Indonesians, one of these selected points was to be Koe pang in Timor where forty-four "extremists" listed by Australian and Dutch security authorities were to be disembarked. Why, when everything had been going so smoothly, and after they had shown such concern for the ultimate fate of the Indonesians, did the Government run the risk of a major upheaval on the ship for the sake of a few so-called extremists, will remain a mystery. It is possible that they miscalculated, assuming that those named could be quietly taken from the ship at Timor, without trouble or incident (which Chifley had specifically said he wished to avoid). When the Indonesians learned that some of their number were to be put ashore they insisted that either all should go ashore, or none should go. Only nineteen of the forty-four could be identified anyway. In the end the Indonesians, through a committee, demanded that the "Esperance Bay" either return to Darwin
or continue to Sourabaya, and threatened to achieve their objects by violence if necessary. As many of them were armed, this was no idle threat. The External Affairs officer, Plumb, accompanying them, decided that it was not worth risking the loss of life that would take place if he forced the issue. Taking on reinforcements from H.M.A.S. "Arunta" which had met the "Esperance Bay" one day off Timor, they proceeded to Java. It was impossible to approach Sourabaya because of the fierce fighting taking place in and around the city and the ship proceeded to Batavia, where the Indonesians refused to disembark without the nineteen "extremists" until twenty men with tommy-guns went below. The nineteen were then transferred to H.M.A.S. "Arunta" and returned to Timor.

When the story of the "Esperance Bay"'s voyage leaked out the Government was blasted from all sides. Why hadn't the Indonesians been searched for arms before they left? Why hadn't "adequate" protection been given the crew members of the Esperance Bay? Why such consideration for the finer feelings of a "mob of coloured communist extremists"? Why hadn't they all been handed over to the Dutch in the first place? Legally, this last was a good question, since the Indonesians were really Dutch subjects.

Considerably embarrassed, the Government did its best to hush-up the whole affair. "Allegations that officers of the Esperance Bay were in danger of being murdered by the Indonesians because of smuggling on board of arms in Australia were not in accordace with the facts," said Immigration Minister Calwell. "At no stage of the voyage was a threatening attitude adopted by the Indonesians, although certain discontent arose when the ship called at Koepang." The same mistake was not made again. The remainder of the Indonesians were returned to Java without incident, except for those few who chose to remain in the service of the Dutch in Australia.

Once more the Commonwealth Government had sailed close to the diplomatic wind, indicating its sympathy for the Indonesians...
by repatriating them in a non-Dutch ship to their homeland.
And again, in an attempt to detain a few alleged extremists whom
Australian officials could not even identify, revealed the
vacillation and indecision that seems to have been characteristic
of Canberra's attitude at this time.


As far as was possible the Commonwealth Government expressed
its intention not to interfere in any way between the Dutch
authorities and the Indonesians in Australia. This was stated
quite clearly by the Navy Minister Makin in May 1945 when he was
asked that Government assurance be given to the Indonesian seamen
working in Australia that they would not forfeit the improved
conditions they had won on their return to the Indies. "I am
sure," the Minister replied, "that the honourable member would not
wish the government to take any imprudent action in connexion with
people under the jurisdiction of a friendly neighbour. It would be
an extremely delicate matter to raise; indeed, any such action may
be regarded as highly improper." In effect the fate of the
Indonesian seamen on leaving Australia was in Dutch hands and the
Government was not going to compromise itself by interfering on
their behalf.

When, four months later the Indonesian seamen walked off the
Dutch ships and the Australian waterside Unions lent their support,
the Government's initial reaction was basically unchanged.

In answer to an emotional attack from Opposition Leader
Menzies, who accused the Government of permitting Communist led
Unions to run the country's foreign policy on behalf of a puppet
of the Japanese, to the detriment of Australians Dutch allies,
"Driven temporarily out of their East Indian Empire," Chifley made
the much quoted reply:

"The hold up of ships bound for Javanese
ports is a matter between the Dutch authorities
and their own subjects. Indonesians refuse to
work those ships. If the Dutch authorities
cannot make their own subjects do
the job, I can easily imagine that
the subjects of another country are
not likely to take action that may be
regarded as 'scabbing'." 27

In an attempt to clarify the situation and reach some
solution, Chifley and Shipping Minister Ashley met Baron van
Aerssen, Dr. Hoogstraaden and General van Oyen in Canberra on
26 September. Chifley apparently was reluctant to believe that
the Dutch had included arms among the mercy stores, but when he
asked the Dutch officials for a denial of this they refused to
give it. 28

On 26 September the Prime Minister told the House of his
discussions with the Dutch authorities.

