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KORTE MEDEDELINGEN

INDONESIAN AND MALAYAN STUDIES IN AUSTRALIA.

Since the war Australia has become increasingly involved in the economic and political affairs of South-East Asia through both the Colombo Plan and the South-East Asia Treaty Organization. As a result Australians are becoming more interested in the peoples of the area, especially as there are now hundreds of young Asians studying at Australian schools and universities. A reflection of this growing interest was the Commonwealth Government's decision in 1955 to grant to the Universities of Sydney and Melbourne, and Canberra University College, a sum of £A 14,000 to develop Indonesian and Malayan studies¹. The following brief survey gives some idea of the progress which has already been made in these fields.

University of Melbourne.

During 1954-5 a number of informal seminars on Indonesia were conducted by members of various departments within the University, and early in 1956, as a result of discussions with the Commonwealth Government, a separate Department of Indonesian Studies was established. Lectures in *Bahasa Indonesia* were commenced in April of that year, following the appointment of Mr. Zainu'ddin, a member of the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as language lecturer. During 1956 lectures (in English) were also given on Indonesia by members of the Departments of Law, History, Economics, and Political Science². At present the course is at the pre-university level, and does not meet degree requirements; but it is hoped to introduce Indonesian Studies as a subject for the Arts degree in 1958, beginning as a single subject, and continuing as a major in three parts. This plan, however, has yet to be approved by the Arts Faculty and the Professorial Board. The ultimate scope of the course will depend largely upon the person who is appointed to take charge of the department³, but the Committee which is supervising the course believes that it should be developed around an area studies programme, and that the objective should not be to produce linguistic specialists. The Committee considers that the course should aim rather at making students fluent in *Bahasa Indonesia*, which would then become the tool for further work in the fields of geography, politics, and sociology. For this reason it has been decided not to appoint a linguist to take charge of the department. The course

¹ In the financial year 1956-7 provision has been made in the Commonwealth Budget for an expenditure of £A 24,000.

² See J. Leyser, "Indonesian studies in Australian universities", *Hemisphere* (April 1957), pp. 6-7. Dr. Leyser, Senior Lecturer in Comparative and International Law, has been engaged in research on Indonesian law and government, and has visited Indonesia twice in connection with these interests.

³ Applications for a Senior Lecturer were called towards the end of last year, but an appointment is still pending.

will provide for three lectures and one tutorial a week in *Bahasa Indonesia*, as well as weekly lectures in English given by members of other university departments on Indonesian politics, geography, economics, and history.

So far no research work has been carried out in the Department of Indonesian Studies itself, although some members of other departments have published, or are preparing for publication, articles relating to Indonesia. Among these are H. Feith (Political Science), who submitted a Master of Arts thesis in 1954 on the "Political Developments in Indonesia in the Period of the Wilopo Cabinet, April 1952—January 1953", and who is proceeding this year to America where he will work in the Southeast Asia Program, Department of Far Eastern Studies, Cornell University, on a doctoral dissertation about the first Indonesian elections⁴; D. W. Fryer (Geography), who is writing a school textbook on Indonesia and has in preparation articles entitled "The Indonesian Sugar Industry", "Economic Problems in the 'Daerah Istimewa' of Jogjakarta", and "Indonesian Disunity and its Economic Consequences"; and P. Brett (Law), who made an extended survey of Brunei in 1956 at the invitation of the British Government to prepare a land code, a draft of which has now been completed⁵.

Canberra University College.

During 1956 preliminary lectures in *Bahasa Indonesia* were given at the College by the Cultural Attaché of the Indonesian Embassy in Australia, Mr. Supangkat. About twenty students attended these lectures, although as in Melbourne the subject was not recognized for degree purposes. At the beginning of 1957 the Indonesian Government made available to the College the services of Mr. Amir Hamzah Nasution, who was formerly head of the Foreign Aid and Project Division of the Bureau of Foreign Relations and UNESCO Affairs in the Indonesian Ministry of Education. Mr. Nasution's appointment is for a period of two years.

The number of students at the moment enrolled for the course in *Bahasa Indonesia* is less than last year when a number of Government "Free Places" enabled more students to attend the lectures. It is expected, however, that enrolments will increase if the language is admitted as a subject for the Arts degree in 1958. At present there is no separate Department of Indonesian Studies within the College's School of Oriental Studies, but as the Indonesian Government is now meeting most of the expenses of the appointment in *Bahasa Indonesia*⁶, it is possible that the finance originally provided by the Commonwealth Government to develop Indonesian studies at the College will be used to make further appointments in this field.

⁴ "Towards Elections in Indonesia", *Pacific Affairs*, XXVII (1954), pp. 236ff.

⁵ Zelman Cowen, "The Law in Asia and Australia", *Hemisphere* (May 1957), pp. 10-12.

