

# LIFE



## THE NEW NATION OF INDONESIA

14 PAGES OF PICTURES BY  
HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

FEBRUARY 13, 1950 **20** CENTS  
YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION \$6.00



Riswan dengan keluarga



IN THE PALACE ENTRY HALL WHERE JOGJAKARTA'S SULTAN PARKS HIS PREWAR ENGLISH CAR, A JAVANESE SENTRY POSES AN ANCIENT SPEAR BESIDE EUROPEAN CLOCK

# The new Indonesia

## A "GIRDLE OF EMERALD" CHANGES OWNERS BUT KEEPS ITS CHARM

PHOTOGRAPHED FOR LIFE BY HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON

It was called, liltingly, "a girdle of emerald flung across the equator." It was said, by others, to be a long chain of islands binding 80 million Asiatics to a European colonial master. It was Holland's pride, the world traveler's delight, the Orient's chief source of oil and tin, Japan's greedy dream of expanding empire. All of this was Indonesia, the 350-year-old child of Mother Holland. But the child at last yearned to be free; it grew unruly and rejected discipline. Then Western neighbors encouraged the mother to help it grow up, to live peaceably by itself. And one day a few weeks ago the mother spoke. Said Queen Juliana:

"The assumption of sovereignty by the young State, the Republic of the United States of Indonesia, its relinquishment by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the conclusion of the Union is one of the most deeply moving events of our times, piercing as it were to the very roots of our existence. . . . Both countries feel sufficiently strong and resilient to start afresh, East and West working to one end."

Whether that end would be happy or chaotic the world could hardly guess. But it knew that Holland had given up an incredibly rich empire—a string of 3,100 beautiful and abundant islands straddling the equator just south of the mainland of Asia. Within its lush and steamy boundaries (map, pp. 84, 85) live the children of 137 cultures. They speak 17 major languages complicated by 200 dialects, make obeisance to sultans, carry bundles on their heads, entertain themselves with

exotic pastimes like "trance dances" (p. 91) and, on Bali, with charming innocence display the most admired female torsos in the world.

The relationship between Holland and Indonesia had begun 100 years before Britain's domination of India. During more than three centuries of Dutch rule, cities grew over jungle, European devices like streetcars were installed in the tropical scene, trade flourished, the Indonesians increased from 12 to 80 million. But the relationship left much to be desired: only 10% of the Indonesians were literate; except as political puppets or shiny puppets of the Dutch, they had no role in their government.

The beginning of the breakaway came in 1942 when the Dutch army collapsed a week after the Battle of the Java Sea. Grasping at the promise of "Greater East Asia," the young firebrands of independence joined hands with the invading Japanese. As puppets they saw their people suffer, but they found a supply of arms. When the Pacific war ended in August 1945, they proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia. Neither Dutch pleas nor Dutch police could change the course of history. While the world applauded, the Dutch withdrew the symbols of their rule (*left*) and listened stoically as the dynamic first president, Raden Soekarno (*opposite page*), exhorted the brown-skinned citizens of his new United States of Indonesia: "Rise, my people! Rise to welcome the rising sun. . . ."

The people the president was speaking to and their newly formed nation are shown in the pictures on these 14 pages.



DUTCH DEPARTURE from the palace at Batavia (renamed Jakarta) ends with the removal of an old governor's portrait.



**THE UNITED STATES OF INDONESIA** is formed by island areas lying beneath the long solid line on map above. It stretches as far from east to west as the U.S.-Canadian border. The equator runs from bottom left to top right corners of

this perspective map, through middle of Sumatra and Borneo and northern part of Celebes. Indonesia's political subdivisions are the Republic (three blue-shaded areas on Sumatra and Java) and 15 Federated States (outlined by broken lines),



**A FLOATING TOWN** lies along the Musi River at Palembang, capital of South Sumatra. Its dwellers move along their watery street in boats, to homes

and shops (*background*) anchored to river bottom. North of here are the oil fields of Dutch- and British-owned Shell and U.S.-owned Standard-Vacuum.

