

# The emergence of the new situation: the Japanese army on Java after the surrender

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reserve tweede luitenant der intendance

The Dutch Parliamentary Enquiry Committee which was created by the Dutch Parliament on November 6, 1947 to enquire into the policies of the Dutch government during the war, concluded that the following ten factors were decisive in frustrating Dutch policy in Indonesia after the surrender of Japan.

De schrijver van nevenstaand artikel is sino-looog/japanoloog. Gedurende meer dan een jaar — tot hij als reserve tweede luitenant der intendance met groot verlof vertrok — was hij werkzaam op de Sectie Krijgsgeschiedenis van de Landmachtstaf. Voor de studie van het onderwerp raadpleegde hij onder meer een aantal tot dusver niet of nauwelijks toegankelijke bronnen, waaronder ook Japanse. De belangstelling in, ook buitenlandse, vakkringen voor dit artikel is reeds gebleken, reden waarom het in het Engels werd gesteld. Inmiddels stemde de redactie in met een vanwege de afdeling Indonesische Geschiedenis van de James Cook University te Townsville (Australië) ontvangen verzoek het te mogen overnemen. Ook in Indonesië vond de schrijver reeds erkenning: in het kader van het culturele verdrag tussen Nederland en Indonesië aanvaardde hij een docentfunctie aan de Gaja Madah Universiteit in Djokjakarta.

Voor de oudere lezers is het ongemeen boeiend in dit artikel beschreven te vinden wat de achtergronden zijn geweest van de beruchte Bersiap-periode. De jongeren kunnen zich terdege laten voorlichten over de wijze waarop het eertijds zo imposante Nederlandse imperium verbrokkelde. Voor een ieder is het goed, aan de hand van deze studie te beseffen welke verreikende consequenties eruit kunnen voortvloeien wanneer een oorlogvoerende partij zich zózeer heeft geconcentreerd op het winnen van de oorlog dat er geen of nauwelijks aandacht werd geschonken aan de voorbereiding van wat onmiddellijk ná de eindzege zou dienen te gebeuren.

1. The almost complete lack of information on the Dutch side about political and military developments in Indonesia during the Japanese occupation.

2. The coinciding surrender of Japan and change made in operational theatres in the Far East. As a result of these events, too few troops were available to the English to permit them to execute those occupational tasks they had undertaken freely and, even, at their own insistence.

3. The proclamation of August 17, 1945 instituting the new Republic of Indonesia.

4. The underestimation by the Dutch of the magnitude and the strength of the Republican movement.

5. The time lag between the surrender of Japan and the first Allied landings on Java.

6. The insufficient information available to the Dutch government about the situation on Java after September 1945.

7. The very great shortage of Dutch military power, caused primarily by the liberation of the whole of the Netherlands in May 1945 instead of September 1944.

8. The public actions of General Christison at the end of September and the beginning of October 1945 and the attitude of higher English authorities.

9. The unwillingness of the Japanese to obey the orders of the Allied Commander, especially those concerning the maintenance of public peace.

10. The delayed liberation of 80,000 Dutchmen interned in camps on Java, who remained in Republican territory.

(*Enquêtecommissie Regeringsbeleid 1940-1945*, 1956, Vol. 8A and B: 721).

History, it seems, had dealt the Dutch a very bad hand to play in Indonesia after the war. But they were not, even if they gave this impression, the only ones, for the same could be said of the other three players, the Indonesians, the English, and

the Japanese. All of them were playing with poor cards, and only one of them held something of a trump; but even this was a trump which, when played, might only make a winner of one of the other players. These were the Japanese, for only they had sufficient military means at their disposal to force the situation in a direction favorable to one of the other parties. It was clear to the Dutch, the Indonesians, and the English that the attitude taken by the Japanese 16th Army on Java would certainly be crucial to the subsequent course of events.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the foremost question in the minds of all three of these parties was what the reaction would be of the 16th Army to 'the emergence of the new situation', as the Japanese euphemistically called their unconditional surrender.

On the Indonesian side there were two general views held about the situation. On the one hand, the *pemudas* (youths) held the radical view that independence should be proclaimed regardless of what attitude the Japanese would take. They gambled on the probability that the Japanese would not interfere, and that, even if they did, the Indonesians would be able to withstand them with Peta, Heiho, and other Indonesian armed forces.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the older Nationalist leaders held the opinion that against the armed might of the Japanese the Indonesians were defenceless, and that the attitude of the Japanese had to be ascertained before an independent Indonesia could be proclaimed (Nugroho 1975: 17-19).

Unlike the Indonesians, the Allies were in no position to ascertain anything. They could only hope that the 16th Army would keep to normal procedures and maintain the status quo at the time of surrender, even though they had, in fact,

<sup>1</sup> There were about 70,000 Japanese on Java at the time of the surrender. This number comprised roughly 30,000 Army personnel, 20,000 Navy personnel, and 20,000 civilians. The latter were for the most part directly employed by the Army in the Military Administration. (For more details see Miyamoto 1973: 44, 193; and 'Bundel Japanese Rapporten' Doc. II, Vol. 5). The 16th Army was organized in three territorial units: the 27th and 28th Mixed Brigades were stationed in West and East Java respectively, each built around a nucleus of four battalions, and a provisionally formed unit of two battalions was located in Central Java. As Japanese war strategy in Southeast Asia had been centered on Singapore, Java figured mostly as a supply base. The plan had been that if the Allies were to land on Java, the 16th Army would retreat to the mountains of East and West Java, and conduct guerrilla operations from there, with the Bandung plateau as the last redoubt (Defence Agency of Japan 1976, Vol. 92: 393-5).

no clear idea of what that status quo constituted.

### The Rangoon agreement

On August 14, 1945, Admiral the Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia (SACSEA) learned that not only had Japan accepted the Potsdam Proclamation, but also that this operational theatre had been enlarged to include the greater part of SWPA (South West Pacific Area) south of the Philippines, which had been the responsibility of General MacArthur. The change in operational theatres at this time was unexpected, although not a complete surprise, for since the conception of SEAC (South East Asia Command) in August 1943 there had been moves to change the boundaries of SEAC and SWPA, and it had previously been discussed with Mountbatten at Potsdam (Mountbatten 1951: 181).

The reasons for this change have never been made completely clear. Initially, the British seemed to have been in favor of it for prestige reasons, and later the Americans for political reasons, in that they did not want to have any part in reinstating colonial powers in their former colonies (*Enquêtecommissie* 1956, Vol. 8A and B: 484-523; Djajadiningrat 1958: 7-17). The reasons given to Mountbatten, however, were purely military. By taking responsibility for SWPA south of the Philippines Mountbatten would free MacArthur to completely concentrate on the invasion of Japan (Mountbatten 1951: 181). The degree to which these military reasons remained pertinent when Japan surrendered is not stated, but the change was nevertheless effected, placing Mountbatten in a very difficult position. And with this new arrangement, the

<sup>2</sup> The Peta (*Sukarela Tentara Pembela Tanah Air*, or in Japanese *Giyugun*) was a Indonesian-officered, locally based volunteer army. Its formation had been ordered on October 3, 1943. After cadres had been trained, the actual formation began at the end of January 1944 in each residency and continued, until by the end of the war 67 battalions of about 500 men each had been formed. The total strength comprised about 38,000 men. Prominent local men were appointed as battalion commanders to provide general leadership, but the actual leading of troops was entrusted to company and platoon commanders (Defence Agency of Japan 1976, Vol. 92: 447-8). In contrast to the Peta, the Heiho or Auxiliary Corps was completely integrated into the Japanese Army. (For further information on these and other Indonesian forces, see also Aziz 1955: 224-230, and Anderson 1961: 37). These forces were supposed to play an important part in the guerrilla operations which were mentioned in note 1.



