Voluntary participation, state involvement: Indonesian propaganda in the struggle for maintaining independence, 1945-1949
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Pro-Indonesian propaganda had thus far for the most part only been distributed in Indonesia itself. The Dutch-Indonesian conflict was fought in Indonesia, and that is where the belligerents were. Additionally, the Republic’s claim of sovereignty were not directly recognized by the major powers. Therefore diplomacy and propaganda had to be undertaken to achieve this international acknowledgement. The Republic faced numerous problems with overseas propaganda. The Republican authorities did not have sufficient power, resources, or personnel to conduct an overseas propaganda campaign, and thus most of their energy was concentrated on Indonesia itself. How the Republic attempted to overcome these problems and what the effect of overseas pro-Republican propaganda was is subject of this chapter.

As a nation-state in the making, the Republic of Indonesia had no infrastructure of embassies and consulates, nor any official representatives abroad. The Republican authorities relied heavily on sympathetic Indonesians living overseas. These people, however, faced a difficult task in promoting their new state. Most of the world knew very little about Indonesian history, let alone Indonesian nationalism, although some (the people of the Netherlands, for instance) felt that the old colonial order should be restored. Many Indonesians lived abroad for work or study, in some cases for years or even decades, but they found it difficult to actively promote the Republic. They were low on money, thanks to the war, and the
majority preferred to be repatriated to Indonesia after the Japanese capitulation anyway, which of course meant a drastic decrease in manpower for the running of a pro-Republic propaganda campaign abroad. Pro-Republic propaganda in Australia was particularly problematic as the Indonesians, propagandists and non-campaigners alike, were vulnerable to deportation at any moment: the White Australian Policy defined them as undesired aliens.

This chapter endeavors to interpret how Indonesian propaganda was practiced abroad and how it dealt with a variety of obstacles. The questions I shall address are: 1) Which countries were targeted and why? 2) Who were the Indonesian propagandists abroad, and how did they become involved? 3) Which issues were addressed abroad, and how was the propaganda surrounding them formulated and disseminated?

In answering these questions, I focus particularly on Indonesian propaganda in countries where a considerable Indonesian population was living and where pro-Republic propaganda was apparent during the Dutch-Indonesian conflict. I acknowledge that more countries played a role in advancing the goals of the Republic abroad than I discuss in this chapter. According to Mohammad Hatta, Indonesians, sometimes in collaboration with foreigners, established eleven committees for independence abroad. These were in Asia, the Arab world, Europe and the United States.

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1 The Australian government first applied a discriminatory immigration policy in the middle of the 19th century, when the discovery of gold in the country attracted a huge number of Chinese immigrants. An anti-Chinese law was formulated, which charged high fees to new Chinese immigrants entering Australia. This type of law against Asian immigrants, particularly Chinese, was also applied in the USA and Brazil. Stricter regulations were issued in 1901, the so-called ‘White Australian Policy’; this targeted more groups than just the Chinese. Upon arrival, new immigrants had to pass a dictation test of 50 words in any European language. Later, in 1910, this requirement was relaxed to apply up to one year after arrival, and in 1920 this was raised to three years. See Carmen Tiburcio, *The Human Rights of the Alien under International and Comparative Law* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2001), p. xx.
Zein Hassan, an Indonesian propagandist in Egypt, mentioned a higher number: 25 committees. These included committees in Singapore, Bombay, New Delhi, Colombo, Cairo, Baghdad, Mecca and London, as well as Central Asia, Australia, and the United States. The most active propagandists were working in Australia, the Arab world and the Netherlands; their actions will be explored in the following pages. I deliberately exclude pro-Republic activities in several other countries as the most apparent aspects of these were different in nature. In Singapore, for instance, one of Indonesia’s closest neighbors, the pro-Republic activities of the majority of Indonesians focussed on procuring weaponry and financing the Republic through trade. The USA and the United Nations were, as can be seen from several studies, key players in Indonesia’s struggle for independence, in particular because they put pressure on the Dutch to lessen the aggressive stance toward Indonesia. Pro-Republic activities in the USA and the United Nations were mainly diplomatic. Diplomacy seeks compromise and finally solution and these were carried out mostly at the negotiation table, but propaganda aims to change the mind, the heart and the behavior by instilling, altering, or strengthening ideas. Propaganda was for the most part aimed at the general populace by use of mass communication media, while diplomacy was carried out between state representatives.

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The Perkoempoelan Kemerdekaan Indonesia in the Arab World

To understand Indonesian propaganda in the Arab world one should take into account the historical and sociological position of Indonesians living there. The spread of Islam in the Indonesian archipelago in the fifteenth century had inspired Indonesian Muslims to embark upon pilgrimages to Islamic sites in the Arab world, in particular Mecca and Medina. Throughout the 19th Century there was an unprecedented proliferation in the number of Indonesian pilgrims, possible in large part because of the increasing wealth of Indonesian Muslims and the introduction of pilgrimage ships by the colonial government of the Dutch Indies.

A considerable number of Indonesians established themselves in Egypt, where the Al Azhar University was widely known among Indonesian Muslims as the best place to study the teachings of Islam. Despite the distance and difficulties of communication and transportation, many of these Indies Muslims maintained ties with their homeland. Some Indonesians stayed in the Arabian Peninsula after finishing their pilgrimage, becoming religious teachers for new generations of Indonesian students arriving annually, especially during pilgrimage season. During the 1920’s and 1930’s, Indonesian students and Islamic scholars in the Arabian Peninsula, carefully monitored by the Dutch consulate in Jeddah, a main port city on the Arabian Peninsula, absorbed the spirit of nationalism which at the time had already attracted Indonesians from both the colony and abroad. They introduced themselves as ‘Indonesians’ in an effort to replace the existing term, ‘Jawi’, current in the Hejaz for all Muslims originating from the Indies, British Malaya, Siam and the Philippines.

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6 M. Zein Hassan, Diplomasi Revolusi Indonesia di Luar Negeri (Jakarta:
The two World Wars made relying on financial support from families in Indonesia increasingly difficult. Therefore, most Indonesians were returned home by the Dutch who, loaned them money and provided ships through their consulates in Jeddah. Some chose to stay, and they became the foremost supporters of Indonesian independence in the Arab world. They sought financial support from the Dutch consulate to feed themselves. The consulate at first refused but later extended a loan after the Indonesians protested. During the Japanese occupation, the Dutch actively approached these students, especially in Egypt, asking for their support for the return of the Indies government to the Indies. They also lobbied for a visit by Queen Wilhelmina’s son-in-law, the husband of the then-Princess Juliana, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, to the Arab world to ensure Indonesian and Dutch cooperation in the expulsion of the Japanese from Indonesia.\(^7\)

The news of the Indonesian proclamation of independence reached the Indonesians in the Arab world at the end of August, 1945. Initially, there were no Arabic language reports about what had

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\(^7\) M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi*, pp. 31-32. In 1923, Muslims from the Indies established Al-Jamiyatul Khairiyatul Jawiyah (the Javanese Service Association), which later, with the involvement of Muslims from British Malay, turned into Persatuan Pemoeeda Indonesia-Malaya (The Association of Indonesian and Malay Youth, Perpindom) in the 1930’s. The Perpindom was financially self-supporting. Its membership consisted of students from Indonesia and the Malay peninsula, who willingly risked the continuity of their study by concentrating on this movement. It was supported financially by its members, sympathizers, and, shortly before the proclamation, the loan from the Dutch embassy in Cairo, which was insufficient to conduct large-scale propaganda operations. In addition to personal communication and various meetings between them and other Indonesians, they also published pamphlets and a magazine called *Soeara Perpindom*. This Indonesian-language newspaper was aimed specifically at countering two Dutch-sponsored Indonesian language newspapers widely read by Indonesian communities abroad, *Bintang Timoer* in London and *Penjoeloeh* in Australia. Most of the articles in *Soeara Perpindom* consisted of counterattacks against the articles in the two Dutch-sponsored newspapers, as well as various articles about Indonesian history and culture. See M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi*, pp. 33-35 and 53.
happened in Indonesia on 17 August, 1945. An Indonesian named Mansur Abu Makarim first spread the news to Indonesian students. He worked at the Dutch Embassy in Cairo and had already been asked by the Indonesian students in the city to provide Indonesia-related information as it circulated at the embassy. He read the news of the proclamation in the Dutch newspaper Vrij Nederland, apparently at the embassy. The Indonesian students in Perpindom (Persatoean Pemoeda Indonesia-Malaja, The Association of Indonesian and Malay Youth), an organization for Indonesian and Malay students established in the 1930’s, responded to the news. It changed the organization’s name. It should now reflect the need to defend the already-declared independence. They chose Perkoempoelan Kemerdekaan Indonesia (PKI, Association of Indonesian Independence, or in Arabic: Jam’iyatu Istiqlali Indonesia—not to be confused with the Partai Komunis Indonesia whose abbreviation is also PKI). The Republican government took no part in the establishment and subsequent propagandizing of the PKI.

Seeking wider public sympathy, the Indonesian students forwarded the news of Indonesian independence to the Egyptian media. According to Zein Hassan, chief of the PKI, Egyptian newspaper editors warmly welcomed the news since they shared anti-colonialist feelings with the Indonesians. They used the news as a trigger to voice their anger at the Allies who were, at the time and in the view of the Egyptian media, oppressing the Egyptians in their own land. It was difficult for these students to stay informed about the course of the revolution. This absence of information, according to Zein Hassan, lasted from August, 1945, until March, 1947 when Indonesian delegates, sent to the Arab world to seek support for the Republic and official acknowledgment, led by Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs Agoes Salim, visited Cairo.

8 M. Zein Hassan, Diplomasi Revolusi, pp. 36 and 49.
9 M. Zein Hassan, Diplomasi Revolusi, pp. 49-50.
Only then could the students confirm what had happened in Indonesia over the previous two years.

Indonesia’s propaganda was at the time necessarily based for the most part on what Zein Hassan called, in 1970, ‘our imagination’ (gambaran khayal kami). This referred to the combination of the limited information gleaned from print media and rumours and the imagination of the Indonesian students. Thus, the propaganda contained both truths and falsehoods. This could of course mislead the audience. The PKI, for instance, published an Arabic-language book entitled Indonesia as-Sairah (Indonesia in the Revolution), on 17 August, 1946, commemorating the first year of the Republic. The book, aimed at the Egyptian public, contained some correct information, such as citing 17 August, 1945, as the date of proclamation and the fact that the proclamation was announced by Soekarno. However, the book also contained incorrect information, for example that the proclamation ceremony was held in Ikada Square, one of Jakarta’s largest public space (whereas it was in fact held at Soekarno’s house, which was far smaller) and that the attendees numbered in the thousands (whereas a likely assessment is mere hundreds). This imaginative writing turned a modest proclamation ceremony into a colossal public event, obviously to increase Indonesians’ confidence abroad and to amaze foreign audiences with the splendor of Indonesian nationalism.

According to an article about the PKI in Cairo, published by the Jakarta-based pro-Republic newspaper Minggoean Merdeka in May, 1946, the history of the PKI’s activity, including their propaganda campaign, could be divided into three phases: the period following the cessation of transport and communication lines between Indonesia and Egypt due to the Second World War, the phase following Japan’s Prime Minister Kuniaki Koiso’s announcement in

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10 M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi*, pp. 51-52.
Japanese parliament of the Japanese promise to grant independence to Indonesia (September, 1944), and the last months of 1945 when the news of the foundation of the Republic Indonesia became known in Egypt. In the first phase, PKI propaganda focused on introducing the Indonesian nation to Egyptian society, which at the time had no knowledge about Indonesia as the Indonesian people were regarded as citizens of the Dutch Indies. In response to Koiso’s promise, Dutch representatives in Cairo persuaded the Indonesians living there to cooperate with the Dutch, by stressing that Indonesia was not ready to be independent and should therefore remain under the Indies government. When news of the independence finally arrived in Egypt, the PKI’s first priority was to liberate the Republican leaders from the stain of collaboration with the Japanese.

By mid-1946, the PKI in Cairo had established communications with 25 instances of the Komite Indonesia Merdeka (KIM, the Committee for Indonesian Independence) throughout the world. The KIM was an independent international committee established by pro-Republic Indonesians and sympathetic foreigners, with branches in the US, Australia, India, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. Despite using a

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11 ‘Perkoempoealan Kemerdekaan Indonesia di Cairo’, Minggoean Merdeka, 17 May, 1946. One may wonder why PKI Cairo lacked correct information about events in Indonesia during 1945-1947 whereas the Minggoean Merdeka published a story about the PKI’s movements in May 1946. The answer is because Indonesian students in Cairo had no opportunity to check the correctness of each story they heard about the events to Republican authorities. Indonesian students actually met an Indonesian delegate to the Hoge Veluwe Conference in the Netherlands, Soewandi, in Cairo on 7 April, 1946. This would be a great opportunity to confirm many news stories about independence, but it was a short visit and no time was available to verify facts. As a consequence, the students still relied on non-official sources of news, including rumours, newspapers and correspondences with Indonesians in other parts of the world, which possibly contradicted each other. In other words, there were various news stories about what happened in Indonesia circulating in Cairo, but the truth was uncertain.

12 ‘Perkoempoealan Kemerdekaan Indonesia di Cairo’. The Committee for Indonesian Independence also existed in India, and one of its activities was to organize a conference among Indonesians living there in April, 1946, which resulted
name similar to that of the KIM, they actually shared only the pro-independence drive, and although they occasionally cooperated with each other, they were not under one umbrella organization. A committee for Indonesian independence was established in Mecca and became a branch of PKI Cairo. The Mecca committee’s propaganda involved a face-to-face approach to Indonesians living in Mecca during the pilgrimage season. The Mecca branch was also in communication with the British Labor Party which, as mentioned previously, was sympathetic to the struggle against the re-establishment of colonial order. The same branch also sent a memorandum to the UNO, which was preparing a meeting in London. To the UNO, the committee stressed that Indonesians had the right to choose which form of government they wanted and that the UNO should send a team to investigate British and Dutch oppression in Indonesia.