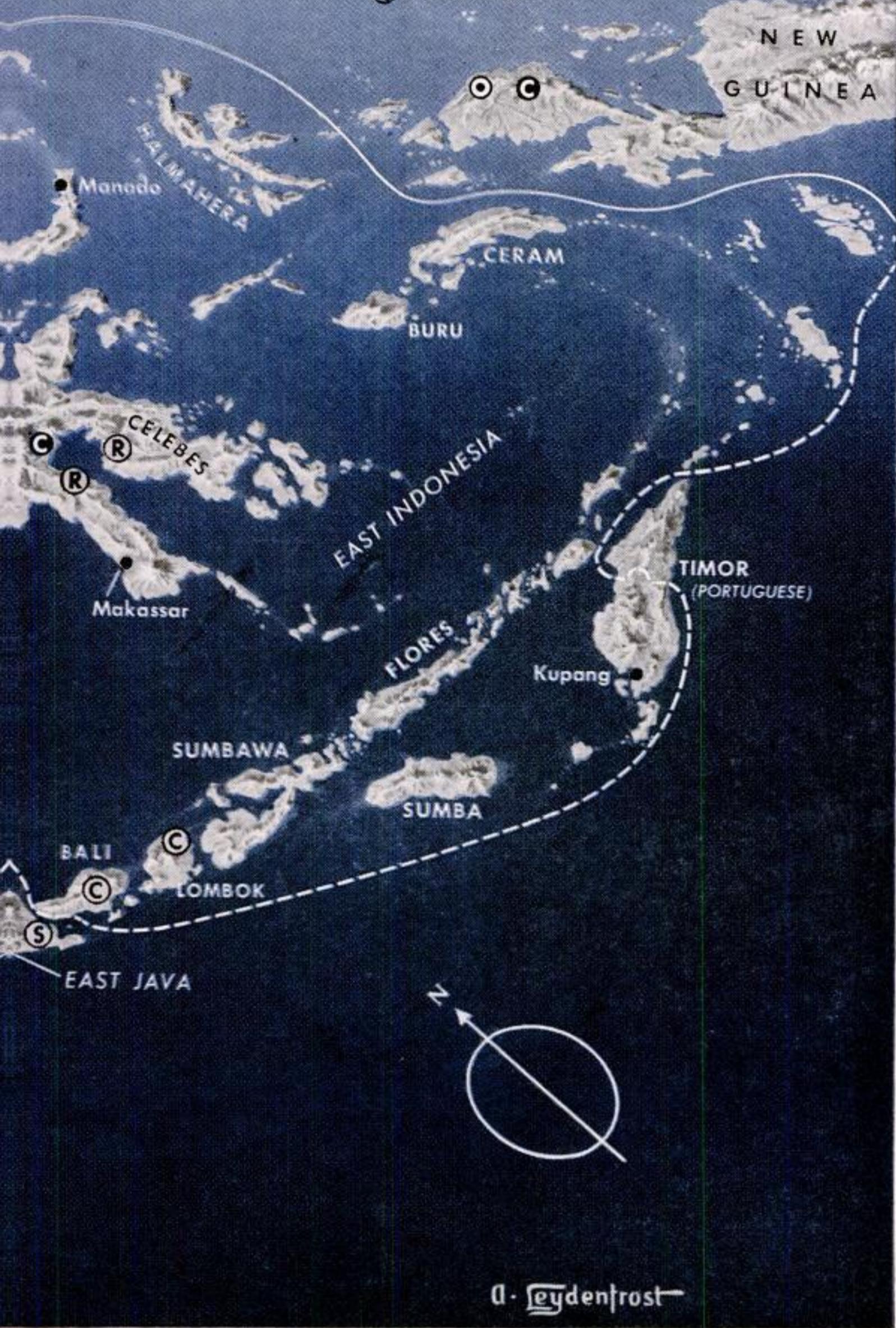


**A HUT ON STILTS**, thickly thatched against tropical rain, is a Bali farmer's home. It is draped with gay tapestry to please Hindu gods during a feast period.

