

Monograph-6

**THE STORY OF INDONESIAN
REVOLUTION
1945-1950**

P. R. S. Mani

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**Centre for South and
Southeast Asian Studies
UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS**

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REVOLUTION
1945-1950**

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UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

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FOREWORD

A large number of scholarly works have appeared in recent years dealing with the Indonesian nationalist movement and revolution. While the Indonesian nationalist leaders like Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir have repeatedly acknowledged India's significant contributions to the cause of Indonesian Revolution, the Western writers have generally tended to downgrade India's role.

This monograph is an attempt to set the record straight and analyse the tumultuous developments in Indonesia during the revolutionary years from an Asian standpoint. Shri P. R. S. Mani is eminently qualified to undertake this study. During five long years, Shri Mani was witness to the rapidly unfolding events in Indonesia; first as an Army Observer with Indian troops, later as a War Correspondent and finally as a Diplomat. A personal friend of the Indonesian nationalist triumvirate - Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir - Shri Mani provides not only a personal touch but also rare insights into the Indonesian nationalist struggle.

This monograph is based on the lectures that Shri P. R. S. Mani delivered to the Faculty and Students of the Centre in February 1981. I am sure this publication will be of interest to not only students of contemporary Southeast Asia, but to all those interested in International Affairs.

I would like to add that the responsibility for the facts and opinions mentioned in this publication rests exclusively with the Author.

Centre for South and
Southeast Asian Studies,
University of Madras.

V. SURYANARAYAN

FOREWORD

A large number of scholarly works have appeared in recent years dealing with the Indonesian revolution. Some of these are mentioned in the list of references. While the Indonesian revolution is a subject of general interest, it has attracted the attention of scholars in various fields. The Indonesian revolution is a subject of general interest, it has attracted the attention of scholars in various fields. The Indonesian revolution is a subject of general interest, it has attracted the attention of scholars in various fields.

This monograph is an attempt to set the record straight and analyze the Indonesian development in Indonesia during the revolutionary years from an Indonesian point of view. It is a study of the Indonesian revolution from an Indonesian point of view. It is a study of the Indonesian revolution from an Indonesian point of view. It is a study of the Indonesian revolution from an Indonesian point of view.

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I would like to add that the responsibility for the errors and omissions in this publication rests with the Author.

Y. SURYAKAYAKA
University of Michigan

PREFACE

Born and growing up in times of revolutions, I was fascinated with the accounts of the struggles led by Garibaldi and Bolivar. The contemporary non-violent revolution of Mahatma Gandhi stirred my patriotism deeply but since it was a new technique unlike the classical revolution, it did not evoke active response in me. My appetite for participating in a revolution in foreign lands in the image of my heroes remained unsatisfied. Destiny took me to Indonesia in the throes of a revolution at the end of the Second World War, along with the Indian Army.

It has been my privilege and good fortune to witness the revolution in Indonesia during five long years from several advantageous positions; as an Army Observer with Indian troops, as a War Correspondent and as a Diplomat.

Yes, this work appears thirty or more years after the events. Obviously, I could not write it as long as I was working for the Indian Government. They were events of a stirring epoch and equally stirring was my association with them as an interested observer. They are easily and vividly recalled to memory as the mind reflects on the tides of time with the help of the regular notes that both by aptitude and training I kept during the five year period. The long intervening years between the events and the writing of this book have enabled me to freshen my notes by expanding the accounts of affairs and of men of that eventful period.

Various books and publications, largely American, have been published on the Indonesian Revolution. The

new material that has come to light thereby has indeed stressed my lack of deeper background of the events. Yet, I have not departed from what I recorded in my notes then as witnessed and observed by me. I was positively a sympathetic commentator. Even if subsequent events were to prove me wrong in regard to my contemporary assessments, I do not wish to avail of hindsight to now correct them in view of my desire to be true to my then vocation as a journalist. At the same time I have availed of the literature published since the revolution to substantiate my observations and comments. I was different from most of them; I was clearly a sympathetic observer quite committed to the freedom of colonial peoples while not deviating from a sense of objectivity.

Sjahrir, Soekarno and Hatta—all the three great personalities of the Revolution with whom I had close contacts are no longer alive. That puts even greater responsibility on me to ensure that my assessments of their roles in the Revolution are in no way influenced by their subsequent conduct in the power struggles after independence. It had been possible for me to be equally friendly to all the three. In effect, I had been severally influenced by the charisma of Soekarno, the placid and polite intellect of Hatta and the penetrating and analytical mind of Sjahrir. To the last, I owed even more. With no pretensions, whether he was Prime Minister or not, he showered on me warm and brotherly affection. His home was always open to me. He was ever ready to give me a succinct analysis of a political crisis though on occasions tinged with his barbs at Soekarno. He took special efforts to simplify for me abstruse political and philosophical ideas. He had great understanding of human nature but alas, little enthusiasm for manipulating the masses like other politicians and believed in an elite cadre of political workers to provide leadership to the masses. His refusal to accept adulations from the masses often injured his political interests.

My admiration for Sjahrir and respect for his intellect knew no bounds. He very generously educated me on politics and international affairs. It is, therefore, natural for me to pay my homage to his life and dedicate this book to his memory.

On his visit to the famous Buddhist monument of Borobudur in the course of his visit to Java in 1927, the poet and Nobel Laureate Dr. Rabindranath Tagore wrote: "To know my country one has to travel to that age, when she realised her soul and thus transcended her physical boundaries when she revealed her being in a radiant magnanimity which illumined the Eastern Horizon, making her recognised as their own by those in alien shores who were awakened into a surprise of life." These cherishable words of the great Indian poet and reformer were echoing in my heart and mind as I was on my last goodbye visit to this glorious monument in Central Java in the last weeks of December 1949. My visits to it were frequent as though to a teacher, a Great Teacher since it spoke so eloquently the teachings of the World Teacher Gautama Buddha. I realised for the first time that India, my own country had no grandiose monument to his teachings and philosophy. As I was contemplating my wonder and seeking guidance from the many stone Buddhas that sat on its every tier and took my snaps, I suddenly realised I was about to fall fifty feet with my head down towards the rocky platform below. And Lo, the timely and restraining hand of Darmanto held me behind the waist and I was saved from a tragic end to be able to write this story. So slender is life; Darmanto was an Indonesian diplomat hailing from the family of the Susuhunan rulers of Soerakarta; he and his wife gave me much insight into Javanese lore and culture. And there were nearly more than a hundred - nay thousands - who constantly helped me to know Indonesia during the five years I spent in what was to me a Paradise, a true El Dorado picturesquely described in Hindu scriptures and Sanskrit literature as Yavadwipa (Java),

the island of millets and Suvarnabhumi (Sumatra), the land of gold - truly lands of plenty. But I must not omit my special gratitude to Dr. Maria Ulfa Santoso, pretty Srisoewarni, Herawati Dia with her flamboyant journal 'Mimbar Indonesia', Soebadio with his unfailing jokes, Soedarpo with his worried looks as to how to dish out variously to foreign correspondents, Soedjatmoko with his contemplative looks and deep analytical mind, Dr. Priono who with his critical satire brushed up my French but without revealing his Marxist outlook, my good Samaritan Sufiyan Tanjoeng who like a protecting shadow appeared suddenly when I was solitarily abandoned after Sjahrir and others in my company were kidnapped in a 'coup' ^{and} when I was surreptitiously crossing the rice fields of Krawang near Batavia after eluding the British Gurkha patrols in order to move into the territory of the Republic for which necessary permission was not always available from the British Hqrs, the charming Mrs. Suryadharma, wife of the Indonesian Air Chief, who helped me with both knowledge and protocol while being the Indian representative at Jogjakarta, Miss. Yetty Zain who while keeping me in her protective custody at Soerabaya initiated me into the secrets of the Poemoda (Youth) movement ^{and} whose leader (and Yetty's brother) Rustum brandished a Japanese sword at my neck as I became his prisoner and her distinguished diplomat brother Zairin Zain who bore my questions patiently, the militant trade unionist Johan Zarushah who loved to tease me about my stories yet added more gossip to my mill, the Indian businessmen of Soerabaya and their families who made me one of their own and whose leader Kundan gave me more than what I could give him, the soft-spoken but clever Ali Budhiardjo who gave me timely tips, Dr. Soebandrio and his cultured wife who never failed me courtesy and hospitality, Rosian Anwar the Socialist Editor whose Socialism was as unknowable as the Brahman in the Hindu doctrine of 'Not This, Not This' (Neti, Neti), the brave and defiant journalist Mochtar Lubis whose lucidity made understanding of background easier, Sultan Hamengko

Bhuwono of Jogjakarta who showed great concern for my happiness, my translator Wirjawan who patiently tolerated my heavy schedule despite his preoccupation with the revolution and lastly but not the least, my office boy Ilias Yacob who wrote on my finally leaving Indonesia: "May God gift you gloriousness and good fortune to meet in person a gentleman who so adequately and so nobly expresses your own about your national needs...this is the second time my officer leave Djakarta and leave not coming back." His Indonesian expression of the sentiment must indeed have been chaste.

It had been my privilege to have known the Indonesian leaders in my several capacities. I was involved in many discussions with them and have been privy to the working of their minds including their mutual taunts. I had easy access ~~to~~ to them as a votary of their Revolution and ~~no~~ limits or protocol inhibited my personal relations with them. They fully trusted me as a sympathiser and gave me much of their confidence. My several Dutch friends also fully enabled me to function both as a newsman and later as a diplomat. Though officially I was frowned upon, the Dutch authorities never denied me courtesy and at the end of my stay, atleast some of them appreciated in me the absence of bias against them.

My work and years in Indonesia were greatly enlivened by the affection and encouragement shown me as a journalist by Jawaharlal Nehru. Equally valuable to me was the unfailing courtesy of Mahatma Gandhi who on second thoughts declined to provide written answers to my questions regarding the Indonesian problem - out of anxiety not to embarrass Nehru who was the Minister of External Affairs - and yet wrote me a post card in his own hand: "You should excuse me for my inability to deal with the questions you have sent me."

My first visit to Indonesia was not pre-planned. It was destiny that took me there along with Indian troops in

September 1945 as their Public Relations Officer. Earlier, in Burma and Malaya, I had come into contact with the personnel of the Indian National Army raised by Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and had made some study of it. The dedicated patriotism and revolutionary fervour roused in the Indian working class in Burma and the rubber tappers in Malaya by the INA had made a deep impression on me. Before we landed in Batavia, we had indeed some idea of what had happened in Indonesia since the collapse of the Japanese Army. But the thought of a revolution was far from our minds and we were under the belief that there was a Japanese inspired and installed regime in Batavia like that of Ba Maw in Burma. Yet, I had my own doubts since I had discovered that the INA had ably balanced between its own independent political decisions and the need to act within the parameters of Japanese logistical support and the demands of ^{main} security interests. At that time, I had also the good fortune to be in the company of one of the ablest Indian journalists, T. G. Narayanan of The Hindu with whom I had long hours of discussion on happenings in Indonesia - quite unlike anything that had happened in India - and his seniority and experience were very valuable to me. It was Narayanan who opened my eyes to the revolution in Indonesia and I then decided to dedicate myself to the task of making it known in India and through India to the world.

To my surprise, it did not appear to be a classic revolution with continuous wars and armed bands storming citadels like the Bastille or towns falling each day into rebel hands. The Indonesian Revolution had quite different characteristics and followed the classical examples only to the extent of the revolutionary fervour of the population being kept permanently at a high pitch for unleashing at a given moment. There was undoubtedly the usual concomitants like frequent armed clashes, road blocks and not to omit minor brutalities but it was the looks of the people armed with all kinds of weapons from carbines, pistols and

mortars to daggers and knives with loosely worn bandoliers and hanging grenades that gave the first impression of a determined people with readiness to back their newly won freedom. It was indeed an unusually tense situation where one could not anticipate what could happen next. There were no clashes of arms in a schematic way as we were used in military campaigns or in defensive operations. It was not anarchy either since there was evidence of a central direction as well as a measure of discipline. It was amazing how such an apparatus came to be built up under Japanese military rule; while Soekarno discreetly fanned the flames of revolutionary fervour and Hatta clandestinely used his position with the Japanese administration to nurture it, the task of organising and directing it was in the hands of the youthful Sjahrir assisted by his loyal student bands.

But once the Allied Troops landed in Batavia with superior arms and trained and tested manpower, a new phase entered in the outlook of the infant Republic of Indonesia. It consisted in adopting new tactics of skill, patience and propaganda while, at the same time, maintaining the high tempo of revolutionary fervour and preparing the Japanese-raised and trained army as well as guerrilla forces for ^{recruiting} an attempted total occupation of the country if such an eventuality should arise. The strength of organisation and the unity behind it became apparent to the Allied Hqrs who realised that total occupation of the country would need larger troops than ^{to} one division that they had landed as well as heavy casualties which public opinion both in UK and India may not tolerate. The bulk of the troops was from India. It must be said to the credit of the Indonesians that they kept their cool, maintained largely their unity and did not make adventurist attempts till the Republic was able to assert its independence. The violent incidents in Soerabaya in October 1945 ^{were} ~~was~~ an aberration in this respect. Both unbridled Indonesian extremists and unwanted British provocation contributed to the initial conflagration there and after the Republic in the person of

President Soekarno had rescued the situation from the extremists, the British, instead of further assistance to the Republic, accentuated it with a military campaign from the air, sea and land.

CHAPTER-I

TUMULT OF REVOLUTION

Soerabaya, 26th October 1945. A clear morning. Life seemed normal with shops open, innumerable betjas (cycle rikshaws) in orderly speed glided on the roads and street corners bustled with food vendors plying their trade. Here and there a few assorted and outdated motor vehicles flitted past and snorting obnoxious fumes from unrefined petrol. And red and white Indonesian flags on all sorts of vehicles and large red and white banners on high buildings fluttered in the morning breeze from the sea. 'MERDEKA' (Freedom) writ white on red streamers across streets and anti-colonial slogans painted in big letters on large walls at vantage distances stared haughtily.

This was how the famous port city of Soerabaya greeted Indian troops of the 49th Infantry Brigade who had landed the previous day amidst the vigilant indifference of the Indonesian population. But the signs were ominous for the Rajputs and Mahrattas as they gleaned the words: "Azadi ya Kunrezi" (Freedom or Bloodshed) bold written in Roman Urdu along the walls of the jetties and wharfs.

To me, it was a hair raising thrill as I realised that I had at last arrived at my tryst with Destiny!

The Indian troops were baffled by the situation and these veterans of North Africa and Burma began to ask their officers if they were expected to fight the Indonesian nationalists. Allied Intelligence had earlier briefed me in Batavia that Soerabaya could be expected to be turbulent as it was known to be an extremist centre under 'Communist' leadership.

As Lt. Tony Cardew of the Royal Navy and I rode into town in our jeep en route to our billet at the Hotel Liberty, we saw places along the roads manned by heavily armed youths of the Indonesian militia and the police. Barricades had been erected at some entry points. My greetings of 'Salamat Page' (Good Morning) evoked rude sneers. It was unlike Batavia where the people had been quite amiable.

Weighed heavily with forebodings for what was to come in the next few days, my diary for 25th October, recorded before retiring to bed, read; "... things look deceptive ... in the light of the previous incidents in and around Batavia in which Indian troops and armed Indonesian groups had clashed, I think, Soerabayans are beginning to regard us as the vanguard of Dutch imperialism ... the pity is that we are mostly Indians here and appreciate like their leaders in Batavia that we have not come to Java of our own volition. We met a few local Indian residents and they have warned us to be careful ...".

The clear and cool morning of 26th October scurried into an oppressive and humid day as the Sun rose to its zenith. I heard or imagined the sounds of some kettle drums. Brigadier Mallaby, a much decorated soldier of great promise and yet gentleness of heart, who was in command of the troops told the international press at his HQ which he had moved into town: "I told the Indonesian Governor of Soerabaya that I am the ruler of this city." My diary entry for that date recorded: "But, alas, it often happens with renowned leaders ... He misjudged the local situation and viewed it in terms of regular forces and equipment. And of Fire power! According to one estimate later, there had been 15,000 trained Indonesian troops in Soerabaya and a much larger number of irregulars armed to wield rifles.

He had not taken into account the intense nationalism and mass frenzy ... Brigadier Mallaby does not seem to

guage the situation adequately and pooh-poohs the Indonesian strength ... Echoes of Glubb Pasha! Playing for time, the usual game ... a thousand regrets I am not a free correspondent to report what I observed (I was then working as an Indian Army Observer, in short an Army correspondent covering the activities of troops) ... Any way, duty by troops from my country first and cannot leave them ...".

As the fierce Sun of the day cast its last shadows, the roar and din of the city also whimpered down in gradual protest as swift moving men and women rushed with aching limbs to their homes for their main meal of the day. At our Hotel Liberty, dinner had long been over and our sentries of the Rajputana Rifles had taken up positions around the building. But I still lingered in the parlour alone, pondering over the events of the day and wondering what lay in store for us. The evening's quiet was occasionally marked by the laughter of the uncaring and hilarious few still drowning the plentiful beer at the bar. My reverie was brusquely jolted as I heard a ^{few} bars of 'Merdeka' (the Indonesian anthem on Freedom) being played on the piano in a distant corner of the parlour. It was little Meena, the Manager's daughter and quite short like all her people for her sixteen years. She had quietly slipped in like a cat and was playing with her small little fingers but with great fervour in her eyes. The song convulsed my inside and I wrote in my diary that night: 'Hardly sixteen, she hypnotises me with her zeal for the freedom of her country. She speaks only Malay and no English ... as I am wishing her 'Salamat malam' (Good Night), she pleads with me to take protection during the coming days ... though I think her childish, her tears move me but not until I lay to sleep did a vague feeling arise in me that there may be a blood bath in store for us ... some are still at their beer in the bar! It's midnight and I must sleep ...".

27 October: It seemed a bright day with renewed wishes for peace. The bearded Jamal, the petite and char-

ming Stri Souchy in her brown batik sarong and soft yellow kabaya (blouse like shirt) and the Balinese Christian girl in her prim blue petticoat and shirt, all of the Pomoeda (Youth Wing of the National Movement) meet me as instructed by their Information Officer in Batavia. They wish to take correspondents round the city on a conducted tour. Since we have no transport of our own, we welcome the idea. I join Ralph Conniston of the New York Times who chooses the Balinese girl speaking excellent English as our guide.

As we were leaving Police HO after obtaining our movement permits, we noticed RAF Spitfires dropping leaflets on the town. These ill-fated and ill-timed leaflets were soon to cause the unnecessary deaths of hundreds of Indian soldiers, thousands of proud Indonesian youths and the innocent public in large numbers. The police deter the people from picking up the leaflets and our guide looks at one and becomes grave. I take it from her, it is in Malay and its meaning becomes quite clear to me. I feel that the proud Indonesians will not surrender their arms which the leaflet demands of them. Our guide frankly tells us trouble looms on the horizon and she rushes us to the Antara News Agency Office. After showing us around, she deposits us back in our hotel. Capt Honavar, a colleague from Indian Army Public Relations, and I tramp out of the hotel to visit a few Indian merchants in town. Kundan, who is the President of the local Indian Association, gives us a delightful lunch and briefs us on the situation. Short-statured and well educated, Kundan who had some links with the Indian nationalist movement broadly sympathised with the struggle for Indonesian freedom: besides moral support, they also gave generously to Soekarno and his associates. Yet, like most of the businessmen from Sind (now in Pakistan) who have spread to remote corners of the world in pursuit of trade, he was quite cautious in his approach. He told us that while Soekarno controlled the entire nationalist forces in Soerabaya as elsewhere in Java, there were still Communists wishing to go ~~alone~~ as well as hot-headed

armed irregulars under a young leader of the Robin Hood type; Boeng Tomo. It was clear to me that we may soon be enmeshed in major clashes unlike in Batavia. But Honavar was still musing over Javanese dance and wayang (shadow play) and Kundan's promise to arrange for a Balinese dancing recital the next day!

Kundan was a public spirited man who was keen to avoid armed clashes in Soerabaya. As the leader of the 500 Indians in Soerabaya, he ably averted a clash on the first day of our arrival, October 25. Again, he did his best on October 27 as the fight raged and his car flying a white flag speeded along bullet-swept roads between British HQ and the Indonesian officials. He was beside Brigadier Mallaby as the latter was shot and killed during truce parleys and Kundan escaped with slight injuries.

While we wend our way back to the Hotel, we noticed increased activity in town with the Pomoeda, armed to the teeth, rushing to various areas and laying road blocks. The evening press briefing at Brigade HQ was cast in a tense backdrop. Grave faces with no smiles. Normally cheerful staff officers Aslam, Chopra and Singh looked serious. The lid was soon off as we gleaned the reports with ominous portents of a serious battle. Mallaby was posing a calm exterior though very much perturbed. He told us that Indonesian Governor Mustafa had fled the town without complying with the promise to cooperate in disarming the population but he has been able to take into custody another official promising to carry out the orders. He also said that he informed the locals that he was the ruler of the place and all Indonesians had to accept his authority. My diary for the day recorded: "I consider Mallaby's approach as sheer arrogance and left the press briefing sadly disappointed at the inability of our military leaders to avoid incidents. I went back to the Hotel and told Honavar for the first time that we were in for trouble and how sorry I felt for the Indian troops. Warriors from North Africa and Burma seem to be forever trapped in the

web of destiny to which they so pathetically cling ... little Meena plays again, this time the Moonlight Sonata and I am reminded of the ancient city of Delhi, the Red Fort, the Jamuna and my friends ... the little girl looks sadly into my eyes and pleads with me to leave the hotel and Soerabaya at once but I tell her that I am Indian will never flee in face of danger ... Honavar butts in and plays a few Indian melodies which stir me even more deeply and I retire ... perhaps all my fears are imaginary but why on earth are the Indonesians parading in the armoured cars and tanks taken from the Japanese ... May be tomorrow everything will be quiet ...".

28th October: We woke to a morning of uneasy quiet. The clear dawn yielded to a sky of low cloudy patches as if a hundred fires had been lit in town. The fierce Sun took deliberate peeps through the clouds as though it resented our presence. Jamal dropped in early morning to apologise for the abrupt cancellation of yesterday and promised to take us round as soon as things became quiet ... Honavar and I had once again lunch with Kundan and sat chatting till 4 o'clock in the evening before walking back to our hotel ... on our way we heard the first shots of rifle fire and we knew the peace of the town had been broken ... more shots were heard and by dusk, we heard the sounds of battle raging ... A Jat platoon of Rajputana Rifles which was guarding us in the hotel took up positions ... By 7 o'clock, the fire started coming in our direction but our troops held fire ... Major Finlay of the Australian RAPWI took command of all of us consisting of the Indian Rajputana Rifles, PR, RAPWI and FSS personnel as a mixed defence force. As the firing in our direction rose, we all stood to it for two hours but held fire. My PR colleagues, Honavar, Donald and Irwin took up positions along with troops and I was assigned to Command post to monitor Brigade HQ on our radio receiver since our communication line with them had been cut. We heard on the radio all the exchanges between HQ and the units each of which was sending out an SOS and HQ

reported they were themselves surrounded and ^{or} fierce battle was on. Some telephone calls did trickle in and one was from Kundan urging me to inform HQ that the Indonesians were anxious to call off the fighting. I replied that I had no contact with HQ and could not leave my post and he should personally approach HQ with a white flagged escort. At ten in the night, HQ announced a truce. Evidently, Kundan had been successful. We stood down and all except the sentries were sent to bed with Donald and I on duty. There was no more gun fire except for an occasional shot from a rifle.