The PKI’s close association with Egypt-based political and social organizations was beneficial to the Republic. The PKI approached the leaders of the al Ikhwan al Muslimun (the Islamic Brotherhood, IM), one of the most influential Islamic organizations in Egypt, established in 1928. This organization promoted anti-colonialism and the unity of Islamic countries all over the globe. The IM subsequently agreed to endorse the PKI’s vision in its newspaper. On 29 September, 1946, the editor beseeched the Egyptian government and kingdoms throughout the Arab world to recognize the Republic of Indonesia, noting that even India, a country still struggling against colonialism (being independent since 1947), had already declared support for Indonesia. India’s example was expected to be followed by governments all over the Arab

in an appeal to call upon Indian leaders to help Indonesia, just like the Egyptian leaders did. The Committee for Indonesian Independence in India was Persatoean Indonesia Merdeka (The Association of Indonesian Independence, Persindom), established in Bombay. See ‘Perkoempoelan Kemerdekaan Indonesia di Cairo’.
world. In the meantime, the Republican government, with the help of the PKI, sent a sympathy-seeking letter to the Arab League, a six-member organization of Arab countries consisting of the Kingdom of Egypt, the Kingdom of Iraq, Transjordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. The Chief Secretary of the Arab League, Egyptian nationalist Abdul Rahman Azzam Pasha, replied, stating that the Arab League supported Indonesian independence.

Islamic Bond and Anti-British Sentiment

In an effort to persuade Arabs that the independence movement in Indonesia was initiated and conducted by Muslims—and therefore deserved support from a Muslim-majority country like Egypt—Indonesian propagandists Islamized the Indonesian leaders. There was no need to Islamize Vice President Mohammad Hatta—the name ‘Mohammad’ already reflected his Islamic background. The Islamization was therefore applied particularly to Soekarno, whose Javanese name sounded strange to Arab ears and led the Egyptians to question whether he was a Muslim or not. Zein Hassan from PKI Cairo, basing his action on an existing practice among Indonesian Muslims, who often had only a single name but later added ‘Ahmad’ or ‘Mohammad’ in front of their name, decided to add ‘Ahmad’ in front of Soekarno’s name. Subsequently, the name ‘Ahmad Soekarno’ was propagated by the Indonesian propagandists, particularly to Egyptian journalists who were curious about events in Indonesia.

On 16 October, 1945, a meeting was held in Cairo, attended by sympathetizers with the Republic of Indonesia, involving such leading anti-British figures in Egyptian politics as Saleh Harb Pasha

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14 ‘Perkoempoelan Kemerdekaan Indonesia di Cairo’.
15 M. Zein Hassan, Diplomasi Revolusi, p. 62.
(formerly Egypt’s Minister of Defense), Abdul Rahman Azzam Pasha, Secretary General of the Arab League Salahuddin Pasha, and other representatives from the Egyptian universities, youth organizations, political parties, the Palestine Committee, and sympathetic figures from Algeria, Lebanon, Iran and China. This meeting resulted in a committee called Lajnatud Difa’i ‘an Indonesia (the Committee for Defending Indonesia). As most of the representatives were Muslims, the Indonesian representatives delivered speeches underlining Islam as the most decisive driving factor in the Indonesian struggle for independence. They said that the golden age of Indonesian history was marked by the birth of Indonesian Islamic heroes who fought against the Portuguese and the Dutch. Given that some attendees were anti-British, the Indonesian speakers also emphasized the challenge Indonesian independence faced due to British intervention. These speeches were later printed, copied, and distributed to Egyptians. The committee sent a letter to Egypt’s Prime Minister Mahmoud an-Nukrashi Pasha, emphasizing the need for Egyptian support for Indonesian independence, stressing that ‘Arab and Islamic countries are also feeling what is now happening in Indonesia—the greediness of imperialism and the bitterness of occupation’. It referred also to ‘the humanitarian relationship and Islamic brotherhood [uquwuh Islamiyah] between Egypt and Indonesia.’

Another PKI propaganda effort, using the Islamic bond, was addressed to the highest officials of Saudi Arabia. On 31 October, 1945, Saudi Arabia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Faisal bin Abdulaziz al Saud, visited London, and the PKI seized the opportunity to appeal to him. The PKI sent a letter to the minister requesting his help to deliver a protest from the Indonesians to the British government regarding British interference in Indonesia and British support to the Dutch. The PKI stressed that Saudi Arabia should support

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16 M. Zein Hassan, Diplomasi Revolusi, pp. 65-66.
Indonesian independence and intervene in the conflict by urging the British to stop helping the Dutch reinstate their power because ‘thousands of martyrs [syuhada] passed away defending this Islamic state’. This letter was ‘on behalf of the 70 million Muslims who are devout to Allah and are holding firmly to their rights’.

The PKI also communicated its anti-British stance to various other governments and politicians, both in Egypt and abroad. On 15 October, 1945, the PKI sent a telegram to Clement Atlee, then prime minister of the UK, declaring their protest of British encroachment in Indonesia, which it saw as a contradiction of the statement by the British War Minister that the British would not fight the Indonesians. A number of telegrams were sent to various governments and politicians around the world, portraying the British intervention in Indonesia as a failure and urging cessation. The PKI of Cairo sent a memorandum via its Indian counterpart to two main political parties in India, the All-India Muslim League and the Indian National Congress, expecting these two parties to use their influence to persuade Indian people that Britain should stop using Indian troops in Indonesia.

The Egyptians’ hatred of the British was employed by the PKI to appeal to the Egyptian people, particularly during the last months of 1945 and the early months of 1946. The PKI propaganda focused on the atrocities committed by the British against Indonesian revolutionaries. The most important anti-British propaganda was produced during the battle of Surabaya in November and December, 1945. During these two months, Egyptian newspapers published news about British bombardment in Surabaya. UK-based

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17 M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi*, p. 82.
18 M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi*, p. 78.
19 M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi*, p. 83.
20 M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi*, p. 62.
newspapers such as *The Sphere* and *The Illustrated London News*, also wrote about the same event, although with a heavily pro-British tone. These newspapers claimed that the conflict began with an attack by Indonesian extremists against British troops who were rescuing prisoners of war. The PKI countered this assertion in its press releases, claiming that the British tendency to divide Indonesians into extremists and moderates was a way of blaming Indonesians for the clash, and further stating that the bloodshed was actually because the British had broken their agreement with Indonesia. Where the Indonesian press, as previously noted, depicted Surabaya as ‘the Second Amritsar’, the PKI in Cairo dubbed it ‘the Stalingrad of Indonesia’ in order to equate the Nazi’s brutal attack on the city of Stalingrad and its population with the violence committed by the British in Surabaya. This image also signified considerable confidence among Indonesian propagandists, implying as it did that the foreign invader would eventually lose.\(^{21}\)

Apart from issues of Islamic brotherhood and anti-British sentiment, largely welcomed by the Egyptians, Indonesian propagandists in Egypt also approached representatives of foreign countries. While the world talked incessantly about establishing peace, Indonesian propagandists in Egypt incorporated this into their messages. As early as 5 September, 1945, an Indonesian organization for Indonesians living in Cairo, the Indonesian Union, had expressed its concern about the urgency regarding global acceptance of Indonesia as a new legitimate country, with, inevitably, a role to play in establishing world peace. The Union sent a letter to the governments of the UK, the US, France, China, Russia, Switzerland, Sweden, Turkey, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon. Copies of this letter also reached Indonesians living in Australia. By quoting Indonesians suffering under the Japanese occupation and at the end of the Second World

\(^{21}\) M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi*, p. 84-85.
War, the Union asserted that, as an independent state, Indonesia would make a great difference to the world:

The Great Powers should look at Indonesia now from a new angle if they really desire a sincere world peace; in fact they think it best that Indonesia be given complete independence (Self-government) in accordance with the Atlantic Charter, as this is the only way, in their opinion [the Union’s opinion], for the prosperity of Indonesia and everlasting peace in the Pacific.\(^{22}\) (sic)

The Union also raised its three main demands:

1) total independence for Indonesia, 2) the integrity of all Indonesia as it was before its occupation by foreign powers, and 3) the representation of Indonesia by a native in the coming peace conference (and [in] any other conference which concerns Indonesia)

In the middle of January, 1946, the Indonesian case had yet to be addressed by the Security Council of the UNO. To try to move this along, the PKI of Cairo sent telegrams to representatives of potentially sympatetic countries, including China, the Ukraine and Egypt. The most important tool used in approaching them was discovering and exploiting similarities between Indonesia and these countries. A feeling of solidarity could be engendered, which eventually led to a belief that the conflict in Indonesia was a common problem. Three shared identities were identified and presented: solidarity among Eastern peoples, camaraderie of Socialist countries, and Islamic brotherhood. A PKI telegram to the Chinese representative asserted, for example, that China’s delegates were ‘the real supporters of the Eastern peoples’ independence’. Help from the Ukraine was, similarly, needed because the Ukraine’s delegate

\(^{22}\) Self-government here is a synonym for a complete independence. See Letter from Bahroedin Ali, President of ‘Indonesian Union’ in Cairo to the governments of UK, US, France, China, Russia, Switzerland, Sweden, Turkey, Egypt, Syria and Lebanon: ANRI, Mohammad Bondan 1945-1968, Nr. 501.
was ‘the real supporter of the Socialist countries’ independence’. And Egypt’s aid was required because, unsurprisingly, the Egyptians and other Arab delegates were ‘the real supporters of Muslim countries’ independence’.23

Throughout 1946, PKI branches in Cairo and other parts of the Arab world, which attentively followed public opinion in their respective countries and developments regarding the Indonesian case in international debate, lobbied continuously for discussion of the Indonesian Republic’s case in the UNO, both through telegraphs to foreign delegates in the UNO and by influencing public opinion, particularly in Egypt. Their main aim was to put the Indonesian case to the Security Council in a way which focused on the illegality of the Dutch presence in Indonesia and on the ability of the Indonesian authorities to run their own country. The PKI always included a copy of a book written by a Republican minister, A.A. Maramis, entitled No More Legal Power of the Netherlands in Indonesia. In this book Maramis, a graduate of the Law Faculty of Leiden University in the Netherlands, argued that from the point of view of the constitution of Kingdom of the Netherlands, Indonesia had already been independent since 1940, when the Dutch government fled to London to escape the German invasion. Maramis argued that the Dutch constitution did not permit the government to move abroad. Maramis, and the PKI, concluded that the exile of the Dutch Queen and her ministers meant the end of legitimate Dutch power in Indonesia. The presence of the Japanese, the Dutch and the British consequently represented intervention in an independent state.24

23 M. Zein Hassan, Diplomasi Revolusi, pp. 98-99.

24 Account about Maramis’ book can be found in M. Zein Hassan, Diplomasi Revolusi, pp. 106-110. This reasoning would also imply that the Queen and the government lost the legitimacy of ruling over the Netherlands. Yet this legal point was challenged. See for example Cees Fasseur, Wilhelmina: Krijgshaftig in een Vormeloze Jas, Druk 2 (Amsterdam: Balans, 2001).
Approaching the Pilgrims

One of the most striking propaganda-related activities of the PKI was aimed at Indonesian pilgrims in Mecca. After a hiatus because of the Second World War, Indonesians could as of 1946 again perform pilgrimages, aided by the NICA which provided ships and other facilities. This aid was extended primarily to those in East Indonesia, where the Dutch-founded federalist state Negara Indonesia Timur (The State of East Indonesia, NIT) allowed a strong Dutch grip in the region.²⁵ Considering that the only way Indonesian Muslims could perform their pilgrimage to Mecca during the revolution was to take ships provided by the Dutch, the PKI’s key propaganda method was to reproach the Muslims who did this. The PKI disseminated the view that performing pilgrimage via facilities provided by the NICA was, when looked at from the viewpoint of Islamic law, ‘forbidden’ (*haram*).

The PKI started this anti-Dutch campaign in 1946, when it learned about the Dutch pilgrimage ships. This succeeded in a number of cases; some Indonesian pilgrims even burned their Dutch passports.²⁶ In 1947 the PKI published a booklet of religious attitudes regarding pilgrimage under the Dutch. According to Zein Hassan, the PKI in Cairo, feeling that the Dutch pilgrimage ships would increase

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²⁵ ‘Soal pergi hadji ke Mekkah’, *Pandji Ra’kjat*, 28 March 1946; ‘Kapal hadji NICA telah tiba di Djeddah’, *Merdeka*, 25 October 1946. The NIT was initiated by the Dutch. It was preceded by the Dutch-initiated conferences (Malino Conference, 16-22 July 1946 and Denpasar Conference, 7-24 December 1946) at which the Dutch gathered representatives of the eastern parts of the Indonesian archipelago and minority groups to establish a state wherein the Dutch could effectively exercise control. The NIT consisted of Sulawesi, Bali, the Lesser Sunda Islands, and the Moluccas. It had considerable support from local kings (*rajas*). It was headed by Tjokorda Gde Raka Soekawati, a *raja* in Bali, and lasted from 24 December, 1946, to 17 August, 1950. Singaraja (Bali) was its capital. For discussion about the NIT and other Dutch efforts to rule east Indonesia, see A. Arthur Schiller, *The Formation of Federal Indonesia* (The Hague: Van Hoeve, 1955).

the dependency of Indonesians Muslims on the Dutch, sought a *fatwa* (religious interpretation or advice on Islamic law from Islamic scholars) from the *mufti* (Islamic scholars qualified to issue the *fatwa*) of Al Azhar University, who supported Indonesian independence. The *fatwa* requested by the PKI was about the status of Muslims who performed their pilgrimage with the help of a heathen nation which was at the time waging war on the pilgrims’ homeland.\(^{27}\) The *fatwa*-commission of Al Azhar, after explaining the importance of pilgrimage for every Muslim who is able to perform it, stated that there were several exceptions, situations in which pilgrimage was not recommended or was even forbidden. The general guideline was that something was forbidden if it did more harm than good. Considering this, the *fatwa*-commission declared that it was *haram* to perform the pilgrimage if it ‘would cause defamation or weakness and conflict, which would cause destruction and disrupt in the solidarity, and generate chaos among the people they leave behind [in their country]’.\(^{28}\) Muslims who sided with the enemy were labeled hypocrites. Those Muslims who received money from the enemy, who ‘wanted to disunite Muslims’, for the pilgrimage were also declared to have committed ‘a sin with major consequence, and an extremely bad mistake’.\(^{29}\)

A report of an investigation into this, addressed to the Dutch ambassador in Jeddah, claimed that this *fatwa* actually followed on from another one issued by the *fatwa*-commission of Al Azhar University in 1946, when the commission was asked about the status

\(^{27}\) M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi*, pp. 173.

