The southeastern extremity of Asia consists of a great peninsula and, off its tapering tip, a vast archipelago. The islands of the latter form an almost continuous mass of land, with only narrow straits separating its parts, so that the entire area—Southeast Asia and Indonesia combined—can be regarded as an interconnected unit from one end to the other. It is divided, however, into five distinct countries. Across the thick top of the peninsula, from west to east, lie Burma, Siam, and Indo-China, all almost equal in size. Malaya, much smaller in area than any of these, occupies the long, slender lower end of the peninsula. South of the narrow Malacca Strait begins the enormous island realm of Indonesia, which then stretches a full three thousand miles to the east, where it ends in New Guinea.

A great right angle drawn on the map, about three thousand miles long on each side, would approximately cradle the whole area. Its location on the equator, whence it extends thirty degrees north and ten degrees south, makes the climate very warm; and the only changes of season are between the wet and the dry times of the year, which follow the shifting of the monsoon winds. Although there is considerable local variation, the wet monsoon, bringing extremely heavy rainfall, generally prevails north of the equator during the months of the American summer and south of the line during the months of the American winter.

The Indian Ocean washes the southern shores of Indonesia, whose eastern border cuts across the middle of New Guinea; to the north lie the Philippine Islands. Much more important, however, are the land borders. Running along the western boundaries of Burma, and the northern limits of Burma, Siam, and Indo-China, rise some of the highest and most nearly impassable mountain ranges on earth. These have isolated Southeast Asia from the rest of Asia, and have made of it a region unto itself, remote and hard of access. These
towering heights have had an even more significant function in terms of peoples and culture. Through them a few rivers have cut deep gorges from Tibet and China: the Chindwin, Irrawaddy, Salween, Menam, Mekong, and Red. These have let people in, but not very many at a time, so that Southeast Asia has never been subjected to mass invasions, but rather to small and slow infiltrations through the tortuous passages. Those who did get in have had a chance to retain and develop their own cultures, which have a character distinct from any others in Asia. China, for all its gigantic expansive power, has never been able to press conquest beyond the mountain barrier, except, for a period in the past, along the narrow coastal corridor leading into Tonkin and Annam on the shores of the China Sea. India, the other large neighboring country, to the west, has likewise been kept from any possibility of conquest here.

This is not to say that influences from these two great centers of civilization have not penetrated into the area. Chinese culture has made a strong impress upon Indo-China, particularly; and Indian civilization, far more than Chinese, spread steadily and strongly, for centuries, over almost the entire region. But the spread was gradual, coming in largely by way of the sea, and in driblets rather than mass inundations; so that the indigenous cultures absorbed Indian elements selectively, and never lost their own character. The history has been one of cultural diffusion from China and India, much more importantly the latter, and not one of cultural conquest. The consequence is that Southeast Asia and Indonesia have remained a true culture area, with a nature of its own, well marked off from all others.

The most striking characteristic of this isolated and protected culture area is its amazing diversity. There is no other part of the world where the range of racial and cultural differentiation is so wide. Many remote sections of swamp and mountain are still roamed by scattered bands of nomads, whose ways of life are as primitive as any found on earth. There are vast regions on the mainland and in the islands where tribes of thousands are now existing under conditions approximating those of prehistoric Europe. There are nations of millions who live in settled villages and towns, carrying on highly developed agriculture, skilled in intricate handicrafts, and following the beliefs and rituals of the world's great religions.
And there are scores of large cities with modern buildings and transportation systems, and populations who are in full contact with the currents of world affairs. In short, virtually the entire range of levels of human culture can be found in Southeast Asia and Indonesia, from the most primitive to the most advanced.

The racial diversity is also great. Pygmy Negritos and dwarf Australoid groups of the Vedoid type stand at one end of the scale, and the progression runs thence through dark-skinned Negroids, brown peoples of mixed Caucasoid and Mongoloid derivation, and lighter folk of virtually pure Mongoloid stock. All of the three main races of mankind—Negroid, Caucasoid, and Mongoloid—as well as the problematical archaic Australoid, are represented.

The size of the entire area, excluding the sea, is about 1,550,000 square miles, half that of the United States. Indonesia is the largest of the five countries, comprising nearly one-half of the combined area, slightly under 750,000 square miles. The three northern mainland countries compare closely in size, their approximate areas being as follows: Burma, 260,000; Siam, 200,000; and Indo-China, 280,000 square miles. Malaya, the smallest, is only a little over 50,000 square miles. The division of population between Indonesia and the four mainland countries is also about equal; of the combined total of approximately 130,000,000—nearly that of the United States—the islands of the Indies have 70,000,000. The remainder is divided roughly as follows: Burma, 17,000,000; Siam, 16,000,000; Indo-China, 25,000,000; and Malaya, 5,500,000.

In any one of these countries except Malaya, the indigenous population—the "natives"—are the great majority. The only foreign groups who anywhere figure importantly are, as might be expected, Chinese and Indians. The Chinese are most numerous in Malaya, where they have actually come to outnumber the native Malays themselves, and comprise almost 2,500,000 of the total 5,500,000. Their next greatest concentration is in Siam, where, although the statistics are disputed, they are said to total around 2,000,000, or about 12 percent of the entire population. The Chinese in Indonesia number approximately 1,500,000 which, though a considerable figure, is only 2 percent of the total population. In Indo-China and Burma, the Chinese are numerically unimportant, with slightly over 400,000 and slightly under 200,000, respectively.
The only countries where Indians are present in large numbers are Burma and Malaya. Burma has, or rather had before the recent war, a little more than 1,000,000 of them; while Malaya has around 750,000. Europeans, though extremely important politically and economically, are very few numerically anywhere in the area. The largest concentration of them is, or was before the recent war, in Indonesia, but even here the total was only about 250,000. In each of the other countries their population was quite inconsiderable, the approximate pre-war figures being: for Indo-China, 40,000; for Malaya, 30,000; for Burma, 30,000; and for Siam, a mere 2,000. Indonesia also had the largest number of Eurasians, who, it has been estimated, formed well over half, probably close to 70 percent, of the persons classed as Europeans. The Dutch, like the French, but unlike the British, gave these people of mixed European and native ancestry the legal status of Europeans; and social intercourse and intermarriage between Netherlanders and Eurasians were freer than such relations in other colonial countries. Burma and Malaya had 20,000 and 12,000 Eurasians, respectively, and the British placed them in a separate legal and political category, drawing strict lines of distinction in social relations as well. The number of Eurasians in Indo-China was not known precisely, but, since native women were frequently taken as concubines by the French, the mixed-blood population was probably quite large, at a rough estimate around 10,000. Here, as in Indonesia, the Eurasians, after 1928, had the legal status of Europeans; indeed, the French went further than the Dutch and gave them French citizenship; but social discrimination against them, though less marked than in the British possessions, was greater than in Indonesia. Siam had only a small number of Eurasians; but, as in most of Southeast Asia and Indonesia, intermarriage between Chinese and natives was very common.

With the native population so large and in such overwhelming majority as compared with the foreign elements, it might be expected that the former would be in political and economic control of their countries. But, except in Siam, this is not so. Indonesia, Indo-China, Burma, and Malaya are colonial possessions, that is, lands subjected to conquest and consequent control and exploitation,

1 Burma became an independent republic in January, 1948.
of both people and resources, by outside powers. Southeast Asia, with Indonesia, is one of the two great areas in the world where colonialism exists, the other being Africa. In both cases, the same combination of factors, historical and cultural, brought about the lowly status of these areas as compared with the independent countries of the earth. They were attractive economically; they were weak politically and militarily; they were culturally different from and, in the Western sense, more backward than the nations of the Occident; and their people were racially different from and, again in the estimation of the West, inferior to Europeans and Americans.

The first of the countries in the area to be subjugated by a Western power was the largest, Indonesia, or, as it was commonly known until recently, the East Indies. This island area, in the sixteenth century, when European explorers came upon it, was undergoing a tremendous revolution. Starting ten centuries before this, a great number of petty kingdoms had arisen in the archipelago, under the influence of adventurers from India. Before the Indians arrived, the native peoples had never evolved the centralized state form of political organization. These new kingdoms passed through countless wars with one another until finally, in the early fourteenth century, one of them, Modjopahit in Java, had performed the remarkable feat of achieving control over all of them. The organization of the empire was feudal, each of the princes of the subject states standing in the relationship of vassalage to the emperor. By the time the Europeans arrived, some two hundred years later, the great empire was in the last stages of breaking up, as a consequence of successive revolts of the vassal princes. Religion played a part in this catastrophe, for the common signal for revolt was the conversion of a prince to Islam; whereupon what might have been a mere uprising against the suzerain took on the guise of a holy war against the Hinduist center of Modjopahit.

The Europeans—first the Portuguese and Spanish and then the Dutch and British—thus encountered, not a unified empire, but a checkerboard of small states, newly independent and mutually hostile. It was not difficult to conduct a campaign of conquest under such conditions, for one prince could be played off against another, to the ultimate ruin of both. As a matter of fact, the various European powers spent more time and energy fighting with each other,
or instigating the native states against rival Westerners, than in direct assaults upon the Indonesian principalities themselves. The Dutch were eventually victorious in this combination of guile and warfare, and by 1650 were well started on their way to ultimate control of the Indies. The complete conquest required over two hundred years, but throughout the whole history of it the superior statesmanship, military equipment, and technical ability of the Europeans easily outweighed the vastly preponderant numbers of the natives.

The organized conquest of the three other colonial countries in the area—Malaya, Burma, and Indo-China—did not begin until the nineteenth century, although seizure of small sections—trading ports and military posts—had gone on intermittently ever since earliest European contact. In Malaya the task of the British was easy, for this small country was split up into especially minute and weak sultanates; and a mere show of power usually produced whatever concessions the British desired. The annexation of Malaya was conducted in a leisurely, piecemeal fashion; and it was not until 1909 that the four final states, which happened to be under Siamese sovereignty, were taken over by the British.

Burma had had a troubled history of internal warfare lasting for centuries before the British started the process of annexation in the nineteenth century. Numerous small kingdoms, which had arisen under Indian influence, fought each other for supremacy, and one after another fell. Starting in the middle of the sixteenth century and continuing for two hundred years, various Burmese kings had carried on a series of remarkably savage and pointless wars with Siam. But an unusual degree of power and unity had been attained by the final Burmese kingdom in 1824, when the British undertook the first campaign into the country as a consequence of a dispute over the India-Burma boundary. The second war, in 1852, and the third, in 1885, completed the annexation of the country; and the last king, Thebaw, was banished to India.

The French took their turn, choosing Indo-China, very late. Persecution of French missionaries was given as the main reason for starting the conquest. Three of the sections of this country—Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin China—had long been under the rule of the Annamese emperor. This empire was unique in Southeast Asia in
that its origin and organization had Chinese rather than Indian sources. A fourth section, Cambodia, was one of the oldest centers of Indian influence in all of Southeast Asia; and its past glories are signalized by the astounding ruins of the deserted capital of Angkor. The fifth section, Laos, largely primitive territory, was under the loose control of two small kingdoms, Luang Prabang and Vientiane. Into this picturesque and varied country the French moved in 1858, gaining a foothold in the port city of Saigon. Five years later, the emperor of Cambodia, whose realm was threatened with extinction by pressure from Siam on the one side and Annam on the other, voluntarily placed his domain under French protection. At the same time, the French forced the emperor of Annam to cede Cochin China; but the monarch achieved a sardonic revenge by removing all of his mandarins from Cochin China, leaving the French a country completely devoid of government. Abashed but undaunted in the quest for empire, the French entered upon a campaign against Tonkin; and, in 1883, the emperor of Annam accepted a protectorate over both Annam and its subsidiary, Tonkin. Finally, the French took over Laos in 1893, after some obscure border skirmishes with the Siamese, who had been raiding into the region, with, it is said, the encouragement of the British, who were concerned over French expansion in Southeast Asia.

The only independent country in the whole area is Siam, whose people are appropriately named Thai, "free men." There are other ethnic groups in the country, such as the primitive mountain tribes, but the Thai proper, the main stock, trace their origin back into the mountains of Yunnan in southern China, whence they came in successive waves many centuries ago, down the Mekong and Menam valleys. They brought with them a Chinese type of political and military organization, which was later blended with Indian-derived elements taken over from the Cambodians whom they conquered. They have always been not only a free, but an aggressive and conquering, as well as a remarkably adaptable, people. The last quality, especially, has served them well in their contacts with the rapacious Europeans, who have ranged the neighboring countries with conquest and subjugation always in mind. The Thai have remained free in recent times by learning to deal with Europeans in ways the latter understand, although it must be admitted that no small factor
in their success has been British-French rivalry, because of which neither would allow the other to take over Siam. Relations with European powers began in the seventeenth century, but for a long period Siam stayed almost completely aloof from the white strangers.

Siam’s bitterest enemy, Burma, with whom wars were fought for centuries, was effectively neutralized by the British early in the nineteenth century; and then Siam entered upon a hundred years of delicate maneuverings with Western powers, particularly France and Britain. Two remarkable kings, Mongkut and Chulalongkorn, whose combined reigns covered fifty years, conducted foreign affairs with such skill, while modernizing the country to a remarkable degree, that in 1896 a French-British agreement guaranteed Siam’s freedom from encroachment by either power; although in the early years of the twentieth century France demanded and got certain cessions of land on the Indo-China border, and in 1909 Britain persuaded Siam to yield territory to Malaya.

What did the European powers—Britain in Burma and Malaya, France in Indo-China, and the Netherlands in Indonesia—obtain for their efforts, and what did they lose by not annexing Siam? Involved are the enormous areas of land listed above; but also involved are a remarkable array of peoples and cultures, and some extremely profitable resources.

To take the peoples and cultures first, there is, in every one of these countries, one majority tribal or national group. In Indonesia these are the Javanese, who, together with the closely related Sundanese and Madurese of the same island, comprise about 65 percent of the entire population of the Indies. In Burma the dominant group is the Burmese proper, who form over 60 percent of the total population. The Thai are by far the most numerous people in Siam, although their exact percentage of the total population has not been calculated. In Indo-China, the Annamese comprise fully 75 percent of all the people. Malaya is most peculiar, because the Chinese alone outnumber the indigenous peoples, and there are very large numbers of immigrant Indians and Indonesians. But among the true “native peoples” of Malaya, there are only a few thousand primitive and semiprimitive folk to compare with the more than 2,000,000 Malays proper.

Aside from the Javanese, Burmese, Thai, Annamese, and Malays,
there are literally hundreds of other ethnic or tribal groups. Some of them are very large, numbering in the millions, and hence they range down all the way to minute tribes of only a few hundreds. In Indonesia, the Malays of Sumatra total well over 3,000,000; the Minangkabau about 2,000,000, the Batak 1,000,000; and the Achinese 750,000. The Makassarese and Buginese of Celebes have a population of close to 3,000,000; while the Balinese total over 1,000,000. In Burma, the Karen and Shan populations are over 1,000,000 each; the Kachin, about 400,000; and the Chin, around 300,000. The Malays of southern Siam run to approximately 400,000; and the Lao are also a very large group, although their population, as distinct from that of the Thai, has not been reckoned. In Indo-China, the Cambodians total about 3,000,000; the Cham, approximately 1,000,000; and the Thai and Lao, around 800,000 and 600,000, respectively. These are the very large groups only; a complete listing of all the smaller ones in the area would fill pages. The mountain lands of Burma, Siam, and Indo-China are checkered with scores of more or less primitive tribes, such as the Naga, Wa, Palaung, Lolo, and Padaung in Burma; the Kamuk, Tin, Chao-Nam, Miao, Yao, Lahu, and Lawa in Siam; and the Muong, Man, Moi, Meo, and Kha in Indo-China. In Malaya, there are Semang, Sakai, and Jakun, all very primitive. For Indonesia, suffice it to say that there are well over 100 tribal groups—aside from the larger ones mentioned—in Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, the Lesser Sunda Islands, and the Moluccas. The number of tribes in Netherlands New Guinea, on the far eastern extremity of Indonesia, has never been estimated, although scores of names are known.

To an anthropologist reading the foregoing, the conclusion would be evident that in this part of the world the range and variety of peoples and cultures are truly unmatched anywhere else on earth. An attempt to describe the complete cultural situation, in all its diversity, cannot be made here; but the general outlines of the ways of life among the inhabitants of Southeast Asia and Indonesia can be indicated, for, despite extreme heterogeneity in details, there are many broad similarities.