Dutch, who had made all their agreements for their return to Indonesia with MacArthur, had to start all over again.

With inadequate troops, shipping, and Intelligence, Mountbatten had to occupy an area which he had not expected to come under his command until much later, if at all, for he had never given his definite agreement to the scheme (Mountbatten 1951: 181-183). Moreover, any speedy action on his part was precluded by MacArthur's<sup>3</sup> order of August 19 that no actual document of surrender could be signed and no landings on or reoccupation of territory in Japanese hands could be made until the formal surrender of Japan had taken place. Likewise, as Mountbatten learned on August 21, the official change in operational theatres would not become effective until after that date (Woodburn Kirby 1969: 230).

The first task which Mountbatten set himself was to try to contact the Japanese, at the same time proceeding with *Operation Zipper* (the invasion of Malaya) more or less as planned. This, however, proved to be much more difficult than expected.

Not until August 20 was contact established with Field-Marshal Count Terauchi Hisaichi, Supreme Commander Japanese Expeditionary Forces Southern Regions, who was headquartered in Saigon. Terauchi's area of command coincided for the greater part with that of SEAC, and by General Order No. 1 he would have to surrender to Mountbatten. Only on August 23 did Terauchi, after having received the formal cease-fire order from the Japanese High Command, comply with Mountbatten's order to send a delegation to Rangoon to sign a preliminary agreement of surrender (Woodburn Kirby 1969: 236). On Sunday August 26 a Japanese delegation arrived at Rangoon, and finally, more than ten days after the Japanese had surrendered, the Allies were in a position to ascertain the attitude of the Japanese Army.

The Japanese delegation, headed by Japanese Army Southern Regions Chief-of-Staff Lieutenant-General Numata, and further consisting of Rear Admiral Chudo, Lieutenant-Colonel Tomura, and two interpreters, were met in a 'strictly correct and coldly polite' manner, as Mountbatten had wanted it, by a twenty-man delegation headed by Lieutenant-General Browning. Representatives of the United States, China, Australia, the Nether-

lands, and France were also part of the delegation. Beginning on August 26, plenary meetings were held for three consecutive days.

Although it was clear from these meetings that the Japanese intended to carry out the cease-fire and the surrender in a honourable and responsible way, it was soon apparent that both delegations had come to Rangoon with different attitudes. The Japanese, writes Mountbatten, 'had come to Rangoon feeling that they were in a position to bargain over, or at least comment on the terms which I had laid down for the execution of the surrender' (Mountbatten 1951: 184). They were even 'unrepentant' as he indicated to the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff (SEACOS 458). The British felt that since the Japanese had accepted unconditional surrender they had no right to criticize or to comment on the orders; they should only ask for clarifications, as Rear Admiral Chudo did when he asked an explanation of the term 'radar' which was new to him (Minutes 2nd Plenary Meeting). According to Mountbatten, the Japanese attitude was most clearly reflected in a letter from Terauchi to him, which Numata produced during the second plenary meeting: in this 'are set forth, in considerable detail, what amounts, in effect, to the conditions which are to govern the surrender and the subsequent period' (SEACOS 458).

Mountbatten was clearly not prepared to take Terauchi's 'desires' into account, and Terauchi's letter met the same fate as the so-called 'Final Note of Japan', which was sent to the Allies the day after Japan had accepted the Potsdam Proclamation, and to which it bears a curious resemblance. Both the letter and the note list a number of 'desires', which if fulfilled would have enabled the Japanese government in the one case or Terauchi in the other to better deal with problems resulting from the surrender. But neither Washington nor Mountbatten wondered whether these desires could reveal anything about the situation in Tokyo or Saigon. To them, the messages seemed more like 'brazen-faced impertinence', coming as they did after the unconditional surrender (Butow 1954: 225). Both requests were ignored, for, as Mountbatten writes, 'my orders are clear and explicit and cover all necessary points with the exception of three on which I have sought confirmation of my policy viz: the status of the surrendered Japanese, their employment on labour, and disarming' (SAC(45) 144/1).

A closer reading of Terauchi's letter, of Mount-

<sup>3</sup> MacArthur had been made Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers on August 15.

batten's orders to the Japanese (as contained in the Local Agreement of Rangoon and its appendices), and of his instructions on how to treat Japanese surrendered forces and enemy civilians (SAC(45)143 and SAC(45)141/1) reveals, however, that there were a number of points on which the Japanese intended to take action, or indeed took action, which were not unequivocally covered by Mountbatten's orders.

What appeared, in the light of subsequent events, to be the most important of these points was that Terauchi proposed in his letter to withdraw all Japanese military personnel, with the exception of a small force to be left behind for the population, to areas other than those to be occupied by the Allied Forces. This, he felt, would preclude the possibility of any conflicts or incidents between the Allied Forces and the Japanese Forces (SAC(45)144/1). Mountbatten responded by ordering a general stand-fast of all Japanese Forces, excepting movements necessary for essential maintenance purposes, and in a few other cases (SAC(45)143 Appendices A and B). At the same time, however, he gave the impression that Terauchi's proposal was not really objectionable:

- a. by instructing his commanders that the Japanese Forces would eventually have to be confined under Japanese command to certain areas (SAC(45)141/1);
- b. by giving the Japanese detailed orders to evacuate certain areas in Malaya, Burma, Thailand, and French Indo-China (SAC(45)149);
- c. by, for the time being, leaving the responsibility for the maintenance of the Japanese Forces with the Supreme Commander Japanese Expeditionary Forces Southern Regions (SAC(45)143 Appendix A), which left the possibility open for this Commander to move his forces to areas where he could maintain law and order among the maintain them.

Of course, had the Japanese been completely in control not only of their own forces, but also of the native population in the areas they occupied, the difference between Mountbatten's orders and Terauchi's suggestions would not have mattered very much. But as Mountbatten had in effect no intelligence data on both these points, he might at least have found Terauchi's letter useful as a reflection of what was going on in the occupied

territories, rather than dismissing it as an act of pure impertinence.

### Japanese policy on Java

Japanese policy on Java was clearly in line with the suggestions given by Terauchi in his letter to Mountbatten. On the morning of August 16 the Bureau Heads of the Staff of the Japanese 16th Army held a meeting at which the Head of the General Affairs Bureau of the Military Administration, Nishimura, and Nomura, Head of the Planning Section of the same Bureau were also present.

The meeting was held to decide on the line to be taken. An official surrender order had not yet been received, but compliance with the Imperial Broadcast of the previous day was agreed upon, as was the adoption of a 'sincere' attitude towards the Allies. The interests of Japan, and the protection of Japanese were to serve as guidelines for future behavior. Representatives of the Military Administration suggested that, since the guidance of the Indonesian Independence movement had become impossible, the framework of political participation of the Indonesians should be further enlarged.<sup>4</sup> Among other topics, the necessity for changing from a war industry to a civilian industry in Indonesia was discussed. However, the primary decision reached was the unanimous agreement to disband the Peta and Heiho

<sup>4</sup> During the war, steps had been taken by the Japanese to grant Indonesia independence. The Tojo declaration of June 1943 offered political participation in the governing of Indonesia to the Indonesians but not independence. This was followed by the Koiso declaration in September 1944, which offered independence but gave no indication of how and when this was to be achieved. Nevertheless a number of concrete steps were taken, such as the further enlargement of the role of the Indonesians in the Military Administration, but the most important measure was the convening of the *Badan Penyelidik Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Committee to investigate measures for the preparation of Indonesian Independence) or BPKI, in May 1945. In July 1945 procedures were speeded up, and on August 2 the Japanese announced the establishment of the *Panitia Persiapan Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Committee for the Preparation of Indonesian Independence) or PPKI. This committee was to prepare for independence, which was to be scheduled for September 7. In Saigon on August 11 Terauchi appointed the Indonesian nationalist leaders Sukarno and Hatta president and vice-president of this committee, which was to be formally inaugurated on August 19. However, the day after the return of Sukarno and his party from Saigon the Japanese surrendered, an event which formally ended the Japanese guidance of Indonesian Independence.



