

OUTLINES OF JAPANESE POLICY IN INDONESIA AND MALAYA DURING THE WAR WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO NATIONALISM OF RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES

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I. *Introduction*

The post-war nationalist movements of Indonesia and Malaya have made a remarkable development. There can be little doubt that this development has a close relation with pre-war circumstances, especially with Japanese policy carried out during the War. Therefore, I would like to offer some materials which demonstrate the nature and process of Japanese policy to those students who have a keen interest in the nationalistic developments of those countries.

I had been in Malaya from December 1942 to the end of the War, engaging in a study of national questions of Malaya and Indonesia. Unfortunately, I am not in a position to show the full result of my studies as I am unable to avail myself of materials and documents which I had to leave behind in Malaya. For that reason I am obliged here to confine myself to a brief outline of the process of Japanese policy.

Several months after the occupation of Malaya and Indonesia, Japanese policy followed the lines of British and Dutch pre-war colonial policies and made the most of the machinery of administration and personnel of the former regime to avoid any sudden adverse influence upon people. This orientation of Japanese policy which favoured the old-established ruling class disappointed progressive youthful leaders who were fervently desired drastic renovation. In Indonesia, twelve incidents occurred in Sumatra and one in Java by the end of 1942. But the above policy was unavoidable as the Japanese Military Administration lacked preparation and administrative officials. Thus, at the early stage of military administration, stress was laid on the native rulers in Indonesia and Malaya who were the object of indirect rule before the war. In the course of time, however, Japan began to modify her policy and encouraged the development of nationalist movements in Java and Sumatra, but in Malaya there was

no marked development in the direction of nationalism. It will be convenient to begin with a description of Indonesia.

II. *Indonesia*

1. Policy for Native Rulers and Chiefs.

A similar policy to the Dutch regime was adopted for the "Vorstenlanden" which were recognized as self-governing under the Dutch. Titles for Soesoehoenan of Solo, Soeltan of Djokjakarta, Pangerans of Mangkoe-negoro and Pakaram, and Soeltan of Tjeribon were officially confirmed and restored as well as Soeltans and Tengkoes for Sumatra. With regard to "Regents" (Territorial Chiefs), they were also recognized as "half-Ambtenaren en half-Volkshoofden" of Regentschappen in the Dutch regime. There was no new policy but the traditional policy as regards native rulers and chiefs continued.

2. Religious Policy.

In Malaya, religious policy was carried out in close connection with native rulers or Sultans as heads of the Mohammedan religion. In Indonesia, the state of affairs was different, because of the high development of religious movements. The Japanese religious policy at first aimed at the unification of influential religious bodies such as the "Nahdatoer Oelama" (Djoembang near Soerabaja), "Mohammadijah" (Djokjakarta) and religious political parties such as "Partai Sarekat Islam Indonesia" (P. S. I. I.) etc. into one central body "MIAI" (Madjelis Islam Alla' Indonesia). Through this central body, necessary measures were taken for the advancement of the religious and civil life of the Mohammedan people. Later on, this central MIAI was even more concentrated into the "MASJOEMI" (Madjelis Sjarekat Oemat Moeslimin Indonesia). In 1945, the MASJOEMI was reorganized as a Religious Department of the "JAVA-HOKOKAI" of which an explanation will be given in connection with the nationalist movement. After this reorganization, the political influence of the young religious nationalist leaders became predominant.

Apart from the policy of centralization of religious bodies, Japan attempted to make the most of a large number of locally influential aged religious leaders, called "Oelama" or "Kiai." These sometimes played an important role in local revolts, instigating the fanatic uprisings through the revolutionary idea of the advent of a "Ratoe Adil" or "Mahdi" who would relieve Mohammedans of the domination of heretics. During the Japanese regime there were several incidents of this kind, e. g. the "Tasikmalaja incident," the "Indramajoe incident" in Java and the "Bajoe incident" in Atjeh, Sumatra.