# Ocean

KEY:

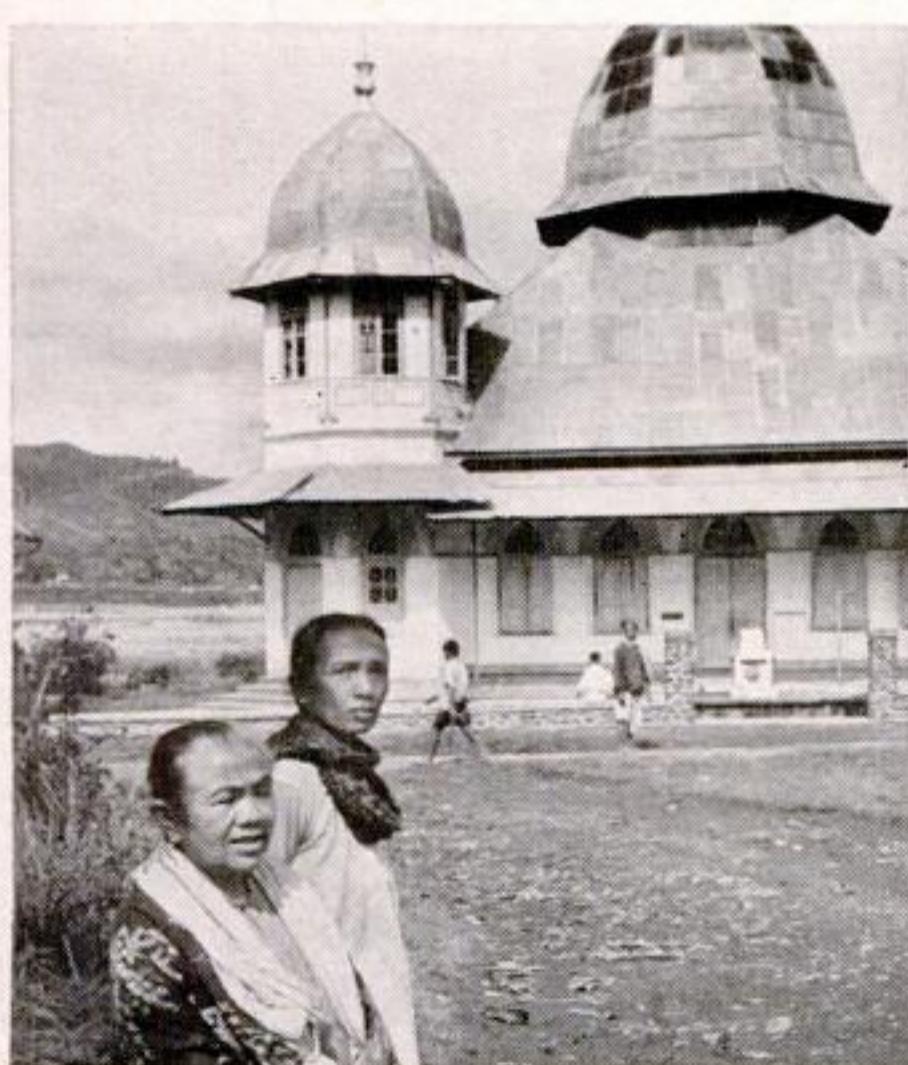
- |           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| ○ OIL     | Ⓐ RICE   |
| ● COAL    | Ⓑ RUBBER |
| ◎ COFFEE  | Ⓣ TEA    |
| ■ SUGAR   | Ⓣ TIN    |
| ◎ QUININE |          |



which the Dutch fostered in 1948. The northern areas of Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo are British. New Guinea (*upper right*) remains in the Netherlands' hands but its incorporation into the nation is a major Indonesian goal for 1950.



**HORNED HOUSES** spire above a street market in Koto Gedang, a Sumatra town. Natives tell that a 16th Century prince, facing war with a Javanese enemy, proposed a bullfight instead. His bull won and thereafter roofs were given horns.



**A MOSLEM MOSQUE**, its zinc domes weathering against Sumatra's humid sky, provides main religious element in Indonesia's architectural heritage.



**BUDDHIST MONUMENT**, the great Borobudur built by Eighth Century artisans of the Shailendra dynasty, dominates a terraced hill in central Java.

The Buddha at left is one of many who sit in massive, stony serenity and gaze forever across a field of stupas toward Merapi peak, a dormant volcano.



**SHOPPING ON BALI** is a twice-weekly task. The farm wife in the foreground brought bananas, mangoes and eggs to market, will buy cloth before returning.



