

"EACH GROUP NEEDS THE OTHER"

THE more one examines the common interests of the Dutch and Indonesians, the more one is struck by this fact—that each group greatly needs the other. To what extent the Netherlands need Indonesia, is obvious to everyone. The Indonesian need for Dutch enterprise is no smaller. Unlike the Indians the Indonesians have no capitalist class of their own. They possess few shares in their own industries, plantations, banks, or even utilities. All these are owned by Europeans and Chinese. Even the middle class in Indonesia is largely Chinese and Arabian. The Indonesian, whether peasant, worker, or intellectual, is therefore practically always moneyless. Even as a peasant, he produces little. According to Dutch statistics, the market value of a whole year's production of the average Indonesian is about £10. This means that the money requisite for the running of a modern state—civil service, education, medical aid, armed forces, etc.—can only be raised if this productive capacity is increased. For this, industrialisation and therefore capital is needed, and capital can only be obtained from the West. It can be more advantageously obtained from a small country which in military terms is relatively insignificant, than from one of the great Powers.

Even before the war, Western mining was responsible for 30 per cent. of Indonesian export and European-owned plantations for an additional 42 per cent.—and this does not include the important Chinese percentage. Industry represented a negligible fraction. The main point on the Indonesian economic programme is therefore not the curbing of Western enterprise, but rather the attracting of new capital for industrialisation. There is thus not the slightest doubt that, even if no other factor existed, Indonesia would need the West. Other factors, however, do exist: Indonesia also needs foreign experts, because the country lacks trained men in industry and all technical work.

Both Sides Are Obsessed

My personal opinion is that this war can be only partly explained from clashes of interest and that a larger factor has been the psychological reaction of war and Axis occupation on the Dutch and Indonesian peoples. Years of humiliation have increased in the average Dutchman's heart the passion to retain what he once possessed.

Many Indonesians, too, have been driven to desperate xenophobia, resulting in opposition to any agreement that would allow the return of Europeans, whatever their position. Both these groups became so much obsessed with their own problems that they forgot the relations existing in the world; the Dutch did not see the meaning of Britain's withdrawal from India, and the Indonesians did not see that they could not live in total isolation.

Dr. Sjahrir said almost this last year when, during consultations with Lord Killearn and Dr. Van Mook, he quoted the old Dutch verses declaring that

THIS is the second of ERIK SCHWIMMER'S articles for "The Listener" on the subject of Indonesia. In his first he dealt generally with the historical background to the dispute; here he is chiefly concerned with the personalities in it, and with the reasons why the moderates in both groups were swept aside

earth would be a paradise if men were only guided by reason and not by their passions. As it was, the forces of reason had a precarious supremacy in Indonesia for two years and were then overthrown by other forces that had long been gathering below the surface. On the Dutch side the forces of reason were represented by Dr. Van Mook and a few helpers, supported by the Dutch working-class and that faction of Dutch capital which is closely linked with Britain and the U.S. On the Indonesian side there were Sjahrir and Sjarifoeddin with their moderate Socialist Party, supported by the more internationally-minded groups, but opposed by many of the armed bands, who later formed political parties, and by the Mohammedan Party, the "Masjumi." These two groups of both nations, favouring negotiations, were never in entire mutual agreement; but it must be claimed that they were both essentially honest, that neither of the two has secretly planned war from the first. Dr. Van Mook, in spite of the vastness of Dutch war preparations, was compelled into this war by forces beyond his control. Whatever the outcome, he will probably regard this war as a personal defeat.

The "Stuw" Group

The Dutch leaders, Dr. Hubert Van Mook, Dr. Jonkman and Prof. Logemann, are still known in Holland as the *Stuw* group. They are the men who, in the early 'thirties, started a periodical called the *Stuw* (literally, "propulsion") in the Indies, pressing for liberal reforms. This periodical was a political event at the time. Never before had the very conservative Dutch population of Indonesia formed a group whose programme was the political advancement of the Indonesian national movement. The *Stuw* group started a new way of thinking about the national question in Government circles. When the Japanese occupied Indonesia and large concessions

to the national movement clearly had to be made, the members of the old *Stuw* group were the natural reserve to fall back upon. These men could be expected to have, more than anybody else, the confidence of Indonesians, having stood aloof from secret police, and other acts of political suppression.

