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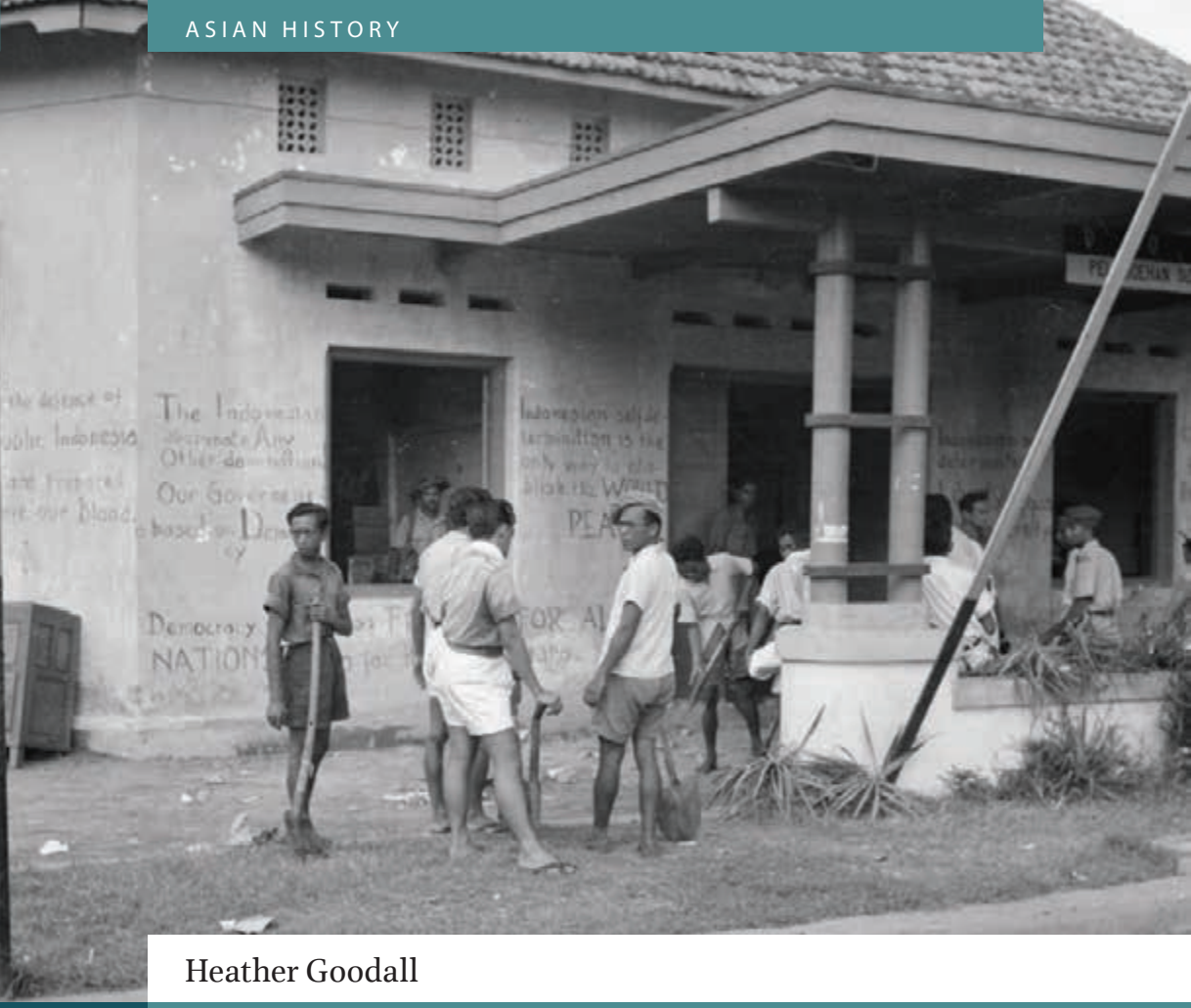

Heather Goodall

Beyond Borders

Indians, Australians and the Indonesian Revolution, 1939 to 1950

Amsterdam
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Beyond Borders

Asian History

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Indians, Australians and the Indonesian Revolution, 1939 to 1950

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For Paulie, Emma and Judith

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Preface and Acknowledgments

This book crosses many borders. Working with Aboriginal Australians as fellow historians, I have become increasingly aware of the diversity and tensions within the artificial borders erected between 'White' and 'Black' Australians. Many of the Aboriginal people I know had backgrounds which included South Asian seamen and African, African-American, and Chinese gold-miners. The non-Aboriginal Australians who unthinkingly declared themselves to be 'White' also often had diverse backgrounds, sometimes including Aboriginal – or Indian or Indonesian or Chinese – ancestry. The relationships that generated this complex racial geography were not in the distant past, but often within the time of my parents or grandparents – proof, if any more were needed, that the 'White Australia' policy was not only draconian but also based on illusions of a fictionalised racial purity, which turned its back on the rich cultural offerings that could have been the experience of all Australians.

If this inquiry had just been about Australia I would already have had many people to thank, but this book posed even more of a challenge. Not only is it set during the tumultuous decade from 1939 to 1949, but it is also based on the premise that Australia was not isolated but instead embedded within a region: the eastern Indian Ocean, extending from India into Southeast Asia, China, and on into the South Pacific. The principal countries considered here are India, Indonesia, China, and Australia. Many groups of people have made their living by moving between at least three or four of these countries, even before they were connected to the more distant arenas of imperial politics and economic power in Europe. The decade of the 1940s was shaken not only by World War II – as was Europe – but also by the challenges to colonialism that made war and its aftermath a very different matter in this Eastern Indian Ocean region than it was in Europe.

Mobile people – seamen, traders, soldiers, and later correspondents and activists – were the channels through which the many cultures of Asia were linked, interacting with each other and with the locally resident populations in each of their ports or battlegrounds. Until World War II, shipping was the dominant way people moved around, but the war accelerated new technologies. Even more rapidly than aircraft, the new media of cabled news and radio drew ever more people into regional circulation.

The pivotal event in this region emerging from the war was the Indonesian Revolution, taking place in a country occupied by Japan but seizing the opportunity of the end of the war to challenge the return of Dutch

colonisers. Indians, Australians, and Chinese had all fought against Japanese expansion as a common enemy and each had been shaped by conflicts around colonialism. Each, however, was in different circumstances. India remained under direct British control, while large sections of Australia's population still chafed at the continuing pressure of the British Empire – people as diverse as Aboriginal and Irish Australians. The Chinese felt that they had shaken themselves free of European colonialism with the establishment of Sun Yat Sen's Republic in 1911 but then the Japanese occupation had had many resonances with colonial force. The Chinese Republicans were left divided while the British remained in possession of Hong Kong. So the differing circumstances of these countries nevertheless held common themes. Both the Dutch attempt to reestablish colonialism in Indonesia and the British role in assisting that reestablishment, were unwelcome not only to Indonesians but to many Australians, Indians and Chinese.

Each of these countries was riven with class differences and contradictory loyalties, making the intense decade of the war and its aftermath a complex period offering both fears and hopes. For a brief time, these hopes were shared across countries and across borders – through personal contacts and increasingly by the newspapers, radio, photographs, and film – with visions of a new future that would emerge from all the suffering of the war. While the history of this decade has often been written by military or diplomatic historians studying strategies and government or empire-level policy-making, it could be argued that it was the working people who forced the major upheavals of the years immediately after the war. It was the seamen who paralysed cargo and weapons shipping to the Dutch colonisers. It was the troops who carried out the military plans of Dutch and British empires in Indonesia – straining their loyalties and leading many to cross the lines, deciding to fight for regional independence rather than for imperial interests. And finally, it was the image-makers – the news correspondents and photographers and filmmakers – who put information into circulation and taught the region about itself. These are the mobilities and connections that this book aims to trace.

There is a cost to be paid for looking broadly at such connections through working people's mobility. It means that this book is not able to analyse the history of any one country or culture in the depth it deserves, including that of Australia. Yet the recognition of the active relationships that were being made and unmade between countries – despite the borders of language, politics, law, and culture – hopefully allows new ways to investigate the histories of each country and to explore such ongoing interactions.