"Inquiry elicited that all (the Dutch
ships) had some arms and ammunition
aboard, in addition to mercy stores. The
arrangement made by the Minister for Supply
and Shipping, as the result of the dis-
cussions, is that there will be no inter-
ruption of the loading of vessels that are
to transport only foodstuffs and medical
supplies. Any ship that is to carry
munitions, and, I presume, military
personnel, will be loaded by Dutch labour." 29

Chifley was reckoning without the deep distrust of the
Unions for the Dutch: in the first instance they had continued
to load the ships on a guarantee from the Dutch that the ships
contained no arms and ammunition. 30 When subsequently tommy-guns
were discovered in the cargo of one of the vessels, they refused
to have anything to do with loading material which could be used
against the nationalists, and refused on later occasions to place
any trust in the Dutch.

In any case, by the end of the week during which the boycott
began, the Union position had changed slightly. It was stated that
any goods which would help the Dutch would hurt the Nationalists.
This included food. Therefore no goods would be loaded at all.

The Government was thus placed in a much more difficult
position, for while the ban related only to military equipment it
could claim to occupy a strictly neutral position in refusing to
interfere. To countenance a complete embargo on goods for the N.E.I.
made it look very much as though the Government was taking sides in the dispute. Accusations that a minority group was being allowed to decide Australian foreign policy came thick and fast, along with repeated demands that the Government state its policy on this question.

Meanwhile the Commonwealth was making continual efforts to reach a compromise between the Unions and the Dutch, at least to get the "mercy ships" away. The Dutch, however, were far more inclined to criticise the Australian Government for its actions than to co-operate to settle the dispute. After a meeting between Chifley, Makin and van Aerssen, the Dutch were reported to have asked

"that the movement of ships from Australia to the N.E.I. with relief supplies be facilitated and freed from delays occasioned by strikes of Indoneisan seamen in Australian ports."

These strikes, van Aerssen declared

"were aggravated by Australian waterfront Unions making common cause with the Indonesians" 31

The obvious implication was that the Government should do something about the Unions.

Chifley suggested as a possible solution that Dutch ships operating between Australia and Java should for the time being be placed on the Australian register, and manned at Australian rates by Australian seamen. van Aerssen refused to consider the proposition, saying that it would be "invidious to national status" for Dutch ships to sail under any but the Dutch flag.32

The Unions had informed the Government that they were prepared to work bona fide mercy ships if this was done under the control of U.N.R.R.A. 33 No agreement could be reached on this matter because of difficulties in guaranteeing the distribution of goods once they reached Indonesia. Neither Dutch nor Unions were prepared to give an inch, which lends weight to the argument that it was the ships, after all, and not the cargoes which were at the bottom of the trouble. It has been suggested that, had the
Dutch been as eager as they claimed to be to get the relief
supplies to Java, the quantity of goods was sufficiently small
to have been airlifted.

On his return from overseas, Dr. Evatt, in his capacity
as Attorney-General, made an attempt to end the boycott by calling
on the Unions to meet in a series of compulsory conferences to
discuss the matter. At a meeting with van Aerssen, Evatt managed
to secure his agreement to the Union proposition that non-military
cargoes (to be distributed impartially by S.E.A.C.) should be
released. The Unions then demanded that a trial ship carrying a
Union observer be sent first. Although this was a new condition
to which the Dutch had not agreed, Evatt made an effort to reach
a compromise in order to save the small measure of agreement already
gained. He suggested that a Government observer accompany the
trial ship. However, the moderate Unionists suggested to fill this
role were rejected by the Left-wing unions. The entire idea of
an observer was rejected by the Dutch as "scandalous" and
"insulting".34

Sympathetic as the Government may have been, both to the
Unions and the Indonesians, they were apparently considerably
embarrassed by the intransigence of the Unions. Nominaly their
position was one of neutrality and yet the Unions had forced
Australia virtually to support of the Republic; at least, this was
the understandable interpretation of the Government's refusal to
use emergency powers to break the boycott, which, despite continual
pressure from the press, from the floor of the House, and from the
Dutch authorities, they steadfastly refused to do. At the bottom-
of their attitude was a fear expressed by Senator Ashley soon after
the boycott commenced; he felt, he said,