The enormous array of languages spoken in the area can be generally classified in four great linguistic families or stocks. The languages of Burma, Siam, and Indo-China fall into three of these stocks:
Tibeto-Burmese, Siamese, and Annamese. The boundaries of these families do not coincide with the political borders of the three countries, but, reckoning by the number of speakers, it may be said that most of the people in Burma speak Tibeto-Burmese languages, which, as might be supposed from the name, run up into Tibet; that most of the inhabitants of Siam speak languages of the Siamese family, which extend north into Yunnan in China; and that the majority of the population in Indo-China speak languages of the Annamese stock, whose connections also are with China to the north. The fourth family of languages in the area is the Malayo-Polynesian, and languages of this group are spoken all the way from southern Siam down through Malaya and throughout all of Indonesia. In the extreme east of Indonesia, however, the linguistic picture shifts, and in New Guinea a new type of speech, which has scarcely begun to be investigated, begins. These non-Malayo-Polynesian languages of New Guinea have been tentatively placed in a classification called Papuan.

Although many of the languages in Southeast Asia and Indonesia have never been written, and while knowledge of writing is restricted to only a small proportion of the entire population, wherever script has been used for these languages four types have been employed. The Arabic script came into Indonesia and Malaya with the advent of Islam about seven centuries ago. Before this, alphabets derived from Indian writing were used, not only in Indonesia and Malaya, but in parts of Burma, Siam, and Indo-China as well. In Indo-China, and anciently in Siam, Chinese script was employed; and much of the Annamese writing is still in the Chinese style. Since the coming of Europeans, the Roman alphabet has been spreading rapidly, and it is likely that eventually it will replace the other kinds of writing.

In considering the economy of Southeast Asia and Indonesia, a peculiar situation, unfamiliar to people of the Western nations, must be mentioned at the start. These countries are in part merely a region of the world where the inhabitants, as they have throughout history, make their living from their own soil and by their own efforts, locally. But these countries are also spheres of exploitation for foreigners, who use them to produce goods to be exported to the outside world. One might put it thus: here are farms and hunting and
fishing grounds geared to local needs, but here too are plantations
and mines whose production has little relation to the requirements
of the natives, except indirectly. The economy is, in short, dual.
There is the native economy, and there is the export economy.
The former is one of subsistence; the latter, one of exploitation for
profit. The two touch upon each other at numerous points, but their
organization and purposes are different.

The great majority of the native peoples of the area are farmers,
and their main crop is rice. If one had to select a single symbol to
express the life of the people of Southeast Asia and Indonesia, the
best choice would be a picture of a farmer working his rice field
with a plow and water buffalo. There are a few regions where other
crops—such as maize or taro or sago—take precedence over rice,
and a very few where rice is not even grown; but they are so rare
as to warrant only passing mention, and rice cultivation is spreading
to these areas. Also, in even fewer very remote jungle and swamp
districts, there still roam small bands of extremely primitive nomads,
who have no knowledge of any kind of agriculture, but live by hunt­
ing and collecting wild foods. As these groups gradually come in
contact with more advanced neighbors, however, they tend to settle
down and begin to grow rice. Although many of the people who
live along the seacoast make their living by fishing, they sell their
surplus fish for rice. And those relatively few millions of natives
who have come to work for wages buy rice as their staple food.
While rice is by all odds the main crop, other grains are grown,
as well as a wide variety of vegetables and fruits. Maize is an im­
portant crop in many regions; a partial listing of other plant foods
would include yams, taro, sweet potatoes, sago, cassava, sugarcane,
and coconuts.

The principal non-vegetable article of diet throughout the entire
area is fish; fishing is a very important occupation among the coastal
peoples. Although various kinds of animals and fowls are raised
and their flesh eaten, meat is unimportant in the diet of nearly all
groups. The most common domesticated animals, water buffalo and
cattle, are used mainly in agriculture or transportation. As a conse­
quence of this aloofness from meat, animal breeding is a minor eco­
nomic activity in all except a few regions of specialization.

The native economy, being based almost entirely upon subsistence
farming, is very little involved with cash income. The people use money, of course, but they never have much of it. The farmer will sell his small stock of surplus rice for cash, but the payment will go at once for the purchase of salt, tobacco, cloth, and similar commodities which he does not produce for himself. The money income of the peoples of Southeast Asia and Indonesia is so small as to be astonishing to the European or American. In pre-war Java, for instance, the average income per person was about $15 a year; and in Siam in 1940 fewer than 3,000 individuals out of a population of 15,000,000 had annual incomes of over $1,100. The vast bulk of the peoples of this area are still living, then, in what might be termed a pre-capitalistic stage of economy. They pass their lives within the closed economic circle of their native villages, producing virtually all of their needs inside the self-sufficient unit and seldom coming into contact with the economy of the external world. Such contacts as they have are brief, and involve only a minimal use of the goods and monetary symbols of international commerce.

The other segment of the economy of Southeast Asia and Indonesia is, or rather was before the recent war, mainly the concern of foreigners who came to the area to develop it for financial gain. It was an economy of money, profit, exploitation, and export. As the years passed, an increasing number of natives became involved in it; and now in the postwar period the leaders of native revolutionary movements are demanding that their people actually take over control of this alien system. But before the war the Indonesians, Malaysians, Burmese, Siamese, and Indo-Chinese had little to do with its direction; nor did they derive much direct profit from it, although many of them worked in it.

In this economy, the Europeans were the directors, and a certain proportion of the natives the laborers. Chinese and Indians participated in it also, both on the upper level of directors and on the lower level of workers. The activities involved in the pre-war profit economy of Southeast Asia and Indonesia were: (1) the production of commodities for export, (2) the importation of goods from abroad, (3) the distribution of these goods for sale, and (4) the transaction of the financial matters connected with export and import. In all of these activities except the first, the natives of the area had little share; and in the actual production they had a nonprofit-
able share. They were the laborers, a few of them the foremen. The Chinese and Indians, varying with the region, were concerned to some extent in all four activities. Some of them were laborers; others were owners and directors of production. Many of them, especially the Chinese, had to do with the importation of goods and selling; indeed, the Chinese were the main distributors throughout the area. And there were a few Chinese and Indian bankers and financial magnates; although their dealings in finance were concerned mainly with small-scale moneylending. But the Europeans were the ones who controlled most of the profit economy. Most of the great producing enterprises were European, as were most of the leading import firms and banking and financial houses. The only activities in which Europeans played almost no role were laboring and retail distribution.

The heart of the colonial profit economy was production for export. Plantations, mines, and oil wells supplied the commodities on which the system was based. And the factors which made the area extremely profitable were first, the fertility of the soil, augmented by little seasonal change and a wide range of crop possibilities; second, the mineral deposits in the subsoil; and third, the cheapness of the labor supply. Although vast sections were either undeveloped or unsuitable for cultivation, no other tropical area in the world had such great expanses of fertile land. The climate, continuously warm, and varying only between wet and dry seasons, with annual rainfall plentiful in most sections, made of Southeast Asia and Indonesia a kind of natural hothouse, producing throughout the year. And the variations in altitude, soil conditions, and, to some extent, in climate allowed for an extensive diversity of crops. Moreover, this agricultural wonderland had beneath its fertile soil other sources of wealth in the form of a great variety of minerals, chief among which were petroleum and tin. Finally, to work this treasury of natural resources, there was available, either within the area itself or in the teeming countries of China and India near by, an ample supply of extremely cheap human labor, unorganized and easy to handle. It was indeed a colonist's paradise.

As might be expected from its vast size, Indonesia was the richest prize of all. The six main export commodities of the Indies were, in order of value, rubber, petroleum, vegetable oils, tin, sugar,
and tea. But these were only the start of a much longer list of extremely profitable export goods, which included, to mention the chief ones only, quinine, spices, kapok, coffee, sisal, tobacco, and tapioca. And ready at hand, in the heart of the islands, was one of the world's greatest reservoirs of cheap labor, Java. The human fecundity of this island matched the fertility of Indonesia's soil. With a population already standing at almost 50,000,000 just before the war, the Javanese were increasing at the rate of over a half million a year. This constantly expanding supply of potential labor could be tapped at will for workers to be employed in any part of the archipelago, and the wages offered need be only a few cents a day. Java was a veritable treasurehouse of human capital. With all these factors in its favor, it is not surprising that Indonesia was the most profitable colonial possession in the world excepting India. It is also not surprising that the Netherlands should now be so desperately anxious to retain this tremendously rich possession.

Malaya, despite its small size, was also a remarkably profitable dependency. Its wealth, from the British standpoint, was owing almost entirely to three factors: rubber, tin, and the commerce of Singapore. Viewed from the perspective of the profit economy, it was a vast rubber plantation and tin mine combined, with the greatest port city in the Orient attached. In its case, a local labor supply was not available, for the native population, consisting of only about 2,000,000 Malays and a small number of primitive tribesmen, was both inadequate in size and disinclined to work for wages. But the problem was solved by the mass importation of Chinese and Indian laborers. The Indians usually left Malaya after their period of service was over; but as time went on more and more of the Chinese stayed after their term of labor, so that by 1940 their numbers had increased to the point where they were the majority group in the colony, surpassing even the native Malays. Tin and rubber had made Malaya, in human terms, a Chinese country.

The three northern nations of Southeast Asia—Burma, Siam, and Indo-China—presented one striking contrast with Malaya and Indonesia, and this was that their main export commodity was rice. Indonesia had barely enough rice for its own needs, and Malaya had to import supplies of the grain; but the three northern countries produced surpluses of it. Each of the three has a great river flow-
ing down its middle—the Irrawaddy in Burma, the Menam in Siam, and the Mekong in Indo-China—and each of these three valleys is a vast complex of rice fields. A century ago, rice was grown here by the natives for themselves. But during the past hundred years rice production became commercialized, and the economy shifted from one of subsistence to one of profit. The great difficulty was that the natives, except to some degree in Siam and Indo-China, did not get the profit. They worked the land, along with Chinese and Indian laborers, but the monetary yields went largely to European, Chinese, and Indian buyers and exporters. Moreover, because of the shift from a subsistence to a money economy, and the natives’ lack of familiarity with the new system, they lost ownership of their land steadily to credit merchants and money lenders. The new landlords were Chinese, Indians, and, in Siam and Indo-China, a small number of natives as well. In Indo-China alone did Europeans become landlords of rice plantations. In the other two countries their role in the commercialized rice economy was played at a higher level, in the actual exportation of the finished product, although in this enterprise the Chinese and Indians had a large part also.

Burma before the war was the greatest rice-exporting country in the world. Rice accounted for almost half the total value of all exports. Most of the rice went to India, which was the main market for Burmese exports in general. The two other leading export products were petroleum and timber, principally teak; and India took almost all of these. Although Burma’s share of the total oil exports of the world was small, the business was extremely profitable, and was operated by the Burmah Oil Company, a British concern. Burma was also the world’s largest producer of tungsten, and led the Orient in the export of silver and lead. Other products of the country which entered into world trade included zinc, copper, nickel, gems, and small amounts of tin and rubber. The transportation system centered on the Irrawaddy River, where a British firm, the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, had a virtual monopoly on shipping, which yielded rich returns.

By comparison with the other colonial countries of Southeast Asia, Indo-China was a poor possession. In terms of the profit economy, it was kept jealously by France as a reserved area for French trade and investment; and the French never developed it as the Brit-
ish and Dutch did their colonies. Rice was by all odds the main commercial product, accounting for about 70 percent of the total value of all exports. Half of it went to China, and nearly all the rest to France or the French African possessions. The rice for export was grown almost entirely in the southern regions of Cochin China and Cambodia, in the Mekong valley. The small farmers here were heavily in debt to Chinese and Annamese usurers; but most of the rice was produced on plantations, largely French-owned. This was the only place in Southeast Asia where Europeans dominated the actual growing of rice. Other landlords were Chinese and, also a very unusual feature, natives. In the northern regions of Tonkin and Annam, even though the Red River valley of Tonkin was a rich rice-producing area, not enough of the grain was grown to supply the extremely dense population. Here was the source of labor for the southern rice plantations, and thousands of Annamese and Tonkinese went seasonally down to the Mekong valley to work in the rice fields. It was a situation similar to that in Indonesia, where overpopulated Java supplied the manpower to operate the plantations of Sumatra and the other sparsely settled outer islands. Indo-China was the only important coal-producing country in Southeast Asia. The mines of Tonkin yielded a fairly large supply of coal, most of it anthracite. Zinc and tin were the other leading mineral exports. Indochina has good potentialities for rubber-growing, and the French were expanding this enterprise before the war. But in general the development of Indo-China lagged; profits from it were poor; and as a late venture in imperialistic enterprise its record was one of disappointment and failure.

Although Siam was the only independent country in Southeast Asia, its profit economy had a colonial character. The main export commodity was rice, which accounted for almost half the value of all exports, but the farmers who produced it were largely either tenants or so deeply in debt to moneylenders that they were little better off than sharecroppers. The landlords and usurers who dominated the rice growers of the great Menam plain were Chinese and native Siamese. The production of tin, the second most valuable export, was carried on by Chinese and Europeans. Rubber, third on the list, was controlled by Chinese and Malays. And teak, the only other significant export, was exploited by Europeans and Chi-
nese. The Siamese government, in recent years extremely nationalistic, grappled vigorously with the problem of getting the profit economy of the country into the hands of the Siamese people. But not only did the native inhabitants show no talent for or inclination toward business enterprise; they would not even accept wage-earning jobs. The government experimented with nationalization of commercial enterprises, but foreign capital was needed; European firms were subjected to discriminatory regulations, but for its development the country required skills and techniques not possessed by its own people; obstacles were put in the way of Chinese immigration, but 90 percent of the wage-workers in Siam were Chinese, and the Siamese refused to labor for pay. Here was a remarkable case of an independent nation surrounded by colonies and trying to get rid of the elements of colonialism that infected its own economy.

In the foregoing discussion of the economy of Southeast Asia and Indonesia, industry has not been mentioned. The reason is that there was almost no industrial development in the entire area. These countries, to the extent that they were incorporated at all in the industrial economy of the Western world, were utilized as producing hinterlands for the factories of Europe and America. This was not entirely a matter of deliberate design, for these areas lack the two natural resources on which modern manufacturing is based, namely, iron and coal. Every one of them has some iron and some coal, but both are present only in poor supply and quality. What factories there were had been built to provide for local needs only (textile and rice mills) or to perform the preparatory processing of raw materials for export (tin smelters and rubber and sugar and lumber mills). Indeed, the only large manufacturing installations which produced a finished product were the oil refineries of Indonesia and Burma.

Throughout Southeast Asia and Indonesia, then, the economic organization was constructed upon a stratified plan. At the bottom were the natives, the overwhelming majority of them still living on a subsistence level within the closed economy of their local communities; and a few millions of them absorbed into the profit economy, but almost entirely in the capacity of laborers. In the middle were the Chinese and Indians, who operated small-scale businesses for the most part, and controlled almost completely the retail trade;
although many of them were laborers. At the top were the Europeans, who really managed the export economy, including its associated large-scale importing aspects, and drew the high salaries and the big profits.

The crucial question is why the natives, who were in so great a majority and whose homelands were involved, never made a better showing in the profit economy which extracted such enormous monetary yields from their own countries. Partly, no doubt, it was because the colonial powers saw only danger to themselves in providing natives with education and training which might fit them to take over management of the rich enterprises; but this would not explain the case of Siam. It would be a more general truth to say that the natives simply had not learned the ways of the profit economy. Throughout ages of history they had been engrossed in their own self-sufficient, nonprofit, subsistence economy; and they had not had time to adjust themselves to the completely unfamiliar system in such a way that they might participate profitably in it. They also lacked capital, so that they could neither buy nor invest in profit-making enterprises. The Europeans had the capital and the technical skills; and the Chinese and Indians, with their organizing ability and commercial acumen, took over what was left in the profit economy. In Burma, Siam, and Indo-China, the natives were so unused to the new pecuniary system that, when rice production was commercialized, they even lost their land to sharp-dealing Indians and Chinese; and the same thing would probably have happened in Indonesia if the Dutch had not wisely forbidden the alienation of native land under any circumstances. This question has more than academic interest, for the native revolutionary governments which have arisen since the war are insisting upon a termination of alien control of the profit economy. Their problem is how, in such an event, they could provide the requisite technical skill, capital, and commercial ability to keep the systems operating properly. This point will be considered more fully later, in connection with the current nationalistic developments.