In trying to understand how these linkages between mobile working people occurred across country borders and were negotiated with local resident populations, I have needed to learn about India, Indonesia, and China during this period of great turmoil. My work has been led and encouraged by many people whose expertise lies in the histories of this book's focal countries. Their generous support and patient instructions have been critically important for the book's development – but, as always, the directions in which I have taken their suggestions are my responsibility alone.

For Indonesia's overall history, I have learned from Adrian Vickers, Vannessa Hearman, Frank Palmos, Robbie Peters, Howard Dick, Dwi Noverini Djenar, Graeme Steel, Geoff Wade, and Anthony Liem. For Surabaya, my thanks to Kathleen Azali and the young Indonesian historians of the c20 Library. I was able to interview family and friends of T.D. Kundan; his grandchildren, Simran Punjabi, Dipika Daryanani, and Manoj Michael Daryanani have been enthusiastic contributors. I was assisted further in Australia by Charlotte Maramis, and in the Netherlands by Andre Stuffkens at the Joris Ivens Foundation and Anne Lot Hoek. Suzan Piper provided excellent translation and research assistance.

For assistance with research on the Australian Chinese community I want to thank the Chinese Youth League, Daphne Lowe-Kelly, Kam Louie, Louise Edwards, Sophie Loy-Wilson and Helen Liem-Wong, the daughter of late Fred Wong. For assistance with the gendered dimensions of violence in war and of colonial discrimination, for men and for women, my thanks to Francisca de Haan, Kate McGregor, Vera Mackie, Duncan McDui-Ra, V. Geetha, and Samia Khatun. For Australian maritime and union issues, I am grateful to Paddy Crumlin (ITWU), Rod Pickette (MUA), Rowan Cahill, Meredith Burgmann, and Drew Cottle. In Australia I was fortunate to be able to interview activists who had been close to the Indian, Indonesian, and Chinese seamen, including Phyllis Johnson, Sylvia Mullins and her brother Jack Mullins, and Komalam Craig's family and friends: Sushila Craig, Sabita Reddy, and Deirdre Morton. Extensive Australian and international archival and media research has been conducted for this project by Helen Randerson.

For Indian seamen, I have been assisted by Ben Zachariah, Ned Bertz, Rochelle Pinto, and in particular Gopalan Balachandran. For research in finding Indian seamen who had been in Australia, my thanks go to Joseph Pinto in Pune and Titas Chakraborty and Prakriti Mitra in Kolkata. In Mumbai, Abdulgani Serang of the National Union of Seamen of India explained the challenges facing Indian seamen today. For the Indian troops, my thanks to Anirudh Desphande and Srinath Raghaven. On Indian politics, the independence movement and the consequences of Partition, my thanks

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My analysis of P.R.S. Mani's experiences in military and civilian investigative journalism has only been possible because of the generosity of his sons, Inderjeet and Ranjit Mani, who donated their late father's papers to the Blake Library at UTS, where they have been digitised, transcribed, and made accessible for open access online. I was also grateful to interview Dr S. Padmavarti, the sister-in-law of P.R.S. Mani, and the Indian activist Sarla Sharma. In beginning to understand the active role of the media I have been assisted by Andrew Jakubowicz and Catriona Bonfiglioni.

I appreciate the support of Amsterdam University Press, whose interest in the Indonesian Revolution has located it in a regional perspective and whose anonymous reviewers offered valuable questions and suggestions that have hopefully clarified this attempt to work across borders. Cartographer Sharon Harrup has skilfully and patiently made that regional perspective visible.

For an overall awareness of regional connections, I am indebted to my co-researchers in the Indian Ocean Project: to Michael Pearson, Stephen Muecke, and particularly to Devleena Ghosh, who has joined me in later projects with the same patience, generosity, and insight. And for their advice, encouragement, support, and warm friendship, in India and across the globe, my thanks to Gunnel Cederlof, Kanchi Kohli, and Mahesh Rangarajan.

Books do not come into existence without the support of people who understand words on paper, and I am grateful to the tireless work and thoughtful insights of my editor, Venetia Somerset.

Families bear the real cost of any long work. My deepest thanks are for them: to my daughters, Judith and Emma, for the inspiration I draw from their passions, and to my husband Paul, who has been unfailing in his patience, love and encouragement.

Part I

Seeing the Region

1 Everybody's Revolution

The Indonesian Revolution seemed – for a while – to be everybody's revolution. The struggle for Independence in Indonesia sent waves of hope and fear across many borders, old and new. It signalled the ending of some empires and the beginning of others, although there were many long struggles still to be undertaken.

This book explores why Indonesian Independence was so important to so many people around the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia. To do so, it considers two events in detail: the Boycott of Dutch shipping in Australian waters in support of the Indonesian Republic (begun in September 1945), and the Battle of Surabaya in Indonesia (October to December 1945). Each of these events is iconic within their own national histories in India and Australia as well as Indonesia, but neither has been analysed or commemorated in relation to the other or to the region as a whole. Yet they happened simultaneously and were linked to each other through people, politics, and rapidly travelling news over the radio, in newspapers, and on film.

From a broader view, analysing these two events together allows us to see the region in a new way – to go beyond both the old borders of empire and the newly imposed borders of the decolonising nations. At the time, many people no longer saw the region as the old network of imperial colonies that it had been, nor as the patchwork of separate nations enclosed behind individual borders that it was to become. Instead, their lived experience of the region was of a series of connections along which trade, ideas, and people flowed. Although many people along these connected routes had conflicts with each other or held prejudices and fears about each other, they also held shared hopes for new worlds.

The two focal events of this book, the Boycott and the Battle, each involved people who had crossed many borders. The Boycott in Australia would not have begun or been sustained without the transnational effort of Indonesian, Indian, and Chinese seamen, and Australian maritime workers, both on ships and on the docks. While it was recorded and analysed in both the Australian and Indian press, they each presented and explained the news of the Boycott in very different ways. Boycott was a time-tested weapon of maritime workers for obstructing international trade, but it could be a double-edged sword: while it attempted to challenge imperial commerce, it could also isolate the newly emerging national movements. Unionists and nationalists in Indonesia, Australia, and India all struggled to use the benefits of this strategy and avoid its weaknesses over the ensuing months.

At exactly the same time, the Battle of Surabaya was taking place. Surabaya, on the north-eastern coast of Java, was the largest port city in Indonesia, the hub of Dutch colonial maritime economic power and so also an important cross-roads for Arabic, Chinese, and Indian traders – some connected directly to Australia. Just as importantly, it was a node in the flow of ideas and philosophies. For centuries, Islamic culture had spread around the coastlines along with the traders. More recently, socialist ideals had spread through the movement of industrial and maritime working people. The Battle of Surabaya was fought between highly politicised nationalists on the Indonesian side and, on the other, a British-led international force composed largely of Indian troops – themselves from a country in the midst of its own struggle for independence. The brutal fighting and relentless bombardment in Surabaya were observed by both Indian and Australian journalists, whose home-country newspapers drew comparisons between the Indian role in the Battle and the Boycott. The news from Surabaya shaped not only how the Boycott was seen in Australia, but also the later events in the campaigns for independence and justice that were being carried out in India, Australia, and Indonesia.

To understand more about why these two events have been remembered the way they have, this book will look at each event and then at its media representations in India and Australia. The media – newspapers, photographs, radio, and film – played an active role in this story. One of the central Battle participants, P.R.S. Mani, was an Indian journalist enlisted in the Indian Army under British command, who wrote and broadcast from Burma and Indonesia. All of the other participants – troops, residents, nationalists – paid careful attention to the news. The Indian Seamen's Union in Australia (ISUiA) kept an extensive file of the Australian newspaper coverage about the Boycott, and its members also took part in a film about it. Each of the actors in this story tried to intervene and reshape the news that was circulating about the events in which they were involved. Much analysis of the media's representations of the conflict in Indonesia, both in Dutch and in Bahasa Indonesia – as well as the vernacular press in many languages in India – remains to be done. Yet there is a rich fund of comparisons that can be drawn from English-language media alone. It is this English-language media that is covered in this study.