29th October: The gloomy morning brought us no peace as Indonesians moving closer to us started firing with automatics at close range. With one of our sentries seriously wounded, our unit opened fire. In a few moments, we suffered two more casualties and being short of soldiers, we retreated to the attic of the hotel with only four bren guns, twenty rifles and ten pistols while the 400 Indonesians encircling us carried tommy guns, brens, machine revolvers, pistols, rifles, Japanese swords and bamboo spears and sticks. Soon fire came from all directions and even through the tiles on the roof. Four more of the troops were wounded and two lay dying for lack of medical attention. No help could be expected as other detachments were in a similar plight. In one cinema hall, where a detachment of Indian troops had been billeted, the entire place was set on fire by Indonesians resulting in very heavy casualties to our troops.

After about two hours of resistance and since no help was forthcoming we decided to give in and Major Finlay led us down the stairs with a white flag. Our casualties were promptly evacuated in ambulance by the Indonesians and the rest of us were loaded into trucks with flashing bayonets directing us and taken to the Kalisoese prison.

As they saw us being thus led away by youth with bayoneted rifles, the ladies of the Indian family residing

adjacent to the hotel commenced to wail for our safety. Touched by this typical Indian motherly concern in a foreign land, with the permission of my escort, I bowed to the eldest of the women and assured them that I will soon return to visit them which I did in a few weeks after our troops had occupied Soerabaya.

Meanwhile, pressed by his own advisers and the Allied HQ in Batavia, President Soekarno rushed to Soerabaya along with Information Minister Sharifuddin who had considerable influence in the city, especially amongst the Communists.

The six hours in Kalisoesoë prison were quite an experience. Three of us in a small cell were offered rice mixed with foul-smelling meat and black coffee. As some of my colleagues suspected the meat as the flesh of our slain comrades, we took only the coffee. Our first experience of a gaol threw us in a state of reverie for a while but in a few hours as we were ruminating ~~how~~ how we would be rescued, Minister Amir Sharifuddin visited me (whom I had greatly befriended in Batavia) and said that the entire episode was a tragic mistake on either side. He said Soekarno who was in the city to restore calm and peace had ordered our release and we will be returned to the British lines as soon as free communication had been established. Later in the evening, my Batavia contact Sufiyan Tanjoeng (a relation of Madame Soekarno) appeared with an armed escort and took all the press correspondents and photographers including PR personnel to the local Governor's Palace where an elaborate meal was laid on for us with the officials offering profuse apologies for what had happened.

While the hours in prison were uneventful, the next four days in Hotel Simpang under protective custody were exciting and educative. Although a formal truce had been enacted following Soekarno's visit, still there were clashes in the city as the Indian troops were regrouping to once again collect in the port area and to maintain it as a base.

The Indonesians thought it was not safe to send us across the lines to the British HQ. We did make an attempt but returned in the face of armed Indonesian irregulars resisting our passage. An effort was made to send us by train to Batavia with an armed escort but we were halted in the Central Java town of Madiun and were unable to proceed further as intense fighting had started in Central Java between Indian troops and the Indonesians. And we were quite amused to hear from the BBC on the station master's radio in Madiun: "All quiet in Soerabaya"! Our train took us back to "quiet" Soerabaya and into protective custody.

During this period, we were placed under the charge of a vivacious and colourful youth leader Miss Yetty Zain whose family members were already my friends in Batavia. In fact, it was her brother Rustom waving a Japanese sword in his hand and at the head of the Indonesian irregulars that had taken us prisoners. He had then shouted: "Gurkha toetoe" (Gurkha Shut Up) at me though he had known me earlier. Apologising later, he offered the excuse that his men would have mistrusted him if he had shown any familiarity. But Yetty was more patient and lectured to us at length on Indonesian nationalism not omitting to answer every question of ours. She spent most of her time protecting us from passing armed crowds threatening us with shouts of "Gurkhas" which we were not. The Gurkhas whose home is in Nepal were part of the Indian Army and some Gurkha battalions under British officers had also been involved in the fighting with Indonesians in West and Central Java where they had established significant bridge heads for later use by Dutch troops. The Gurkhas were reputed for their ruthlessness in hand to hand fighting with their kukris (curved knives) and the Second World War had witnessed their prowess against the Germans and Japanese. To the Indonesians who hated the armed forces opposing them, the distinction between the terms Gurkhas and Indians was not known and hence every Indian was

classed as a Gurkha. Somehow, even today, most Indonesians seem to be pathologically indifferent to the distinction.

November I was marked by a changed atmosphere. The Sun did not seem harsh and we were quite relaxed after a sumptuous Indonesian meal and much hospitality and kindness from Yetty Zain who restored to us our seized typewriters and cameras apart from our clothing. To me personally, the whole episode appeared like as though I was playing a role in a drama where the opponents were also familiar to me. Such an opportunity may or may not occur in one's life and I was deeply grateful to my Destiny for giving me the experience! After much friendly farewells we were escorted to the British HQ in the Fort area and handed over officially. Some days later, on November 5, the entire press party sailed for Singapore along with the first flight of refugees comprising 500 Dutch and Eurasian women and children who had to flee their homes.

In the web of Destiny as I then definitely was, there was on one side the pull and thrill of Indonesian nationalism in a revolutionary mood and on the other, my duty as an officer of the Indian Army to publicise the activities of Indian troops. Although in the earlier phase at Batavia, I had not witnessed any clash between the pull and duty, the events in Soerabaya did make a choice inevitable but before I could do so, I returned to Soerabaya early in November 1945 to witness the offensive launched by fresh troops from the 5th Indian Division to secure Soerabaya and its environs.

Having decided that the prestige of the British-Indian troops should not be allowed to suffer, the 5th Indian Division with its Gurkha, British and Indian troops fanned out on November 10, from their base in Soerabaya port after ^aheavy bombardment from land, sea and air of known Indonesian concentrations; having sensed the British

preparations, the Indonesian regulars had pulled out leaving the irregulars to adopt guerrilla defence and scorched earth tactics. Using determination as well as restraint as their watch-word, it took a week for the British Indian troops to mop up the main resistance and another to occupy the important landmarks. The Indonesians reportedly sacrificed a great number of their armed personnel. The women and children of the Chinese, Dutch and Eurasian communities were rescued in hundreds by the Indian troops.

This was my first intimate contact with the Indonesian Revolution and since I kept my cool, I was able to witness the mass frenzy, the bands of armed irregulars often harming the course of the Revolution by defying central direction and authority and the opportunist tactics of the Communist led militia. The opportunity also led to my casting my lot with the study of the Indonesian Revolution as an observer. To this end, I soon went to India, gave up my army commission and returned to Java in March 1946 as the correspondent of the Free Press Journal of Bombay.

CHAPTER-II

BACKGROUND TO REVOLUTION

As an Indian, the appeals of Indonesian nationalism were quite familiar to me. There were many parallels with India and yet vital differences. My contacts with Indonesian intellectuals and journalists yielded much material in this matter. The accounts of the colonial struggle were quite familiar to me as an Indian and there were some parallels to similar developments in India. But the approaches of the two colonial powers, Britain and the Netherlands, were quite dissimilar.

Colonialism and imperialism carry within them the seeds of national awakening. Benign Dutch rulers of Indonesia though exploiting the country economically had for centuries deluded themselves into believing that their colonial rule-paternalism-was different from that of the Spanish and Portuguese and even that of the British, and that the average Indonesian was highly appreciative of the rule from Holland and reciprocated the affection and consideration shown to him by the colonial civil servants. True, after long years of internecine civil strife, the people welcomed the impartial, strong and central rule of an alien race since it restored law and order resulting in the peaceful growing of crops and tending of cattle. For over a century, the Dutch showed a blind eye to the growing impoverishment of the people and their economy as the grinding wheels of colonial rule allowed the export of the raw wealth of the country to the benefit of the mother country and the enhancement of its riches. True, more schools, hospitals, clean roads, and potable water supply helped to meet the intellectual and health demands of the

Indonesian people who also appreciated the induction and super imposition of a modern administration without impairing the native frame work. But the economic exploitation was eating at the vitals of the country as elsewhere in other colonial and imperialist territories in the neighbourhood in Asia. Nationalism with the objective of self-rule gradually and perceptibly began to stir the population. A tragedy of Indonesian history is that the Dutch did not perceive the awakening of nationalism in such clear terms as the British and had for long years imagined that their rule unlike that of the British was highly paternalistic and would survive against the historical changes of the epoch. The Portuguese had also tenaciously believed that their 'assimilado' ideology insulated their colonies from change towards self-rule.

Indonesian armed resistance to the Dutch became dormant after the fall of the last Mataram Kingdom and other principalities around the 1830s. But nationalism as a factor of opposition to foreign rule lingered and continued to smoulder. Enlightened Indonesian personalities took a positive step in 1908 and a retired medical officer, Dr. Waidin Sudhira Udara and Princess Kartini founded the Budhi Oetomo (High Endeavour). The latter was already a pioneer in starting several schools for girls in Java. It is believed that the two had been greatly inspired by the ideals of the Indian poet, Dr. Rabindranath Tagore and the Boedi Oetomo schools were based upon the principles of nationalism. In 1911, the Indonesian intelligentsia felt they needed a wider body if nationalist outlook was to have some content and hence the Sarekat Islam (Islamic party) appeared on the scene with the avowed object of protecting the economic interests of the people (principally traders) of Java and Sumatra as opposed to those of Chinese immigrants who were being encouraged by the Dutch to come to the country. It was also intended to protect the Islamic faith of the population from inroads by the Christian missionaries and to promote the intellectual well-

being of the Indonesians. With these triple objectives of nationalism, the leader of the Sarekat Islam, Omar Syed Tjokroaminoto made it clear that the organisation was not anti-Dutch and will follow a constitutional path in seeking remedies. The Sarekat Islam grew to attract a large following with nearly eighty organisations affiliated to it. Its demand for a self-governing Indonesia but in union with the Netherlands was a demand somewhat similar to the demand for Dominion Status under the British Crown made in India about the same period. This parallel development of growth in nationalism in two colonial countries which had little contact with each other at that time is a feature that particularly strikes an Indian observer of the scene and confirms the universal belief that ideas that stir human hearts (and minds) have no geographical frontiers.

1930s was a period of growing anti-colonial activity in Asia. While young nationalists—mostly students—of some of these countries had a measure of contact at the meetings of the Anti Imperialist League at Brussels, the several nationalist outbursts in different parts of Asia had no connections with each other except the prevailing mood of struggle for independence. They were mostly spontaneous and erupted as part of the developing events in Europe and in the Far East and the resultant convulsions in the colonial and imperialist systems. As the clouds of war gathered over Europe, discerning nationalists perceived a new and clear vista of the opportunities for evolving patterns of struggle towards achieving the objective of independence. Also, the populations in these regions were increasing at a fast rate and the rising demands for food and clothing for them required a change from the colonial economic system. The colonial rulers themselves were also apprehensive over the future of the colonies as the threat to their home-lands in Europe drew nearer.

Two distinct approaches to nationalist struggle emerged in Asia during the period. The first, eminently and successfully tried by Mahatma Gandhi in India, aimed at

changing the attitude of rulers through a process of education and devoid of bitterness. Its strength lay in the use of moral force at a mass level. The other one also had its roots in India which having faith in revolutionary endeavour was to use the opportunity of a weakened and pre-occupied ruling power in the face of long drawn out war with Germany to incite rebellion in the country and ultimately to lead to the revolt of the indigenous armed forces and police. The violent sections of the Quit India movement as well as the gigantic effort of Subash Chandra Bose in raising the Indian National Army in Japanese occupied Asia subscribed to the latter approach. A prerequisite for the former approach was that the ruling country was an admirable democracy whose eyes could be opened to the futility of holding colonies that could evolve into liabilities rather than assets in the future. Both these view points prevailed for a time in Indonesia and each had its own adherents. But there was no rigidity: Neither the religious nor the moral overtones as in India. While they had fundamental faith in the principle of non-cooperation and resistance to foreign rule, there was no commitment to non-violence. Of course, there was the realisation of the absence of weapon resources to fight the rulers who did not hesitate to use force. There was no disposition towards terrorism either. Among the Indonesian leaders, Dr. Mohamed Hatta who had been convinced in the efficacy of Mahatma Gandhi's technique of non-violent non-cooperation was of the view that it will not suit the temperament of Indonesians. On the other hand, both Soekarno and Sjahrir did not have faith either in individual or mass civil disobedience of the polite form but believed in mass upsurge, revolt and paralysis of the ruling authority. There was, however, a small number of isolated individuals in Java—where a subtle combination of Islamic Sufis and Hindu mysticism continues to be prevalent—who believed in the efficacy of moral force. Nevertheless, all the Indonesian leaders and most people admired Gandhi and held him as the beacon light to the struggle

of all colonial peoples. Soekarno frequently quoted Gandhi in his stirring addresses to his people while Sjahrir, who had met the Indian leader in London in 1931, was very surprised at the openness of Gandhi's tactics in giving notice on each occasion of a resistance movement to the British.

Following the galvanising of the nationalist urge caused by the Sarekat Islam in 1916, the impact of external events such as the 'Boxer' rebellion in China, the continued pressure from the people of the Philippines for a greater measure of self-rule and Japanese naval victories over imperial Russia (1905-06) was significant and raised the hopes of the nationalists. Simultaneously, the Socialists in the Netherlands encouraged by their entry into the Parliament, sponsored a move towards 'Indies for Indonesians'. Indonesian students in Holland organised themselves towards helping the cause of independence. There grew gradually a kind of policy in the Hague for granting greater autonomy to the government of Batavia and for entrusting administrative responsibility into Indonesian hands. A system of village councils was planned. But in practice, most of these remained just pious wishes and there was no devolution of authority given to Batavia. Dutch Liberals headed by Deventer even suggested that the Netherlands owed a debt to Indonesia for having assisted the Dutch economy and proposed that all Indonesian contributions to the Dutch exchequer since 1867 should be refunded to Indonesia. But there was no loosening of the Dutch colonial control and the status quo remained. The situation has been aptly described by historian J.S. Furnival: The Dutch practice was: "Let me help you, let me show you how to do it, let me do it for you" (Hass: History of SE Asia, p.750).

A new political force largely receiving inspiration from political conditions in the Netherlands emerged in Indonesia. With the success of the Russian Revolution of 1917,

this group at first called itself a Social Democratic Party but later transformed itself into the Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party). Curiously, it was organised by some members of the privileged Eurasian community who had wider contacts with people in Holland. While commencing activity in the trade union field, the PKI actually aimed at infiltrating the popular Sarekat Islam and securing for itself the latter's mass base. The Communists took the lead in organising several strikes in Java to which were attracted a large number of Sarekat followers who were arrested along with the PKI supporters. In this situation, the Dutch authorities arrested Dr. Tjokroaminoto for subversive activities. Thereafter, the Sarekat took steps to purge itself of all Communist-leaning supporters. The Communist parties in other colonial countries had also attempted similar infiltration of nationalist broad-based organisations with varying degrees of success. The pattern revealed an obvious central direction.

In the years of the post First World War, the Depression (1923-26) also affected Indonesia. Industrial disputes multiplied and helped the PKI to consolidate its position in the trade union field. The Dutch repressive measures in dealing with a big railway strike in 1923 evoked popular support for the PKI who had a similar opportunity in 1925 when the rulers used excessive force to put down a strike in the metal industry. It was only after the Dutch banned the PKI and sent 1300 of its ranks into exile was some measure of normalcy restored.

With the Communists out of the field, the Sarekat which had confined itself to religious affairs once again became politically active but chose a cautious policy in view of the repressive laws and methods of the Dutch. Outwardly, it confined its activities to educational and economic issues.

With the continued discontent in Indonesia, a new political force made its appearance. In 1927, one of the

founders of the Boedi Oetomo (High Endeavour) of 1908, Dr. Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo assisted by the young architectural engineer Soekarno started the PNI - Perserikatan Nasionalis Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party) in Bandung in Java. The Indonesian students in Holland had largely influenced the formation of the new party. Soekarno was already a powerful orator and organiser and the two spared no efforts to unite all nationalist groups under the PNI's banner. They had planned to launch a country-wide non-cooperation movement using the Gandhian technique of a no-tax campaign to begin with. Before they were able to launch the campaign, the Dutch got wind of it. They arrested Soekarno in 1929 and had him sentenced to four years imprisonment for sedition and revolutionary activity. Soekarno's indictment of colonial rule and spirited defence of freedom at the trial attracted wide attention in Holland and other countries. It was felt that at last Indonesia had a leader of international stature. The Dutch also outlawed the PNI in 1930.

After the imprisonment of Soekarno, the PNI became politically dormant and confined its activities to the problems of the peasantry and of education. A communist attempt to fill the vacuum ended in failure. The growth of the PNI was also facilitated by the liberal policy of Governor General De Graeff who permitted freedom of expression. He was also quite tolerant towards the nationalists in the hope of suppressing the communists.

The outlawing of the PNI resulted in the emergence of several splinter parties. Within months, in September 1930, the Partai Rajkat Indonesia (Indonesian People's Party) appeared with the object of achieving self-government through parliamentary methods and cooperation with the Dutch. The PNI was dissolved and the Partindo (Partai Indonesia-Indonesian Party) was formed in 1931. Its objective was complete independence through non-cooperation but with a more moderate approach than the PNI. An important minority of the PNI organised the Golongan

Merdeka (Independent Group) which had almost the same programme as the parent PNI. Sutan Sjahrir and Dr. Mohamed Hatta who had worked together in the Indonesian nationalist student movement in Holland joined the Golongan Merdeka which soon under Sjahrir's influence called itself Club Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Education Club). Sjahrir handed over the Chairmanship of the group to Hatta on the latter's arrival in Indonesia. In joining the small group of politically conscious nationalists in the Club, both Sjahrir and Hatta were impelled by the view that mass parties as the Partindo with charismatic leadership were unsuited for building a nationalist movement as the Dutch stifled such parties easily by imprisoning the charismatic leaders. They relied on building select cadres with a sufficient number of people being educated to political maturity and understanding of nationalism rather than a few key persons at the top. Obviously, the two had been greatly influenced by the organisation and working of political parties in the West, particularly the Dutch Socialist Party. This difference in approach being fundamental caused the rift between Sjahrir and Soekarno who tended to gradually regard Sjahrir's theorising as principally aimed at degenerating him politically. This gulf between the two widened and ended in personal recriminations with some disastrous results to the future welfare of Indonesia. Both Hatta and Sjahrir sincerely believed that building a nationalist movement with leadership capability extended to larger sections and each study group multiplying itself to reach new and fresh segments of the population will assist in building a well knit party frame-work which could better weather the repressive measures and enable party activities to continue as the top leadership was arrested and immobilised by the authorities. In fact, when Sjahrir and Hatta were exiled in February 1934, four successive executive boards of the Golongan were arrested by the Dutch and still the organisation continued to function till the return of the exiles in 1942. The Congress Party in India had also aligned succes-

sive action committees during the civil disobedience movement.

When he was released in December 1932, Soekarno made several attempts to unite the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia of Hatta-Sjahrir and the Partindo but failed. He threw his lot with the latter and built it into a strong organisation with 50 branches and a membership of 20,000. But, its influence extended to many times that number among the masses. He was successful in attracting the loyalty of both intellectuals and the masses with whom he established a special rapport through his skills in oratory, using similes from legends and fables familiar to them. As was to be expected, the Dutch were unnerved at the popularity of this rising cynosure and exiled him in August 1933. It was only in 1942 after the Japanese invaded Indonesia that he was released and was able to resume the leadership of his people.

About this time, there were influential political and liberal minded elements in Holland who were keen to advance Indonesia constitutionally. But their efforts were stifled by the more powerful Dutch business interests who were fearful of losing their total investment of around US \$ 2000 million in Indonesia. Their annual income from this investment was reportedly around US \$ 300 million. Evidently, the Dutch colonial economy would be disrupted if anything should happen to this heavy investment. Nevertheless, the Netherlands Parliament had in 1916 passed a bill for establishing a People's Assembly — Volksraad with limited advisory powers in Batavia. With an European majority, its Bills were still to require approval from the Hague government. Its first sitting could take place only in May 1918. In 1925, its strength was raised to 61 (Indonesians : 30) and it was given restricted legislative and financial powers. No conventions were built up to make it grow organically and the nationalists allege that the entire exercise appears to have been made in order to bypass the demand for home rule.

With the exile of Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir and the Dutch authorities arresting those who took their place, Indonesian nationalists attempted to utilise the Volksraad to achieve their objective. A section of the old Sarekat Islam under Hadji Agoes Salim promoted the PSII — Pendjedar Sarekat Islam Indonesia (Movement to make Sarekat Islam Indonesia Conscious) and entered the Volksraad in order to wrest concessions from the Dutch. Other groups and study clubs as Boedi Oetomo and Persatoean Bangsa Indonesia fused to form the Parindra (Greater Indonesia Party) under Dr. Soetomo and became the most influential group in the Volksraad. The Volksraad passed a motion of petition to the Dutch Government in 1936 with a vote of 26 : 20 which sought the convening of a conference to discuss plans towards steps for Indonesian self-government spread over a period of ten years and within the existing Dutch Constitution. Even this was rejected by the Netherlands Government, and that too in a statement of the Netherlands Queen long after in August 1940 when the seat of the Government was in exile in England but which promised a conference once the war was over to discuss future relationship. But there was no mention of independence. This was further amplified by the Netherlands in an answer to a Question in the Volksraad by stating that the Atlantic Charter had no new significance since its principles had been adopted by the Netherlands government much earlier and adherence to the Charter does not specially call for any fresh consideration of its policy towards the Indonesian population. Yet, the signatories to the Atlantic Charter had pledged themselves to the right of self-determination for all peoples! Earlier, the Netherlands government said that political reforms will have to await the restoration of the political organs of the mother country on the successful conclusion of the war. No doubt, Indonesian nationalists were disillusioned and frustrated with the efficacy of constitutional methods. Nevertheless, they used the Volksraad for the establishment of retail and peasant cooperatives, a Bank to give credits to Indonesians on reasonable terms, a hostel

for poor workers, programmes to combat illiteracy and several other beneficial measures.

Outside the Volksraad, Indonesian nationalists were compelled to become increasingly active with the war clouds threatening Europe and the possibility of the Netherlands being occupied by the Nazis. A large Federation of Indonesian political parties (GAPI - Geboengen Politik Indonesia) was created in May 1939. It called for the right of self-determination for Indonesia, national unity founded upon political, economic and social democracy, a democratically elected Indonesian parliament responsible to the people of Indonesia and solidarity between Indonesian political groups and the Netherlands in order to maintain a strong anti-fascist front. A GAPI sponsored Indonesian People's Congress (Kongres Rajkat Indonesia) was convened in December 1939 in which as many as 90 political, social and economic organisations took part. The Kongres adopted Bahasa Indonesia as the official language, the Red and White banner as the national flag and Indonesia Raya (composed by Soepratman in 1929 at a Youth Conference and already adopted by Soekarno's PNI party) as the National Anthem. The Kongres campaigned for the conversion of the Volksraad into the Indonesian parliament and in view of the critical international situation, demanded greater cooperation between the Indonesian people and Netherlands through the grant of large democratic rights to the Indonesian people.

This history of the struggle of the Indonesian nationalists shows that even their minimum demands for a responsible government in Batavia were rejected by the Dutch government and their offer of cooperation on the basis of equality with promise of self-determination under the Atlantic Charter was spurned by the Dutch at a time when their homeland as well as Indonesia were in danger of falling under the enemies of democracy. The adamant attitude of the Dutch colonialists has remained inexplicable and

perhaps is due to the illogics of the international system. All those were in contrast with happenings in India where the British had gradually advanced into dyarchy and a large measure of provincial autonomy at the beginning of the Second World War.