Closely linked with the problem of the low economic status of the native peoples, and also vitally important in relation to their past and future political development, is the matter of education. The fact is that the educational level of the masses and their rate
of literacy are lower in Southeast Asia and Indonesia than in most other areas of the world. The colonial governments until recently were either indifferent or opposed to native educational improvement. The Europeans were in the area to make profits and to control the local populations for this purpose; and they were unwilling to spend money for native schooling and to run the risk of sowing seeds of revolt by educating potential leaders in the knowledge, skills, and human ideals of the Western world. The monopoly on economy and government, to be preserved, had to be accompanied by a monopoly on education, for ideas are the stuff of revolution. Although progress has been made in all of the countries, the figures on literacy show how slow it has been. After three centuries of Dutch rule, the Indonesians were still 93 percent illiterate in 1930, and it is very unlikely that this proportion had dropped below 90 percent by 1941. Precise statistics for Indo-China are not available, but the rate of literacy there was probably not over 15 percent. In Malaya, literacy was much more widespread, with 24 percent of the total population able to read and write in 1931. The large numbers of Chinese in Malaya, however, raised the average literacy considerably, and the rate among the native Malays was much lower. Siam and Burma had the best records. Although the Siamese were said to have been 95 percent illiterate in 1934, the census of 1937 claimed that literacy had risen to 31 percent. According to the constitutional provisions of 1932, completely representative government was to be withheld until over 50 percent of the population were literate; and since in 1946 the legislature was elected entirely by popular vote, this evidently indicates that the goal has been reached. Burma, thanks mainly to its system of native Buddhist parochial schools, had a literacy rate of 37 percent in 1940.

The school systems were remarkably complicated, including private establishments operated by missionaries, the natives themselves, and various alien groups such as the Chinese, and, besides these, government schools for Europeans, natives, and alien Asians, as well as mixed institutions, using different languages and methods. In Burma, Siam, and Cambodia and Laos in Indo-China, most of the elementary schools were Buddhist monastic establishments, with monks as teachers. The Siamese and Indo-Chinese "pagoda" schools were being absorbed steadily into the government systems; just
before the war in Siam, for instance, 70 percent of all the state schools were located in monasteries. In Malaya and Indonesia, every large village had a Koran school, run by Moslem priests. Above the elementary level, however, nearly all of the education was carried on in government or mission establishments, and European languages were used for instruction. In all of the countries except Siam fees were charged for schooling, rising with the grades; and in none of them except Siam was education of any kind compulsory. The proportion of the government budget devoted to education was very small in every instance. Taking the Philippine school expenditure of about 25 percent of the total budget as a standard, the comparable allotments for the countries of Southeast Asia and Indonesia were approximately as follows: Siam, 12 percent; Indo-China, 10 percent; Burma, 10 percent; Indonesia, 8 percent; and Malaya, 5 percent.

Another basis of comparison is the proportion of the children of school age and the proportion of the total population attending school. In Indonesia, with 2,700,000 students, 20 percent of those of school age were receiving instruction, or 4 percent of the population. In Indo-China, 570,000, or 17 percent, of the children were in school, representing 2.5 percent of the population. Malaya had 270,000 students, 33 percent of those of school age, and 7 percent of the population. In Burma, the comparable figures were, respectively, 850,000; 37 percent; and 5 percent. Siam, in proportion to population, was far in the lead, with 1,570,000 children, or 78 percent of those of school age, in school, representing 11 percent of the total population.

All of the countries had numerous specialized schools for training in technical subjects such as manual trades, agriculture, and forestry; and each of them had a university. But the number of students enrolled in the universities was very small. Raffles College in Malaya had only about 700 students; Rangoon University in Burma, approximately 2,500; and the University of Batavia in Indonesia, Hanoi University in Indo-China, and Chulalongkorn University in Siam each had about 1,000 students. Thus in the entire area, with a combined population of 130,000,000, the number of university students was less than 7,000. A few hundred students from Southeast Asia and Indonesia went abroad each year for higher
education, and, though inconsiderable in numbers, these men became very important in the developing nationalist movements. But in the whole area there was a great scarcity of natives with advanced education. The entire school enrollment, very small in proportion to population, was concentrated in the primary level, 98 percent of all students attending the local elementary schools, most of which had courses of only three or four grades. All of the nationalist programs placed better educational facilities high on their lists of demands for reform, and the new revolutionary governments have included in their programs vastly expanded provisions for schooling.

While these countries have thus accepted wholeheartedly the educational ideals of the Western world, they have resisted the intrusions of European religions. There are two great religious divisions in the area. One, in which Buddhism is the main religion, includes Burma, Siam, and the two western sections of Indo-China: Cambodia and Laos. The other, where the majority of the people are Mohammedans, comprises Malaya and Indonesia. There is still a third, smaller region, including the three other parts of Indo-China—Annam, Cochin China, and Tonkin—where a peculiar combination of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism prevails. In Siam, 95 percent of the population is Buddhist, and about 4 percent Moslem, the latter being nearly all Malays in the southern districts. In Burma, Buddhism is professed by 85 percent of the people, the minor groups being pagan, with 5 percent; Mohammedan, with 4 percent; Hinduist, with 4 percent; and Christian, with 2 percent. The pagans are all members of the primitive hill tribes; the Moslems, mostly the Arakanese of the Coastal districts bordering on India; the Hindus, almost entirely Indian immigrants; and the Christians, for the most part formerly pagan Karens.

The Annamese, forming 75 percent of the total population of Indo-China, might be classed as Confucianists, but Taoist, Buddhist, and surviving pagan elements give their religion a unique and amorphous character. The remarkably synthetic disposition of Annamese religion has been demonstrated recently in the birth and rapid growth of a sect called Caodaism, which originated in Cochin China in 1926 and now claims a million adherents. It is a blend of Buddhism, Taoism, Christian Catholicism, Confucianism, and spirit worship. Its guiding spirit is a deity named Cao-Dai, whose spokesman on
earth is a kind of pope who holds court in a Cochin China pagoda. It has an element of nationalism in it also, for Cao-Dai is expected to restore independence to Indochina, whose loss of freedom, it is believed, was a punishment for sins. The Buddhist peoples of Indo-China—mostly concentrated in Cambodia and Laos—comprise slightly over 20 percent of the total population of the country. The remainder of the Indo-Chinese are mostly pagans of primitive culture inhabiting the isolated mountain sections.

The Malays of Malaya are nearly all Moslems. There are a few thousand primitive pagans; and the Chinese and Indians of the country have their own religions. The Indonesians are over 90 percent Mohammedans; the Javanese, who constitute two-thirds of the entire population, being the largest Moslem group. Indonesia is the second greatest Islamic country in the world in terms of population, following the new state of Pakistan in India, which has a population of about 90,000,000. Approximately 5 percent of the Indonesians are pagans, and 3 percent are Christians, the latter mostly former pagans who have been recently converted. The Balinese have retained the Hinduist religion which once prevailed in Java and Sumatra, and they constitute about 2 percent of Indonesia’s population.

The Buddhists and the Moslems of the area, the majority religious groups, observe most of the outward forms of these faiths. The Javanese and Malays, for instance, attend the mosque, regard the Koran as sacred scripture, and follow the precepts of Islam. The Burmese, Siamese, and Cambodians profess the Buddhist ethical and theological beliefs, and carry on the associated rituals. Every youth among these Buddhist peoples spends some period of his life as a novice in a monastery school. Siam, for example, has over 18,000 temple monasteries, served by 150,000 monks and 100,000 attendants, in which at any time nearly 100,000 novices and 5,000 advanced scholars of the sacred Pali literature may be studying; and Burma has 120,000 Buddhist monks and 20,000 monastery schools. The form of Buddhism practiced in these countries, and in Cambodia and Laos also, is the so-called Hinayana, which survives elsewhere only in Ceylon. The kind of Buddhism which has influenced the Annamese, however, is that prevalent in China, known as Mahayana. But adherence to these great world religions is in large part
merely nominal among the masses of the people in Southeast Asia and Indonesia. In every case, the successive adoptions of Hinduism (now virtually vanished except in Bali), Buddhism, and Moham­medanism—and Confucianism and Taoism in Annam—have re­presented only superimpositions upon the old pagan cults and be­liefs. Underneath the varied veneer of these later faiths the ancient religions survive, and the new systems are fitted into the old.

Throughout the whole area, the basic substratum of paganism is made up of three main elements: beliefs and practices associated with magic, spirits, and the ghosts of ancestors. The pristine form of this pagan pattern still survives among the primitive tribes, but it shines through the covering fabric of Islam, Buddhism, and other more recent faiths in every country. Thus the Burmese hold strong beliefs in spirits of various kinds, called “nats.” Every rural village has, along with its Buddhist monastery, shrines of these spirits. The Siamese have numerous beliefs and practices connected with magic and spirits; and their worship of the king, though formally derived from Hinduism, is related to the pagan concept of personal magical power which prevails throughout the area—appearing, for instance, in the highly charged persons of the Annamese and Cambodian monarchs—and which extends across the Pacific into Oceania, where the Polynesians call it “mana.” The Annamese have taken over the magical elements in Taoism, and merged them with their own tradi­tional sorcery; and Confucianism has been selectively adapted to the extremely vital ancestor cult. Indeed, the official religion of the Annamese empire, although it included Confucianist, Buddhist, and Taoist elements all intermixed, was essentially a combination of magic, animism, and ancestor worship. Every Annamese family has an altar on which the named tablets of deceased relatives are kept, to which offerings are made regularly; and after five genera­tions the tablets are stored in clan shrines. The empire itself was founded upon a harmonious synthesis of Confucian ideals of filial piety and the vastly ramified ancestor cult, which culminated in the worship of the ancestors of the royal clan. Just as there never was a mass cultural invasion and transformation in Southeast Asia and Indonesia, but rather a slow infiltration of alien influences, leaving the native cultural core largely intact, so also religious pressures from the outside have seeped rather than swept in, being gradually
and smoothly added to and fitted in with the traditional beliefs and practices of the native peoples. There has never been a religious revolution in the area; the record is one of evolutionary synthesis of old and new.

Of all the great world religions which have been introduced into the area, Christianity, despite centuries of missionary effort, has been least successful. Christian missionaries have made most of their converts among the pagan tribes, but have been unable to turn Moslems and Buddhists to the new faith. In Burma, there are about 2,500,000 Christians, the great majority of them being of the Karen and other predominantly pagan tribes. The Baptists are the largest group, with 225,000, followed by the Catholics, with 90,000, and the Anglicans, with 10,000. The remaining 10,000 are of several minor denominations. Siam has about 50,000 Christians, including 35,000 Catholics, 10,000 Presbyterians, and 5,000 others. Statistics are not available for Indo-China, but the number of Christians there, mostly Catholic, is probably not large. In Malaya, hardly any of the Moslem Malays have turned to Christianity, and most of the work of missionaries has been among the resident Chinese. After hundreds of years of missionary effort, Indonesia has only about 2,500,000 Christians, who, as elsewhere in the area, are mostly converts from paganism. The proportions of Catholics and Protestants there are approximately equal. Thus the influence of Christian missions in Southeast Asia and Indonesia has not been primarily religious, for relatively few converts have been made; far greater have been the missionary contributions to education and medical care. Here can be noticed the readiness of the native peoples to receive the learning and the material aids of the West; but they have refused, usually calmly and without fanaticism, to accept the religious doctrines of Christianity.

Perhaps the inconsistency between the preachings of Christ and the imperialistic activities of the Christian Europeans has been a factor impeding the spread of the new faith. But another handicap of the Christian churches has been their intolerance toward existing religions. They permit no compromise with paganism, Islam, Buddhism, or any other system; these must be condemned as totally false, and the Christian beliefs upheld as totally true. The Mohammedan proselytizers, and the Hinduist and Buddhist bringers of
foreign religions before them, came in as individuals, subject to no doctrinal orthodoxy. They were not dominated by church hierarchies which dictated what they must preach. They were able, therefore, to adapt their teachings to the prevalent beliefs of the natives, to grant the possible power of a local god or the efficacy of a traditional ritual while indicating the additional virtues of their own faiths. This, in large part, is why Islam and Buddhism have succeeded so well, and also why the texture of religion in the area is so varied and mixed. The new has been overlaid on and intermeshed with the old all through the centuries, and the result is a composite of paganism and later religions. The Christian missionaries have refused to let their faith be woven into the pattern, demanding that the latter be destroyed and replaced by Christianity alone. They have refused to compromise; but compromise and synthesis are the very essence of the religions of the area, and consequently Christianity has failed.

Just as the natives of Southeast Asia and Indonesia had no control over the profit economy of their countries, so also they had little voice in the higher levels of government, except, of course, in free Siam. As a matter of fact, there was a striking parallel between the economic and the political situations. The native peoples in their countless village communities lived under the rule of their own chiefs and councils, with little interference from the colonial administrations. As long as they kept the peace and paid their taxes, the central government let them alone. Like the profit economy, it was a thing separate from their traditional life.

Long before the coming of the Europeans, however, higher forms of social and political organization than the village commune had evolved in Southeast Asia and Indonesia. The Siamese brought in with them from southern China a centralized form of government, and the Annamese had an elaborate monarchical system also derived from China. Many of the other peoples—including the Burmese, Cambodians, Malays, and Javanese—developed centralized state governments as a consequence of contact with Indians; and most of the empires, kingdoms, sultanates, rajadoms, and the like which the Europeans encountered were constructed on the Indian pattern. But throughout the centuries these states actually represented a mere superimposition on the basic form of social and political or-
ganization, the village commune. This was true even in highly centralized Siam, where theoretically the entire nation was arranged in an hierarchical continuum from lowliest serf to king, but where in reality the communities were the functioning units of society for the great majority of the common people.

When the European conquerors entered, they abolished many of the native states, usually in cases where the monarch refused to submit; as the British did in Burma and the Dutch in various parts of the Indies. But they generally sought to keep these traditional rulers in power, in order to use them as puppets through whom they might govern under the guise of noninterference with existing local regimes. This technique of colonial administration, widely practiced in Africa also, is known as indirect rule, and it took various forms in different parts of Southeast Asia and Indonesia. Actually, whatever form the relationship between the colonial administration and the native states assumed, real control passed into the hands of the Europeans. In every instance, the native prince had beside him an official of the European administration, who told him what to do: a French Resident Superior with the Emperor of Annam, a British Adviser with the Sultan of Kelantan, a Dutch Governor with the Susuhunan of Surakarta, and so on. Large areas of Southeast Asia and Indonesia, however, were not within the domain of any native monarch when the Europeans came in. Here there were only village communities, or, in remote sections, nomadic or seminomadic primitive tribes. Such districts were put under direct rule, with no intermediary political organization between the colonial government and the chiefs and elders of the villages and bands.

The foregoing discussion of the economic, social, and political situation in Southeast Asia and Indonesia has been written in the past tense. In the case of the economy, this could hardly be otherwise, for information on economic conditions since the end of the war is extremely scanty and unreliable, and, more important, the area has not yet recovered from the catastrophic effects of the war. To present anything like a picture of the normal economic situation—the organization of the economy, the actualities and potentialities of production, internal and external trade, and the like—it is necessary to go back before the Japanese invasion. The present conditions are abnormal, extremely so, and when peace and stability re-
turn to the area the economy will pick up at the point where it was before the war; although, as will be seen when current political developments are described, some very great changes will probably be introduced, especially as regards the role of the natives in economic affairs. But the basic pattern of organization, production, and distribution will be about the same as in pre-war days, not as it is under present conditions of excessive disturbance.

In the case of social and political organization, it is simply impossible to discuss this area except in two phases: pre-war and post-war. The recent war brought a revolutionary change in Southeast Asia and Indonesia, and the conditions before and those after the conflict are so completely different as to constitute an epochal transformation. Nevertheless, as in the case of the economy, there will be no clean break with the past. No one could understand the present revolutionary movements and events, or venture anything like a valid prediction as to the future, without knowledge of the situation as it existed before the war. Therefore, in the following detailed discussion of social and political conditions in each of the five countries of Southeast Asia and Indonesia, the state of affairs just preceding the war will first be described, and then the developments since the end of the war, with some intermediate consideration of happenings during the Japanese occupation.

Burma has been the fourth largest unit in the British Empire in terms of population, coming after India, the United Kingdom, and Nigeria. Before the war, it had the greatest measure of self-government of any tropical dependency except the Philippines. Its status within the Empire, after separation from India in 1937, was never exactly defined. It was usually characterized in rather vague terms as a self-governing unit of the British Commonwealth. Actually, it had many of the features of a true dominion, but it also bore certain marks of colonial status. Thus, although it had a cabinet of native ministers responsible to an elected legislature, the control of foreign affairs, finance, and defense was in the hands of a British Governor. The Governor appointed the cabinet from among the members of the legislature. The legislature consisted of two houses, a Senate and a House of Representatives. The latter was entirely elected, but half of the members of the Senate were appointed by the Governor and the other half were elected by the lower House.
While the legislature enacted laws for the country, its powers were restricted in some very important respects. It had no authority over foreign affairs, defense, and monetary policy; and large sections of Burma were not under its jurisdiction. The Governor had charge of these matters, which were known as "reserved" subjects. The absence of native control over the first three is invariably a characteristic of colonialism everywhere, and in these respects Burma had mere colonial status. The fourth reserved subject, the Governor's power over the so-called "excluded areas," had reference to the parts of Burma which were mostly non-Burmese in population and culture. Although they covered over 40 percent of the land area, they included only about 15 percent of the total population. The most important of these regions were the Federated Shan States on the eastern border. Great parts of the mountain territory on the north and west were also in the excluded areas, over which the legislature had no authority whatever. The peoples of these sections were ruled by their own chiefs, with whom the Governor dealt through the Burma Frontier Service.