\(^{28}\) NL-HaNA, 2.10.14. inv. nmr. 3411. A letter from the Dutch ambassador in Cairo, Egypt, to the Head of Far Eastern Board of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Batavia, 10 February, 1948.

\(^{29}\) NL-HaNA, 2.10.14. inv. nmr. 3411. A letter from the Dutch ambassador in Cairo, Egypt, to the Head of Far Eastern Board of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Batavia, 10 February, 1948.
of pilgrims from North Africa traveling under the supervision of French authorities.\textsuperscript{30} Those who already knew about this fatwa but continued to perform pilgrimage with the facilities provided by the heathen nation were deemed infidels. This fatwa was translated into Indonesian, copied, and sent to Mecca to be distributed to Indonesian pilgrims there.\textsuperscript{31} It was entitled *Haram Naik Hadji Djika Menjebabkan Fitnah dan Perpetjahan Dikalangan Kaum Muslimin* (It is forbidden to perform pilgrimage if it causes defamation and disunity among Muslims). It was spread in Mecca in particular from the beginning of 1947 until September of the same year, close to the peak of pilgrim season (October, 1947).

In another part of the pamphlet, the PKI listed the history of support by Arabic countries for the newly born Republic of Indonesia. Entitled *Perhubungan antara Republik Indonesia dan Negara-negara Arab* (The relationship between the Republic of Indonesia and Arab countries), it explained that all Arab states should support and aid the Indonesian nation’s struggle. It listed sympathetic assistance from various parties in the Arab world after November, 1946, when the Arab League ‘advised its members to acknowledge the Republic of Indonesia as an independent and sovereign state’. It also mentioned those Arab states which had already acknowledged the Republic by September 1947, namely Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon


\textsuperscript{31} M. Zein Hassan, *Diplomasi Revolusi*, pp. 169-171. It was not known whether this booklet was ever distributed to Indonesia. Both Indonesian and Dutch sources did not mention its spread in Indonesia, but it seems that the booklet was only disseminated in Mecca. The PKI had hardly any opportunities to circulate it to Indonesia. They heavily depended on returning pilgrims, whereas every Indonesian pilgrim using Dutch ships was obligated to report to Dutch Consulate in Jeddah before returning home. This was the opportunity for the Dutch to search Indonesian pilgrims and confiscate any material the consulate found dangerous. Some PKI propaganda materials, including the booklet, were seized in such searches.
and Afghanistan. This acknowledgment led the PKI to announce that ‘despite many obstacles put before us by the colonizer, each Arab and Islamic country has been made aware that the Republic of Indonesia is the only legitimate government of the Indonesian nation, beloved and obeyed’. The pamphlet closed with two undated photographs showing the Arab world’s support to the Republic, the first of representatives of the Indonesian government, including A.R. Baswedan and Minister of Foreign Affairs Agoes Salim, who were received by Arab League officials in Cairo, and the second depicting Agoes Salim shaking hand with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Al Amir Faisal ala Su’ud, in the same city.\footnote{NL-HaNA, 2.10.14. inv. nmr. 3411. A letter from the Dutch ambassador in Cairo, Egypt, to the Head of Far Eastern Board of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Batavia, 10 February, 1948.}

There were both useful and dangerous consequences to the publication of this pamphlet; a number of pilgrims who read the \textit{fatwa} visited the PKI of Mecca to express their loyalty to the Republican government, but at the same time, the Dutch consulate’s counterpropaganda, which styled the PKI as anti-pilgrimage (disliked by the Saudi government, who opposed any political propaganda and depended financially on the coming of the pilgrims) led to the imprisonment of a PKI leader by Saudi police.\footnote{M. Zein Hassan, \textit{Diplomasi Revolusi}, pp. 173. See also NL-HaNA, 2.10.14. inv. Nmr. 3411.} The PKI planned to request that King Ibn Saud rebuff pilgrims from the eastern part of Indonesia, which was occupied by the Dutch. Convincing Ibn Saud to do this was difficult, however: he believed that Mecca was open to all Muslims, regardless of their political views or nationality.\footnote{NL-HaNA, 2.10.14. inv. nmr. 3411. A letter from S. van Hulst, the Secretary of the Dutch Consulate General in Singapore to Head (\textit{Onderhoofd}) of General Recherche in Batavia entitled ‘inz. rep. propaganda te Mekka’, 12 January, 1948.}

The PKI conducted propaganda throughout the entire pilgrimage season, doing everything from spreading a \textit{Haram Naik Hadji}
pamphlet at the beginning of hajj season to distributing pamphlets to Indonesian Muslims who had finished their pilgrimage and were preparing to return home. The PKI distributed pamphlets in Indonesian pilgrims’ encampments near the pilgrimage sites.35

Several Indonesian pilgrims were personally approached by the PKI. These pilgrims were not only given the pamphlet Haram Naik Hadji, but also letters from the PKI to be forwarded to influential local leaders in Indonesia. As previously noted, most of the pilgrims were from East Indonesia. Via several supportive pilgrims, the PKI delivered the pamphlet Haram Naik Hadji and the letter to local aristocrats and other notable leaders in Makassar, the capital of the Dutch-founded State of East Indonesia (see picture 4.1.). In December, 1947, Hadji Sjahadat Dg. Sitoedjoe, a Muslim merchant from Makassar who had just returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, brought with him at least seven copies of letters directed to various persons in his city, including himself, the King of Gowa Andi Idjo, a Makassar merchant named Idries Dg. Pulie, a member of City Council of Makassar called Andi Manapijang, a former district head of Binamu (South Sulawesi) named Hadji Mattawekkang, a local Muhammadiyah leader, and another local official. Their respective backgrounds showed that the PKI wanted representation with virtually all important groups in the city: merchants, local aristocrats, and officials from both the Dutch-founded local government and Islamic organizations.36

The letters called on these well-respected people to support the Republic, each person receiving a different, tailored approach.


In approaching the King of Gowa, for instance, the PKI respected his elevated position in his society, and expressed that the king must have noted the increasing support for the Republic both within Indonesia and abroad. The PKI alluded to various kingdoms abroad, in particular in Arab world, which had expressed a pro-Republic stance, suggesting that the Kingdom of Gowa should also follow this path. The PKI then requested Idjo to ‘bolster and intensify the propaganda of the Republic of Indonesia in your area’. Dutch propaganda criticizing the Republic was, the PKI stated, ‘all lies’. The PKI stressed that in the international world, the Republic’s efforts to gain support were successful whereas those by the Dutch had failed. Evidence included the reception of Indonesian representatives at the UNO and the refusal to allow a representative of the Dutch to the UNO and Soekawati, the president of the State of East Indonesia, into Arab countries. The PKI also told Idjo that the Republic was warmly received by Indonesians abroad: ‘The Indonesian nation spread abroad, consisting of people from the Republic of Indonesia, Kalimantan, Sulawesi and the Lesser Sunda Islands, stands 100% behind the Republic of Indonesia’. These letters, nevertheless, failed to reach the intended recipients due to Dutch confiscation after a search of Hadji Sjahadat’s house in late December, 1947.

37 NL-HaNA, 2.10.14. inv. nmr. 3411. A letter from M. Nuri Entik, the clerk of PKI branch Saudi Arabia, to Andi Idjo, the King of Goa, South Sulawesi, entitled ‘menjampaikan usul dan amanat’ (conveying suggestions and mandates), 10 November, 1947.
The Dutch recognized and were concerned by the influence of the PKI’s propaganda on Indonesian pilgrims in Mecca. The PKI was dubbed by the Dutch Embassy’s Director of the Far East at the Dutch Consulate in Jeddah, H.F. Eschauzier, ‘a Republican

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38 NL-HaNA, 2.10.14. inv. nmr. 3411. A letter from M. Nuri Entik, the clerk of PKI branch Saudi Arabia, to Andi Idjo, the King of Goa, South Sulawesi, entitled ‘menjampaikan usul dan amanat’ (conveying suggestion, and mandate.), 10 November 1947.
propaganda institution’ (een republikeins propagandainstituut) and by the Dutch Consulate General in Singapore as ‘a Republican propaganda body’ (een republikeins propagandalichaam). The burning of Dutch passports by Indonesian pilgrims was considered by the Secretary of the Dutch Consulate in Singapore, S. van Hulst, to have been caused by ‘the influence of the then [1946] Republican propaganda [in the Arab world].’

Dutch authorities took measures to counter pro-Republic propaganda in Mecca and in Indonesia. In Mecca, they employed Abdoel Rachman Almasawa, an Indonesia of Arab descent who had been a pro-Dutch propagandist when he cooperated with the Indies-in-exile government in Australia in 1944. The exact nature of his propaganda activities there remained relatively obscure, but according to internal communications among Dutch officials in Jeddah he ‘managed to reduce the influence of Republican propaganda [among Indonesians in Mecca].’ As mentioned earlier, the Dutch authorities also took a hard line toward the spread of pro-Republic propaganda among the pilgrims, including searches and the confiscation of Republican propaganda materials upon departure in Jeddah.

Republican authorities combined both Islam and nationalism in their messages. At the beginning of 1949, they produced a booklet entitled *Kenang-kenangan untuk Djema’ah Hadji Indonesia* (A Gift for

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Indonesian Pilgrims). This 64-page book was addressed to Indonesian pilgrims in Mecca, obviously aimed in particular at those pilgrims who arrived on the Dutch ships. Opening with both the Indonesian greeting of ‘Merdeka’ and the Islamic greeting ‘Assalamualaikum’ (peace be upon you), this book was touted as a gift for Muslims who had performed the pilgrimage, the most important element in Islamic ritual (see picture 4.2., 4.3., and 4.4.). The book consisted mainly of pictures whose messages addressed three main issues: the importance of pilgrimage for Indonesian Muslims, depictions of the help the Indonesians had received from the Arab world in maintaining their independence, and a plea to Indonesian pilgrims to return home and fight for independence after they finished their pilgrimage. On page 4 and 5, a picture of President Soekarno was placed side-by-side with a picture of King Ibn Saud, the leader of Saudi Arabia, signifying that now the two countries were now equal and that these two were the most important leaders for Indonesian Muslims. Other pictures depicted the friendly stance shown by Arab leaders to Indonesian delegates seeking their sympathy. One picture showed how the Republican government had been developing Indonesia. There were also several pictures displaying mountains and trees, the beautiful landscape of Indonesia, in an effort to foster feelings of love for the homeland.

Included also was a picture of Soekarno writing on a blackboard before a crowd, accompanied by text clearly satirizing Dutch colonialism:

It was said that the Dutch task in Indonesia was to ‘educate’ the Indonesian nation. After three and a half centuries, 93% of Indonesians still could not differentiate between alif, the first letter in Arabic, which looks like an

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42 NL-HaNA, 2.10.17, inv. nmr. 908. A letter from H.W. Felderhof, the Attorney General of the Supreme Court of Indonesia, to the High Representative of the Dutch Crown in Indonesia and Head of DIRVO and Head of RVD, Batavia, entitled ‘Propaganda in het Midden-Oosten’, 9 February, 1949. The booklet is attached into this letter.

‘I’ in Latin] and a pole (meaning they were still illiterate). The Republic of Indonesia, as the government established solely for the sake of the Indonesian people, feels the eradication of illiteracy, which was inherited from the colonizer, is its utmost priority. Therefore, all energy is devoted [to performing this task]; even His Majesty President Soekarno takes his part at the forefront, to teach people to write and read.\footnote{NL-HaNA, 2.10.17, inv. nmr. 908. A letter from H.W. Felderhof, 9 February, 1949.}

![Image of a booklet](image.jpg)

Picture 4.2.

A booklet entitled \textit{Kenang-kenangan untuk Djema’ah Hadji Indonesia}, aimed at Indonesian pilgrims in Mecca\footnote{NL-HaNA, 2.10.17, inv. nmr. 908. A letter from H.W. Felderhof, 9 February, 1949.}
February, 1949.


Indonesian Propaganda in Australia and the CENKIM

From June 1943, the Dutch transported hundreds of native political prisoners from Digul in Dutch New Guinea to Australia, simultaneous with their effort to establish the Dutch Indies government-in-exile there after the Japanese took over the Indies a year before. By 1945, there were thousands of Indonesians living in Australia, mainly members of the Dutch army and navy, former Heiho members captured by the Allies and transported to Australia, Indonesians working in Dutch offices and shipping companies in Australia, and political prisoners from Digul. These prisoners were former members of main political parties in the Indies in the 1920’s and 1930’s, parties such as PKI, PNI, Partindo and Permi, which aspired to a democratic and independent Indonesia. The Japanese capitulation in August, 1945, changed the situation drastically because a large number of Indonesians in Australia were repatriated by the Australian government the following month. The rest remained for a variety of reasons, such as family matters: some Indonesian men had married Australian women.

48 Mohamad Bondan, Genderang Proklamasi di Luar Negeri (Jakarta: Kawal, 1971), p. 1. See also Harry A. Poeze, ‘From Foe to Partner to Foe Again: The Strange Alliance of the Dutch Authorities and Digoel Exiles in Australia, 1943-1945’, in Indonesia, No. 94 (October 2012), pp. 57-84 and Rupert Lockwood, ‘The Indonesian Exiles in Australia, 1942-1947’, in Indonesia, No. 10 (October 1970), pp. 37-56. Digul, also known as Boven Digoel, is a mass internment camp built by the Dutch Indies government shortly after the failed coup by the Indies communists in 1926. It was located several thousand kilometers away from the much more developed Java Island, deep in the jungle of New Guinea where malaria was rife. As of 1927, all political internees were taken to Digul. According to Takashi Shiraisi, the Digul camp was neither a penal camp nor a concentration camp, as its main purpose of it was not physical punishment but an administrative measure to compel inmates ‘to live a normal life under abnormal conditions’ and ‘let inmates die, go insane, or be broken’. See Takashi Shiraisi ‘The Phantom World of Digoel’, Indonesia, Volume 61 (April 1996), pp. 93-94.