CHAPTER-III

THE PERSONALITIES

Though some of my foreign colleagues found it difficult to estimate Soekarno in the early stages, I found no particular difficulty.

Soekarno was the dominant personality of the Indonesian Revolution. My first acquaintance with him was on the same day as I had landed with Indian troops, September 29, 1945. I had gone to see him in the company of a few correspondents. He struck me as a warm-hearted and dandyish person, rather fond of military uniforms though he seemed to know little of military strategy. But he was well versed in history including military history and philosophy. It was rather strange to find this kind of aptitude in an architectural engineer. He was a born orator and an attractive personality somewhat cast in the mould of earlier Javanese heroes. He could talk for hours to the masses in their own wavelengths of legendary folklore and enrapture them through the shibboleths of Hindu-Javanese-Balinese-Islamic mysticism. His attraction to intellect was no less since he could quote from German, English and Dutch quite fluently. He knew a little Sanskrit probably acquired from the scriptures of his Hindu-Balinese mother. Besides Islam and being a pious one at that, he had made a deep study of the Hindu religion. His capacity to absorb and memorise was unlimited. One of his favourite quotations on occasions to me were the words of Swami Vivekananda: "Awake! Arise! Stop not till the goal is reached!". He loved India very deeply but alas, in latter years he had to change his attitude following the inept treatment of him by some Indians. From my first contacts with him, it was

clear to me that here was a man of destiny who will lead his people for long years. It was this discernible magnetism in him that evoked the adoration of the masses for their Bung Karno (Brother Soekarno). There is also a pun on Karno-the Javanese people were instantly reminded of the strong man Karno (Karna in Sanskrit) of the Mahabharata legend which pervaded the countryside through the 'wayang' (puppet shows). At the same time, he was also very human; he often did not hesitate to talk about personal problems. On occasions other than formal, most of my chat with him were conducted in his dressing room as he laced his shining shoes on top of a stool. He was an exhibitionist!

Though he provided the main momentum to the revolution and was its virtual and unquestioned leader and its principal architect, yet he relied greatly on Dr. Hatta's advice and ability to clearly and coolly analyse developments during most of the revolution.

Simple in his ways and yet meticulously neat and composed, the unassuming Dr. Mohamed Hatta was quite a contrast to Soekarno. Never agitated and even on the rather rare occasions his anger quite muffled, his firmness and shrewdness greatly helped to provide balance and good judgement during the days of the revolution as well as those of the infant Republic. He and the dynamic Soekarno formed an ideal team and were very much complementary to each other. It is doubtful if the communist rebellion in September 1948 could have been put down by any other leader than Hatta. Though firm in regard to the protection of the Republic and its government as he showed in handling the several attempts of the Trotskyist leader Tan Malakka to stage a 'coup' in order to supplant Soekarno, yet Hatta was quite flexible in dealing with the Dutch under the compulsion of the limited military capability of the Republic. It is sad to reflect that such an able man, like his friend Sjahrir, was denied the opportunity to serve and lead his people quite within a decade of the

country emerging into full independence for which he had struggled so hard in a crusading zeal governed by the constant anxiety to salvage Indonesian manpower and the economy based on natural resources from the ravages of war.

Hatta had much in common with the brilliant and yet unostentatious Sjahrir and was the nexus in the triumvirate. From their student days in Holland, the two had been comrades in the struggle against colonial rule. Both were from the ruling clan of Minangkabau in Sumatra. When these two intellectuals met and discussed their country's problems, their arguments coupled with deep thinking pauses used to remind me of the moves and checks of a chess game. Hatta often prevailed upon the younger Sjahrir who accepted things with a boyish smile. While Sjahrir was versatile and had a wider international outlook, Hatta was essentially an economist and an outstanding administrator. Sjahrir was a convinced socialist though not doctrinaire but pragmatic. Hatta was a kind of Liberal and preferred to be unidentified to any 'isms'. Sjahrir was quite a moderate and yet unyielding and Hatta was ever ready with flexible formulations that did not give up the essentials. There was never a frown on Sjahrir's face despite much suffering and he showed no bitterness towards the Dutch though their treatment of him was quite stupid. Sjahrir's essential appeal was to the young students who formed the vanguard of his section of the resistance movement against the Japanese.

I owe a good deal of my education in politics and international affairs to Sjahrir who was an intellectual giant. But as a politician his drawback was that he avoided the masses and was also contemptuous of mass adulation which he considered as fickle. Since I preferred mostly his company, I used to travel with him and wherever groups of people brought him fruits and flowers as tokens of their admiration, much to my great disappointment, he would just smile and thank them but there was no effort to

harangue them to revolutionary activity. Applause was thanked only with a boyish smile. He was highly reflective and analytical. He had deeply imbibed from the writings of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Kant, Goethe and Russel but had a special fondness for the Spanish philosopher Ortega Y. Gasset. While in exile, his diary records: "A real happiness is never exclusive ... one wishes to communicate it to others and one becomes generous with it towards others. It is for this reason, *I believe, that in the long run the highest attainable personal happiness coincided with the general happiness and well-being of humanity*". Touches of Vedanta! He was a great humanist! Each time I met him, I came away with a new idea. Though physically the shortest, he was one of the tallest of the Revolution in that he master-minded a plan involving millions of people. His great ability lay in priming the explosion-through a select few not all of whom were aware of his hand in the deft moves-in support of the Declaration of Independence as fortuitous circumstance converged in a rapidly evolving historical situation. In my opinion, he was the best Eastern product of Western thought and culture but yet he never lost his identity with his people. He was primarily responsible for winning world support for the young Republic; yet like prophets of other revolutions, he was denied the rights of a free citizen in a free Indonesia! It was a sad irony that a great humanist like him should have suffered at the hands of a State which he had helped to found and which was committed to the principle of Humanism in its Pantja Sila (Five Principles)!

My personal relations with Hatta were also close and he had a peculiar way of showing his affection — even as Nehru did on occasions to me — by entrusting me with a special task. He used to send for me and sound my reactions to a proposal before acting on it. His clear head was a great inspiration to think out problems posed by him. When he came to New Delhi on an incognito visit following the first Dutch Police action, Nehru assigned me to be his escort. I was given the task of presenting him to the Indian

Foreign Office from whom he sought recognition for the Republic. A request as this had to be made initially through a plain Indian Citizen (which I was) and not by any official. The effort resulted in a de facto recognition of the Republic and thus began the diplomatic contacts. And I ... became part of History. At one time, he wished that I should help him personally after becoming a 'Warta nagara', that is, an Indonesian citizen. Since at that time I did not envisage a role beyond that of a journalist, I had replied that while I valued the trust and confidence he placed in me, I could not deviate from my then assignment to cover the Indonesian revolution and once it was over, I wished to await further similar assignments from my newspaper. Later, when I returned to Jogjakarta as a diplomat, he told me that I had taken a correct decision. Actually, the pull from Nehru was even greater.

Soekarno too was quite affectionate but in a different Javanese way. He took pains to ensure my personal comforts. Though given to a great deal of pomp and formality, sometimes his meetings and talks with me were in his private rooms as he was putting each foot on a stool to tie his shoe lace! I did admiringly comment on the meticulous care he took to dress neatly! He also invited me to his select parties with a number of his feminine admirers around. He would repeatedly talk to me about Javanese and Balinese Hinduism with their mystic content, his grand conception of a renascent Asia and inevitably on every private occasion pick my poor brain on its content of Sanskrit knowledge and when I did recite some verses from literature or the Bhagvat Gita, he would ruminate on the Javanese parallel thought and explain it to me.

Since Soekarno, apart from being the principal leader of the revolution, was the main architect of the Indonesian nation and provided it with ideological content, consideration of the ideology he evolved for the nation and in which the people had great faith is essential. The corner-stone of this ideology was Unity-Unity in Diversity 'Binneka

Tunggal Ika' the motto under the national emblem today. Compelled by the geography of the land with its thousands of islands over a three thousand mile archipelago in the Indian Ocean and the several different streams of culture of the population, Soekarno emphasised preeminently on National Unity as a cardinal principle of Indonesian nationalism. It is only through unity he could hold his people together in their struggle against colonialism. The ingraining of this concept among his people also helped to off-set the proverbial policy of divide and rule of the colonial rulers. The Javanese in him also believed in Gotong Royong: Consensus through Discussion. The second principle of Soekarno's ideology was that of Total Opposition to the colonial power with whom he could not conceive any compromise nor any moderation of the demand for independence. Based on his Marxist study, he emphasised the ^{contradiction} ~~contraction~~ between nationalism and colonialism as a matter of a dialectical principle which he simplified for mass consumption with the slogan: SINI (here) and SANA (There).

Soekarno's ideology did not ignore the need for nationalism to be mass based. He epitomised the 'THANI', the common Javanese peasant who lives in poor circumstances while growing food and other crops on his small plot of land, a land whose fertility yields to his bare hands. Called MARHENISM after Marhen, a peasant acquaintance of his in the early years of his political career in Bandung, this identification of nationalism with the common peasant provided mass appeal for it.

Enveloped as he was in Javanese mysticism and with an abiding faith in it despite his devotion to modern political thought and history, Soekarno appeared to believe in the prophecy of Djojobojo and commended to his people as a cynosure and hope for the ^{eventual} ~~eventual~~ success in becoming free once again. Djojobojo (1115-1130), the last ruler of Kediri in East Java before the advent of colonialism, had prophesied that Java would be conquered by yellow-skinned

conquerors who would stay for the life time of the maize crop. When the maize ripened and was ready for harvest, the conquerors will leave and Java will become free. As early as 1928-1929, ^{Soekarno} ~~he~~ made some references to the rise of Japan ("Yellow-skinned Conquerors") and to the Pacific War that was to follow and through which Indonesia will achieve its freedom.

In regard to Islam, though he believed in the Javanese Abang view and tradition that Islam was part of a unified Indonesian outlook as opposed to the orthodox SANTRI view that Indonesian outlook should be reflective of Islam - an entirely diametric view, he strived hard for a synthesis of the two in the interests of Indonesian nationalism.

Like the Hindu Tantric School of thought, the Javanese cult of KESAKTIAN believed in the inherent power (SAKTI) within each individual which could be nurtured, cultivated and developed under spiritual guidance. This was a MUST for Javanese rulers who under instructions from their spiritual guides had to go into retreat into lonely caves and meditate in order to recharge themselves for their royal duties. Soekarno also cast himself in a similar role but adapted it to modern requirements by promoting an inner synthesis in himself between KESAKTIAN and his study of modern political thought including Marxism. This was basic to his political philosophy and on occasions, he did reveal that he wanted to go down in history not as a politician but as a prophet and political philosopher. Hence his fondness for inventing new ideas and giving them titles: GANEFO, CONEFO etc. He often told me that he greatly admired DIPONEGORO, the last ruler of Java whom the Dutch vanquished and used to quote his words. One such anecdote: When the Dutch invaders informed Diponegoro that Hindo (land of Hindus) had already ^{fallen} ~~taken~~ to the English it greatly demoralised him and speeded his defeat. Soekarno was a strange mixture of modernism and Javanese mysticism!

Javanese mysticism has had quite an influence on several political parties in Indonesia. Even a dialectic ~~ed~~ party as the Communists came under its spell and for long years, the Javanese Communist leader Alimin, a very likeable intellectual, struggled with reconciling the two in vain. One often gained the impression that he was more of a mystic than a Marxist. Obviously, therein lay the seeds for the failure of Communism in that country. Soekarno also could not resist the mystic spell and he was even doubly influenced by both the Javanese and Balinese expositions of it as his mother was a Balinese. Some of his decisions were also governed by a mystical approach though he did not fail to provide them with a rational clothing in the phraseology of Kant, Hegel, Marx and Gandhi. The power of Javanese mysticism though not easily perceptible is indeed great in Indonesia. On occasions, Alimin and Soekarno kept good company.

Strangely, despite his uncompromising stand against colonialism, in national affairs Soekarno was for total conversion of the dissenters in order to achieve total unity. He was against coercing them in any manner and desired they should be handled gently. Thus, when the Dutch set up several puppet states in order to thwart the Republic, he was opposed to stirring up mass rebellions against them. Similarly, he does not appear to have been one with Hatta in putting down forcefully the Communist rebellion of Madiun. He always lent an ear to the scheming Trotskyist Tan Malakka who was out to oust him. With the strain of Javanese syncretism in him, he believed that in the long run, the opponents could be won over by absorbing some of their ideas and hence his later wooing of the Communists with, of course, disastrous consequences to himself and the country!

CHAPTER-IV

HIGH PRINCIPLES OF PANTJA SILA

The Preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, inter alia, states : "... in the form of a Republic of Indonesia which is based on the sovereignty of the people and on the pillars of One Deity, Just and Civilised Humanity, Indonesian Unity and People's Rule guided wisely through consultation and representation, in order to achieve Social Justice for the whole Indonesian people". The very phrase 'Pantja Sila' which is all Sanskrit galvanised me.

Why the number 5? Soekarno appears to have been guided by his background of Javanese mysticism and the lores of the Javanese people, the Mahabharata — the Hindu epic in Javanese form — of which he himself was very fond. He frequently talked to his people of the exploits of the Pantja Pandawas (Five Pandavas) and also of Dhanjaja (Ardjuna) in whose heroic postures he often seemed to cast himself in his role as a warrior leader of his people in the struggle for freedom (Dharma Juddha — War of the Just of the Mahabharata). Which Indonesian born of a Balinese Hindu mother and of Abangan Muslim father could forget his boyish dreams of playing the role of Ardjuna as in the long evening shadows the Wayang figures with their adventurous roles of the Pandavas encompassed his impressive mind? The Wayang stories would have been each day elaborated to Soekarno by his Balinese mother and narrated in the same style as the generations of such mothers in either Indonesia or India had venerated the exploits of the Pandawas. It had therefore been quite easy for me to always understand Soekarno.

Since Soekarno was the originator and promoter of the Five Principles it would be best to use his words to explain them and to comprehend them. In an address on Pantja Sila before the Preparatory Committee for Independence on June 1, 1945, he pointed out that *Nationalism*, which encompasses the entire archipelago extending between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, is born out of the desire of the people inhabiting the region for unity as a nation and in their conception it was comparable to the nation that existed during the times of the Madjapahit and Sriwidjaha kingdoms. He made it clear: "Neither Javanese nationalism, nor Sumatran nationalism, nor the nationalism of Borneo, nor of Sulawesi, Bali, or any other; but Indonesian Nationalism of all of them together which becomes the basis of one national State".

Developing the second principle: *Humanism*, Soekarno said that there should be caution to ensure that Nationalism does not develop into chauvinism as in Germany but it should be part of internationalism or Humanism. In this connection, he quoted Mahatma Gandhi: "I am a Nationalist, but my nationalism is humanity". Soekarno said further that Humanism is not cosmopolitanism which denies the existence of Nationalism. According to him, "Internationalism cannot flourish if it is not rooted in the soil of Nationalism and Nationalism cannot flourish if it does not grow in the flower garden of internationalism".

In regard to the third principle of *Sovereignty of the People*, he advocated deliberations amongst elected representatives of the people so that unanimity or consensus could be reached on issues and problems. In fact, this principle was already embedded in the life of the Indonesian people in the form of Gotong Royong (Consensus

through discussion). This is an ancient Indonesian custom. In earlier days, all land in a village belonged to the community and not to the rulers. Whether working the rice fields or building a house, mutual assistance was practiced as part of service to the community.

While explaining the fourth principle of *Social Justice*, Soekarno emphasised that it was unlike in Western democracies which had merely followed the 'recipe of the French Revolution' in setting up people's representative bodies but the people continued to be at the mercy of capitalists. "What is called democracy, in them there is nothing except political democracy; there is no social justice at all, there is no economic democracy at all", he added. He quoted the comments of Jean Juarez: On Parliamentary Democracy: "... every man has equal rights — equal political rights, every man can vote, every man may enter Parliament. But is there social justice, is there evidence of well-being among the masses?" Rejecting the Western model, Soekarno urged his people: "If we are looking for democracy, it must not be Western democracy, but 'permusjawaratan' (Representation of people) which brings life, that is politico-economic democracy which is capable of achieving social prosperity". Elaborating the golden millenium of Ratu Adil ('Just Rule') which is the legendary aspiration of the people when prosperity for everyone will prevail), he said that it meant social justice so that the people could live in comfort. He had an extra-ordinary capacity to corelate modern conceptions to the ancient and ingrained tenets of the people.

On the fifth principle of *Belief in God*, Soekarno was quite clear and said that every Indonesian should believe in his own God: "... the Indonesian State shall be a State

where every person can worship God as he likes. The entire people should worship God in a cultured way, that is without religious egoism". His own outlook was Javanese Abangan Muslim and as such he was for a secular State. He argued with the proponents of the Islamic State that since in regard to representation of the people, the Muslims will have a preponderance in a legislature in which they could convince the non-Muslim minority on the virtues of Islam; whereas in a monolithic Muslim State, there will be no similar opportunity. An adept at rhetoric, he said: "If the Indonesian people really are a people who are for the greater part Muslim, and if it is true that Islam in Indonesia is a religion which is alive in the hearts of the masses, let us leaders move every one of the people to mobilise as many Muslim representatives as possible for the legislature".

Soekarno had an innate capacity to reach the hearts of his people by simplifying political ideas. While simplifying the Five Principles into Three, he said: "The first two principles, nationalism and internationalism, nationalism and humanity, I compress into one, which I call socio-nationalism. And democracy, which is not the democracy of the West, but together with well-being, I also compress into one; that is what I call socio-democracy. Belief in God with respect for one another is the one principle left. And so, what was originally five has become three. But perhaps, not all of you like this tri-sila and ask for one principle only?... If I compress what was five into three, and what was three into one, then I have a genuine Indonesian term, 'Gotong Royong', mutual cooperation. The State of Indonesia which we are to establish must be a Gotong Royong State. Is that not something marvellous, a Gotong Royong State?" He was a juggler with the use

of words and could make the familiar well dressed and attractive. Elaborating, Soekarno went on: "Gotong Royong is a dynamic concept, more dynamic than the family principle.... The family principle is a static concept but Gotong Royong portrays one endeavour, one act of service, one task...Gotong Royong means toiling hard together, sweating hard together, a joint struggle to help one another. Acts of service by all for the interests of all".

CHAPTER - V

REVOLUTION IN THE MAKING

It is difficult to write of a period one did not witness. But a knowledge of the past is essential to know the present.

Having observed in Burma and Malaya that the Indian National Army of Subash Chandra Bose had a large measure of autonomy to organise and raise funds but had to function within the parameters of Japanese security interests and was dependent on the latter as its sole supplier of weapons, I was interested in ascertaining how the Soekarno - Hatta authority was able to function under Japanese auspices. Apart from the official Dutch and several Western correspondents describing it to be a Japanese puppet regime, there were also some Indonesians who were equally critical. There were no doubt highly exaggerated accounts of their total freedom of action as well as of complete subservience to the Japanese. Naturally, I turned to Sjahrir for information on the period and I found him fairly objective despite his dislike of Soekarno but he was convinced that for a long time, any regime of Soekarno-Hatta will carry the taint of Japanese collaboration.

By March 9, 1942, the Japanese had occupied the whole of Java as there was not much resistance by the demoralised Dutch following Hitler's occupation of their home land. Yet a select few among the Dutch joined Indonesians in setting up a resistance movement. It was a strange situation in which the Dutch authorities had rejected several Indonesian offers to fight the invaders.

When Holland came under the heels of Hitler, the Indonesian population were jubilant. The Djogjoberojo

myth became revived. As predicted by the mystic Djojobojo, the Dutch would soon be driven out of Indonesia by a yellow race from the North and then Indonesia will become free as the yellow race itself, will in turn be driven out. The Japanese invaders, who fitted in with the prophecy, were welcomed by the population. But the nationalists under Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir were of the view that the Axis powers could pose a greater threat to Indonesian freedom than the colonial Dutch. The Dutch rulers were also appraised of this view. The three also educated the people against any faith in the Japanese as their liberators. The left-wing of the nationalist movement had also openly declared its support to the allies. The Dutch were slow to react. The exiled leaders Hatta and Sjahrir in Ambon Island were repatriated to Java only hours before the Japanese landed in Ambon. Soekarno was still exiled in Sumatra. With the public thus deprived of national leadership, they continued to rejoice at Japanese victories. The hold of Djojobojo was indeed very strong!

Apart from the several mistakes made by the Japanese military regime like the introduction of the "Three A's" extolling the Japanese race, the compulsory shaving of the heads of students and the launching of the East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere even before there was an independent Indonesia, any support for the Japanese appeared to have been doomed from the beginning. Nothing could shake Indonesian firm belief in the Djojobojo prophecy. They largely regarded the 'Yellow race' as merely interim custodians of the country and who in turn will be driven out! But as the harshness of the Japanese military regime became evident, the Soekarno-Hatta combine were able to act as a buffer. In addition to protecting the population, they utilised the opportunity to organise the people's zeal and momentum in the cause of freedom. In this task, they had prior understanding with Sjahrir whose resistance movement was assisted considerably from their position of vantage.

The Japanese soon found that they could not control the administrative apparatus but the need to pacify the population was imperative if the war effort was to proceed unhindered. At first, they tried to utilise feudal and religious elements to provide support but when this failed, they turned to Hatta and Sjahrir who were then in Java after being freed from their exile by the Dutch just as the Japanese were landing in Ambon. The two leaders did not trust the Japanese but found that the Japanese finally envisaged the setting up of an Indonesian government as they had done in Burma but with control in Japanese hands. Personally convinced as they were that a time of reckoning must come for the Japanese and that would be the appropriate moment to launch an Independent Indonesia, Sjahrir and Hatta came to the conclusion that participating in a Japanese sponsored Indonesian government would help separate nationalist and revolutionary activities to converge towards ultimate independence and it was therefore preferable to be in it than out of it. It was agreed between them that while Hatta cooperated with the Japanese, Sjahrir would lead in organising a coordinated revolutionary underground.

And so when in the latter part of 1943 when the Japanese more precisely approached Hatta for his cooperation, he agreed provided that he would be allowed to organise the building up of the Indonesian nation. In the predicament they were in and realising the value of a popular leader like Hatta, the Japanese readily agreed to Hatta's condition. But when they similarly sought Sjahrir's cooperation, they drew blank. He gave the excuse that he was too preoccupied with his "Pedagogic" activity to think of anything else — the excuse was only to provide "cover" for his underground activity. Hatta was made the Head of the Advisory Office for National Affairs. Within a short period, the Japanese had been ill-treating ~~him~~. *Soekarno but Hatta obtained his release.*

Soekarno, Sjahrir and Hatta had a secret meeting at ~~the~~ Hatta's residence. Soekarno agreed to the plan already

envisaged by Hatta and Sjahrir. It was decided that Soekarno - Hatta should offer cooperation to the Japanese, insulate the administrative machinery from excessive interference by the Japanese Army and provide a broad legal base for the national struggle while secretly aiding with finance and information the revolutionary resistance movement led by Sjahrir. Gradually, Soekarno was able to wrest several concessions from the Japanese who found his mass appeal could be utilised for their own propaganda. However, the discerning Indonesian people absorbed only the kernel of nationalism amidst the propaganda. Thus Soekarno was able to achieve freedom to organise his activities politically. He once described this to me by quoting the proverbial saying that if water was added to milk, the swan would only drink the milk and leave out the water. I was touched by his expression of this simile which is a well - known one in Sanskrit literature.