forces. Later in the morning a meeting was held with representatives of the Defence Units of West, Central, and East Java to work out the disbanding of the Peta and Heiho. During this last meeting the disappearance of the Indonesian nationalist leaders Sukarno and Hatta was reported (Miyamoto 1973: 49, 50). Sukarno and Hatta had been abducted to the Peta garrison of Rengasdenklok, about 50 kilometers east of Jakarta by radical *pemudas*, who tried to persuade them to make a unilateral declaration of independence (Anderson 1961: 70-71; Reid 1974: 25-29). Though the Japanese did not have this exact information they certainly guessed that something was being planned; thus the disappearance of Sukarno and Hatta only reinforced their determination to disband the Peta and Heiho. The order to disband the Peta went out on August 17th and became effective on the 19th; the order to disband the Heiho was issued on the 20th (SEATIC IV: A/1113 and A/1119). On August 18 the 7th Area Army, under the command of which the 16th Army fell, also issued an order to disband the Peta and Heiho (Defence Agency of Japan 1976, Vol. 92: 454).<sup>5</sup>

The Japanese were fully prepared to disband the Peta and Heiho by force of arms if necessary, but all went peacefully (Miyamoto 1973: 51). In some cases the Japanese seem to have used a variety of pretexts like telling troops that they were to be issued new equipment to get them to relinquish their weapons, but most troops were too surprised to offer any resistance. Moreover, indecision or even actual support on the part of some Indonesian leaders facilitated the Japanese move (Anderson 1972: 99-103).

In the evening of August 18 the 16th Army received an official telegram ordering the cessation of hostilities, and on the 21st the commanders of the units were assembled at General Headquarters. At this meeting the Imperial Proclamation calling for the cessation of hostilities was read and the policy for dealing with the new situation was explained. This policy specified: obedience to the Imperial Proclamation; sincerity vis-à-vis the Allies; and friendship with the Indonesians. With regard to this last point, the 16th Army decided, since the Peta and Heiho forces had been dis-

banded and with them the spectre of another Blitar rising<sup>6</sup> exorcized, to take some concrete measures. Though the Japanese did not recognize the independence which was proclaimed by the Indonesians on August 17 — it was finally done unilaterally, but not before the leaders had obtained some indication that the Japanese would not interfere — they now decided out of a sense of commitment to the promises of independence given before the end of the war and out of a sense of gratitude for the help which the Indonesians had given them, to at least put no obstacles in the way of a peaceful progress towards Indonesian independence.

With the disbanding of the Peta and Heiho this seemed possible. Thus, on August 21 the 16th Army ordered its own confinement, effective as of August 25, to those areas where they could be self-sufficient for at least six months. Only small detachments were left in the cities to maintain law and order (SEATIC IV: A/1120; Miyamoto 1973: 60). Japanese civilians were to remain at their posts while women and children were sent to hospitals in the mountains. In case difficulties would arise all civilians were to be brought to the army internment areas.

The Japanese were fully aware that this might seem to the Allies a breach of surrender terms, but they decided to risk it. Moreover, when a telegram from Singapore reached them on August 29 informing them that essentially the same measures had been taken there, but that in addition the remaining guard/police units were allotted only five rounds of ammunition per man, they readily adopted the same measure, despite their realization that what was appropriate for Singapore was not necessarily appropriate for Java. If the Allies censured these measures, it was decided that the explanation, that they were taken to avoid unforeseen clashes between the Allies and the Japanese, would be given. The battle troops were released from their duties of maintaining the public peace, and this assignment was given to the police and 80-man *Kempeitai* (Japanese Military Police), further reinforced with a number of troops. The Indonesian police consisted of 24,000 men with 80 machine guns, 10,000 rifles, and 15,000 hand guns, to which force a small number of Japanese were attached. With the exception of these weapons, all Japanese arms were to be collec-

<sup>5</sup> The 7th Area Army with Headquarters in Singapore comprised the 16th Army on Java, the 25th Army on Sumatra, the 29th Army in Malaya, and the 37th Army on Borneo. In its turn it was subordinate to Headquarters of the Southern Army in Saigon.

<sup>6</sup> In February 1945 the Peta Garrison of Blitar had revolted against the Japanese (Nugroho 1974; Anderson 1972: 36; note 3).

ted starting September 1 (SEATIC IV: A/1127, A/1129; Miyamoto 1973: 60).

On August 29 the 16th Army on Java finally received the Allied orders of the Rangoon Agreement, and on September 4 a command from Imperial General Headquarters in Tokyo was received ordering the disbanding of Peta and Heiho, the maintenance of the status quo, and the safe transferral of arms to the Allies at their present locations. However, since things were proceeding smoothly, the 16th Army decided to continue on the previously set course, and to ignore these orders in cases where they were at variance with the measures already taken (Miyamoto 1973: 61).

Though originally concerned that the Allies would censure them for taking these measures, the Japanese were eventually quite successful in disguising the discrepancies even to the point of intimating that their actions were the results of Allied orders. Anderson, for example, quotes 'Allied orders' issued on August 18, and bases his story of the measures mentioned above on interrogation reports of Japanese officers made after the war (Anderson 1961: 95, 118). But, as has already been indicated, the Japanese did not receive any Allied orders until August 29; Mountbatten did not even establish contact with the Japanese until August 20; and his orders to the Japanese in Indonesia to evacuate the areas of Padang, Medan, Palembang, Batavia, and Surabaya, to at least five miles outside these cities were not issued until September 23 (NGS 100). Without having received any orders, the Japanese knew very well — as might be expected of any regular army — what normal surrender procedures were, having accepted surrender so often in the beginning of the war themselves; indeed, the conditions they imposed on the Dutch in 1942 did not essentially differ from those which were imposed by Mountbatten.

The Japanese military command knew what was expected of them, and they knew further how to anticipate orders which might be forthcoming from the Allies. So it is not surprising to find Japanese officers referring to Allied orders to justify their actions of an earlier date while conveniently glossing over the fact that these measures were taken often weeks before any detailed Allied orders were received. In some of the interrogation reports the impression is given that the reasons for interning the Japanese troops were mainly disciplinary. But this seems more of

a convenient rationalization than an explanation based on any fact. There is no indication that the Japanese had any serious disciplinary problems. Miyamoto (1973), for example, makes no mention of them, and in view of histories of disciplinary problems in the Japanese Army it is unlikely that such problems existed. As a rule, Japanese troops never revolted except when higher officers took the lead, and these, as was mentioned above, had arrived at a common viewpoint at the meeting of August 21.

Field Marshal Terauchi was probably fairly well aware of what was going on and tried in his letter to Mountbatten to protect himself from future Allied censure, but his letter was ignored. By the beginning of September the Japanese on Java had implemented to an extreme degree the most important suggestion made by Terauchi in his letter, without the knowledge of the Allies.

