

II

THE WEST NEW GUINEA QUESTION – GENESIS

The West New Guinea question turned out to be the most festering problem in Dutch-Indonesian relations, driving the two nations eventually to the brink of war.

During the 1950s the Dutch determination to hold on to the colony and the Indonesian resolve to take it over took on such intransigent proportions that it was another twelve years before The Hague, confronted by the certainty of a full-fledged war and bereft of military support from the USA and Australia, was finally forced to give in and close off the last chapter of the saga of three and a half centuries of Dutch colonial presence in the East Indies archipelago.

None of the reasons, however, advanced by the Netherlands for the continuation of their rule of West New Guinea seem to have been compelling enough, at least in terms of Dutch national interests, to have allowed the development of a serious rift with Indonesia and the eventual breaking off of diplomatic relations. At first glance it also seems highly puzzling, if not entirely incomprehensible, to see a nation known for its business acumen and common sense to present Indonesian radical nationalists and communists with a convenient stick to hit and harm Dutch economic interests and hasten their nationalisation.

West New Guinea as a new Eurasian fatherland

The genesis of the West New Guinea question dates back to pre-World War II requests of Eurasian emigrant organisations to

grant the territory a separate administrative and political status.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Eurasians, who were largely concentrated in Java, suffered from a high rate of unemployment, caused to a large extent by the ever-intensifying competition with a rapidly growing class of Dutch-educated Indonesians for a dwindling supply of white collar jobs, which carried the highest social prestige in the colonial status system.¹ In order to alleviate this problem Eurasian political organisations attempted to persuade their members to abandon their traditional fixation with government employment and to try to find work in other sectors of the economy. Propaganda concentrated on turning Eurasians into independent entrepreneurs, particularly in agriculture.

As a result, in the 1920s, various small Eurasian agricultural colonies were established on leasehold land in east Java and the Lampungs. It soon became clear, however, that owing to the unceasing indigenous population explosion and the constant growth of a rural proletariat, the chances for Eurasians to establish themselves as a yeoman class in their heartland of Java were very slim. During the quest for a suitable alternative area for Eurasian immigration the choice fell on the vast, still only partly explored and thinly populated colonial backwater of West New Guinea.

Most of the Eurasian agricultural colonies founded in the 1930s in the northern part of West New Guinea turned out to be utter failures and the remaining ones only just managed to secure a very meagre livelihood. Generally these ventures had been ill-conceived and badly planned, while too many immigrants lacked the necessary training, experience and stamina needed to carve out an existence in a hostile jungle. Most returned to Java, completely disillusioned.

The situation in the Hollandia region, a major settlement area, was described in a 1938 government report as totally disastrous, the number of colonists having fallen from 102 in 1936 to fifty in 1937. On the other hand, in the Manokwari region results

seemed to have been moderately encouraging. In 1938 there were 258 settlers who, out of a total land concession of 1018 hectares, had 348 hectares cleared and 185 hectares under permanent cultivation, mainly for food production. Crops such as copra, coffee, kapok, cocoa, and fruit were grown.²

It was not only to Eurasians that West New Guinea was portrayed as the Promised Land, but also in the Netherlands itself propaganda was used to settle thousands of Dutch rural unemployed on the island. In 1923 the Nieuw Guinea Beweging (New Guinea Movement) stated as its aim:

... the foundation of a real Netherlands settlement colony, a tropical Netherlands, a fatherland for all Dutchmen in the Netherlands Indies and an area to absorb Holland's own excess population ...³

The colonisation issue was also pushed strongly by the Vaderlandsche Club (VC) – a group of ultra-right Dutch and Eurasian colonial diehards, who unequivocally rejected the demands of the radical wing of the Indonesian nationalist movement for independence in the immediate future. In a 1933 report to the Volksraad, the Netherlands-Indies proto parliament, the VC argued that the New Guinea highlands were suitable for settlement by Dutch farmers, while Eurasians would be able to cope with conditions in the coastal areas.⁴

In the Netherlands itself political support for the New Guinea movement was rather weak and was almost totally limited to the ultra-right fringe. The idea seems to have particularly caught the imagination of the Dutch Nazi movement, the Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (NSB) which saw the creation of a white Dutch province in the Indies as very important to shore up the Netherlands' imperial cause. With almost prophetic foreboding one protagonist wrote in 1936:

... if Java, Sumatra, etc., should be severed from the Netherlands within the foreseeable future – which God forbid! – then that does not need to be the case for New New Guinea. New Guinea does

The West New Guinea Debacle

not belong to the Indies Archipelago either geographically or geologically. The human, the animal, and plant world of New Guinea also have a strongly Australian character. One might very well refer to New Guinea as 'Netherlands Australia' ... Neither the Javanese, the Acehnese, nor the inhabitants of Palembang have any right to this 'empty' country. The Dutch were the first to occupy it, and have the right to use it for the population surplus of the Netherlands ...⁵

Equally significant in this context were the exhortations at that time of Dr J.W. Meyer Ranneft, an important colonial official and champion of the interests of the *blijvers*, that is, Eurasians, but also including a sizeable number of Dutchmen, who considered the Indies as their homeland. In 1935 he advocated that New Guinea should be made a colony of the Netherlands Indies with its own administration and special personnel. He repeated this call the following year in a farewell speech to the Raad van Nederlandsch-Indië (Netherlands Indies State Council):

... Of the greatest importance both economically, politically as well as in view of the international situation, is the need to exploit the Outer-Islands, particularly Borneo and New Guinea. It is imperative not to leave the string of islands surrounding Java neglected; and what must be kept constantly in mind is the Japanese offer of so-called cooperation in the development of the Outer Islands. Fortunately immigration is increasing, although not fast enough. And again I want to push my slogan that at least New Guinea should be made into a colony of the Indies – or another colony of Holland – with its own Constitutional Regulations ... Moreover, the colonisation by Netherlanders, despite the dismal results so far, deserves continued strong support ...⁶

The incessant pressure of the immigration lobby as well as the stubbornness and idealism of the settlers, who stayed on against great odds to carve a meagre living out of the harsh and relentless jungle, finally stung the Batavia government into action. As a result various measures were taken to improve the standard of

living of the settlers and to increase farm productivity and profitability. Firstly, in Manokwari, a Dutch language primary school was established and a government Agricultural Extension Officer was permanently stationed. Some financial assistance was also provided, the funds being drawn from the profits of the state lottery, the extent of this aid increasing from 5397 guilders in 1934 to 16,500 guilders in 1937. Another development was the founding in 1937 of the Kolonisatie Raad (Colonisation Council) allocated by the government with, for that time, the sizeable grant of 300,000 guilders to provide help, guidance and financial assistance to settlers.⁷

The Dutch government's interest in encouraging immigration should also be seen in the wider context of the new policy of exploration and economic development of New Guinea adopted in the 1920s and 1930s in response to the security threat posed to the island by other imperial powers, particularly Japan.

It was only at the turn of the 20th century that a serious beginning had been made to explore and map the area as a whole. Until then exploration had not gone beyond the coastal fringes with the interior remaining virtually a *terra incognita*. Nor had any military or administrative posts been established and Dutch territorial claims were only protected by a number of shields bearing the Royal Coat of Arms erected at various points around the coast.

This greater interest shown by the Dutch in New Guinea from the early 1900s should be seen in the framework of the so-called Pacification Policy, adopted by the Netherlands during the heyday of the New Imperialism after 1870. In order to keep other acquisitive nations at bay more effective Dutch control was established over the whole of the archipelago by imposing on local rulers new contracts to comply more strictly with orders from Batavia and those who resisted were forced to obey through the force of arms such as in Bali, Lombok, and Aceh.

Firstly, government posts were established in 1898 in Fak-Fak and Manokwari and in 1902 in Merauke. Then in 1906, Gov-

ernor-General van Heutsz, the conqueror of Aceh, despatched his trusted confidant, Captain H. Colijn, to New Guinea to investigate local conditions at first hand and advise as to what policy should be adopted in the future. In his 1907 report Colijn emphasised that a full-scale attempt to explore and map the interior should be undertaken before government administration be extended and economic exploitation encouraged and facilitated.⁸ This recommendation was accepted by the colonial government and the task was entrusted to the Netherlands-Indies army (KNIL), which between 1907 and 1915 managed to map most of the interior with the exception of the central mountain area. Work was scaled down during World War I. Demands for land concessions by Germany and Japan, of which the latter were considered by Batavia as being mainly politically motivated, highlighted the need for speeding up exploration and to convince Dutch enterprise of their patriotic duty by showing greater interest in investing in New Guinea.

Japanese pressure, however, intensified and in 1931 the firm of Nanyo Kohatsu Kaisha obtained a plantation concession of about 6000 hectares in north New Guinea and continued to press for other land grants.