In pursuance of their policy to rally nationalists under Soekarno and Hatta behind their war effort, the Japanese Army set up on March 9, 1943 an all inclusive Central National Organisation, the POETARA (Peasant Tenaga Rajkat - Centre of People's Power). The Japanese held out promise that self-government will be granted in the near future. During his visit to Jakarta (Batavia) in June 1943, Japanese Premier Tojo announced that the Indonesians should take part in their own government. The POETARA which gained much popular support was followed in September 1943 by a Central Advisory Board under the presidency of Soekarno. It became an appointed Representative Council.


It was a strange situation of parallel developments; while the Japanese ensured their war propaganda by whipping up the POETARA and the Board, Soekarno - Hatta successfully utilised their predominant position in the two bodies to widen and deeply intensify nationalist ideas. The period appears to have interestingly witnessed the simultaneous activities of three distinct groups; the first

totally trusting the Japanese and working in close collaboration with them, a middle group - the most influential and the only one with mass backing - under Soekarno - Hatta offering cautious cooperation to the Japanese while utilising the opportunities to enhance both self - rule and nationalism and the third group of scattered and small but well-knit units of resistance to the Japanese and their war effort. Some of them were under Sjahrir while others were led by Communists and Islamic organisations. There were the positive signs of a revolution that was brewing.

As I heard this saga of the beginning of the revolution from Sjahrir and his close associates and had cross checked them as occasions arose with Hatta and Soekarno, I was struck with great admiration for the Indonesian leadership and capacity for promoting the framework for a revolution.

The Japanese occupation gradually assumed the form of forced labour, frequent use of the bayonet, seizure of food and other goods and incessant propaganda of their own. There was sickness and starvation in the country; malaria was rampant and the drug quinine grown and produced in the country at the Bandung factory which at one time used to meet most of the world's requirements was not available to the people as the Japanese had cornered all stocks for their own use and export to their troops in Burma and Indo-China. There were frequent small scale uprisings in Java in 1944.

As the tides of war turned perceptibly to the detriment of the Japanese, they planned partial mobilisation of the people to use them against any first onslaught by the Allies. They forced emaciated and half-starved peasants into military training which was greatly resented. An Auxiliary Force, PETA, of 37,000 youths, was raised but the units were confined to the areas of recruitment for fear of their rising against the Japanese in the future. Another force, HEIHO with a strength of 25,000 and as part of the

Japanese Imperial Army but with Japanese officers and service any-where was also created and given intensive training with typical Japanese rigour and discipline. A BARISAN HIZEBULLA, consisting of only Muslim youths of the ages of 14-22 and numbering half a million was also raised and trained for local defence in urban areas. Additionally, an auxiliary police force of one million called the Vigilance Corps was also set up in the rural areas of Java. In order to ensure surveillance of the population in the wake of repeated acts of sabotage by resistance groups, the Japanese also created the Java Service Association whose other duties included propaganda, organising rallies, parades and public functions and the collection and distribution of supplies. It was no doubt obvious that the Japanese proposed to retain control at every stage in their own hands. The Association had also a Vanguard Corps (Barisan Pelopar) as part of it. It was trained as a paramilitary unit but was equipped with only bamboo spears! One of its duties was to mobilise or herd  crowds for rallies etc.

While training all these units, the Japanese did instil the strict discipline characteristic of their own Bushido principles which because of a measure of its spiritual content appealed to the Javanese recruits inured to ideas of spiritual power over many generations. The Indonesians imbibed most of it as relevant to the demands of their own struggle for freedom. It was not therefore surprising that Indonesian youths displayed great ferocity, courage and fortitude in their clashes with Allied troops later as in Soerabaya.

Actually, the Japanese effort did provide a militant mass base for the Revolution since the Indonesian resistance movement had infiltrated into all the Japanese created units with the help and guidance-as was originally planned between them-of Soekarno-Hatta. The Revolution was thus strengthened with ^{on by} the instruments of power created by the Japanese. It must be said to the credit of

the Indonesian leaders that they mostly kept in leash this gigantic build-up except for a few occasions when such forces spilled over as happens inevitably during such upheavals. These forces severally did create problems for the Republic on later occasions but Soekarno and Hatta were able to surmount and overcome them.

By the end of 1943, the POETARA was dissolved; and on March 1, 1944 a new organisation: the PKR (Perhimpunan Kebaktian Rajkat-People's Loyalty Organisation) or in Japanese language Djoma HOKOKAI was set up. They had been quite unnerved by the anti-Japanese feelings of the students. But as HOKOKAI failed to evoke mass support, the Japanese took another leaf from colonial tactics and attempted to use religion as a vehicle for their ends. They granted special positions to Islamic priests, teachers and experts in Islamic law. To the consternation of the Japanese, the new Muslim body instead of enhancing Japanese propaganda efforts commenced to intensify nationalist demands for independence, even as HOKOKAI.

Soekarno and Hatta utilised the HOKOKAI - though to a lesser extent than the earlier POETARA - to promote national consciousness and strengthen the people's will towards independence.

Concerned with the growing hostility of the educated youth towards them, the Japanese now launched one more organisation: ANGKATAN MUDA (Youth Corps) in June 1944 and forced youth leaders whom they suspected of underground activity to participate in it. Sukarni and Chairul Saleh in Jakarta (Batavia) and Roeslan Abdulgani (who later became Foreign Minister under Soekarno) in Soerabaya were thus pressed. It did not take long for the Angkatan Muda to turn anti-Japanese like the earlier ones. The seven-headed Hydra of Indonesian nationalism appeared to have finally opened the eyes of the Japanese.

In October 1944, following Premier Koiso's statement in the Japanese Diet that Indonesia will soon be granted

independence, Soekarno and Hatta and others were permitted to advocate openly for independence.

A surprising development was the setting up in Batavia of ASHRAMA INDONESIA MERDEKA (Dormitory for Free Indonesia) by the Head of the Japanese Navy Intelligence, Admiral Maeda who also played a significant role later at the time of the declaration of Indonesian independence.

On March 1, 1945, a broadbased Preparatory Committee for Independence in Java was set up. Following plenary sessions in May, June and July, conclusions were reached on constitutional and economic problems. A similar committee concluded its work in Sumatra.

In my impression, the years of the Japanese occupation were remarkable for the tremendous arousal of national consciousness. While malicious critics alleged that the Republic of Indonesia was 'Made in Japan', unfortunately the Dutch paternalists who had the control of government in Holland believed that they could continue to entertain a 'Bapak' (fatherly) attitude towards the people of their former colony. It has to be recognised that the gigantic arousal of national consciousness was a deliberate and planned effort of Soekarno and Hatta. They deftly availed of the scope and opportunities provided by the Japanese. Moreover, as part of his political theories, Soekarno moulded the towering consciousness into such shape that in the course of forging it, the people's political will towards independence became sharpened. In this unique effort, he had struggled and undergone tribulations for long years to rouse the national consciousness and bring the national will to a pitch. The Japanese occupation did play its role in the sense that the common suffering, privations and humiliations endured accentuated the national consciousness and heightened the strength of the national will.

There have been beneficial fall-outs to the Indonesian revolution. As indoctrination of Japanese ideas disturbed

and convulsed the educational system, hundreds of young men left secondary schools and besides strengthening the underground movement, sought jobs in estates, trade and commerce. Because of paucity of their own, the Japanese were obliged to employ Indonesians as train drivers, mechanics and administrative personnel which in Dutch times were ~~longer~~ held by Eurasians and Dutchmen. Members of the Indonesian aristocracy who had occupied junior administrative positions in the provinces were given more senior positions. As a result, there was a vast change in the entire social fabric with heightened Indonesian self-confidence in their ability to handle a variety of jobs and trades and to run the country efficiently. Besides, there was also the blessing in disguise of Japanese raised Indonesian forces who had received military training. They were all behind Soekarno to a man.

The Indonesian language also received a great boost during this period. After failing to enforce Japanese in place of Dutch, the Japanese found it expedient to use Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian language) both for propaganda and administrative purposes, since it was widely understood. The oratory of Soekarno and his capacity to add to its vocabulary enriched the language and it became a symbol of pride for Indonesian nationalism.

It was a gigantic achievement. To spur millions on the move over a period of years and to keep the momentum of their ardour required extraordinary vision and understanding. After considerable study of political philosophies of the West, Indonesian history and the basic religious urges of the people including Javanese mysticism, Soekarno as early as 1932 evolved a methodical approach in keeping with the psychology of his people for arousing nationalism on a mass scale and finally when it reached a high pitch to canalise it towards a revolution. Observing the national struggles in India and other Asian countries and drawing lessons from the liberation struggles in Latin America, he

not only dreamt of the time when he would lead his people in a gigantic struggle against Colonialism but laid step by step plans for its successful culmination. He enunciated the trilogy of National Spirit, National Will and National Deed. Elaborating on this at a very much later date in free Indonesia while addressing the Gadjja Mada University in Jogjakarta in 1951, President Soekarno said inter alia: "There is no action without desire, there is no action without will ... to bring men to act, the will must first be activated. If this principle is transposed to problems concerning a nation or a society, then it would mean that the Leader must above all activate the collective will. For what purpose? To give birth to Collective Action, to bring about a Collective Deed ... I am happy if I am able to carry out the task allotted to me, that is to awaken men to action, to activate men to deeds ... in order to bring men to act, I try to activate the will, the Collective will. I try to awaken the Collective will, to make it more determined, to set it aflame: ... Without the will of individuals, there can be no National Will, and without National Will there can be no National Action ...". Soekarno's efforts in forging the National Spirit, then gradually moulding it to a National Will and finally queering it to a passionate crescendo — setting it AFLAME as he called it were indeed outstanding revelation to me of how the Javanese mystical mind in Soekarno with its traditional belief in rousing the inner Spirit, directing its Will towards the Ultimate and to culminate it in a climax of Union or Identity with the Creator transposed it to national affairs! It was a transposition into public affairs of the grand conception of Yoga.

It took me over a year to form my impression of this period in Indonesia under Japanese occupation and I often wished I had been in the country then to feel the thrill of it all.

CHAPTER — VI

THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

As the Japanese Empire plunged to its last ebb, on August 8, Soekarno and Hatta were summoned to Saigon to meet the C-in-C of the Japanese Southern Army, Field Marshal Count Terauchi. After discussing the declaration of Indonesian independence, it was decided that the Committee for the preparation of Independence should meet in Batavia on August 19. Prior to his departure for Saigon, Hatta had concurred with Sjahrir that the zero hour was near at hand for a massive revolutionary effort by openly combining the overt forces under Soekarno and Hatta with those of the clandestine underground in pursuit of establishing a free Indonesia. But by August 14, when Soekarno and Hatta returned to Batavia, swift events had overtaken anticipation. Japan had earlier on August 10 accepted the Potsdam terms, a fact which had not been disclosed to Soekarno-Hatta in Saigon. As news trickled through to the Indonesians that Japan had on August 14 surrendered its armed forces to the Allies, Hatta conferred secretly with Sjahrir when the latter urged that the declaration of independence should be made forthwith as August 19 may be too late. 'Now or Never' was Sjahrir's firm attitude as a similar chance may not reoccur. The underground forces were restive and Sjahrir was for unleashing them against the Japanese to capture power and to establish a free Indonesia. Hatta consulted Soekarno. For fear of Japanese reprisal against any unilateral declaration of independence and a consequent massacre of the population by the Japanese Army, Soekarno vacillated. Hatta's tactful reply to Sjahrir was that since a declaration of independence had to be made by Soekarno in order to rally

the population behind it and since the Japanese were still in control, it would be prudent to follow agreed procedures. Sjahrir met Soekarno personally in an effort for immediate declaration of independence so that the restive and expectant masses could rally in its support, leaving the Japanese to react in any manner they chose. Soekarno first agreed to make the proclamation at 5.00 p.m. the same day (August 14) and thereupon arrangements had been made for a massive turn-out of the population at Batavia. Copies of the proclamation had also reached the various units for distribution and Indonesians working for Japanese News Agency, Domei, were instructed to flash the proclamation of independence to the world on its wires. As the count down to 5.00 p.m. neared, Soekarno first sought postponement by an hour and then to the next day.

It was an evening of high drama. Soekarno, the revolutionary, believed that he could work for a legal transfer of power by the Japanese whose power could be expected to last at least for some more months by which time a free Indonesia could have consolidated itself to the extent of being acceptable to the returning Allies. The sudden Japanese collapse came to him as a shock and though a legal process could not any more be gone through, he nevertheless felt that the best course would be to pursue the objective through the Preparatory Committee. Hatta agreed with him and set to work on the draft Declaration of Independence.

Several delegations of young nationalists visited Soekarno in vain. In the early hours of August 15, an Indonesian Army unit stationed near Batavia and some young leaders kidnapped Soekarno and Hatta to the Garrison HQ outside Batavia. Apparently, Soekarno appears to have known that the Japanese Army intended to come down heavily on any unilateral declaration of independence and he wished to avoid responsibility for bloodshed. He also appears to have felt that disorga-

nised Indonesian armed bands could be no match for the disciplined Japanese army and thought the unleashing of mass power for which he had struggled long years should only be made at an opportune time to enable its certain success. His adamant as well as defiant attitude to the pleadings of the young leaders showed that he was not developing cold feet but only his firm belief that, at that time, the prudent way would be to act constitutionally.

The young nationalists were quite aware that any proclamation of independence has to be made by Soekarno so as to carry the entire country with it. And the long-time revolutionary Soekarno was not the one to throw away his convictions and yield. In this impasse, other nationalists sought the help of the Good Samaritan, Admiral Maeda of the Japanese Navy. On his intervention the captors of Soekarno and Hatta released them on the assurance that the Constitutional Convention will meet forthwith at the Admiral's residence in order to avoid possible counter action by the Japanese Army. The Navy being the senior service had its day and the Convention proceeded without interference from either Admiral Maeda or other Japanese. While the Convention sought to amend portions of the Declaration critical of Japanese oppressive rule, Sjahrir on August 16 instructed his group at the Domei news agency to flash to the world the unpurged Declaration. Sjahrir had earlier declined to participate in the Convention as it was being held in the house of a Japanese. Since it was then believed that the United States will send its forces to Indonesia to take over from the Japanese, Sjahrir was anxious that independent Indonesia should conform to the high ideals of the United Nations and avoid any Japanese taint in the Declaration. Sjahrir's precipitate action forced Soekarno's hands and he rushed on August 17 to make the proclamation of independence.

Once he had made the proclamation, Soekarno acted with great speed to put the State apparatus into action. In an atmosphere which had electrified the whole country and

the exhilaration of the public reached unknown heights, he promptly issued a series of decrees which called on Indonesian Armed units to obey only the orders of the new government of the Republic of which he had been made President and Hatta Vice - President by the Convention, the civil authorities to abide by the instructions of his government and ordered all Japanese flags on public buildings to be replaced by the Indonesian red and white (Merah Putih). In the few cases where Japanese and their troops resisted these orders, the masses turned extremely violent and massacred them. Otherwise, the disarming and internment of the Japanese troops - a task that came to be finally allotted to Mountbatten's SEAC - was proceeded with peacefully by the Indonesian regulars assisted by the population as well as irregulars. But most of the Japanese who were quite bewildered by the collapse of the Imperial government and army surrendered to the Indonesians peacefully.

While the jubilant population considered the declaration of independence as a fulfilment of the Djojobojo prophecy, the anxiety of the leaders was to speedily consolidate the Republic and ensure that the armed forces be organised cohesively so that the Republic would be respected by the Dutch colonial forces should they return in the wake of the occupying Allied troops. They also wished to achieve speedy international recognition for the Republic and its membership of the United Nations. As they sought to rebuild the country's economy much disrupted by the war and sabotage and also the perilous economic policy of the Japanese, there was a new urge and a new wave of ecstasy among the people particularly the youth and every citizen considered it his duty to safeguard the Republic and the newly won freedom. The cries of Merdeka rent the air everywhere and greetings like Good Morning and Good Evening were coupled with the salutation to freedom: "Salamat Pagi, Salam Merdeka" and "Salamat Malam, Salam Merdeka". Night and day seemed to be

one for the jubilation and so it went on for some weeks till the coming of the Allied troops. Old and young and women and children, all joined hands in this gigantic chorus and students rushed to help in the administration of the free government. Their wages were a mere pittance but their striving to get the new State moving was stupendous. A new confidence also dawned on the Indonesians. After seeing the Dutch surrender ignominiously to the Japanese, they discovered the latter to be an impolite and rude people who were not as capable as they had imagined. They had also seen the demoralisation of the Japanese and the collapse of the "Greater East Asia".

But the problems of the State created anxieties for the leaders of the Republic even as the public continued in their festive atmosphere. The problem of moving food to deficient areas in Java and Sumatra in the absence of adequate transport, restoration of public communication that came into disuse for years and the reconstruction of the economy which was in itself a gigantic task in any army occupied country were obsessing the leaders of the Republic, particularly Hatta and his small band of assistants who were all economists. There were also formidable security and political problems with as many political groups as the letters of the English alphabet. Actually, Hatta and Sjahrir in 1945 encouraged the growth of different political groups in line with their thinking and that a nationalist movement should have broad based and educated cadres instead of depending on charismatic leadership only as the latter are easily eliminated to the detriment of the national struggle. Soekarno on the other hand believed in a dynamic single party. As a result, the plurality of parties meant absence of organic unity. In the early years of the Republic, political parties in power had to make concessions to the Dutch for the sake of peaceful evolution towards international recognition and consequently compelled to resign in the face of opposition whipped up in the Provisional Parliament.

Each of these groups also maintained ^{its} ~~their~~ own militia. There were also armed guerrilla bands under self-assumed leaders who interpreted freedom as autonomy for themselves. The political groups also jockeyed for position in the new administration by backing their demands with a show of their own armed strength. With their well knit units, the PKI (Communist Party) became increasingly vocal and aimed at the eventual capture of power for themselves. In the task of reorganising the armed units into one cohesive army of the Republic, Amir Sharifuddin played a notable role but this left out militia and units attached to political parties and a few armed groups with their own 'war lords'. The leaders were also fully convinced that to get the oil and rubber flow out of Indonesia again, they had to look to outside help, principally from the United States. Discerning leaders like Hatta and Sjahrir were greatly concerned over the possible attitudes of the victorious Allied forces when they came to occupy the territory and they continuously planned for the options. To Soekarno at the apex of the free Republic of Indonesia, the future appeared to be full of tribulations.

This was the vista that opened before my eyes when I landed in Batavia on September 29, 1945.

CHAPTER — VII

STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

Following the emergence of a free Indonesia on August 17, 1945, the mass euphoria all over Indonesia lasted a long number of months. In Java, which was the hub of the national awakening, it was even more intense. Flags and banners fluttered at every height and armed regulars and irregulars jauntily strided about with their assorted ware of weapons. Every street corner and all the streets and big roads were patrolled frequently with road blocks laid here and there to watch for enemies of the Republic, the Dutch that may return—the 'BLANDA' as they were called. Motor launches and country-crafts surveyed the coasts in regular vigilance to prevent landings by the Dutch colonists. A large proportion of the citizenry, both men and women, boys and girls sporting a variety of weapons taken from the Japanese armoury turned into a volunteer soldiery. It was no martial law but military vigilance with public participation. It was a set pattern reflective of a revolution. Despite the profusion of arms, there was discipline and peace. The peace of joy or joy of peace following freedom was not disturbed till the Allied troops arrived.

Fifty two days after the Republic was born, on September 29, 1945, the Allied troops landed in Batavia. The first were the 23rd Indian Division most of whom were Indians. I landed with the first wave as an Observer for the Indian Army, to report on the activities of the Indian troops. There was no welcome to us as in Burma and Malaya. Only a few children in isolated groups waved their hands as they saw the big ships and generally tall and

dark Indian soldiers with their guns coming down the scrambling nets aside the ships. There was an eerie and ominous quiet indicative of suspicion. But the Indians generally felt that they were meeting people with whom they had ancient connections. I was now with the Revolution.

The Indonesian leaders had been expecting the American troops to arrive. But the arrival of Colonial Indian troops made them nervous about intentions. The original plan to send US troops had been changed and Mountbatten was suddenly asked to take over the tasks of disarming the Japanese in Indonesia and repatriating them. The interregnum gave the Republic scope for a measure of consolidation. The Dutch objective was to utilise the British military with Indian troops under their command to rapidly restore Dutch control over the islands of Indonesia and principally in Java and Sumatra since they did not have enough forces of their own. The Dutch rapidly raised a local military force from Dutch residents, released Dutch prisoners of war and internees while Dutch naval forces along with a few Dutch troops also arrived from Europe. It was a paradoxical situation for the British Government. The Labour Government in Britain was setting its course on decolonisation with the prospect of an early launching of the Dominion of India. In spirit, it was also sympathetic to the Indonesian aspirations - a spirit that was quite pronounced in the British Command HQs. In Batavia, it was also bound by traditional ties to the Netherlands, supplemented by the agreement of August 24, 1945. This was the back-drop to the divertisement one witnessed as the Indonesian Republic struggled for survival during its infancy. I found the situation both amusing and interesting. The conflict of imperialism attracted me greatly.

As he did not have sufficient number of troops with him to carry out his assigned tasks, the British Commander, Lt. General Sir Philip Christia^{an} entrusted it to the Soekarno government whom he found to be in de facto control of Java and Sumatra. Actually, the Indonesian Army had

already disarmed and interned most of the Japanese and as the Japanese ships arrived in port to take them back home, they were duly handed over to the British HQ. The entire operation was executed efficiently by them and earned the appreciation of the British General.

Following his own experience in dealing with Aung San in Burma, Mountbatten with his natural predilection towards the new wave in Asia, preferred to avoid large scale hostilities with the Indonesians. Also there was the clamour on a national scale in India led by Nehru (whom Mountbatten had recently befriended in Malaya) for the withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia. Hence, they could not be used beyond policing duties. He appeared, therefore, to be in favour of securing the cooperation of the Republican leaders for which some minor political concessions could be made to them accompanied by a change of heart on the part of the Dutch towards which he was hoping to use his influence with the latter.

In the beginning, the British were pleased to deal with the Republican authorities and seemed reluctant to be involved beyond their main tasks. In fact, British policy then was to avoid becoming involved beyond their former territories. Sensing the strength behind the Republic and consistent with public opinion in Britain which was to decolonise and advance towards self-government in India and British colonies, the British seemed unwilling to become the Trojan Horse for the return of Dutch rule.

But within two months, when former Dutch Governor General Van Mook arrived in Batavia, there appeared a shift in British attitude. Dutch troops also arrived, first in small numbers and later in formations. The Dutch Navy took up positions around the islands of Java and Sumatra. While it was put out that the Dutch troops had arrived to protect internees, it soon became obvious that the entire Anglo-Dutch move was to enable the Dutch to talk to the Indonesians from a position of strength. First, the British

enlarged their areas of occupation in the towns on the pretext of having to protect their perimeters and step by step, added more towns under occupation. The Netherlands Civil Administration (NICA - a despised word to Indonesians) was introduced in these places and perceptibly Dutch troops took over in select areas from the British. How the Dutch Navy was permitted outside the authority of the Allied HQ in Batavia to interfere with the inter-island trade in the narrow straits between Java and Sumatra quite perplexed me and other observers. This barter trade was vital for the Republic to continue its exports via Singapore and to obtain in return clothing etc., for its population.