3. Political Organization.

From the occupation of Java and Sumatra, the Japanese Military Administration prohibited any political parties or associations and suppressed all native political activities. This policy was changed in December 1943, when a Central Council (CHUO-SANGIIN), entirely composed of Indonesians, was formed. This increased the political power under the leadership of Ir. Soekarno remarkably. Indonesian civil officials, two Residents of State, one Mayor, two Directors of Religious Department and Welfare Department and several advisors for Military Administration were appointed. One of the most characteristic administrative organizations was the creation of the "Office for the People's Affairs" (JUMIN-JIMUKYOKU) which was divided into several sections of Japanese, Indonesians, Chinese, Eurasians, Indians and Arabs, and functioned as advisors on questions related to complaints of the public in general. In order to prevent racial animosities and communal discord, the Office for the People's Affairs stressed the duty and responsibility of the people to work together for the unity and prosperity of the country.

4. Development of the Nationalist Movement.

The Indonesian nationalist movement experienced four stages of development during the Japanese occupation.

(1) Three "A" Movement

The first stage was that of the SAN-A-UNDO (Three "A" Movement). The Three "A" Movement started in March 1942, after the fall of Java, under the leadership of Japanese men of letters attached to the Propaganda Department in co-operation with the Indonesian intelligentsia, e. g. Sanoesi Paneh, Soekardjo etc. The name of this Three "A" movement originated in the following: Japan is the Light of Asia; Japan is the Mother of Asia; Japan is the Leader of Asia. The object of this movement was to awake and encourage Indonesians to self-consciousness and responsibility as a member country of the Co-prosperity Sphere of Greater East Asia. This spiritual movement later became a hot-bed of political nationalist movements. The Three "A" Movement may be considered the first stage of the nationalist movement.

(2) The POETERA Movement

The Three "A" Movement developed into the Poetera (Poesat Tenaga Ra'jat) movement whose significance was announced in December 1942 and started to work at the beginning of March 1943 on the occasion of the first anniversary of the fall of Java. The leaders of this movement were prominent nationalists, Ir. Soekarno and Dr. Mohamed Hatta. Indonesian leaders took the initiative in this movement in contrast to the Three "A" movement in which the Japanese took the lead. This movement promoted the political consciousness of Indonesians throughout Java.

(3) The JAVA-HOKOKAI Movement

The Poetera Movement again in March 1944 developed into the JAVA-HOKOKAI (Public Duty Association of Java) Movement which continued until the surrender of the Japanese Army. With the establishment of a Central Council entirely composed of Indonesian political leaders in December 1943, the character of the confused Poetera movement changed into a Central Council focussing national movement. Thus the long-cherished Indonesian nationalism reached to the highest tide of development.

(4) The Independence Program

The time-table of the Independence of the Indonesian State was as follows :

(a) In November 1943, Ir. Soekarno, Dr. Hatta and Ki Bagoes Hadikoesoemo visited Tokyo to pay their respects to H. M. the Emperor HIROHITO.

(b) On September 7, 1944, a promise of the future independence of Indonesia was made by P. M. General KOISO in Tokyo.

(c) On May 2 and 3, 1945, the First Conference of the Secretary-Generals of the Military Administrations of Java, Sumatra and Malaya was held under the auspices of the Singapore H. Q. 7th Regional Army.

Agenda : 1) Policy of Focussing the Mind of the People.

2) Indonesian Independence Problems.

(d) At the end of May, a Research Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence was formed by Pan-Indonesian political leaders in Djakarta (which became the "National Committee" with the declaration of Independence on August 17, 1945).

(e) On July 17, the final decision was made in Tokyo to grant quick independence to Indonesia.

(f) On July 29, the Second Conference of the Secretary-Generals of the Military Administrations of Java, Sumatra, Malaya, Celebes (Navy area), and Saigon (staff officers of Field Marshall TERAUCHI) was held under the auspices of the Singapore H. Q. 7th Regional Army.

Agenda : Quick Independence for Indonesia.

(g) On August 8, official recognition of the speedy independence of Indonesia was announced by F. M. TERAUCHI at Saigon. On that occasion, Ir. Soekarno and Dr. Hatta were invited to receive the document. The realization of the independent Indonesian State was to take place on August 18 by a Declaration of Independence at the initiative of the Indonesian leader, Ir. Soekarno.

The unexpected surrender of the Japanese Forces on August 15, hastened the schedule and Ir. Soekarno made the Declaration of Independence on August 17, assuming the position of President of the Indonesian Republic.