"that no action should be taken which
would have the effect of embroiling the
whole of the waterfront of Australia in
a dispute arising out of trouble which has
occurred in another country." 35

The same explanation was made some six months later by the
Prime Minister, in reply to a question in the House:

"Does the honourable member suggest, that in order to have a limited quantity of supplies loaded for some particular part of the globe we should have allowed an industrial dispute to flare up that would involve the whole industrial movement and the whole of the shipping trade in the country." 36.

There is no reason, however, to believe that the Government would have wished to take action to force the Unions to load the ships, even had the risk of industrial upheaval been negligible.

If it was impossible for the Government to oppose the boycott with force, it was equally impossible for it to openly support the Unions, considering the attitude taken on the issue by the British Government. So anxious were they, in fact to end the boycott, that Lord Louis Mountbatten was sent to negotiate directly with the Union leaders in an attempt to persuade them to release the Dutch ships and thus relieve the strain on British shipping. 37

There is no reason to believe, however, that the Commonwealth Government would, at this stage have wished to give unqualified support to the Nationalists. This reluctance to be openly committed is revealed by the Government's diplomatic activities in Batavia.

5. Australian Diplomacy in Batavia

The first steps towards a diplomatic exchange between Canberra and Batavia had only just been taken when the Indies fell to Japan. According to Dr. Evatt, Australia had, however, a special representative in the N.E.I. since V-J Day. 38 At the end of October 1945, Macmahon Ball, head of the Political Science Department of Melbourne University, was appointed Australian Government Political Representative attached to the Allied Commander in the N.E.I. The Government had been anxious about events there, and wanted to be kept fully informed. 39

Macmahon Ball reached Java at a time when the fighting was
probably at its fiercest, as the battle for Sourabaya was beginning. It was at this point that the British command realized that this was not a small insurrection but a major revolution, and that some compromise with the Republicans would have to be reached.

The Australian representative had instructions to do all possible to assist in a settlement, to show sympathy to the Republicans as far as was possible without offending the Dutch, but at all costs to avoid committing Australia to any particular position. This was not a simple task, for while the Indonesian leaders, especially Sjahrir and Sukarno were accessible, pressure was continually being brought to bear by the British Foreign Office representative in an effort to persuade the Australian Government that Australia's future security depended on the return of the Dutch. This, the British diplomats believed was quite possible, if only the Dutch were to receive unstinted support from their allies.

The British Military Command took a quite different view for the soldiers, with several years experience of war-time Asia, realized that the nationalist movement was a force to be taken seriously. They were continually urging the British Government to seek a settlement, if possible through the United Nations. It was this strand of British opinion that, in the end, probably carried most weight in Canberra.

The Dutch were persuaded, during talks with the British Government in December 1945 to recognize the right of Indonesia to independence. A plan had been agreed upon which was to be discussed with a "legitimate" nationalist movement.

Van Mook returned to the Indies from London in January and later the same month it was announced that Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr was to be sent to the N.E.I. to assist in the negotiations on behalf of the British Government.

On 10 February, van Mook, at the first meeting with the Republicans, presided over by Clark-Kerr, presented Sjahrir with a summary of Dutch proposals. Briefly, these were for a Commonwealth
of Indonesia, controlling its domestic affairs through democratically elected and predominantly Indonesian institutions. The Head of Government was to be a representative of the Crown with special powers regarding the guarantee of fundamental rights, efficient administration and sound financial management.

The Indonesians were prepared to talk on this basis and negotiations took place throughout February and March. At this time conduct of Australian diplomacy in Batavia was in the hands of Keith Offier, appointed Head of Mission 25 February while at the same time being in charge of peace negotiations with Thailand.

In a statement of 26 February, the Dutch reassured the Indonesians that the "Commonwealth proposal" envisaged complete self-government. The Indonesians, for their part, modified their demands somewhat, seeking de facto recognition of their control of Java and Sumatra. By the end of March it was announced that sufficient agreement had been reached for van Mook to return to the Hague for consultations. He was accompanied by Clark-Kerr and a number of Indonesian representatives. Negotiations continued throughout April in the Netherlands.