With the advent of British troops, the Republicans were obliged to adopt new tactics of skill, patience and propaganda while at the same time maintaining the high tempo of revolutionary fervour. They had to maintain the Japanese raised and trained Indonesian forces in a state of permanent alert in view of the superior arms of the British command and its war tested manpower. Not to be outwitted, the Republican government moved to Jogjakarta on January 4, 1946 to continue with the administration of the country from there leaving a small unit in Batavia to use diplomatic methods with the British HQ and the colonial Dutch lurking behind it. It must be said to the credit of the Indonesians that even then they kept their cool, largely maintained their unity and did not engage in adventurist attempts. The violent incidents in Soerabaya in October 1945 were an aberration. Unbridled Indonesian extremism and needless British provocation contributed to the initial conflagration in that city. The Indonesian Communists were also keen to rehearse their 'revolution'. Even after the Republic in the person of President Soekarno had rescued the situation from the hands of the extremists, the British instead of assisting the Republic to assert itself, accentuated the problems for it by a punitive and thunderous assault from the air, sea and land - quite obvious it was an attempt to retrieve lost prestige.

The little war in Soerabaya has already been described by me. The days and hours spent by me with the revolutionaries and the long talks with the youth leaders of all groups were part of my education. I tried to comprehend the depth of emotional urges behind the cry of "Merdeka" (Freedom) and the rationale of "Toetup Blanda", "Toetup Gurkha" (Shut up, White Man - normally used against the Dutch and Shut Up Gurkha, a misconception that all Indian soldiers were Gurkhas). After all, had I not longed for such an experience? I tried to penetrate the minds of the young leaders, both their boy and girl leaders some of whom were only in their teens. I was amazed when they spoke the verbiage of classical revolutions. Their study classes did not appear to have been in vain and I noticed with considerable interest how they had been prepared and trained for some years for opportunities of revolutionary activity. My task was greatly facilitated because I had earlier befriended some of them in Batavia. Their attitude now was quite strange; privately they were as friendly as before and attending to my needs besides answering my endless questions but publicly rude with the use of harsh words. In fact, at the head of the column which "captured" us at the Hotel Orange was a good friend who did not hesitate to shout abusive commands at me with his drawn Japanese sword. It was not mere youthful ardour and heroism that fired them into revolutionary action but the firm conviction that Colonialism must be totally opposed with all force if their beautiful country endowed with natural riches was to be made a happy place for themselves and their families.

Despite the fury of the British reprisal at Soerabaya the Republic's leaders continued to respond to the path of negotiation. Former Dutch Governor General Van Mook, who was already in Batavia, began parleys, while sounding out the parameters of compromise and insisting that Dutch Sovereignty should first be recognised, he questioned the legality of the Republic and found little common ground. Simultaneously, he began to build pressures against

the Republic and let it be known that he would not deal with Soekarno and Hatta whom he considered as collaborators with the Japanese! Yet, in order to pursue their interest in consolidating the Republic and keen to prefer negotiations than clash of arms, Soekarno by a special decree appointed Sjahrir as Prime Minister and made him responsible to the KNIP (Komite Nasional Indonesia Poesat - Provisional Parliament) of which Sjahrir had been the Chairman. In order to assist Van Mook, the Netherlands Government in the Hague announced vague proposals: that Indonesia will be a partner in a Netherlands-Indonesian Union and all partners to the Union will have equal self-respecting status. While Soekarno publicly rejected the proposal, Sjahrir in his parleys with Van Mook demanded that the Netherlands should first recognise the Indonesian Republic. The leading feudal, ^{the Sultan} the Sultan of Jogjakarta stood steadfastly and irrevocably behind the Republic.

Early in 1946, following pressure on the Dutch to seek a negotiated settlement, the Dutch government on February 10 announced its proposal to set up a Federal Indonesian Commonwealth with internal affairs being dealt with by an Indonesian Parliament of Indonesian majority and a Cabinet headed by their Crown Representative. The Indonesians rejected it as completely unrealistic. This absence of realism at that time on the part of the Netherlands government resulted in untold hardship to millions of Indonesians and caused ~~the~~ sacrifice of many lives of the Indian Army personnel during a peacetime endeavour. As an observer, I felt sad while reflecting that the home of Grotius, the moulder of international law in modern times, a country that contributed so much to Art in Europe and a people who had suffered under the Nazis should deny freedom to the people of another race. Emotionally, it was difficult for me to reconcile Dutch obduracy with the broad outlook of my young Dutch friends with whom I had spent some years at the international

headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Madras, especially Conrad Woldringh who used to throw me in raptures every time he played Debussy.

Sjahrir went to the Hague in April 1946. The British had also been told by the Dutch that they would prefer to deal directly with the Indonesians. Prime Minister Sjahrir made it absolutely clear that the starting point must be a recognition of the Republic of Indonesia as a Sovereign state and thereafter, it will be possible to enter into negotiations for cooperation in all spheres with the Dutch government. The Dutch reply was that they could recognise the Republic only as one of the constituent parts of the Federal Commonwealth and its territory will be confined to those areas of Java and Sumatra not occupied by the Allied troops. This revealed that the Dutch wished to subordinate the Republic into an insignificant position and the proposal was unrealistic in the context of the situation in Indonesia. Since it was beyond the mandate from the Indonesian Parliament (KNIP), Sjahrir returned home quite disappointed and feeling that the Dutch had missed the opportunity to restore goodwill in Indonesia.

The political situation was once again in a flux. The last Indian troops had to be withdrawn by November 1946 as per the commitment to the Indian Government. Hence, there was a feverish ferrying of Dutch troops to outlying areas and towns by the British Royal Air Force since the Dutch did not have the transport. The Indian forces also transferred their heavy equipment including tanks and armoured carriers to the Dutch Army.

In February 1946, I decided to cast my lot with the Revolution in Indonesia. I went to India to get released from my Army Commission and returned to Batavia in April 1946 as a War Correspondent for an Indian Daily in Bombay.

Despite some obstruction from the Allied HQ, I was able to travel freely to and from the Republican areas.

The rice fields around Batavia provided excellent cover to avoid Gurkha patrols who on occasions very conveniently mistook me for an Indonesian civilian. The month of June 1946 was quite a trying period for the Republic where the plurality of political parties created several new pressures. There was also a measure of popular discontent at the lack of progress in negotiations with the Dutch. The youth groups became restive and were keen to disavow the path of negotiations in favour of fighting the Allies including the Dutch. Prime Minister Sjahrir came under heavy criticism though basically he was equally firm in opposition to the restoration of colonialism but was prepared to make compromises with the Dutch on other matters. The extreme left-wing parties desired social revolution at the same time as the political revolution. The Trotskyist group set up an agitation against the few feudal rulers which put Sjahrir in a tight position. As a Socialist, he could not oppose the agitation's principles but as Prime Minister he could not permit instability in the Republic at a critical period. He felt that the agitation was ill-timed. But as was the case with Sjahrir at all times he was against mobilising massive support for his point of view. In this case, he also appears to have avoided decisive steps in the hope that the agitation will not receive popular support. The internationally well-known Tan Malakka, Trotskyist leader, had been planning to wrest power in the Republic. Perhaps under the impression that he could feed the growing disillusionment with the policy of the government for negotiations with the Dutch, he used the armed unit under his control and the local military command which had come under his spell to kidnap Prime Minister Sjahrir and his two cabinet colleagues on June 27 while on a visit to Soorakarta, the hot-bed of the agitation against feudal rulers. I was with Sjahrir at that time and in fact we were all talking around midnight. Without a shot being fired and no talk of arrest or resistance, a small army detachment whisked him and his aides away. It appeared to me at that time that he was off to keep some engagement till

Army Major Yusuf suggested that I might move to his house as the situation in the town was tense and that Sjahrir had been kidnapped by some extremists. My friend Sufiyan Tanjoeng, a relation of Madame Soekarno, appeared from nowhere and assured me not to worry and that he will escort me to Jogjakarta. They kept Sjahrir and his colleagues in custody for three days and released them only when an unit arrived from Command HQ in Jogjakarta under instructions from President Soekarno, who called upon his people to rally against the kidnappers as he thundered: "This is a state, not a club, not a league, nor a party". He castigated radical elements for overstepping the limits of agitation and within no time, the leaders of the kidnapping were arrested. And Sjahrir returned to Jogjakarta in two days to report to President Soekarno on fresh proposals from the Dutch.

The British appeared by this time to have fulfilled most of the undertaking of their agreement of August 26, 1945, with the Netherlands. Vital bridgeheads which the British had secured around the cities of Batavia, Bogor, Bandung, Semarang and Soerabaya in Java, and around Palembang, Medan and Padang in Sumatra were in the process of being handed over to the Dutch. The latter had also secured most of the areas from the Australians in Borneo and Celebes including the outer islands. In North Celebes, the Dutch trained colonial troops revolted and went over to the Republicans. While the Dutch were thus hoping that the Republic would gradually wither away, world opinion against the Dutch was gathering ground. There was an increasing demand in support of Indonesian independence in the United States, India and Britain and opposing the restoration of Dutch colonialism. Time was also running out as under the demand of the interim Indian government in New Delhi under Nehru, Indian troops had to leave Indonesia by November 1946. In the circumstances, the British brought their experienced diplomats on the scene. While Sir Archibald Clark Kerr's suggestions were resented

by the Dutch as far reaching, the British Special Commissioner in South East Asia, Lord Killearn had more of a presiding and guiding role when Van Mook assisted by three Commissioners General from the Hague met the Republican delegation in a conference at the hill station of Linggadjati not far from Batavia. Killearn was able to prevail over the Dutch and an agreement was reached on 15th November. Under it, the Dutch recognised the Republican government as exercising de facto authority in Java, Madoera and Sumatra, the two governments were to cooperate in establishing a United states of Indonesia on a federal basis by January 1, 1949, and which was to be a sovereign democratic state, a Constituent Assembly was to be created with elected representatives both from the Republic and other areas and the United States of Indonesia was to be a member of the Netherlands Union. Despite strong opposition in the Indonesian Provisional Parliament (KNIP), the two governments ratified the agreement on March 25, 1947. This was definitely an advance on the terms offered to Sjahrir when he went to the Hague in April 1946.

The Linggadjati Agreement soon ran into heavy seas as a result of differing interpretations placed upon it. Though the de facto authority of the Republic had been recognised by the Dutch, they attempted to set up puppet states in West Java and Sumatra. The federal system was what Van Mook was setting up unilaterally along lines he thought fit. The Republicans viewed this effort as a superficially disguised form of the familiar divide and rule policy and to establish Dutch overall control over the new state. Van Mook organised the 'State of East Indonesia' as a part of the proposed Federal set-up.

On the Republican side, the activities of Van Mook created even greater opposition to the Linggadjati Agreement. The Masjumi, the PNI and the Trotskyist Tan Malakka group had earlier strongly opposed in the KNIP ratification on the ground that they could not accept the Netherlands - Indonesian Union with the Dutch Queen at

the head of it. While the Trotskyist attitude which was because of their anxiety to destabilise the Sjahrir government was understandable as part of their struggle for power, the opposition of PNI whose mentors Soekarno and Hatta had approved the agreement was surprising. Rivalry for power had set in the body-politic of the Republic.

The Masjumi and the PNI also felt correctly that their own political support was larger than that of Sjahrir's Socialist Party. Supporting the Linggadjati pact was the Left Front (Sajap Kiri) consisting of the Socialist Party, Pesindo (Socialist Youth) and Labour and Communist Parties as also the small Christian and Catholic Parties. In fact, the Dutch at one time seemed to have been hoping that the KNIP may not ratify the agreement but Soekarno ensured ratification by enlarging the KNIP on December 29, 1946, through a Presidential decree using the pretext that such expansion had long been overdue. The Dutch intentions became clearer in April when they unilaterally assumed that they continued to exercise sovereignty throughout Indonesia till the United States of Indonesia came into being.

There was much sympathy among Indian troops for Indonesia. As veterans of the Second World War, they had fully imbibed the spirit of the Allied cause in fighting the German and Japanese powers. They had complete faith in the Atlantic Charter and the promise of Four Freedoms in a new world order. They were also conversant with the developments in India, the parleys between Indian nationalist leaders and British statesmen and the prospect of a free India in the near future. At the same time, the association with British military leaders over nearly one and a half century had developed them a strong sense of duty to that leadership.

Hence, on all the occasions they were used against the troops of the Indonesian Republic, despite the emotional conflict within them, they acted with a strong sense of duty

to the British authority to whom their loyalty was pledged. Yet, among ourselves, we did argue and question the role they had been compelled to play. Actually, Mountbatten's South East Asia Command had been unprepared for the assignment in Indonesia and British political compulsions required the early repatriation of British troops to the U. K. SEAC was left with only a couple of British Indian Divisions to execute the tasks of ^{interning and repatriating the} Japanese POWs. Confronted with a situation in Indonesia beyond the scope of these tasks, the British were compelled by their government's understanding with the Netherlands Government to maintain law and order in Indonesia till such time as the Dutch troops were in a position to take over. Initially, the British were not quite enthusiastic over the second role and largely left it to the Republic of Indonesia to be responsible for such a purpose. But when pressures from the Hague mounted, they resorted to limited forays against the Republic in order to establish bridge heads for the Dutch troops to follow. Since there was no effective voice as yet in India against the use of Indian troops against Indonesian nationalists, the British utilised the Indians under their command though they were quite aware where the sympathies of the troops lay even as those of most of the British officers. But as I had belonged to the Indian Army, I felt that it was my beholden duty to resolve emotional conflict within the Indian rank and file and strived towards that end. Earlier, in the conflict that ranged in Soerabaya, a beribboned Rajput hero of Burma as he lay dying with an Indonesian bullet in his heart had asked me: "Why should we die for the Dutch, Sir?"

But as the public pressure in India increased for the withdrawal of Indian troops from Indonesia and Nehru who was to join an interim government under British auspices preparatory to Indian independence also called for the withdrawal, the role for aggressive action against Indonesians was shifted by the British to Gurkha troops of the Indian Army who were least affected emotionally. As soon as the interim government was formed in New Delhi, Nehru

was able to fix a firm date for the withdrawal of the entire Indian Army including the Gurkhas.

The Indian troops in Indonesia were mostly Punjabis, Madrasis, Rajputs, Mahrattas and Pathans and belonged to the Hindu, Muslim and Christian religions. While all of them equally resented their role in Indonesia, the Muslim amongst them were specially perturbed. About six hundred of them 'deserted' allegedly enticed as the British said while admitting that some of them did not like to fight the Indonesians. I often met them in Jogjakarta and sometimes saw them operating individually with Indonesian guerilla units. They were mostly spirited in assisting the Indonesian freedom struggle and were well-spoken of by Indonesian officers. Undoubtedly, some had been lured by material benefits. A few also gave their lives to the cause of Indonesia. It was with some interest that I noticed that the Indonesian Army did not mobilise them as a single unit, obviously not wanting to antagonise the British and when the British Command withdrew, these "deserters" were also gradually repatriated to India.

Life as a War Correspondent was quite exciting. The British HQ had organised a cosy Press Camp at the former residence of the Dutch Navy Chief. We were well looked after with excellent food and wine, as also some Japanese POWs attending on us as orderlies. I shared a Japanese Major with another officer. The Major narrated to me in his broken English and Indonesian about what happened during the Japanese occupation. He had broad sympathies for the Indonesians.

We were mostly British, Australian, Dutch, one Chinese and one Indian: that was me. The other Indian, T.G. Narayanan left soon after the Linggadhati meet for New Delhi from where he joined the secretariat of the United Nations. He returned to Indonesia later as the Secretary of the UN Good Offices Committee of the Security Council. Noel Buckley of the Reuters, Bob Kiek of the Dutch News Agency Aneta and Graham Jenkins of

the Melbourne Age were with me. In view of Australian sympathy for Indonesians, I found Graham Jenkins an understanding companion. There was much exchange of information between all of us at the bar in the camp. Bob Kiek as well as other young Dutch correspondents were quite objective and showed understanding of the Indonesian view point.

Despite the fact that I had been an officer of the British HQ earlier, the HQ appeared to be putting obstructions in the way of my free functioning. Their FEP, the political wing of the HQ, was quite rude and peremptory on occasions. On the evening of May 9, 1946, Major West (Whom I had dubbed Mae West because of his good looks) thundered to me on the phone: "You can't go on the plane tomorrow". I was a little taken aback but later learnt that the Indonesian PR had put me on the list of correspondents to accompany Premier Sjahrir in the British RAF plane the next morning to Jogjakarta to meet President Soekarno with whom he had growing differences. It was a vital meeting with much significance for the stability of the Republic. The British HQ had allowed Reuter Correspondent Buckley to proceed along with Sjahrir even though like me he had also been denied permission the previous evening. The British HQ owed its continued existence in Batavia to the sacrifice of many Indian lives and as a natural reaction, I wrote in my Diary for the day: "You British! Et tu Brute!" I also protested vehemently to the SEAC about the discrimination and later when they explained to me that Buckley's visit was unauthorised and that I should tell the General that he may be excused, I bluntly refused on a matter of principle. But my problems with the British HQ were soon put on even keel as the suave Lt. Col. Laurens Vander Post, later famous as a novelist on South African life, took charge of relations with me. He even gave me a 'carnet de passage' for free travel between British and Republican territory.

Actually, the Dutch PR treated me much better than the British after the latter wound up.

CHAPTER - VIII

INDIA AND INDONESIA

Historically, since early times, there have been contacts between India and Indonesia. There have been migrants from the Indian shores, both princes and priests as well as those daring sea-fairers who carried the precious merchandise between the shores of India and the many islands of Indonesia. Whole royal families, soliders and the leaders of many religious sects of Hinduism appear to have gone to Java and Sumatra and mingled and merged with the local population. In the process, great cultural and religious activity developed in those areas and culminated in the emergence of powerful empires like Madjapahit, Sailendra and Mataram. The rulers of these kingdoms were reportedly proud of their connections with India and Soekarno used to frequently remind me that the last ruler of Mataram, Diponogero fell to Dutch arms after being demoralised on hearing the Dutch boast that India had been conquered by the British.

In Parambanan near Jogjakarta, the Saivite temples bear eloquent testimony to the ancient religious and cultural bonds between the two peoples. The patron saint of South India, Agastya Muni sits even today in sculptured stone with his benign face gazing at the landscape of Central Java. Not very far is the glorious monument of Borobudur, the epitome of Buddhist philosophy which Buddhist monks from India and Indonesia erected together with the assistance of the skilled artisans of Java. And again, in the Djien plateau on the way to Kaliurang, one saw the remains of the chariots in stone (Raths) of the Mahabharata. And as one enjoyed the wayang (Shadow play),

one realised how the Hindu epics of Ramayana and Mahabharata had permeated into the folklore of the people of Java. In distant Bali, a form of Tantric Hinduism and Buddhism prevails. When I saw these thrilling evidences of our ancient contacts, I realised that these people were our kinsmen who still cherish the cultural heritage of India's ancient religions. And I was even more gratified and proud when I was told that Islam also spread to the islands of Indonesia through Muslim traders from the West coast of India who gradually settled there.

Significantly, it was Soekarno (with his Balinese Hindu mother) who set the tone in recent times to emphasise the cultural links between the two countries. In a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru on August 19, 1946, following the second anniversary of the Indonesian Republic, he said: "Your country and your people are linked to us by ties of blood and culture which date back to the very beginning of history. The word 'India' must necessarily always be part of our life for it forms the first two syllables of the name we have chosen for our land and our race - it is the 'Indo' in Indonesia. This Jogjakarta from which I write is - like Java, Sumatra and most other place names - an Indian word; my very name itself is eloquent testimony to the great extent to which we have fallen heir to the rich culture of your ancient land...". As a gesture of goodwill and friendship to India, Soekarno ordered on the first anniversary of their independence that the Indian tricolour should be flown alongside the Indonesian flag. Both he and Vice President Hatta praised the role of India and Nehru, exhorted the population to remember that Indonesia was not alone in its struggle against colonialism.

RICE AGREEMENT WITH INDIA

The de facto recognition given to the Republic of Indonesia by the Allied Commander-in-Chief soon after landing in Batavia on September 29, 1945, was the first step to achieve international recognition. Prime Minister

Sjahrir's adroit diplomacy was directed at widening such recognition. The 'Battle of Soerabaya' was one of the main events that forced the British Command to recognise that "the Republic had strong popular backing". In the last two or three months of 1945, there had been heavy fighting between Indian troops of the British Command and armed Indonesians over most of Java and parts of Sumatra and Bali as the British established bridgeheads round important cities and towns even as they severally occupied them. If only the British had realised this popular backing in the first instance, the evil consequences of their August 26, 1945, terms of agreement with the Dutch could have been avoided and many hundreds of lives could have been saved in what was essentially a peace-time operation. Meanwhile, the Labour Government in Britain, which had set its sights on the independence of India and was moving in the direction of an Interim Government in New Delhi under Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership, began pressing the Dutch to start negotiations with the Republic.

It was at this juncture that I decided to relinquish my army role and to return to Indonesia as a free newspaper man. Before leaving for India in December 1945, in my meetings with Indonesian leaders, Hatta in particular, I learnt that they were keen to secure 'de jure' recognition for the Republic from India as soon as a free government was formed in New Delhi. He was of the view that such recognition could pave the way for a chain of recognitions from Muslim countries and other Asian nations. In this matter, Dr. Hatta set great store on his friendship with Nehru since the days of the Anti-Imperialist League activities in Brussels and wished, if possible, I should convey this to Nehru. An opportunity for me soon occurred when I "covered" Nehru's tour of Malaya and Singapore in March 1946 for a Bombay based newspaper. I had met Nehru only once before when I had conveyed to him a packet containing an analytical and objective account of the Indian National Army from my friend T.G. Narayanan of The Hindu of Madras who was with me in Burma as a

war correspondent. He had met many personalities there, both British officers, POWs, INA personnel and had painfully compiled the account over a period of several months often seeking contacts in territory beyond the control of the British forces. While crossing the Penang riads on April 2 prior to his return flight to India, Nehru took me aside on the boat and affectionately putting his hand round my shoulders - as was his wont - asked me for a brief account of the the situation in Indonesia. As I acquainted him with Hatta's desire and thinking, for early recognition from a free Indian government, he wished to convey in reply the limitations under which an Interim Government was going to function in New Delhi and hence could not hold out a promise for early recognition. At the same time I was to assure Hatta that he will do everything possible both within and outside government and particularly in the international field to further the cause of Indonesian freedom. He rapidly dictated to me a short message for the Indonesian leaders which was even more rapidly typed, signed and handed to me before we disembarked from the boat and he flew back to India.

As soon as I reached Batavia on April 6, it was ^a problem to contact Dr. Hatta who along with Soekarno had moved to Jogjakarta on January 4 to establish the seat of the Republican government there. Luckily, Prime Minister Sjahrir, who stayed part time in Batavia in order to negotiate with the British and the Dutch, was available. He appeared pleased but expressed no reaction when I explained that Nehru may not be able to work for an early recognition by the Interim Government in New Delhi; he said he appreciated it. Sjahrir is not used to ebullient reactions unless it was amusing enough to provoke his loud laughter. He gave me the impression that he was relying for this on the British and the left-wing Dutch politicians. But I did not express my misgivings over his optimism since my contacts with Raden Abdul Kadir and others close to Van Mook had made it clear to me that Dutch official

policy was to reduce the Republic to one of several political parties in Indonesia.

Sjahrir was greatly interested in developments in India and I took the opportunity to correct some distortions presented to him earlier on the subject by the officials of the British Foreign Office in Batavia. As I was describing how the Second World War had disrupted rice supplies to India from Burma, how what little was grown in India had been diverted to the troops and how a man made situation created a severe famine in Bengal, with the rest of India veering towards the same, I pointed out to him that Indonesia seemed to be fortunate in food supplies despite the Japanese occupation. While he was narrating that amidst various others the food problem was not luckily there for the Republic to face except shortfalls in certain areas which was more one of bottlenecks in distribution due to inadequate transport, it just-in a flash-occured to me to ask him if Indonesia with its abundance of rice in fertile Java with three crops a year could come to the assistance of India in return for Indian textiles and medicines. The name Java was somehow linked in my mind always with food grains since I was familiar with a particular kind named Java (millets) almost from childhood. For once Sjahrir's face showed more than a boyish smile; his face lit up in a broad gleam; he closed his eyes for a minute and kept silent for a further two. Then expressing his sympathy for the Indian people, he generously offered half a million tons of rice for them. He wanted India to arrange for ships to take them. He pointed out that Java had just had bumper harvest and enough to spare. There was a shortage of textiles in Indonesia and if India could help with them, they would be welcome.