The powers of the Governor went much farther than his control over the "reserved" affairs. He could issue ordinances at any time, although these were subject to legislative review. The legislature could introduce bills on certain matters only with his consent. A most remarkable provision was one enabling the Governor to enact laws, which could not be contravened by any subsequent acts of the legislature. Such laws, however, had to go at once to the Secretary of State in London, to be laid before Parliament. By declaring a state emergency, the Governor could even assume unto himself "all or any of the powers vested in or exercised by any body or authority in Burma." In justice it must be said that these various extraordinary privileges of the Governor were seldom exercised, although just prior to the war mass arrests and peremptory censorship of the press occurred under the Governor's emergency authority. In the ordinary course of events, the greatest single power vested in the Governor was that of absolute veto over acts of the legislature. This right of absolute executive veto is another characteristic feature of colonialism.

Elections to the legislature were conducted on a communal basis, that is, Burmese voted for Burmese candidates, Karen for Karen,
Indian for Indian, and so on. Several seats were reserved for special interests, such as commerce, industry, and labor. But the system insured a majority of about ninety for the Burmese proper, on whose side the 12 Karen delegates usually voted. According to the terms of the franchise, the voting privilege was open to about a quarter of the population, but the rules had some amazing features. A man, to vote, had to possess real estate of at least $30 value (approximate equivalent in American currency), or have paid municipal taxes, or have rented a building for at least three months which had a monthly rental of about $1.20; or he might vote, regardless of these financial requirements, if he had served for a year in the army or the police force. He had also to be eighteen years old or over. Women could vote if they were twenty years old or over, fulfilled the financial requirements, and were literate. Remarkably enough, men did not have to be literate to vote. To become a senator (half of the number were elected by the House of Representatives), a person had to receive an income of at least $3,600 a year, or pay a minimum land tax of $300. The British were evidently determined that only solid citizens, by monetary standards, voted.

Nevertheless, with all these restrictions on true popular government, by comparison with other dependent countries Burma had obviously progressed far along the way to real self-rule. This fact appears also in the large proportion of Burmese who were employed in government service. For purposes of administration, the country was divided into seven parts, called divisions, each under a commissioner, and these in turn were subdivided into districts, under deputy commissioners. Of the 37 deputy commissioners in pre-war Burma, over half were native Burmese. Full control over the civil service, however, was vested in the Governor; the legislature had no control over appointments, dismissals, promotions, or pay. More than half of the magistrates in the country were natives, and the police force was largely Burmese. In the government service as a whole, Burmese outnumbered Europeans by 15 or 20 to 1.

The rank and file of the administration of Burma consisted of the headmen of villages. Each village headman had to be approved by the deputy commissioner of his district; but the selection of the headman was dependent upon the will of his people. These village chiefs were petty judges, police officers, and tax collectors com-
bined; and they received as salary a share of the tax receipts. They were assisted by an elected committee in each locality. The fundamental democracy of Burmese society is shown also by the fact that there is no native aristocracy, and the caste system of India does not exist. Under the old kingdom, of course, there was a royal family; but, although little is known of social organization during the monarchy, apparently there was either no real class of nobility, or at best a very weak one. Certainly fewer traces of it survive now, only sixty years after the abolition of the kingdom.

Another common feature of social organization in Southeast Asia and Indonesia appears also in Burma, namely, the high status of women. In this part of the world the complete subordination of females which is found in India has no place. In Burma, although men are clearly the heads of the households, women suffer no restrictions on their freedom, and they have equality of rights with males in respect to property ownership, inheritance, and divorce. They carry on a good deal of the small trading in the local markets, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, and several of them have actually become chiefs of villages. There is no concubinage; polygamy is rare; and widows may remarry without hindrance. And, very unusual for the Orient, almost 20 percent of the women are literate.

Despite the unusual degree of autonomy in administration and native participation in government, Burma in the pre-war period had a strong and constantly growing nationalist movement, agitating strenuously for an even greater measure of self-rule. The nationalists wanted not only political rights, however; almost an equal part of their demands were for economic improvement, including protection of native land-ownership and more opportunities for Burmese in the better kinds of wage-earning occupations. Because the Indian immigrants were the main source of trouble in the land question, and also competed for jobs with natives, Burmese nationalism always had an anti-Indian as well as an anti-government aspect. Consequently, many of the violent manifestations of nationalism took the form of riots directed against the Indians; and the worst of them occurred in the period of the 1930s, just when political nationalism was running at full flood. The Indians thus became the targets of economic nationalism, while the British bore the attacks of political nationalism.
In its early stages, Burmese nationalism was linked with Buddhism; in fact, its roots run back to the Young Men's Buddhist Association, founded in 1908, which later merged with other similar organizations in the General Council of Buddhist Associations. But, as in the case of most of the Islamic parties of Indonesia, religion was really only a symbol of the national spirit, and played a role similar to that of Catholicism in the Irish struggle for freedom. Moreover, Buddhist monks became constantly more active in political agitation, taking part in riots and inciting strikes, although the more conservative Burmese had doubts about the propriety of such behavior by priests. As the size and powers of the legislature increased, and as more and more natives participated in government, the pace of political activity accelerated and the number of parties multiplied. Indeed, one of the greatest defects of Burmese politics was the proliferation of parties, which led not only to disunity and confusion in the whole nationalistic movement, but also to personal politics of an undignified character. The separation of Burma from India in 1937 brought political activity to a high point, but, despite internal dissension, the common political goal of most parties became dominion status for Burma within the British Empire. So insistent did the pressure become that in 1940 the Governor declared officially that the eventual aim of British policy was to transform Burma into a self-governing dominion.

During the Japanese occupation of Burma, a puppet government headed by Ba Maw, a former premier who had been imprisoned by the British for sedition in 1939, was established. But although many Burmese worked with the Japanese and even fought on their side, a sizable proportion of the nationalist elements formed a guerrilla army, the Burmese National Army, and harassed the occupying forces in the late stages of the war. The ranks of this army were drawn mainly from the young members of the Thakin Association, a group of nationalist youths who, to symbolize their rebelliousness against the colonial system, had adopted the custom of addressing each other as Britishers were usually addressed, by the term “thakin,” meaning “master.” In the closing period of the war the Burmese guerrillas and British soldiers fought together against the Japanese, but cooperation ended with the war.

For the first time, the Burmese formed almost solidly behind a
single party, which was the postwar descendant of the former Thakin organization and took the name of the Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League. The freedom movements in Southeast Asia and Indonesia since the war have produced a remarkable group of native leaders, and in Burma the revolutionary genius was a young man, only a little over thirty years old, named Aung San. He had been a guerrilla leader during the war. As head of the League, he brought Burma to the threshold of freedom in less than two years. The British tried in every possible way to induce the Burmese irregulars to give up their arms after the Japanese surrendered, but the natives refused. The British could easily have taken any point in Burma they desired, but guerrilla operations would have made such positions virtually useless. It became quickly apparent that Burma was not tenable without the consent of the natives.

Military means failing, the British began negotiations for a peaceable settlement. In May, 1945, they offered a plan whereby, after an interim period of reconstruction and preparation, Burma might revert to its pre-war status, and then decide freely what form of government it desired. During the interim period, which would last for a maximum of three years, the country was to be ruled by an executive council under the chairmanship of a British Governor, who would appoint the members of the council. The Burmese claimed that the 1945 plan offered almost no fundamental change from the pre-war situation, and, although the interim government was set up, with the Governor at its head, the Freedom League refused to participate unless it were given all the seats on the executive council. Instead, the League was offered three places out of fourteen, and, declining these, the only important party in Burma began a campaign of terrific resistance. The Council was filled with old-line politicians, and it had no prestige whatever. For over a year the interim government staggered along, resisted by the Burmese at every turn, and finally, in September, 1946, after a countrywide police strike followed by a general strike, the council resigned. The British had to yield, and they granted six seats out of eleven on a new council to the League. Aung San was made deputy chairman and minister of both defense and external affairs, two posts which the British had formerly insisted upon retaining. The strikes were called off, but Aung San warned that unless a suitable settlement
were made quickly, the Freedom League would withdraw from the government.

In December, 1946, the British government announced that Burma was to be granted either complete independence or dominion status, whichever it desired, by the quickest means possible. A delegation, headed by Aung San, went to London, and in January, 1947, an agreement was signed by the Burmese and the British, which marked complete surrender on the part of the latter. Burma was to elect a constituent assembly in April, which was to draw up a constitution under which the country might become either a dominion or an independent nation. The frontier regions, formerly “excluded areas,” were to decide whether or not they wished to join the rest of Burma or remain in a special relationship to the British Empire. The April elections resulted in a sweeping victory for the Freedom League, and the new assembly set about drafting a constitution. Within two months the tentative decision was made that Burma was not to become a British dominion, but rather an independent sovereign republic, to be called the Union of Burma.

The revolutionary governments of Southeast Asia and Indonesia which have arisen since the war all show, on the economic side, a strong tendency toward state socialism. In Burma, an announcement by Aung San clearly foreshadowed this development. He stated that although the country is not yet ready for socialism, and capitalist economy must continue, the latter is to be regarded as purely transitional. In the eventual socialization of the national economy, all subsoil resources, forests, national power sources, and railways, ports, and other public utilities are to become national property; and, while private ownership of such properties, as well as land, may persist for a while, the goal will be state ownership.

The executive council was at work on these plans, both political and economic, when suddenly, in July, 1947, a catastrophic event threw Burma into confusion. A band of men armed with automatic weapons invaded the council chamber and assassinated eight of the nine ministers, including Aung San. This mass murder was evidence of the chronic disease of Burmese politics, extreme divisiveness aggravated by resort to violence. Political assassinations were frequent in the history of the old kingdom, down to the days of Thebaw, the last monarch, who had scores of members of the royalty mur-
dered; and bloody riots were common occurrences in recent years. But the astounding massacre of the council reflects an even more pervasive pattern of violence which prevails in the country. During the period of attachment to India, Burma had the highest crime rate of any Indian province; and since then there has been no improvement. In 1942, one out of every 215 Burmese was in jail, many of them for political offenses, but an astonishingly large proportion for murder and banditry. Gangsterism, known in Burma as "decoity," flourished as in no other Southeast Asian country. Various reasons have been given for this peculiarity—among them the great number of transient laborers, the constant shifting of people owing to the troubles of farm tenantry, and the relative lack of public condemnation of crime—but the problem as a whole has never been satisfactorily accounted for. Perhaps the general air of political and economic frustration which one senses in Burma is the covering reason for the widespread crime; but there may be some element in Burmese culture itself giving rise to an abnormal manifestation of aggression and violent action.

For all the turbulence of the postwar period, culminating in the assassination of the great leader, Aung San, and his ministers, the record is one of steady progress toward the liquidation of colonialism, which is the dominant trend in the current history of Southeast Asia and Indonesia. There is no question that, so far as Burma is concerned, the British grant of autonomy to India set the specific pattern for this neighboring dependency of the Empire. But the occupation of the country by the Japanese for over three years, which broke the hold of imperial authority and gave the natives not only experience in administration—both as puppets of the Japanese and as independent leaders of resistance organizations—but also possession of large supplies of military weapons, was the catalyzing factor which precipitated the successful revolution. Burma was well on the way, before the war, to actual self-government and probably dominion status; but the war itself hastened the process and carried it much farther than the British expected it to go. Burma has actually been given the choice of complete independence, something which would never have been predicted for this early date by even the most pessimistic of British imperial authorities.2

2 An independent republic since January, 1948, Burma became a member of the United Nations in April of the same year.
Siam has emerged from the war with no fundamental change in its internal social and political organization; but before the outbreak of war the country had passed through a decade of revolutionary transformation. The revolution of 1932, which was virtually bloodless, brought to an end the absolute monarchy which had ruled Siam for five centuries. Under the remarkable king, Chulalongkorn, who reigned from 1873 to 1910, and his successors, the ground had been laid for the eventual revolution by numerous departures from traditional Siamese political organization. The great king continued the practice, begun by his father Mongkut, of hiring European advisors to assist in the modernization of Siam. He centralized the administration of the country, rendering obsolete the feudal rule of hereditary nobles by subordinating them to royal officials in the provinces, who in turn were placed under the jurisdiction of a Minister of the Interior. The monarch also established a cabinet on the Western model, although it was purely advisory except for administrative duties. He regularized and codified the system of law, instituted a national budget, and encouraged education, which in 1921, under his successor, became compulsory on the elementary level for all children.

The centralization of government and the suppression of feudalism caused a great expansion in the civil service, whose members were drawn from the constantly increasing class of educated Siamese, more and more of whom went abroad to study. Until 1932, the high posts in the government, however, were held by the nobility; and one of the principal reasons for the revolution was the resentment of the growing body of officials against this aristocratic monopoly. Moreover, the ruler at this time, Prajadhipok, had cut the civil service sharply in the interests of economy, and hundreds of dismissed employees were antagonistic toward the government. But the main reason for the revolution was the spread of democratic ideas among the educated Siamese. The internal revolution in Siam had its source in the emerging intelligentsia, just as the nationalist movements against colonialism elsewhere in Southeast Asia and Indonesia arose as a consequence of the slow but steady diffusion of education among the native peoples. In its inception, however, the revolution was not a mass movement, and at the time of its occurrence scarcely 5 percent of the Siamese were literate. It was the achievement of a small elite of government officials and military
officers. Indeed, the new Siam has still to rise above the oligarchic kind of government which replaced the absolute monarchy in 1932. Nevertheless, the constitution adopted after the revolution made provisions for the eventual development of true democracy.

The 1932 revolution was carried out by a combination of civilian and military officials. The two groups were incompatible from the start, however, and this split still persists in Siamese politics. The leader of the civilian contingent was a young lawyer educated in Paris, Luang Pradit, and the military group was led by two colonels trained in Germany, Phya Bahol and Phya Song. Siam's first constitution provided for a legislative assembly with full law-making powers. Half of the members of the assembly were elected by popular vote (all citizens over the age of twenty were eligible for the franchise) and the other half were appointed by the king. After ten years, or before then if the literacy of the population rose to 50 percent, all of the delegates were to be elected. The executive branch of the government was in the hands of a state council, whose president was also prime minister. The king appointed the members of the council, which was responsible to the assembly and could be dismissed on a vote of no confidence.

The king could propose legislation to the assembly and could veto acts passed by it, but his veto could be overridden by a simple majority vote. The king could also dissolve the assembly, but then new elections had to be held within three months. Thus, although the powers of the ruler were still considerable, there was a profound change from the absolute royal authority of the former regime. Moreover, the grip of the nobility on the higher administrative offices was broken completely, as princes of royal blood were not allowed to hold positions in either the legislature or the ministry; they were eligible only to advisory or diplomatic posts. By curbing the nobility, however, Siam did not become a democracy. The record of the government since the revolution has been one of rule by small cliques, and during most of the time the group in power has been dominated by military officers or by conservative civilians whose dictatorial tendencies have been supported by the military. The royalists, however, lost virtually every vestige of control after an abortive attempt at counterrevolution in 1933. The king, in pro-
test against the infringement of his powers, abdicated in 1935 while living in England, and was succeeded by his nephew, Ananda.

The struggle for power between the different groups of the ruling oligarchy caused numerous conspiracies and a few actual civil revolts during the 1930s. The most liberal among the leaders was Pradit, but, although he was a member of the state council throughout most of the period, he never was able to gain firm control of the government. Indeed, he was continually branded by rivals as a dangerous radical, and on one occasion he was sent out of the country to France, in virtual banishment. Nevertheless, his socialistic ideas were shared by the more conservative politicians who dominated the administration. The reason for this was not that these men were radical in any ideological sense, but rather that another factor, extreme nationalism, led them, because of the peculiarities of Siam's economic situation, into a program of state socialism. Since native capital was lacking and most of the profit economy—ownership, management, and wage-earning jobs—was in the hands of foreign elements, principally British and Chinese, the only means of gaining native control over the commercial life of the country seemed to be through state enterprise. Consequently, economic nationalism became the keynote of Siam's pre-war history. The government entered many businesses, including shipping, the distribution of oil and tobacco, and the buying, milling, and selling of rice. The development of local industries was encouraged by subsidization, and expansion of agricultural enterprise in rubber, sugar, and rice was fostered by state research and aid. Food production for domestic needs was required of the people, in order to make the country self-sufficient; and the state set up agricultural credit facilities and sponsored the promotion of cooperative societies. The program also had an aggressive aspect, in the form of laws discriminating against foreign business, both European and Chinese, and restricting immigration, which was almost wholly Chinese. The entire scheme had little success, because of the lack of native capital and specialized skills, as well as the stubborn reluctance of the Siamese to enter commercial occupations or even to accept wage-earning positions in the profit economy. The underlying reason for the latter difficulty was the almost complete lack of training for and experience in such work.
The program of economic nationalism is of interest mainly, however, because it is a part of a general trend in Southeast Asia and Indonesia toward state socialism. The leaders of the revolutionary movements in Indonesia, Indo-China, and Burma all see socialism as the appropriate and desirable economic system for their countries when self-government is won. Siam, although it is an independent nation, has had a colonial type of economy, and here also state control of the means of production has been the goal of the government, no matter what may be the purely political opinions of the different groups in power. Perhaps the reason for this is that any colonial country, in order to gain control of the profit economy, must, in the absence of native private capital for local investment and development, yield the direction of capital and production to the government in a system of state socialism.

