

*Road to Exile. The Indonesian Nationalist Movement 1927-1934.* By John Ingleson. Published for the Asian Studies Association of Australia by Heinemann Educational Books (Asia) Ltd., Singapore, 1979. 254pp.

PRIMARILY this book must be seen as a contribution to the history of interwar Indonesian nationalism, and in particular to the history of the 'secular' nationalists who were in the event to emerge as leaders of independent Indonesia postwar. It traverses some ground made familiar by John Legge, Bernhard Dahm and others, as well as by Dr Ingleson's own *Perhimpunan Indonesia and the Indonesian Nationalist Movement 1923-1928* (1975). Beginning with a short account of PI, it moves to a discussion of the study clubs in which Indonesians returning from the Netherlands played so important a role. It considers the formation of the Partai Nasional Indonesia in the wake of the suppression of the Communist revolts of 1926-7 and the unsuccessful attempt to create in the *Perumfakatan Perhimpunan-perhimpunan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia* a federation of political parties, including both 'secular' and Islamic. It deals also—and rather sensitively—with the actions of the colonial government: with De Graeff's liberalism, and his somewhat wistful hopes of winning over cooperating nationalists to the régime, and by contrast, with his successor De Jonge's conservatism, intensified with the onset of the depression by recollection on the part of Dutch residents and officials of the insurrections a few years before. If some of this ground is familiar, Dr Ingleson gives us new information and new insights, making use of official Dutch archives and private papers and of contemporary Dutch and Indonesian newspapers and journals. He presents, finally, a small but penetrating portrait of Sukarno, both the orator in full spate, and the prisoner who so much lost his confidence in confinement that he offered to refrain from all further political activity in return for his release.

Those who do not specialize in Indonesian, or even Southeast Asian studies, will still find this book interesting. For the terms in which it discusses Indonesian nationalism are of wider relevance. The nationalists of the 1920s believed that their only chance of upsetting the power of the colonial rulers was through developing the apparent counter-power of the masses. As Dr Ingleson points out, they shared this view with the Indian nationalists. It was a recipe for other Asian nationalist movements, too: Rizal and his Liga, Aung San and his Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, would have recognized the concept of a countervailing force, of a state within a state. Maybe the fundamental weakness of the policy was also shared. How did you judge when to pit this power against the government? How did you act if the government simply failed to recognise its challenge? The Dutch government could insulate the peasantry from the movement in Indonesia; they could undermine mass action by arresting the leaders. Rizal, too, had been arrested: the Spaniards were displaced by the Americans. Aung San won perhaps less because of his own strength than because of the weakness of the British, and their unwillingness or inability to rely on the postwar Indian army. And if the 'secular' nationalists of Dr Ingleson's period gave currency to the concept of an Indonesian nation, their realising it surely depended on the incursion of the Japanese and the disruption of colonial power that was brought about by external forces. The nationalist movement in Indonesia, like that in other colonial countries, enjoyed a success like nineteenth-century Italy's: though it struggled, its success was out of all proportion to its intrinsic strength. It still had to face the

task of turning a 'geographical expression' into a nation.

That said, it can also be argued that, in the longer term at least, there was an inconsistency between democratic advance back in Europe and authoritarianism overseas. It was not only that the Netherlands bred students like those who joined PI. It also nurtured attitudes like De Graeff's: a policy like De Jonge's could not forever be accepted in the Netherlands. But a policy like De Graeff's had little chance in the Indies. Even apart from the impact of the depression or the war, it seems doubtful whether any lasting compromise could have been reached between Indonesian nationalism and Dutch authority. Empire is hard to relinquish. Though colonial rulers have been prepared to go, they have often wished—as, again, in Burma—to leave behind a monument to their good intentions, one which they had designed.

If Dr Ingleson's book interests both by interpreting a phase of Indonesian nationalism and by provoking comparison with other nationalisms, it is noticed in these pages for another reason also. Historians have been anxious that specialised research of the best kind should continue to be published, despite the contracted prospects of the profession and the mounting cost of books. They have initiated self-help, in the United Kingdom, for example, through the Royal Historical Society series, *Studies in History*. With colleagues in other disciplines, they have also initiated a Southeast Asia Publications Series on the part of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, of which Dr Ingleson's book is the first. Maybe New Zealanders do not have the resources to follow these examples. But they should salute the courage and enterprise of their trans-Tasman colleagues, and welcome their generosity: members of the New Zealand Asian Studies Society are offered the same concession price as ASAA members (A\$6.35 paper, A\$14.55 cased).

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*Colonial Cap and Gown*. By W.J. Gardner, published by Whitcoulls for the University of Canterbury, 1979. 142pp. N.Z. price: \$6.95.

FORTUNATE enough to house its own historians, the college and university is one of the few institutions in New Zealand life which has been relatively well served by the professionals. But W.J. Gardner in *Colonial Cap and Gown* is the first to go beyond the standard narrative of a particular *alma mater* and try to offer some broader generalizations about the university in a new society. Gardner does not deal with all the New Zealand colleges, but simply the first two, Canterbury and Otago, which he treats alongside the three earliest Australian universities, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. All five were founded between 1850 and 1874. In design this is an exciting project. The comparative perspective, the attempt to integrate New Zealand mid-Victorian history into that of Australian history, and the author's eagerness to hunt for larger generalizations, raise high expectations.

Some of this promise is indeed fulfilled. This book is most readable, written