To the shrewd and far seeing Sjahrir, apart from consolidating Indian goodwill towards the Republic as manifest in Nehru's message, the arrival of ships from India to fetch Java rice would mean a death blow to the Dutch economic blockade which hindered both inter-island

trade and even the traditional country - craft barter trade with Singapore from Sumatra. The prospect of a trade pact between the government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Indian government opened a new vista that could lead to expansion of international recognition for the Republic. But he did not express these views to me and it was left to others to draw such conclusions.

The story of Sjahrir's offer was carried by my paper, the Free Press Journal of Bombay, on April 8 in the front page under the headlines: "Indonesia's Goodwill Gesture towards India, Premier Sjahrir's offer of 500,000 tons of Rice" and in turn this was quoted extensively in the Indian and Foreign Press. My Editor from Bombay cabled me: "Your Rice offer very great achievement". Jawaharlal Nehru sent me a letter appreciating my work as a correspondent in Indonesia. Papers in Indonesia gave the story banner headlines on April 12 and published alongside Nehru's message to the Indonesian leaders which I had delivered to Sjahrir. Conveying the greetings of the Indian people to the people of Indonesia "who were putting up a brave struggle for their freedom", Nehru said in the message: "On my visit to Malaya, so near to Indonesia, I thought of your great struggle for freedom often and discussed it with many Indonesians and other friends here. We are facing grave problems in India today which might affect the future of our country. But however entangled we might be in our own problems, we think of you for we realise that your struggle for freedom is intimately connected with ours. In the event of any big changes taking place in India resulting in the formation of a national government, rest assured that we shall take every opportunity to assist you and help in such ways as we can".

The Indonesian leadership was greatly encouraged by the message and the millions of people in Indonesia were greatly thrilled by the support for their struggle. The conservative Western correspondents did not view the news with any great significance; it did raise some eyebrows in

Whitehall and the Hague. While the British were a little taken aback by Nehru's forth-right views even before the interim government was formed in New Delhi, the Hague government reacted strongly and termed it interference in their internal affairs! In London, as Labour Party politicians were pleased with Nehru's lead, the officials were wondering what was Nehru upto and a few of them felt that it did not augur well for the foreign policy of the new Dominion of India. (Before the emergence of independent India, the foreign policy of the entire British Commonwealth was coordinated in London). To me, the reactions abroad were perplexing and for a while I felt that I had put my head in a hornet's nest. The local Dutch authorities were fuming at me and at the British HQ, the normally genial yet shrewd and curt Director of Political Intelligence, Col. Lawrens Van der Post (who later thrilled the world with his novels on the social fabric of his native land of South Africa) questioned me as to why I did not check the Rice Offer story with the British HQ or the Dutch before sending it to my paper. My cool reply that I did not have to check the interview given to me by the Prime Minister of a country in respect of his own government and his country and I was quite satisfied with the bumper crop of rice since I had personally visited Republican territory and seen things for myself. He was more than taken aback by my answer. When he tried to be a little overbearing as he mentioned that the Dutch had asked for me "to be thrown out of the country", I also reacted sharply by stating that if they dared to do so, I should be least unhappy since in that event India was then in a mood to welcome me as a hero! Thereafter I was largely left alone except that I had a few irksome restrictions on my free movement and my mail was tampered with. But dutifully I did obtain the Dutch reactions to the rice offer and my paper in Bombay published using their statement that according to them there was not enough rice in Java to spare for India and their view was that no rice can move out of Java without their premission since according to them

sovereignty rested with them. Except for a select number of Dutch friends, official Dutch authority was quite hostile to me from then.

Questions were raised in the British House of Commons on the rice offer and the terse official reply implied that it was not a feasible proposition due to paucity of transport in Java, lack of available space in ships and the absence of adequate stocks of rice in Java. Similar replies were orchestrated by British officials in Singapore. In New Delhi where an interim national government was yet to be installed, the official answer was that the reported rice offer was unreal quoting the British Special Commissioner for South East Asia, Lord Killearn!

As an atmosphere of disbelief in the rice offer was thus being created, my Editor in Bombay asked for a reiteration of the offer by Sjahrir who could also issue a government statement on the subject followed by a communication to the Indian government through the British Consul General in Batavia. At one stage, the Dutch authorities suggested that since they were the sovereign authority, the offer should be routed through them.

Obviously, the storm over the issue was roused because of the political implications. The Republican government accepted the gauntlet and in another press interview on April 21, Sjahrir reiterated to me the offer of April 7 following his extensive tour of East and Middle Java. In the interview, he said that a big bumper crop existed in the rice-bowl of Besuki in East Java and others had confirmed that the year's rich rice harvest was unprecedented. This was followed up on April 23 by an official statement of the Indonesian Prime Minister which said that his interview of April 7 to the Free Press of India offering half a million tons of rice to famine-stricken India had "aroused some doubt in the outer world" and added: "I want to repeat here and now that I gave the FPI representative a true picture of the food situation and of our needs of import

goods. The lowest estimates of the crop for this year is five million tons, while the highest goes upto seven million tons". Stressing that the Indonesian population did not consume more than four million tons, he said: "Even if there is no surplus rice, I think our people would readily give 500,000 tons of rice for sorely needed textiles, tools and implements. I think it is more than natural that the Indonesian Republic does what is possible to ease the food situation in India. We have much sympathy for the Indian people and would welcome the establishment of economic and spiritual relations between the Republic and India as between free nations". The Indonesian Ministry of Information simultaneously appealed to people to assist social relief organisations in collecting the promised rice quota for India. Sjahrir also appointed a Minister to be specially in charge of the collection and despatch of rice to India. This mobilisation of efforts behind the rice offer was prompted by the Dutch propaganda offensive against the offer. The latter were also assisted by their agents amongst the people creating opposition to it and the agitation within the Republic by the Trotskyist elements under Tan Malakka against the offer as part of their general efforts to destabilise the Republican government with a view to wresting power. The response of Nehru to the rice offer and the expression of appreciation by Indian public opinion combined with the political implications of the prospect of a barter agreement with another government greatly reinforced Sjahrir's determination to go through with the rice offer and in the process overcome the obstructions.

The task of galvanising the nation behind Sjahrir's rice offer was left to Dr. Mohamed Hatta. In a nation-wide broadcast to his people on June 22, 1946 he said spontaneous offers from the people had already netted 200,000 tons and that the Indonesian gesture was "invested with great significance and had evoked world wide attention". Pointing out that the offer was based on Humanitarianism, one of the basic principles of Indonesian nationalism now

enshrined in the Republic's Constitution, he added: "Our friendship with India with whom we have had the most cordial relations from the very early days of history, is in a special category. India has enriched our culture enormously; she has over centuries maintained economic relations with us and in the field of politics we have been able to learn much from the gallant fight she has put up against British imperialism. It was from the non-cooperation movement of India that we learned and applied so successfully those principles which fanned the flame of patriotism to white heat ... both India and we have been opposed to capitalism and imperialism and there was much common ground in the nature of our common struggle. And as a result, there has sprung up between us and the Indians a strong spiritual bond, rendered doubly stronger by the deep friendship between the national leaders of both countries. Hatta also told his people: "Since our recent proclamation of independence, we have kept up a ceaseless struggle to win international recognition of our independence and it is no little help that we have received from India in this direction". In a significant forecast of future relations from which the ideas on non-alignment ~~has~~ sprouted, Dr. Hatta said: "The signs and portents of present history show that India's freedom is near at hand. And soon a Free India linked to in ties of closest friendship with a Free Indonesia will set an example to the whole world how nations should live in friendship and understanding. These ideals have been the mainspring of actions in the past and will be the basis of action in the future..." But the situation was not without its pathos. Among others in the wake of the British led Indian troops, there were a handful of assorted Indian Communists, Trotskyists and Radical Democrats who had been employed in special units of British political intelligence. A couple of them were set loose on Indonesian public opinion to denigrate the Indian national leadership. An anti-Nehru piece appeared in the Republican *Independent* of Batavia edited by a Ceylon Tamil who had worked for the Domei news agency as well as for

the Indonesian! Though the *Independent* was financed by President Soekarno, some items in it were placed by the British HQ. Another Communist Indian who had been educated in Britain attempted to portray Nehru as a hypocrite while discussing Indian affairs with Sjahrir!

There were obstructions at every stage of progress in regard to the rice offer. The offer was made on April 7 and by mid-June, Indonesian Ministers had moved sufficient quantities to the ports for shipment. As there was shortage of motor transport and the few much-used Japanese trucks were in the defence units which had priority, Indonesia had asked India to lend or barter some of the trucks with the Indian troops who were leaving soon. The heavy equipment of the latter and of US origin had already been transferred to the Dutch troops. But the request merely ended up in parleys in London and the British Special Commissioner in Singapore was opposed to Indonesian rice moving to India and in its place offered stocks from Bangkok. However, Nehru who had by then entered the interim government in New Delhi was firm and the Indonesian leaders kept up their pressure. Sjahrir also received an invitation from Nehru to attend the historic Asian Relations Conference in March 1947. By early June, 1946 the Indian Government assembled its ships in Singapore in readiness for loading rice at Indonesian ports. And finally, on July 27 by which time all hurdles had been crossed, the Indian Food Secretary signed and exchanged letters of agreement with Premier Sjahrir under which the Republic was to supply 700,000 tons of paddy in return for the supply to the maximum extent of consumer goods of equivalent value as demanded by the Republic. Most foreign representatives in Batavia had been sceptical about the rice offer and thought it impractical. But when it was consummated, there was no lack of appreciation and admiration for Nehru and the Indian government for the persistent and patient manner in which they had tackled the matter in which deep political principles and international practice had become embedded. A simple humanitarian gesture assumed political implications

from the time it was born! To me personally, it was the vindication of a 'scoop' which was first called unrealistic.

In the course of the negotiations for the barter agreement, Nehru cabled Sjahrir on May 7: "I learn through the Press that you have been good enough to offer to send half a million tons of rice from Indonesia to India to relieve famine conditions here, provided the necessary shipping is arranged for. I understand also that you are in great need of textiles from India. We are grateful for your offer. Half a million tons of rice or other food grains would make a great difference to India in the months to come. Could you kindly let us have further details of your offer so that we can make arrangements in regard to it! There is cloth scarcity here also but I am sure the Government here will do its utmost to provide textiles in exchange for foodgrains. I should be grateful for an early reply." After the barter, Premier Sjahrir cabled on May 27 to Nehru: "We are anxiously awaiting the moment you will be able to visit us. You and Mahatma Gandhi are known and loved by our people as the leaders of Asia. Your struggle for freedom has always inspired our own. That is why we are now happy to be in a position to show our sympathy for your people by sending all the rice we can send in order to prevent disaster overcoming your country ... I am convinced that the opportunity is not far off when we shall be in a position to extend this splendid constructive cooperation between our people to cultural and political cooperation as well. We lay great hope by your future political status because we are deeply interested in your freedom and welfare as you have in ours ...".

In the months of May and June 1946, the rice offer was also caught up in the deteriorating political situation. The Indonesians were firm in seeking a direct barter deal with India but the Dutch were adamant that it must be with them. The Supreme Commander of the SEAC, Admiral Mountbatten who had befriended Nehru earlier in Malaya now visited New Delhi to meet him and the British Viceroy

before proceeding to London to advise the British government on the developments. In Batavia, there were increasing signs of the Dutch contemplating an early military action against the Republic in which case the bartered rice could never reach India.

Indonesia was able to fulfil in most parts the stipulated supply of rice to India under the barter agreement and received in return agricultural implements, textiles and miscellaneous goods required by them. But the achievement in the international field was even more significant. The political aspect was succinctly put by Vice-President Hatta "The third factor bound up in our offer of rice to India is the political aspect, which automatically becomes part and parcel of the transaction. The Dutch claim jurisdiction over Indonesia and as evidence of this fact they have set up a number of administrative offices in Jakarta (Batavia). All this is a house of cards and Dutch jurisdiction is merely on paper. Our rice offer has punctured the bubble of Dutch pretensions and the Dutch are absolutely at their wit's end. The Dutch sit by powerless while we make an offer of rice to lighten the burden of India's famine. What does it establish? It shows the Republic of Indonesia is a going concern, that we have a land which we rule and an efficient administration which attends to the duties of government. In one fell blow we have delivered the 'coup de grace' to Dutch claims that our Republic is in a state of collapse and that our people are going about with empty stomachs."

On the occasion of the first anniversary of the Republic (August 17, 1946), President Soekarno said: "The most satisfactory aspect of our foreign policy is the agreement arrived at between ourselves and the Government of India. We have thereby won the friendship and awakened the fraternal feelings of Indians and forged links of understanding which will stand us in good stead when India takes her rightful place as one of the big nations of the world. We have also thereby obtained conclusive proof that a large nation regards us as having an established place in the

world that it places trust in us and treats us as a mature people." As I stood a few feet away from him on the occasion, these words of Soekarno greatly thrilled me to the bones and gave me satisfaction that a purely journalistic role at the commencement of this affair had culminated in the success of an endeavour benefitting several nations and the cause of peace and progress. It was significant that the first international agreement signed by the struggling government of the Republic was with the government of a country whose people have had since the dawn of history cultural, spiritual and commercial relations with the people of Indonesia. My Editor from Bombay cabled me: "... Your rice offer very great achievement ...".

The virtual de facto recognition of the Republic by India raised its morale greatly. Despite all the convolutions of the official policy of the British Government, the British Military HQ at Batavia had dealt with the Republican Government as exercising de facto authority in Java and Sumatra. Weighed with the pressure from their Commonwealth associate nations of Australia and India and with public opinion in their own country positively in favour of a peaceful settlement towards independence in Indonesia, the British government at this period began a series of moves to prevail on the Dutch to recommence negotiations with the Indonesian Republic following a new crisis created by differing interpretations on the Lingadjaati Agreement and Dutch anxiety to enforce its will speedily through military action.

CHAPTER - X

WITNESS TO FORCE MAJEURE

With Nehru installed as Vice-President of the interim government in New Delhi and in charge of External Affairs, a new phase of diplomacy entered the field in support of the Indonesian Republic. With his extensive public contacts in Britain and Europe and now reinforced by his official contacts with the British government, Nehru was able to utilise diplomatic means to further the cause of Indonesian independence. There were Dutch and American missions in the capital of India and diplomatic moves were made with them for a speedy and peaceful transfer of power in Indonesia. It must be said to the credit of the British at this time that they allowed the evolution of a foreign policy for the new India by the interim government even prior to independence except occasionally supplying information to provide a balance of approach.

The successful culmination of the Rice Agreement between Indonesia and India saw the emergence of the nucleus of an Indonesian diplomatic mission in New Delhi. Although India had given only de facto recognition to the Republic, like Britain the US and other countries following the Lingadjaati Agreement, the latter's set-up in the Indian capital was rendered all help and assistance in the initial period. It was also enabled to sprout into sending representatives to other select world capitals and at the headquarters of the United Nations. The first Indonesian representative, Dr. Soedorsono was given access to Nehru and Indian officials with whom he kept in continuous contact.

The growing international personality of the Republic perturbed the Dutch. Following the Rice Agreement with

India, there were increasing diplomatic contacts between the Republic and the British Commonwealth. Indonesia participated in the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in the summer of 1947. There, Sjahrir received a big ovation and the support of many Asian countries. Envoys of Muslim countries including Egypt began to visit the Republic and establish contact with President Soekarno in Jogjakarta. Greatly unnerved by these developments and perturbed that the situation may slip from their hands, the Dutch prepared for a massive military strike against the Republic. Aware of this, the Republican government appeared quite conciliatory in implementing the Lingadjaati Agreement and made several concessions in regard to interpretations. But the Dutch chose a crucial difference involving the sovereignty of the Republic with a view to breaking up the negotiations and following it up with the use of force. Their aim was to weaken the Republic militarily and economically so as to demoralise the people supporting it and their hope was that the Republican government would ultimately reduce itself to be the Republican Party.

In May 1947, the Dutch insisted that the Lingadjaati Agreement entitled them to jointly police Republican territory to put down what they called lawlessness. Naturally, the Indonesians could not agree to this. As the British HQ was shortly to be withdrawn, both the British and the United States which entered the scene at this juncture were keen to see a settlement that would enable an Indonesian government to function in cooperation with the Dutch government. Several discussions between Sjahrir and Dutch politicians were held concerning the formation of an interim government and the Americans appear to have felt that once such a government was installed, the confidence and cooperation generated in a realistic situation will enable smooth solutions to problems. But there was a hitch over the titular head of such an interim government; the Dutch were firm it should be representative of the Dutch Crown in Batavia and Sjahrir personally was agreeable to

the proposal as he felt that in practice healthy conventions could be built up to enable democratic functioning as in India where an interim government was already functioning with the British Viceroy presiding formally over it. When Sjahrir took the proposal to the KNIP (Provisional Indonesian Parliament), there was strong opposition from all parties except his own. Sjahrir thereupon resigned as Prime Minister on June 27, 1947. Before Sjahrir went to the KNIP, US diplomats had been prepared to underwrite the functioning of the interim government on a democratic basis. An American communication came too late to effectively assist Sjahrir. Something had gone amiss with US diplomacy at this crucial juncture and this was a real turning point. An opportunity for a peaceful evolution of a free Indonesia was lost with consequent incalculable loss to Dutch interests and the tremendous destruction of life and property of the Indonesians. As I was then positioned in New Delhi as a Special Correspondent, I could only murmur to myself my sad disappointment that the Indonesian people did not appreciate the sagacity of Premier Sjahrir.

Meanwhile events were moving fast in Indonesia. After the Lingadjaati Agreement, the Dutch seemed reluctant to implement it. At the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi in March 1947 convened in a non-official capacity by Nehru the delegation from Indonesia headed by Sutan Sjahrir drew star attention and the struggle in Indonesia secured a big boost from the representatives of the nations assembled. Sjahrir and his colleagues met the various delegations and received much assurances of sympathy and support. The Indonesian problem now came into focus on the world stage.

Sjahrir was soon followed by Hatta in August 1947. Vice-President Hatta arrived in the Indian Capital after being secretly flown out of Jogjakarta in his dakota by a daring Indian civilian pilot, Biju Patnaik who in later years became a Minister in New Delhi. For diplomatic reasons, Hatta's visit to meet his friend of long years Nehru was

kept secret for a few days and as I was then at New Delhi, I was asked by Nehru to escort him here and there. Hatta was keen on Indian de jure recognition which could be followed by several Muslim countries.

At that time, I was working as a journalist in the Indian Capital and escorted the Indonesian Vice-President and a few of his colleagues to the Secretary-General of the Indian External Affairs Department to whom Hatta presented a memorandum outlining the situation in Indonesia and requesting the Indian government's de jure recognition of the Republic. Obviously, protocol required that an Indian citizen or Indian organisation should first moot the question and introduce the 'rebel' Indonesian party to Government of India. It was Nehru who gave me this honour. Following Hatta's visit, it was agreed that India will give every assistance to the Indonesian Republic and the question of according full recognition to the Republic though deferred for a while would not come in the way of the promised assistance. It appears to have been then felt by Nehru that though the Republic fully satisfied the usual norms for granting de jure recognition, any precipitate move in this direction will prejudice the chances of a peaceful transfer of power through diplomatic efforts and using the machinery of the fledgling United Nations and its Security Council. It was also amply evident at that time that though the Republic could continue to offer armed and other assistance to the Dutch, it was not in a strong position to create a decisive solution in its favour. Dr. Hatta gave me the impression that he was fully appreciative of the reasons behind the Indian thinking and was quite satisfied with the results of his visit. Obviously, in isolated Jogjakarta, the play of world forces at the time and the potentiality of diplomatic methods had not been equally felt as in New Delhi. Sjahrir, with whom I had an opportunity to discuss the developments immediately thereafter, was gratified that his own outlook had been endorsed again. My only disappointment in regard to "covering" the Indonesian Revolution as a journalist was

that I could not succeed in securing an extensive press interview on the subject with Mahatma Gandhi. It was the time of the first Dutch police action. Though he generally expressed sympathy for the struggle in Indonesia and received Hatta and Sjahrir, my several meetings with him did not produce any copy. Finally, he agreed to reply to any questions that I would put in writing. But when the series of questions were given to him, the apostle of non-violence would not comment on them. Instead, I received a postcard written in his own hand: "You should excuse me for my inability to deal with the questions you have sent me". But his signal became clear to me only when a few days later, Nehru smilingly referred to my questions. It became obvious to me that Mahatma Gandhi did not wish to tread in a field which, for a long time, he had conceded as the privy of Nehru who was by then the Minister of External Affairs in addition to being the Prime Minister in New Delhi. I have found such rectitude very rarely among politicians.

The beating of the Drums of War by the Dutch now commenced. They had issued an ultimatum to the Republic on May 27 in which they accused the Republic of violating the Lingadjaati Agreement. Despite appeals from the governments of Britain and the USA to desist, the Dutch launched a large-scale offensive against the Republic on July 21, 1947. In a swift action, they occupied all the economically important areas in Java, Sumatra and Madoera, leaving the Republic non-contiguous areas in Central Java, Western-most Java and the ports in Sumatra. The Dutch action was in violation of the Lingadjaati Agreement of which Article XVIII provided for arbitration in case of disputes of interpretation. Earlier, the Dutch had rejected the Indonesian invocation of this clause. India and Australia raised the matter of Dutch aggression in the UN Security Council which on August 1 asked the parties to cease fire and settle their disputes by peaceful means. But it did not call for the withdrawal of Dutch troops from Republican

territory. The Dutch objective and hope appears to have been that denied sustenance, the Republic will wither away from within. On the other hand, the Republican forces anticipating Dutch move had dispersed themselves and began to harass the Dutch forces and cause them an uneasy time. By a further resolution of August 25, the Security Council established a Good Offices Committee with representatives from Belgium, Australia and USA to assist the parties to the dispute. This was a significant development and the policy of the United States thereafter was clearly aimed at reconciling the need for Indonesia to be helped in such a manner as not to become a prey of the ambitions of international Communism and the Netherlands being an important factor in West European rehabilitation must at the same time be assisted to secure her vital economic interests in Indonesia.

Through the action of July 21, the Dutch besides securing East and Central Java had occupied the vital oil wells area of Palembang and Medan in Sumatra with its rubber estates. Only the Central Jogjakarta area, the Western tip of Java and most of Sumatra remained with the Republic. As the Dutch lacked sufficient forces to police entire Indonesia and yet were keen to maintain a stranglehold on the Republic, the strategy of the Indonesian forces was to avoid direct action against the superior equipped Dutch forces but to penetrate as small groups into Dutch occupied areas, to harass them and to make the governance impossible. Sjahrir was able to escape to India and from there proceeded to New York to present his country's case before the UN Security Council in August 1947 which, having first hand reports of the problems involved, appointed the above said Good Offices Committee.