#### **The effects of Japanese policy**

The effects of the Japanese measures were soon felt. Since their independence proclamation the Indonesians had been organizing, and by the beginning of September their Republic had taken shape. The PPKI elected Sukarno and Hatta President and Vice-President, and, after the removal of its Japanese members and the inclusion of a number of prominent Indonesians, it became the *Komité Nasional Indonesia Pusat* (Central Indonesian National Committee) or KNIP. National Committees (*Komité Nasional Indonesia*, or KNI), were set up everywhere to organize politically at the local level. The constitution prepared by the BPKI had been adopted almost completely. A police force, the *Badan Keamanan Rakat* (People's Security Body) or BKR, was established, consisting for the greater part of former Peta and Heiho soldiers. But most important, the members of the civil service were won over to the side of the Republic. In order to avoid a confrontation with the Japanese, the civil service was to function in a dual role by remaining part of the Japanese administration, but it was at the same time loyal to the Republic. The same duality operated in the case of the Cabinet, of which most members were simply the heads or advisors of departments of the Japanese administration (Anderson 1972: 85-117). In this way the stage was set for a rather smooth take-over from the Japanese.

Popular response was cautious in the beginning, as people did not really believe that Japan had



surrendered. But after the public announcement by the Japanese of their surrender on August 23, the movement gathered force. Yet the Japanese were still very much in control and incidents were rare. On August 18, the Kempeitai in Serang were attacked, resulting in one person killed and one injured, and the POW camp in Bandung was attacked on August 25, an incident which resulted in one recorded death, but on the whole the situation remained fairly calm. With the end of the fasting month on September 7, however, and more specifically with the disappearance of Japanese troops to their internment areas, such incidents became more common.

The Indonesian leadership had succeeded in galvanizing public support for the Republic, but the response they got in the end was far stronger than what they had asked for. Dissatisfied with the *diplomasi* (diplomacy) tactics of the leaders, who attempted, by maneuvering the Japanese out of the way and taking over the administration, to strike a responsible posture and appear very much in control, the *pemudas* called for a struggle (*perjuangan*) to oust the Japanese forcibly from their positions and to take their arms. In this way, they felt they could better prepare for the arrival of the Allies, and more specifically the Dutch. They had no illusions that the Dutch would be sympathetic to the Republic, even if this Republic succeeded in keeping the situation in hand and running the country; and Dutch radio broadcasts from the outside did nothing to convince them otherwise.

The call for *perjuangan* in an already potentially revolutionary situation, however, unleashed forces which turned not only against the Japanese, but which also cut away at the very roots of the young republic. The hostility caused by the Japanese occupation, which had stirred the population to a much stronger degree than even the Dutch colonial administration had, compounded by the deprivation and even, in some areas, actual starvation during the last year of the war, fused with powerful Muslim sentiments, Javanese mysticism, and elements of traditional banditry to form an explosive energy no one could control. Certainly the officials who belonged to the lower echelons of the administration and who had so often been the instruments of the Japanese during the occupation, could do nothing to moderate the volatile fury of those who were now carrying the banner of *Merdeka*.

The Japanese were taken by surprise. Their wartime experiences in Indonesia, unlike those in the Philippines or China where strong resistance movements had existed, had not led them to believe that they would have great difficulties on Java even after their surrender. Their policy seemed fairly well thought-out. Although certainly self-serving in that they wanted to avoid any kind of foreseeable trouble, they hoped by their voluntary self-internment to render a service to the Indonesians. With the Japanese out of the way and the task of maintaining law and order placed mainly in the hands of the Indonesian police, they hoped to put the Indonesian leadership of Sukarno and Hatta in such a position that they would become indispensable to any solution of the Indonesian problem. Moreover, they expected that the power and freedom to act which they gave to Sukarno and Hatta would be sufficient to pacify the demands of the more radical elements among the Indonesians. By filling the political vacuum which was created by the Japanese surrender with Sukarno and Hatta and the physical vacuum created by their self-internment with forces supposedly loyal to Sukarno and Hatta, it was hoped that Sukarno and Hatta would become for the Allies the foremost party to negotiate with, which should result in at least a de facto recognition of the Indonesian Republic.

It was hoped that in this way the political road would be open for a peaceful attainment of independence. Moreover, the Japanese would not be involved, and they would retain the friendship of the Indonesians.

This policy might have worked. When the first Allied representative, Rear Admiral Patterson, arrived off Tanjong Priok harbor on September 15, the Japanese impressed upon him the strength of the independence movement, and the necessity for an Allied policy which would take into full account the changes which had been wrought in Indonesia during the three and a half years of Japanese occupation (Miyamoto 1973: 64-68; Van der Wal 1971, Vol. I: 150; Enquête-commissie 1956, Vol. 8A and B: 673 ff; Yamamoto, 'An Individual...'). The main Japanese argument was that without the cooperation of the nationalists nothing could be achieved in Indonesia except a bloodbath, an argument which more astute Dutch observers would arrive at themselves about a month and a half later (Van der Wal 1972, Vol. II: 21). The argument, however, was not lost on Mountbatten. With too few troops at

his disposal yet to impose anything in even the most favourable of times, let alone a period in which the new Labour Government in London was not disposed to permit an military ventures because of the events which had taken place in Greece earlier that year, he clearly saw the solution in dealing with Sukarno and the nationalist leadership much as he had dealt with Aung San in Burma in a similar situation (Van der Wal 1971, Vol. I: 308, 357, 358). The Dutch, however, would have nothing to do with this.

Viewing the situation mainly in terms of law and order, they felt cheated by the Japanese and abandoned by the English. Even if they were convinced of the necessity for finding a place for the independence movement within the framework of their policies, they were certainly not prepared to deal with people like Sukarno, whom they regarded as a criminal and a collaborator of the worst kind.

Thus, the converging Japanese and English policies were now undercut, on the English side by the intransigent attitude of the Dutch, and on the Japanese side by the fact that their policy had misfired. By the beginning of October the situation had run so far out of hand that nothing short of a complete redeployment and rearming of the 16th Army would be necessary to break a deadlock, which the Japanese considered not to be of their own making. And even if they did intervene, intervention could result in nothing except the enmity of the Indonesians toward the Japanese and many casualties. Nevertheless, as will be detailed later, in the beginning of October the Japanese came quite close to adopting such a policy.

During the latter half of September the Japanese still thought that they were able to handle the situation. There had been confrontations; there had been casualties; some utility services and factories had been taken over or attempts had been made to take them over; but large-scale confrontations had been avoided. On September 18, the Allies issued an order forbidding mass meetings, the carrying of arms by Indonesians, and the flying of the Indonesian flag, and the Japanese promulgated this order. In spite of this order, the Indonesians decided to hold a mass meeting in Gambir Square in Jakarta on September 19, either out of protest, as the Japanese suggested, or because they had already planned it and did not want to call it off. The Japanese put heavy pressure on the nationalist leaders to call the meeting off, but the latter, under equally heavy pres-

sure from the *pemudas*, decided to continue with the meeting. As a compromise, Sukarno made a very short speech, asking the people to trust the leaders and to go home quietly. The crowd obeyed, and the meeting, which had been held under threatening Japanese guns, ended in at least a psychological victory for the Indonesians (Miyamoto 1973: 69-71; Anderson 1972: 119-124).

The next day the British told the Japanese that they would remain responsible for the maintenance of the public peace, and that they should disperse mass meetings like the one of the day before with tear gas if necessary. On September 21 the 16th Army held a staff meeting and arrived at the following policy: in the interest of the reconstruction of Japan the Japanese should be quickly and safely demobilized and anything which might impair the honor of Japan in the course of demobilization should be avoided.

The following five points were adopted as guiding lines for their policy.