All these consequences of news flowing across borders to shape government and activists' decisions about separate campaigns are lost when events like the simultaneous Boycott in Australia and the Battle of Surabaya are seen only within national boundaries. Yet that is how they have continued to be portrayed in most analyses.

Mobile working people are this book's focus, sharing person-to-person relationships, not the diplomats and leaders who negotiated the upper levels of political change. I follow the seamen and soldiers, labourers and traders – the mobile people who had been quietly building a network of links that might have used imperial infrastructures, like cargo shipping, but had subverted them to their own goals. There were variations of class among these working people but, other than the traders, many were not literate and few left their own accounts. There has been much valuable research exploring the lives of working people across borders – sometimes moving voluntarily, like seamen and merchants and sometimes involuntarily, like soldiers, convicts, slaves, and indentured labourers.[1] Many of these studies focus on the period before World War II, with the important exceptions of Yasmin Khan and Srinath Raghavan, who both focus on World War II itself.[2] This book looks beyond that conflict, tracing how the war opened up possibilities for very new worlds once it was over, because it had shaken the foundations of the old empires. Moreover, this book looks across more than one empire: the British, the Dutch, the Japanese, and the emerging Cold War alliances that later led to other empires. Finally, this book looks beyond the conventional assumption that mobile people were men; in these pages, the women involved in this period – as travellers, as workers, as lovers and wives, and as activists – become visible.

Internationalism and nationalism

Calls for an end to colonialism had been heard for a long time. Movements for autonomy and then complete independence had been building since the end of the nineteenth century and had gathered force after the Chinese Republican movement toppled the Manchu Dynasty in 1911.[3] The paradox identified by Glenda Sluga was that this period of intense campaigning for new nations – with, inevitably, a set of clear borders – was also a period of active internationalism; an obvious example is the emergence of bodies like the League of Nations, which were aimed at fostering free communication across such borders.[4] Vijay Prashad argues in *The Darker Nations* that

1 Tambe & Fischer-Tine 2009; Ballantyne 2012; Anderson 2012; Raza et al. 2015; Loy-Wilson 2016; Rettig & Hack 2011; Omissi 1995, 1999; Das 2011; Streets 2004.

2 Khan 2015; Raghavan 2016.

3 Raza et al. 2015.

4 Sluga 2013.

there was a different type of 'nation' being conceived among anticolonial independence movements like those in South Asia. Rather than being based on an imagined nation where citizens shared identical histories, cultures, or racial backgrounds, Prashad argues that Nehru and others understood the 'nation' to be always in a reciprocal relationship with the 'international', across many cultures and borders.[5] Benjamin Zachariah in *Playing the Nation Game* has shown that this dimension of Nehru's thinking had faded, by the 1940s, as pragmatism forced him into alliances with more conservative coalition partners. Nevertheless, this perspective can be seen well into the 1950s in Indian foreign policy interventions in, for example, the conflict in Korea. How far did this broader conceptualisation of the 'nation' extend to the decolonising movements of Indonesia and India in the 1940s.[6]

Illusions of – and desires for – racial 'purity' had led settler colonies with dominant European populations like Australia, the USA, and South Africa to impose racially restrictive immigration acts beginning in the 1880s. Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds have traced how settler colonies built 'a confederation of colour' – that is, an alliance of 'White' nations – that held for decades. This shaped consciousness in places where it held power, like Australia, even when it was contested and disorganised, as it was in the period considered in this book.[7] In places where this 'alliance of Whiteness' did not hold political or cultural power, like India, there was wide knowledge of and anger about such racialised barriers around the settler colonies of the region.

Yet the idea of racial 'purity' in Australia was always an illusion. Ann Curthoys explored the cultural and racial diversity of Australian society despite its myths of racial purity as early as 1973[8] and has continued to work on this theme with Marilyn Lake and others.[9] The conceptualisation of a communicative, transnational space that encompasses the Indian Ocean and South and Southeast Asia has been laid out effectively by Devleena Ghosh, Paul Gillen, and Stephen Muecke in a series of volumes.[10]

There was, in fact, a great deal of communication across this region. One of the ways this book intervenes in conventional histories of the region is by 'de-centering Europe', in Dipesh Chakrabarty's phrase, to shift the focus to this Indian Ocean–Southeast Asian region and recognise the sustained

5 Prashad 2007.
6 Zachariah 2012.
7 Lake & Reynolds 2008.
8 Curthoys 1973.
9 Curthoys & Lake 2005; Lake 2010.
10 Gillen & Ghosh 2007; Ghosh & Muecke 2007; Ghosh et al. 2009; Ghosh 2012.

mobility and communication around it.[11] As Prashad suggested, nationalism may not be the polar opposite of internationalism, so their co-production may not be the paradox which some have suggested. Although Australia is seldom included in regional definitions of 'Asia', it was part of the flow of information, trade, people, and politics in the interwar period. Long before Gandhi's political work was publicised in Australia, people had been moving back and forth across the Indian Ocean, writing letters about what they found in Australia to family back in India, but also building relationships – and often lasting marriages – with Australians, including Aboriginal Australians, as Samia Khatun is showing.[12] Many Australians had Irish backgrounds and shared an acute awareness of the bitter Irish struggles for independence from the British, so when the Irish press in Australia linked the 1919 British massacre at Amritsar with the Irish independence struggle, there was a ready Australian audience.[13] Protests from India against the restrictive White Australia immigration legislation, introduced with Federation in 1901, had continued, backed by threats of trade boycotts in 1903 and 1905 and then voiced at the postwar Commonwealth Conferences of 1921 and 1923, finally forcing some amendments to the Act in 1925.

In Indonesia, the emergence of many movements opposed to colonialism – an 'Age in Motion', as Shiraishi has translated the *pergerakan*[14] – led to a powerful surge in independence and communist movements in 1926 and then the imprisonment by the Dutch of many on the Left in West New Guinea. Some activist Indonesians escaped by fleeing overseas, which ironically enabled them to attend the many anticolonial forums occurring at the time, such as the League Against Imperialism where Mohammad Hatta met Jawaharlal Nehru.[15]

In China, the British shootings at Shanghai in 1925 – and the presence and implied participation of Australian troops in the massacre – had galvanised Australian unions into issuing calls for solidarity with Shanghai workers and their unions.[16] The presence of many Australians in China escalated this communication, as Sophie Loy-Wilson has shown: some were Australian citizens of Chinese ethnicity, while many others were European Australian in China because of personal relationships, looking for work, taking up new

11 Chakrabarty 2000.

12 Khatun 2012, 2015, 2016.

13 *Catholic Press* 15.7.1920: 27.7.1921, 17.7.1921: 13; *Southern Cross* 12.8.1927: 11.

14 *Pergerakan* is a base word that means both 'movement' and 'motion'.

15 Shiraishi 1990.

16 Loy-Wilson 2016.

commercial links, maybe pursuing missionary evangelism, or monitoring Shanghai's British-owned factories.[17]

Yet despite such widespread communication, including tragic events and powerful anticolonial campaigns, the empires were still standing at the end of the 1930s.

World War II changed all that forever. The Atlantic Charter, announced on 14 August 1941, seemed to promise an end to colonialism. Later years were to show that this reading of the Charter was illusory, but in 1941 it inspired hope across the colonised world, where people struggling for independence saw the document as a commitment that an Allied victory would see a new world of equality, safety, and democracy for all.

Then the Japanese push began into the Pacific, Southeast Asia, and beyond, with intermittent threats and bombing raids on India and Australia. The Western European empires were destabilised or unceremoniously pushed out of these areas altogether by the Japanese advance in Indonesia, Indo-China, and Burma. Although welcomed by some, the Japanese vision for a Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere stalled and ultimately failed. Yet the Japanese had shown that European empires could be beaten and sent packing by an Asian army.