**OIL WORKER** bends to connect a new pipe to the drilling rig at a Palembang field. This big Standard-Vacuum field was brought into production 28 years ago.

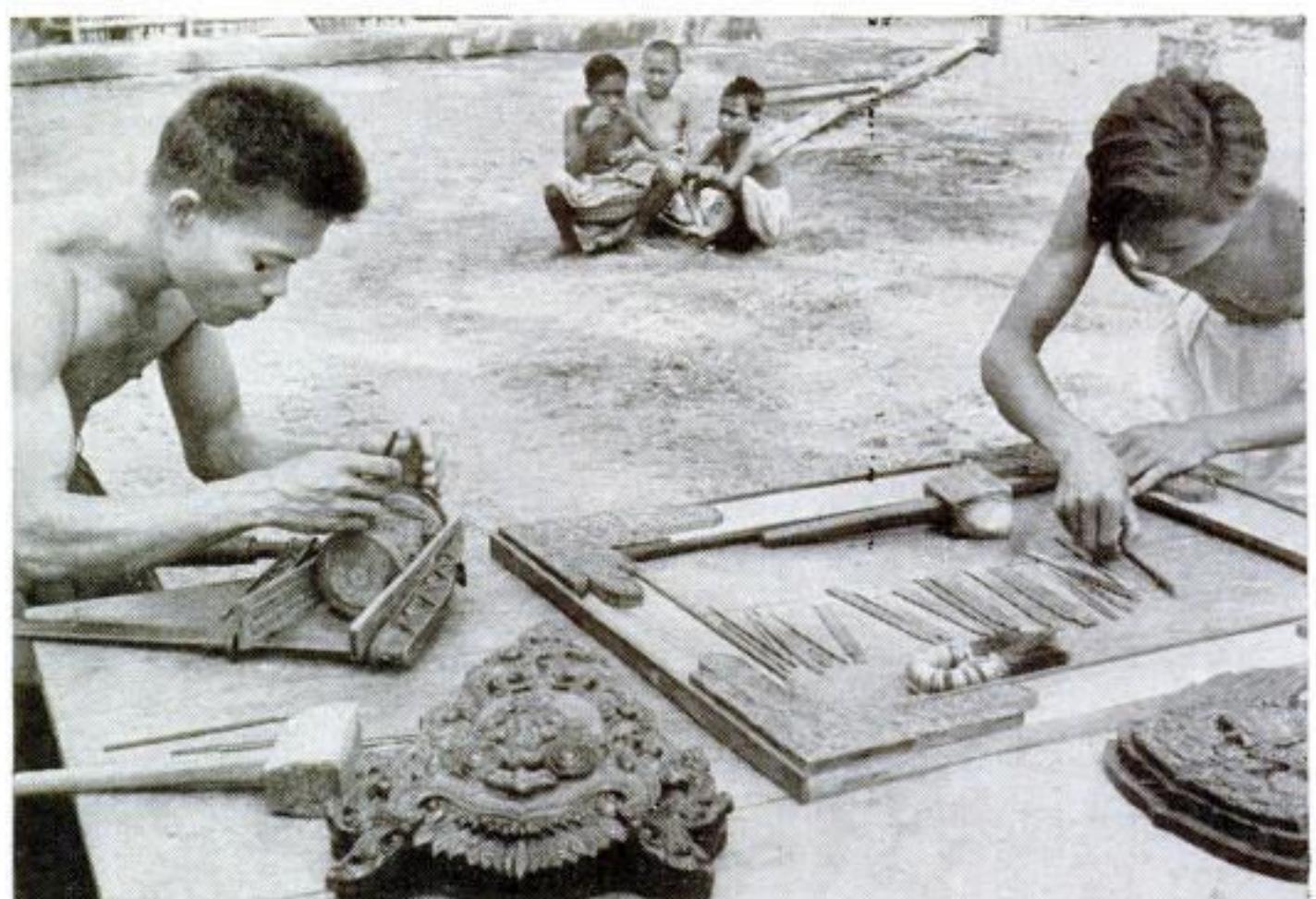


**FACTORY GIRL**, only 16 but married, helps put gay patterns in batik by waxing out unpatterned areas of cotton cloth before dyeing.