50 Mohammad Bondan, Secretary of the CENKIM in Brisbane to Fenner
News about Indonesian independence was delivered to Indonesians in Australia via a radio broadcast in Arabic, broadcast by an Indonesian radio station in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra, as early as 18 August, 1945. Neither news of Indonesian independence nor of the recent situation in Java were mentioned in the Australian press and radio because of strict Allied censorship of radio broadcasts from Japan-held territories. In September, 1945, some former Digul prisoners in Brisbane formed the Komite Indonesia Merdeka (KIM, the Committee of Indonesian Independence), later the CENKIM (CEN stands for Central, meaning the headquarters of all Australia). It was led by Djamaluddin Tamin, a West-Sumatra-born communist who was captured in 1932 by the British authority in Singapore, accusing him of establishing a communist network in Southeast Asia. He was later exiled to Digul and eventually to Australia. Another founder was Mohamad Bondan, a former member of the Mohammad Hatta-founded nationalist organization Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia (PNI-Baru), exiled to Digul in 1935 along with Hatta and Sjahrir. In June, 1943, he, along with other Indonesian prisoners, was transported to Australia. In conjunction with NICA’s move from Melbourne to Brisbane, the Indonesians, including Bondan, were also transported to Brisbane. In Wacol, near Brisbane, Bondan approached Indonesian prisoners in the Dutch-established Camp Columbia, where Dutch civilians and military personnel were stationed during the war.

The CENKIM also forged a link with the Indonesian Seamen’s Union, an organization for Indonesian seamen in Australia which went on strike in September, 1945, backed by the Australian Trade Union Movement, in protest against Dutch ships believed to be taking weapons to Indonesia. Communication was also established with organizations and individuals linked with the ruling Labor

The main task of the CENKIM was to propagate Indonesian independence in Australia in three main ways: speeches, writing and direct approaches to Australian politicians. CENKIM’s biggest challenge was the lack of qualified manpower to run the organization, caused largely by the significant reduction in the numbers of Indonesians in Australia. The CENKIM operated amidst the repatriation of most of the Indonesians living in Australia, particularly in 1945-1947. By the end of 1946, thousands of Indonesians had been repatriated using ships provided by the Australian government, 600 were still in the Dutch camps, dozens had chosen to cooperate with the Dutch, and those remaining were deemed unsuitable for the CENKIM’s needs. Branches of the CENKIM were opened in Sydney and Melbourne, but the Sydney branch was ineffective as its members consisted mostly of Indonesian seamen, unused to administration and mobilization jobs. Another branch was established in cooperation with former political activists in Merauke, Dutch Nieuw Guinea. Their main aspiration was, however, not to campaign for the independence but to seek CENKIM’s help in lobbying the Australian government to repatriate Indonesians stranded in Merauke to Java.

51 Mohamad Bondan, Genderang Proklamasi, p. 2-4.
52 Mohamad Bondan, Genderang Proklamasi, p. 19.
53 Mohammad Bondan, Secretary of the CENKIM in Brisbane to Fenner Brockway in London, 13 October, 1946: ANRI, Nr. 348.
54 Mohamad Bondan, Genderang Proklamasi, pp. 18-19.
55 Mohamad Bondan, Genderang Proklamasi, p. 44. CENKIM’s initial aim of propagating Indonesian independence in Australia was overwhelmed by a more urgent task, namely repatriation. The CENKIM was requested by the Australian authorities to help arrange repatriation of Indonesians with ships provided by them. Thus, in addition to the dissemination of news about the independence, early on after its establishment the theme the CENKIM promoted consisted also of convincing Indonesians to return to their homeland soon instead of remaining in Australia. The CENKIM was also preoccupied with matters concerning the ill-treated Indonesians in the Dutch camp, and with whether the Australian wives
In early days of the independence, the Indies-in-exile authorities in Australia, as mentioned earlier, accused Soekarno of being a Japanese collaborator, which to European ears might call to mind Vidkun Quisling, Minister President of Nazi-occupied Norway, considered a traitor to his homeland by the Allies because he collaborated with the Nazis during the Second World War. Quisling himself was finally sentenced to death in October, 1945. CENKIM’s initial propagandistic focus, like Soekarno and Hatta’s propaganda shortly after the proclamation, dealt with purifying the image of Indonesians who had collaborated with the Japanese. The slogan ‘Soekarno was not Quisling’ was propagated via various means, but most importantly was spread by mouth to Australians in the streets, houses and universities.

CENKIM’s key source of information was radio broadcasts from Indonesian stations. Its members frequently monitored events in Indonesia via an English language program produced by the RRI in Yogyakarta, *The Voice of Free Indonesia*. The information they received was published as a weekly bulletin, subsequently spread to the sympathetic supporters of the Republic, such as the Independence Committees in other Australian cities, Australia’s trade unions and the Australian press, and supportive parties abroad. The effectiveness of this kind of propaganda was proven when the Dutch launched their first military offensive on 21 July, 1947. Receiving radio

of Indonesians returning to Indonesia should be allowed to follow them to a completely new country. In a retrospective view of Bondan, despite the fact that this committee was established for propagating Indonesian independence abroad, ‘gradually this committee turned into a public service department [...] Matters related to migration, labor social security for the Australian wives, and even certificates of marriage were being taken care of [by the committee]’. See Mohamad Bondan, *Genderang Proklamasi*, p 17, 28-32 and 56.


broadcasts about this attack on the same day enabled CENKIM to forward this news, apparently from Indonesia’s point of view, directly to several newspapers in Brisbane. As a result, the next day this attack headlined in the Australian press.\textsuperscript{38} It was very likely that CENKIM was itself the source of information from the Republican side for the Newcastle (New South Wales)-based newspaper, \textit{Newcastle Morning Herald & Miners’ Advocate}, which on 22 July, 1947, published the military action as its headliner under the title ‘Dutch Aircraft attack Java Airfields. Truce in Indonesia Ended’. The title clearly indicated who infringed upon the armistice. This article depicted various Dutch attacks on Java’s key cities and their impacts on the Indonesians, including Indonesian victims of Dutch shootings and the evacuation of men, women and children from the heavily bombed territories.\textsuperscript{39}

CENKIM celebrated the endurance of the Republic during months of heavy struggle by publishing and distributing commemorative booklets. When the Republic commemorated its 6-month anniversary, CENKIM published a booklet entitled \textit{The Republic of Indonesia}, which displayed symbolic representations of the Republic, such as a red-and-white drawing and a portrait of President Soekarno. It also contained an article about the history of Indonesia’s struggle for independence, and a quotation from the Constitution. Also included were Vice President Hatta’s thoughts about Indonesia’s aims and ideals, including a request to help Indonesia gain international recognition, a request specifically addressed to his old friends in Europe, such as those who had attended the International Democratic Congress for Peace at Bierville, France, in August, 1926, and the Anti-Colonial League Congress in Brussels, Belgium, in February, 1927. As before, CENKIM distributed copies


of the booklet to independence committees and other sympathetic organizations all over Australia and abroad.

This type of propaganda was utilized again in celebrating the first year of the Republic on 17 August, 1946. Another English-language booklet, entitled *Merdeka*, was published, containing sympathetic messages from high-ranking Australian leaders with diverse backgrounds (see picture 4.5.). The booklet’s cover depicted a strong bull breaking chains attached to his feet, which represented the determination of the Indonesian people to be free from colonization.\(^{60}\) In the introduction, the CENKIM emphasized the *de facto* authority of the Republican government, the Republic’s contribution to the world, and the challenge it still faced from the ones the CENKIM called ‘the aggressor’: the Dutch. The CENKIM published what it cited as proof of the efficacy of the Republic, in particular ‘the ability of the Republic to send 500,000 tons of rice to India’. It also emphasized the ‘tremendous support given to the Republic by the mass of the Labor Movement throughout the world, which needs no comment from us to make it known’.\(^{61}\)

\(^{60}\) NL-HaNA, 2.10.17, inv. nmr. 842. A letter from S. van Hulst, the Secretary of the Dutch Consulate General in Singapore to the Head (*Onderhoofd*) of General Recherche in Batavia, entitled ‘inz. het boekje “Merdeka”’, 12 September, 1947. The booklet was attached in the letter.

Picture 4.5.
A booklet, published by the CENKIM to commemorate the first anniversary of the Republic in Australia.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{62} NL-HaNA, 2.10.17, inv. nmr. 842. A letter from S. van Hulst, 12 September, 1947.
The booklet opened with views from Soekarno, Hatta, Sjahridr and Amir Sjarifoeddin, who defended Indonesia’s right to self-determination, promoting a peaceful solution concerning the Dutch-Indonesian conflict, and demanding that the Indonesian people unite behind the Republican government. The booklet listed a number of Dutch negative actions resulting from the Dutch government’s conservative views and ignorance of the realities of Indonesian independence, which included the imprisonment—without trial—of Indonesian officials. The latter was regarded by the Republic as a reinstatement of the former colonial power’s repressive laws and an infringement on the UNO chapter covering support to a free political institution. Supportive comments from high-ranking Australian officials, including Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs Herbert Vere Evatt, were presented, indicating that Australia endorsed cooperation with Indonesians who aspired to independence. Almost every one of the booklet’s 36 pages was complemented with photographs of prominent Indonesian and Australian leaders, political and military events in Java, and pro-Republic popular support in Indonesia and abroad.\(^{63}\) In addition to the previous recipients, copies of this booklet were sent to all UNO members.\(^{64}\)

The CENKIM’s propaganda was not aimed exclusively at the Indonesians stranded in Australia because of the Japanese occupation, whose number decreased gradually due to repatriation, but also at Indonesians who had been in Australia since long before the Second World War began. A small number of Indonesians had been working as pearl divers on the northern coast of Western Australia. There was also an Indonesian community in New Caledonia, a French colony in the Pacific Ocean, the residents of which had since years before the war had been employed as contract laborers and domestic

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\(^{63}\) NL-HaNA, 2.10.17, inv. nmr. 842. A letter from S. van Hulst 12 September, 1947.

\(^{64}\) Molly Bondan, *Spanning a Revolution*, pp. 221-223.
workers. Reciprocal correspondence was established between the CENKIM and these Indonesians, and the CENKIM regularly sent them propaganda materials about Indonesian independence. The CENKIM was approached, moreover, by pro-Indonesian Dutch individuals who had mastered propaganda techniques and had wide international networks such as Joris Ivens, a renowned Dutch filmmaker. According to Ivens’s biographer, Hans Schoots, the US intelligence service the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) classified Ivens as a ‘dangerous Communist’, as he was a suspected Soviet espionage agent and propagandist, especially in the field of motion pictures. The film producer made documentary films in a number of countries, including the US and China, and in the 1940’s was based in Australia. He worked there as Film Commissioner for the Indies government. He was once appointed by the Indies government to produce a film entitled Rehabilitation of the Netherlands Indies, but he refused to continue when he became aware that the Dutch intended to restore the colonial government in Indonesia. Concerning his refusal, he said, in comments later published by the Australian press, ‘As an artist I decline to produce the film, which runs counter to my principles and convictions’.

Ivens was subsequently approached by the head of the CENKIM, Mohammad Bondan, and he agreed to cooperate with the Indonesians to help develop a film industry in Indonesia. In 1945-1946 he made a black and white documentary film about Indonesia, entitled Indonesia Calling. Produced secretly in Sydney to avoid police surveillance, this film was shown successfully in Indonesia, Australia and the United States. It portrayed the struggle Indonesian

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65 Molly Bondan, Spanning a Revolution, pp. 218-219.


seamen had faced in promoting Indonesian independence via their strikes and marches in Australia’s harbors. Stories about this movie spread to the Committees of Indonesian Independences (KIMs) outside Australia, including the KIM in the United States, which then planned to import the film. Liberal members of the Australian parliament tried to ban it from export. According to an Australian newspaper, the ban was based on the grounds that ‘it contained propaganda against the Dutch’. The ban failed miserably: the export permit was initially denied, but this decision was later annulled.  

The *Indonesia Calling* film was shown at the Stanley Theatre in the famed theatre district of Broadway, New York, on 2 December, 1947. The screening was warmly welcomed by the US press, which meant extensive publicity for pro-Republic nationalist activists at one of the most popular art hubs in the US. The *New York Times*, for instance, wrote, ‘Apparently a fragmentary report, the offering presents nevertheless some interesting footage not yet seen here publicly on a post-war crisis’. *The Daily Worker*, the official publication of the Communist Party of the USA, described the film as a ‘superb movie, with mature political understanding’. Commentary in another US leftist newspaper, *PM*, was perhaps the highest compliment and brightest spotlight the film received in the US, which undoubtedly encouraged Americans to find similarities between the Indonesians’ cause and their national ideal: ‘deeply moving, inspiring, and informative. It seems the Australian, Chinese, Indian, and Indonesian workers took the Atlantic Charter at its words’.  

70 ‘Screen here and abroad lawsuit holds up Mason: Plans’, *The Mail*, 16 August, 1947.  
Copies of *Indonesia Calling* were transported successfully by repatriated Indonesians. Pro-Republic newspapers in Indonesia published the positive responses the film had garnered in Australia. The movie itself, according to *Merdeka* newspaper, was dubbed by Australian audiences ‘among the best documentary movies in the world’.\(^{72}\) It was even said to have been of higher quality than the more-well-known political documentary *Spanish Earth*, a film made in 1937 (also by Ivens) about the anti-monarchists who tried to establish the so-called Second Spanish Republic. The *Indonesia Calling* movie was later shown several times in Yogyakarta, the capital of the Republic. About this film, cinema scholars Khoo, Smail and Yue wrote, ‘it is arguably Australia’s most noteworthy and controversial film of the 1940’s’.\(^{73}\)

Propaganda targeting the Australian government and people was also spread by the Republican government and the Indonesian press in Java. This can be seen in the case of the Indonesian seamen’s strikes and in other supportive acts by Australians, and in how the Republican government interpreted these. Starting on 21 September, 1945, Indonesians working on the Dutch ships harboring in Australia were on strike. This was widely reported in Australian newspapers, raising public awareness. Near the end of September, it had become known that several Dutch-operated ships which were transporting medicine and food for prisoners of war and internees in Indonesia were in fact loaded with military goods, including rifles and ammunition. This instigated the strike.\(^{74}\) Concerned that this strike might encourage more Indonesians to leave the Dutch ships,

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\(^{72}\) ‘Film “Indonesia Calling”’, *Merdeka*, 30 October, 1946.