1. An independent Indonesia would be best for Japan. Endeavours should be made to implement an early withdrawal of the British and Japanese Forces, leaving the Dutch and the Indonesians in a position to find their own solution.
2. A sincere attitude towards the Allies should be taken; in particular armed clashes or any conflict which might impair the honor of Japan should be avoided.
3. The good will between the Japanese and the Indonesians should be maintained; thus, the use of arms should in principle be avoided.
4. All Japanese, army personnel, civilians in the service of the army, and Japanese nationals should without discrimination be protected and demobilized.
5. Post-war affairs should be managed along the following lines:
  - a. until the take-over by the Allies, the main task of the Japanese army would concern the preservation of law and order. In this case the police should as much as possible be put in the foreground, while the Japanese Army should take a supportive position in the background;
  - b. the transfer of power to the Allied Army would take the form of a transfer from the Japanese Army to the Allied Army. But attempts should be made to help the Indonesians take the initiative and to try to make the Allied Army



recognize the reality of the Indonesian situation (Miyamoto 1973: 75).

In fact, the above was just a reaffirmation of the policy decided upon after the surrender, but which, with the imminent arrival of the first Allied troops, was about to be really put to the test.

The Indonesians did not have much confidence that the Japanese would be able to achieve anything for them with the Allies, and in fact the Japanese were not very optimistic either. On September 25 the Indonesians decided to cut their ties with the Japanese, to abolish the dual role of the Indonesian officials, to declare them officials of the Republic, and to take over from the Japanese what they could, including arms. The number of incidents increased sharply, but the Japanese, in spite of repeated Allied orders to take sterner measures, put up only token resistance. It were, however, the events in Surabaya which precipitated the crisis.

### The Surabaya surrender<sup>7</sup>

Since the proclamation of the Republic the situation in Surabaya had conformed in general to the pattern existing elsewhere, except perhaps that a number of incidents which had taken place there made the population more *bersiap* (ready) for revolutionary struggle. Moreover, the stature of the older nationalist leaders in Surabaya was much less than that of those in Jakarta, which allowed militant *pemudas* to take the initiative at a much earlier date.

The disbanding of the Peta was effected without conflict. The only notable indication of protest was the disappearance of the flag of the Peta Battalion in Grissee (approximately 15 km north of Surabaya). After disbanding the Peta, the Japanese began collecting their arms and preparing for their self-internment. By September 6 the arms were collected. Of the approximately 10,000 Japanese in Surabaya (Navy personnel excluded) only a small group of personnel remained behind

<sup>7</sup> The following version of the Surabaya surrender is essentially based on the report of Captain P. J. G. Huijjer RNN, the official Allied representative in Surabaya (*Enquêtecommissie* 1956: 594-606); the version of the same incident given by Lt.-Col. Tanaka, a staff officer of the Japanese Army Command in Surabaya Miyamoto 1973: 99-131); the report of Lt. Cdr. P. G. de Back, the RAPWI representative in Surabaya (Van der Wal 1971, Vol. I: 486, note 4); and the interrogation reports of Rear Adm. Mori, and Vice Adm. Shibata, both of the Japanese Navy Command in Surabaya.

to transfer weapons and administration to the Allies, along with a ten-man Kempeitai group and a company infantry of about hundred men as guards (Miyamoto 1973: 63, 109). Thus, when Mountbatten issued the order on September 23 commanding the Japanese to evacuate the area within five miles of the city and five miles from the east side of the Westervaarwater (NGS 100), the Japanese Army had long since cleared Surabaya and interned itself in the interior. The internment camp of the Japanese Navy, however, was not yet ready, so the Navy removed its personnel to the neighbourhood of Malang in accordance with Mountbatten's order. Of the Navy about 4,000 persons remained in Surabaya (Shibata, 'General Course...'; Miyamoto 1973: 131).

While the Japanese were moving out, however, internees from the Japanese camps were moving in. Although Mountbatten had given the order that no one should leave the camps, this order was to some degree ignored; moreover, Eurasian internees had apparently been told by the Japanese that they could 'go home' (Kretz n.d.: 10). The arrival of some large groups of ex-internees increased tensions immensely. The Indonesians who had put up check-points complained that some of the groups returning carried arms, while the mainly Eurasian Red Cross helpers accused the Indonesians of interfering with their humanitarian work. It was into this already tense atmosphere, in which each side accused the other of provocations, that the first Allied party, the Mastiff Carbolite party led by second Lt. Antonissen, landed on September 18. This group was one of a number of parties organized by the Anglo-Dutch Country Section (ADCS) or Force 136, originally an organization which had send undercover parties into Malaya and Sumatra during the war. After the surrender of Japan these were parachuted into Sumatra and Java, or, as in the case of Sumatra, came out into the open to check the situation in the camps and to gather general information under the name of RAPWI (Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees) parties, although the real RAPWI parties would only move in some time later.

The Japanese learned of their arrival while engaged in an Army-Navy meeting on the reception of Allied troops. At this meeting the Navy proposed among other things to remove the camouflage colors from the city, erect welcome arches, and had already organized a Eurasian band and dancers. They ordered the members of the Carbolite party

to be escorted to the Yamato (Oranje) Hotel. There a great number of Dutch, Eurasians, and Indonesians assembled. The Japanese depicted the scene as a gathering of silent, resentful Indonesians, triumphant Dutch, and tense Japanese guards.

The next morning, while the leaders of the party were visiting Japanese Headquarters, some members of the party raised the Dutch flag on the hotel. This was the signal for the Indonesians to attack. A wild fight ensued during which the Indonesians managed to tear off the blue band of the Dutch flag, thus turning it into the Indonesian flag. In the fight a number of people were killed, among whom was Mr. Ploegman, a well-known Eurasian political leader. According to the Japanese the Oranje Hotel incident greatly raised the morale of the Indonesians, strengthened their unity, and made them conscious of the power of the people.

On September 21, the RAPWI commander for East Java Second Lt. De Back of the Dutch Navy came to Surabaya. He immediately sent the Caribolic party back to Jakarta and then proceeded to order the Japanese to make preparations for the evacuations of Dutch women and children from the camps near Semarang to Surabaya. This evacuation was considered necessary because of the appalling conditions in those camps. These camps were used mainly for the internment of women and children. As the Japanese had expected the first Allied landings on East Java, all the men were interned in West Java, the last redoubt of the Japanese in their plan for the defence of Java, in order to prevent the Allies from quickly liberating and rearming these men (Miyamoto 1973: 147). The Japanese, though afraid that the arrival of more Dutch in Surabaya would only aggravate the situation, complied with De Back's orders, after checking with Headquarters in Jakarta. From September 29 until October 2, when the evacuation was suspended because of the worsening situation, a daily transport of about 500 women and children arrived in Surabaya. De Back estimated, that, apart from these 2,000 women and children, about 3,000-4,000 ex-internees entered Surabaya through their own efforts.

The first Allied military representative to come to Surabaya was Captain Huijer of the Dutch Navy. He arrived on September 23 on the orders of Admiral Helfrich, the Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch Forces in SEAC, and with the approval of Rear Admiral Patterson, to inspect the naval

base and see if it could be quickly put in use again for the Dutch fleet. He impressed upon Major General Iwabe, Commander of the 28th Mixed Brigade and the East Java military sector, and Vice Admiral Shibata, Commander of the 2nd Southern Expeditionary Fleet, the wishes of Patterson concerning law and order.

The following day, he left for an inspection tour of Balikpapan, returning on September 29 via Jakarta to Surabaya. This time he arrived with new orders from Patterson: to prepare the Allied reoccupation of Surabaya. Finding that the situation had deteriorated, he ordered the Japanese to increase their guards. Seven companies (approximately 700 men) were recalled from the mountains, and about 43 guard- and check-points were set up.

On September 30 the Japanese decided to recall five more companies from the mountains. These troops were armed with 15 rounds of ammunition, some light machine guns with 100 rounds, and a great number of blank cartridges. These troops had, however, not yet arrived on the first of October.