## PEOPLE WORK SLOWLY IN THEIR ANCIENT WAYS

In the languorous heat of the islands the pace of labor is necessarily slow. The primitive hand methods of other centuries are still used almost everywhere except in tin mines and in the oil fields (*below*) where a few thousand Indonesians have learned to grapple with the tools of the mechanized world for which they produce oil. The easy rhythm of life gives the native fisherman time to decorate his *prau* with bright designs (*opposite page*), and the artisans of Java a chance to bring intricate works of art from blocks of wood (*below*). Much of the hardest work falls to Indonesia's peasant women. On Java, women work the fields as a religious duty. To cultivate one hectare of rice land, a Javanese wife works 674 hours, her husband 285, their water buffalo 59.

During the colonial period the people's earnest labor and the bounty of the soil and sea gave Indonesia enough food for everybody. But war and rebellion destroyed many fertile paddies, and the government of the new nation now faces the heavy task of regaining self-sufficiency in food. It is turning its efforts away from overcrowded Java (850 persons per square mile) toward the jungled acres of uncrowded Sumatra (70 per square mile).



**WOOD CARVERS** at a school for native apprentices in Japara, famous center of the Javanese carving industry, work on a wooden screen and grotesque figures.



**JAVANESE FISHERMEN** in a vivid *prau*, the native outrigger canoe, come in from the Java Sea to Rembang (pop. 50,000), a port which the Dutch East

India Company began developing in 1743. The man standing behind coiled rope wears the black fez of Indonesia's Moslems, the dominant religious group of Java.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

INDONESIA CONTINUED

## LAND OF PARASOLS AND MANGOES



**WOMEN OF SEMARANG**, chief city of Java's north-central coast, wear brightly brocaded silk *rebajas* (jackets) over flowered sarongs, walk barefoot under bamboo parasols.



**A FRUIT MARKET** in Semarang offers sugary sirups, colored with bright dyes, as soft drinks. The dark-browed woman (*foreground*) peddles tender-fleshed mangoes, which grow in profusion on Java.