Commenting on the Dutch proposals Dr. Evatt said that they seemed

"to make a great advance towards a satisfactory settlement. Whilst Dutch sovereignty is retained, provision is made for a great increase in local self-government...The Dutch proposals are expressly based on Article 73 of the Charter and our special representative in the N.E.I. is doing what is possible to assist the special British political representative now mediating between the parties with a view to a just settlement."

Meanwhile, in the United Nations, Australia had opposed a Ukraine demand for an enquiry into British suppression of the Indonesian nationalist movement.

Although it was later to take an active part in the negotiations for a settlement, during this initial stage the Australian Government was content to do what it could unofficially and behind the scenes.
When Dr. Evatt told the House of Representatives that Australia had a

"vital interest in the preservation of a war-time friendship with the Dutch in relation to the Netherlands East Indies," but should at the same time

"do everything possible to establish good relations with the Indonesian and other dependent peoples advancing towards a greater degree of self government," 43

he was not simply making a empty "On the one hand this...On the other hand that..." statement. He was expressing what was, for Australia, a very real dilemma.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

By virtue of her geographical position, Australia would have been compelled to pay some attention to a nationalist movement in the N.E.I., but because of the peculiar circumstances of enemy occupation which led the N.E.I. Government and many thousands of Indonesians to spend some four years on Australian soil, this country was itself deeply involved in the struggle.

It was involved because of the close relationship which developed on the waterfront between Indonesian seamen and Australian Unions, culminating in the ban on Dutch ships; involved because Australian soldiers were engaged in putting down any signs of nationalist support and restoring Dutch administration in Borneo, Celebes and Timor; involved because time after time the Australian Government was forced to make decisions - on the training of Dutch troops, repatriation of Indonesians and numerous other issues - which had a bearing, one way or another, on the struggle between the Indonesians and the Dutch.

After four years of close contact both Dutch and Australian tempers were shortened. The war over, the Dutch expected whole-hearted support from their Allies in their re-occupation of the Indies. The Australian Government, aware of the strategic importance of the Indies to national defence, was not completely sure that the Dutch were reliable neighbours. There was also a feeling that the Indonesian people had a right to some measure of self-government. While the press and many Australians-in-the-street were inclined to put their money on the Dutch, other groups were not so sure.

The Left-wing, led by the waterfront Unions, was adamant in support of independence for Indonesia.

The Labour Government at this stage, immediately after the war, was still treading warily. Sympathetic to the concept of Indonesian self-government, it was cautious regarding Sukarno's movement, about which it knew little. This little had been gleaned
principally from British and Dutch sources. In any case, it looked forward to a gradual development of democratic self-government, in British tradition, for the N.E.I. While refusing to break the wharfies' ban, all other avenues were explored in attempts to free the Dutch ships; while refusing to train their troops, arms and equipment were sold to the Dutch; while Indonesians were repatriated to N.E.I. ports of their own choosing, a few "extremists" were singled out and handed over to the Dutch; while the political representative in Batavia was under instructions to show sympathy to the nationalists, the Army was destroying their power in Celebes, Timor and Borneo.

The explanation of this political schizophrenia seems to lie partly in the confusion of a country endeavouring to regain its balance after an exhausting war, fearing any action which might either plunge it into another, or delay the return of long missed goods and services to the community; partly in the lack of co-ordination experienced within an administration expanding to meet the needs of a new technological age, run by a group of able, idealistic but headstrong men; and partly in the difficulties experienced by a small nation, such as Australia, endeavouring to follow a foreign policy of which its great and powerful friends disapproved.
Chapter I

"The Netherlands East Indies" will hereafter be referred to as "the N.E.I."


These records are held by the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

Chapter II


2 For details of early military co-operation see Douglas Gillison, Royal Australian Air Force 1939-42, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1962, p.152 ff.

3 Courier-Mail (Brisbane), 6-7 January, 1942.

4 A Minister could not be appointed to Batavia while the Netherlands Government was in exile in London.

5 Courier-Mail, 14 February, 1942.

6 Ibid., 11 March, 1942.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid., 7 March, 1942.


10 Courier-Mail, 8 June, 1942.

11 These were: Economic Affairs, Education, Defence, Home Affairs, Finance, Public Works, and a Bureau in charge of preparatory measures for the re-establishment of civil administration in the liberated N.E.I. Keesings Archives, 1944, p.6664.