On that day the Indonesians attacked. They first took the Hitachi factory; at about 12 o'clock they seized the radio station; and in the afternoon they occupied the hospital. Their tactics were well thought-out. Their first targets were lightly guarded places where the Indonesian employees submitted requests to be allowed to take the place over. This was followed by negotiations while a large crowd mixed with Indonesian policemen demonstrated outside. In the case of the hospital, patients from the Indonesian hospital were brought in on stretchers to press their demands. Although not violent, these tactics were intimidating enough for the small number of Japanese guards to give in. Moreover, they were under orders not to use their arms, an order which had been reaffirmed in a telephone call made to Headquarters in Jakarta.

The take-overs during the day had been fairly organized affairs of ex-Peta and Heiho soldiers and students, and the town at large had remained quiet. But when evening fell the whole town became involved. Masses of people ran through the streets armed with sharpened bamboos and krisses, shouting '*merdeka*'. Major-General Iwabe put his remaining troops on alert, despite the fact that his staff still thought the Indonesians would not dare to attack the Japanese Army directly.



Having witnessed the independence demonstrations of March 1, 1919 in Korea, Iwabe seemed to have a better feeling for the situation, as one of his staff officers later remarked. However, the alert order came too late, and most of his officers did not reach their posts. Many were stopped by the crowd and pulled out of their cars, and even Iwabe himself was barely able to return to his Headquarters after dinner. The uproar lasted the whole night, as the Indonesians took over one after another of the Japanese supply dumps.

The next morning, the Japanese organized an Indonesian guard to escort the last transport of women and children from the train station to their lodgings, and then reported the situation to Headquarters in Jakarta, demanding, among other things, that further RAPWI transports be stopped.

They were advised not to make use of arms, a suggestion with which Iwabe was in full agreement, particularly in view of the fact that this reinforcements had not yet arrived. At about 7:00 a.m. a large crowd attacked the communications center of the Japanese Headquarters. Communication wires were cut, but the personal intervention of Iwabe prevented a complete take-over. At about 9:00 a.m. the Commander of the former Peta battalion of Grisse, dr. Mustopo, came to the Japanese Headquarters. He remained there for the rest of the day. No details of his talks with Iwabe are available except for the fact that Iwabe explained to him the policy of the Japanese Army and tried to enlist his help in preventing further incidents.

Since dr. Mustopo was in fact the leader of the whole uprising, it seems not unreasonable to assume that he was there mainly to keep an eye on the Japanese activities, if not even to try to make a deal with Iwabe. At about 10 o'clock, the message came that the Indonesians were attacking the Kempeitai, and that a fight was in full swing. Hastily dispatched officers from Headquarters managed, with the aid of Indonesian policemen, to stop the fighting after some time, but the Kempeitai building was occupied by the Indonesians. In the evening the Indonesians attacked the Japanese Navy, managing despite sporadic fighting, to take over most of the Naval Base. (In fact, there had been earlier attacks on the Navy, but this was not known by the Japanese Army Headquarters since the Army and Navy Headquarters were completely out of touch during the course of most of the events, not only with each other,

but also with their own units.) By midnight the Japanese Army in Surabaya was completely disarmed, with the exception of the Ohara Battalion which was still being reinforced by troops coming from the concentration areas.

On the morning of October 3, the situation was reported to Headquarters in Jakarta, but the order was sent out that on no account should Japanese troops resort to arms. In fact, Japanese Headquarters in Jakarta had been under strong Allied pressure to use weapons, but until that point they had avoided it. In fact, the same morning, Major-General Yamamoto, Chief-of-Staff of the 16th Army, was summoned to Allied Headquarters and was given a direct order to this effect, but these developments were not communicated to Surabaya.

While the Japanese were trying to reach a decision as to whether or not arms should be used, Captain Huijer decided to act. Infuriated by what he considered to be a refusal by the Japanese to put down the uprising, he decided that he had at least to try by whatever means available to keep the Japanese Headquarters intact and also under his control.

From Sudirman, the Indonesian Resident of Surabaya, whom he had visited to protest about the state of law and order, he learned that the Indonesians were planning to attack the Japanese Headquarters that night. In order to prevent this, he struck a deal with Sudirman and the local KNI, to the effect that the Indonesians would leave him the Japanese as POW's, and would not attempt to take over the Japanese Army and Navy Headquarters, the Naval Aviation Yards, and the aerodrome, on the condition that the Japanese Admiral and General would surrender to the Allies.

Apparently Huijer rather naively misinterpreted the thrust of the entire movement. He described it as being strictly anti-Japanese, and not yet anti-European or anti-Eurasian, and clearly thought that once the hated Japanese were removed and the objects they controlled labelled Allied Property, the Indonesians would be satisfied and the mob would disperse. If the Indonesians really succeeded in making Huijer believe that they only wanted to get rid of the Japanese, while in fact they could not have cared less about the Japanese and were interested only in their arms, they can only be admired for their cunning. But perhaps it was also not so difficult to fool the old colonial, whom the Japanese describe as a tragic hero burning with pride and ambition... a Tyrone Power with

a monocle in his left eye. He was not, they felt, one who had a great understanding of the circuitous actions of the Indonesians; not that he ignored them, but he measured them by pre-war standards. It is also possible that he trusted Sudirman, who was, according to the Japanese, an old pre-war acquaintance of his, too much. Whatever the true explanation might be, armed with the assurances from the local *Komité Nasional* that they desired to cooperate only with the Allied Command, he went to the Japanese Army Headquarters.

There, having first asked for a drink, he explained to the Japanese the situation as he saw it and what could be done about it. He spoke only in Dutch, which his interpreter, the only other non-Japanese there, put into what was called by the Japanese present 'adequate Japanese'. When Huijer told them that they had been completely disarmed, Iwabe objected, saying that the Ohara Battalion and his Headquarters were still armed and functioning. This Huijer ignored. He continued by saying that the Indonesians were planning to storm the Japanese Headquarters that night and that the only way to prevent this and to restore order would be for the Japanese to surrender to him, thereby placing everything formerly under Japanese control under that of the Allied Command. Allied property, he explained, would not be touched by the Indonesians, as had been promised to him by Resident Sudirman. And in no case should the Japanese Army open fire on the Indonesians.

The Japanese were dumbfounded. Finally Iwabe answered that he understood Huijer's demands, but that for such a momentous decision he had first to consult Headquarters in Jakarta. Huijer replied that there was no time for that and gave the Japanese five minutes to come to a decision. Iwabe thereupon consulted with Yasuoka, the Head of the Military Administration in Surabaya, the only other Japanese present apart from Lieutenant-Colonel Tanaka, one of Iwabe's staff officers. Yasuoka whispered to Tanaka that in this way a solution for the arms problem could be reached without jeopardizing their ties with the Indonesians. At 16:30 p.m. Iwabe solemnly surrendered his sword to Huijer, who needed it as proof for the Indonesians. Thereafter he left for the Japanese Navy Headquarters, where at about 19:30 p.m. the same scene was enacted.

Huijer's story of the affair differs in three important aspects from the Japanese version

given above. In the first place, he does not mention Iwabe's remark that the Ohara Battalion was still armed. In the second place, he maintains that the surrender was not an official surrender, which he would have no authority to accept, but only a pro forma surrender to pacify the Indonesians. This is confirmed by Vice Admiral Shibata's version of the affair. According to the Japanese Army, it became clear to them that this was just a pro forma surrender only when Lt.-Col. Tanaka visited Huijer on October 5 to obtain a confirmation of the surrender. Finally, Huijer does not mention that he forbade the Japanese to use arms against the Indonesians. On the contrary, his version maintains that he told Iwabe to order his garrisons in the province of East Java to continue to fight as hard as possible and to give in to no Indonesian force.