In many areas there emerged bitter opposition to Japanese rule, which came to be seen as just another form of imperial domination. William Frederick has documented the rising anger among the working-class *kampung* (urban neighbourhood) populations of Surabaya about the mounting controls imposed by the Japanese.[18] The *romusha* (forced labourers) from Java suffered most severely. Initially volunteering as workers, the *romusha* were soon coerced into performing body-breaking labour, and suffered from acute starvation and severe brutalisation, leading to a far higher death rate than that of European prisoners of war (POWs), though this is seldom acknowledged.[19] The opposition to the new Japanese empire, however, also fuelled nationalist hopes. Barely 24 hours after Emperor Hirohito announced the Japanese surrender, the Indonesians took their first steps towards independence – and offered an example for many of the anticolonial movements across the Indian Ocean, Southeast, and East Asia. The struggle for independence was on! There were many battles still to be fought in Indonesia and elsewhere before independence even looked possible. But once that call had come from Indonesia, there was no turning back.

17 Ibid.

18 Frederick 1989. See Glossary for '*kampung*'.

19 Kratoska 2005. See Glossary for '*romusha*'.

For the leaders of the new Indonesian Republic, hopes for success seemed to lie with international networks. One of the first actions of the Indonesian Republic reflected this desire to speak to a wider world. In a radio broadcast on 8 October 1945, President Sukarno invited four leading figures from 'neighbouring countries' to visit Indonesia to see for themselves what conditions were like under the new Republic: Madame Chiang Kai-Shek of China, General Carlos P. Romula of the Philippines, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, and Herbert Evatt of Australia.[20] Other than providing testimony, the leadership of two of these countries could have offered little help: Republican China was heavily damaged after the Japanese occupation and, though technically independent, the Philippines was entrapped in rising American anti-communism. The third leader was Nehru, who had no nation – and indeed was barely out of jail – but who led a rising nationalist movement that was clearly about to take control of India. Bert Evatt, the Attorney-General and Foreign Minister of Australia, was simply not concentrating on Indonesia, but rather on jockeying for power with the USA and Britain over the occupation of Japan and the Peace conditions. His involvement was to come only later, as a supporter of Indonesian Independence at the United Nations. None of these four leaders came to Indonesia immediately, and even their sympathy and availability would not have been enough to bring Indonesia much assistance, but the new Republic wanted international witnesses.

Forces for mobility

The communities to whom the Atlantic Charter, and then the Indonesian Revolution, promised so much were mobile because of processes accelerated by colonialism: the flow of cargo and ideas on the one hand and, on the other, the exercise of power backed by guns.

Cargo

The networks of trade involved the labourers – often enslaved, bonded, or indentured – who produced the goods, the seamen who transported the goods to and from Europe, and the merchants who conducted the trade. Another element was imperial power, although not necessarily enforced by colonial armies. Instead, such power might be enacted through the private owners of cargo ships, but their interests were backed by the colonial states.

20 Anderson 1976/2006: 179.

It has become common to refer to groups such as Indians and Chinese, who settled in new places, as 'diasporas' following William Safran's definition of the term, in which orientation towards and identification with the homeland is an important defining characteristic.[21] Yet, as Joya Chatterji and David Washbrook point out, people's orientation towards a 'homeland' changes over time.[22] Thus, it was only when an active nationalist movement developed within the homeland that people in overseas countries began to conceive of themselves as having closer ties to it. Nationalism at home and among the diaspora was therefore produced in particular historical circumstances, rather than being a permanent characteristic of peoples living away from their places of origin. Members of such diasporic populations may also – and simultaneously – have strong links to their new places of residence, so that in times of crisis, their loyalties might be complex and multiple. Such complexity has been explored by cultural geographers like Doreen Massey and Ben Rogaly and their work has been taken up in current discussions around 'translocality'.[23] It was clearly a factor among many of the actors we meet in the following chapters of this story, whose primary loyalty was not to a single 'nation' but rather to a region or perhaps to an idea.

The other important question surrounding such diasporic groups, particularly successful trading communities, was whether they functioned as a collective, drawing strength from closely woven networks of kin and the constraints of caste, class, and religion that were dominant in their place of origin, or whether their success was a result of factors common to businesses in their new location. Claude Markovits's work on Sindhi traders in Central and Southeast Asia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is an important source for the focal areas of this book, particularly Surabaya.[24] Many other authors have followed his work to attribute the success of these trading communities to their culture, as Heiko Schrader, for example, did with the Chettiers, the Tamil traders who became widely established throughout Malaysia, Burma, and Sumatra during the same period.[25] Markovits later reflected on his own work and concluded that the 'culturalist' approach was too simple.[26] In his view, the success of the Sindhis in Indonesia was not due to tightly knit ethnic, religious, or caste structures, as they were in fact a multi-caste and multi-religious group.

21 Safran 1991: 83-99.
22 Chatterji & Washbrook 2013: 1-10.
23 Massey, 1994; Rogaly, 2015, Greiner and Sakdapolrak, 2013.
24 Markovits 2000.
25 Schrader 1992; Mahadevan 1978a, 1978b.
26 Markovits 2008.

Instead, Markovits believed that it was the mobilisation of particular bodies of knowledge, such as the efficient circulation of information about business strategies and skills in how to rapidly acquire fluency in new languages – as well as simple contingency or luck! – that allowed the Sindhis in Southeast Asia to strengthen their business fortunes.

There has been much important research on seamen, particularly Indian seamen, who are widely known as 'lascars' – a general term for 'seamen' that became specifically racialised to refer to South Asians in the late nineteenth century, as Janet Ewald pointed out.[27] Gopalan Balachandran and Ravi Ahuja have both contributed significantly to this literature, which overall relates largely to the northern hemisphere. The southern hemisphere archival resources used to discuss the organising of Indian seamen in Australian waters in this book are therefore both unusual and valuable.

A widely held belief among shipping companies and colonial states was that there were 'genuine' lascars who were not political but could be 'contaminated' by 'agitators'. This conceptualisation has also entered the scholarly literature; for example, Kris Manjapra notes that M.N. Roy 'travelled as a lascar', suggesting that the 'ordinary' lascar was not going to be a political activist.[28] Ali Raza and Ben Zachariah point out that this is a simplification of a far more complex reality.[29] As this book too will show, Indian 'ordinary seamen' could be intensely politicised but nevertheless 'genuine' lascars, while at the same time anyone could and did 'travel as a lascar': for example, working one's passage to get to the Hajj was common among Indonesians, making them 'lascars' for the period of the voyage but not necessarily before or after it. Raza and Zachariah identify four routes to becoming a lascar, but point out that there was ambiguity and overlap between them all, and that all were subject to change over time for the individual involved: 'We need to understand lascars' political inclinations not as organised or coherent ideology, but as related to lived experiences, dealing with the movement of ideas, the processes of formulating them and of translati[ng] them, and acknowledging the complexity and intermingling of motives and ends.'[30]

The importance of trade meant that its obstruction – or boycott – was just as important. Boycotts could be carried out by consumers, traders, or transporters. Fostering trade links was a way to build and cement commitments to the stability of trading partners, in this case the new nation of

27 Ewald 2000.
28 Manjapra 2010.
29 Raza & Zachariah 2012.
30 Ibid.: 15.

Indonesia. For a movement like the Indonesian nationalist movement, the use of boycotts as pointed out earlier was a double-edged sword: while the initial Boycott of Dutch shipping was a powerful way to hinder the return of the Dutch colonisers, economically and militarily, it eventually became a major liability for the new Republic because it threatened to keep it isolated from more powerful nations. For seamen, however, whether they were Indian, Chinese, Australian, or Indonesian, using the weapon of boycott by intervening in the transportation of cargo was one of the few powers they could utilise that would actually make a difference to empires.

Military power

Most visibly, the power of the coloniser was enforced by troops, many recruited from the colonised populations themselves and then deployed to enact imperial control. Each of these colonial armies had their own history. Tobias Rettig and Karl Hack have gathered an important body of scholarship together in *Colonial Armies*, building on the work of David Omissi, Sanatu Das, Heather Streets, and others in relation to WWI and Yasmin Khan and Srinath Raghavan on WWII, much of which is discussed in the following chapters.[31] Gajendra Singh has argued that, just like the lascars discussed by Raza and Zachariah, the identities of the troops were far more complex than suggested by simplistic, racialised categories such as 'martial races'. Most important, they changed over time and in relation to lived experiences. Singh's valuable analysis of the changing self-perception and affiliation of troops over the early twentieth century is particularly relevant to the discussion of how Indians responded to the conditions in Burma and Indonesia. In these two locations, they faced not only differences in geography, climate, and enemies but differences in how the context framed military confrontations as challenges to very personal loyalties and identities.[32]

Ideas

Yet another element shaping all of these mobile populations, including the troops, were the circulating webs of universalist ideas. Some of these philosophies had survived for a long time, particularly Islam, which had been carried around coastal regions by traders and seamen around the

31 Rettig & Hack 2011; Omissi 1995, 1999; Das 2011; Streets 2004; Raghavan 2016; Khan 2015.
32 Singh 2006.

Indian Ocean and into Southeast Asia from around 1000 AD.[33] Then came European Christianity, associated with and tainted by its links with European imperialism but still taking hold widely, penetrating into inland areas, sometimes through force but at other times as a choice intended to challenge local power relations.