Along with economic nationalism, Siam developed a strong tendency toward political nationalism before the war. The Siamese have always been a militaristic, aggressive nation; and the revolution seemed to intensify this characteristic. In 1939, the name of the country was changed to Thailand, to symbolize the nationalistic significance of the tribal name, Thai. Military expenditures rose to almost a quarter of the total budget, and the army and navy, though small, were continually modernized. Siam, in proportion to its size, was carrying on a more intensive rearmament program than any other nation; and while the Siamese gave little direct military aid to the Japanese, they did take advantage of France’s defeat in 1940 to seize by force of arms a sizable slice of territory in Indo-China. The military emphasis was strengthened by the influence of army officers in the government. Nevertheless, the virtual dictatorship of the 1930s was increasingly challenged by the rising power of the assembly, and particularly by the growing confidence and prestige of the elected members. When the Japanese moved into Southeast Asia in 1942, however, the government became virtually an outright dictatorship, and the nationalistic spirit was manifested by declaration of war upon Great Britain and the United States.

Although Siam was until 1932 an absolute monarchy, and after the revolution a virtual dictatorship, the underlying democracy of Southeast Asian and Indonesian society always survived at the level of the masses of the common people. The king was regarded as semi-
divine, a Boddhisattva or reincarnation of Buddha, and until the revolution the immensely ramified nobility had an important share in the government of the country. A peculiar feature of the royalty, however, was that membership in it was not hereditary, except temporarily. After five generations of descending status, any branch of the royal family reverted to the level of commoners. The monarchy itself passed from father to son, the eldest son of the premier queen being the heir apparent. In the absence of male offspring, the throne went to a brother of the king. So strong was the idea of the king's divinity that royal incest was frequently resorted to for the sake of preserving the sacredness of the sovereign lineage, and four of the five kings in the nineteenth century were the children of half-brothers and half-sisters. The royal family was extremely large, as the monarch had an enormous harem; Chulalongkorn, for instance, died leaving 600 widows and 370 children. Slavery, officially abolished in 1905, was widespread until late in the nineteenth century; and it is said that a hundred years ago over a quarter of the population were slaves. Moreover, every freeman had a patron in the upper class; so that a form of feudalism permeated the country.

The vast majority of the people live in small villages of ten to eighty families. The members of the village, both men and women, elect their chief. The villages are grouped in subdistricts, and the chiefs of the communities elect the presiding chief of the subdistrict. Above this level, the administrative officials are appointed by the central government. The subdistricts are grouped in 406 districts, these in 70 provinces, and these finally in 10 “circles”; the three categories of territory being under administrators of progressively higher rank. But the important strata from the standpoint of the masses of the people, the village and the subdistrict, are democratic in organization and functioning. Siam never accepted the Indian caste system; and the status of women, as elsewhere in the area, is unusually high for the Orient. Men are the family heads, but women may own and inherit property, and, except in the old harem system of the upper class, they have always had complete personal freedom. Over 15 percent of them are literate, and under the constitution they may vote in national elections.

The extension of democratic government provided for under the 1932 constitution has progressed steadily in spite of the oligarchic
character of the central administration. Provincial councils were soon set up; as in the national legislature, half of the members were to be elected and half appointed until the rise in educational level warranted a completely elective membership. King Ananda, just before his death—apparently by assassination in the old royal tradition of Siam—signed a new constitution in 1946, which provided for a senate and a house of representatives, elected by popular vote; and the first entirely elected Siamese legislature was opened in June of that year.

During the war, Siam gave little substantial aid to the Japanese, but the dictatorial government made a bad error in declaring war on the United States and Great Britain. The British were disposed to force a punitive peace settlement on Siam, and only the intervention of the United States softened their terms. Britain had replied to Siam's declaration of war in 1942 with a counter-declaration, but America refused to acknowledge a state of hostilities with Siam, on the ground that the declaration of war was made by a puppet dictatorship of the Japanese; and in 1945 the king ruled both declarations void. During the war, moreover, the Siamese underground, in which several high officials of the government secretly participated, cooperated effectively with the Allies, especially the Americans. Without consulting the United States, the British first tried to impose a treaty which would have given Britain military bases on Siamese soil and have reestablished trade monopolies. Under American protest these demands were withdrawn, and the final settlement of early 1946 required that Siam give up its new name of Thailand, reverting to the traditional designation; that it return to Malaya the four northern states and to Burma the two Shan states which had been ceded to Siam by Japan during the war; and that disposition of the territory in Cambodia and Laos which Siam had seized from Indo-China be decided by international arbitration.

Siam thus reverted to its pre-war condition, with little change in status or in social and political organization. The disturbed economic conditions of the rest of the world have affected the country adversely, however, and it has yet to return to normal production and trade. The government is still dominated by cliques, as it has been since the revolution of 1932; and graft and corruption have
increased to a degree previously unknown. But for a technically enemy nation situated in a colonial area, large parts of which are undergoing bloody revolution, Siam is holding its balance surprisingly well in the turbulent aftermath of war. It is preserving its remarkable record of maintaining independence in a part of the world where it alone has been a free country.

Malaya, a British dependency, has also come through the war relatively unchanged, especially by contrast with Burma, Indo-China, and Indonesia, the three other colonial countries of the area. In all of Southeast Asia and Indonesia, Malaya before the war had the smallest measure of self-government; and it promises to continue to have less than any of its neighbors. One reason for this is its small size, and another is its inconsiderable population, about 5,500,000. Furthermore, even this number is divided among three markedly different ethnic groups: the Chinese being in a majority with close to 2,500,000, the Indians totaling almost 800,000, and the native Malays constituting the remainder of about 1,250,000. The two large alien groups, forming 60 percent of the entire population, were in Malaya as immigrants, and were therefore in a poor position to make political demands; while the Malays were not only few but also politically unsophisticated.

It has been remarked that Malaya was an ideal colony from the imperial standpoint, being richer in profit yield than all of the other British colonies combined, and having a consistently favorable budget, no income tax, and no politics. The actual control of the British administration was more complete than that of any other colonial government in the area. Nevertheless, the fiction of native self-rule by Malay sultans was elaborately maintained, each of the nine states being theoretically independent, and all of them functioning as protectorates of Britain under treaty arrangements. The truth was that the British Resident or Adviser of each state ruled it, under direct supervision of the High Commissioner in Singapore. Since there were no elections, there were no political parties and no organized political activity. The Malays, with no experience or hope of experience in government, had almost no national political consciousness. The British cited the preponderance of Chinese as a major justification for continuing their strict control over the gov-
ernment, representing themselves as protectors of the indigenous Malays against possible encroachments of the politically and economically more experienced Chinese.

The administrative organization almost surpassed belief in its fantastic intricacy. There were three separate governmental jurisdictions in the small area: the Straits Settlements, a crown colony consisting principally of the three port cities of Singapore, Penang, and Malacca; the Federated Malay States, a loose union of four of the pseudo-independent protected sultanates; and the Unfederated Malay States, an unamalgamated checkerboard of the other five protected states, each independent of the others; and there were seven tariff boundaries. The British justified perpetuation of this plan of utter confusion on the ground of protecting the integrity of the native states. An obvious advantage to the British was that such minute subdivision of the territory insured against any possibility of Malayan unity. It was, on a small scale, the ultimate application of the principle of divide and rule. The complex system was held together by lines of control that came together in the hands of the Governor of the Straits Settlements and the High Commissioner of the Malay States, the same man, in Singapore. The main channels of administration within the country ran down through the Malayan Civil Service, an almost completely British corps directed by the Governor-High Commissioner. All of the sultans, chiefs, and other official and semiofficial organs of administration were actually nonfunctional embroidery on the pattern of concentrated control.

The Malays had no political program; most of the Chinese were so strongly oriented toward their home country that they felt only a tangential interest in Malayan affairs; and the Indians, almost all of them transient coolies, were even less concerned with Malaya than the Chinese. The British apparently felt little apprehension about the possibility of political action on the part of the Malays. They rightly saw no reason for being concerned about the Indians. The Chinese alone seemed to be a potential source of trouble in the future, for among them were two elements—the one communistically inclined and the other Kuomintang nationalists—who might some day attempt a movement toward either Malayan independence or a closer link with China. The police and the secret
service spent more effort on surveillance of the Chinese than of any other group.

The British, like the native and alien peoples of Malaya, had no plans for changing the status quo, except that from time to time they reviewed the possibility of federal unification of the nine states and the Straits Settlements under a single administration. After the war, during which Malaya was occupied by the Japanese for almost four years, the British came forth with a plan for federalization. It proposed a new name for the country, the Malayan Union and Singapore. The Union would include all nine of the native states, as well as Penang and Malacca, which were formerly parts of the Straits Settlements. Singapore would become a separate colony, although it would be linked in certain ways with the Union; and both would be under the supreme authority of a single Governor. The entire plan represented a departure from the past only in the greater centralization of government; in the lowered dignity of the nine sultans, who henceforth would recognize the British Crown as sovereign in their states, rather than as a foreign protecting power under treaty relationships with them; and in the proposed establishment of a Malayan Union citizenship, to be granted to all persons, of whatever origin, born anywhere in Malaya. The last provision, which, if carried out, would give to Malaya-born Chinese citizenship rights equal to those of the native Malays, is potentially important, but, since the scheme made no mention whatever of voting or popular government of any kind, the question of citizenship is only of latent significance. The plan had nothing at all to do with democratic progress, although this was mentioned in the preamble; it was designed merely to simplify the governmental structure and thus render more efficient the colonial administration of Malaya.

During the Japanese occupation, numerous resistance groups conducted guerrilla warfare against the occupying forces. Most of the members of these groups were Chinese, but many Malays and some Indians were also in the guerrilla bands. Out of these wartime resistance units, and also from the more educated segment of the general population, there emerged, after the Japanese surrender, types of organization which had never existed in Malaya before, or at best had been very weak, namely, political parties and labor unions. One party, which claims the support of the majority of
Malays, is the United Malay Nationalist Organization, dominated by aristocrats and native governmental officials. It is conservative, asking mainly for a return to pre-war conditions, with the sultans' sovereignty intact, the states mutually independent, and requirements for citizenship strict. The Malayan Communist Party, largely Chinese, which, though small in numbers, is strong in the labor union movement, calls for the independence of Malaya, democratic government, and universal suffrage. The most interesting political organization is the Malayan Nationalist Party, claiming a membership of 60,000. It desires a republic, in which the majority of the legislature would be elected and half of the delegates would be Malays. The Governor would have no power of absolute veto over acts of the legislature, to which the executive council or cabinet would be responsible. This republic would eventually join the Indonesian Republic in a general Malaysian federation. All of these organizations were opposed to the original British plan for the Malayan Union on one ground or another. The Chinese parties, of which there are several, liked the citizenship provisions, but many Chinese criticized the absence of any provision for a democratic form of government. The Indians, while rather active in the new labor unions, are politically apathetic, being much more interested in the political developments in their own country than in Malaya. The British, taken aback at the opposition to the original Union plan, formed a political working committee in 1946 to consider revisions.

In the meantime, the government of the colony of Singapore was established, with a constitution which for the first time in Malaya's history provided for popular elections. But the innovation was a cautious one, for only six members of the legislative council would be elected—by vote of all British subjects over 21 years of age, regardless of sex and literacy—while nine of them would be appointed by the Governor and three others would represent the European, Chinese, and Indian chambers of commerce. In a British White Paper issued in July, 1947, a revision of the Union plan was offered. Instead of a Union, it proposed a Malayan Federation, to include the nine states and the British settlements of Penang and Malacca. Whether Singapore would eventually become a part of the Federation was left an open question. The traditional sovereign rights of the sultans would be preserved under the Federation, but
their exact status was not defined. There would be a strong central government headed by a British High Commissioner, who would be assisted by an executive council. A legislative council would have jurisdiction over domestic affairs, but the High Commissioner would have “reserved powers” to enforce any bill which the council did not pass in a reasonable time and which he considered to be necessary. A form of federal citizenship would be established, but no specifications concerning this were given; and there was no mention at all of voting or popular government. The entire plan actually offered little change from the former system of administration in the country, and provided for no progress whatever toward democratic self-government.

Thus, although Malaya remains largely in its pre-war status, even here, in the politically most backward country of the area, there are stirrings of protest against the traditional colonial system. But the division of the population into different ethnic groups, particularly the Malays and Chinese, as well as the generally conservative tendencies of the Malay intelligentsia, many of whom are officials in the native states and therefore have a personal stake in the preservation of the old organization, impede any united movement toward genuine self-rule and popular government. Even in its orientation toward neighboring countries Malaya is divided. The Indians, a majority of whom are transient laborers on rubber plantations, have interest only in India. The native Malays, mostly farmers and fishermen living in small villages in the rural regions, are culturally and linguistically related to the Indonesians, especially to their brother Malays of Sumatra. And the Chinese, like their kinsmen elsewhere in the world, do not forget their ties with the homeland. They are principally urban dwellers or businessmen in the small towns; and in the future development of Malaya will probably constitute the bulk of an emerging middle class whose point of view on foreign relations will be strongly influenced by their ancestral link with China.

Indo-China, with the largest population and the greatest potential wealth of all the French colonies, was, immediately upon the close of the war, the scene of a revolution whose violence has been surpassed only by the Indonesian struggle for freedom. The French had held Indo-China for less than a century, many parts of it for less
than that, when the Japanese invaded the country in 1940, more than a year before they moved into the other parts of Southeast Asia and Indonesia. Indo-China is actually a complex of five small countries, and before the war the form of administration differed for each. Annam and Cambodia were protectorates, under the nominal rule, respectively, of an emperor and a king. Laos also was technically a protectorate, but it was ruled directly by the French except for the territory of the king of Luang Prabang. Tonkin, formerly a part of the empire of Annam, was classed as a protectorate too, but since there was no native ruler the protectorate was one in name only, and the region was actually under direct French administration. Cochin China, also a territory of the Annamese empire in the past, became a colony, directly ruled, under the French. The French official in charge of each of the four protectorates had the title of Resident Superior, while the colony, Cochin China, had a Governor. The supreme head of government was the Governor-General.

The administration of the entire country, despite superficial variations, was actually in the hands of the civil service, headed by the Governor-General, and supreme authority was thoroughly centralized. Decisions as to policy and even relatively minor matters were made by the Governor-General, or, very commonly, by the Ministry of Colonies in Paris. In fact, most of the direction of government in Indo-China was by executive decrees. There were numerous kinds of councils in the country, but, although the members of many of them were chosen by a very restricted electorate, their functions were purely advisory; and, of course, the native rulers whom the French kept in office were mere puppets of the colonial regime as represented by the Residents Superior of the protectorates. French administration was handicapped not only by the fact that, unlike the British and Dutch officials in neighboring dependencies, the French civil service personnel was largely incompetent, but also by the constant shifting of the higher officers of government. In forty years there were 52 different Governors-General; and in the same period Cochin China had 38 Governors, while Annam, Tonkin, and Cambodia had 32, 31, and 22 different Residents Superior. Laos, in thirty years, had 17 Residents Superior. The instability of French politics was reflected in the colony, for, unfor-
fortunately, the colonial administration, which in the British and Dutch dependencies was mainly staffed by career experts, was used in Indo-China, especially on the important upper levels, as a device for rewarding party politicians with lucrative jobs. The civil service was also, by comparison with neighboring countries, overstaffed, and it had a higher proportion of European personnel in proportion to native employees—one French official to every five native—than elsewhere in the area. As a consequence of all of these factors, the administration was very expensive, absorbing fully a half of the total government budget.