12 The Argus (Melbourne), 13 June, 1944

13 Ibid., 14 March, 1945.

14 Australian Public Opinion Polls, Nos.314-326, (Melbourne, December 1945-January 1946) showed that 6 out of 10 had read of the nationalist revolt. Of these, 41% supported Dutch rule for the Indies, 29% supported Indonesian rule, 13% some other system, and 17% had no opinion. This meant that 24.6% of the population favoured Dutch rule and 17.4% favoured Indonesian rule. Schneider, op. cit., p.29-30.
Chapter III

1. H.J. van Mook, broadcast of 5 March, 1944, reported in The Argus, 6 March, 1944.

2. Ibid.


4. Stated by External Affairs Minister Dr. Evatt in the House of Representatives: "From the Netherlands Indies, Australia has received much assistance during the war, and in turn our servicemen have been proud to render them great help. Australia's participation in the recovery of their territories from the enemy will lead to even closer relations in peace-time. I shall elaborate no further." C.P.D. (Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates), Vol. 179, p.236, 19 July, 1944.

5. The operative passage of the Royal Message was as follows: "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." Text quoted in P.S. Gerbrandy, Indonesia, Hutchinson & Co. (Publishers) Ltd., London, 1950.


11. Ibid., 26 September, 1945


16. Ibid., 24 October, 1945.

Chapter IV

1. Interviews with E.V. Elliott (Seamens Union) and E. Roach, (Waterside Workers' Federation), Sydney, June 1965.

2. Statement made by the Committee of Indonesian Independence, Maritime Worker, November, 1945.


5. Ibid., 27 September, 1945.

6. Ibid., 28-29 September, 1945.

7. The fifteen Unions were: Waterside Workers' Federation, Ironworkers, Boilermakers, Seamens Union, Ships Painters and Dockers, Clerks, Road Transport Workers, Almalagamated Engineers, Australasian Society of Engineers, Building Workers, Plumbers, Shipwrights, Sheetmetal Workers, Electrical Trades, Federated Engine Drivers and Firemen. The Tribune (Sydney), 28 September, 1945.

8. "Some 5,000 Indonesians directly participated in the 1945-6 struggle for the Republic on Australian soil, of whom 3,768 achieved voluntary repatriation; while perhaps another 5,000 had passed through Australian ports or encampments and were out of the Country when the Republic was proclaimed." (Lockwood, op. cit., Part I, Chapter IV.).

9. Central Committee of Indonesian Independence, Republic of Indonesia, Brisbane, 1946, p.15.

10. Statement of Committee of Indonesian Independence, Maritime Worker, op. cit.


13. This story was told me by Roach (W.W.F.) June, 1965. See also Lockwood, op. cit., Part III, Chapter I. It is regrettable that the note was not preserved.

14. Lockwood, ibid.

15. Mrs. Gwyn Williams, Darlinghurst, Sydney, in a personal interview with Lockwood, ibid.


*The Tribune*, 16 August, 1945.

Republic of Indonesia, op. cit., p.15.

Elliott, in *S.M.H.*, 26 September, 1945.

Interview with Elliott, June, 1965.

Lockwood, op. cit., Part III, Chapter II.

Lockwood, interview with Elliott, June 1964, ibid.

Ibid.

Resolution passed by Sydney Branch of W.W.F., 20 September, 1945, quoted in Central Committee of Indonesian Independence, Merdeka, Brisbane, August 1946, p.15.

Lockwood, op. cit., Part III, Chapter I.

Telegram from Englart to Healy, 24 September, 1945, from W.W.F. "Indonesia File, 1945-49", quoted in Lockwood, op. cit., Part III, Chapter IV.

Lockwood, op. cit., Part III, Chapter V.


Charlie Young, Secretary of the Melbourne Branch of the W.W.F., in a letter to Lockwood, 18 October, 1963. Lockwood, op. cit., Part III, Chapter V.

*The Argus*, 1 October, 1945.

Lockwood, op. cit., Part III, Chapter III and Chapter IX.

Ibid, Chapter IX.