Other Western universalist ideas took a more critical stance towards empire. One was Theosophy, which rejected European Christian dominance in favour of Hinduism and Buddhism, setting up an international base in Adyar, India and branches in many places, including Australia. This influential body of thought drew many women both in metropoles and colonies into its ideology of 'universal brotherhood', which promised 'no distinction on the grounds of race, creed, sex, caste or colour'. In theory at least, Theosophy embraced a world of cultural tolerance, actively involving itself in movements for constitutional change and self-government like the Home Rule movement in India – although some of its leaders rejected Gandhian non-cooperation as both 'revolutionary' and unrealistic, calling instead for the discipline of conscription and for standing armies to guard civilised India against the 'savage tribes' of the north. Theosophy drew in many educators who were interested in staffing girls' schools in particular, and came to include the methods for the instruction of very young children associated with Maria Montessori. From the 1880s to the 1920s, these links drew Europeans into the rich cultures of Asia by embracing religions like Hinduism and Buddhism in ways imperial bureaucracies and military structures had never done.

Still more critical of empire was socialism, circulating from the 1880s, then communism from 1917, disseminated through the old links of trade and transport, particularly among seamen. Based on class differences rather than differences of religion or race, socialism and communism reached across the hierarchies and divisions within colonised societies. These included those between castes in India or between the Javanese aristocracy and Java's many workers, particularly in the port cities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Surabaya, where the seamen carrying cargoes and the wharfies handling them were increasingly likely to be unionised.

Gendered worlds

These webs of cargoes, people, power, and ideas intersected and interacted with each other, sometimes in tension and sometimes in mutual

33 Ali 2016.

amplification. Each also generated personal relationships of love, sex, and marriage. While the stories of seafarers, soldiers, and journalists are often written as if only men participated, women were involved in all of these flows. Women were labourers in the plantation fields and took part in the movement and trading of cargo, either as family members of traders or as traders themselves. Women were involved with seafarers at every port – often as sex workers but also as lovers, wives, and comrades. Women took active roles in the circulation of ideas. Theosophy, in particular, included many women among its leaders, such as Annie Besant, Margaret Cousins, and Rukmini Devi. Movements for national independence and communism also involved many women and generated sexual relationships across racial, cultural, and national borders. And finally, as writers and journalists, in radio and theatre, women travelled across borders and became emotionally and sexually involved as they did so.

Recognising gender amounts to far more than 'adding in' women, difficult though that may be given the gaps in the archival record. It is just as important to see that the many stereotypes of male members of mobile communities of seamen and soldiers were intensely gendered, presenting varied forms of masculinity and their embodiments in association with particular groups of people or specific trades. The gendering of racial representations was a long-established and highly effective tool of colonialism.[34] The European gender order in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries routinely attributed males with characteristics of rationality, relative physical strength, and assertiveness over women, who were expected to be emotional and childlike, physically weak and compliant. There were assumptions of a biological basis for such distinctions, like the descriptions of diseases with symptoms including uncontrollable emotions that could only affect women, notably 'hysteria', which were developed by early Egyptian and Greek medicine but persisted into the popular psychology of the twentieth century.

The stereotyping of colonised peoples was shaped by variations in these characteristics, which established hierarchies in which European men could be considered dominant. Rationality was central to many elements of such hierarchies; conversely, the absence of rational control of emotions,

34 Works on gender theory in colonial contexts used for this study include Spivak 1988; Jayawardina 1994; McClintock 1995; Stoler 1995, 2002; Burton 1998; Levine 2004; Sinha 2004; Allen 2008; Ballantyne and Burton 2009; Fischer-Tine and Gehrmann (eds) 2009; Haskins & Lowrie 2015. See Ewald 2000 and Balachandran 2008, 2012 on the gendered stereotyping of seamen in the Asian Articles (which had different categories for seamen from different countries) and the characterisation of male Indian 'lascars' as effeminate, physically weak, compliant, easily led, and – at times – irrational.

leading to either childlike naivety or 'frenzy', was commonly ascribed to the colonised – in other words, male colonised people were believed to demonstrate characteristics that were assumed to be 'feminine'. Another gendered 'colonial' stereotype was the British depiction of 'martial races' as part of its strategy to recruit Indians into the military. This was both an expansion and a diminution of European masculinity: their aggression, assertiveness, and strength might be enhanced, but colonial males were still considered lacking in the European masculine traits of rationality and capacity to lead.[35] There were similarities in the Dutch depictions of the 'Ambonese', whom they encouraged to join their colonial army.[36] This book traces such representations of lascars, 'martial races', and other colonised people in the Australian and Indian media, showing them to be not only gendered and shaped by both British and Australian histories but also changing over time.

Media and new mobilities

The flows along these networks circulated at an ever-increasing pace as technologies changed, first introducing steam into the cargo transport system and then changes in the media from postal carriage and telegrams to photography, radio, and film. All contributed to the intensifying circulation of ideas and facility of commerce. The expansion of colonial communication media was exponential and was initially aided by European colonisers like the British and Dutch. They sought to bolster the legitimacy of their colonial rule in the later nineteenth century by fostering literacy in their colonies through education and the creation of a 'public sphere' to allow rational debate.

Of course, the expansion of this 'public sphere' in fact created many 'publics'. Direct participation in these 'publics' might require literacy, but people without skills in reading or writing could still listen to others read and use scribes to contribute to these debates. Photography, radio, and film offered even more possibilities for non-literate intervention, and, as this book shows, mobile working people were quick to grasp such opportunities. Emerging elites in India and Indonesia often led the late nineteenth century movements demanding a voice for the colonised. Their literacy enabled them to turn readily to the local press – which they may sometimes have owned – to express those demands. By the 1910s, alarm in the British and

35 Streets 2004; Singh 2006, 2014 on gender and recruitment in India.
36 Hack & Rettig 2011.

Dutch colonial regimes led to increasing censorship and judicial proceedings to muzzle such oppositional press. As both Timothy Harper and Keith Foulcher point out, the imposition of such controls merely led to more subtle use of metaphor and symbol, greater publication in vernacular languages, and diversification of challenges to colonial control.[37] Through the interwar years, colonial regimes intensified their efforts to establish and control the press and newly emerging media such as radio.

The two world wars accelerated this process as technologies like radio and photography became essential to the militaries of all sides. This book traces the expanding role of the press through the mid-twentieth century in covering both warfare and social conflict. Correspondents' written reports, photography, radio, and film were crucial means through which the participants in this story observed and shared the events in which they took part.

This new international communication was called 'news' and presented as factual, although there was always selectivity and interpretation involved from journalists, photographers, filmmakers, or editors. The expansion of this industry of international communication initiated the circulation of a whole new group of people filling roles variously called foreign correspondents, war correspondents, and public relations staff. Some of these people had worked earlier in their home country press, like P.R.S. Mani, the Indian journalist whom we follow throughout this book. Others may have been travellers or bureaucrats, but they could still do the work needed for the expanding industry of international news. Their accounts – whether professional articles or the by-products of more mundane personal letters and company reports – not only depicted events that had seldom been recorded but also, through the press, circulated accounts of these events to new audiences on the homefront and other battlefields. In fact, they showed the events to the participants themselves, who then had the opportunity to see both the events and themselves in a new light.