Even though I had returned to New Delhi to 'cover' Indian developments in the capital for my newspaper, I soon drifted more towards Indonesia and accepted to work as a Correspondent for the Indonesian news agency, ANTARA. But as soon as the Indian Government had

decided to open a Mission in Batavia and had chosen a Representative as Consul General, I was asked by Nehru to accompany him as his Press Attache in October 1947. This threw me to the diplomatic swirl of Batavia apart from continuing my contacts with my friends in the Indonesian Republic. This new role gave the opportunity to listen to and evaluate Dutch official opinion in addition to keeping in touch with British, Australian, American, and Belgian views on developments. The pacification work of the United Nations in trying to resolve the issues between the Indonesians and the Dutch interested me greatly as it was the main plank on which Indian policy put great reliance at that time.

But despite all the best efforts of the United Nations and the keen efforts of the United States government, some unrelenting aspects of human nature prevailed in Dutch ruling circles. There was a serious set-back and the Dutch resorted to a Second Police Action. I was quite bewildered when I found that a powerful country as the United States could not have its way over events in Indonesia.

With the establishment of the UN Good Offices Committee, there was greater US initiative and interest in the Indonesian question. Apart from global strategic interests, the US appeared to be interested in the rich economic potential of the country where it had already fruitful investments in Sumatra. Indonesians of all shades except the Communists were keen on American capital and expertise for the development of the country's rich resources in oil and minerals and their expansion. Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir commenced to woo US personalities and the US public. A militant poise of the Indonesian Communists added some urgency to this scenario. At the same time, the US government nominated to the Good Offices Committee a suave University Professor, Dr. Frank Graham, whose avowed objective was to ensure peaceful transformation in Indonesia towards independence and, of course, under US guidance.

The Good Offices Committee was not successful in achieving an immediate cease fire. But a Status Quo Line corresponding to the positions held on August 29, 1947, came to be considered as a dividing line between the two forces and a sort of uneasy peace prevailed. In December 1947, the Dutch proposed twelve principles and demanded that the Republic should accept them within three days. As these were not acceptable to the latter, Graham incorporated along with them six other principles favourable to the Republic and made the amalgam acceptable to both. In commending his formula, Dr. Graham said they would "transfer the struggle from a provisional military demarcation line which would disappear to a democratic political line which would endure". In prevailing upon the Republic to accept the package, he stressed the link between the Truce Agreement and the Political Principles.

The situation at the time was quite depressing to the Republican leaders. The Republican troops had little ammunition while the Dutch had large supplies of superior weapons. The forces under the Republic's command were also dispersed without any organised contact with each other while the Dutch were as regular units with communications facilities. In the event of renewed hostilities, the Republicans would stand to lose even more and moves in the UN Security Council will be rendered ineffective by a French veto to assist the Dutch colonialists. In the circumstances, Soekarno, Hatta and Prime Minister Amir Shari-fuddin (who became Prime Minister following the resignation of Sjahrir) accepted the Dutch counter proposals. In doing so, they were also moved by the prospect of the UN conducted plebiscites resulting in large areas held by the Dutch returning to the Republic. Of course, Dr. Graham pressed them in the direction of acceptance of his package in his own characteristic way by stressing that the battle was being transferred "from bullets to ballots". Conscious of their heavy responsibility to the population in terms of heavy loss of life and the destruction of property in case the

Dutch should launch another offensive for which they were poised, the Republican leaders chose the path of peace and negotiations by accepting the package offered by Dr. Graham. It was indeed a traumatic period for the Republic. In the KNIP, Sjahrir, the Masjumi and some sections of the PNI opposed the Graham package. Once the principles had been agreed to by both parties, Graham lost no time in summoning the USS Renville to the Batavia shores and the Renville Truce Agreement and the Twelve and Six Additional Principles appended to it were signed on Board on January 17, 1948. The Renville Agreement in brief provided for a new cease fire line - the Van Mook line - (which further constricted the territory under the Republic), for Indonesian forces behind Dutch lines to be withdrawn and trade was to be permitted across the cease fire line. The sovereignty of the Netherlands over Indonesia was to continue till the formation of the United States of Indonesia of which the Republic would be one unit. UN supervised plebiscites were to be held in Java, Sumatra and Madoera to determine which of the areas wished to form part of the Republic. It was clear to me at that time that the Renville terms were clearly a retrograde development for the Republic and if they had accepted the Interim Government proposals of the Dutch some six months earlier, they would have been by January 1948 in a better position to negotiate with the Dutch. Since I was then a diplomat in Batavia, I had to keep my own counsels but privately shared Sjahrir's great sense of disappointment at the turn of affairs. Since some of my close friends were also working with the UN Good Offices Committee, I had no hesitation in telling one of them that his Committee was performing a holding operation for the Dutch but he shied off the comment by pointing out the limitations under which the UN had to work.

The Renville Agreement was able to maintain peace — though uneasy for nearly eleven months. The Republic attached importance to the Principles for Political Settle-

ment appended to it. The Dutch in addition to setting up client states took steps unilaterally towards the creation of the United States of Indonesia but without the Republic being brought into the discussions. The Republic was to be a component of the USI. After a stated interval during which Netherlands sovereignty was to continue but an interim government would function, the Netherlands sovereignty was to be transferred to the United States of Indonesia. A Constitutional Convention was also to be created and a Netherlands-Indonesian Union under the Dutch Crown. Actually, these very issues had emerged in the earlier discussions that Sjahrir had with the special Dutch plenipotentiaries prior to his resignation. History has its own ways. If reason had prevailed over emotions at that stage, the Republic would have been in a stronger position and not yielded territory to the Dutch. But it was not to be. For the Dutch the police action only delayed the rehabilitation of Dutch industries in Indonesia.

Except for minor patrol clashes, the Renville Agreement gave the longest period of truce in the course of the conflict between the Dutch and Indonesians. But during these eleven months, the Dutch continued to augment their military strength. Dutch propaganda attempted to weaken the Republic internally. Within the Republic, there were growing misgivings over the policy of negotiations. The population was increasingly dissatisfied with the hardships caused by the Dutch blockade. Adventurist elements like the Communist and Trotskyist parties were mobilising their forces and planning to challenge the Soekarno-Hatta leadership. Sensing this as a favourable situation and conscious of their own military strength, the Dutch showed reluctance to negotiate on the 'modus operandi' for independence as outlined in the Renville Political Principles. It was indeed a frustrating situation for the Republican leadership. The Trotskyist leader Tan Malakka appealed to the population to reject the leadership of Soekarno-Hatta who, according to him, placed great reliance on Western countries and in

negotiations with the Dutch which produced no results. He declared that independence could only be attained through revolutionary activity. It was a critical period and the central control and direction of the Indonesian Revolution was weakening. It was a traumatic phase for Soekarno particularly. Dutch propaganda in the US painted the Republic as being under Communist control and not wishing the loss of American public sympathy, the Republican government took steps to purge its important organs and ejected Communists and Communist sympathisers from its organs of administration.

In the absence of any negotiations, there was a stalemate which the US and Australian members of the Good Offices Committee attempted to resolve by the introduction on June 10, 1948 of fresh compromise proposals. While the Republic accepted these proposals, the Dutch rejected them.

Several frustrating months dragged on without the Dutch relenting from their adamant attitude. The new US representative on the UN Good Offices Committee, Merle Cochran (who was to play a notable role in the concluding negotiations leading to the final Indonesian independence) presented on September 10, 1948, a new plan which was a draft agreement for overall political settlement. This was also based on the Principles accepted as appended to the Renville Agreement. While generally in line with the earlier du Bois-Critchley plan, it had some new features to make it acceptable to the reluctant Dutch. But once the discussions were resumed, the Dutch commenced to suggest a series of amendments with the objective of stalling the negotiations in the hope that time and continued distress could weaken the Republic even further. The Dutch demanded priority of emphasis be on cease fire. The Republic suggested that negotiations could continue alongside the Committee's deliberations on cease fire observance of Truce. The Republic was creating problems for the Dutch in the areas they had occupied through guerrilla patrols harassing lines of communications. Trade had come to a stand-still in the areas

wherein the Dutch had created new puppet states because of a boycott organised by the supporters of the Republic.

The economic privations and the long unpromising period of negotiations which had not resulted in the consolidation of 'Merdeka' (Freedom) increased the number of problems for the Republic and general public dissatisfaction was mounting. It now faced a challenge to its authority from the Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party) which launched a revolt in mid-September 1948. In a swift move, they seized the city of Madiun in Central Java and proclaimed a 'Soviet' there. The revolt was led by a well-known Indonesian Communist, Muso recently arrived from abroad and who had not lived long in Indonesia. At the instance of international Communism, he had ousted the long-time and popular leader Alimin from the party's leadership. It was an adventurist attempt largely led by repatriate Communists who had long resided in Holland and Moscow and therefore formed part of the outlook of international Communism. Though they may have felt that the conditions were ripe for a socialist revolution of the Communist type, apparently they had not correctly sensed the mood of the population, the loyalty of the regular troops and the charismatic hold of Soekarno on his people. Hatta, who had taken over as Prime Minister early in 1948 from Amir Sharifuddin because of the latter's pronounced Communist leanings had martial law imposed and put down the revolt firmly. It took nearly six weeks for the Republican Army to crush the Communist revolt and it was sad for many of them that the one who as Defence Minister had struggled to create a cohesive Republican Army, Amir Sharifuddin had joined forces with the Communists. His head fell as well as that of Muso when the Army executed them at the end of the affair. It was strange that a popular leader and orator - a Christian in a predominantly Moslem country - as well as able administrator who served the Republic successively as Minister of Information, Defence Minister and Prime Minister and an

understanding and sympathetic comrade and colleague of Sjahrir in the socialist movement should have gradually drifted towards international Communism. To add poignancy to the disappointment of his friends and admirers of whom I was one, he said just before his end that he was always a Communist but had earlier been one in disguise! And it was him that the Dutch financed to organise an underground against the Japanese. The Republican government was aided by the Masjumi, the PNI and Sjahrir's Socialist Party in suppressing the Communists. The Republican leadership would normally have thought twice before depriving itself of the support of the most effective group amongst revolutionary forces against the returning Dutch colonialism and that too at a critical phase in the life of the Republic but since the challenge was to the very existence of the Republic, Soekarno and Hatta had no choice except to suppress it with all the force at their command. A Dutch offer of help to suppress the Communist revolt was naturally rejected by the Republic. Friendly governments such as India and Australia were appreciative of the firmness and skill with which the Republic handled the revolt. The US government and public opinion reacted favourably to the outcome and the enhanced American goodwill was to greatly benefit the Republic subsequently.

Following the suppression of the Communist revolt and in the face of growing American pressure on the Dutch, the Netherlands Foreign Minister Dr. Stikker arrived in Batavia on November 1, 1948 to hold talks with Hatta directly. But the Republic did not feel encouraged as the Dutch elections of 1948 had resulted in the ascendancy of the conservative Colonial Party. As a result, there was increasing demand in Holland for a "quick solution" to the Indonesian question and obviously in line with the outlook of the majority party the elimination of the Republic by force. It appeared to me and other observers that Stikker's mission was foredoomed even before it began. However, Stikker himself was considered as a sympathetic Liberal by

the Republic's leadership. These direct talks failed on the issue of the special powers of the Netherlands High Representative during the period of the interim Federal government. While the Dutch insisted that the High Representative should have the power to use Dutch troops on his own authority in areas where he decided there was disorder, the Republic was quite firm that internal disturbances should be dealt with by the Indonesian forces of the interim Federal government, but the interim government will have the choice of seeking the assistance of Dutch troops if it felt the necessity. They were also prepared to accept Netherlands sovereignty all over Indonesia during the period of the interim government which was in itself a very big concession. But to permit the High Representative to use Dutch troops on his own authority would have meant that the Republic should negate the revolution and sacrifice its own authority and power which it had built at such great sacrifice. Moreover, the Indonesian Army, which was also a political force to reckon with, would never have agreed to the use of Dutch troops in Republican territory.

The Dutch objective of weakening the Republic and reducing its role in a future Indonesia became once again confirmed when the Netherlands informed the UN Good Offices Committee on December 11, 1948, that it had been absolutely impossible to reach agreement with the Republic's leaders and no purpose would be served in continuing negotiations under the auspices of the Committee. They also said that they proposed to proceed with the formation of an interim Federal government but without the Republic. A place was to be kept in it for the Republic's later inclusion.

The Republic made a counter move on December 13. It asked the Committee to transmit to the Dutch that the Republic recognised Netherlands sovereignty during the interim period but desired that in the exercise of its authority during the period, Netherlands should impose on itself certain limitations. The note which was from Prime

Minister Hatta said: "We are fully prepared to recognise the (Netherlands) High Representative has the right of veto over acts of the various organs of the Federal Interim Government. We ask only that definite standards be set forth or perhaps definite categories of acts be given precise formulation to guide the High Representative in the exercise of his power of veto ... We are prepared to further concede that the High Representative be given emergency powers to act in a state of war, a state of siege or a state of insecurity. As part of an overall agreement we shall be ready to stipulate that the High Representative be himself the ultimate judge of the necessity for the exercise of extraordinary powers under these circumstances. Again we ask only that definite standards be laid down to govern the High Representative's decisions". Even though Hatta's letter was most conciliatory and provided scope for immediate accord through negotiations, the Dutch did not avail of the offer. On the other hand, they gave the impression of having decided a course of action: viz., to unilaterally establish an interim Federal government without the Republic. Hatta who had been in touch with his friend Nehru at this period had acquainted himself fully with the manner in which the Indian interim government functioned in New Delhi, the reserve powers of the British Viceroy and the understanding about conventions concerning them. At a press Conference in 1946 in Batavia, the Dutch plenipotentiary Van Mook had told me that there were no parallels at all in regard to political developments in Indonesia and India!

It was unfortunate that one more and an earlier chance for conciliation was missed by the Dutch. They failed to take a broad perspective of events and did not respond to the mood of the Republic. On the other hand, they took the view that as the Republic was beset with serious internal problems, both political and economic, it can be humbled into submission through a swift military action. To observers, it was clear that the UN Good Offices Committee

was being ignored by the Dutch except when it suited its interests.

And then came one more ultimatum from the Dutch. It was December 17, 1948. This time, the ultimatum was addressed to the UN Good Offices Committee which was asked to obtain the Republic's acceptance of the Dutch demands on the powers of the Netherlands High Representative and his control over all armed forces by him during the interim period. The US Representative on the Committee, Merle Cochran promptly replied to the Dutch deprecating what appeared to him as an ultimatum and stating the Republic could not be expected to agree without further negotiations to any demands to which they had already raised objections. Cochran also appealed to the Dutch to resume negotiations. The drama was further heightened when on the next day, December 18, at 11.30 hours midnight, Cochran as current Chairman of the Committee was in receipt of a further communication from Dutch officials in which he was informed that the Netherlands government would no longer abide by the Renville Truce Agreement since the Republic had failed to prevent breaches of the truce! Without waiting for a response from a body which had been entrusted by the United Nations Security Council to ensure peace, exactly at midnight, that is, within half an hour of the missive to Cochran, the Dutch forces launched a large scale military offensive from land, sea and air against the ill-equipped defenders of the Republic.

The Republican leaders appear to have been surprised at the timing of the Dutch military attack although they had anticipated it. Relying to an extent on Cochran's prognosis that the Dutch may not resort to force and hoping that the US in any case would help to prevent it, Soekarno and Hatta had thought that it could only come after the establishment unilaterally of an interim government; the Dutch would invoke the pretext of a request from such a government to take action against the Republic for alleged

frontier violations. At this moment, the Republicans did not seem to know their Dutch! They had imagined that the Dutch would rather promote a civil war between the puppet states and the Republic than defy the UN Security Council. The contemplated departure of President Soekarno on December 19 on a goodwill visit to India at the invitation of Prime Minister Nehru both unnerved the Dutch and precipitated the second Dutch police action. The Dutch did not give clearance to the Indian plane which had arrived in Singapore in order to fetch Soekarno. Some facts are enshrouded in Indian official records which are still classified but a few influential Indonesians have always felt that there was a slip up somewhere. The Dutch arrested Soekarno, Hatta and Foreign Minister Agoes Salim in Jogjakarta and Sjahrir in Batavia. While they interned Hatta and Haji Agoes Salim in the island of Bangka whereto Soekarno and Sjahrir were also brought later after initially being held at Brastagi in Sumatra. The Indonesian Army under its C-in-C Sudhirman took to the hills and jungles as preplanned in order to harass the Dutch through guerrilla warfare. Numbering about 145,000 they had been specially trained for the purpose by the Japanese.

Following the capture of the Republican governmental leaders, a Provisional Government of the Republic, according to pre-plan, was set up at Bukit Tinggi in Sumatra and which constantly radio beamed instructions to the population who offered passive resistance in areas under Dutch control. Frequently, Dutch communications were cut and the movement of Dutch troops became restricted as a result of Indonesian guerrilla activities. There was an increasing number of Dutch casualties. More significantly, in the Dutch sponsored states of Pasundan (West Java) and East Indonesia, the governments resigned in protest against the Dutch military action.

Long after the event, Sjahrir at one time mused with me why the President and Vice-President of the Republic, Soekarno and Hatta, had not taken to the hills along with

the Indonesian Army as that could have provided even greater resistance to the Dutch occupation. He seemed to imply that it was on the advice of the Indian government that both the President and the Vice-President surrendered to the Dutch forces on December 19. Since I was then in Batavia and sometimes one did not know what was happening between New Delhi and the Indian Office in Jogjakarta, I still do not have a clue as to whether Soekarno and Hatta persuaded themselves to surrender to the Dutch on the basis of any advice purported to have come from New Delhi.

CHAPTER - XI

INDIA MOBILISES INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

The second Dutch success in arms over the Indonesian Republic was only a pyrrhic victory. The objective of eliminating the Republic as a rallying force of nationalism was frustrated when the emergency Republican government under Finance Minister Shafrudin Pranwiranagara sprang up at Bukit Tinggi in Sumatra ^{and} urged the people to offer passive resistance to the Dutch occupation. The refugee government - as per plan - kept up its contacts with the outside world through the Republic's offices in Singapore and New Delhi.

The international reaction to the use of Dutch military forces for the second time against the Indonesian Republic was intense and evoked world wide condemnation.

While the Indonesians were disappointed with the attitude of the Western countries, their disappointment with the United States was also tending towards disillusionment since they had greatly relied on US help from the time the Republic was proclaimed as was stated in its manifesto. There was no doubt that the US policy framers were in no unenviable position; between the compulsions of Dutch role in the NATO, the long term economic interests of the US and the inevitability of the extinct of Colonialism, the US appears to have failed in giving a timely lead and was vacillating. This was no doubt sensed appropriately by international Communism and hence the illtimed and frustrating revolt of the Communist Party of Indonesia at Madiun. The Dutch also similarly judging the US dilemma indulged in the two military adventures against the Republic but which

solved no problems. Instead of attempting to strike a seeming balance which provided scope for other nations to exercise their options, the US could have made an unequivocal declaration in favour of Indonesian independence through peaceful means and in co-operation and association with the Dutch. Such a step would have helped in moulding public opinion with the "stubborn" Dutch among whom there were indeed influential sections in sympathy with Indonesian aspirations and the ambitions of international Communism could have been checked. And Indonesia, both the people and the land, could have been saved immense hardship. The US policy of riding two horses at the same time — normally a Cossack feat — was indeed a failure initially. As time advanced and the US felt that economic screws on the Dutch were essential to progress towards objectives, of course in terms of long-term US interests, such pressure was exercised on the "stubborn" Dutch who as a result proved more malleable.

It was about this time that I was again drawn into the vortex of developments ^{which} I had hoped had ended with my becoming a diplomat and getting used to anonymous work behind the policy of a government and far removed from the public gaze. For reasons of their own, my government in New Delhi asked me to relinquish my post as Press Attache in Batavia and proceed to Saigon to take over as Consul General there. I had quite mixed feelings. I was being moved to another hot spot, probably a real war zone. After years of service in the Army and the experience in Soerabaya, I was quite tired of violence. Yet, there was the opportunity to witness the withering of another colonial power. The journalist bug in me urged the desire to compare 'notes' between Indonesia and Indo-China.

I had formally and informally bid good byes to diplomats and friends in Batavia and had brushed up my elementary French with the help of girl friends. I boarded the KLM flight to Singapore at the Kemajoran airport,

A close associate of Sjahrir and like him without the normal failing of rancour, Soebadio swished me aside from the ladder and in just two minutes told me that the aircraft would halt at Bangka where the Republican leaders were confined by the Dutch; I would be escorted to their presence by a guide and the rest was for me to act upon. Knowing as I did 'Badio with his sense of humour and pranks, I refused to believe him but as he did press my palms I realised the pass word of a revolution and knew he was being quite serious. At Bangka as we were alighting for a halt of half an hour, I was greeted by the Indonesian Air Chief, Air Marshal Suryadharma who whisked me at great speed to the house where President Soekarno, Vice President Hatta, Foreign Minister Haji Agoes Salim and Sjahrir were together waiting to receive me. The Dutch guards nearby did not even stop our car to check me. It was all alike in a picture on the screen or in a dream with fast moving events. I was at my wit's end, neither my friend Suryadharma could explain what all this was about. Where I had expected an austere prison atmosphere, I found a family lived villa; instead of serious drawn faces, I found the Indonesian leaders smiling, chatting and laughing. The Dutch at this date seemed to know how to look after their VIP prisoners after years of the inglorious practice of exiling them to Boven Diguel to wither away in prison camps and die in the midst of malaria. Apart from Dutch officials and Indonesian leaders who had been cooperating with the Dutch, I was one of the first few diplomats to be allowed to meet the Republic's leaders in custody and that too not at my asking. Apparently, I had also then, the role of a friend of the Republic. It did not take me long to realise that my visit to Bangka was part of the move of a group of influential Dutch officials who believed in reconciliation with Indonesians and were in contact with Sjahrir and his group of Socialists. The second Dutch police action had caused wide-spread disaffection all over Indonesia and quite a number among the Dutch were opposed to the action. I had always been in touch with the

saner elements among the Dutch in Batavia who were aware of my appreciation for their tradition and culture and of my firm belief that colonial empires would crumble in the new order of things. After a discussion during which Hatta explained to me how the Republic had collapsed at the onslaught of the Dutch which was unexpected at that juncture, he explained that they had been somewhat confident that the Dutch military action could be stalled till there was a better atmosphere favourable to Indonesia in Holland through US diplomacy and the UN Good Offices Committee. At the end of the discussion, Hatta drafted a memorandum which Soekarno and Agoes Salim approved. The missive was signed by Soekarno-Hatta and given to me for expeditious transmission to Nehru. Sjahrir was a bit aloof and I sensed that he and Soekarno had drifted apart. During their brief incarceration together earlier at Brastagi in Sumatra, according to what I heard in Bangka, Sjahrir had made some sarcastic remarks on Soekarno's penchant for early morning jogging while in captivity! These personal idiosyncrasies appear to have added fuel to their political differences in a later period in a free Indonesia and caused much harm when the need for stability in that country during a vital phase was paramount.

When I returned to the aircraft, I found that the plane had stopped for nearly an hour to enable me to conclude my mission in Bangka. Apparently, a section of the Dutch Government was interested in and keen on peace moves in which New Delhi's influence with the Republic could be utilised to advantage. As I was musing how events were overtaking me without my own volition like in the eye of a cyclone, the vibrations of the plane while it was about to land at Singapore awakened me to the realisation that I had played a historic role in an hour of peril for the Republic. My concluding mission in Indonesia was to take a message from the captive leaders of the Republic to the Indian Prime Minister. In the missive, they asked Nehru for help in their desperate circumstances of absence of military, eco-

nomic and diplomatic resources to continue the struggle and expressing their full trust in his capacity and ability to activate international opinion in support of the cause of Indonesian freedom.

