

# Letters to The Times

## Issues in Indonesia

### Anti-Dutch Agitation Held an Asset in Regime's Domestic Politics

*The writer of the following letter is Professor of History at Utrecht University and visiting professor at Harvard.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:  
In your issue of Dec. 8 Tillman Durdin describes the Indonesian attack on Dutch residents and Dutch interests and property, and ends with the reflection: "Nationalism can be costly. Both Dutch nationalism in holding on to West Irian and Indonesian nationalism are giving new evidence of this."

Can anything be more unfair than to paint the Dutch attitude and the Indonesian attitude with the same brush of "nationalism"?

I am glad to see from your leading article on another page in the same issue that you take a very different view from that indicated by the passage quoted. I hope you will allow me to comment on its implications nevertheless.

The Indonesian Republic rests on the agreement by which in 1949 the Netherlands renounced her sovereignty over the archipelago. From that renunciation New Guinea was expressly excluded.

#### Claims to Territory

Indonesia has ever since agitated for the possession of that territory, which adjoins her own but is ethnically or morally in no way connected with it. The passion with which the claim has been pursued does not seem to have served any other purpose than that of fanning Indonesian nationalism.

The economic situation and social conditions have in many ways deteriorated under the regime of independence; Javanese-dominated centralization has led to dangerous reactions on the part of the other islands. To divert attention from all this, nothing has been found more effective than to represent Holland as still being a danger, still a potential enemy or oppressor.

In actual fact the state of opinion in Holland in no way justifies these wild charges. On the contrary, the way in which Holland has accepted the loss of her colonial empire has been remarkable. The Dutch have found scope for their energies in the rebuilding of their country, in extensive and skillful industrialization, in great schemes of land reclamation. To suggest that New Guinea was retained in order to serve as a threat against Indonesian independence is simply absurd.

Why, then, was it retained? To begin with, because there was no reasonable ground why it should be included in the cession of the rest of the one-time empire. The population, living in another age, was not and is not in the least affected by the wave of nationalism that swept more or less strongly over Indonesia proper.

The arguments advanced by the Indonesian Government were little suited to make an impression on the Dutch. They were too transparent a cloak for a hate propaganda intended to bolster up a shaky regime. In spite of constant provocation on the part of Indonesia, in spite of her having violated the 1949 agreement in many of its provisions, the Dutch Government has never refused to negotiate, but it has refused to negotiate after first conceding the demand for New Guinea.

#### Anti-Dutch Agitation

That the unfortunate Dutchmen in Indonesia were often inclined to wish that their Government would give way is understandable enough. Is it not questionable, however, whether a concession to threats and blackmail would have produced peace? Is it not more likely that Sukarno would have felt encouraged and would have thought up another grievance? For the anti-Dutch agitation has become too precious an asset in his domestic politics to drop it, New Guinea or no New Guinea.

I shall not labor the point. In your leading article you take essentially the same view. "The Dutch," you say, "are as much to be commended for their patience and restraint \* \* \* as the Indonesians are to be condemned for their reckless irresponsibility." And, "The Dutch deserve the good offices of the free world."

Let us hope that we shall hear no more of a Dutch "nationalism" as if there were nothing to choose between them and their aggressors.

PIETER GEYL.

Cambridge, Mass., Dec. 9, 1957.

### Longer School Year Opposed

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:  
Certainly Prof. Edgar M. Finck of Dickinson has rightly stressed, in your issue of Dec. 8, that changes must be effected in our system of education in order to meet the Soviet challenge, but increasing the length of the academic year might serve our enemies better than it would our educational structure.

Surely what American education needs is more academic content more efficaciously conveyed to students, not more time. Especially is this true at the school level, where subjects with real academic value might receive greater emphasis than courses in driving, extracurricular activities, study halls (where precious little studying is done) and the myriad scholastic time-wasters which might turn out "well-oriented" students, but in too many instances do not turn out students prepared for a university education.

This would permit the energies of college teachers and their students

to be channeled into the traditional function of the university—to which the Russians adhere—the creation of educated men and women.

Increasing the academic year in the colleges, thereby limiting what is already an uncomfortably short annual research opportunity for most teachers, could prove to be the death warrant for the productive scholarship which, as Prof. Harold Sprout pointed out Nov. 24 in your columns, fosters better teaching. Is it worth it?

THOMAS G. BARNES,  
Assistant Professor of History,  
Lycoming College.

Williamsport, Pa., Dec. 8, 1957.

## Developing Missiles

### Wider Role for Vice President in Expediting Program Proposed

*The writer of the following letter is a member of Congress, representing the Fifth District, New Jersey.*

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:  
I should like to comment on your editorial of Dec. 17 entitled "Missile Inquiry." As you point out, the Senate Preparedness subcommittee is performing a valuable service in educating the public on a question of critical importance to the nation.

You suggest that no solution has yet been offered to correct the Pentagon's "hodgepodge of divided and diffuse authority." Perhaps no "solution" will be found. None the less many will agree with your conclusion that our missiles program needs "a tightening of lines of control."

In this connection I wish to repeat a suggestion I recently made for expediting the missiles program. Why should not President Eisenhower, by Executive order, specifically assign to Vice President Nixon over-all responsibility for accelerating our missiles program? Obviously someone with real prestige and authority is needed—someone who has both the time and authority to "knock heads together" if that should be necessary. Certainly we cannot afford to waste time, talent, money and energy on unnecessary inter-service rivalries and undue red tape.

Dr. James Killian's appointment is a step in the right direction, but his role is essentially advisory. Similarly, William Holaday, the Pentagon's Director of Guided Missiles, is not in a position to expedite the program with the authority required. Vice President Nixon could provide the much-needed ingredient—full-time executive energy and authority.

#### Specific Responsibilities

President Eisenhower has given Mr. Nixon the best training of any Vice President in history. Is not now the proper time to take the further step of assigning Mr. Nixon specific executive responsibilities? The seriousness of recent developments, and the intolerable burdens placed on our modern Presidents, would seem to make it obvious that we should utilize the Vice President's experience, talents and training.

The office of the Vice President today is still seriously under-utilized. And yet the total burdens of the Presidency today are too great for any single man. Why not utilize the office of the Vice-Presidency to relieve some of the real operating burdens of the Presidency? Such a step, in my opinion, would be advisable no matter what President were in office, and whatever the problems he had to face.

We recognize, of course, that, under the Constitution the executive power is vested solely in the President. However, this does not preclude the President from making specific delegations of his authority. What I am suggesting would in no way weaken the President's fundamental responsibility.

Surely the problems which the nation faces today are so critical that we should abandon the outmoded concept that Vice Presidents should not be given executive responsibility.

PETER FRELINGHUYSEN Jr.

Washington, Dec. 18, 1957.

## Negotiating With Russians

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:  
Why does the Administration seem so panicky at the idea of negotiating with the Russians?

What have we to lose? On one hand, if any kind of workable agreement can be reached, the cause of peace is served. On the other hand, if we expose Soviet proposals as tricks or propaganda, we will at least have called their bluff. The world will know we are sincere in trying to explore every possible avenue leading to peace.

As it stands now, we are mutely letting the Russians get away with their bluff that they are willing to sit down and negotiate reasonably.

RICHARD HUDSON.

New York, Dec. 18, 1957.