Iwabe, however, decided to give a literal interpretation to the surrender. He was of the opinion that, given the structure of the Japanese command, the surrender was not limited to Surabaya. Thus, on the evening of October 3 he ordered all his troops not to use their arms and to leave the responsibility for maintaining the public peace and guarding of Japanese Army property, which was now Allied property, to the Indonesians. Some of his commanders, like Colonel Okubo of the Besuki garrison, objected. They stated that leaving the maintenance of law and order to the Indonesians was not unreasonable, but that giving them the Japanese arms would be dangerous... but Iwabe overruled them.

The Indonesians did not keep their part of the deal with Huijer. It is conceivable that the KNI had thought that their deal with Huijer would keep the Japanese arms among their own followers and out of the hands of radical *pemudas* and other spontaneously formed fighting bands, but they were finally powerless to prevent this from happening. Sudirman wrote Huijer that the people did not consider Huijer a representative of the Allied Command but rather of the NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration) and thus a threat to the Republic. Accordingly he broke relations with Huijer, who was subsequently put into protective custody by the Indonesians.

With this one stroke, the Indonesians acquired power over 30,000 Japanese, who could be used as potential hostages, and a large amount of arms. An exact number of the quantity of arms is difficult to give, but the following figures, which exclude Navy and Air Force equipment as well



as arms in private possession of officers, arms in the possession of civilians in the service of the army, and arms in the possession of the police, may give an indication of the weapons seized by the Indonesians: there were approximately 19,000 rifles; 700-846 automatic pistols; 422-720 light machine guns; 480-504 machine guns; 148 grenade throwers; 17 infantry guns; 63 mortars; 400 improvized mortars; 14-25 anti-tank guns; 19-27 field and mountain guns; 3-4 cannon; 142-145 anti-aircraft guns; 16 tanks; 62 armored cars; and about 1900 vehicles (Miyamoto 1973: 347). The arms thus captured in East Java constituted more than half of the equipment of the future Indonesian Army.

### **The effects of the Surabaya surrender**

The first reaction of Japanese Headquarters in Jakarta to the Surabaya surrender was to state that it had been the rational thing to do. When the English were told, however, they replied furiously the Surabaya surrender was a direct violation by the Japanese of the surrender terms, for they were allowed to surrender only to Mountbatten or his representative, and not to 'some Dutch Naval Captain'. They regarded it as another example of Japanese insincerity and demanded explicitly that the status quo as it had existed previous to the incident should be restored in Surabaya.

If the Japanese did not restore the former situation in Surabaya they would be given POW status . . . a technical point which was, however, lost on the Japanese. The Japanese replied that Huijer was not 'some Dutch Naval Captain', but an official Allied representative. As for the alleged Japanese insincerity, the Japanese replied that their cooperation had already cost them 47 dead and 32 wounded, that the reason for any lack of cooperation lay in the fact that the English did not seek the cooperation of the Indonesians, and that the experience of the Japanese Army pointed to the adopting of a flexible attitude as a reasonable last resort for avoiding chaos and protecting the POWs and internees (Miyamoto 1973: 91-92). To this the English had no real answer, for what the Japanese were in fact advising them to do was exactly what the English had been advising the Dutch all along.

In spite of the effectiveness of their answer, the Japanese were concerned about the English pressure. On October 3, when Chief-of-Staff Major-General Yamamoto was censured by the English,

the Japanese issued an order in response which still forbade the use of arms in principle, but which permitted it in a number of cases (Miyamoto 1973: 86, 87; SEATIC IV: A/1149). This order was the source of considerable anxiety, since it was feared that the unit commanders would not interpret it rightly. The Japanese were not allowed secret means of communication, and calling staff officers, from the units to Headquarters to 'explain' the order, as was done in the staff meeting of September 21, was not possible in this situation. (At this staff meeting a rather stern order to maintain law and order, to suspend the move to the concentration areas, and to rearm the units, issued on September 18 was apparently 'explained away', for there is no indication that it was ever acted upon (SEATIC IV: A/1138).)

The anxiety felt in Japanese Headquarters about the order of October 3 was apparently unnecessary, for nothing changed. On October 7 Major-General Hawthorn, Commander Allied Land Forces Java, Madura, Bali, Lombok, issued a stern proclamation containing, among other things, the warning that looters, illegal bearers of arms, etc., risked being shot (Donnison 1956: 458 Appendix 8). This proclamation was made public on October 13, but it had apparently been given to the Japanese beforehand, for they transmitted it to all their units on October 7, along with the order to obey it (Miyamoto 1973: 133; SEATIC IV: A/1153).

On October 8 the English gave again, for the eighth time, the order to the Japanese to use their arms. This time they accompanied it with the veiled threat that they might have to take measures which they would prefer not to take if the Japanese did not obey the order. This time the Japanese were seriously worried. They feared that the English might by-pass their Headquarters and give direct orders to individual Japanese units to suppress the Indonesians. These and other worries led them to issue a strong order announcing a change of policy regarding the maintenance of law and order, which is summed up in the last clause as 'the idea of our remaining in assembly areas and (the) policy of engaging in office work connected with the change-over of control will have to be abandoned. We must arm ourselves again' (Miyamoto 1973: 136-7; SEATIC IV: A/1154).

What the Japanese hoped to achieve with this order is open to question. The order was immediately criticized by the Japanese Naval Staff in Jakarta, on the basis of the opinion that everything, including arms, should be given over to the

Indonesians. But the Army Staff, already irritated by what they considered to be excessive zeal shown for the Indonesian independence by the Naval Staff<sup>8</sup> countered with the argument that the Army had the responsibility for the safety of the Japanese on Java, and that, moreover, a transfer of arms to the Indonesians would be a direct violation of the Allied orders (Miyamoto 1973: 138).

The message implied that the Navy should not make the situation more complicated by meddling in things which were not their primary responsibility.

The Japanese did certainly not intend to suppress the independence movement. However, apart from those concerns mentioned above, they feared that the situation would run out of hand and that large-scale massacres would occur (SEATIC IV: A/1154, point 1). As a result, their measures were mainly protective. Endangered Japanese would be taken under the protection of the Army; arms and ammunition dumps, and POW and internment camps should be protected to the fullest extent; but the inability to guard other objectives would simply have to be accepted. The order did not

<sup>8</sup> The Japanese Naval Office in Jakarta and its head, Rear Admiral Maeda, were openly in favor of the independence movement and did everything in their power to assist it, often coming into conflict over this point with the policy of the 16th Army. The attitude of the Japanese Navy on Java stood out in marked contrast to the official Naval policy in the area it administered, Borneo and the Greater East, where almost up to the end of the war the independence movement had been suppressed or discouraged (Kanahale 1967: 148-152, 175-180, 220-228). The actual power of the Japanese Navy on Java should not be overrated. The most important service it could render to Indonesian nationalists was to shelter them from a too-close supervision by the *Kempeitai*; Maeda had rendered this service on the eve of the Independence Proclamation by offering his house to Sukarno, Hatta, the *pemuda* leaders, and the members of the PPKI in order to draw up the Independence Proclamation. To see Maeda as the evil genius behind the independence movement, as was done in some Dutch circles, is a gross exaggeration of his role. However, by offering his home and by interfering on behalf of the Indonesians with the Army authorities, he broke the deadlock between the older nationalist leaders and the *pemudas*, which culminated in the Rengasdenklok affair, and in this way he certainly made the Independence Proclamation possible (Anderson 1961: 75-87; De Graaf 1959: 326). The attitude taken by Naval authorities in Surabaya, although favourable to the independence movement, seems to have been more cautious. Having far more real power than the Naval Office in Jakarta, they were more directly responsible for the state of affairs and accordingly showed less inclination to take a too-active role.

prevent the Japanese Commander of Central Java from ceding most of his arms to the Indonesians, and it seems to have played no role at all in the only two instances in which the Japanese acted decisively against the Indonesians, the clearing of Bandung on October 10 and the clearing of Semarang on October 15, as outlined below.