This Japanese intrusion made it abundantly clear that speedy action by the Netherlands to protect its territorial claims had become imperative. In response, in 1934 the Nieuw Guinea Comité was founded for the specific purpose of working towards the task of national economic development in New Guinea. Among the leading members were Welter, a former Minister of Colonies, who was to play a prominent role in the postwar Dutch decision to keep New Guinea under Dutch control, and directors of large Dutch enterprises with interests in the Indies. In addition, a number of colonial experts, including Dr Meyer Ranneft, were part of the committee.⁹

The first practical result following his agitation was the founding, in 1935, of an oil company, the Nederlandsche Nieuw Guinea Petroleum Maatschappij, a joint venture of Royal Dutch

Shell, Standard Vacuum Oil Company, and Standard Oil Company. It was granted a concession of almost 10 million hectares and found oil in the Vogelkop area in 1936, 1939, and 1941.¹⁰ This was followed in 1937 by a number of large Dutch companies establishing a joint venture, the *Nederlandsche Maatschappij voor Nieuw Guinea* (Negumij), which set up an experimental plantation near Hollandia. In addition, the Dutch colonial government itself started a large plantation near Manokwari.

The very moderate economic achievements of Eurasian migrants were almost totally annihilated during the Pacific war. After their capture, many of the able-bodied men were murdered by the Japanese on the spot, while the majority of the other settlers lost their lives in the detention camps. After the war a handful of survivors set about with great courage and determination to rehabilitate their neglected houses and overgrown farms.

The future political status of West New Guinea in the balance: 1945-1949

New Guinea had, prior to the war, formed part of the Moluccas, and in July 1946 was elevated to residency status in its own right. Its first acting Resident, van Eechoud, whose crucially important role in New Guinea affairs will be treated more fully later in this chapter, during talks in Batavia at the end of 1945, had apparently been able to obtain the initial agreement of the government to create New Guinea as a mandate of the Dutch crown. But in secret correspondence early in 1946 he admitted that, owing to strong Indonesian objections, this probably would not be possible, and that New Guinea would remain in an Indonesian federation. He insisted, though, that it was certain that the territory would be given a special status. Agreeing that socially and economically New Guinea should remain oriented towards Indonesia and a complete partition was not envisaged, he emphasised that a political separation was necessary in order to protect the interests and rights of the Papuans who, culturally,

socially and economically, were backward compared to most of their neighbours. The Papuans should then be given the opportunity to develop their area according to their own norms and needs. At this stage van Eechoud seemed to have been satisfied with autonomy, a position he later changed in favour of continued Dutch rule.¹¹

In contrast, the Eurasian representatives, at a conference in October 1946 at Pangkalpinang between the colonial government and minority groups, were far more drastic in their demands, and insisted that New Guinea should be retained as a Dutch colony.

Numbering about 160,000 in total, Eurasians had formed a special, privileged class in the prewar pluralist colonial system and had generally considered themselves as Dutch and superior to Indonesians. With the majority of them, after 1945, being unwilling to fuse themselves with the indigenous population in a free and Indonesian-controlled state, they became the first victims of decolonisation, feeling themselves as virtually displaced persons in their own country. While many Eurasians emigrated to the Netherlands, a sizeable segment still demanded that New Guinea should remain Dutch and be set aside as their new homeland.

In Java and the Netherlands the interest in immigration to West New Guinea was rekindled. After the outbreak of the Indonesian revolution in August 1945 the position of the Eurasian group had seriously deteriorated. The Eurasians, who as a whole stayed loyal to the Dutch colonial cause, were to bear most of the popular retaliation against the hated colonial rule and many were killed, their bodies often being savagely mutilated during widespread outbursts of murder and pillage (*bersiap*) between September 1945 and the early months of 1946. Furthermore, appalled by the spectre of the Netherlands being forced to negotiate with the hated republicans about the creation of a free Indonesia, in which they did not want to participate in, Eurasians wanted a way out of this impasse. Under those circumstances

the earlier dream of West New Guinea as a new homeland started to shine again as a beacon of hope at least to some sections of the Eurasian population. As a result some of the prewar immigration organisations were revived, but their political importance was soon overshadowed by the formation of a new movement, Groter Nederland Actie. Its chairman, Captain C.T. Berg, in a submission of 11 March 1946, implored Lieutenant Governor General H.J. van Mook to declare New Guinea a separate part of the Netherlands kingdom, similar to Surinam, where Eurasians would be able to safeguard their own culture, religion, and way of life under the protection of the Dutch crown.¹²

In the Netherlands it was Dr Meyer Ranneft, a member of the highly prestigious Raad van State, who raised the future status of West New Guinea. In a minority report to the Queen on 26 July 1946 concerning the duties and powers of the Commissie-Generaal, he stressed that in a future constitutional settlement the interests of certain population groups and territories should be safeguarded, and pointing in particular to the possible importance of New Guinea for Holland, argued that it was certainly too valuable to be merely transformed from a Dutch to an Indonesian colony. He also emphasised that the Netherlands had a duty to Ambon and the other areas that had faithfully supported the Dutch cause and had to ensure that they would be allowed to maintain a closer association with the Netherlands crown.¹³

Later in the year at the earlier mentioned Pangkalpinang conference, it was again the same Captain Berg who came to the fore as an ardent advocate of granting West New Guinea a separate constitutional status under continued Dutch rule in order to create a viable new Eurasian homeland.¹⁴

The response of van Mook to these rather emotional pleas of the Eurasian delegates, although not dismissive, was rather weary and pointed to the result of a recent investigation that showed that so far immigration to New Guinea had aroused very little interest. He undertook to draw the attention of the government in The Hague to the need for a systematic investigation into the

possibilities of overseas immigration as a whole.¹⁵ He further argued that at the current stage of the Dutch-Indonesian negotiations it was not possible yet to give a clear pronouncement about the future status of New Guinea.¹⁶ Minister of Colonies Jonkman was less circumspect and in a despatch to the Commission-General referred to '... a felt need to consider the possibility to grant a special status to New Guinea also without knowing the real aspirations of the population ...'¹⁷ In its reply of 14 November the Commission-General showed itself quite willing to consider the question of granting special treatment to New-Guinea, although it was not clear yet as to how this should be implemented.¹⁸

In any case Jonkman's request regarding New Guinea came too late to have any impact on the results of the Linggajati Agreement, which was concluded on 12 November between the Commission-General and the republican government. In this agreement the Netherlands recognised the *de facto* authority of the Indonesian republic over Java, Madura, and Sumatra. Secondly the Netherlands and republican governments were committed to cooperate in speedily establishing a sovereign democratic and federal based state, the United States of Indonesia. Rather significantly, article four stated that the federation was to consist of the Indonesian republic, Borneo, and the state of Eastern Indonesia, covering the whole area eastwards from Sulawesi and Bali to Timor and also, as generally understood by both parties, West New Guinea. It was furthermore emphasised that the people in any area retained the right to indicate in a democratic manner that they wanted to be incorporated in the federal system in a different way.¹⁹

The difference in emphasis between van Mook and Jonkman about the desirability of granting a special status to West New Guinea was already exemplified in an earlier despatch of 21 October 1946. This despatch dealt with the question as to how the Netherlands should handle the invitation of Australia and New Zealand to attend a meeting early in 1947 to found the

South Pacific Commission. Van Mook, worried about the possibility of further Australian meddling in what he saw as Dutch internal affairs, wrote rather scathingly that this conference had seemingly been designed, in the first place, to enhance the international profile of the vainglorious (as far as the Dutch were concerned) Australian Foreign Minister, Dr Evatt. While he could see Australia's interest in such a move, Netherlands New Guinea was not part of the Pacific but was economically, socially, and culturally almost totally orientated to, and dependent on, Indonesia. Still van Mook did not entirely discard the possibility of a more autonomous New Guinea:

Only when Netherlands New Guinea would be separated from the Netherlands Indies or Indonesia a situation would arise where this proposed regional organisation could well be of some importance to us. In fact it is quite conceivable that such a separation would prove to be useful or necessary. But at this present point of time it seems still desirable not to push too openly in that direction and also not to give the appearance of being working towards that goal ...

