

## Australian- Indonesian relations, 1945- 1949

When, on 17 August 1945 the Indonesian Republic was proclaimed, Indonesian soldiers, sailors and airmen in Australia refused to fight for the Dutch against the newly declared republic. They secured the support of the maritime unions, who refused to load any ships taking military supplies to the Netherlands East Indies forces or any ship declared 'black' by the Indonesians. Initially held for a period of nine months, the boycotts grew to become an official ACTU action. Thirty-one Australian trade unions and four unions of Asian seamen (temporarily organised in Sydney) became involved, to varying degrees, between 1945 and 1949.

### UNION RECORDS

Included in the records of many unions are files about the boycotts.

#### **Australian Council of Trade Unions**

Indonesian blockade, 1945-1949 (correspondence, minutes of meetings of unions interested in the boycott of Dutch shipping) (N114/190)  
Dutch-Indonesian situation, 1945-1949 (N21/421)

#### **Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Enginemen**

Indonesian dispute, 1947-1948 (E212/675)

#### **Australian Railways Union**

Indonesia - Ban on Dutch goods, 1947 (N5/797)

#### **Indian Seamen's Union in Australia**

Membership books, correspondence, newspaper clippings, 1945-1949 (also 'Indian, Indonesian and Australian activists planning boycott' from *Tribune*, 12 Oct 1945 and a May Day banner, 1946) (E177/1-25)

#### **Seamen's Union of Australia**

Indonesia, 1946 (N38/304)  
General Secretary's correspondence with, and circulars from, the Indian Seamen's Union in Australia, 1944-1946 (E183/21/38)  
General Secretary's correspondence on Indonesia, 1945-1946 (E183/26/39)

#### **Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia**

Federal Council minutes, 1947 (Z248/93)

Indonesia, Part 2: Black ban on Dutch-Indonesian trade with Australia in support of Indonesian independence, 1949-1951 (J Healy's correspondence) (E211/4)

Black bans on Dutch-Indonesian trade with Australia in support of the Indonesian Independence Movement, 1945-1948 (correspondence) (E211/154-155)

Australia's shipping problems - manuscript (incomplete) prepared by Robert Lockwood, circa 1950s (Z248/58)

Subject file - Indonesia's independence struggle, 1945 (Z248/65)

Photographs - Indonesian independence (Z248/80)

Leaflets and handbills, Sydney, 1940s (Z248/77)

### COMPANY RECORDS

The maritime unions' boycott of Dutch shipping had an impact on several Australian companies. Examples of the documents to be found include:

#### **Dalgety & Company Limited, Perth Branch**

Shipping Department - correspondence, 1945-1949 (100/3/104; 100/3/109)

### PERSONAL PAPERS

Several trade unionists collected records about Indonesia's struggle for independence. The items listed below are just a sample.

#### **Campbell, C H**

Correspondence and other material regarding the Indonesian independence movement and the Indian Seamen's Union in Australia, 1944-1947 (P81/1-52)

#### **McDonald, Geoff**

Subject files - ACTU: Loading and unloading and repair of Dutch ships, 1947-1948 (P94/33/5/11) and Williamstown Naval Dockyard, 1948 (P94/33/5/16)  
Press clippings - Indonesian war, 1947 (P94/49/4/xviii)

#### **Rawling, J Normington**

Indonesian internees in Queensland, 1946 (N57/548)

### Roach, Ted

*Report on Indonesia* by Ted Roach, General Secretary, Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia, 1947 (Z523/3)

### Turner, Ian

Press clipping - Student demonstration, Sydney, in support of independence for Indonesia, 1947 (P2/2/33)

### Wood, Bill

Photograph - 'Dutch profits or Java's freedom? - diggers support Indonesians - down with Dutch imperialism' - graffiti; photography for the *Tribune*, 1945 (Z577/3)

## PRINTED MATERIAL

*Free Indonesia*, Central Committee of Indonesian Independence, Brisbane, 1946 (P81/49)

*Free Indonesia*, Eliot Valens Elliott, General Secretary, Seamen's Union of Australia, 1946 (P120/1153)

*Hands off Indonesia*, Gerald Peel, 1945 (Z259/3, Z248/72)

*The Indonesian struggle for freedom*, Usman Sastroamidjoyo, 1948 (Z248/72)

*Maritime Worker*, official journal of the Waterside Workers Federation of Australia, 1945-1947 (S62)

*Seamen's Journal*, 1947-1949; also report to Seamen's Union of Australia Annual Convention, by Tuk Subianto, General Secretary, Indonesian Seamen's and Dockers' Union, Jun 1956 (S390)

*Sourabaya Sue's inside story of Indonesia*, Ketoet Tantri, 1947 (Z458/198)

*The voice of free Indonesia*, Central Committee of Indonesian Independence, Brisbane, 1946 (P81/47; P120/122)

## PUBLISHED SOURCES

Margo Beasley, *Wharfies: a history of the Waterside Workers' Federation of Australia*. Halstead Press Pty Ltd, Sydney in Association with the Australian National Maritime Museum, 1966

Margaret George, *Australia and the Indonesian revolution*. Melbourne University Press, Carlton, Victoria in association with The Australian Institute of International Affairs, 1980

Heather Goodall, 'Port politics: Indian Seamen, Australian Unions and Indonesian Independence, 1945-1947' in *Labour History*, No. 94, May 2008, p. 43

Rupert Lockwood, *Black Armada*. Australasian Book Society, Sydney, 1975

Martin O'Hare & Anthony Reid, *Australia and Indonesia's struggle for independence*. PT Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta, 1995

*Indonesia Calling*, film sponsored by WWF, SUA and 13 other Australian unions, regarding the Indonesian trade unions' 1947 appeal to 'all democratic and peaceful peoples everywhere, and especially to the working class in all countries of the world, to boycott all that is Dutch in all harbours, stores, roadways and other places throughout the world, in the event of the outbreak of warfare in Indonesia' ([http://workers.labor.net.au/106/c\\_historicalfeature\\_indonesia.html](http://workers.labor.net.au/106/c_historicalfeature_indonesia.html))

### More information

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