Annam, nominally ruled by its emperor, had an assembly whose members were elected by a small elite consisting of mandarins, native "notables" of the upper class, licensed merchants, and graduates of French-Annamese schools. But it was merely a consultative body, and the actual administration was carried on, under the direction of the Resident Superior, by the French and native civil service. The latter was staffed by mandarins, who represented a survival from the days of the independent empire. In former times they were chosen by competitive examinations which concentrated on the Chinese classics, as in old China, and even the poorest youth could aspire, through learning, to the mandarinate. After 1915, the French abolished the examination system, and merely appointed the mandarins. Although there was a class of nobility under the independent empire, noble titles were granted by the emperor, and in each generation a noble family dropped down one level until, after five generations, it merged with the common folk, a procedure identical with that prevalent in Siam. The nobility, as such, had no part in government, but many mandarins had noble status. The emperor was an absolute monarch, semidivine, and the representative of Heaven on earth. All authority was concentrated in him, and from him it was diffused downward through the mandarins, the chiefs of villages, and the heads of families. The entire concept of government was paternalistic, and Confucian ideas of filial piety permeated not only the administration, but also the highly developed ancestor cult and the system of clans, of which there were many, grouped under the dozen or so great family names of Annam. The organization was thus strikingly similar to that of the Chinese empire; whence indeed it was derived. The emperor kept a large
measure of his prestige under French rule, although he lost nearly all of his actual power.

Tonkin, which until 1807 had been ruled by a viceroy of the Annamese emperor, was directly administered by the French, even though it was classed as a protectorate. The mandarinate was retained, and, with the European bureaucracy, represented the central government in the various parts of the country. Tonkin had a protectorate council, whose relationship to the Resident Superior was purely consultative, and whose members were chosen by a small electorate of French citizens and prominent natives. Cochin China had no mandarins, for they were all withdrawn by the Annamese emperor when he ceded the country to the French in 1862, and the administration was carried on, under the Governor, by French and native officials. The Colonial Council here had more power than any other council in Indochina, and yet its authority was restricted to questions of taxation. This body elected one delegate to the French Chamber of Deputies, the sole representative of Indo-China in the central government of the French empire. Laos, nominally a protectorate, was ruled directly, except for the kingdom of Luang Prabang, whose monarch was retained in office. The administrative officials, under the Resident Superior, were native mandarins and functionaries of the French civil service. The advisory council was similar in composition and functions to the protectorate council of Tonkin.

Cambodia also had a consultative assembly, elected by a limited elite, but here the traditional native system of government was preserved more nearly intact than anywhere else in Indo-China. French civil officials and a corps of about a thousand mandarins carried on the administration, but the king had more prestige and the forms of monarchy were observed more fully than in the other two royal domains of Annam and Laos. The king of Cambodia, heir to the glories of Angkor, was, like his counterpart in Siam, a divine ruler, and a feudal kind of hierarchical social organization, again similar to that of Siam, placed every individual in a status of either client or patron to persons above and below himself. This system was extended to include not only nobles and freemen, but serfs and slaves as well. All persons in positions of authority were graded by the number of "dignities" they possessed; thus the highest nobles
had 10,000 dignities and an ordinary village chief about 500. Even the marriage rules were affected by status, the king being allowed eleven wives and a commoner only three. The number of concubines, however, was not limited, and the king's harem regularly had a personnel of between three and four hundred. One further feature of the Cambodian kingdom had a parallel in Siam, and in Annam as well. Any branch of the royalty, after five generations of descending rank, dropped to the level of the common people; the only difference from the other two countries was that in Cambodia such déclassé aristocrats became members of a special ex-royal clan. Evidently the function of this remarkable scheme in all three countries was to keep the noble class fluid and thus reduce the possibility of any challenge to the supremacy of the royal line.

It might be supposed that with the strong development of monarchial systems in Indo-China, followed by the autocratic French colonial regime, democratic forms of social and political organization could hardly survive. And yet here, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia and Indonesia, beneath the elaborate cover of despotism, the basic units of society, the village communities, have always functioned as small republics, autonomous in local affairs and mutually independent. In Annam alone was there any tendency toward oligarchic government on the village level. Here the communities have been dominated by so-called "notables," the prominent men and taxpayers. But, since Annamese villages are virtually clan units, the ruling elders have been relatives of everyone else in the community. Their status as heads of the village has been merely analogous to that of heads of families within the locality. These village notables formerly elected the chiefs of cantons, or subdistricts, in Annam; but the French violated this democratic practice by making canton heads appointive. Throughout Indo-China, except in a few primitive matrilineal tribes, men are dominant in the families, but the status of women is high by Oriental standards. And even in Cambodia and Laos, where Indian influence was strongest, there are no caste divisions.

The French colonial policy had as its ideal goal assimilation of the Indo-Chinese to French culture, so that eventually the country might form an association with the mother country on a basis of equality. The first part of this program was realized among only
a very small proportion of the natives. This elite group received French education, and even, in a relatively few cases, secured French citizenship. Naturalization usually required that a person be able to speak the French language and have performed some distinguished service; but, remarkably enough, citizenship so obtained was not inherited. Not only was citizenship sparingly granted; the whole scheme of concentrating upon production of a native elite impeded the development of mass education. Moreover, confidence in the ideal of assimilation itself was shaken when it was noticed that a very large proportion of the Indochinese who were given the advantages of a Western type of education became fervent nationalists, leading their less enlightened brethren in movements against French colonial rule. The basic difficulty was that the political and economic emancipation of native society did not keep pace with even the slow educational advances; and the young Indo-Chinese instructed in the notions of liberty, equality, and free competition found themselves with no voice in the government of their homeland, unable to rise above a subordinate level in the administrative services, and facing a barrier of discrimination which shut them out from employment in the better wage-paying jobs of the profit economy. In the second part of the French ideal program, equal association of the mother country and the overseas territory, no progress was made at all; but the principle is important because it became the basis for concessions offered to Indo-China by France after the recent war.

Perhaps the quickest way to summarize the defects of French colonial administration in Indo-China is to outline the program of reforms demanded by the Viet Minh, the dominant and most representative party of the country today. The party drew up its manifesto in 1942, and it is a striking commentary on French rule. The party demanded a democratic constitution, providing for a popularly elected legislature. It insisted that the rights of personal liberty be guaranteed, and that irregular police methods, including torture, brutality, and peremptory trials, be abolished. It called for an end to arbitrary censorship of the press and to restrictions on the right of free assembly, as well as for freedom of movement from one part of the country to another. It asked for a reform in the tariff system, so that foreign trade need not always be sacrificed for the protection
of French interests. The other demands were for an opening of
government employment, on all levels, to Indo-Chinese, without dis­
 crimination; a program of industrial development; attention to mod­
ernization of agriculture, and with more emphasis on native food
crops and less on export products; improved provisions for public
health and medical care; vastly expanded educational facilities, from
elementary school to university; abolition of forced labor on public
works in lieu of tax payment; labor legislation to improve particu­
larly the poor conditions among the coal miners of Tonkin and the
contract laborers on the Cochin China rice and rubber plantations;
and finally a reform in the system of taxation, especially abolition
of the hated government monopolies on the sale of opium, alcohol,
and salt.

In all of these respects, French administration was implicitly con­
demned by the Viet Minh, and the record justified the indictment.
Two striking examples from the list of grievances above are the
matter of police methods and the government monopolies. Indo­
China, particularly in the period around 1930, was little better than
a police state. There were mass arrests, followed by brutality, tor­
ture, and star-chamber trials under a special Criminal Commission.
Thousands of Indo-Chinese, most of them for mere political agita­
tion, were imprisoned in jails where conditions were appalling even
for the Orient or were banished to the sinister concentration camp
on the island of Pulo Condore, and hundreds were executed. As for
the monopolies, since almost half of government revenue came from
their sale, the use of opium and alcohol was encouraged and almost
forced upon the people, and salt was sold only by the government
at a high price.

In the face of such conditions, and with improvement stubbornly
refused by the French, it is not surprising that nationalistic move­
ments struck constantly against the colonial regime. The earliest
organized uprising occurred in 1908, just at the time when the first
signs of nationalism were appearing in Burma and Indonesia. There
is no doubt that the victory of the Japanese over the Russians in
1905, symbolizing for the masses of Orientals the revolt of Asia
against European domination, had an important part in the rise of
colonial nationalism. The uprising of 1908 was suppressed, and
hundreds of natives were banished to the prison on Pulo Condore.
Here among the prisoners was established the first recorded party, called the Restoration of Annam. During the first World War, over 100,000 Annamese were conscripted for labor service in France, and these men returned home with rebellious ideas which grew out of their comparison of conditions in free Europe with those in their own country. They formed the base of two parties which arose in 1925 and 1927, the Revolutionary Party of New Annam and the Annamese Nationalist Party. The former group split apart because of dissension between its communist and more conservative elements, and the communists established a party of their own. The Nationalist Party attempted an assassination of the Governor-General in 1929; in the bloody suppression following this incident it was discovered that half of its members were government employees. This party also instigated a mutiny of a garrison of native troops in Tonkin in 1930, and the French reprisals were so violent that the organization was forced into clandestine activity only.

The Indo-Chinese Communist Party reached its high point in 1931, when it claimed 100,000 followers. Its leader, a remarkably able and courageous Annamese, is the greatest figure in modern Indo-Chinese history and the president of the Republic of Viet Nam. Originally named Nguyen Ai Quoc, he changed his name to Ho Chi-Minh. The son of a mandarin, he traveled around the world as a sailor, and spent several years in Europe, where he became prominent in communist circles. He spent most of his time outside Indo-China in the 1930s, for the French were desperately eager to seize him; but he was constantly at work organizing nationalist groups, on the pattern of communist cells, within the country. His main base of operations was Canton, which became the center of Annamese plotting, but he also lived for brief periods in Russia and Siam. Before the British arrested him in Hongkong, he had been able, with the aid of small funds provided by Moscow, to set up a network of village cells, canton sections, and a central committee in Indo-China. The French hunted down the communist-nationalists ruthlessly, mobilizing, in a campaign of terror, the police, a large corps of spies, and the Foreign Legion. Mass arrests, torture, and arbitrary trials were employed to break the movement, and thousands of natives were imprisoned or executed. By 1933, the communists had
been forced underground, but the organization built up by Nguyen Ai Quoc survived.

When the Japanese occupied Indo-China in 1940, the nationalists saw their chance to emerge. Just before this, in 1939, a new party, largely communist in composition, had been established. It took the name of Viet Minh, or the League for the Independence of Viet Nam (the ancient name of Indo-China, meaning Land of the South). In 1942, all of the other important parties—including the Annamese Nationalists, the Association of Revolutionary Annamese Youth, and the Indo-Chinese Communist Party—merged with the Viet Minh, which was pledged to fight against both Japanese and French for the cause of independence and democracy. The French administration was kept in office by the Japanese and cooperated with them in attempting to suppress the Viet Minh, which conducted effective guerrilla warfare all during the war, especially in the final months, when it aided Allied operations, mostly American, behind the Japanese lines. Nguyen Ai Quoc, now Ho Chi-Minh, was the organizing genius and leader of the resistance forces, which numbered fully 50,000 and functioned through a central national committee and local people's liberation committees. In 1945, the Japanese, foreseeing the probability of defeat, took over administration from the French, who had collaborated wholeheartedly with them during the occupation, both in combating the Viet Minh resistance and in supplying material, especially food, for the Japanese forces. In place of the French, the Japanese set up a puppet government, nominally independent, in Annam, Tonkin, and Cochin China, under the Annamese emperor Bao Dai; Cambodia and Laos were declared independent under their kings.

The Viet Minh would have nothing to do with these Japanese puppet governments, and, when the surrender came, they proclaimed the establishment of the Republic of Viet Nam. Meanwhile, France, now liberated, broadcast a plan for the future administration of Indo-China which was intended to counteract the Japanese declaration of independence for the country. Indo-China was to become a semiautonomous dominion in a French Union, with full control over domestic affairs. But the Governor-General would still be supreme, and a new state council, composed of appointed members, would have only advisory functions. In other words, Indo-China
would have domestic autonomy, but this would be under French direction. Furthermore, defense and foreign affairs would be managed by France. The new Republic saw no progress in this plan and refused to consider it. Because French forces were not available, the British were given the task of disarming the Japanese and restoring order in the southern part of Indo-China, while the Chinese were assigned the same duties in the northern half of the country.

The British refused to recognize the authority of the new Republic, and, after they had armed the French who were in Saigon, incidents occurred which led to open warfare. As in Java, the British used Japanese troops to reinforce their own largely Indian contingents; and they stayed in southern Indo-China long enough to protect the entry of some 50,000 French troops. The Chinese in the north dealt openly with the Republic, recognizing it as the de facto government of the area, but in early 1946 they withdrew and French forces moved into Tonkin. The French, using mostly American weapons and other equipment, as well as Foreign Legionnaires largely recruited in Germany, started the full-scale warfare which was still going on in 1948.

It appeared for a while in the middle of 1946 that a negotiated peace would put an end to the French-Viet Nam war, for in March of that year France recognized the Republic “as a free state with its own government, parliament, army, and finances, forming a part of the Indochinese Federation and the French Union.” Cambodia and Laos had meanwhile been established, under the nominal rule of their kings, as autonomous states within the Federation. The French promised that the question of inclusion of Tonkin and Cochin China with Annam in the Viet Nam Republic would be decided by referendum; but they quickly broke this pledge by setting up a separate republic in Cochin China. This country is the richest part of Indo-China, and without it the Republic would be economically crippled. Moreover, there is little doubt that its population, mostly Annamese, would vote to join Viet Nam if a referendum were held. Tonkin would certainly declare for Viet Nam. The president, Ho Chi-Minh, made a fruitless trip to France to try to settle the issue of Cochin China, arrange for a cessation of hostilities, and initiate concrete action in establishing the Republic, the
Federation, and the French Union, as provided for in the March agreement. The French continued to behave as though the agreement never existed, and, in a country raging with open warfare, the Viet Nam Republic set about organizing a government while the French poured in troops and tried constantly to spread out from their bases in the principal cities and in Cambodia and Laos. Even in the latter two countries, however, they were resisted by native forces sympathetic to Viet Nam, the Free Cambodia and Free Laos groups. In Annam, Tonkin, and Cochin China, the French organized a party of native politicians who were at odds, for one reason or another, with the Viet Minh. It was called the National Union Front, but its name was utterly inappropriate, as it had almost no support among the populace.

The Viet Nam Republic held its first elections, for a provisional government, in early 1946, openly in Annam and Tonkin, and clandestinely in French-occupied Cochin China. The result was a complete victory for the Viet Minh, and Ho Chi-Minh became president of the Republic, while his party won nearly all of the seats in the provisional assembly, among whose members was the ex-emperor Bao Dai, who had abdicated, giving the Republic his blessing, at the time of the Japanese surrender. He was elected, under his nonimperial name, from his ancestral province. In November, 1946, the assembly adopted a constitution providing for a unicameral legislature to be elected triennially by popular vote of all persons over the age of 18, a president elected by a two-thirds vote of the legislature, and a prime minister and cabinet responsible to the legislature.

The plan of local government owed something to both the traditional village autonomy of Indo-China and the Soviet system, which Ho Chi-Minh learned well in his days as a communist. Each village would have an elected council, and elected councils would also govern the provinces. The local councils would elect the executive committees of the prefectures, districts, and the three great divisions or "bos" of Viet Nam: Annam, Tonkin, and Cochin China. Although the pattern of organization had a relationship to the Russian plan, and while Ho Chi-Minh himself was once an avowed communist, the Republic is not communistic. There is not even a communist party in Viet Nam, the old one having been disbanded in 1945.
The Republic is nationalistic and opposed to imperialism, but is not anticapitalist. President Ho, when asked about communism, has stated that it may come some day to Indo-China, but that now the goals are freedom and democracy. Still, while the Republic has declared that foreign capital will be welcome and its rights thoroughly protected, it is probably inevitable that the new regime, once firmly established, would lean toward moderate state socialism in the economic sphere. The constitution makes careful provision for the safeguarding of civil liberties and the rights of minority peoples, and stipulates that education on the primary level will be compulsory and free. Already a great literacy campaign is under way and has produced surprisingly successful results.

The French have never had true peace in Indo-China, except in the backlands of Cambodia and Laos. The Annamese have resisted colonial rule constantly, and even when lying low under military suppression they have busily organized for the uprisings which burst forth every few years. The French reaction has been, not compromise and concession, but force and still more force against the aspirations of the natives. French colonial policy, ideally directed toward assimilation of the subject peoples to French culture, with eventual equal association as the final goal, has not succeeded because it was never tried. The assimilationist program was carried out for a very small proportion of natives, but their education in Western ideas of freedom and democracy made them revolutionaries against the colonial system, which in its very essence is opposed to self-government, personal liberty, and equality.

The Dutch, although they never had the principle of cultural assimilation of their colonial subjects in their imperial policy, have nevertheless faced the same problem in Indonesia as the French have in Indo-China. Here, in the largest and richest of all the countries of the Southeast Asian area, a violent revolution, led by men who have received the Western kind of education and absorbed the social and political ideals of Europe, started immediately after the Japanese surrender. As in Indo-China, the groundwork had been laid over a period of many years, during which nationalist movements gained steadily in strength despite the frantic efforts of the Dutch to suppress them.