III. *Malaya*

1. Policy for Sultans.

In Malaya, the policy for Sultans was most important resulting from historical circumstances. However, the policy was not always carried out with consistency. The Sultans were deprived of political power as rulers of States through the suspension of State Councils. They were dissatisfied with this treatment by the Japanese Military Administration, although they officially continued to hold their titles, received almost the same personal allowances and political pensions as before the war, and were acknowledged as Heads of Religion on January 20, 1943.

2. Religious Policy.

Policy as regards these Sultans was dictated by religious considerations. To enhance the religious position of Sultans, Religious Councils were reestablished in each State in 1944. The management of Religious Councils was entirely entrusted to their initiative and responsibility and fairly large sums were granted for this purpose by the Local Governments. The date of the reestablishment of Religious Councils was as follows :

(1) August 12, 1944, Majlis Mashuarat Orang Besar-Besar dan Ulama, Perak (Chairman : Raja Muda Perak)

(2) September 21, 1944, Majlis Mashuarat Ugama Islam, Johore (Chairman : Yang Dipertua Jawatan Igama Johore)

(3) September 23, 1944, Majlis Mashuarat Ugama Islam, Negri Sembilan (Chairman : Yang Dipertuan Besar)

(4) September 24, 1944, Majlis Mashuarat Ugama dan Adat-Istiadat Melayu, Selangor (Chairman : Sheikul Islam Stia Diraja, Selangor)

(5) October 7, 1944, Majlis Ugama Islam, Pahang (Chairman : Tengku Besar)

(6) In October, a Komiti Penasihat Kadzi Besar Singapore (The Chief Kadzi's Consultative Committee), Persekutuan Majlis Kadzi-Kadzi Malacca and a Religious Council of Penang were established, and the Chief Kadzi or Mufti became chairman of the various Religious Councils.

Religious Councils were divided into four sub-committees. (1) Jawatan Kuasa Undang-Undang Ugama Islam ; (2) Jawatan Kuasa Ulang Bichara Mahkamah Shariyah ; (3) Jawatan Kuasa Pelajaran Ugama ; (4) Jawatan Kuasa Mentadbirkan Khairat. Thus, religious administration regarding the Determination of Mohammedan Law, Mohammedan Religious Court, Religious Education and Religious Charity were greatly improved. On December 13, 14, 15, a Malayan Conference of Religious Councils (Majlis Agong Ugama Islam Malaya) was held in Kuala Kangsar to discuss common matters of the Mohammedan religion.

3. Political Organization.

Instead of the pre-war State Council, an Advisory Council of State (SHU-SANJIKAI) was established in each State in December 1943, and Sultans were appointed as vice-presidents and advisors (Perak only) while the Japanese Residents were presidents. The character of this Council was literally advisory, neither legislative nor executive. The Council was composed of the representatives of all communities, Malays, Chinese, Indians and Eurasians in approximate proportion to the population except in Perak.

	Malays	Chinese	Indians	Eurasians	Arabs	Total
Singapore	4	6	3	1	1	15
Malacca	7	5	2	1	-	15
Penang	5	7	3	-	-	15
Johore	8	3	2	-	-	13
Negri Sembilan	8	3	2	-	-	13
Selangor	5	6	4	-	-	15
Perak	15	4	2	-	-	21
Pahang	6	3	1	-	-	10
Total	58*	37	19	2	1	117

* includes five Sultans.

Note : Four States of Northern Part of Malaya had been ceded to Thailand since October 1943.

Through this formation of Advisory Councils, the political status of the Chinese was improved compared with pre-war time. These advisory organs, however, were not fully utilized by the Military Administration. The people's participation in politics remained nominal.

4. Policy for Communities.

Malaya is a typical plural society. In consideration of this, a plural policy adapted to each community was carried out. For this purpose, communal bodies were formed such as the Malay Welfare Association, Overseas Chinese Association, Indian Independence League, Eurasian Welfare Association and Arab Welfare Association. These associations had two functions, to act as representatives for each community and as advisors and collaborators to the Military Administration. Plainly speaking, however, these associations did not properly fulfil their functions but showed only a passive attitude towards the authorities. In order to encourage and promote the spontaneous activities of communities, another step was devised by the Military Administration.