\(^{74}\) Mohamad Bondan, *Genderang Proklamasi*, p. 6.
the Dutch-backed Indonesian-language newspaper in Australia, *Penjoeloeh*, launched Dutch counter-propaganda. It expressed the concerns of the Indies officials in Australia and published a call to stop the strike. The newspaper refuted the accusations about the nature of the cargo and stressed the ships’ beneficial mission, not just for the Dutch but also for Indonesians. It warned that such a strike could delay the arrival of Dutch ships in Indonesia and would lead only to ‘the deaths of thousands of people of many nationalities’ because the cargo ‘consisted of medicine, food, clothes and other assistance for both Europeans and Indonesians, who suffered long under Japanese suppression’.\(^{75}\) *Penjoeloeh*’s editor even suspected that the mastermind behind this strike was not Indonesians, but ‘an Australian party’ (clearly referring to the Australian leftists who supported the Republic), and that all matters related to Indonesia should be resolved ‘between our government and us, the Indonesian nation’, without involving third parties.\(^{76}\)

The Indonesian government approved of the strike and appreciated both the Indonesians and the Australians involved in it. On 29 September, 1945, the government announced in the newspaper that ‘The Republic of Indonesia happily welcomed the strike carried out by Indonesian seamen in Australia as a refusal to take part in the transportation of Dutch troops to reestablish the Dutch [East Indies] government in Indonesia.’ The government also thanked Australian laborers for their help related to the strike.\(^{77}\)

Another appeal was made by Republican authorities and the Indonesian press, this time focusing on the geographical proximity between Indonesia and the countries in the Pacific Ocean, in particular

\(^{75}\) ‘Akibat pemogokan’, *Penjoeloeh*, 27 September, 1945.

\(^{76}\) ‘Pemogokan bangsa Indonesia di Australia’, *Penjoeloeh*, 4 October, 1945.

\(^{77}\) ‘Pemogokan pelaoet kita disamboet oleh Pemerintah Republik Indonesia’, *Warta Indonesia*, 29 September, 1945.
Australia and New Zealand. The Indonesian authorities viewed Australia positively. Actions which they interpreted as support included Australia’s act of returning Indonesians to Indonesia, an Australian broadcast in which it was stated that Australia preferred to live with tens of million of Indonesians rather than tens of former Dutch colonial administrators, and the news that in several cities in Kalimantan, Indonesians and Australians had cooperated in fighting the Dutch who had tried to take control of the island.78 The KNI, on 26 November, 1945, announced publicly that the Indonesian authorities thanked the Australian people and government, as well as the Australian laborers, and asked the Australian people and government to continue to provide physical and spiritual support to the Indonesian nation which was struggling to defend an independent country and which harbored dreams of establishing the best possible relationship with the surrounding countries in general and with Australia and New Zealand.

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78 Stories about good cooperation between Indonesians and Australians in Kalimantan were Indonesian propagandists interpretation’s of the political situation in Kalimantan after August, 1945. Unlike in Surabaya, relationship between pro-Republic elements in Kalimantan and the Australian troops who were posted on the island to disarm Japanese soldiers were relatively good. Australian troops arrived in Kalimantan in October, 1945, and were welcomed by Indonesians sympathetic to the Republic. There were no anti-Allies incidents in Kalimantan, whereas anti-NICA actions immediately appeared among nationalist youth. The Australian troops, according to Indonesians, acknowledged the existence of the Republic of Indonesia in Kalimantan and were indifferent to the NICA. In one incident in Pontianak, West Kalimantan, in October, 1945, the NICA told the city’s Chinese population that the Republic was a continuation of the Japanese regime, which meant that the Chinese would continue to suffer. This propaganda led to violence between the Chinese and the natives. After a meeting between representatives of both the Chinese and the natives, a peace agreement was reached. Indonesian nationalists and Australian troops visited Pontianak City and surrounding areas together to inform the population about the agreement. This implied that the Dutch were provocateurs and trouble-makers, while Indonesian nationalists and Australian troops were partners in freeing Kalimantan from Dutch provocation. The story mentioned above and other similar stories were used by Indonesian propagandists as evidence of cooperation between the Republic and Australian troops in Kalimantan in fighting the Dutch. See Pasifikus Ahok, et. al., Sejarah Revolusi Kemerdekaan (1945-1949) Daerah Kalimantan Barat (Pontianak: Kanwil Depdikbud Provinsi Kalimantan Barat, 1992), pp. 44-52.
in particular’.\textsuperscript{79} The implication was that the stability of the region required an independent and sovereign Indonesia.

Looking to the Pacific Ocean was relatively new for Indonesians, having previously only had dealings with the Indian Ocean, the Arab world and Europe, but the immediate support of the Australians had led them to realize that they had a potential friend in the south. This new way of thinking was reinforced in pro-Republic newspapers, including \textit{Minggoean Merdeka}. In an article in the newspaper, a writer stressed that ‘even though Australia is small in terms of population, I believe that Australia deserves the most fragrant name within our nation’. He added that Australia ‘now becomes our friend, or in Communist terms of friendship, our “comrade”’.\textsuperscript{80}

\textit{The CENKIM’s International Propaganda}

Living outside Indonesia carried an added benefit for Indonesians sympathetic to and supportive of the Republic: it made Indonesians more aware of international politics and allowed contact with well-known figures and organizations abroad, backed by the availability of advanced communication media. Just like the PKI of Cairo, which sent letters to various countries throughout the world, the CENKIM, as of January, 1946, took a similar path shortly after the heaviest British bombardment in Surabaya. It sent telegrams to such politically influential countries as the US, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, as well as to small countries in Central America, including Haiti and Guatemala. They subsequently sent a telegram to the General Assembly of the UNO in London, asking for the UNO’s support for Indonesian independence.\textsuperscript{81} It should

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\textsuperscript{79} ‘Resoloesi II. Terima kasih pada Australia’, \textit{Berita Repoeblik Indonesia}, 1 December, 1945.
\textsuperscript{80} ‘Australia dan perdjoecangan Indonesia’, \textit{Minggoean Merdeka}, 22 June, 1946.
\textsuperscript{81} Mohamad Bondan, \textit{Genderang Proklamasi}, pp. 66-67
\end{flushright}

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be stressed once again that the CENKIM was not a branch of the Indonesian government.

A close relationship had been established between the CENKIM and organizations with similar missions all over the globe. The CENKIM had established contact with the American Committee for Indonesian Independence, headquartered in New York and led by Dirk Jan Struik, a Dutch Marxist and a lecturer of mathematics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The CENKIM sent various printed materials, mainly leaflets, covering recent events concerning the Dutch-Indonesian conflict for the American Committee, which in turn attempted to open the Indonesian question at the Security Council of the UNO as ‘the longer the British, Dutch and Japanese troops remain in Indonesia, the more of our people are killed for imperialist greed as they take our homeland away from us’. The American Committee also tried to mobilize public opinion in the US, including toward the American press, which scarcely reported on the conflict in Indonesia. The Committee believed that ‘only mass pressure will achieve a correct American foreign policy towards the Far East’. Apart from print materials like leaflets, the American Committee requested that the CENKIM send them copies of *Merdeka* newspaper, so as to gain more understand of the occurrences in Indonesia from a firsthand source.

The CENKIM also cooperated with the American Committee branch in Los Angeles by supplying information about events in Indonesia through letters, leaflets and other materials. This cooperation was not only in the interests of Indonesian independence, but also for the sake of Indonesian seamen who were in January, 1947,

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stranded in the US, possibly facing deportation. Following intensive communication with the CENKIM, the committee requested that the US government let these men remain. The committee organized letters to the delegates of the UNO and members of Congress, and drafted a plan for a mass demonstration in front of the Dutch Consulate in Los Angeles.\(^{84}\)

The CENKIM approached Fenner Brockway, the anti-war and anti-colonialism leader of the British Independent Labor Party (ILP), who was well-known in the UK for his sympathy to the independence struggles of colonized nations in Asia. In one of its letters to Brockway in early 1946, the CENKIM praised him highly for his vocal support of Indonesian independence: ‘your name will always live in Indonesia, and in the hearts of freedom-loving people everywhere’. In order to provide Brockway with information and opinions from the Indonesian side, the CENKIM enclosed a number of printed items, including its *Merdeka* booklet, reprints of Indonesian newspapers, and transcripts or synopses of Indonesian radio broadcasts. The CENKIM dubbed the booklet ‘a small token of our esteem and very sincere appreciation for all you have done’.\(^{85}\)

Similar points of appeal and the same booklet were sent to the British Centre Against Imperialism in London. This organization devoted itself to ending colonialism and imperialism throughout the world and was closely linked with the ILP and Brockway.\(^{86}\) Subsequently, the organizing secretary of the Centre, M. Ali, sent a

\(^{84}\) Ede Kemnitzer, Secretary of American Committee for Indonesian Independence in Los Angeles to the CENKIM in Brisbane, 23 January 1947: ANRI, Mohammad Bondan 1945-1968, Nr. 326.


\(^{86}\) Mohammad Bondan, Secretary of the CENKIM in Brisbane to the Organizing Secretary of British Centre against Imperialism in London, 12 August, 1946: ANRI, Mohammad Bondan, 1945-1968, Nr. 348.
letter to Tom Driberg, a British journalist who published regularly in the British newspaper Reynolds and was a member of British parliament representing the Labor Party. In his letter to Driberg, Ali included the English language pro-Republic magazine, The Voice of Free Indonesia. Ali referred in particular to articles on page 7 of the magazine which described Indonesia’s export products and requested, ‘Will you kindly cause to reproduce the article in the Reynolds and other papers, which will surely serve as valuable information for the general public in this country’. 87

The CENKIM and the Indonesian Authorities

With regard to pro-Republic propaganda in Australia, CENKIM was affiliated to both the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Information (Kempen). 88 The CENKIM informed the Republic, particularly the ministry of foreign affairs, about the contemporaneous Australian political landscape, and it gauged Australia’s public opinion regarding Indonesian matters. In return, the Kempen provided the CENKIM with printed propaganda materials containing information about the political situation in Indonesia.

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88 There were several efforts to establish connections between Indonesian authorities and the CENKIM, in particular to deal with three main issues: 1) repatriation-related matters, 2) the establishment of trade relations between Indonesia and Australia, and 3) pro-Republic propaganda in Australia. In late 1945 and 1946, the CENKIM had twice attempted to establish contact with the Indonesian authority in Jakarta, and later in 1946 in Yogyakarta, but without response. It was only when Australia’s sympathetic acts became widely known in Indonesia and when Australian businessmen began to seek trade opportunities with Indonesian merchants that connection and cooperation were established between the CENKIM and the Republican authorities. In Australia, the CENKIM helped connect Australian businessmen seeking to export goods to Indonesia with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. See Mohamad Bondan, Genderang Proklamasi, pp. 118-119.
In practice, however, the Republican government and the committee were not equal partners. The Kempen, for instance, instructed the CENKIM to put solid emphasis on specific issues in Australia. One instance is about the progress of the negotiations between Sjahrir and Van Mook about Indonesian authority in Java and Sumatra and Dutch power outside these two islands. Minister of Information Mohammad Natsir sent a booklet to the CENKIM in which he stressed that the Dutch authorities lacked the good intention to consider the Republic’s demand. What the Dutch had done, according to the minister, constituted an ‘aggression’ intended to extend the areas they occupied, and could lead to a colonial war. Natsir expected the CENKIM to emphasize this ‘actual situation’ in its propaganda activities. He told the CENKIM that from an international perspective, the position of the Dutch was unacceptable because the Dutch had violated the spirit of the Atlantic Charter, which addressed the right of freedom of any nation, claiming that they only wanted to negotiate based on ‘their obsolete constitution, maintaining formality and closing their eyes to all reality’.  

Cooperation between the CENKIM and the Kempen continued when the Kempen asked the CENKIM to produce propaganda for Australia. The Kempen asked for the CENKIM’s help in producing 27 copies of a phonograph record of the Indonesian national anthem, the plan being distribute them to the RRI all over Indonesia. In turn, the Kempen supplied the CENKIM with materials, including propagandistic ones, from Indonesia, such as Indonesian currency, stamps, and other printed materials. The CENKIM then distributed these materials to committees of Indonesian independence all over the

[^89]: Mohamad Bondan, *Genderang Proklamasi*, pp. 65, 72-76 and 139.

[^90]: It was neither known whether the CENKIM managed to produce such a phonograph record nor whether the record, if it ever existed, was eventually spread to RRI branches. The main RRI office in Jakarta has no copy of this record.
world. The paper currency, a symbol of the economic independence of Indonesia, was sent as far as London, Cairo, Bombay and New York.

In order to make the Indonesians in Australia, and the Australian public in general, aware of the latest political situation in Indonesia, the CENKIM disseminated copies of Indonesian newspapers. The English-language Republican publication *The Voice of Free Indonesia* was particularly preferred by the CENKIM, as it was already in English.⁹¹

*In Enemy Land: Perhimpunan Indonesia Campaign in the Netherlands*

The presence of people from the Indonesian archipelago in the Netherlands could be traced back to the 17th Century, but an increasing number of Indonesians came to the Netherlands at the beginning of the 20th century when hundreds of Indonesian students pursued higher education at the various universities and academies in the Netherlands.⁹² A small but influential number of Indonesian students in the first three decades of the 20th century propagated Indonesian nationalism through nationalist organizations, especially the Perhimpunan Indonesia (Indonesian Association, PI).⁹³ Several PI members returned to Indonesia after finishing

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⁹¹ Yet, according to Bondan, its translation of Dutch terms was sometimes incorrect. Bondan gave an example: an article in the magazine consisted of the term ‘vol bloed’ (sic) (full blooded), which referred to a purebred Dutch person or a ‘Belanda totok’. This term was inaccurately translated by the Indonesian author into ‘full bloody’ (violent Dutch) instead of ‘full blooded’. Yet, this translation perhaps indicated that a widespread negative sentiment toward the Dutch among the Indonesians had unconsciously reproduced hatred against the Dutch in various ways. See Mohamad Bondan, *Genderang Proklamasi*, p. 60 and 77-79.


their studies and, during the revolution, became the Republic of Indonesia’s top leaders, including Vice President Mohammad Hatta, who led the PI in 1926-1930. The rest remained in the Netherlands and faced Nazi occupation, taking part in clandestine anti-Nazi movements.