Van Mook then advised that the Netherlands should only attend in an observer capacity.²⁰

Minister Jonkman agreed, although with the proviso that the possibility of a special status for New Guinea should be kept open.²¹

Hardly a month later van Mook himself seems to have changed his mind and moved much closer to the position of the Minister. He wrote on 27 November 1946 in a despatch directed personally to Jonkman, that after a meeting with Dr W. Hoven, the acting director of the Department of Binnenlands Bestuur (BB) and the Resident of New Guinea, van Eechoud, he had come to the conclusion that New Guinea should be given a special status. Van Mook gave two reasons for this *volte face*: firstly, the Papuan population, which according to new data was much larger than the million mark estimated previously, was unwill-

ing to accept Indonesian interference in their affairs; and in view of the low degree of civilisation attained it seemed therefore irresponsible to leave the territory under the control of the United States of Indonesia. Secondly, he argued that large investment funds were needed to develop New Guinea, and with the income potential from mining and other sources at the present looking rather doubtful, it could be expected that the territory would be seriously neglected when placed under an Indonesian administration. So van Mook proposed that in the first place the overlord rights of the Sultanate of Tidore over part of north New Guinea should be bought off, something which could be done relatively easy as its ruler was plagued by chronic budget deficits. Finally, he spelled out three possibilities under which New Guinea would be given a special status:

1. As part of the Netherlands Kingdom and as such participating in the Netherlands-Indonesian Union,
2. As a special territory administrated by the Netherlands-Indonesian Union,
3. As a UN Trusteeship territory either under the Kingdom or the Union.

The expectation that the Union would probably balk at the prospect of being required to provide substantial long-time financial assistance to New Guinea would make the options of either direct Dutch colonial control or a Netherlands-administrated United Nation trusteeship the most feasible under the circumstances.²²

Van Mook's argument about the incapacity and unwillingness of the federal state of East Indonesia to incur the large financial outlays needed for the exploration and exploitation of New Guinea resources seems to have been generally shared in government circles in Batavia.²³

The demand in the Netherlands to hang on to West New Guinea was further reinforced by the storm of protests caused by the Linggajati Agreement, which was generally seen as a complete surrender to the republicans, who were widely regarded by

the Dutch as a bunch of murderous rabble-rousers and incompetent upstarts. It was particularly galling to many Dutchmen to have to endure the thought of a victorious Sukarno, a man detested as a traitor, and a puppet of the Japanese to whom he had callously sold hundreds of thousands of his compatriots as slave labourers; a man they saw as an untrustworthy self-seeking cad and a swollen-headed parvenu. Dutch national pride had been seriously hurt and public disgust about being betrayed by the Allies, firstly by Britain and later USA, was fierce enough to demand at least a politically acceptable face-saving device before this draft agreement could be passed by parliament.

It was only the Labour Party, commanding just a little less than a third of the votes in parliament, that was in favour of the agreement. Hence, as a Labour member of cabinet, Jonkman was committed to make a vigorous stand in parliament to have it ratified. The strong opposition, however, of conservative and middle of the road politicians from the Christian Democrat and Liberal parties, meant that concessions had to be made. During a cabinet meeting on 18 November some Ministers argued that this provisional accord should be only binding to its signatories, the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia, and that other colonial territories including Surinam, Curaçao, the state of Eastern Indonesia and other regions and population groups ‘... were not affected and were still open for discussion ...’ In reply, Jonkman affirmed that indeed the agreement had been rather imprecisely formulated leaving open the opportunity for later amendments and clarifications.²⁴ And a little later went as far to argue that that the idea of maintaining a Dutch stronghold in New Guinea deserved full support.²⁵

To mollify the conservative opposition even further, Jonkman opened up the possibility of a continued Dutch political influence in the archipelago, and suggested the establishment of ‘... a more intimate bond between the Crown and the more or less contiguous territory formed by New Guinea, Ambon, and Timor

...²⁶

Perhaps unwittingly Jonkman here sowed the seed of the bitter disputes which arose between the Netherlands and Indonesia during the 1950s and 1960s.²⁷

The ultimate decision to insist on a special status for New Guinea in the projected Netherlands-Indonesian Union was made on 5 December²⁸ and Jonkman, in his final formulation, showing the influence of the prodding of Minister van Maarseveen²⁹ of the powerful Catholic Party, left no doubt about the cabinet's stand when he stated that:

... the government desires that in conformity with the spirit of articles 3 and 4 [of the Linggajati agreement] New Guinea should also be accorded a special status in relation to the Kingdom and the Federation, even though perhaps the indigenous people might be unable to indicate their wishes. And also particularly the possibility should be left open for the establishment of large colonies of Netherlanders, especially of Eurasians from the Indies, who want to live separately and freely under their own governmental system ...³⁰

A motion of the Catholic leader Romme and a Labour Party stalwart, van der Goes van Naters, to accept this amended Linggajati agreement was passed by parliament on 20 December 1946.³¹

In Indonesia, however, these arbitrary alterations of the original agreement by the Dutch government caused a furore not only in the republic, where they were immediately dismissed, but also in the projected federal state of East Indonesia, the leaders of which, at the time, were congregated in a conference with the colonial government in Denpasar in Bali.

Jonkman informed van Mook on 11 December about the government's declaration expressly stating that the possibility of according New Guinea a special status should be kept open. He added that the actual implementation could be worked out later, although he rejected van Mook's earlier suggested option of a UN trusteeship.³² Van Mook assured Jonkman that he was not

inclined one way or the other, but only wanted to refer here to the expected Australian trusteeship of New Guinea.³³

This bilateral decision to keep New Guinea outside the Indonesian federation posed a great problem to van Mook during the Denpasar conference. A number of delegates, including the Sultan of Tidore and Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung of Bali, were squarely opposed to granting a special status to New Guinea.

Van Mook tried to explain the Dutch position by using the same rationale underlying his argument in his despatch to Jonkman on 27 November, emphasising that the size of the Papuan population had been estimated to be considerably higher than previously believed; and that because of the Pacific war, national Papuan awareness had rapidly increased particularly in the northern part of West New Guinea. But the picture of the political wishes of the geographically scattered Papuan population was still too blurred to send a genuinely representative delegation to Denpasar. In addition, van Mook suggested it would take a great deal of investment capital to develop New Guinea, which would be a difficult burden to bear for the newly constituted state of East Indonesia. Recognising that despite a special status New Guinea would remain bound up with Indonesia in one way or the other and without wishing to push the rights of Tidore aside he was still of the opinion that it was more appropriate:

... not to tie an essentially non-Indonesian territory to an Indonesian state but rather to make it into special territory which conceivably could be linked to the United States of Indonesia, the Netherlands-Indonesian Union, or the Netherlands ...³⁴

Finally, van Mook insisted it was not the intention of the government to keep New Guinea outside Indonesia, but in fact it was carefully looking into the question as to how New Guinea could be best fitted into the framework of the Indonesian federation.³⁵

These assurances seemingly counteracted both van Mook's

and Jonkman's previous position; and also misrepresented the real position of The Hague government which, in its declaration to parliament on 10 December, had clearly envisaged the possibility, if not the fact of New Guinea remaining under direct Dutch control. Furthermore, in his effort to help the Indonesians to swallow the inedible pill of the separation of New Guinea, van Mook somewhat deviously avoided any mention of the other part of the 10 December declaration referring to the immigration of Eurasians which, by definition, implied the continuation of Dutch colonial rule. He wrote on 19 December to Jonkman: 'Also to-day there was unanimous approval for the creation of the state of East Indonesia. It will still take some effort to exclude New Guinea ...'³⁶

It is clear that here van Mook believed that Jonkman wanted New Guinea excluded from East Indonesia at least for the time being as he had stated in his despatch of 11 December. But in an obvious effort to ease van Mook's problems in Denpasar the Minister temporarily put the demands of political reality in the Netherlands aside and indicated to van Mook that a softer line could be adopted:

I would like you to know that in my view New Guinea does not need to be excluded, but rather it will be possible for it to obtain a special relationship as is meant by article three of the basic agreement with special financial assistance and shared control and responsibility with the Netherlands in accordance of article 10d ...³⁷

Article three stated that every part of Indonesia had the right to delay or refuse to join the Indonesian Federation. In that case a special relationship with the federation and the kingdom would be created. Article ten dealt with the assistance to be provided by the kingdom to the United States of Indonesia.

This provided van Mook with more leeway as he reported to Jonkman on 23 December:

Postponing a final decision I managed to keep New Guinea temporarily out of East Indonesia. But only through declaring that

New Guinea would *not* entirely be separated from the United States of Indonesia ...³⁸

While the draft bill founding the Federal State of East Indonesia was finally passed, delegates, remaining suspicious about Dutch intentions, tempered van Mook's success by a resolution passed of sixty-eight votes out of a total of seventy, and demanded that an early investigation be held about the possibility of including New Guinea in the state of East Indonesia, and that such a commission would contain a substantial representation from the state of East Indonesia.