5. The Formation of "EPPOSHO."

The Epposho was formed on June 4, 1944 in Penang as a first experiment at the initiative of Colonel H. Hamada, Secretary General of the Malayan Military Administration at that time. The original object of

the formation of the Epposho was to create voluntary enthusiasm among the Chinese through an understanding of the mind of people by listening to their complaints and grievances caused by pressure of the Military Administration. The activities of the Epposho were led by two Japanese young civil officers and thirteen young and intelligent Chinese who were ready to submit frank and constructive criticism to the Military Administration. The Epposho became a driving power of Chinese economic activities and contributed to the attainment of a self-sufficient economy and the improvement of the economic welfare of people by efforts in importing rice from Thailand. In view of the successful experiment of Epposho in Penang, the same were used in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, but these did not produce the desired result owing to the sudden transfer of Colonel Hamada in October 1944.

6. The Significance of "HODOSHO"

As a direct result of the above-mentioned First Singapore Conference, which was held on the 2nd May 1945, by the Secretary-Generals of the Military Administrations of Java, Sumatra and Malaya, the Hodosho came into existence as the most suitable measure for the understanding of the people in Malaya. The main fault of the Military Administration up to this time was the lack of a firm and consistent policy in respect to this understanding. In consideration of this, the Military Administration went forward a new road.

As a result of the success of the Epposho, the Hodosho followed a similar organization. The Epposho, as mentioned above, was set up only for Chinese, but the Hodosho was for all communities, i.e. Malays, Chinese, Indians and Eurasians. It was of three or four sections, each section being composed of one Japanese civil officer and ten members of young and middle-aged intelligent people of each community. The duty of the members of the Hodosho was, first of all, to consider themselves the servants of the public by sacrificing personal ambitions and selfish interests for the benefit of public welfare and general advancement of Malaya. Through the activities of the Hodosho, the Military Administration expected and welcomed constructive criticism and the spontaneous co-operation of the people.

The meaning of the Hodosho is literally "Help-and-Guide-People" Office. On June 13, 1945 the Penang Hodosho was first opened and at the same time the already existing Epposho became the Chinese section of it. On July 3, the Central Hodosho at Taiping and the Perak Hodosho at Ipoh were opened simultaneously. By the end of July the work of establishing Hodosho in each State was finished.

Another important aim of the Hodosho was to foster and promote the spirit of mutual understanding and co-operation of all communities,

and to eliminate antagonistic feelings and racial prejudices through collaboration in the Hodosho. The mission of the Hodosho was to create social unity in Malaya by the people's awakening to common social responsibility and common consciousness of their own homeland. However, it was too late to materialize these ideals of the Hodosho.

7. The KRIS Movement.

The name KRIS was derived from the Malay initials, KEKUATAN RA'YAT ISTIMEWA (All-out Effort of the People). The plans of the Kris Movement were a direct product of the Singapore Second Conference of Secretary-Generals of the Military Administrations of Java, Sumatra, Celebes and Malaya on July 29, 1945. As has been previously mentioned, the problem of Independence of the Indonesian State was the subject of discussion at this Conference. For Malaya, too, certain measures were taken in order to exploit in the right way the unavoidable political influence of Indonesian independence upon the people in Malaya, in view of the fact that Malays highly rejoiced when Malaya and Sumatra were treated as a unit of Military Administration immediately after the Japanese occupation. Furthermore, on the occasion of the promise of future independence for Indonesia made by P. M. KOISO on September 7, 1944, the Malays of Singapore attempted a congratulatory mass-meeting and a formation of an Indonesian Society, which, however, was not permitted by the Japanese Authorities.

A much more important fact was that the Malays were extremely discouraged at the Japanese Military Administration owing to the increasing difficulties of living conditions and the hopeless condition of the minority population ceded to Thailand in October 1943. Therefore, in view of the independence of Indonesia, there was an urgent need to encourage the Malays, recognizing their long-cherished ideal of "Indonesia Raya." It is needless to mention that Malays have a language, religion, customs, history and culture common with Indonesians, to say nothing of race.

The aim of the Kris Movement was to make Malays conscious as a part of the glorious Indonesian people and to inspire their political self-consciousness. Of course, the idea of "Indonesia Raya" could not be realized at once, but step by step. The Kris Movement, if misled, would arouse misunderstandings and suspicions of other races, obstructing the social unity and advancement of Malaya. Consequently, the plans of the Kris Movement were to be carried out in close connection with the general activity of the Hodosho.