At the time, Indonesians in the Netherlands consisted of noblemen, intellectuals, students and temporary domestic servants. They mainly joined religious and political organizations. After the end of Nazi occupation in the Netherlands, the main organization for intellectual Indonesians in the Netherlands remained the PI, whose members were primarily nationalists and communists who had established contact with various groups in Dutch society, especially the Dutch communists.

Indonesians in the Netherlands had been able to receive news from Indonesia only with difficulty. According to Parlindoengan

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95 During Nazi occupation the PI cooperated with the independent left-wing resistance paper *Vrij Nederland* (VN). This cooperation continued after the occupation; one of PI’s leaders even became a weekly editor of the VN. See Inge van der Meulen, ‘1945-1949’, p. 331. Membership in PI increased after the end of World War 2 in May, 1945, both because of the popularity of PI as an anti-Nazi underground force during the occupation and because the PI had coupons for food distribution. Moreover, many Indonesians were now stranded in the Netherlands and they had to cooperate with each other to stay alive. After the Indonesian independence became widely known to Indonesians in the Netherlands in October, 1945, many wanted to return home, but the Dutch government would only repatriate them if they declared themselves citizens of the Indies. This requirement, however, was refused by the Indonesians, so they could not return home. See Parlindoengan Loebis, *Orang Indonesia di Kamp Konsentrasi Nazi: Otobiografi Parlindoengan Loebis* (Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2006), p. 248 and 251. Preventing Indonesians from returning home, especially the nationalists, was actually a concern for the Dutch government. According to Parlindoengan Loebis, then a PI member, Minister of the Colony J.H.A. Logemann once stated that ‘We are not stupid enough to return you all to Indonesia. With more intellectuals there, their struggle would absolutely become stronger’. See Parlindoengan Loebis, *Orang Indonesia di Kamp Konsentrasi Nazi*, p. 253. Only at the end of 1946 did the Dutch government arrange to repatriate Indonesians to Indonesia.
Loebis, a PI member, the Indonesians were not convinced about the reality of Indonesian independence until October, 1945. Moreover, Indonesians were suspicious of the Dutch. Only specific persons were trusted, such as the pro-independence Professor Willem Frederik Wertheim, an expert on Southeast Asia who in 1936-1942 was a lecturer at a law school in Batavia, and taught at the University of Amsterdam from 1946. When he returned to the Netherlands at the end of 1945, he told his Indonesian circle in the Netherlands about the drastic changes in Indonesia compared to the situation before the coming of the Japanese.\footnote{Parlindoengan Loebis, \textit{Orang Indonesia di Kamp Konsentrasi Nazi}, pp. 249-250. See also Wim Wertheim and Hetty Wertheim-Gijs Weenink, \textit{Vier Wendingen in Ons Bestaan: Indië Verloren, Indonesië Geboren} (Breda: De Geus, 1991), pp. 287-342.}

When news of Indonesian independence reached the Netherlands, these nationalists became the foremost pro-independence propagandists there. Some challenges hindered rapid spread of pro-independence sentiments, especially in the first months of the revolution. Written communication between Indonesians in the Netherlands and those in Australia, who by then were internationally known for their contribution via strikes against Dutch ships in Australia’s harbors, became increasingly difficult because the Dutch censored letters from abroad if they were addressed to Indonesian nationalist activists. Therefore the only plausible means of getting letters and other printed materials from such countries as Indonesia and Australia was by addressing them to Dutch persons who supported the Indonesian national movement. In addition, open meetings and mass rallies voicing support for the Republic were forbidden in the Netherlands.

Inge van der Meulen states that public opinion among the Dutch in the Netherlands in the spring of 1945 favored the restoration of colonial administration but with necessary adaptations to the current
situation, or in other words, ‘restoration and renewal’. This was only partially accepted by many nationalist Indonesians, in particular the PI. According to the PI, cooperation was necessary, but the continuation of colonialism unacceptable. The PI had publicly announced their vision about postwar Indonesia while the Dutch celebrated their freedom from Nazi occupation on 5 May, 1945, in Amsterdam. One of PI’s representatives, F. Harahap, was given the opportunity to deliver a speech. By taking Dutch freedom as inspiration, and referencing the involvement of Indonesians in the anti-Nazi movement in the Netherlands, he requested that ‘the Dutch people in the future also contribute to freeing Indonesia from its ruler, and that in the future Indonesia and the Netherlands, just like now, stand side by side’.

The conservatism of the Dutch people’s ideas about Indonesia was the PI’s main criticism. An anonymous author wrote in the PI’s official mouthpiece, the Dutch-language magazine *Indonesia*, in July, 1945, that the root of such conservatism was because ‘the Netherlands has a centuries-long colonial tradition’ and ‘the influence of pre-war colonial propaganda is still strong’. As an example of this enduring Dutch conservatism the author referred to a brochure in which Indonesians were underrated and humiliated in typical colonial wording. According to the PI Indonesians ‘like other peoples of the world also dream of justice and independence.’

The PI did not only use newspapers to disseminate their views; it also organized political activities. Inge van der Meulen listed a number

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of meetings with high ranking Dutch officials, popular gatherings, and celebrations, particularly during May, 1945, when the Netherlands was finally liberated from the Nazis. In that month PI leaders met with the Dutch Prime Minister, Pieter Sjoerds Gerbrandy, and Interior Minister Louis Joseph Maria Beel in Amsterdam. In Leiden, Indonesian nationalist activists organized the commemoration of 20 May, the day of birth of Boedi Oetomo (BO), an emancipatory organization in Java, as ‘Indonesian national day’. A well-informed audience might wonder at this since the BO aspired to the emancipation of Javanese aristocrats rather than the political independence of the Dutch Indies’ native population. However, the majority of the politically-conscious Indonesians in the Netherlands at the time were indeed aristocratic Javanese. Nationalist slogans were displayed on banners, as were excerpts from Queen Wilhelmina’s 7 December, 1942, speech about the plan to hold a conference with representatives of the Dutch colonies to discuss the creation of a Dutch commonwealth. Other events included public meetings in Amsterdam and Den Haag, and art nights in Amsterdam, Utrecht and Den Haag. On these occasions, PI leaders delivered their speeches, concentrating on the importance of the Netherlands to Indonesian people.\footnote{Inge van der Meulen, ‘1945-1949: Geleidelijke verwijdering’, p. 338.}

The PI’s manifesto of August, 1945, reiterated its demand for a discontinuation of colonial ties between the Netherlands and Indonesia. The PI sought a new and better world in which the independence and equality of all mankind must be core foundations. It demanded a round-table conference at which representatives of the Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam, and Curacao would participate in discussing the establishment of the commonwealth. The PI called for solidarity among all Indonesians with its entreaty to Indonesian organizations to form ‘an Indonesian national front’. In order to ensure the purity of the new Indonesian leadership, and perhaps also
to impress the anti-Japanese Dutch, the PI championed the complete removal of all traces of Japanese fascism in Indonesia.

Continuing this line of thought, the PI’s *Indonesia* likened Soekarno, Hatta and other Japanese collaborators with Wang Ching Wei, a Chinese leader in mainland China who had cooperated with the Japanese during the war. Mochtar, the author, acknowledged that these Indonesian collaborators had been truly nationalist and democratic, but had subsequently ‘deviated’ by becoming ‘Japanese henchmen’. Mochtar also acknowledged, however, that at the beginning of the Japanese occupation, cooperation with the Japanese was unavoidable, even acceptable. He blamed the pre-war colonial ties for preventing a close relationship between the ruled and the ruler, a rift later successfully exploited by the Japanese.  

The PI halfheartedly welcomed the proclamation of Indonesian independence. On one occasion they claimed:

> During their occupation of Indonesia, the Japanese appointed Ir. Soekarno as the chief of the advisory board for Java, thus making him a suitable figure to become ‘president’ of a Japanese-inspired ‘independent Indonesia’. Previously, at Japanese instigation, an Independence Committee was established in Java. In this light and in the light of Japanese capitulation, wanting to save their ‘honor’ with respect to the Indonesians, it is no wonder that Soekarno’s action [to proclaim the independence] is a continuation of his pro-Japanese politics during the occupation.  

The PI’s harsh stance toward former Japanese collaborators lasted less than one month. During late September and early October,
1945, the PI received telegrams from Indonesian nationalists, likely from the Committees of Independent Indonesia in Australia, the US, and Egypt, which fundamentally changed the PI’s point of view. They all declared their support to the Republic. For the PI, such telegrams were a confirmation that despite the collaborationist background of many Republican leaders, within two months they had garnered wide-reaching support among other nationalists as well as from the people at large. In *Indonesia*, published on 6 October, 1945, the PI acknowledged that despite its anti-fascist stance, it realized that ‘it is now clear that the authority of Soekarno is uncontested, and other democratic groups stand behind him!’. In addition, the PI called on the Dutch people to immediately make a decision about whether to remain conservative and reactionary or to accept Soekarno’s Republic. The Netherlands should take action soon, in particular in realizing Queen Wilhelmina’s speech, or, ‘the Netherlands will, perhaps forever, lose its opportunity’.\(^\text{103}\)

The PI’s campaign focused its policy on three issues: 1) calling upon Indonesians in the Netherlands to return home and take part in the independence struggle, 2) stressing a preference for negotiation over armed confrontation because it believed that committing violence against the supporters of independence would lead to retribution, and 3) stating that British troops should be deployed to Indonesia instead of Dutch troops, not just because this was the task Britain had been assigned to after the war ended but also because the British had very little vested interest in Indonesia as compared to the Dutch.\(^\text{104}\)

The PI conducted propaganda meetings with various groups in the Netherlands, such as Indonesians of Chinese descent and Indonesian seamen working in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Toward the seamen, the PI reviewed the latest developments in Indonesia and called on


\(^{104}\) Parlindoengan Loebis, *Orang Indonesia di Kamp Konsentrasi Nazi*, p. 249.
them to refuse to work on ships bringing Dutch troops and weapons to Indonesia.\textsuperscript{105}

\textit{Propaganda of Vereniging Nederland-Indonesië}

Another pro-Republican organization was the Vereniging Nederland-Indonesië (The Netherlands-Indonesia Association, VNI), established in August, 1945, and consisting primarily of members of the PI’s and Dutch people sympathetic to Indonesian independence. Membership included some of the PI’s main members such as Suripno, Maruto Darusman, Sunito and Setiajit. Among these was the member of Dutch Parliament for the Labour Party (PvdA), Lambertus Nicodemus Palar, who later became an Indonesian representative at the UN. Sympathetic Dutch members included Professor J.P.B. Josselin de Jong from Leiden University and former advisor for native affairs in the Indies, E. Gobée.

The main aim of the VNI was the liquidation of colonialism in the Indies, based on the Dutch Queen’s speech in December, 1942, on a vaguely formulated promise for more self-determination within an imperial context. It also promoted a peaceful solution rather than armed conflict. The VNI cooperated with the PI and various other groups in Dutch society, including political parties and labor unions. They disseminated their view through pamphlets in which they promoted their organization as the one for progressive people, in contrast with the conservatives who supported the continuation of the colonial order.\textsuperscript{106} The VNI even sent representatives to attend the World Federation of Democratic Youth congress held by Czechoslovakian government. Despite various objections by Dutch authorities, they arrived in Prague, where they were given the

\textsuperscript{105} Parlindoengan Loebis, \textit{Orang Indonesia di Kamp Konsentrasi Nazi}, p. 254.

\textsuperscript{106} Inge van der Meulen, ‘1945-1949: Geleidelijke verwijdering’, p. 332.
opportunity to speak about the existence of the Republic and stress their position as representatives of Indonesia. They spread their views further through various talks with leading Czechoslovakian politicians and newspaper editors they met during the congress.\textsuperscript{107}

In October, 1945, the VNI sent an open letter to the Dutch government, in which it expressed appreciation for the government’s policies of equality and volunteerism regarding Indonesia. It criticized, however, the government’s serious lack of commitment in executing its promises. The VNI suggested four critical points to be carried out at the time:

a. Appointing representatives from the national movement in Indonesia, as well as representatives of other social groups, such as Indonesian Chinese and Indo-Europeans, as members of the Indies Government,

b. With negotiation and with the help of Indonesians, reestablish authority in Indonesia,

c. Stipulating that at the Round Table Conference to be held soon, the nationalist movement be represented by democratic leaders that it chooses,

d. Providing facilities to the PI delegation as the representative of the nationalist democratic movement to fly to Indonesia within the coming days, in order to observe the situation in Indonesia and make contact with the leaders of the National Movement.\textsuperscript{108}

The rise of Sjahrir, well-known for his refusal to collaborate with the Japanese, as Indonesian Prime Minister in November, 1945, was warmly welcomed by the VNI as evidence of a democratic Indonesia. The VNI therefore reminded the Netherlands to open diplomatic talks with him soon. In a manifesto titled \textit{Aan het Nederlandsche volk...Aan het Indonesische volk} (To the Dutch people...To the Indonesian people) dated 26 January, 1946, the


VNI asked the Dutch government to avoid violence and to instead negotiate with the Indonesian government. It too demanded an unconditional acknowledgment of the right to self-determination of the Indonesians. In return, it should also be ensured, it said, that the current Indonesian authority was free from Japanese influence. By adhering to these stipulations, a definite result could be expected from the Round Table Conference. Copies of this manifesto, signed by leading Dutch and Indonesian figures, were forwarded by the VNI to the Dutch press.109

In April, 1946, the VNI started publishing a monthly magazine *De Brug-Djambatan* (The Bridge), in which the idea of Dutch-Indonesian cooperation was constantly reinforced. Headquartered on Keizergracht, Amsterdam, this magazine was distributed both in the Netherlands and in Indonesia.110 The picture on its cover was a bridge connecting a typical European tree on one bank of a river to a coconut tree from the tropical islands on the other (see picture 4.6.). According to VNI chairman Josselin de Jong in his introduction in the first edition of the magazine, his organization chose this picture because it symbolized ‘a bridge between two countries, two peoples’. These two peoples ‘have been connected for centuries’ but now the connection was likely to be broken. The VNI called on all Dutch and Indonesian people to together create ‘a new, reciprocal, treasured bond of friendship and cooperation between the Netherlands and Indonesia’ (*nieuwe, beiderzijds gewenste band van vriendschap en samenwerking tussen Nederland and Indonesië*).111

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110 *De Brug-Djambatan*, 1st edition, 1st year, April, 1946.
111 *De Brug-Djambatan*, 1st edition, 1st year, April, 1946.
In connection to the VNI’s call for negotiation instead of violence, one of the VNI’s most striking propaganda activities was a mass gathering held in Markthallen, Amsterdam, on Saturday, 2 February, 1946. The VNI claimed that 20,000 attended. The Nieuwsblad van het Noorden newspaper, circulated in the northeast of the Netherlands,

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112 De Brug-Djambatan, 1st edition, 1st year, April, 1946.
reported positively that ‘There was great enthusiasm among the attendees’. In his address, G.E. Poetiray from the PI entreated the Dutch people, ‘who had to fight for five years for their freedom, and now stand closer to the Indonesian people than ever’. Gerrit Jan van Heuven Goedhart, the head of the VNI and former Minister of Justice of the Dutch government-in-exile in London, as well as chief editor of Het Parool, seconded Poetiray’s call in his speech. He believed that mutual need and cooperation would end the conflict:

He, who says, “Indië lost, adversity born” cannot keep pace with the tempo of this time. The Netherlands, without the power of a state [zonder beinvloeding der staatsmacht] have built ports and transported goods all over the world, simply because it is really good at this. Why should we lose the Indies when we can give a price to the state power in the old form? This way we can win friendship from all [Indonesian] people, who understand that they could not live without western organization.