A draft agreement of November 1947, between the Netherlands and the then State of Eastern Indonesia to create a United States of Indonesia, emphasised again the earlier article of the Linggajati agreement dealing with the right of regions to decide to stay out of the federation, or delay their entry, or have their place in the federation organised in a different way.³⁹

The request of the President of East Indonesia that the obstacles preventing New Guinea from being incorporated into the state of East Indonesia should be taken away and that this state should be given sole right to that territory⁴⁰ was passed by the Batavia government. Van Mook though rather pointedly added that such a possibility was practically hypothetical because this would surpass the financial strength of East Indonesia. So the situation had moved back to square one.⁴¹ Jonkman also insisted again that the possibility of a special status for West New Guinea should be kept open.⁴²

The assertion in the book by de Geus⁴³ that neither van Mook nor Jonkman wanted to keep West New Guinea out of Indonesia seems not to be fully supported by the available evidence, because their inclination towards inclusion or exclusion kept on changing in line with the demands of political expediency at a particular point in time. Furthermore, the assertion that only the Dutch imperial pressure group, the Groter Nederland Actie, demanded separation is also too extreme and denies the existence of the powerful voice of the Right as a whole in parliament

which insisted on the continuation of Dutch rule in New Guinea and saw Jonkman's declaration of 15 December as the government's confirmation of their wishes. In some circles of the Netherlands Indies government itself, both in Batavia and in New Guinea, pressure was mounting to have New Guinea retained in Dutch hands.

The New Guinea question, always a low key issue in Dutch official thinking, was pushed even further into the background during the political *mêlée* caused by the breakdown of the Netherlands-Indonesian negotiations and the Dutch armed attack on the republic during 20 July and 4 August 1947. In the subsequent Renville agreement which *inter alia* included the acceptance of the future independent Indonesian state in the form of a federation, no special mention was made of New Guinea. Still, it is significant to note that articles three and four of the earlier Linggajati agreement laying down the right of states to insist on a special relationship with the Indonesian federation and the Netherlands kingdom had been incorporated.⁴⁴ It is clear that the Dutch cabinet saw the Renville agreement as compatible with its demand for a special status of New Guinea and both Ministers Beel and Jonkman were actually pushing this issue in parliament at this time.⁴⁵

Moreover, the West New Guinea question was kept alive by the various immigration organisations, which continued to flood the government and parliamentarians with requests and petitions to ensure that New Guinea would be kept within the Dutch kingdom. Interesting is the proposal by the Dutch Left to deport to West New Guinea some of the convicted Dutch Nazi cooperators, such as members of the NSB and Dutch SS, to expiate their sins by opening up the jungle with hard labour. In fact, only 230 political prisoners were sent with most of them having returned to Netherlands by 1950.⁴⁶

The government postponed making a decision until more essential data about the situation in New Guinea and its prospects would be available. Early in 1947 the Batavia government was

very pessimistic about the possibilities of agricultural development and immigration in New Guinea, although it was more positive about its mining and mineral potential.⁴⁷ It was felt that sufficient data on which to base a reasonable judgement was still lacking, and for that purpose a fact-finding committee, *Studiecommissie Nieuw Guinea*, was instituted on 15 March 1948. It included two of the most prominent and tenacious advocates of the Papuan cause, the acting Resident of New Guinea, van Eechoud and Dr W.C. Klein, secretary of the prewar Nieuw Guinea Comité and founder in 1934 of the scholarly Nieuw Guinea Studiekring. He also published the periodical *Nieuw Guinea*.

So far no areas had been found suitable for large-scale European colonisation. In March 1948, Minister (without portfolio) Götzen advised Prime Minister Beel that immigration should only be allowed if there was a reasonable expectation that settlers would be able to obtain a living. A scientifically based search between February 1946 and the middle of 1947 in the Hollandia region for potential agricultural land proved to be disappointing.⁴⁸ In fact only two areas, each containing 500 hectares immediately available for colonisation, were found around Lake Sentani near Hollandia, and near Manokwari. Moreover, a government-funded offer of accommodation and land to former Dutch prisoners of war and people who still were awaiting evacuation from the interior of Java had met with a very disappointing response, as only about forty people had taken up this offer.⁴⁹

Nevertheless, on 18 September 1947, the Batavia government set up a special council to take care of transmigration and emigration especially in regard to West New Guinea. Furthermore, a special transmigration and emigration section was added to the newly-founded Department of Social Affairs, which among other things was to investigate the possibilities of the exploration and development of West New Guinea. In its report it came to the conclusion that any migration of Eurasians to West New Guinea should be out of the question before more knowledge of the ter-

ritory was available and promising areas for settlement had been found. This would require a great deal of technical expertise and capital investment most of which would to have come from the Netherlands itself, and it would be irresponsible to start to act before being sure about the future status of New Guinea and the availability of the necessary financial support.

A proposal to set up a New Guinea Fund, supported with an annual government grant, had been submitted to The Hague by van Mook, who added that any commitment by the government of large funds for the development of New Guinea should be on the basis of certain conditions regarding the future status of this territory and its relationship with the Netherlands. This was supported by Minister Götzen and also Minister Jonkman, who commented: 'But this status is closely dependent on *who* is willing and capable to take on the task of opening up and developing New Guinea ...'⁵⁰

So here Jonkman is again clearly thinking of a Dutch-controlled New Guinea!

While negotiations with the Indonesian republican government were progressing excruciatingly slowly and finally stalled again, the Dutch accelerated their push to establish the federal states in order to contain the republic. During a meeting of the BFO on 15 July 1948 a resolution was passed for the establishment of a federal interim government and the territory of the federation comprising the whole of the former Netherlands Indies. Against the wishes of most Indonesian delegates the Dutch succeeded in having New Guinea again excluded on the basis of the Dutch version of the Linggajati agreement.⁵¹

After the general election on 7 July 1948 in the Netherlands the new cabinet of Drees-van Schaik took over in which the Catholic Party member van Maarseveen replaced Jonkman as Minister of Overseas Territories. Regarding West New Guinea the policy of the previous government was continued, and van Maarseveen, although pointing out that the government was not yet in a position to take a final decision on the future status of

New Guinea, stressed that it was willing to take into account the fact that its inhabitants were Melanesians and different from people in other parts of Indonesia.⁵² In addition, the strength of the ultra pro-New Guinea faction in parliament had increased through the winning of two extra seats by the CHU and two seats by the Liberal Party. Of great significance to the New Guinea cause was the entrance into the Lower House of Gerbrandy, Prime Minister of the War Cabinet in London and a member of the conservative ARP, and the appearance of another colonial die-hard, Welter, a representative of the break-away Katholieke Nationale Partij. A former Minister of Colonies and a prominent member of the prewar Nieuw Guinea Comité, Welter came to the fore in parliament as one of the most eloquent and forceful champions of a permanent Dutch presence in New Guinea. During a debate about the Emergency Law in late October 1948 he insisted that New Guinea should be kept under the Dutch crown as it

... is not only of great importance strategically and economically, but also probably opens up possibilities for migration of Netherlanders. These considerations are of such importance that the government should be empowered to take measures to ensure that the political future of this possession should not in any way be prejudiced ...⁵³

The Minister for Overseas Territories, Sassen, replied that the government in fact did not want to prejudice the position of New Guinea. Welter still wanted the government to spell out its position more clearly by assuring that no preliminary measures would be taken which possibly would affect the freedom of action of the parliament when later deciding on the position of New Guinea. He then went into raptures, declaring New Guinea to be the political and economic reserve and salvation of the Netherlands nation.⁵⁴ He was strongly supported by Tilanus, the leader of the protestant CHU faction in the House.⁵⁵

In the KVP a sizeable number of members were prepared to

do hardly more than pay lip service to the demands for Indonesian independence and strongly supported the idea of excluding New Guinea from the Indonesian federation. Professor Romme, the party's leader, proved to be particularly forceful, in the end, on this point. During discussions on 3 August 1948⁵⁶ about the Indonesian Interim Government Bill he was very critical about the inadequate way he believed New Guinea's position had been dealt with:

It appears from article 1 of this bill that this refers to the *whole* of Indonesia, i.e., also New Guinea. The speaker feels that this contravenes the standpoint taken so far by the Netherlands government. After all the government has always declared that New Guinea will stay outside the federation ... the speaker suggests that a short resume should be made about what the Netherlands government has stated so far concerning the status of New Guinea. It can then be seen whether the speaker's impression that the Netherlands government's view is that New Guinea should remain outside the United States of Indonesia is in fact correct. In any case it is sure that in the Netherlands Indies it is generally believed that the Netherlands Government thinks this way ...