The plans of the Kris Movement were officially fixed on August 10, by the Malayan Military Administration, but preparations had already started since June under the leadership of Ibrahim bin Jaacob who was president of the K. M. M. (Kesatuan Melayu Muda) before the war and

Lieutenant-Colonel of the Malay Volunteer Force under the Japanese regime. On August 12, Ibrahim met by chance Ir. Soekarno and Dr. Hatta flying from Saigon to Djakarta at the Taiping aerodrome and was encouraged by them.¹ Ibrahim was on his way to attend the organizing meeting of the Kris Society to be held on August 17 and 18 at Kuala-Lumpur. The meeting was informally held in the evening of the 17th with the presence of about twenty representatives of young Malays gathered from all States and Settlements. Ibrahim himself did not attend the meeting and left Kuala Lumpur for Singapore at midnight of the 14th in order to discharge his duty of disbanding the Malay Volunteer Force. After all, the plans of the Kris Movement broke down owing to the sudden surrender of the Japanese Army.

IV. Conclusion

Generally speaking, Japanese policies for Indonesia and Malaya were not at the beginning sympathetic towards nationalist movements. Policies were planned and carried out merely from the strategic point of view. Consequently, Japan took action in the direction of encouraging nationalist movements only when the tide of war turned for the worse, with a view to make the people co-operate with the Japanese Army against possible landing operations of the Allied Forces. Whatever intentions Japan might have had, as a matter of fact, Japan had to advance the nationalist movements. It cannot be denied that this resulted in the post-war development of nationalism in Indonesia and Malaya.

As regards Indonesia, the fact that almost all necessary measures, including a new Constitution had been prepared for the independence of the Indonesian State, paved the way for a smooth start of the new government immediately after the declaration of independence.

In Malaya, too, the Kris Movement stimulated the national consciousness amongst the Malay youth. Nationalist leaders who participated in the organizing meeting at Kuala-Lumpur expressed frankly and enthusiastically their own constructive views on the political future of Malaya. Some of these Malay leaders formed the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP) at Ipoh in October 1945. Dr. Burhanuddin and Ishak bin Haji Mohamed who were prominent leaders of the MNP were original leading members of the Kris Society. Dato Onn bin Jaafar was also one of the original members of the Kris Society. But he parted from the MNP group on the

¹ Ir. Soekarno and Dr. Hatta did not attend the Kuala Lumpur meeting of the Kris Society but only met Ibrahim at Taiping. In this respect, the description of Virginia Thompson is based on mere rumour. See: Virginia Thompson and Richard Adloff, *The Left Wing in Southeast Asia* (New York, 1950), p. 143.

ground that he could not sympathize with ideal of "Indonesia Raya" of the MNP. He separately organized the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) in March 1946 and led conservative Malays in the resistance against the Malayan Union Plan sponsored by the British Government. UMNO at last attained its aim by creating Federation of Malaya instead of a Malayan Union in February 1948. But there can be little doubt that its rather conservative orientation nullified the democratic and progressive course of the broadly based national movement in Malaya. Malay nationalism led by UMNO turned into Malay racialism.

At present, the most important question for Malaya is how to create "a common social will"² which will be the basis of national unity in a plural society. The merely political measure of the institution of Malayan common citizenship will not be sufficient. A rapid improvement of economic conditions of malays parallel with the advancement of the political status of Chinese should be achieved so as to eliminate racial and communal antagonistic feelings. On this point, the task confronting the Communities Liaison Committee set up in December 1948 is very important.³ It will, however, fail to realize the anticipated result, unless its bureaucratic membership is democratically reorganized and supported by a broadly based national movement. At any rate, there is no doubt that the present communist revolt constitutes a fatal impediment to the sound development of nationalism in Malaya.

² On this point, the argument and opinion of Mr. Furnivall are suggestive. Cf. J. S. Furnivall, *Progress and Welfare in Southeast Asia* (New York, 1941), p. 69.

³ Silcock, T. H. and Ungku Abdul Aziz, *Nationalism in Malaya*. *Data paper prep. for the 11th Conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations, Lucknow Oct. 3-15, 1950*, p. 55-58.