In the case of Bandung the decision to act was made by Major-General Mabuchi, Commander of the Defence Unit of West Java. Perhaps the prodding of the Allied RAPWI officer in Bandung, or a too-literal interpretation of the Hawthorn Proclamation, as Japanese Headquarters suggest, prompted him to act, but certainly he was fed up with the repeated attacks on Japanese troops, supply dumps, etc., which had not been stopped through the vain appeals he had made to the Indonesian leadership in Bandung. Finally, he ordered Bandung cleared, the Indonesians, including the police, disarmed, and all arms among the population collected (SEATIC II: A/140). The action was a swift and complete success, but when Headquarters in Jakarta were informed, they were not very pleased. By now seriously worried about the 30,000 Japanese in Indonesian hands in East Java, they asked Mabuchi to restrain himself and at least rearm the Indonesian police, which he did (Miyamoto 1973: 144-5). However, Mabuchi was rewarded for his actions by being made by the Allies, on April 2, 1946, Acting Commander of the 16th Army.

In the case of Semarang, the orders of October 8 had even less influence. In Central Java the influence of the surrender of the Japanese in East Java was immediate, all the more so since the Japanese garrison of Surakarta in Central Java fell under the East Java Command. Thus, when Major General Iwabe ordered his troops to surrender on October 3 this also included the Surakarta Garrison. A substantial number of arms were in this way passed on to the Indonesians in Central Java. Moreover, the Japanese Forces in Central Java were an ill-assorted lot, comprised of cadre training units and advance parties from the 48th Division, which just before the end of the war had been on the move from Timor to Java and Singapore. Five thousand of these men were intended for the defence of Singapore, while the rest were to remain on Java (Defence Agency of Japan 1976, Vol. 92: 393). These troops had only recently come under the command of the 16th Army and had been provisionally organized into two battalions under the



command of Major-General Nakamura. (When the rest of the 48th Division arrived, the plan was that they were to be organized into a mixed brigade of four battalions as in West and East Java, but this never happened.) These troops were, moreover, largely unfamiliar with Indonesian conditions (Miyamoto 1973: 147).

Major-General Nakamura was under orders not to use arms, and, fearing that any action on his part would only endanger the large internment camps for European women and children south of Semarang, he gave in quickly to the increasingly powerful armed pressure of the Indonesians. In Semarang the same was scheduled to happen. The garrison, under the command of Major Kido Shinichiro, had already passed a major part of its arms on to the Indonesians when the Indonesians made the fatal mistake of beginning to arrest and murder Japanese. Enraged, Major Kido ordered an attack, recaptured his arms, and started clearing up Semarang on October 15. On the evening of October 16, it was discovered that the Indonesians had murdered all Japanese in the Bulu prison; 149 persons were killed and 30 unaccounted for (Miyamoto 1973: 160-4). This was all the motivation needed by the Japanese to accept without protest the orders of the small British detachment which landed in Semarang on October 19 to spearhead the Allied drive to the internment camps south of Samarang, and Magelang.

Thus, one of the main fears of Japanese Headquarters in Jakarta, that the British would put individual Japanese units under their command and order them to fight, was realized. Japanese staff officers from Headquarters in Jakarta were sent to Bandung, Semarang, and Surabaya, to regain control, but to no avail. Of the 16th Army, only the West Java Defence Unit and Major Kilo's unit in Semarang was left... the rest was in Indonesian hands.

In West Java, the British charged the Japanese with guarding arms and ammunition dumps through November. In the area around Semarang, Major Kido's unit was called into action several times during the same period, until pressure from the outside world against the use of Japanese troops put an end to this. The Japanese Headquarters in Jakarta, which had been transferred to Bandung by October 19, had lost operational control; from that time onwards it concentrated on the evacuation of the Japanese from Java. This evacuation was, with the exception of about

15,000 persons who remained behind as labor units, completed by June 1946; in total, about 58,000 persons were evacuated (Miyamoto 1973: 267).

### Conclusion

The revolutionary furor which swept through Indonesia, and particularly through Java from the end of September 1945 until the first months of 1946, the so-called *bersiap* period, astounded virtually all observers at the time. Almost no one had expected this of the meekest people on earth ('*zachtmoedigste volk ter aarde*', Van der Wal 1971, Vol. I: 410). But whatever explanations are given for this phenomenon, the fact remains that there was in Java one force which could have effectively controlled the outburst: the Japanese 16th Army. That it did not succeed in accomplishing this was not its deliberate intention but resulted from the fact that when the outburst came at the end of September, the 16th Army had rendered itself incapable of controlling the situation by its self-internment. The small number of Japanese troops remaining in the major cities were ineffective against concerted Indonesian mass actions, while the Indonesian police were more loyal to independence than they were to the Japanese.

The policy of self-internment, clearly designed to give the Indonesian leadership sufficient flexibility and authority to function, both with respect to the Allies as well as to the more radical *pemudas*, left the Japanese without control. When the Allies did not afford the Indonesian Republic some form of recognition and the Indonesians decided to take matters in their own hands, the Japanese were not in a position to respond quickly or powerfully. Only a complete mobilization of the 16th Army could have restored control to the Japanese, but even before they could have begun to contemplate this, the Surabaya surrender took place.

The surrender at Surabaya was crucial, not only because it provided the Indonesians with sufficient arms to resist the whole British Indian 5th Division in the fierce battle of Surabaya during November, thereby demonstrating to the world that the Indonesian Revolution was not some kind of small extremist affair which would fade into nothing more than a footnote in a book on Dutch colonial history once some force was used against it, but also because it made the whole Japanese

16th Army powerless in one stroke. With about 30,000 Japanese in Indonesian hands, almost half the total number of Japanese on Java, the Japanese Headquarters was certainly not going to undertake actions which might endanger these lives, even if they had wanted to take action against the Indonesians.

While one may wonder just how decisive were the actions of the Dutch Naval Captain Huijer and whether Iwabe could, once his reinforcements had arrived, have played the role of a Mabuchi or a Kido, it is certain that Huijer unwittingly played the role of a mediator between the Japanese and the Indonesians, and by demanding their surrender he took responsibility from and so 'saved the face' of the former. And whatever the effect of Iwabe's actions may have been on the number of casualties for the other groups, it is certain that he saved a great number of Japanese Army lives. In East Java the number of casualties of the 16th Army was 149 (25 died in action, 16 died by suicide, 108 were victims of accidents, disease,

etc.) compared to 308 for Central Java (253 died in action, 7 died by suicide, 48 died from other causes), and 600 for West Java (266 died in action, 37 died by suicide, and 297 died from other causes), a ratio of 1:2:4 (Miyamoto 1973: 363).<sup>9</sup> Against the total number of 1,057 Japanese casualties sustained in the period from their surrender until June 1946 stands the total of 957 for the ten days of March 1942 (255 dead, 702 wounded; Defence Agency of Japan 1967, Vol. 3: 594); a proportion which clearly reflects how much more difficult getting out of Java was for the Japanese than getting in had been.

<sup>9</sup> To compare: the casualties reported for the Allied Land Forces on Java comprised for roughly the same period 600 killed, 1,420 wounded, and 320 missing (Woodburn Kirby 1969: 544, Appendix 310). It is not clear how many of those missing can be counted as deserters. HQ AFNEI Intelligence Review, Period Oct. '45-Nov. '46, listed 746 British Indian deserters. The number of Japanese deserters is given by Miyamoto (1973: 375) as 268 men; however, HQ AFNEI Weekly Intelligence Summary no. 53 gives 593 as the official Japanese number.

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