It is furthermore interesting to note that in the first draft program of the new van Schaik-Drees government, in the passage affirming the creation of a sovereign United States of Indonesia, the original wording 'encompassing the whole of the Netherlands Indies' was deleted on the insistence of Romme, because of the New Guinea issue.⁵⁷ Also, the new Catholic Minister of Overseas Territories, Sassen, clearly instructed the delegation to the Dutch-Indonesian negotiations that New Guinea would remain directly under the Dutch crown until such time that its status would be decided.⁵⁸

The BFO, however, continued its opposition to the separation of New Guinea from East Indonesia, and during negotiations in October 1948 a compromise was arrived upon in which New Guinea, while remaining under the crown, would come under a

combined Dutch-Indonesian administration.⁵⁹

The highest advisory body in the country, the Raad van State, in its advice to the Queen on 11 January 1949, was severely critical particularly about the New Guinea clauses of the BFO bill. It argued that it would prove difficult if not impossible after a few years to reverse the idea of joint rule and establish a direct constitutional bond with the Netherlands. Furthermore such a condominium would cause constant disputes among the two partners.⁶⁰

The BFO bill was sent to parliament on 13 January 1949, but never reached the reading stage and was allowed to die a natural death. It was withdrawn again on 10 February 1950. This Dutch concession to the federal states, particularly East Indonesia, was clearly more motivated by the pressing need to save the negotiations with the BFO than indicating a change of direction in Dutch policy concerning New Guinea.

Surprisingly and rather gratuitously the Dutch position received a boost from an entirely unexpected quarter when Republican Prime Minister Hatta told Minister of Foreign Affairs Stikker during a visit to Indonesia in November 1948 that ‘... he was not interested in New Guinea; this does not belong to Indonesia ...’⁶¹ This caused Stikker to argue that this meant New Guinea could be kept by the Netherlands unless it was decided to give in to the demands of East Indonesia, for which he could not see any reason.⁶²

For Stikker to take Hatta at his word was, to put it mildly, rather naive as he probably only wanted to avoid the possible delay of the transfer of sovereignty by the Netherlands owing to a dispute which did not touch the core of the negotiations and which could be settled later. What is absolutely clear, however, is that Stikker, and most other Dutchmen, completely misread the state of political realities in the republic and the atmosphere of nationalistic aspirations, which had included, from the founding of the radical Indonesian nationalist movement in the 1920s, the demand for a free Indonesia stretching from Sabang to

Merauke. It misread the strength of Sukarno and his nativistic brand of nationalism that deeply touched and stirred the soul of the people. Perhaps even more importantly it failed to fathom the intensity of anti-Dutch colonial feeling and it could not see that a continued Dutch presence in New Guinea was seen as a dangerous dagger poised at the Indonesian heartland. Finally, it failed to see that the 'reasonable and realistic' leaders like Hatta, on whom they had pinned hopes to protect the Dutch economic political interests, were poised on the edge of an abyss of popular pent-up anger, frustration, hate, and psychic pressure caused by years of economic deprivation and the general disappointment at the non-arrival of the Promised Land heralded by the revolution. In this situation charismatic, messianic figures like Sukarno could prosper and find it easy to push aside the dry, rationalistic 'administrator' types like Hatta.

While no doubt Sukarnoism would have been victorious even if New Guinea had become Indonesian in 1949, it might have been more difficult to nationalise Dutch enterprises and to ruin the Indonesian national economy to the extent that actually occurred. A Dutch New Guinea was seen by the vast majority of nationally conscious Indonesians as a colonial danger to their security affording the Dutch an easy opportunity to keep on interfering in Indonesian internal affairs.

Generally, Dutch business circles with interests in Indonesia were rather apprehensive about official Dutch policy regarding New Guinea and its future effect on the safety of their investments. Propaganda by the New Guinea lobby about the untapped wealth of New Guinea in fact caused only a very subdued response from Dutch industry.

A number of officials and politicians issued warnings about the possible future dire consequences for Dutch-Indonesian relations. An example of this was van Roijen, the main Dutch spokesman during the pre-RTC negotiations, who reported that during an interview Sukarno had disagreed with Hatta's view about New Guinea and called himself a 'New Guinea fanatic'.

This stance by Sukarno was almost totally ignored by Dutch politicians, who were neither willing to take notice of him nor to admit that he was the most powerful person in the republic and in Indonesia as a whole.⁶³ Perhaps one of the most perspicacious comments came from W. Schermerhorn, a former Labour prime minister, who argued that the New Guinea issue was shrouded too much in sentiment with too many people thinking that, by sticking to New Guinea, at least something of the former Netherlands Indies' empire would be saved:

... whereas I declare here emphatically that the interests of the Netherlands lie in cooperation with the United States of Indonesia. Everything we would sacrifice for the retention of New Guinea will probably – no one can see into the future – be very dearly paid for ...⁶⁴

Similarly, a number of other Labour Party members showed their disquiet. Their voices remained largely ignored in the ruling political climate in the Netherlands that did not allow any further concessions to the Indonesian republic.

As it was, it was by no means sure whether the Roem-van Roijen agreements, which formed the basis of the RTC negotiations, would be able to muster the required two-thirds majority vote in parliament.

The New Guinea question came to the fore again in parliament in February 1949, when two members of the CHU, F.H. van de Wetering, a former Dutch Reformed missionary and later mayor of Palembang, and H.J. Meijerink, former director of a Christian teachers' college in Solo and from 1937 member of parliament for the ARP, urged that the government should finally take a firm stand about the future status of New Guinea. According to van de Wetering, in view of the very primitive state of their civilisation it would be unrealistic to talk about the right of self-determination of the Papuans, whom he emphatically designated as Melanesians and not as Indonesians. It was high time that the government made a decision and stopped postpon-

ing the matter in deference to international interference and to spare the sensitivities of the newly created federal states. But rather than trying to create the impression that the Netherlands has no selfish motives, he argued:

Why do we not just boldly say that New Guinea provides the Netherlands with a unique opportunity and task. Let us provide men and capital to transform those dark, wild, isolated, areas, in which Papuans live in the most primitive circumstances and are, because of sickness and living conditions, declining in number and are in danger of dying out, into accessible, cultivated, and prosperous lands. Let the Netherlands show that it is not a little forgotten country on the North Sea, ... but that it still possesses that old, tenacious spirit needed to create New Guinea into a New Netherlands. So then the dreams and desires will be achieved of ten thousands of Eurasians, who in the future will hardly have any economic prospects in Java. Then it will be no longer necessary to squabble over the question whether Eurasians should remain Netherlands subjects or should adopt Indonesian citizenship but instead New Guinea will be their reborn country and new fatherland ...⁶⁵

Another opposition speaker, H.J. Meijerink of the ARP, also pleaded for the retention of New Guinea, although he was less starry-eyed than van de Wetering and alluded to the political complexities of the problem, which could not be easily resolved. Stressing that the government should not be allowed to procrastinate any further but should show its true colours, he pointed out that Eurasian agricultural settlements would succeed only if sizeable financial support was forthcoming and providing such ventures were started in conjunction with Dutch farmers.⁶⁶

In response to these passionate pleas the government insisted that the matter should to be deferred until current inter-departmental consultation in progress had been completed and the report of the New Guinea Study Commission had become available.

In the meantime, Minister van Maarseveen began the New Guinea campaign when, at the end of March, he took the rather portentous step of ordering the higher representative of the crown, Beel, to break the administrative ties of New Guinea with East Indonesia by proclaiming the territory as a separate residency and buying out the traditional feudal rights of the Sultan of Tidore.⁶⁷

Following this decision, during a cabinet meeting on 7 June 1949, van Maarseveen left very little doubt as to his intentions concerning the status of New Guinea when he argued that, firstly, Indonesia did not have any legal right to this territory, and that opportunities for economic development would be more favourable under Dutch rather than Indonesian rule, an argument similarly emphasised by van Mook previously. He also stressed the importance for the Netherlands to hold on to some adjacent territory to act as a refuge for the sizeable number of people with pro-Dutch sympathies who had become unacceptable politically in Indonesia. Moreover, New Guinea could also be used for immigration of part of the surplus population of the Netherlands that in the immediate postwar period was economically depressed and was thought to be suffering from over-population. New Guinea could also act as a safe haven for the large fleet of the inter-island Dutch shipping company KPM in the event of Indonesian attempts at nationalisation. Finally, the military importance of New Guinea was emphasised, particularly for the navy, which was in need of a naval stronghold to react swiftly to any threat to Dutch people and property in Indonesia. It could also act as a part of the American defence axis against international communism running supposedly through New Guinea and the Philippines to Japan.⁶⁸