Finally, these news reports and images are how these events have been remembered, either in the impressions left at the time on personal memory or through library holdings. Ownership and control over the news industry during the 1940s was diverse: some journalists, like Mani, were employed by the military or the colonial states, while others had a degree of independence as the employees of nationalist newspapers, as did T.G. Narayanan. Yet others were employed by working-class organisations, like the filmmakers in Australia who were commissioned by the Waterside Workers Federation

37 Harper 2001; Foulcher 2009.

(WWF) to produce films from the workers' point of view. Each type of coverage, whether it was identified as factual news or as opinion or review, not only conveyed glimpses of reality, but *interpretations* of that reality – and often very partial interpretations, at that.

This book takes a close look at the news media in this period. Historians usually draw on newspapers and other media as sources – to be assessed critically but then taken as evidence of the events under discussion. In this story, on the other hand, the media itself is an actor in the events – not only the key participants in the Boycott and Battle, but also the broader publics in Australia, India, and war-torn Indonesia were influenced by what news they heard or read or saw as 'news' and how it was explained to them. This in turn shaped political, industrial, and military decisions.

There has been no previous comparative historical study of the media of Australia and India, so this book turns over new ground in its comparison of the English-language Indian-owned press with Australian newspaper coverage of these two major events in 1945 and 1946. The most useful media studies approach has been the body of theory on 'Framing', that is widely used today and has many different interpretations.[38] One definition which is held in common is that 'frames' can be considered as simplifications of information that narrow the range of possible reader interpretations and responses. Frames might be developed in the media over time through contextualisation (by proximity in a newspaper's layout, for example), emphasis, repetition, omission, or the ascription of agency or passivity to different characters. Most useful for this study has been the work on frames done by Robert Entmann and by Teun van Dijk. Entmann's comparative approach considers how similar events have been presented by the same media in very different ways. This book has also used comparison but looks at how the media of two different countries – India and Australia – considered the same events.[39] Van Dijk has paid particular attention to the discursive strategies of 'the ideological square', in which the 'frame' shapes the way media products are understood to favour one interpretation over others.[40] My book has not attempted to assess reception, that is, how audiences understand media coverage. Instead, I have followed Van Dijk in comparing how information has been presented in the media products themselves, using the framing elements indicated above, in the hope that others will build on this analysis.

38 Attributed to Erving Goffman in his 1974 *Frame Analysis*, the concept has been widely used but retains currency although the definitions of 'frames' vary substantially.

39 Entmann 1991.

40 van Dijk 1998a: 267; 1998b.

The newspapers in India and Australia reported on exactly the same events, but they demonstrated wide differences in the contexts in which they were presented – in both explicit references and the visual layout of the newspapers – and the meanings attached to them. Often the same sources were used, but the editorial approaches to the information were very different. Sometimes the same journalists authored articles for use in both the Indian and Australian press, but the allocated column space – and therefore the amount of detail that could be conveyed – was very different, as were the headlines. At times the same vocabulary was used – terms like 'the Atlantic Charter' and 'extremist' were common in both countries – and yet the meanings associated with these words or phrases had very different values. In particular, the meanings explicitly or implicitly associated with the term 'extremist' varied significantly before and after the commencement of the Battle of Surabaya. This was an important turning point for all of the parameters mentioned above, so this book analyses and compares the media in the two countries before and after the Battle commenced. The gendered nature of the characterisations of actors and actions is also noted and compared.

At the time of these events, pictorial news coverage was increasing, although it had been introduced earlier in Australian papers than in Indian ones. Visual media like photographs, films, and political cartoons in newspapers and the aural media of radio broadcasts all exhibit divergences that correspond to those in the textual sources – but it was the visual and aural forms of media that were targeted by the seamen's (and at times soldiers') attempts to intervene. Identifying the differences in print, audio, and visual media in content and source, context, and frame, may be considered incomplete from the perspective of media analyses, but are necessary dimensions of the historical analysis undertaken in this text.

Globalisation

The circulations of people, trade, ideas, and power described in this book can be seen as an expression of what we now call globalisation, which has often been assumed to have emerged only in more recent times. Yet, this study demonstrates that global circulations and contestations were occurring at least as early as the mid-twentieth century. In his 2017 book *India, China and the World,* Tansen Sen has shown the presence of such circulations for centuries

Yet after describing such mobility and border crossing, my book closes with a series of obstructions to these global flows. In the 1950s, the Cold

War and Stalinism combined to choke off the international exchange of ideas, while mechanisation reshaped the shipping industry, cutting down the flow of people in unionised crews. The new nations of the 1950s, so hard-won after decades of struggle against empires and often with passionate commitments to be 'nations of citizenship' rather than 'nations of blood', nevertheless set up borders that seemed impermeable. Ironically, the end of empires saw nationalism interrupting the global flows that had offered so much hope of a new world.

At the same time, however, circulations also accelerated with more and faster channels of communication and new populations of mobile people who reactivated the person-to-person interactions that had been so characteristic of the 1940s. Sometimes the links were restored by the same people who had built them in the 1940s, but sometimes it was new people reshaping the abandoned networks of the past into new visions of the future. Such restored or reimagined links – the re-emergence of globalisation – will be suggested in the final chapter of the book.

Sources for the voices of workers, lascars, and sepoys

The opportunity to look closely at the networks of mobile people in the 1940s arose because two resources have only recently become available. While they do not provide comprehensive histories, they nevertheless offer insights that are not otherwise available. The first of these sources is the archive of the Indian Seamen's Union in Australia (ISUiA). This was a union established by Indian seamen in 1945 to protect their interests while in Australian waters. This archive contains one of the very few bodies of material written or dictated by Indian seamen themselves in any part of the world. Some of this material was compiled by an Australian who was the Honorary Treasurer of the Union: Clarence Hart Campbell, who was a Gallipoli veteran, a committed political activist on the Left of the Labor Party, and a close associate of the Communist Party, as well as a small businessman trading in the cargoes of the future, oil and bitumen. Although there are some notes by Campbell and much careful tabulation of expenditures and incomes in his handwriting, the archive contains many notes from speeches made by the seamen themselves and 800 union membership cards, filled out by many different hands and often signed with thumbprints or crosses. They reveal home addresses and languages, political affiliations and shipboard trades. There are also letters from the seamen to the Union and to Campbell from different ports in Australia and

India for years after the seamen had left Australian waters and, as the later chapters explain, been denied return.

The other source is the collected papers of P.R.S. Mani, an Indian journalist who was 'embedded', in today's terms, with the Indian troops who fought in the Battle of Surabaya. Mani had enlisted in 1943 in the Indian Army, which was under British command. He was assigned as a Captain to the Military Public Relations unit, to travel with Indian troops in Burma and Malaya during the war and then went with them to Indonesia. While there were other Indian journalists there at the time, Mani was the only person telling the story of the Battle of Surabaya from the standpoint of the Indian troops. The Mani papers have been generously made available by his family for research and they are now universally and freely accessible through the Blake Library at the University of Technology Sydney.

Mani was also unique in leaving us different types of writing that were written for different audiences. First are his despatches in 1944 and 1945 to his British commanding officers. Second are the articles written for the public audience of the *Free Press Journal of Bombay*, the newspaper Mani joined when he left the army in protest in early 1946. Finally, there are fragments of his diary entries while still enlisted at Surabaya in late 1945 and then as a war correspondent in 1946. Mani seems to have kept all of these materials during his long later career as a diplomat in the Independent Indian Foreign Service after 1947 with the expectation that after he retired he would write about his time in Indonesia. His book did indeed come about and was published by Madras University in 1986, but not all of his carefully conserved notes were used for its composition – leaving questions taken up in the following chapters about his reasons for selection or exclusion.

These Indian sources are all in English, and the newspapers reviewed for the analyses of the Indian press are also all in English. This is clearly a disadvantage of this study, and much research remains to be done on the vernacular language press. There was, however, a vibrant independent newspaper culture flourishing in the English language in India in the decades before Independence, with presses owned by Indians defying British disapproval to express strong views in support of Indian nationalist causes. These newspapers were speaking to audiences in India – where most secondary and all tertiary education was in English – but also to the Left in England and across the empire, and indeed across the region. English was a widely used and often subversive medium. While this book is not as comprehensive as it would be if it delved into the press published in local languages, the media comparisons here are at least able to open up the field of regional actions. The material of Indonesian origin is far more difficult

to access because the imperial – and widely used – language was Dutch, while Malay was the crucial language of dissent. Some of this material has been translated into English, but I have relied heavily for new translations on the assistance of researcher Suzan Piper and historian Dr Frank Palmos, as well as the support of other Dutch researchers and journalists.