**RICE HARVEST** brings both men and women into this dry field near Japara. Moving about the broad

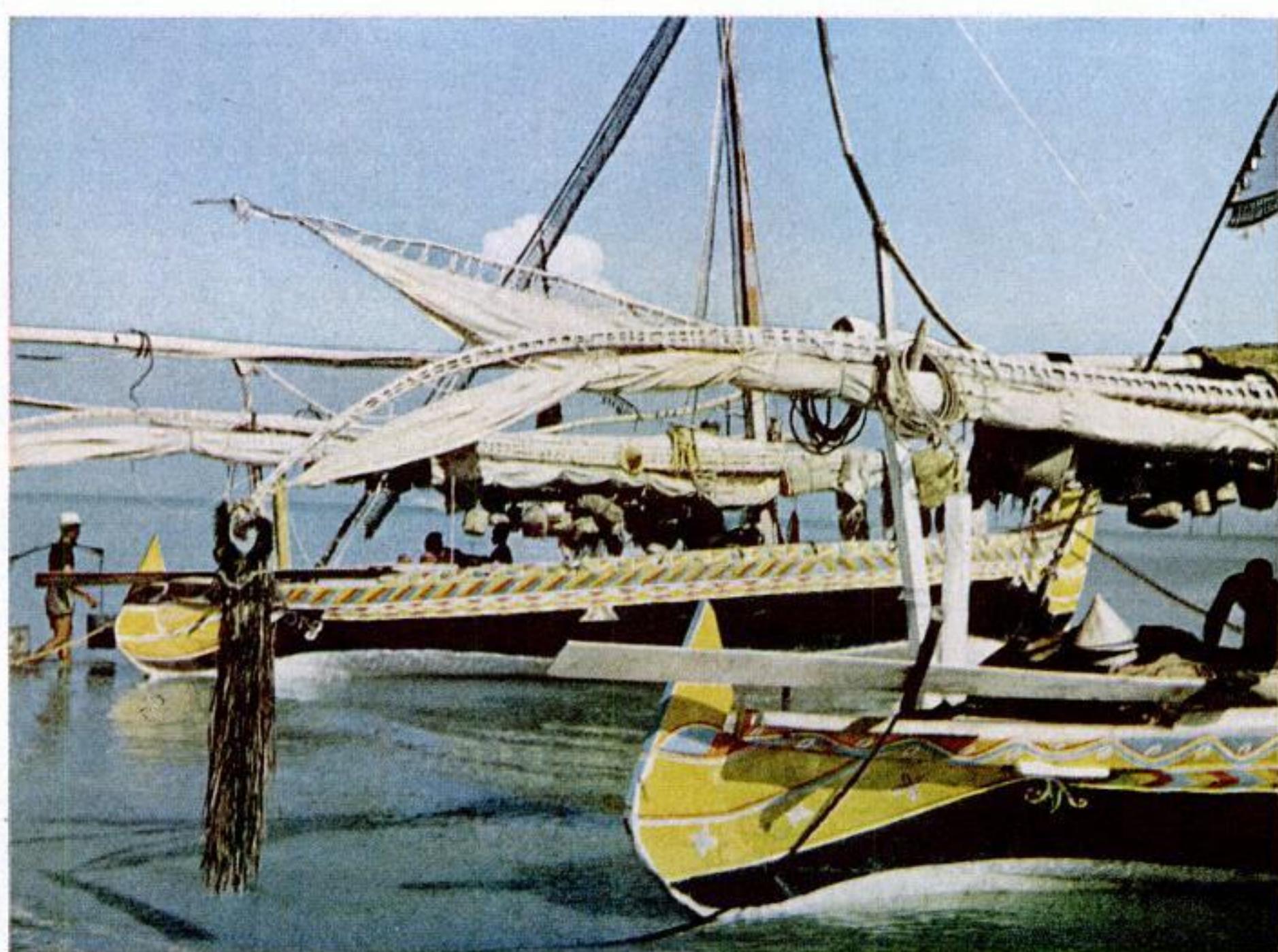


**A FOOTPATH TO REMBANG** carries the rhythmic flow of native commerce as peasants bring their produce to market and women shoppers move homeward

from the city. The skeletal foliage beyond the path is a row of trees which produce the fluffy kapok out of which the stuffing for mattresses and life preservers is made.



field in swirling patterns, these farmers reminded Cartier-Bresson of "troops of birds in loose flight."



**FISHING BOATS** beached along the flat shore at Rembang gleam in the equatorial sun. The designs

painted on these *praus* have no meaning except to satisfy the Javanese taste for colorful decoration.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Bahan dengan hak cipta



**DANCERS OF BALI** use the angular grace of a temple dance (*above*) to enact a tale from the *Ramayana*, an Odysseylke epic with a Hindu hero named Rama. Most of Indonesia's dances and other art forms have Hindu roots.

"**MAKING PROSPERITY**" is the hopeful theme of this Javanese palace dance (*left*), presented to entertain the young Susuhunan (sultan) of Surakarta. The bare-shouldered girls move with floating steps and lowered eyes.

**AN EVIL KING** is portrayed by a golden-winged male dancer (*right*), who is one of the Susuhunan's family. Taken from the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, this dance reaches a climax when another dancer, Virtue, kills Evil.





**TRANCE DANCE** depicts struggle with witch's dagger. Hypnotized, the Balinese girl whirls in frenzy and her black hair flies.

## THE ISLANDS' DANCES ARE GROTESQUE AND GRACEFUL

The dances of Indonesia tell the islands' folk tales, which are as ancient and timeless as the soil. On Java and Bali two different dance forms have grown up through the centuries. The Javanese (*right*) is courtly, formalized and graceful; the Balinese is vigorous and often grotesque. In both Javanese and Balinese dances the costumes are rich with goldwork and the music a soft blending of gongs and tinkling bells. The Balinese dance tale often depicts the visitations of evil spirits and their violent exorcism. In the most spectacular of these (*above and below*) the dancers begin by going into self-induced hysterical trances. Once hypnotized, they believe their krisses are turned against them by the evil magic of Rangda, the incredibly ugly, pendulous-breasted Queen of Witches. Magic saves them, and while still hypnotized two men bite off live chickens' heads for priestly sacrifices. Then all slowly recover and return to the reality of their island.