In June 1949 the negotiations to work out the Roem-van Roijen proposals in more detail had stalled and van Maarseveen decided to visit Indonesia himself. There he also held exhaustive consultations with members of the New Guinea Study Commission and was told that very little was known yet about the natu-

ral richness of New Guinea, although it was felt that more oil would be found. After he was told that as an estimate a minimum of 16 million guilders were needed annually for opening up the territory and the cost of a projected trial colonisation project would be 30 million guilders, van Maarseveen concluded that neither the state of East Indonesia nor the United States of Indonesia would be able to bring New Guinea to prosperity.⁶⁹

After great difficulties the negotiations were put on track again, but New Guinea remained an obstacle to the end. The Dutch insistence on a special status was not only rejected by the republic but also by the federalists. During the talks on 22 June 1949 between the Netherlands on the one side and the republic and BFO on the other about preparations and procedures for a projected round table conference, both Indonesian delegations only agreed to the Dutch request to have New Guinea included in the agenda on the condition that it should become part of the United States of Indonesia. Dutch negotiator van Roijen, though, argued that this inclusion in the talks should not be prejudicial to any of the parties and that the Netherlands government maintain its previous position.⁷⁰

During a closed session of parliament on 13 July 1949, van Maarseveen presented an account of the latest Dutch-Indonesian accord. During the debate the government's policy concerning New Guinea was attacked by the leader of the ARP, J. Schouten, for not being explicit enough particularly about the position of the Eurasian group. Strong support came from the two other stalwarts of the pro-New Guinea lobby, Welter and Tilanus. The Minister retorted that recently received reports of investigations in the field made it clear that the problem was by no means as simple as it had been portrayed by Schouten and the matter still needed more careful scrutiny by cabinet.

New Guinea again featured prominently during the public parliamentary debates on 16 and 17 August 1949 which were monitored at this time in the visitors' gallery by members of the Indonesian delegation to the imminent RTC. The renewed pres-

sure by Schouten, Welter and their parliamentary supporters that New Guinea was and should remain Dutch was now provided with more political clout by the conversion to their cause of P.J. Oud, the Liberal (VVD) leader in the House, who argued that:

Either the people of New Guinea are capable of determining their own destiny and should be given the opportunity to do so, or if they are not able to decide their own fate then Dutch sovereignty should be maintained until such time that they will be really capable. In no case should New Guinea be allowed to become a negotiable object between the Netherlands and Indonesia because this would simply amount into transferring it from one colonial status to another ...⁷¹

This conversion of Oud and a number of other Liberals to the New Guinea cause, it was feared by the cabinet, could well put in doubt the chances of gaining the two-thirds majority vote in parliament, required to ensure acceptance of the Round Table Agreement. The Liberal shift to the Right in colonial policy had already become apparent during the 1948 election campaign with the appearance of such campaign mottos as: 'the wheel must be turned around' and 'do you also have enough of Sukarno'.⁷²

The West New Guinea question deferred during the Round Table negotiations

During the round table negotiations the New Guinea issue became an unbridgeable obstacle threatening the ultimate success of the conference as a whole. A compromise proposal by the UNCI to transform the territory into a UN trusteeship was immediately vetoed by the federal states with the rejoinder clearly stating that a separation of New Guinea would result in the rejection of the Round Table Agreements. Similarly, suggestions by some of the Dutch delegates for a trusteeship, already seen by van Mook as a possibility earlier, were summarily dismissed by the Catholic leader, Romme. Another proposal for a Dutch-

Indonesian condominium based on the existing dual Anglo-Egyptian administration of the Sudan was largely ignored by the government.⁷³

In contrast, the stand on New Guinea taken by the republican delegation led by Hatta, was far less sanguine and was careful not to press the matter to the point of endangering the successful completion of the Round Table negotiations and the all-important agreement on the transfer of Dutch sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia.

Finally, a UNCI proposal to shelve negotiations on the New Guinea question until after the completion of the RTC and leaving the area in the meantime under Dutch control, was finally agreed upon after long and intensive discussions. As a result article two of the draft charter of the Transfer of Sovereignty laid down that:

... the status quo of the Residency of New Guinea shall be maintained on the condition that within one year after the date of the transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia the question of the political status of New Guinea shall be determined through negotiations between the Republic of the United States of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands ...⁷⁴

This deferment of a final decision on the political fate of New Guinea seems to have satisfied enough members of the Dutch parliament to pass the Round Table Agreement legislation on 9 December 1949. Perhaps a number of members might have in mind the Dutch proverb: *van uitstel komt afstel*, meaning that postponement often ends up in maintaining the status quo indefinitely. It was a situation that in reality did come to pass. In the Second Chamber the agreements were passed with seventy-one votes for and twenty-nine votes against and in the First Chamber there were thirty-four votes in favour and fifteen against. Voting against were the ARP, and other smaller religion-affiliated parties including four of the nine members of the CHU.

This ultra-Right group was joined by the Communist Party that dismissed the Sukarno-Hatta government as bourgeois lackeys of the capitalist-imperialists and traitors to the true ideals of the revolution.

The failure to achieve a mutually acceptable solution on New Guinea during the RTC proved to be disastrous as it raised a hitherto fairly low-key issue into a full-blown international territorial dispute between two independent nations.

The argument of the New Guinea hardliners in the government, parliament and in the nation at large had almost totally concentrated on the need to create a new homeland for Eurasians and part of the surplus population of the Netherlands itself. In truth these migration plans were never substantially realised, and the actual number of prospective settlers remained pitifully small. In contrast to the claims of the immigration organisations in 1948 to have 11,000 members,⁷⁵ Eurasians, who were generally urban-based office workers, showed actually very little interest in taking up the hazardous role of trail-blazing pioneers in the harsh New Guinea jungle. Furthermore, the procrastination of the Dutch government in reaching a final decision on the political fate of the territory and the official soft-peddalling about large-scale colonisation ventures would hardly have been expected to encourage Eurasians to rush to New Guinea in droves. It is estimated that by the end of December 1949 less than 1000 Europeans, including Eurasians, were living in New Guinea. Still, an exodus from Indonesia took place immediately after the transfer of sovereignty and by the end of 1950 the European population in New Guinea, in the most part Eurasian, had increased to 8516. Only very few managed to settle on the land. The vast majority found employment in the government service or in private firms. Eurasian migration to New Guinea petered out early in the 1950s as most of them preferred to settle in the Netherlands with smaller numbers going to New Zealand, Canada, and Australia. In the latter case applicants were only acceptable if their features were deemed not to be too dark-

skinned and Indonesian in appearance.⁷⁶

It seems difficult to accept that the migration lobbies alone were powerful enough to force the Dutch cabinet and most of parliament to finally insist on retaining control of New Guinea.

In fact by 1949, despite the absence of an exhaustive and statistically responsible study of the island, enough data had been gathered to conclude that the harsh and mountainous topography and the generally poor quality of the soil precluded the establishment of economically viable farming and plantation ventures, hence dooming any plans for large-scale Eurasian and Dutch agricultural settlements.⁷⁷ As an agricultural expert put it in a 1954 report:

... the fact that so far only 1/74 of soils have been scientifically tested should not be allowed to create optimistic expectations of vast areas of fertile land in the not yet explored parts of the island. We know enough about New Guinea that it is geologically old and shows little evidence of even old volcanic activity ... So on the basis of this the normal rule concerning topical soils must be applied here, meaning comparatively very little real fertile lands can be found in Netherlands New Guinea ...⁷⁸

In fact, van Maarseveen alluded to these obstacles in parliament on 25 May 1949, warning of the limited capacity of New Guinea to absorb Eurasian settlers. Nevertheless this did not deter the Minister from persisting in his demand that the territory should remain Dutch:

In principle nobody could doubt that New Guinea does not belong to Indonesia proper. New Guinea is different geographically, ethnologically, and also politically. New Guinea is an entirely separate territory also in regard to its development ...⁷⁹

It seems that van Maarseveen and some other politicians were also motivated in their New Guinea stance by economic considerations. He is reportedly to have told the Labour leader, van der Goes van Naters, that New Guinea was worth a gamble

because of its supposed important mineral deposits, including oil.⁸⁰ Van Maarseveen also stressed the importance of retaining a stronghold in the Indonesian area in order to give substance to the Netherlands-Indonesian Union and to act as a near-at-hand and convenient watchdog of the vast Dutch investments in Indonesia. Another prominent Catholic member of parliament since 1948, Ms Klompé considered New Guinea important because it, among other things, ensured the Netherlands' continued membership of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE). This, she argued, was bound to boost Dutch export opportunities in Asia as a whole.