⁶ In 1957 the Indonesian Government also presented 16,000 books and pamphlets in *Bahasa Indonesia* for use in Australian universities.

University of Sydney.

At the end of 1955 the University of Sydney decided to establish a separate Department of Indonesian and Malayan Studies in charge of a Senior Lecturer or Reader, who, it was proposed, would develop "in the first instance a general course, at Pass level, in the history and cultures of the regions..." Recently, Dr. F. H. van Naerssen of the State Agricultural University, Wageningen⁷, was appointed to the Readership, and he expects to take up his position in August 1957. Dr. van Naerssen hopes to be able to lecture in the field of Indonesian and Malayan history and culture, and it is expected that an additional member of staff will be appointed to teach *Bahasa Indonesia* and/or sociology.

In the Department of History, Dr. Graham Irwin⁸, gives a course of lectures on modern Far Eastern history, some of which are devoted to Malaya and Indonesia. He is at present working on two articles, one on Australian-Malayan relations, and another on Malacca as a trade emporium in the seventeenth century.

University of Queensland.

During 1955-56 the present writer delivered lectures and conducted seminars on modern Indonesian and Malayan history, and supervised a young Malay student, Zainal Abidin bin Abdul Wahid, who wrote a fourth year honours thesis entitled: "A Study of Australian-Indonesian Foreign Policy, 1950-55." Later this year, Dr. P. N. Tarling, whose doctoral thesis at Cambridge University related to Anglo-Dutch diplomatic rivalry in Indonesia 1824-71, will take up a post in the Department of History, and will continue lectures in the field of modern South-East Asian history.

Miss June Stoodley, a Lecturer in History in the Department of External Studies, is at present working on a Ph. D. thesis entitled: "The influences of Sir Frank Swettenham on British Colonial Policy in Malaya".

Universities of Western Australia, Adelaide and New England.

In the Department of History of the University of Western Australia a general course on Pacific Affairs is conducted by Dr. J. D. Legge, who spent part of 1956 working in the Southeast Asia Program of Cornell University, and in field research in Indonesia "on the persistence of the problem of regionalism in contemporary Indonesia, and on the decentralization plans of the Republic as a means of meeting local feeling". A short paper on this subject may be brought out as

⁷ *Culture contacts and social conflicts in Indonesia* (New York 1947); "Indonesia", P. Roupp (ed.) *Approaches to Community Development* (The Hague 1953), pp. 318-30; & c.

⁸ "Nineteenth-Century Borneo. A Study in Diplomatic Rivalry", *VKI* (1955), vol. XV.

an interim research report by the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project.

A few lectures on modern Indonesian and Malayan history are given in general courses in the Universities of Adelaide and New England.

The Australian National University.

Unlike other Australian universities, the Australian National University at Canberra is purely a research institution. In the School of Pacific Studies, Dr. J. D. Freeman (Anthropology) is preparing for publication a comprehensive analysis of the social structure of the Iban of Sarawak, as well as other studies of Iban culture. These will be complementary to his *Iban Agriculture: A Report on the Shifting Cultivation of Hill Rice by the Iban of Sarawak* (H.M.S.O., London 1955). Also in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, Donald J. Tugby, who has recently returned from two years' field work in northern Sumatra (Tapanuli) is preparing a doctoral dissertation entitled: "Social Structure and Social Organization in Mandeling, Sumatra". His wife, Mrs. E. E. Tugby (Geography), who accompanied her husband in the field, is writing a Ph. D. thesis on "Land Use and Settlement Patterns in Mandeling, Sumatra".

In the Department of Pacific History, Miss Emily Sadka⁹, is working on a doctoral dissertation entitled: "The Development of the Residential System in the Native States of the Malay Peninsula, 1874-1895". The present writer¹⁰ is engaged in research in the field of modern Indonesian history, and is examining in particular Western economic influence in Java and west Sumatra during the nineteenth century. It is hoped eventually to appoint to the department another historian who has special training in Islamic studies.

Conclusion.

Although an encouraging beginning has been made in Indonesian and Malayan studies in Australia, it will be obvious to Dutch readers that at present these are generally lacking a broad foundation. Because of the reasons enumerated in the opening paragraph of this report, there has been a natural preoccupation with Indonesian political problems, and this has produced a certain prejudice against the more traditional linguistic and indological studies which have developed in the Netherlands. Much, therefore, depends upon Dr. F. H. van Naerssen and his Department of Indonesian and Malayan Studies in the University of Sydney, as he alone in Australia has the equipment necessary to begin, among other things, old Javanese studies.

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⁹ "The Journal of Sir Hugh Low, Perak, 1877", *JMBRAS*, XXVII (iv) (1954), pp. 1-108.

¹⁰ *The Native Policies of Sir Stamford Raffles in Java and Sumatra* (Oxford 1957).