The meeting resulted in several resolutions, including the intention to solve the Dutch-Indonesian problem not with ‘armed violence’ (gewapend geweld) but with ‘peaceful consultation’ (vreedzaam overleg) with the Sjahrrir government, the recognition of Indonesia’s right to self-determination, and voluntary cooperation between the two countries. This was the only solution, according to the VNI, which could avoid ‘a war between a people and another people’. These resolutions were then sent by telegram to Premier Schermerhorn, Minister of Overseas territories J.H.A. Logemann, Van Mook and Sjahrrir. The 2 February public gathering had attracted such a great number of attendees that it was widely reported

113 ‘Indonesische manifestatie: 20.000 menschen in de Amsterdamsche Markthallen’, Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, 4 February 1946.

114 ‘Clark Kerr ontmoet Sjahrrir: Amerika bij de besprekingen?’, De Tijd: godsdienstig-staatkundig dagblad, 4 February 1946.


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in the Dutch media, which increased exposure and thus the chance of more popular support for the Republic in the Netherlands. In addition to radio broadcasts, the main Dutch newspapers, especially the leftist ones such as *Het Parool*, *Het Vrije Volk* and *De Waarheid*, also reported on the gathering.\(^\text{116}\)

The VNI believed in the power of the masses to influence public opinion and apply pressure to the Dutch government and parliament. Less than one year after it managed to gather thousands of people together in Amsterdam, it drafted a petition which was then signed by more than ten times the number of people who had attended the gathering. The petition, said to be signed by 233,408 people, was drafted by activists from mixed backgrounds: the chairman of the VNI Van Heuven Goedhart, secretary Riemens, and the Indonesian vice chairman of the organization Soehito. It was sent to high-ranking Dutch officials such as the premier, the Presidents of the Eerste and Tweede Kamer (the houses of parliament), and the Minister of Overseas Territories, and to the Dutch news service Aneta. This was made shortly after the draft of Linggardjati Agreement was signed by representatives of the Netherlands and Indonesia on 15 November, 1946; in that agreement, the Netherlands acknowledged the *de facto* authority of the Republic of Indonesia in Java, Sumatra and Madura. Although the petition said nothing about the agreement, it, as before, endorsed negotiations with the Republic.\(^\text{117}\)

\(^{116}\) Inge van der Meulen, ‘1945-1949: Geleidelijke verwijdering’, p. 352. Nevertheless, van der Meulen is doubtful that 20,000 was the correct number, as a large number of entrance tickets were actually not sold. Yet she stresses that there is no other assessment available with respect to the correct number of attendees.

\(^{117}\) It stated: ‘Undersigned wish an agreement with the equal Indonesia, in which the essential elements of democracy are guaranteed and Indonesia’s wish of freedom is satisfied. They request the government and people’s representatives to take all measures which could lead to the making of an agreement, and immediately urge a delegation of trusted men to be sent to Indonesia with full authority.’ See ‘Petitionnement’, *Het Dagblad*, 19 November, 1946.
Pro-Republic Dutch Figures: The Case of Frans Goedhart

The issue about how Indonesia should be reorganized after the Second World War had been publicly discussed in the Netherlands during the Nazi occupation. The discourse about the future of Indonesia appeared most notably in one of leading resistance newspapers during the occupation, Het Parool. According to his biographer, the historian Madelon de Keizer, Frans Goedhart, founder of this leftist newspaper, had campaigned since before the war for maintaining a political relationship between the Netherlands and the Dutch Indies under the Kingdom of the Netherlands. He reminded the Dutch, however, that self-government was a requirement.118

When the Republic was declared and this became known in the Netherlands, Goedhart’s view toward Indonesia was largely influenced by his newspaper’s correspondent in Java, Jacques de Kadt, who had been interned in a Japanese camp for civil internees during the occupation. De Kadt himself had a good relationship with Soetan Sjahrir, who guaranteed his safety after he was released from the camp. De Kadt was apparently impressed by this socialist politician who was not tainted by collaboration with the Japanese. De Kadt believed that in the middle of the chaos during the bersiap period Sjahrir had appeared to be a capable leader, well able to handle the situation.119 His support to the revolution and the Republic of Indonesia was seconded by Goedhart. When the socialist Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA) was established in February, 1946, and he became a member, Goedhart underlined that the party should make it its


utmost concern the solution to the Dutch-Indonesian problem. He also countered views widely spread in Dutch public opinion—in particular through the press—which claimed that the Indonesians were anti-Netherlands, that the Republic was made in Japan, and that Java was in a state of extreme chaos.\textsuperscript{120}

It was through Frans Goedhart and other \textit{Het Parool} journalists that constructive aspects of Indonesian nationalism were spread to the Dutch public amidst the rife associations of Indonesian nationalism and the Fascist Japanese. The proximity between \textit{Het Parool} and the Amsterdam-based weekly newspaper \textit{De Baanbreker} enabled the dissemination of a good image of the Republic, as represented by one primary figure: Prime Minister Sjahrir.\textsuperscript{121} In December, 1945, \textit{De Baanbreker} published a picture of Sjahrir along with quotations from his letters written from pre-war exile in Dutch Nieuw Guinea. Sjahrir’s background as a former law student in Leiden (just like Frans Goedhart), his socialist sentiments, and his anti-Japanese image, or in short his extreme contrast with President Soekarno who was regarded as a Japanese collaborator and anti-Western figure, strengthened his image as someone with whom the Dutch could speak about the future of Indonesia. Sjahrir was also well-connected to Dutch Prime Minister Schermerhorn.

Still in December, 1945, a complete version of Sjahrir’s letters from exile was published by De Bezige Bij, a publishing company in Amsterdam founded in the anti-Nazi resistance. The PI reinforced the positive image of Sjahrir by translating Sjahrir’s influential booklet, \textit{Perdjoeangan Kita} (\textit{Onze Strijd} in the Dutch version) in cooperation with \textit{Vrij Nederland}\textsuperscript{122} into Dutch and publishing 9,000 copies. This

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\textsuperscript{120} Madelon de Keizer, \textit{Frans Goedhart}, p. 170.
\textsuperscript{122} During the German occupation of the Netherlands (1940-1945), the \textit{Vrij Nederland} (Free Netherlands) newspaper played an important role as one of
booklet apparently caught the Dutch public’s interest, as, in February, 1946, about 17,000 more copies were printed. According to Sjahrir’s biographer, Rudolf Mrázek, 17,000 copies was ‘an unusually high number for the time’.\textsuperscript{123}

The Dutch public received Sjahrir’s thoughts with interest. A reviewer named K.A.H. Midding, in \textit{Uitzicht} on 5 and 13 February, 1946, praised Sjahrir when he claimed that Sjahrir could potentially ‘make the Indonesian people conscious of themselves, might lead the Indonesians towards the position of equivalence with other peoples’.\textsuperscript{124} Meanwhile, another commentator, L. de Bourbon, in his article ‘\textit{Indonesische Overpeinzingen}’, published in \textit{Vrij Nederland} on 23 February, 1946, praised Sjahrir’s booklet as a piece written by a ‘very talented man, who had studied and learned much’.\textsuperscript{125}

Since 1946 Frans Goedhart had been a member of the Dutch House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal) for the PvdA party. In this capacity he promoted negotiation with the Republic rather than armed action. When several Tweede Kamer members urged the need to fight what they saw as Indonesian nationalists pursuing totalitarianism (according to \textit{De Waarheid} newspaper, the parliament members thought that ‘De eisen van de nationalisten zijn “totalitair”’), Goedhart countered by stressing the leading resistance presses, along with the newspaper operated by the Dutch Communist Party, \textit{De Waarheid} (The Truth), and the newspaper published by the Dutch Labour Party, \textit{Het Parool} (The Password). Orthodox Christians had published \textit{Vrij Nederland} since 31 August, 1940. Its anti-Nazi ideas led the arrest of its members by the Nazi police, the Sicherheitspolizei (Security Police). See Jeroen Dewulf, \textit{Spirit of Resistance: Dutch Clandestine Literature during the Nazi Occupation} (New York: Camden House, 2010), pp. 70-71. And, once again, Jennifer Foray’s \textit{Visions of Empire}.

\textsuperscript{123} Rudolf Mrázek, \textit{Sjahrir}, p. 292.

\textsuperscript{124} Rudolf Mrázek, \textit{Sjahrir}, p. 293. English translation of the Dutch quotation is from Mrázek.

\textsuperscript{125} Rudolf Mrázek, \textit{Sjahrir}, p. 293. English translation of the Dutch quotation is from Mrázek.
that ‘overleg’ (consultation) should be used first. He criticized the Dutch troops preparing to deploy to Indonesia as having no spirit of consultation and being instead consumed by the idea of fighting the Indonesians, as promoted by the Dutch Minister of War, Johannes Meynen.\footnote{‘Indonesië in de Tweede Kamer: reactie dreigt met “inmenging” in regeringsbeleid’, \textit{De Waarheid}, 16 January 1946.} He demanded more understanding from the Dutch people as he saw that nationalism in Indonesia was ‘always underestimated’ and that the nationalists’ demands were ‘not unreasonable’.\footnote{‘Indië in de Kamer: slechte voorlichting gecritiseerd’, \textit{Het Dagblad: Uitgave van de Nederlandsche Dagbladpers te Batavia}, 18 January, 1946.} These views, along with the debate in parliament about the Indonesian question, were reported widely by the Dutch press in the Netherlands and the Dutch-language press in Jakarta, extending the reach of the views of these sympathetic Dutch.\footnote{‘Indië in de Tweede Kamer’, \textit{Het Nieuws: Algemeen Dagblad}, 17 January, 1946; ‘Indië in de Kamer’, \textit{Het Dagblad: Uitgave van de Nederlandsche Dagbladpers te Batavia}, 17 January, 1946.} It was even reported as far as Surinam, another Dutch colony.\footnote{‘Indië in de Tweede Kamer’, \textit{De West: Nieuwsblad uit en voor Suriname}, 18 January, 1946; ‘Debatten over Indië’, \textit{Amigoe di Curacao}, 18 January, 1946.}

On 15 June, 1946, Goedhart flew to Indonesia as a reporter for \textit{Het Parool} with the mission to collect firsthand information about what actually happened in Indonesia. He also intended to counter the position taken by a majority in Dutch Parliament that Indonesia would remain under the Kingdom of the Netherlands while a degree of autonomy would be granted. This of course largely represented the aspiration of colonial officials and not of the Indonesian republican leadership, Goedhart’s interpretation of events in Jakarta was reinforced by his contacts, mainly Republican officials, including Premier Sjahrir and Minister of Information Natsir. He also spoke with Dutch persons sympathetic to the Republic who in 1946 had established a group called Progressieve Groep van Nederlanders,
consisting mainly of pro-Republic Dutch officials and scholars, including the well-known lecturer W.F. Wertheim.\textsuperscript{130}

Goedhart’s presence in Java raised concern among the Dutch authorities in Indonesia because of his leftist tendencies. Nevertheless he was able to attend as a journalist a Dutch-initiated conference which had invited representatives of East Indonesia to discuss the formation of a federal state. This was the Malino Conference, in South Sulawesi. He was one of two Dutch newspapermen there; the other was L.F. Tymstra from the Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau (ANP).\textsuperscript{131} On 2 August his interview with the representative of Sulawesi, Nadjamoeddin, appeared in \textit{Het Parool}.\textsuperscript{132} A shorter version of the interview was later published in an Indonesian language newspaper, \textit{Soember Penerangan}, on 21 August, 1946. Goedhart’s interview focused on Nadjamoeddin’s idea about the relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia. Nadjamoeddin, according to Goedhart, preferred an alliance between the countries in which matters were mutually handled and where both people’s position was equal, ‘like friends’.\textsuperscript{133}

According to De Keizer, upon his return to the Netherlands in September, 1946, at a press conference at Schiphol Airport, Goedhart emphasized the contrasting public opinions in Indonesia and in the Netherlands. Whereas he saw willingness to cooperate in solving the conflict among Indonesians, he could not find the same thing in the Netherlands. He felt that two things he had observed during his travels in Indonesia should be exploited by the Dutch in negotiating their interests with the Indonesians. The first one was the Indonesian

\textsuperscript{130} Madelon de Keizer, \textit{Frans Goedhart}, pp. 171-3.
\textsuperscript{131} ‘Ratoe-ratoe doenia dikirim ke Malino’, \textit{Flores}, 3 July, 1946.
\textsuperscript{132} Madelon de Keizer, \textit{Frans Goedhart}, p. 173.
\textsuperscript{133} ‘Perhoeboengan baroe dengan orang2 Indonesia’, \textit{Soember Penerangan}, 21 August, 1946.
people’s love for the Netherlands and the second was their need of the Dutch expertise.