**MASS SUICIDE** seems imminent as these trance dancers press krisses to their breasts. But wounds are minor. Friends suck away blood, put red flowers in cuts.

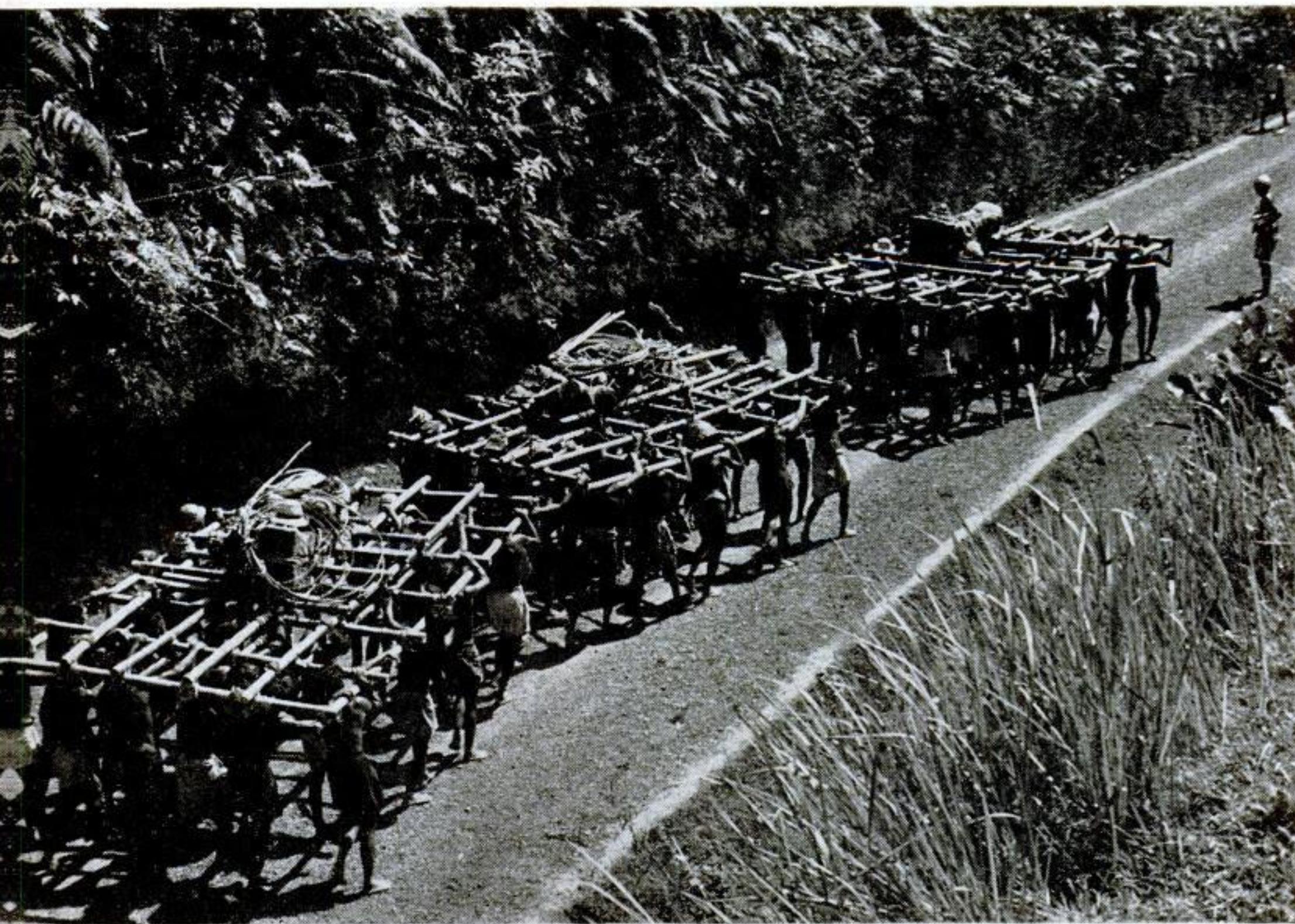


**CAPANG-CAPANG** is the name for slow, swaying walk of this barefooted Surakarta princess, whose Serimpi dance is the highest form of Indonesia's superb art.