Indeed, deposits of oil, nickel, gold, chrome and iron had been found, but so far exploration had been too patchy and too haphazard to present accurate estimates of their commercial viability. Only oil showed some initial promise. Production had started in 1948 but petered out in the late 1950s as further exploration attempts proved fruitless. In fact mining experts remained rather cautious in their assessment of New Guinea's mineral exporting potential, and pointed also at the inhibitive cost of transport caused by the difficult logistics involved.⁸¹

The van Eechoud factor

Much rosier were the reports of a number of local officials and settlers who, as pioneers and explorers, had developed a deep personal attachment to the country and to the Papuan people. Like many of their 19th century precursors during the heyday of Western imperialism, they tried to portray the advantages of annexation in the most favourable light attempting to present their home governments with a *fait accompli*.⁸²

Two persons readily falling into this category were Dr Vic de Bruyn and Jan van Eechoud, whose commitment to the Papuan people had been even further reinforced through their shared experiences during the war against the Japanese.

After the Japanese invasion, de Bruyn, a district officer

(*controleur*) of Eurasian origin, stayed behind in the jungle near the Wisselmeren area and, aided by a small band of Papuans, managed throughout most of the war to keep the Japanese at bay and to gather intelligence for the Allies on Japanese troop strength and movements. His exploits have been recorded in the book, *Jungle Pimpernel*. Jan van Eechoud, Commissioner of Police in Manokwari and a Reserve Officer in the KNIL, with a small party of Ambonese and Papuans, took to the jungle when the Japanese arrived and tried from previously prepared bivouacs to conduct intelligence activities and to harass Japanese patrols. A description of these dangerous adventures can be found in van Eechoud's *Vergeten Aarde (The Forgotten Earth)*. Less successful than de Bruyn, he was evacuated by flying boat to Australia in 1943, where he was attached to NICA, an organisation consisting of militarised units of Dutch colonial administrators who were to follow the Allied landings in Indonesia and reintroduce Dutch rule.

It should be kept in mind that the Japanese had only occupied parts of northern New Guinea and that their coastal drive southward had stopped at Kononaro at the border of the Mimika region. Part of the central and the whole of the southern areas remained under Allied control. The Dutch administration was centred in Merauke and small units of the KNIL, often aided by the Papuan population, continued operations against the Japanese in the interior. New Guinea was the only part of the Indies where the Dutch flag had been kept flying during the whole of the war and the Papuans had generally showed themselves anti-Japanese and in some areas had resorted to armed resistance. These facts played a significant part in impelling many of the European colonial officers and service personnel concerned, to strongly oppose the integration of the territory with the Indonesian republic, which was widely seen as a Japanese puppet and most of its leaders as traitors to the Allied cause.

Another argument used to reinforce the demand for a special status for New Guinea was the emergence during the war, par-

ticularly in northern New Guinea, of the first signs of a national Papuan consciousness, which showed distinct anti-Indonesian overtones. This occurred firstly as a reaction to the ill-treatment of the Papuans by the Japanese forces and their Indonesian helpers.

In any case there always had been bad feelings against the so-called *amberies*, that is, Indonesians mainly from the Moluccas and north Sulawesi, employed by the Dutch colonial government and the missions in lower echelon civil service positions and as teachers. The majority of these had been wont to display a racially superior attitude and treated the locals harshly and with contempt. The fact that some of these *amberies* actively cooperated with the hated Japanese caused the original sullen resentment to grow into active resistance, resulting in demands for their repatriation and for their jobs to be filled by Papuans. Furthermore, the far more humane and equal treatment experienced by the Papuans in north-west New Guinea from the American troops in 1944 to 1945, and the sight of Afro-American soldiers performing the same tasks as their white counterparts, seems also to have impressed at least the small elite of Dutch-educated Papuans and to have heightened their craving for social and economic equality and speedy modernisation. The Papuan leader Nicolaas Jouwe, later a prominent leader of the Free Papua Movement, described the impact of the American landings on the local people as follows:

My father was a tribal leader in a *kampung* near Hollandia. He, with the men of the village went to find out what was happening. They saw how the Negroes, who were as black as we, were building roads, driving large Army trucks, and were able to do all sort of things just as well as the Whites. They saw Black pilots, Black sailors, Blacks in beautiful uniforms with bottles of Coca-Cola. Of course they had no idea about racial discrimination in the USA. But what they saw opened their eyes. They had always been despised and treated as savages. Not so much by the Dutch but by

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the lower ranking officials. They had always been at the lowest point of the ladder: firstly there were the Dutch, then the Chinese, followed by the hated South Moluccans ('the Black Hollanders'), then the Javanese, and finally the Papuans. So this contact of the coastal population with the American forces in 1944 contained the germs of the later growth of political consciousness ...⁸³

On the other hand the bulk of the population was unable to cope psychologically with the rapid changes wrought in their lives by the war, and particularly the arrival of the Americans with their unimaginable wealth of goods and machinery and so they tried to find succour in messianic movements, which often turned them against all foreign intrusions. It was a development that will be treated more fully in the section on Papuan nationalism. The focus here is on the role played by colonial officers such as van Eechoud in relation to the development of a Papuan national identity.

Just prior to the American landings in north-west New Guinea, van Eechoud and his NICA detachment were dropped by plane south of Hollandia to gather intelligence about Japanese strongholds and troop movements. As the senior NICA officer attached to the United States army, van Eechoud carried the status of Resident, the highest rank in the Dutch regional colonial service (Binnenlands Bestuur). After the Japanese surrender in August 1945 he was appointed by the Americans as commander of the Dutch forces and NICA units in the whole of New Guinea. When, on 5 March 1946, New Guinea reverted to civil rule, van Eechoud continued as Acting Resident, although official confirmation was not received until 2 February 1947.⁸⁴

Certainly van Eechoud was among the first to draw official attention to this embryonic Papuan national stirring and felt bound by a moral duty to encourage and guide those feelings into productive channels, leading the Papuan people to the point where they would be able to decide on their political future and protect their interests effectively. He was adamant that New

Guinea's prewar treatment as an extension of the Moluccas had to be abandoned and the area had to be given its own autonomous administrative structure under a Resident responsible directly to Batavia. Initially, he seems to have been wavering on the question of whether the territory should be turned into a separate Dutch crown colony, an option he strongly favoured later. He wrote in November 1945 to P. Kerstens, Director of Education and Religious Affairs in Batavia and later a member of the Dutch parliament on the Catholic ticket:

... what status must be given to N.G.? Meyer Ranneft has always argued that it should be made into a crown colony and my impression is that also Mr. Van Mook is moving quite far in this direction. At the present I am unable to judge whether the international situation and the location of New Guinea in the Pacific makes this desirable. I have come to the conclusion that so far as government administration is concerned N.G. should resort directly under the (Batavia) government. Thus, it should be given provincial status, and it would suffice to appoint a Resident as administrator not a Governor. So as a separate residency we would obviate the earlier position which gave the distinct impression of N.G. as a colony of Ambon ...⁸⁵

Clearly, van Eechoud had access to some members of the top layer of the Batavia government. This also included Raden Abdulkadir Widjoatmodjo, his former superior officer in NICA in Australia and in New Guinea and later Deputy Chief Commander of Allied Military Administration Civil Affairs Branch for Java and Madura. He was also a very influential adviser of the Lieutenant-Governor General van Mook, who himself was acquainted with van Eechoud and was impressed with his achievements and ideas. It was in fact van Eechoud who had directed van Mook's attention to the political changes taking place in New Guinea that, as referred to earlier, led him to argue that New Guinea should be accorded a special status. Again it was van Mook who was responsible for the official appoint-

ment of van Eechoud as acting Resident and his inclusion in the preliminary talks on the founding of the South Pacific Commission.⁸⁶

In fact van Eechoud was quite used to running matters on his own and his first efforts to involve the indigenes themselves in the public cause had come about when Batavia was still under Japanese control, and most of the members of the Netherlands Indies government in exile were sunning themselves in Brisbane or enjoying themselves in Melbourne or Tasmania.

At the end of 1944 he established the Papuan Battalion to participate in the mopping-up operations of the Japanese. This army unit, consisting partly of the soldiers of Vic de Bruijn's jungle commando, came under the command of van Eechoud in April 1945 and already numbered 397 men. Apparently the Papuans warmed to their task with great gusto, but as van Eechoud remarked, many of them must have been wondering why it was now all right to kill and why this previously was severely forbidden. But also the Papuan population in general was very active in 'Jap hunting'. The Japanese found their own practice of offering a monetary award for each white man killed now turned against themselves with disastrous consequences by the Dutch who put a price of half a guilder on each Japanese head. As van Eechoud writes:

A lot of half guilders were earned. According to my notes about the five posts of Hollandia, Sarmi, Biak, Numfoor and Sausapor, it appears that during the period August to October 1944 the people killed 2,119 Japanese and took 249 prisoners. I know that the total number of Japanese killed in Biak alone amounted to 1,700. According to true Papuan custom, evidence of the quarry was brought along, partly as a trophy, and partly to prove their right on half a guilder. And so Papuans arrived carrying lugubrious looking garlands made of shrivelled up Jap ears. We tried of course to explain to them that this was not acceptable behaviour. This was not understandable to the Papuans ... One could hardly

expect Papuans to have humane feelings towards the Japanese. Not only because of their atrocious behaviour but also Papuans had never been able to see any reason why an enemy should be treated with any consideration. So captured Japanese were normally carried in completely naked, tied up on a long pole like pigs ...⁸⁷

As well as the battalion in 1944 van Eechoud established a police school for Papuans in Merauke, which in 1945 was relocated to Hollandia; he envisaged that the core of the Papuan police force would be provided by the Papuan Battalion.