He stated that the Republic was able to accept criticism. Goedhart himself pointed at his own criticism of the strong influence of the Japanese character on the Indonesian nationalist movement. According to him the Republican official he talked to accepted this assessment.\textsuperscript{134}

Frans Goedhart rewrote nine articles; under the pseudonym of Pieter ‘t Hoen, he had published previously in \textit{Het Parool} about his experiences in Indonesia. He added new material to create a 126-page book entitled \textit{Terug uit Djokja} (Return from Yogyakarta), published in January, 1947 (see picture 4.7.). According to De Keizer, the main point of the book was to eliminate misunderstanding between the Netherlands and Indonesian nationalists, in particular after the failure of Hoge Veluwe conference in April, 1946, at which the Netherlands had demanded that the Republic remain a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, a proposal definitively refused by the Republic. De Keizer mentioned that there were several key issues which Goedhart brought to the Dutch public which should have been considered by the Dutch, including that Indonesian leaders such as Sjahrir, Hatta and Sjarifoeddin had been able to coordinate the politics and had avoided violent side effects of the revolution—and that establishing a state under the Kingdom of the Netherlands was unrealistic.

Frans Goedhart convinced his fellow countrymen that the idea that Indonesia was in complete chaos was totally false. He mentioned a talk with several Dutch officials, who had been in Indonesia for dozens of years, in Hotel des Indies in Dutch-occupied Jakarta. They had expressed surprise hearing Goedhart’s plan to travel to the Republic’s capital, Yogyakarta. That place for them was ‘the center of the Republic, the fascist Republic, the castle of extremists and terrorists, the Japanese accomplices, the robbers and arsonists, the white haters,\textsuperscript{134}

\textsuperscript{134} Madelon de Keizer, \textit{Frans Goedhart}, pp. 180
who would push all Hollanders to the sea, if we let them go their way’. They felt that a Dutchman who would go there must be ‘een halve krankzinnige’ (half mad). But in Terug uit Djokja, Goedhart refuted these claims. He told the readers that these Dutchmen were simply ‘victims of delusions of an untrusted propaganda, which is not only trying to intoxicate Batavia but the whole of the Netherlands’ (het slachtoffer van waanvoorstellingen van een onbetrouwbare propaganda, die niet alleen Batavia, maar geheel Nederland heeft pogen te vergiftigen). Goedhart saw that these people listened only to stories spread by those whose contacts with the Republican side took place on the battlefield, and were characterized by atrocities and revenge. They, according to Goedhart, ‘had apparently never had contact with Indonesian intellectuals’. Goedhart was sure that meeting with these Indonesian intellectuals, who now ran the country, would completely destroy the perception of the Republic as total mess. He had met dozens of the Republic’s leaders, and he, in contrast to the negative pictures about the Republic drawn by many Dutch people in Java, saw them as ‘wise, reasonable and nice people’.

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136 Pieter ‘t Hoen, Terug uit Djokja, pp. 5-7.
The book reached both the Dutch and the Indonesian public. Goedhart sent 500 copies to the representative of the Progressieve Groep in Jakarta and one copy to President Soekarno. The book

had a strong impact, which for Goedhart himself also had a negative aspect. He received abusive letters full of insinuations and threats. He felt that these critical voices equated him—with his unpopular claims that the Republic-held territories were not in complete chaos—with a Bolshevik, a fascist, even a traitor.  

_Dutch Violence and Indonesian Students’ Propaganda_

Late 1946 saw a significant decrease in the Indonesian nationalists’ propaganda in the Netherlands due to the repatriation of the majority of Indonesians to their homeland. One consequence was the cessation of _Indonesia_ magazine, whose contributors chose to return home. Nationalist propaganda in the Netherlands arose again in 1948, though, as it was led by the remaining PI activists. The Dutch decided to launch a second military offensive on 19 December, 1948. The action, known as Operatie Kraai or Operation Crow, generated a sharp response from Indonesians, not only in Indonesia but also in the Netherlands, who interpreted this as irrefutable proof of Dutch wrongdoing in Indonesia. Associations of Indonesians in the Netherlands in Amsterdam, Leiden and Den Haag, under the leadership of the PI, established Gaboengan Perkoempoelan Perkoempoelan Indonesia (The Association of Indonesian Organizations, GPPI). In January, 1949, the GPPI held a mass gathering, attended by 150 Indonesians, in Den Haag. Speakers criticized the Dutch offensive in Indonesia, stating that Republic of

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139 In addition to the Indonesian independence, one other thing that drew the attention of most Indonesians in the Netherlands was their repatriation to their homeland. As a response to the increasing demand from Indonesians in the Netherlands to be returned to Indonesia after the war ended, the Dutch government in October, 1946, promised a ship named Weltevreden to repatriate 900 Indonesians and ‘de in Indië gowertelden’ (those rooted in the Indies, or those who felt a special tie with the Indies). Almost all Indonesians welcomed and used this opportunity. See Inge van der Meulen, ‘1945-1949: Geleidelijke verwijdering’, p. 360.
Indonesia had been ‘raped’. A resolution was taken pleading for breaking off of all relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands. A telegram was sent to Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in New Delhi, where he was hosting an all-Asia conference. The message stressed that ‘All Indonesian organizations in the Netherlands are of the opinion that Dutch aggression has rendered every political relationship within the Netherlands-Indonesian Union completely unacceptable. May Asian solidarity be expressed at the conference in New Delhi’. This point of view was also to be disseminated to the UN and sympathetic countries.¹⁴⁰

Some Indonesian students at Dutch universities responded to the Dutch military operation by announcing in February, 1949, their refusal to accept scholarships from the Dutch government. They discontinued their studies in the Netherlands. This strike was made public by the students and the pro-Republic Indonesian organizations, in particular the GPPI and the sympathetic committee Hulp aan Indonesië (Help for Indonesia). The striking students contacted the press, and the Leidse Dagblad, a newspaper in Leiden, reported on this strike in one edition. The committee Hulp aan Indonesië, in the meantime, dubbed these students ‘Indonesian victims’ (Indonesische slachtoffers), implying that they were the injured party and the Dutch government was the perpetrator. It also called for material and moral support from the people, including Dutch society. At one of its public meetings, the GPPI announced that it had ‘great sympathy’ for the students’ decision and announced its willingness to ‘grant all possible help’ to them. It even called on its members to strike by taking no courses at any university or academy in the Netherlands for a week, starting on 18 February, 1949, ‘in order to give concrete form to

this expression of sympathy and in order to protest the still ongoing colonial war waged by the Netherlands’.  

Relationships among students and ideological closeness between them seemed to have surpassed the limits of nationality. The Pericles, a Dutch student organization with a leftist orientation, was approached by the committee Hulp aan Indonesië, whose members were mainly communists. The Amsterdam student organization Pericles then announced their support for the strike undertaken by the Indonesian students through an announcement in *De Waarheid*, the newspaper of the Communistische Partij van Nederland (Dutch Communist Party, CPN). Pericles stated that it supported a week-long strike of Indonesian students and called on students in Amsterdam to ‘attend no lecture this week’. It also tried to approach the University of Amsterdam’s professors to ask them to cease giving lectures that week. It announced various support stratagems, and called for financial contributions for the Indonesian students. It further invited students to a meeting to discuss this matter at Café De Kroon in Amsterdam. 

The largest propagandistic activity related to this was perhaps the Indonesian Art Night held by the GPPI on 6 March, 1949, in the building Amicitia in Den Haag. More than 350 people were in attendance, including 70 Dutch people, a relatively large proportion. Despite its title as an art night, the only art performances presented were *kroncong* (a musical style combining Indonesian and Western musical instruments) and Javanese dance; most of the occasion

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142 NL-HaNA, 2.10.14, inv. nmr. 2654. A letter from J. Hazenberg on behalf of the Head of Central Security Service in Den Haag to Dutch Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of Overseas Territories, entitled ‘Stakende Indonesische Studenten’, 22 February, 1949, including a copy of an article in *De Waarheid* newspaper, entitled ‘Actie van “Pericles” voor Indonesische Studenten: 7 Dagen Staking aan Universiteit’, 19 February, 1949.
was taken up by political messages which symbolized an ultimate political rally to consolidate the opinions of Indonesian students all over the Netherlands.

At this time, speeches were delivered which criticized the Dutch military’s aggression. An Indonesian speaker, Zain Nasution, called upon all attendees to sing ‘Indonesia Raya’ together. Another speaker, Soenan Hamzah from the PI, called on the attendees to dig deeply into their pockets to support the students. Sumabrata, a student from Utrecht who had been involved in the strike, was the most strident speaker. He condemned the Dutch military offensive and accused the Dutch of violating the Linggardjati and Renville Agreements and of continued colonial exploitation. In his words it now was ‘impossible’ for Indonesians to trust the Dutch. Sumabrata said that ‘the Dutch government has committed inhuman misdeeds toward the Indonesian population’. He finally called for solidarity among Indonesian students in the Netherlands, stressing that those who did not take part in this action ‘shall bear the consequences in the near future’ and would no longer be trusted. In other words, inactive Indonesian students would be excluded from the Indonesian communities in the Netherlands.¹⁴³

Conclusion

Pro-Republic propaganda abroad was crucial to the existence of the Republic of Indonesia in its efforts to garner essential support from the international world. Moreover, it was important because it was independently begun and carried out by nationalist Indonesians living abroad, rather than strategically planned and extensively sponsored by Republican authorities in Indonesia. These volunteers were basically

on their own and had to provide for everything themselves. Financial support from the Republican authorities was largely nonexistent and the same applied to the provision of propaganda materials and media professionals. Consequently, the propaganda to support the new-born state abroad did not necessarily mean that the state backed such efforts in any concrete way. Impromptu Indonesian propaganda abroad was not under state control. Communications and relationships developed between the Republic and the Indonesian nationalists abroad, but they were not hierarchical and occurred intermittently. Given these shortcomings, in the period of the struggle as a whole the primary source of direction concerning propaganda was not from the Republican authorities, but the self-initiative of the already pro-independence Indonesians living in foreign countries, largely backed by sympathetic opinion-makers in the respective countries, particularly party heads (leftist parties in the case of Australia and the Netherlands), leaders of worker organization, religious gurus, progressive intellectuals and media editors. Some development is evident, such as the propagandists’ effort to gain instructions from the Republican leadership. This was, however, rare.

Pro-Republic propaganda abroad was determined by shared ideals concerning Indonesian independence and a solidarity which had flourished among the nationalist activists in Indonesia, the Netherlands and the Arab world since long before the proclamation. The Second World War in Europe and the Pacific War in Asia became catalysts which strengthened this nationalistic view despite the lack of communication caused by these wars. The Soekarno-proclaimed Republic of Indonesia met with mixed reactions among Indonesians abroad, from firm refusal by the Indonesian nationalists in the Netherlands because of Soekarno’s collaborator background to immediate support from the nationalists in Australia, who were able to follow and understand the war situation in Indonesia more closely. Intercontinental communication between these nationalists proved
an effective way to ensure that the Republic obtained increasing support abroad.

Political dynamics in Indonesia, the Netherlands, Australia and the Arab world also contributed to the increasingly positive light in which Indonesians abroad saw the Republic. In Australia, the Dutch act of loading ships intended as bringers of humanitarian help to Indonesia with weapons sparked severe opposition from the Indonesian wharf workers, a situation immediately utilized by Indonesian nationalists in the country to add weight to their opposition to a Dutch return to Indonesia. Meanwhile, although Dutch society in the Netherlands endorsed cooperation with the Indonesians to determine their postwar future, the Dutch government was unwilling to share responsibility. The Dutch parliament’s hesitancy at a time when popular backing for the Republic was rampantly gathering speed (although the Dutch government was even more prepared to negotiate than large parts of the public were) triggered a radical change of opinion among Indonesian nationalists in the PI, from anti-Soekarno to pro-Soekarno and his declared Republic. In Egypt, existing anti-British sentiment made the locals receptive to the Republic. Overall, one can see by correlating the prevalent public opinions in each country that pro-Republic propaganda abroad succeeded, to a large extent, in raising international awareness, understanding, and recognition of and sympathy for the Republic and its supporters.

Republican authorities neither initiated nor financially backed Indonesian propaganda abroad, due to many hampering factors, so it was remarkable that it was so successful. The Dutch, meanwhile, prevented the Republic from finding much support abroad in any way they could, employing sea blockades, monopolizing communications, even resorting to searches and confiscation. The Dutch wanted to create the impression that what happened in Indonesia was a Dutch internal affair which they would be able to solve without involving foreign countries. Through pro-Republic propaganda abroad, carried
out voluntarily by Indonesian nationalists, the Republic, despite its extremely limited role, managed nonetheless to overcome this obstacle and to garner international support.

The impact of this support is tremendous as it changed attitudes abroad. In the beginning of the struggle, there was a belief outside Indonesia that the Republic of Indonesia was identical with the Japanese collaborators, as depicted in Dutch propaganda. With the intensification of pro-Republic propaganda abroad, there appeared within several months various supportive speeches, written works, and actions by foreigners as well as Indonesians overseas. In Indonesia, such international support boosted the confidence of the Republican leadership and other nationalists (e.g., journalists) as they believed that their struggle were now internationally backed. This can be seen from a variety of references to international support to the Republic in, among others, Republican leaders’ addresses and newspapers’ articles. In a short period of time, propaganda abroad turned the barely-known ‘Indonesian people’ into ‘the Republic of Indonesia’, and their aspiration to be independent became well-known, gaining support among foreign populations, political bodies and politicians, and the mass media.