The analysis and comparison of English-language media in Australia has utilised a new tool: the digitisation of newspaper sources in the online Trove program of the Australian National Library. This has made a far wider range of rural and urban newspapers more freely available than ever before. This tool has allowed the careful analysis of mainstream newspapers, both 'quality' and 'tabloid', in particular those owned by union and working-class interests, alongside the newspaper of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA).

Since there is no systematic digitisation program of newspapers in India, I have drawn on four Indian-owned newspapers that utilised English and that have been painstakingly searched for this study.[41] Although the editorial policy of each of these four newspapers was nationalist, they were widely separated by geography, demography, and ideology. In the eastern city of Calcutta, the *Hindusthan Standard* was aimed at the large English-speaking Bengali population, who were acutely conscious of the armed resistance to the British, the Indian National Army (INA), that had operated in Burma and been led by Bengalis. The south-eastern Madras-based *Hindu* was liberal and nationalist but far more moderate. The Communist Party of India, while drawing strength from various areas, based *The People's War* in the old capital of Delhi, seeking to reach the many different states of the country but publishing less often than the other three papers considered here. *The Free Press Journal of Bombay* was, as its name suggests, based in the western city of Bombay. Its owner and editor was the committed nationalist S. Sadanand, but the paper showed less interest than the *Hindusthan Standard* in the INA or Bengali separatism. Sadanand was, like the city of Bombay, cosmopolitan and outward-looking. Like the *Hindu*, he ensured that *The Free Press Journal of Bombay* sent foreign correspondents to Southeast Asia.[42]

Although there are no other comparisons of the media of Australia and India on the events discussed in this book, Remco Raben's thoughtful 1999 edited collection *Representing the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia* has

41 With the assistance of researchers Rindon Kundu (Kolkata), Subarta Singh (Delhi), Unnayan Kumar (Delhi), Ajinkya Lele (Mumbai), and Helen Randerson (Sydney).

42 With the assistance of the Blake Library, UTS, which has purchased, digitised, and made accessible the relevant period of *The Free Press Journal of Bombay*.

considered how the 1942-45 occupation had been seen in Japan, the Netherlands and Indonesia itself. Raben has argued that the same events have been remembered and represented very differently in each of the countries involved, arising not only from that country's position in the war but from its earlier history and the futures it experienced after the war. Moreover, as each of Raben's contributors confirm, such memories varied between different groups and individuals within those countries, suggesting 'the layered and pluriform nature of memory'.[43] Limited as it is by using only English-language press, the comparison in this study of the same events viewed in India and Australia offers similar conclusions to those of Raben about representations in each country of the intensely conflicted conditions of Revolution, Boycott, and Battle.

There are certainly questions remaining about how far the English-language newspapers surveyed can reflect the views of the majority of Indian or Indonesian working people. There are questions, too, about the capacity of historians to access the voices of Australian workers, even though they might share the English language. This book draws on the CPA newspaper *Tribune*, the journal of the Seamen's Union of Australia (SUA), and the autobiographies and memoirs of unionists and the research of labour historians. Where possible, interviews have been recorded with the very few surviving working people who participated in the Australian events. The demographics of ageing have meant that most of these interviewees were women, which has had the benefit of providing some insight into the roles of women in the political and social interactions that were occurring across cultural borders within Australia.

And so, as well as the histories of the focal events, this book traces some fragments of the individual histories of those brought into unfamiliar situations by these border crossings – they found they were encountering and being challenged by difference. This often generated misunderstandings and confusion, and as far as possible their misunderstandings are traced or suggested in this study.

Structure of the book

After this introductory chapter, the chapters follow a chronological path to explore the context of the dramatic events of the postwar period and the influences and interactions that occurred. The earlier chapters also introduce

43 Raben 1999.

the people who went on to play roles in the major events of the Boycott and Battle, and who therefore return again and again in the later chapters.

Part I, 'Seeing the Region', comprises two chapters. This chapter, Chapter 1, 'Everybody's Revolution', outlines the goals and structure of the book.

Chapter 2, 'Connections', sketches the background of the mobile people who came into contact in the Boycott or Battle and their aftermaths. One was the troops of colonial armies, into which category both the Indian and Australian armed forces fell.[44] Gallipoli was one point where both Indians and Australians were present, suffering heavy losses on behalf of the British. One of the individuals whose life threads through this story, Clarrie Campbell, is introduced more fully in this chapter. He was at Gallipolli and met Indian troops there, both as military comrades and as medical staff after he was wounded. Campbell continued his involvement with Indians once he had returned to Australia.

Many of the mobile populations who played a role in the events of 1945 were involved with cargoes as labourers, seamen, or traders. Chapter 2 continues by tracing the racialised and gendered structuring of the industrial legislation governing seamen in particular, named the Asian Articles but in fact incorporating different regulations for different racial groups. Eventually this structure also controlled traders through restrictive immigration laws. Another person introduced in this chapter who reappears throughout this story is T.D. Kundan, a Sindhi merchant from Hyderabad, one of a community of Hindu traders who expanded their businesses far across Southeast Asia. In the early 1930s, Kundan settled in Surabaya, the busy port city in eastern Java. He became a spokesperson for the large resident Indian population of the city and went on to take an active role in the Battle of 1945.[45]

Part II, 'An Asian War', contains three chapters that demonstrate how World War II looked very different in Asia than it did in Europe. While again not comprehensive, this section brings in perspectives from across the region.

Chapter 3, 'Dangerous Oceans', considers how the coming of war generated new activism on the waterfront, initially from Chinese and Indian seamen, then from Australian maritime workers, and finally from exiled Indonesian seamen.

This chapter introduces Fred Wong, the Australian of Chinese descent who took an active role in linking Chinese seamen with Australian unions to bring much-needed land-based union support to the Chinese seamen's

44 Omissi 1995, 1999; Singh 2006, 2014; Das 2011; Bose & Manjapra 2010; Manjapra 2010.

45 Sandhu and Mani 1993; Markovits 2000, 2008; Kundan, Resumé, *c.* 1975, held in the Kundandas family archive.

industrial and political demands. We also meet Komalam Craig, an Indian university graduate studying teaching in Australia, the widow of an Australian, who had a background in theosophy. Komalam's nationalism and links to left-wing Australians enabled her to build links between militant Indian seamen and Australian unionists.

Chapter 4, 'Home and Away', considers the impact of the Japanese expansion, first on those Indonesians – Malay, Indian, Chinese, and Dutch – within Indonesia at the time of the Japanese occupation in 1942. Then it considers the impact of the Japanese expansion on the Indians in the British-commanded Indian Army who fought the Japanese in Burma and Malaysia. This chapter introduces another key figure in the story, P.R.S. Mani, the Tamil radio journalist and Nehruvian nationalist who accepted a commission in the Indian Army in 1944 and was posted to the Public Relations division. Tasked with building morale among Indian troops, Mani did far more than that by seeking out the great diversity among the Indians in uniform and introducing them to each other.

In Chapter 5, 'Sharing the Home Front', I trace how the war looked in Australia. Although fearful of Japanese bombing and invasion (as was India), Australia was also a more cosmopolitan place than it had been at any time in the previous 50 years. The White Australia Policy was, in effect, suspended for the duration of the war, and by 1945 there were many Australians who had built close relationships with people they had never had the chance to meet before.