**RICE FIELDS** under irrigation near Pendang, in central Sumatra, lie like mirrors reflecting the foliage of bordering palm trees. The surfaces of these paddies

are speckled by young shoots. The turbaned man in foreground is an overseer, and the people across the paddies are laborers who plant and harvest semiannual crop.



**TEMPLE BUILDERS**, shouldering three prefabricated sections of a new Hindu temple designed for

a village on Bali, move in procession along a valley road. They carried their loads four miles this way.



**PUBLIC BATHING** brings women and children to a canal beside a busy Jakarta street. Though very



**TEA PLANTATION** near the Javanese city of Bandung has its tea bushes in a grove of quinine-producing Cinchona trees. The Dutch first brought tea to Java

as an experimental crop in 1832. Before the war Indonesia produced 18% of the world's tea. Because of the destruction of plantations, it now produces only 4½%.



dirty, canal water is used for washing bodies, clothes and teeth. Wells provide the public's drinking water.



**BURDEN BEARERS** of Bali are women who balance towering clusters of earthen pots on heads, hold-

ing on with one hand while other hand swings. They are bound for market in Klungkung, old Bali capital.



ON THE ROAD TO JOGJAKARTA A RAGGED LINE OF YOUNG JAVANESE GUERRILLAS MARCHES JAUNTILY TOWARD TOWN TO CELEBRATE THE NEW INDEPENDENCE OF THE NATION

## YOUNG MEN ARE BOTH THE PERIL AND THE HOPE

A generation of Indonesian patriots fought for *merdeka* (freedom). Now that they have won it, they are discovering that the bright days of fulfillment can be clouded by the aftermath of struggle and new problems of peace. In western Java trigger-happy young men with guns still stalk the countryside. Some were natives who, having fought as mercenaries for the Dutch, now roam unemployed, hated by their countrymen. Some are guerrillas who fought the Dutch, then turned against President Soekarno. They include Moslem fanatics of *Darul Islam* ("World of Islam"), who want to make Indonesia an Islamic utopia where by Allah's grace all things are perfect. Several thousand of these dangerous men are led by a former Dutch officer who has an egocentric plan to purge "Japanese influence" from Indonesia by warring on the Soekarno government.

The wiser, more moderate young patriots who are Indonesia's new leaders (*below*) must find ways to bring dissidents as well as peaceful men and displaced princes (*opposite page*) into the new national culture fostered by the government. It is a government more deeply influenced

by the American constitutional system than by Indonesia's own diverse cultures. Though predominantly Moslem, the founding fathers did not mention Mohammed in their new draft constitution. Rather the preamble ordained a charter based broadly on "divine omnipotence, humanity, national consciousness, democracy and social justice" and a federal state "governed by justice." Its "bill of rights" prohibits slavery, torture and illegal arrest; it guarantees freedom of speech, religion and assembly, and the sanctity of every home. Like an American, an Indonesian charged with crime will be presumed innocent until proved guilty in open trial.

Even the effort to build a new state on these tolerant concepts is spectacular in the Asia of 1950, when helpless masses are being marched doggedly toward the police state. These concepts must be carried out, and non-Communist friends must find ways to help solve the hard economic problems that lie ahead if Indonesia itself is to continue living outside Moscow's orbit. Then the "girdle of emerald" may become a chain of great strength binding East and West together for their common good.



**PRIME MINISTER** is Mohammed Hatta, 47, a Dutch-educated Sumatran. He negotiated independence and now doubles as the foreign minister.



**DEFENSE MINISTER** is the Sultan of Jogjakarta, 37, known as democrat despite his wealth. He commanded the anti-Dutch Republican army.



**INTERIOR MINISTER** is Anak Agung, 30, Balinese raja and former East Indonesian premier. He championed federalism in new government.



**ELDER STATESMAN** at 40 is Sultan Sjahrir, whom Dutch exiled. He attended U.N. after the war, holds no office but has wide political influence.

**AN OLD PRINCE, ONCE OF THE RULING CLASS,  
PEERS PAST GUARD AT THE NEW LAWMAKERS  
WORKING INSIDE THE PALACE AT JOGJAKARTA**