Indonesia before the recent war was not designated by the Dutch
as a colony, although it had most of the characteristics of a colonial dependency. It formed, according to the Dutch definition, a "part" of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and had its own governmental system to handle domestic affairs; but the islands were under the "guidance" of Holland and the latter controlled relations with foreign states. Thus legislation concerning matters of broad and fundamental import for Indonesia went through the parliament in Holland, while strictly domestic affairs were directed by the Governor-General and the organs of government in Batavia. These included the Council of the Indies, a five-man advisory board of the Governor-General; a cabinet; and a legislative assembly. Defense, as usual in colonial countries, was in the hands of the controlling power.

The legislature, known as the Volksraad or People's Council, was potentially the most important organ of the Indonesian government. Created in 1916, at first it could not initiate legislation, but might merely call upon officials for explanation and defense of their policies and activities. Later, however, members could introduce bills on their own initiative, and the Volksraad could amend bills presented to it by the Governor-General, who was required to lay every legal measure he advocated before the Volksraad for a vote. If the legislature and the Governor-General could not reach agreement on a bill, the deadlock was resolved by vote of the Netherlands parliament or by royal decree. The Volksraad was therefore almost, but not quite, a true legislative body. The partially democratic nature of this assembly was also demonstrated by the way in which its members were chosen. There were 61 delegates, the chairman being appointed by the Crown, and the remaining 60 members being partly elected and partly appointed by the Governor-General in the following manner: of the 30 Indonesian delegates, 20 were elected and 10 appointed; of the 25 European members, 15 were elected and 10 appointed; and of the 5 "alien Asiatic"—Chinese and Arab—deputies, 3 were elected and 2 appointed. Thus the elected members totaled 38 and the appointed ones 22. The method of election was indirect, and only members of the local councils—provincial, regency, and municipal—voted for delegates. These council members in turn were partly chosen by the people themselves, in most places voting as village units, and partly appointed by the head
of the local civil service administration. The whole process was remarkably complex and cumbersome.

There were three kinds of administration outside the central government. The civil service, headed by extremely well-trained Netherlanders but including a large proportion of natives on the lower levels, acted as the representatives of the central government in the various districts. The native rulers, mostly hereditary, were survivors from the feudalistic system which was traditional in many parts of the Indies before the arrival of the Europeans. And third, there were councils of the different kinds of administrative districts: provinces, regencies, municipalities, and communities.

The civil service included several grades of officials, virtually all of the superior posts being manned by Netherlanders. About 7 percent of the area of Java was nominally governed by four native sultans, while fully 60 percent of the territory outside Java was technically controlled by local rulers. In Java, although 90 percent of the island lay outside the domain of the native states, "semi-indirect" rule operated throughout these sections, which were divided into 70 regencies, each under the nominal authority of a native prince of noble ancestry. The lowest unit in the hierarchy of native regional government was the village community. Each village throughout the Indies had a chief, in some cases elected and in others hereditary. He was assisted by certain other officials, usually including a secretary, a messenger, a bailiff, and a priest. Each village had an assembly, to which generally all adult males in good standing were eligible. Many of the communities had, in addition, a council of elders, a kind of senate drawn from the members of the assembly. These village republics, as elsewhere in Southeast Asia, were the real centers of native social and political life. Only a small proportion of the common folk ever had anything to do directly with the higher native officials or the Dutch administrators. The third type of regional government was a recent innovation, although the groundwork for it had been laid as far back as 1903, by the first "decentralization" law. The plan was to develop in each section of Indonesia a complete local government to handle internal affairs. Each of the major administrative divisions was to have not only its civil service officials representing the central government, and its native rulers, but also a council, partly
appointed and partly elected. The scheme would eventually have worked out into a system similar to the American federal type of government, with its state legislatures and city councils, and by 1941 the plan was in partial operation.

The development of Dutch rule was thus one of cautious and gradual liberalization of the governmental system, slowly tending toward the goal of native self-rule under European supervision. Still, the Indonesians had little share in the central administration, for above the village level the Dutch held firm control in their own hands. The only important governmental body in which natives were even fairly well represented was the Volksraad; but the thirty native delegates formed only half of the legislature, and ten of them were appointed by the Governor-General, while the method of election of the other twenty was so indirect that true popular representation was not achieved. Moreover, acts of the Volksraad were subject to initial veto by the Governor-General, and to final veto by the Netherlands government. The highest officials of the central administration included only two Indonesians in 1941; and the civil service above the rank of controleur was almost entirely staffed by Netherlanders.

The nationalist movement began in Indonesia in 1908, but it was not until the first World War and the establishment of the Volksraad that the Dutch began to be alarmed at the growing radicalism, from the Netherlands standpoint, of the Indonesian nationalists. Some of the parties and leaders of the 1920s were undoubtedly communistically inclined, but the great majority of them were purely anti-imperialist nationalists who agitated for improvements in the political and economic status of their people. The Dutch reaction to the growth of nationalism was to make the laws regarding native political activity ever stricter, and to impose heavy penalties on all who violated them. The worst period was in 1926 and 1927, when armed rebellions broke out in Java and Sumatra. The Dutch reprisals were swift and ruthless, and thousands of natives were imprisoned, a large proportion of them being banished either to a political concentration camp deep in the wild interior of New Guinea or to remote towns in the outer islands. Hundreds of prisoners were still in the Boven Digoel camp in New Guinea when the Japanese invaded the Indies, and many of them had been
there ever since the uprisings of the late 1920s. Nearly every one of the leaders of the postwar revolution had spent years in Dutch prisons for political activity. The censorship laws were so strict that almost any statement of the nationalist position was punishable, while public advocacy of Indonesian independence was legally classed as sedition. It was forbidden to use the term “Indonesia” in print or on the radio, because, the Dutch said, it had become a symbol of independence; and singing of the nationalist anthem “Indonesia Raya” was prohibited by law.

After the harsh repression of the uprisings in the late 1920s and the imprisonment or banishment of many of the nationalist leaders, the movement subsided, and from 1930 until the Japanese invasion there was a period of wary political action, marked mainly by efforts to organize a united front of nationalist parties so as to strike strongly when the time was ripe. The most powerful of the parties were the Parindra, a federation of moderate nationalist groups; the Gerindo, a coalition of more radical organizations; the PPBB, a party of native government officials; and the MIAI, a federation of Moslem societies. Both the Parindra and the Gerindo were composed mainly of Western-educated Indonesians, supported by local patriots of lesser learning; the PPBB membership, drawn from the ranks of government employees, was well educated; while the MIAI followers were, for the most part, comparatively uneducated and unsophisticated Mohammedan enthusiasts. Until 1939 these parties, and a score of minor ones, had never achieved any appreciable unity of goals or action. In that year the relatively conservative Parindra and the relatively radical Gerindo both shifted ground sufficiently toward a compromise central position to render amalgamation possible. They were joined by several minor parties, and the result was a coalition under the name of GAPI, Gaboengan Politiek Indonesia, or Indonesian Political Union. The PPBB and the MIAI did not join the Union, but in policy and voting in the Volksraad they followed the GAPI line. This coalition thus became a unified and powerful pace-setter for Indonesian political action, the first effective Indonesian political federation.

The GAPI policy represented a strategic compromise with necessity. All through the 1920s and 1930s, whenever an Indonesian party showed signs of real power and embarked upon a program of
spirited agitation, the government, on one pretext or another, jailed its leaders or sent them off into exile. Since, under the East Indian laws, advocating independence could be construed as treasonable activity, any "secessionistic" nationalist was liable to legal prosecution. The native political leaders came to realize that the government was determined to enforce this type of law, and therefore, in self-defense and for the sake of staying free, most of them came around to the point where they carefully refrained from preaching complete independence for Indonesia, and instead advocated self-government within the Netherlands Kingdom. The GAPI epitomized this device of strategic retreat. Just before the Japanese invasion, the Dutch made a final gesture which left a bitter memory of them among the Indonesians: they rounded up and imprisoned scores of native political leaders.

The Japanese occupation of Indonesia for nearly four years changed the political situation in the islands tremendously. The revolution really started during this period, although the nationalist movement had prepared the way for it. The quick conquest indicated to the Indonesians the fact that the European masters, who had seemed invincible for three centuries, could be beaten. Moreover, it suited the purposes of the Japanese to indoctrinate the masses of the natives with anti-imperialist propaganda, and they did this on a much wider scale than the nationalist leaders, constantly suppressed by the Dutch, were ever able to. Unfortunately for the Dutch, there was enough of truth in what the Japanese said about imperialism to make a profound impression upon the Indonesians. At the same time, they never accepted the idea of Japanese domination. They responded enthusiastically to the Japanese slogan "Asia for the Asiatics," which they interpreted as meaning "Indonesia for the Indonesians." But the Japanese did certain other things which had greater practical significance. They removed all of the Dutch from their positions of control in government and economic affairs, replacing them with Indonesians who had previously been subordinates of the Europeans. Thus native politicians and government employees, who had been either excluded from political life or given minor administrative posts by the Dutch, were placed in the highest levels of authority. Indonesian foremen and technical assistants became managers and superintendents of planta-
tions, mines, and petroleum installations. And for the first time in modern Indonesian history, large numbers of natives were recruited, trained, and armed for military service; and former petty officers in the small Dutch forces were elevated to positions of command in the new militia. For almost four years the Indonesians, under Japanese direction, actually ran their country, and they gained skill, experience, and confidence in themselves. The Japanese occupation was thus the training period for the postwar Indonesian Republic. Finally, when the Japanese saw that their defeat was certain, as a last gesture, since they had nothing to lose by it, they set up an Independence Preparatory Committee, which, immediately upon the surrender, proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia.

Unlike Burma, the Philippines, and most other liberated areas, the Indies were not entered by the Allied forces at once. The suddenness of the Japanese surrender left the islands "unoccupied," which gave the Republic time to get organized and to mobilize its troops for defense of the new independence. When the Dutch heard about what was occurring, they frantically broadcast from Australia an order placing Indonesia under interim control of the Japanese, and condemned the Republic as a Japanese-inspired creation of native radicals and collaborators. The natives were shocked that the Dutch preferred to designate the enemy as their deputies rather than allow Indonesians to take charge. Since the Dutch had only small forces available, the British were given the responsibility, as in Indo-China, of entering the Indies to receive the surrender of the Japanese there, disarm them, and release Allied prisoners of war and internees. The Republican leaders assured the British that they would cooperate fully with them in their mission, but warned that if they brought any Dutch troops or officials with them this would be resisted by armed force. The British landed, accompanied by Dutch contingents, and warfare began.

As in Indo-China, the British did two things which went contrary to their mandate from the Allied command. In the first place, instead of disarming the Japanese troops at once, they used them to police sections of Indonesia, and also, to the scandalized amazement of the natives, they even employed them in actual combat against the Indonesians. The second British breach of contract came when they announced that they intended to insure the safe entry
of Dutch forces before leaving Indonesia. They decided this entirely on their own; it was not in the terms of the mandate defining their mission in the Indies. Dutch forces poured in steadily under cover of British protection, until by the end of 1946 they numbered about 100,000. They had mostly American weapons and equipment, just as the French troops did in Indo-China. The best Dutch units were marines who had been trained and fully fitted out in the United States. In both places, British protection and American supplies paved the way for attempts at colonial reconquest.

During a full year of warfare, partially interrupted from time to time by temporary truces, the Dutch and Indonesians carried on negotiations with the mediation of the British. The Dutch first offered a settlement based upon a statement of policy which had been made by the Queen in 1942. According to this, Indonesia would in the future become an equal, autonomous partner of Holland in a Netherlands commonwealth. In the early months of 1946, the Dutch elaborated this vague plan, and, although commonwealth partnership was still the basis of the new offer, they outlined a procedure whereby, after an indeterminate period, Indonesia might, if it so desired, become completely independent. In the meantime, a democratic, representative legislature would be established in the Indies, with a majority of native members. The Governor-General, however, would retain extensive special powers to guarantee "fundamental rights, efficient administration and sound financial management." Whether he and the Netherlands government would still have veto power over acts of the Indonesian legislature was not stated. There would be a central government of the whole Kingdom, including a commonwealth cabinet and administrative bureaus, and composed of members drawn from all parts of the union, but no central legislature. Probably the question of the latter was deliberately avoided, because the problem of proportional representation would have surely arisen, and Indonesia, with over 70,000,000 population, might logically have claimed a larger representation than Holland, with only 9,000,000 population. The Dutch promised that if Indonesia accepted the proposal, Holland would sponsor Indonesian membership in the United Nations.

The Netherlands plan just outlined became the basis for protracted negotiations between the Dutch and the Republican officials.
Finally, in November, 1946, just as the British were withdrawing their forces from Indonesia, the Netherlands and Republican representatives initialed an agreement which was then submitted to their respective governments for approval. In the meantime, the Dutch, who had succeeded in occupying most of the islands outside Java and Sumatra, called a conference of delegates from these outer territories at Malino in Celebes in July, 1946, and resolutions were passed which, among less important provisions, favored the establishment of a United States of Indonesia, to consist of four federated states: Java, Sumatra, Borneo, and the Great East (eastern Indonesia). Another conference, held in Bali in December, 1946, formally established the state of Eastern Indonesia; but this event attracted little attention because of the far greater significance of the initialing of the general Dutch-Indonesian agreement in November.

This agreement, which was approved by the Netherlands and Republican governments and formally signed in Batavia by their respective delegates in March, 1947, was named the Linggadjati or Cheribon Agreement, after the place near the city of Cheribon in Java where it was drawn up in November. It consists of eighteen articles, the main points of which may be summarized as follows.

The Netherlands Government recognized the Republic of Indonesia as the \textit{de facto} government of Java and Sumatra. The Malino resolutions had favored separating Java and Sumatra, and the Dutch showed a disinclination to allow incorporation of the latter island in Republican territory; but this first provision of the Cheribon Agreement represented a crucial victory for the Republic, which thus would gain control over the two most important islands of the Indies and more than 80 percent of the total population. Areas in Java and Sumatra occupied by Dutch troops were to be gradually yielded to the Republic, at the latest by January 1, 1949. The Netherlands Government and the Republic were to cooperate in the rapid formation of a sovereign democratic state, a federation to be known as the United States of Indonesia. This would include all of the Indies, in three divisions, namely, the Republic of Indonesia (Java and Sumatra) and the States of Borneo and the Great East. If the population of any territory should decide, by democratic process, that they were unwilling to join the United States
of Indonesia or preferred a special relationship to the federation or to the Netherlands, their desires would be recognized. The constitution of the United States of Indonesia was to be drawn up by a constituent assembly composed of the democratically nominated representatives of the Republic and the other divisions of the federation. The method of participation in the constituent assembly would be determined by consultation between the Republic and the Netherlands.

The Netherlands and the Republic would cooperate in establishing a Netherlands-Indonesia Union, with the Netherlands Queen (or King) as head, this Union to be composed of two equal partners: the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Netherlands, Surinam, and Curacao) and the United States of Indonesia. There would be joint organs of government in the Union, formed by both partners, to handle matters of mutual interest, such as foreign relations and defense, and, if necessary, fiscal, economic, and cultural affairs. One very important article dealt with economic adjustments, and provided that the Republic would recognize the claims of all non-Indonesians to the restoration of their rights and the restitution of their goods within the territory of the Republic. A joint commission was to be set up to effect such restoration and restitution.

The date by which the Netherlands and the Republic would endeavor to have established the United States of Indonesia and the Netherlands-Indonesia Union was set at January 1, 1949. In the meantime, the Netherlands would take steps to obtain the admission of the United States of Indonesia as a member of the United Nations immediately after the formation of the Netherlands-Indonesia Union. In the period of preparation, an interim organization would be established, consisting of delegates of the Netherlands and the Republic and of a joint secretariat. If the delegates were unable to settle a point of dispute, it would be submitted to arbitration, with a chairman of another nationality presiding and having the deciding vote. If the two delegations could not agree upon a chairman for arbitration, the chairman would be appointed by the President of the International Court of Justice.

The question of the "right to secede" was avoided, which marked an important difference in status between the projected United States of Indonesia and the British Dominions. Indonesia was to be-
come a sovereign state, but her bond with the Netherlands would be indissoluble, a remarkable and unique innovation in international relations. In the Cheribon Agreement, moreover, no mention was made of the office of Governor-General, which would evidently be abolished; and High Commissioners would be exchanged by the Netherlands and the United States of Indonesia. This arrangement was in keeping with the basic principle of equality of partnership. The Cheribon Agreement was vague concerning details of the central government of the Netherlands-Indonesia Union; even the central cabinet envisaged in the early 1946 Dutch proposal was not mentioned.