Chapter V


4. Administration Instruction, 14 September, 1945, War Diary of 21 Infantry Brigade, January 1946, from the Makassar Force Records (henceforth MFR) at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

5. R.A.F.W.I. was an organization for the Rehabilitation of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees, at this time under the direction of Lady Mountbatten.

6. N.E.T. draft handbook for Australian troops (undated), MFR.


8. Services Reconnaissance Department, Miscellaneous Intelligence Report No. 7, Condition of the S.W. Celebes Under Japanese Occupation, 7 September, 1945. MFR.


13. Letter to Brigadier Dougherty from the Head of the Communications officials in Makassar, 12 October, 1945. MFR.


17. Report on Operations of Makassar Force, 22 September to 20 December, 1945, from War Diary, HQ 21 Infantry Brigade, December 1945. MFR.

18. Ibid.
19 Headquarters Instruction to Australian Forces, 6 November, 1945. MFR.

20 Report on Operations of Makassar Force etc., op. cit.


22 Headquarters instructions to Makassar Force by signal, 22 December, 1945. MFR.

23 See van Mook, op. cit., p.184n.

24 Instructions to Makassar Force in Connection with the Roles of the A.M.F. and N.I.C.A. in the South Celebes, November 1945, 21 November, 1945. MFR.


26 Proclamation issued by Brigadier F.O. Chilton, D.S.O., Commander, Australian Military Forces, Makassar, 29 October, 1945. MFR.

27 S.M.H., 10 October, 1945.

28 Maritime Worker, October, 1945.

29 The Tribune, 11 September, 1945.


31 Long, op. cit., p.569.

32 The Argus, 29 November, 1945.

33 Lockwood, op. cit., Part III, Chapter X.

34 Instructions to Makassar Force, November 1945, op. cit.


36 Report on Operations of Makassar Force etc., op. cit.

37 Referred to above.

38 Instructions to Makassar Force, November 1945, op. cit.

39 Order by Brigadier Chilton, addressed individually to all the Rajahs and Kaseangs (local chiefs) in the Makassar Force area, including the portion under Japanese control, December 1945. MFR.

40 For description of events following the Australian withdrawal, see Kahin, op. cit., p.356.
Chapter VI


2. Ibid., Vol.185, p.6197, 2 October, 1945.


5. Some estimates placed the value of Dutch orders at £30 million or £40 million. Chifley stated in the House of Representatives on 6 March that the figures were utterly unreasonable: the Dutch authorities would not be able to place the orders, and could not pay for them if they did. He estimated the value of the orders as between £3 million and £5 million. (C.P.D., Vol.186, p.17). Elliott, of the Seamen's Union, on the other hand, placed the figure at £750,000 on the basis of a statement made by the Officer-in-Charge of the Netherlands Indies Government Sea Transport in Sydney on 1 March, 1946. See E.V. Elliott, Indonesia, Summary of speech made at the Town Hall, Sydney, 15 April, 1946.

6. For description of this incident, see article by Crayton Burns, The Argus, 17 November, 1945.


11. Ibid.


Mountbatten arrived in Canberra 24 March, 1946, from Singapore (his Headquarters) where less than a week earlier he had had talks with Nehru. He spent two days in Canberra during which he had "informal discussions" with Chifley. The subject of these discussions was not disclosed. His sojourn in Canberra was followed by a triumphal visit to Melbourne and then Sydney, where, on arrival on 26 March, Mountbatten met the Union leaders at the office of Shipping Minister Ashley. This meeting was described by The Times (London) of 30 March, 1946, as an "unexpected engagement" introduced into a tight official programme. "It is understood that he discussed particularly the hold up of Dutch ships in Australia." The Australian newspapers (C.M.H. and The Argus, 30 March) however, reported that the meeting was "hurriedly arranged as a result of suggestions made while he (Lord Louis) was in Canberra". E.V. Elliott, in an interview with Rupert Lockwood, June, 1964, said that it had been revealed to him in discussions with Mountbatten that Lord Louis had come to
Australia "for the specific purpose of getting the black ban on the Dutch ships lifted." See Lockwood, op. cit., Part III, Chapter VII.


39 The Argus, 29 October, 1945.

40 "Netherlands East Indies: Post-war Developments", Current Notes, December, 1946.

41 Ibid., February, 1946.


43 Ibid.

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