Thus a group of men who before the war were a progressive minority, considered a mere public nuisance by the colonial group in command, became Dutch leaders in Indonesia, supported by Labour but opposed by almost everybody else. Van Mook, Jonkman and Logemann are not, by international standards, revolutionaries. Logemann was professor at the University of Batavia and enunciated theories on Dutch Indies law which shocked colonial society, but would not have shocked New Zealand. After the war, he became Minister of Overseas Territories. Now he is one of the important men behind the scenes.

The Patriarchal Attitude

Dr. Hubert Van Mook, a Eurasian, who before the war was Chief of Economic Affairs, and afterwards Lieutenant Governor General, has genuine concern for the Indonesian people, attempts to work also for their interests, and has allowed himself to become the butt of Dutch reactionary hatred. In particular they claimed that he was too independent in his actions, whenever he did not listen to conservative advisors, and nicknamed him Hubertus I. But now war is waged in Indonesia and he does not resign. One meets many members of this "ethical" group in Indonesia. They are a peculiar feature of Dutch colonial society: men who have so much become accustomed to the patriarchal attitude of Dutch rule, that they genuinely begin to feel themselves, in a certain measure, to be fathers. In relation to them, the Indonesians feel a certain appreciation, but at the present time they do not regard themselves any

longer as sons. Still, in quieter times, Van Mook would probably have been able to make a fair agreement and would have found a peaceful solution.

On the Indonesian Side

By far the most brilliant on the Indonesian side is Sjahrir. In the 'thirties he attended a University in Holland and gained a knowledge of Western politics, and of Dutch literature and prose style, in which few equal him. On his return to Indonesia his enthusiasm for the national cause brought about his arrest in 1934 and he was detained in Digul internment camp without any reasons being given. During the years of imprisonment he wrote *Thoughts of an Indonesian*, containing a beautifully written and profound analysis of the psychology of colonial government. With rare simplicity he shows not only the poverty of the Imperialist spirit, but also the warped personalities, the lack of resolution and self-confidence typical of the subjects of colonial domination. In addition his book contains prophecies, five years before the event, of the methods of the Japanese co-prosperity spheres and their effect on Indonesia. Sjahrir remained a practically unknown man until his election as Premier in November, 1945.

Sjahrir, then, understood more fully than any of his associates what Oriental revolution is. It is a sudden release of the emotions, a frenzy in which everything is overthrown. It is an outburst of a people who have long been passive and suddenly have an impulse and an opportunity to rush towards freedom. It has not, necessarily, any constructive force behind it. It principally desires a void.

"A Great Achievement"

Such was the Indonesian revolution in its inception, in August, 1945. To stem it then, and allay it for the moment, although not for long, would probably have been simple. Sjahrir began a policy of inducing the people to go back to their work; in radio speeches and through propaganda meetings he insisted that only common sense and reason could guarantee success. To uneducated people, whose first acquaintance with political propaganda had been the Japanese glorification of passion, this was a new viewpoint. It must be regarded as a great achievement on Sjahrir's part that within a few months he pacified the country sufficiently to be taken seriously by foreign powers.

Sjahrir's ideals of building up a modern state are not shared by all Indonesians. In particular, the conservative Mohammedan party is opposed to all that comes from the West. When the Linggadjati agreement came up for discussion they objected to the recognition of the Dutch Queen. The progressive parties forced this clause through the Representative Council.

Thus we see progressive groups in Holland and Indonesia standing fairly near to one another. In both countries we see, however, groups who have always been opposed to agreement; and in the great difficulties developing over the last few months, these latter groups were finally successful in their endeavours.

(To be continued)



SJAHRIR



VAN MOOK

"The earth would be a paradise . . . if men were only guided by reason"