In describing the complexity of the war years, this chapter shows the setting for the later Boycott of Dutch shipping. This Boycott arose out of the turmoil of the war years, and so the characters in Chapter 5 become key players in the shipping Boycott described in Chapter 6. One was Clarrie Campbell, first seen in Chapter 2 while serving in WWI. By the end of the 1930s, he was working closely with the rising number of Indian seamen in Australian waters. With them, he later gathered aid to assist with the 1943 Bengal Famine and, in 1944, to develop an Indian Seamen's Social Club. There Campbell met Abdul Rehman, a Maharashtrian Muslim seaman from Pune who shipped through Bombay. Rehman's calm and steady strength drew many Indian seamen to him, and he was to become a leader in the movement for better industrial conditions that finally emerged as the Indian Seamen's Union in Australia. Some of the most regular volunteers at the Indian Seamen's Social Club became participants in the Boycott: along with Campbell's partner Ada Boys, there were also Phyllis and Johnno Johnson and Sylvia Mullins. The nationalist Indonesian seamen, arriving from 1942 onwards, included more petty officers, some of whom formed relationships

with Australian women like Charlotte Reid (later Lotte Maramis). Other young Australians became involved with the final group of Indonesians, who arrived from the Dutch political prison camps on West Papua. These were people from the broader Left, including students like Molly Warner (later Molly Bondan), who was from a theosophical and Left-leaning family background and just wanted to be involved in building a new future for Australia. It was almost coincidental that this later group of students and others settled on building closer ties for the future with Indonesians. The consequences of this choice were momentous.

Parts III and IV consider the focal events of this study, the Boycott of Dutch shipping in Australian waters and the Battle of Surabaya, respectively. Each Part follows the same pattern: first the events themselves are discussed (in Chapter 6 on the Boycott and Chapter 9 on the Battle); then the media in Australia (including the interventions by Indians) before and during the Battle (in Chapters 7 and 10); and finally the media in India before and during the Battle (in Chapters 8 and 11). This structure brings the media into the course of the events, demonstrating how the selective and distorted press representations shaped decision-making. As will be seen in these chapters, some parts of the Australian Boycott events only become visible in the Indian press, and only long after they had occurred. For this reason, it is in Chapter 8 that the story begun in Chapter 6 can be given further detail, and only in Chapter 10 that we see the Indian seamen's own attempts to intervene in the worsening media coverage by taking strategic actions to present their story in press photographs and film. Some parts of the Battle were never revealed in the Australian press, while there are insights into the experiences of the Indian soldiers in the Battle of Surabaya, discussed partially in Chapter 9, which were not revealed even in the Indian press until a year after the Battle took place, as is recounted in Chapter 13.

Part III focuses on the events of the Boycott in Australian waters until late October, events that appear in the Australian and Indian media in very different ways. Chapter 6, 'Boycotting Colonialism', describes the early course of the Boycott and suggests the roles taken by various groups within the campaign. An important new arrival in mid-1945 was the seaman Dasrath Singh, who was already highly politicised in Calcutta although his birthplace may have been South Africa. Singh became close to Campell and Rehman, taking an active role in the political campaigns around industrial justice and support of the Indonesian Independence movement.

Chapter 7, 'Seeing the Boycott in Australia', considers the accounts printed in the Australian mainstream and communist press from August to October 1945, tracing the different representations of the strike and

the context of its coverage, namely widespread industrial unrest that emerged as workers' demands that had been held in check during the war burst into view along with frustration at the persistence of wartime restrictions.

Chapter 8, 'Indian Perspectives on the Boycott', brings the Indian-owned, nationalist (but English-language) press into sight, showing a very different view of the Boycott. The role of Indian seamen in the Boycott was seen far more clearly in the Indian press than it ever was in the Australian coverage, even in articles written by Australian authors, as this chapter will describe.

Part IV, 'Fighting Two Empires', traces the events of the Battle of Surabaya and its representation in the press in Australia and India. Chapter 9, 'Surabaya Burns', describes the course of the Battle itself from P.R.S. Mani's perspective, embedded in the 123rd Division of the Indian Army, from late October 1945. Mani's view is close to that of the troops, though he was aware that he saw the events from a different vantage point than they did. Attention then returns to the Surabaya merchant, T.D. Kundan, a supporter of the Indonesian nationalist groups and their key mediator with the British. Kundan is the only Indian portrayed individually and positively in later Indonesian histories of the Battle.

This chapter shows how cable and radio became an even more crucial part of this story. Recent statements by Indian nationalist leaders – circulated through radio and cabled news stories – were scrawled across the buildings of Indonesian cities, aimed directly at the incoming Indian troops to remind them that they shared nationalist visions. The new Indonesian Republic used radio to speak to the outside world, while local leaders used it to speak to their supporters at home and abroad. And as more and more Indian troops wavered in their loyalty, crossing the lines to fight on the side of the Indonesians, some defectors began broadcasting too, encouraging the Indians remaining in the army to join them in fighting both the British and Dutch empires.

The following two chapters trace the divergent media representations of the Battle in the Australian and Indian press. Chapter 10, 'Frenzied Fanatics', follows the Australian press coverage of late 1945, which was drawn largely from the Dutch and British press with only occasional local reporting by war correspondents. This flowed directly into the Australian press's representation of later events associated with the Boycott campaign in Australia. At the same time, however, a film funded by left-wing unions and activists was being made. While *Indonesia Calling!* did not address events in Indonesia at all and completely failed to acknowledge the role of Indian strikers or the union they had set up, the Indian seamen who acted in the film took

the opportunity to mount a visual challenge to the denigration they were facing in mainstream Australian media.

Chapter 11, 'The Acid Test', explores the very different view of the Battle that appeared in the Indian press, drawn from major reports of the Indian war correspondent T.G. Narayanan, Mani's fellow Tamil journalist who had reported with him in Burma. In Narayanan's account, which was consistent with that of other Indian-owned presses, the Indonesian Republicans may have had people in their ranks who were frustrated and headstrong, but their grievances were sound and their proposed remedies logical and understandable.

Part V, 'Aftermath', traces the impact of the Boycott and the Battle. In the short term, it appeared that both had failed. Chapter 12, 'Breaking the Boycott', traces how Australian representations of the Battle of Surabaya, which had emphasised irrational violence on the part of the Indonesians, were used to divide Australian unions, undermining the support for the Boycott. At the same time, repatriated Indian seamen faced reprisals from British and Dutch shipping companies through 'bad nullies', the powerful weapon provided by the Indian segment of the Asian Articles, which kept most of the seamen out of international shipping for the rest of their lives.

Chapter 13, 'Trading for Freedom', describes the period in 1946 when the Indonesian Republican leadership, having been forced by the Battle of Surabaya to recognise that the colonisers could not be defeated militarily, began to question the strategic usefulness of the Australian unions' boycott tactic. This chapter documents the decisions made by Mani and Kundan, encouraged by Prime Minister Sjarhir, to open trade links to send rice between Republican Indonesia and famine-threatened India. While both suffered challenges from the British and the Dutch in their attempts to ensure that this trade would go ahead, the chapter traces the difficult decisions Mani had to face in another type of trade. He was forced to trade journalistic silence for the safety of Indian soldiers who had decided to fight alongside the Indonesians in a shared anticolonial struggle.

By 1947, as described in Chapter 14, 'Transnational Visions', Republican leaders were more actively looking to set up trading links with wider networks. While Mani and Kundan had tried to open trade with India in 1946, Campbell – initially working with Fred Wong – tried through 1947 and early 1948 to establish trade across the region and link Indonesia with Australia and China through Singapore. Fred Wong drowned mysteriously in July 1948 and his attempts with Campbell to establish trade failed, caught up in the rising anti-communist fears of the Cold War, and probably sabotaged by the security forces of the British and Dutch with assistance from the

Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO). While Lotte Maramis and Molly Bondan were able to go to Indonesia and work there as journalists, neither the British nor the Dutch would allow Campbell to travel to India or Indonesia. He remained in Singapore under surveillance, but from there he took part in the network of activists, including other Australian exiles, who were arrayed across the region. Campbell continued his contact with old CPA comrades, and met Phyllis Johnson in Singapore in 1971. The hopes they had all shared of new worlds after the war had to be put on hold, but were re-emerging by the early 1970s.

Part VI, 'Reflections', contains Chapter 15, 'Remembering Heroes', which concludes the book by reflecting on the regional effects of the Boycott in Australia and the Battle of Surabaya. The surviving public narratives – already shaped by the media of the day – have since been pared down further by the demands of national and sectional interest in the decades since these events occurred. Nevertheless, while the border-crossing movements of the 1940s were temporarily stalled, the globalisation process could not be stopped. This final chapter sketches the re-emergence of the processes of circulation.