After the signing of the Cheribon Agreement, movement toward implementation of its provisions was slow, and numerous instances of differences in interpretation occurred. Considering the lack of precision in its terms, this was not surprising. Basically, the questions of interpretation centered upon the degree of sovereignty the Republic was to exercise in the interim period before the United States of Indonesia and the Netherlands-Indonesia Union became finally established. The very nature of the interim government of Indonesia (the joint "organization" mentioned in the Agreement) was not precisely defined. Among other vexing questions were the right of the Republic to trade directly with other nations, the diplomatic and consular representation of the Republic in foreign countries, the rate and manner of reduction of the armed forces of both parties, and the interim status of the territories outside Java and Sumatra. The police organization of the Republican area was also a subject of dispute, the Netherlands favoring a joint Dutch-Indonesian gendarmerie, the Republic insisting that this would be an infringement upon its sovereignty.

For several months these questions were the subject of tense parleying. Meanwhile, the Republican government in the interior of Java, headed by three former Dutch political exiles—President Soekarno, Vice-President Hatta, and Premier Sjahrir—proceeded with its own organization. A national convention—representing various parties, regions, and minority, religious, and occupational groups—drew up a draft constitution, providing for a president, vice-president, premier, and cabinet; a Peoples Congress; and a Council of Representatives. The Peoples Congress, elected by uni-
versal suffrage, would meet at least every five years, and would have the power of electing the president and vice-president and of amending the constitution. The Council of Representatives, selected by the Congress from among its own members, would meet at least once a year to carry on legislation; and the premier and cabinet would be responsible to it. The national economy would be organized on a basis of partial state socialism, with emphasis on the establishment of cooperative enterprises. Branches of production vital to national welfare would be controlled by the state, as would natural resources, which would be exploited in the public interest. At the same time, however, foreign capital and enterprise would be welcomed and subjected to no discrimination.

Starting in June, 1947, the Dutch began to issue ultimatums to the Republican government. They demanded that native forces be withdrawn from the perimeter of Netherlands-held territory in Java and Sumatra, claiming that the Republican troops were violating the lines which had been agreed upon; yet there were probably as many Dutch attacks across the Indonesian lines as the reverse, and the Dutch showed no intention of removing their forces from Java and Sumatra, which they already recognized as under the de facto authority of the Republic. The Netherlands insisted that Republican territory be opened to trade, complaining that the Republic refused to allow rice shipments to the Dutch-occupied districts, where the shortage of food was starving the people; yet the Dutch blockaded all Republican ports, and forbade any trade between the Republic and other countries. The Netherlands demanded that a joint Dutch-Indonesian gendarmerie be set up to police Republican territory; yet the Dutch were unwilling to give the Republic time to consider this bold intrusion upon its sovereignty. Finally, in direct violation of the article in the Cheribon Agreement which stipulated that points of dispute which could not be settled by negotiation would be submitted to international arbitration, the Dutch suddenly and without warning, in July, 1947, struck with full military force against the Republic, just as the Germans had attacked Holland seven years before. The Netherlands pleaded due provocation, but the suspicion cannot be avoided that during all of the negotiations of 1946 and early 1947, plans were being laid for eventual resort to armed force, and that the con-
ciliatory gestures of the Dutch were made in order to play for sufficient time to bring in troops and deploy them for the ultimate attack.\(^3\)

Thus, while Burma has moved steadily toward national self-determination, with a British guarantee of either dominion status or independence; \(^4\) while Siam has resumed its independent progress toward democratic government; and while Malaya, relatively undisturbed, has subsided into a close approximation of its pre-war condition; the two largest countries in the area, Indonesia and Indo-China, have been ravaged by bitter revolutionary wars against Dutch and French forces determined to reimpose their domination against the will of the people. These continuing conflicts have kept the whole area in a state of extreme disturbance, which is damaging to world economy and potentially threatens world peace; for, as the preliminary skirmishes of the second World War proved, war anywhere is a danger to peace everywhere. Aside from the importance to international economy of the products of Southeast Asia and Indonesia, the immense population of the area makes it impossible to regard these countries as insignificant territories of perpetual backwardness, especially since the population is increasing at an amazing rate. Death rates are high all over the area, but within the last century the cessation of native warfare and the introduction of modern medical facilities—both benefits brought in by the Western powers—have remarkably reduced the incidence of mortality, infant and adult. The extremely high birth rates have continued, however, and the net population gains have been enormous.

Indonesia's population, probably not much over 8,000,000 at the beginning of the nineteenth century, totaled in 1940 over 70,000,000. The increase of 20,000,000 since 1920 represents an average annual growth of a million a year, or between 15 and 20 percent per decade, about twice the rate of increase in the United States. Java, the center of population, is the most densely inhabited region of its size in the world, with about 1,000 persons per square mile.

\(^3\) A United Nations Security Council Committee of Good Offices succeeded in terminating the warfare by a truce agreement in January, 1948. Certain basic principles were accepted by both sides, and negotiations for peaceful settlement were again undertaken.

\(^4\) Independence was chosen, and was secured in January, 1948.
By 1940 the Javanese had increased to nearly 50,000,000 from 35,-
000,000 in 1920. Burma at the beginning of the present century had
a population of approximately 11,000,000, but now it has approxi­
mately 17,000,000, which represents an increase of about 12 per­
cent per decade. Malaya, with only 3,000,000 in 1910, almost
doubled its population in thirty years, having a total of 5,500,-
000 in 1940; but this increase was owing largely to immigration,
most of it Chinese. Indo-China’s population rose from 23,000,-
000 in 1936 to almost 25,000,000 in 1941, representing an in­
crease per decade of about 14 percent. Finally, Siam reported a
total population of 14,500,000 in 1937, the date of the last census,
but it had only 11,500,000 in 1929; these figures, if correct, would
mean an increase of between 25 to 30 percent in eight years, which
is almost incredible. The truth is probably that the last census was
more complete than the previous one; but even if this is granted,
the rate of increase of Siam’s population is tremendous. In the whole
area, the population increased by around 20,000,000 between 1930
and 1940, or between 15 and 20 percent in a decade, a rate exceeded
in few other parts of the world. If it were to continue, by the year
2000 the combined population of Southeast Asia and Indonesia
would be over 300,000,000.

But, in the current and future fate of the area, more is involved
than natural resources and great masses of human beings. There is
also the question of the relations of man to man, and nation to na­
tion. Is one kind of social order, based upon the ideals of national
liberty and democracy, to prevail in the Western world, while a
different one, involving racial discrimination and economic and po­
litical subordination of whole populations to foreign states, con­
tinues in vast areas of the Orient and Africa? Can what is right in
Europe and America be wrong in Asia and Africa? Is there a double
standard of democracy? It happens that these are exactly the ques­
tions being raised by the leaders of colonial revolutionary move­
ments in Southeast Asia and Indonesia. They are pointing out the
embarrassing paradox of colonialism: that countries like Britain and
France and the Netherlands, which base their entire national code
upon the principles and ideals of democracy, have suppressed the
rise of democracy in their own dependencies. In broader perspective,
the colonial revolutions raise the question of whether it is pos-
It would seem that the things the colonial peoples are demanding—native self-government, freedom from outside domination in economic affairs and international relations, equality of representation in international organizations, military self-defense, and removal of arbitrary lines of social and educational discrimination based upon race, creed, and nationality—are indissolubly linked with the problem of international peace, for it is denial of these rights, or aggressive attempts by nations to deprive other nations of them, which cause wars. It was because Germany threatened other nations in these particulars that the last war was fought. There will never be peace in the dependent areas until these rights are won. There is proof of this in Southeast Asia and Indonesia now, and Africa and the other colonial regions will follow the same course sooner or later. The dependent areas are, then, zones of actual or potential revolution. As such, they constitute a threat to world peace, for wars tend to spread. Colonial revolts are different from civil wars, because, much as the statesmen of Britain, France, and the Netherlands may insist that warfare in their overseas dependencies is a matter of domestic concern only, actually such conflicts are international, involving two different and quite separate entities: the ruling nation and the subject nation. The Indonesians are not Dutchmen, the Burmese are not Britishers, the Indo-Chinese are not Frenchmen. Indeed, the whole institution of colonialism emphasized the differences, and was constructed upon the basic premise of the racial and national divergence between the ruling group and the subject group.

The very possession of subject territories affects the international policies of imperial states so that, while supporting democratic principles and ideals for themselves and other independent nations of the Western world, they tend to follow undemocratic lines in their policies toward the dependent peoples of the Eastern world. Thus there grows up among the imperial powers a colonial bloc in the councils of the nations, which stands together against the rest of the world. It would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to create an international order based upon democratic principles if the imperial states were to continue to form a bloc opposing the
development of independence and democracy in the colonial half of the world. This is not to say that the independence of such countries of Indonesia and Indo-China might not create new problems of peace and international accord. But a retrogression toward the traditional system of half-a-world ruled by the other half would be sure to bring constant and increasing unrest and revolutionary wars in the dependent areas; and probably suspicion, mutual resentment, and a breakdown of democratic morale among the independent powers. It might even produce such exacerbation of racial feelings—for the colonial line happens to be a racial line—that eventually the world would be split apart by interracial warfare. Remarkably enough, however, the imperial states—including, despite their recent military activities in Indo-China and Indonesia, the French and the Dutch—accept as a worldwide ideal the principle of national self-determination and self-government. Not one of the major imperial powers now takes a stand against colonial nationalism as such. They justify their policies by insisting that these are planned to develop national maturity in their dependencies, however long this may take. The Dutch, for example, deny that they are fighting against nationalism or nationalist Indonesians in the Indies; they say that they are fighting “extremists.” The French claim that they are not attempting to suppress the cause of nationalism in Indo-China; they are fighting “communists.” And yet the vast majority of the natives in both countries are either enrolled in the ranks or supporting the struggle of the alleged extremists and communists.

The most disillusioning experience of the Indonesians and Indo-Chinese since the war has been their failure to gain the support of the United States in their bids for freedom. The Americans, or rather American statesmen, have either taken no stand on the colonial issue or have sided with the imperial powers. America, the great hope of world democracy, has virtually become a member of the colonial bloc. 

There are several reasons for this. One is the provincialism and ignorance of the American public and American statesmen regarding the Far East. The issues involved are not appreciated because the true significance of Oriental resurgence to our own future and that of the world is not understood. We have retreated therefore into a policy of hands-off, with a hope that all will turn out well. Related to this are the prevalent American preconceptions.
about race. White people and white nations are, Americans think, superior by nature, and should stay in control over the darker races. We have also been reluctant to take any action which might embarrass our recent allies, Britain, France, and the Netherlands. Moreover, on the economic side, American business concerns with interests in colonial countries generally distrust native independence movements; and their opinions carry great weight in the governing circles of the United States. They prefer to carry on in the old ways, fearing the possibly adverse effects of colonial nationalism on their properties and profits.

But above all, the policy of the United States toward the colonial revolutions has been determined by the morally devastating fear of Russia which infects the American government and military command—which, in foreign affairs, are becoming one and the same thing. We refuse to take any action which might weaken the Western European powers, because they would be our allies in a war against Russia. Since they include the three most important imperial states—Britain, France, and the Netherlands—we therefore support the preservation of the colonial system. Because the Navy, looking toward Russia, insisted upon unrestricted control of island bases in the Pacific, our statesmen renounced the principle of international trusteeship for all colonial areas. And there has crept into the parlance of American international statesmanship a pernicious doctrine of "power vacuums." With regard to colonies, the idea is that if imperial control is withdrawn this will create a power vacuum, into which some new system might creep. This could be communism, and therefore we must be careful to avoid the possible development of power vacuums in the dependent areas. The fact, however, is that, while the revolutionary regimes in Southeast Asia and Indonesia favor a form of state socialism no more extreme than that of Britain or of Sweden, they have shown no tendencies toward communism, nor have they made any overtures to Russia at all. There are communist parties in Burma, Malaya, and Indonesia, but in each case they are in a small minority. The Indo-Chinese Communist Party was dissolved in 1945.

As for the possibility that fascistic dictatorships might arise in these countries, there have been no signs of this whatever. The revolutionary governments have operated on the basis of proportional representation of all parties and ethnic groups; and the lead-
ers—Aung San in Burma, Ho Chi-Minh in Indo-China, and Soekarno in Indonesia—have made no gestures toward dictatorship. Perhaps one reason for this is that the nationalist movements developed in protest against dictatorships of the colonial variety. But another reason is that in none of these countries was there a native upper class or even middle class of any importance. The governing officials of the nationalist regimes are common men, distinguished from the masses only by their better education; the revolutions are people's movements, led by men of the people. In fact, a peculiar service of the colonial administrations was to stifle the development of a native elite, who, with independence, might seize power and set up oligarchies. This is what happened in the Latin American revolutions of the nineteenth century, when mestizo cliques replaced the Spanish and Portuguese imperialists. It has also occurred in the Philippines, where the government, as before the war, is run by an inside circle of Filipino politicians and capitalists, largely mestizos. Following the same pattern, the French have tried to establish counter-revolutionary puppet governments in Indo-China under docile members of the gallicized elite, but these efforts have failed.

The real danger is not that the native peoples of Southeast Asia and Indonesia will turn of their own accord to either communism or fascism, but rather that the policies of the Western democracies will force them into an alignment opposed to the imperial powers and their supporters, particularly the United States. There never was much friendly feeling toward Britain, France, and the Netherlands in the area, but America has had a tremendous "reservoir of goodwill" among the colonial peoples, largely because of its record in the Philippines. This was demonstrated rather pathetically when the Indonesians, expecting American troops to enter Java after the Japanese surrender, painted the walls of Batavia with phrases from the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution. But faith and hope in the United States are dwindling in Southeast Asia and Indonesia, while the Dutch and the French are taking the surest means to alienation of the colonial peoples from the imperial powers and perhaps from the Western democracies. A great opportunity to establish firm outposts of loyalty to democracy in Southeast Asia and Indonesia is being lost.

This discussion of the implications of the colonial revolutions in the area has concentrated upon political developments, but some-
thing should be said about the economic aspects. With regard to the national economies of the area, the question is whether, if natives took control of the government, they could also handle the economy. Concerning the basic subsistence economy there can be no doubt, for this has always been in native hands. In the profit economy, however, they have had little share except as laborers and petty bosses. Still, much of the export production of the area is carried on by uncomplicated agricultural methods, easily learned. This is true of rubber, quinine, tea, coffee, sugar, copra, fibers, and indeed just about all of the export crops. Rubber perhaps requires the most skill, not in the growing, but in processing before shipping; and yet the procedure is relatively simple. Two native foremen, one experienced in the growing and the other in the processing, could direct the operations of a rubber plantation; indeed, this was quite usual in Indonesia during the Japanese occupation. The operation of mines, oil installations, and factories on a large scale by natives would require far more training than they have had. Likewise, there have been few natives who could handle the intricacies of foreign trade and banking, or even any commercial enterprise of appreciable size. But all of the revolutionary governments insist that, despite their socialistic tendencies, they would welcome foreign capital and talent; and, given educational and training facilities, the natives could learn. Even if some of the foreign concerns abandoned their activities in the area and local governments had to take them over as state enterprises, foreign experts could be hired to run them until natives had time to learn, as happened in Russia after the 1919 revolution. Siam, also, has regularly employed foreigners as government advisors. Education is the solution to native deficiencies in the economic as in the political sphere, and this is the reason why the programs of all of the revolutionary governments give such heavy emphasis to its rapid and intensive development.

In the perspective of international economic interests, the covering question is whether the economic good of the dependent peoples and the rest of the world would be better served if the former colonies became self-governing than if they were to continue as subject countries. It is virtually certain that if the dependent peoples were to gain self-government they would quickly set about raising taxes, always remarkably low in colonies, thus reducing the profits on foreign investments. They would turn the funds so obtained into
an expansion of public services, especially education. They would certainly try to raise wages too, which would cut further into profits. The indications are that they would also attempt to develop a more self-sufficient, balanced domestic economy, with local industries to supplement the raw-material production which has been almost the sole economic function of colonies in the past. All of this would amount to an effort to raise the standard of living of the colonial masses. One school of thought in international economics, with which the present writer agrees, claims that the net result would be a great expansion of markets for imports in the colonial areas, which would redound to the advantage of the Western countries as well as to that of the native peoples themselves. The phenomenally low purchasing power and depressed standard of living in the colonies have kept these potential markets of millions from anything except a small volume of consumption. In Southeast Asia and Indonesia imports have been only a small fraction of exports, and hardly a quarter of the imports have been for native consumption, because of mass poverty.

This point of view might be called the argument for the economic indivisibility of the world, and it claims that poverty and low standards anywhere reduce potential prosperity everywhere. It matches the other argument here advanced, that of the political indivisibility of the modern world, which claims that an absence of national freedom anywhere is a threat to peace and freedom everywhere.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Note: Items marked with an asterisk are standard comprehensive references for each of the five countries of Southeast Asia and Indonesia.

Collis, M. S. The Burmese Scene. London, 1943.