It is to the everlasting credit of India and the Indian people that their leader, Nehru responded with great fervour to the Indonesian cause in arranging for the succour of the Republic in terms of material, financial, logistical and diplomatic support, all promptly given and without much hesitation. For Nehru, the Indonesian struggle was a common struggle for all Asia to throw off the shackles of Colonialism. In the classified archives of the Government of India, there is a memorandum still to be released for publication which gives the totality of the entire spectrum of aid given by them to the Indonesian Republic. Till its release, it will suffice to state that no request of the Republic at that critical period went unheeded at the hands of Nehru. There was never the thought in his mind at that time of any expectation of reciprocity from the Indonesians as Nehru viewed India's limited gestures to be in conformity with his belief that the freedom of all colonial peoples was indivisible countrywise and it was only a question of one bastion falling after the other.

The Bangka episode did upset New Delhi's plans for my career. Following the bold headlines in the Singapore newspapers of my Bangka visit of which not I but others were the source, I received word that my assignment to Saigon had been changed at French request. Curiously, an European official of the International Red Cross with a considerable period of stay at Saigon had met me briefly at Singapore ostensibly to brief me on conditions in Saigon but it occurred to me after the posting had been changed that his purpose was to size me up on behalf of others. Destiny has its own pull and I could not shake off Indonesia as easily as my Indonesian friends did to me much later. On my return to New Delhi, I was to draft the documentation for the 19 Nations Conference of Indonesia which Nehru

had convened in New Delhi in the third week of January 1949 to devise ways and means of assisting the Republic of Indonesia. I was also to assist the Secretary of the Conference in the day to day deliberations in preparing the minutes and drafts of resolutions. The opportunity no doubt thrilled me in that it was God-sent and I gave of my best in both knowledge and experience in a cause which was dear to me and out of faith in the leadership of Nehru. It was a prodigious task for which I had never had the training but as the Secretary of the Conference said in his commendation of me - the only occasion my government did so to me - "but for his keenness and drive behind the scenes, the Secretariat would not have functioned as smoothly as it did". I had also the satisfaction that my knowledge and experience of Indonesia had been put to full use and again in his words: "I have to my great advantage made full use of his energy, enthusiasm and knowledge of men and events in Indonesia".

It was at the instance of the Prime Minister of Burma, Thakin Nu that the Conference was convened. He suggested to Nehru that as the Prime Minister of India, he should invite Asian countries to deliberate on the second Dutch military action against the Republic of Indonesia. Invited to the Conference was a wide variety of 18 countries with interests in the region or of Asia: Afghanistan, Australia, Burma, Ceylon, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Pakistan, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Siam, Syria, Yemen, Nepal and New Zealand. Turkey which was also invited declined to attend. While China, Nepal, New Zealand and Siam were represented by Observers, the others sent delegations headed by plenipotentiaries,

The scenario for the Conference is best described in Nehru's own words: "We meet today because the freedom of a sister country of ours has been imperilled and the dying colonialism of a past age has raised its head again and challenged all the forces that are struggling to build up a new structure of the world. That challenge has a deeper signi-

ficance than might appear on the surface, for it is a challenge to a newly awakened Asia which had so long suffered under various forms of colonialism. It is also a challenge to the spirit of man and to all the progressive forces of a divided and distracted world. The United Nations Organisation, a symbol of the one world that has become the ideal of men of thought and goodwill, has been flouted and its expressed will set at naught. If this challenge is not met effectively, then indeed the consequences will affect not merely Indonesia but Asia and the entire world. That would represent the triumph of the forces of destruction and disintegration, and the certain sequel would be ceaseless conflict and world disaster". These were indeed the words of a visionary, historian and prophet. In the same strain, he continued at the opening session: "We represent the ancient civilisation of the East as well as the dynamic civilisation of the West. Politically, we symbolise, in particular, the spirit of freedom and democracy which is no significant a feature of the new Asia. This long sweep of history passes before my eyes with all its vicissitudes for the countries of Asia and, standing on the edge of the present, I look to the future that is gradually unfolding itself. We are the heirs of these long yesterdays of our history, but we are also the builders of tomorrow that is shaping itself. The burden of that tomorrow has to be borne by us and we have to prove ourselves worthy of that great responsibility. If this gathering is significant today, it is still more significant in the perspective of tomorrow. Asia, too long submissive and dependent and a play-thing of other countries, will no longer brook any interference with her freedom".

These lofty ideals of freedom and democracy and a world order based on cooperation between the rising Asia and Western countries as 'builders of the tomorrow' were inadequately appreciated and understood at that time by governmental leaders in the West. Nehru was considered pro-Communist and anti-West which to the intellectuals in the West appeared absurd. But the media in Western

countries often worked up a passion and a prejudice which unfortunately has prevented the organic growth of closer relations between the two largest democracies of the world.

The Indian Prime Minister described the second Dutch military offensive of December 18, 1948, while negotiations were proceeding as one: "Even the dulled and jaded conscience of the world reacted to this with shock and amazement". In a tribute to the Indonesians, he said: "Any person who is acquainted with the spirit of the Indonesian people or of Asia today, knows that this attempt to suppress Indonesian nationalism and the deep urge for freedom of the Indonesian people must fail. But if open and unabashed aggression is not checked and is condoned by other powers, then hope will vanish and people will resort to other ways and means, even these might involve the utmost catastrophe. One thing is certain; there can be and will be no surrender to aggression and no acceptance of reimposition of colonial control". Nehru not only knew the West well and also the pages of History, but having been associated with colonial peoples and their struggle, he could well visualise the future.

All the participating countries unanimously condemned the Dutch military action. Apart from Nehru, Solomon Bandarnaike of Ceylon and Dr. Burton of Australia played important roles in drafting the resolutions. There was world wide interest in the meeting and its outcome. In the United States, where there had been some misgiving when the Conference was announced, both official and public opinion appeared to have been pleased with the moderate nature of the resolutions. In Western Europe where there was intellectual affinity to Nehru, there was more than satisfaction that Nehru's stature as a statesman of the world had risen and ill-conceived fears of his setting Asia against the West had become false alarms. The whole of Asia was galvanised by the historic meeting which gave notice of its determination to evolve a new life. In Indonesia, it was a big booster to the morale of the

Indonesian forces resisting the Dutch Occupation Army and the Republican leaders in captivity saw new hopes emanating, from the New Delhi Conference.

The Conference's resolutions were recommendations to the Security Council for the immediate release of the Republican government, other Republican leaders and all political prisoners; the restoration of the Republican Government within the Residency of Jogjakarta with all facilities for communication and freedom of consultation; the return to the Republican Government not later than March 15, 1949, such areas as was held by it on December 18, 1948; the immediate withdrawal of Dutch troops from the Jogjakarta Residency and their progressive withdrawal from former Republican areas; the immediate removal of restrictions imposed by the Netherlands government on the trade of the Republic and pending the formation of an interim government by March 15, 1949, the Republic to be afforded all facilities for communication with the world. The interim government was to have full powers including control over the armed forces, the completion of elections for a Constituent Assembly by October 1, 1949, and the complete transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia by January 1, 1950.

The main resolution of the Conference was in accordance with the request made by Soekarno-Hatta to Nehru from their captivity in Bangka.

Five days after the conclusion of the New Delhi Conference, the Security Council on January 28, 1949, in a fresh resolution called for a cease fire immediately; unconditional release of all political prisoners arrested since December 17, 1948 and for the immediate return of the Republican Government with its officials to Jogjakarta. It also recommended that the parties should enter into negotiations at the earliest with the assistance of the UN Commission for Indonesia (in the same resolution, it had converted the UN Good Offices Committee into the UN

Commission for Indonesia) for establishing a Federal, independent and sovereign United States of Indonesia at the earliest possible date. It also spelt out that the interim Federal Government should be established not later than March 15, 1949, and that elections for a Constituent Assembly be completed by October 1, 1949, with the transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia taking place at the earliest date and in any case not later than July 1, 1950. The Security Council's resolution fell short of the New Delhi recommendations. Still, it showed unmistakable evidence of the weight of international opinion as crystallised at the Conference in New Delhi.

In response, the Dutch officially expressed the view that the UN could not interfere in the internal affairs of the Netherlands Kingdom. The Emergency Republican Government in Sumatra also rejected the UN resolutions and urged the guerrilla forces and the population to resist the Dutch forces. The challenge to Dutch authority began to grow in the occupied areas. Sabotage of the permanent way, mined highways and attacks on Dutch operated estates became a regular feature. Simultaneous with increasing US pressure on them, there was some realisation in Dutch official circles that the second military action had instead of solving problems created more.

Without waiting for the Security Council resolutions, the Dutch Government had earlier made some new moves. Its plenipotentiaries in Batavia had moved Soekarno and Sjahrir from Brastagi (Sumatra) to Bangka to enable the Republican leaders to consult among themselves before permitting the BFO, the Federal Consultative Committee, established by the Dutch of Dutch-sponsored non-Republican states and political organisations to proceed to Bangka and have discussions with the Republic's leaders, towards the formation of an interim Federal Government. It was obvious that the Dutch were now in a mood to comply with the Security Council's

directives but without accepting them. There were three compulsions on the Dutch; the weight of international opinion as seen at the New Delhi Conference which was backed by the UN Security Council, the increasing pressure from the United States, the realisation among non-Republican elements sponsored by the Dutch that they could not function without the goodwill of the Republican leaders and a transformation though not very pronounced of public opinion in Holland in favour of a peaceful settlement in Indonesia.

Following the softening approaches to the Republic through firstly the BFO delegation and other visits to Bangka by important Dutch officials and indicative of a change in trend in attitudes at the Hague, the Dutch now produced a new formula (named after the Dutch Prime Minister, Dr. Beel) which envisaged accelerated transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia, by April or May 1949 in the wake of a Round Table Conference on March 12 to be held at the Hague to which the BFO, Republican and other representatives would be invited. The UN Commission for Indonesia was also to be invited to "render assistance in order to achieve positive results". At that time, it was not clear to me how much the Dutch had been influenced by the earlier Mountbatten Plan of 1947 in New Delhi in which he hastened the independence of India (and Pakistan) by fixing the deadline of August 15, 1947 and the tearing of each date from the calendar as it neared the deadline created its own compulsions on the political leaders. The Dutch in Batavia always denied any parallelism between the situations in Indonesia and India.

The Beel Plan appeared on the scene as a completely new approach; it was a landmark in the tortuous negotiations over three years alternating with punitive military actions and really seemed the first reasonable attempt on the part of the Dutch to solve the Indonesian problem and to come to terms with the Republic. The Dutch had failed in their attempts to cajole, coerce and browbeat the Re-

public by setting up puppet states whose leaders themselves were obliged by the pressure of public opinion to align themselves with the basic principles of recognition of the Republic and the transfer of real sovereignty. In the process, the unity of all the population in Indonesia became manifest in their devotion to Merdeka (Freedom). Dr. Beel and his government had wisely recognised the need for an entirely new approach for the Netherlands to conserve its economic and political interests in Indonesia in cooperation with the Indonesians.

As the month of February passed without the Republican leaders being freed from Bangka and restored to Jogjakarta, the UN Security Council met in the second week of March, 1949 and after discussing Indonesia for two weeks passed a Canadian resolution directing preliminary talks in Indonesia on (a) restoration of Republican authority in Jogjakarta and (b) the convening of the Round Table Conference in the Hague aimed at creating an independent Indonesian Federation. Since the Security Council by its resolution of January 28, 1949 had already demanded the restoration of the Republican Government to Jogjakarta, to now ask the parties to negotiate such a restoration was a retrograde step. Hence, the nations that were party to the resolutions of the Conference on Indonesia at New Delhi moved for bringing the issue before the UN General Assembly Session in April 1949. The issue was admitted by the Assembly for inclusion in its agenda but meanwhile as there had been reportedly some agreement between the delegations of the two parties before the UN Commission in Batavia, it was decided to take up the matter in the September session of the Assembly. The 15 nations who were signatories to the resolutions of the New Delhi Conference on Indonesia met informally on April 13 at New Delhi and decided that in case no settlement was soon reached in Batavia, their representatives at the UN should again move the Security Council for sanctions against the Dutch after condemning their failure to comply with the resolution of

January 29. They also planned to deny the Dutch transit facilities across their several territories which the Indian Government had already done in respect of KLM flights to and across Indian territory on July 27, 1949, following the first Dutch police action.

It was during this period that the United States used effectively its leverage with the Netherlands Government. On March 30, the Secretary of State Dean Acheson told the Dutch Foreign Minister Stikker in Washington that unless the Dutch government complied with the UN Security Council resolutions, the State Department would be obliged to stop ECA allocations to the Netherlands.

Apart from the US pressure, there was now increased pressure from Dutch business interests as they realised that the sands of time were running against their long term interests in Indonesia. One of the ablest of Dutch diplomats arrived on the scene. Soon after his arrival, Van Royen, head of the Dutch UN Mission, resumed contacts with the Indonesians. Van Royen at first said that the Republic would be restored to only the city of Jogjakarta and its environs and not the entire Residency, but under US pressure, Van Royen reversed his stand within 12 hours and assured that the Republic would be restored to the Jogjakarta Residency! And all these informal understandings were formally affirmed before the UN Commission on May 7.

The Dutch now accepted the Security Council Resolutions of March 23. Thus there was a complete volte face on the part of the Dutch government and it ultimately accepted the UN proposals for the evolution of the United States of Indonesia. The Federalists, who had earlier refused to take part in the Hague Conference unless the Republic also took part, now welcomed the developments. Thus unison between the Federalists and the Republicans was a significant feature of the Indonesian revolution and showed the inherent strength of Indonesian nationalism.

The Republican leadership displayed great tact and statesmanship in dealing with the Federalists and it reflected their sense of maturity as statesmen. It was Hatta's cool and unperturbable personality that prevailed at the time of travail. It was not long before the Republican and Federalist delegations met and reached agreement on (a) the establishment of a Federalist system of government (b) the installation of a Provisional Federal Government till elections were held for a popularly elected government (c) the Provisional Government to delineate the States of the Federation and to select the representatives of the States to a bicameral legislature and (d) to have a Cabinet form of government. It was heartening to witness that Indonesians only were deciding on the future set up of their independent country.

Once the Dutch made the inevitable and the long awaited gesture, events moved swiftly. The Jogjakarta Residency was restored to the Republican Government and its leaders flew in an UN Commission plane on July 7 and on August 3, a cease fire order was issued from both sides. The Republic had considerable difficulty in enforcing it not only due to the paucity of communications with its widely scattered forces but because the Commander-in-Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces, General Sudhirman had retained some of the austere and disciplinary qualities of the Japanese Army by whom he had been trained. Without any personal ambition, Sudhirman stuck to principles and refused to accept the authority of President Soekarno since he had been in Dutch exile after surrendering to the Dutch military forces instead of remaining with the armed forces as its Supreme Commander to resist Dutch rule. According to him, the President had by his own action of surrender abjugated his position both as President as well as Supreme Commander and hence he would not respond to a cease fire call from the latter. As fortune willed it or destiny took me into its vortex again, I was a close witness in Jogjakarta during the anxious few hours when parleys were held bet-

ween the C-in-C and the President through the mediation of Ali Budhiardjo whom from the beginning had been associated with the organisation of the armed forces and as such the only civilian who had considerable influence with their rank and file. He brought to bear his typical Javanese introspection combined with the cool and unperturbable characteristics which he shared so greatly with Hatta and Sjahrir to whom he was very close, qualities which I have greatly admired in my many Indonesian friends, both men and women. He moved in this matter using his legal acumen with great tact and was successful in persuading Sudhirman to accept the authority of Soekarno both on legal and moral grounds. The result did not impair Sudhirman's integrity and principles either. The President had also his prestige and authority untarnished. The Republic in turn benefited from the cease fire in moving forward to independence. To me, Jogjakarta, my new place of assignment, was never without excitement. I was sent there by my government as their Representative replacing my predecessor who had been evacuated by the Dutch during their second police action.

With Premier Hatta's return from the Hague Round Table Conference on November 4, the only problem that remained was for the preparations to make the move to Jakarta (Batavia) for inaugurating the United States of Indonesia. Premier Designate Hatta returned to the Hague and on December 27 received from the hands of the Netherlands Queen the instruments of transfer of Netherlands sovereignty to the new state of the United States of Indonesia. On the same day, the Dutch Governor General vacated his palace in Jakarta as the Dutch flag was lowered and the Indonesian Red and White flag was raised on top of the palace. Soekarno now as President Designate of the United States of Indonesia flew from Jogjakarta to Jakarta on December 31, 1949 to inaugurate the United States of Indonesia on the morning of January 1, 1950 in the Presidential Palace. As a friendly gesture, he invited me to

accompany him on the flight to Jakarta. It was no doubt an honour to the Indian Representative to the Republic of Indonesia but to me personally it meant the culmination of an exciting and rewarding adventure in the cause of the independence of a friendly and hospitable people and nation. I was more than thrilled when President Soekarno at the end of the festivities inaugurated the United States of Indonesia told me on my farewell visit: "We have achieved our independence after a long bitter struggle and you can well be proud of your mission as a friend".

It was a long struggle and it had taken four long years and another four and a half months of travail for the Republic of Indonesia to achieve its aims since the declaration of Independence on August 17, 1945. It entailed the sacrifice of thousands of young lives and severe privations for the normally peaceful and contented people of Indonesia. But it is to the credit of its leaders, Soekarno and Hatta, that during this prolonged struggle, they stood by the lofty principles of Humanism and Internationalism enshrined in its declaration of independence. Even when Dutch military ruthlessness provoked the people's anger and passion, the leaders and the government avoided bitterness towards the Dutch people. War is brutal and I have personally witnessed the brutality of the armed forces. While the rest of the world was hailing peace and healing the wounds of a catastrophic war, another war was unleashed against ill-equipped but freedom loving Indonesians due to the lingering avarice and power lust of a bygone age which the world holocaust had itself earlier destroyed. In that to a considerable extent such cruelty of man towards man was perpetrated with the goodwill and tolerance of nations that sought only their own self-interests made me often feel despondent for the future of mankind and the world system. It was also a lesson in the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the United Nations to maintain peace, a commodity which until Humanity changes its outlook may continue to rest on the balance or imbalance of powerful nations.

Throughout the five years of my association with Indonesia, I was gratified to notice that the Indonesian leaders kept their cool and their heads high as they worked ceaselessly for a compromise that would not compromise their freedom and honour. They used different means at different times but they never sacrificed the welfare of their people. They never showed bitterness towards those that did not agree with them and hoped that the people's will would assert itself in the end. But my tribute is even greater to the hundreds of young boys and girls, men and women who volunteered to help the free Indonesia to run its administration, to man its army, to man its communications, to run the radio broadcasts and keep the nation moving without any expectation of reward or praise^{or} of career except for meagre allowances or rations to sustain their bodies. But the spirit of the Nation, the Spirit of Merdeka sustained their souls.

REFLECTIONS

Considering that the Republic of Indonesia had few resources at that time after three years of Japanese occupation which had destabilised the economy, it was indeed a remarkable achievement for its leaders to have kept the country going for more than four years in the face of two Dutch invasions and Dutch economic warfare through a naval blockade of even the minimal inter-island trade. While Soekarno held the banner aloft and continuously kept up the revolutionary fervour of the people, it was Hatta who toiled with the day to day problems of the population for food and essential amenities. Soekarno spoke revolution, lived revolution and acted revolution while Hatta sweated with his devoted band of economists and administrators to keep the nation moving as far as possible in the adverse circumstances. The latter was an able administrator, quick and clear in his decisions and firm in his actions. Soekarno in those days always bowed to Hatta's superior wisdom till he broke with him in the post independent days on the role of the Masjumi, the

party of Islamic ideology and with the largest following in the country. An unique aspect of Hatta was that he had little time for long and elaborate discussions and often took decisions as matters were being elucidated to him. His incisive mind analysed situations rapidly like a computer. Even in the midst of harrowing events of the revolution, he was always soft-spoken but when on occasions ruffled, never displayed any temper. He was a fine Humanist and had genuine affection for everyone. He again found his equal only in the ever smiling Sjahrir, a comrade of long years in the struggle for freedom since their student days in Holland. As they planned, pined and pictured a free Indonesia, Sjahrir was the introspective mind that had inherited the best in culture and philosophy from the West and yet retained a pragmatic approach to the problems of a backward colonial nation. He was particularly devoted to his country's youth and knew how to move them into action. Contemptuous of pomp and splendour and pride and ostentation, he showed himself as a genuine Socialist to his many admirers. It is as a diplomat that he rendered great service to the fledgling Republic after giving his brain and brawn to the revolution. No circumstance could perturb him and he maintained a calm and optimistic outlook. He combined tactics with strategy and knew how and when to make concessions in order to achieve his objective. He had an innate gift, like Nehru, to anticipate events. At the UN Security Council following the second Dutch military action against the Republic, as the Foreign Minister of the infant Republic, he made abiding impression by his firmness, moderation, and spirit of accommodation.

The triumvirate: Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir for the time it lasted made an ideal team for the revolution and they were then the best. Like all revolutions, once it is over, the objectives are lost in the lust for power! The leadership splits and nationalism becomes weakened. It is wrong to judge the Indonesian Revolution by its aftermath

and the tribulations it stirred in the region after its independence had been internationally affirmed. Its achievements during the revolution were great and glorious.

No revolution keeps to its course even as a mighty river in spate. Lenin's hopes for the Russian revolution had been belied although in his "State of Revolution", he had planned for the anti-Czarist revolution to be followed by a Capitalist State as in Europe which after a long interim period would evolve into a Socialist Revolution under the leadership of the Marxist Party and which in turn could lead to a truly democratic state. In the same way, the Indonesian Revolution appears to have gone off its Pantja Sila rails once independence had been achieved.

India's contribution to the Indonesian Revolution and the freedom struggle has been outstanding. Galvanising the Indonesian national struggle with the feeling of companionship and making of it a wider struggle against the common oppressor of Colonialism, granting material and logistical support in addition to the diplomatic initiatives from the Indian Government, it was India, under Nehru, that acted decisively to ensure Indian help was considerable, generous and effective. While details of this support would have to naturally await release of the documents for publication by the Government of India, it will suffice for me to point out that no 'quid pro quo' ever entered the mind of Nehru at that time though some detractors of India and enemies of Indonesian nationalism had attributed motives to him. It was essentially an identity of outlook and synchronisation of views on the common struggle against Colonialism that propelled Nehru in the direction of concrete assistance-more than moral support-to the infant Republic of Indonesia. If at all there was any expectation on the Indian side, it was one of reciprocal good-will only. Since I was privy and the channel to some of the exchanges between the leaders of

the two countries, both prior and after Indian Independence, it is my categorical assertion that there was no imposition of Indian views on the Indonesians. With admirable drafting, often Nehru's own, the Indian view point on various issues—whether it was the recognition of the People's Republic of China or the form of future association with the Netherlands in a Union under the Crown on the model of India's association with the British Commonwealth — was clearly stated leaving it to the Indonesian Republic's leaders to formulate their own policy. For instance, when on being acquainted with Indian views on the recognition of the People's Republic of China, Soekarno told me that the Republican Government would act similarly; twice I met Hatta to have it cross-checked with him in order to be certain that Indonesian official policy had been made.

Nehru more than fulfilled his promise of taking "Every opportunity to support you in such ways as we can"; and "however entangled we might be in our own problems, we think of you for we realise that your struggle for freedom is intimately connected with ours"; these were not mere brave words from a comrade leader who had great admiration for the Indonesian's "great struggle for freedom" as he himself called it.

How fickle and how capricious are the feelings of nations for each other even like those of humans! It is not for me but for others to examine and analyse the events after January 1950 which dragged India and Indonesia apart.