Another initiative of van Eechoud, which was to have important repercussions on future political developments in the territory, was the founding, at the end of 1944, of a Bestuurschool, a public service training school, to enable Papuans to compete with, and finally to displace, the Indonesians in the lower ranked positions in the civil service. Over the years this school produced more than 150 graduates, most of whom served in public service positions. Among its first graduates was Nicolaas Jouwe, who later recalled:

... the school certainly caused bad blood among the south Moluccans, who had always provided the recruits for the government service. Van Eechoud broke with this. At the opening of the school in 1944 he said some unforgettable things. He said: 'We came here in 1828, and we told you what to do. Today you are called to take the government of this country in your own hands; today the new Papuan is being born.' The oldest student stepped forward and replied: 'We give you the honour title of Bapa Papua, father of the new Papua'. Van Eechoud is the only Dutchman, who was given this honour ...⁸⁸

As a first step on the long and arduous road to the achievement of a modern Papuan democratic government van Eechoud, in January 1946, ordered all district officers to experiment with consultative councils. The meetings were to be conducted as

much as possible in accordance with local *adat* and had to be representative of all social layers of the Papuan people. The objective was to bring the people together, to introduce them to democratic thinking and practices, to make them understand the pros and cons of socioeconomic and political decisions, and thereby eventually create a greater sense of Papuan national consciousness and unity. The ultimate ambition was to proceed from these local councils to a national Papuan representative assembly.⁸⁹

In the more culturally developed Biak area, where most indigenes under thirty-five years of age were found to be literate,⁹⁰ Dr Vic de Bruyn founded in 1947 a more advanced type of representative council: the Kankainkarkara. Being convinced that the Biak *adat* contained a number of basic democratic features de Bruyn based the new council on the existing local village organisation structure, which consisted of twenty members, of whom fifteen were elected by local councils and the other five appointed by the district officer, who also presided as chairman.⁹¹

Van Eechoud, although not opposed to immigration *per se*, was worried about its possible harmful effect on the Papuan population, particularly in the case of Dutch settlers from the Netherlands itself. He wrote to W.K.H. Feuilletau de Bruyn, an important leader of the immigration lobby in Holland, in January 1947:

... I must admit that I am not very enthusiastic about colonisation in New Guinea of Europeans from Holland. In the first place I doubt that it will be successful. Furthermore it seems to me that the import of Europeans will sow the seed of future conflict. I could only agree if sufficient account is taken of the future of the Papuans. Only when this is effectively assured can such conflict be avoided but this means that colonisation cannot be based on Papuan labor, because this would result in a system of slave labor. And I am convinced that the Papuans are far too ambitious and too eager for self-advancement to allow this to happen. I have a

high opinion of their intelligence and I am sure they will also find their own way without colonisation. You would not recognise any more the Papuans of earlier times, who (now) when they realise that not sufficient attention is given in government policy to their own future welfare, have meetings, pass motions, send telegrams to the Government and the Commission General etc., and let it be known every time they are not happy about political decisions

...⁹²

In March 1947 van Eechoud submitted a detailed, 130-page report on government policy to the Batavian government, in which he explained his ideas about training and guiding the Papuans to self-government. He argued that New Guinea should have its own government apparatus separate from the rest of Indonesia and be staffed as soon as possible by Papuans themselves, while socioeconomic development should be directed at protecting and advancing the needs and demands of the local people.⁹³

There is no doubt van Eechoud was impelled by a kind of sacred mission towards his Papuan charges and held their interests, as he perceived them, to be of paramount importance. Less paternalistic than the common run of colonial administrators, as is evident from his Papuanisation policy, he also showed a more sympathetic understanding than most of his colleagues had at the time of the struggle for independence in Indonesia proper. As he wrote to Abdulkadir in July 1946:

... It appears that we are frightened to recognise that the urge towards 'merdeka' is born in every people, who have achieved a certain stage of development. This does not mean that hereby we have to ignore the influence of large-scale capitalist enterprise, and various other international political and economic relationships. Surely, we will not weaken our position by recognising something which is fully alive. This has been clearly acknowledged by van Mook, Logeman, etc., in their speeches, but our Government Information Service and particularly our press seem not to be able

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to bring up the necessary courage to follow suit ... I ask myself how in God's name Indonesians will be ever able to extract from our press any notion that we understand them ...⁹⁴

On the other hand van Eechoud was critical of the undue haste of the republicans in demanding the transfer of full power without having sufficient trained and experienced leaders and officials to take charge of the ship of state. He seems to have preferred self-government rather than full independence for Java and Sumatra.⁹⁵

From the beginning, van Eechoud's major concern was to avoid a situation in which New Guinea would be sucked into the maelstrom of Indonesian radical revolutionary agitation and violence. Hence his insistence on creating a special status for the territory in which the Papuans would be given the chance to be educated gradually and peacefully towards the realisation of nationhood and a free and democratic government system. By 1948, probably realising that the Dutch-designed Indonesian federal system was doomed and that the Indonesian republic would impose its reign on the whole of the archipelago, he changed his initial view that New Guinea would eventually become part of Indonesia. Instead he began to work intensely to keep New Guinea under the Netherlands crown, which he considered to be the only way to effectively safeguard Papuan national interests.

Extremely annoyed about the fact that New Guinea affairs rated only very low on Batavia's list of priorities he lamented, in a letter of January 1948 to his friend Abdulkadir, Director-General of Government Affairs, that five months after the submission of his report there had been no official reaction as yet. This meant that in the meantime the territory remained without the necessary staff and material resources needed to set his proposed development in motion. He also insisted that it was high time that a decision should be taken about the future political status of New Guinea, as he was at a loss as to what policies to pursue.

Was he expected to guide the situation to the eventual incorporation of the territory into East Indonesia or would New Guinea remain Dutch and become a receptacle for large-scale Eurasian immigration? Being aware that it was still too politically sensitive for the government to pronounce openly on its future plans for New Guinea, van Eechoud asked to be given at least a discreet hint of what was to be the likely policy direction so that he could adjust his policies accordingly. Abdulkadir agreed that a speedy decision on the political status of New Guinea was urgent. But too many people were meddling in this question with the result that a final decision was postponed until the report of the New Guinea Study Commission had been completed. This commission, envisaged by van Mook during the Pangkalpinang conference in 1946, had finally been officially instituted on 15 March 1948 and van Eechoud was appointed as a member.⁹⁶ He wrote the political and economic parts of the final report, which was finished in April 1949. He remained sceptical about the work of the commission as a whole, criticising it for not being objective and profound enough. In the meantime, van Eechoud continued to work towards the realization of his own policies and plans.

In April 1949, van Eechoud travelled to Batavia especially to meet with his powerful uncle, High Commissioner Beel; and he reported to Feuilletau in The Hague:

I had a long and, enjoyable talk with Beel and I am under the impression that he is very keen to give New Guinea at least a special status under Dutch control ...⁹⁷

Rather significantly he added that finally most of the Batavian government establishment had taken his side and supported the idea of a separate New Guinea under the Dutch crown. Asked his opinion by Beel about the idea of severing the ties between Tidore and New Guinea, van Eechoud pointed out that he had already advocated this in his submission of 1947, and complained of never having received any reaction from Batavia on his blue-

print of New Guinea's development. To this Beel reacted rather laconically: 'but you surely pushed on regardlessly ...' In fact this is precisely what van Eechoud had been doing, although on occasions falling foul of the central authorities. He was not trained as a colonial administrative officer (BB) but was basically a police officer, a military man, a jungle explorer, who was used to taking instant decisions on the spot. As a Resident he continued to act in the same way, taking quick decisions, and trying to railroad through his ideas. Van Eechoud was impatient about the procrastination and neglect of New Guinea affairs by the Batavia government, which had its hands full trying to deal with the political and military situation in Java and Sumatra. In this situation he took things in his own hands and, remaining largely unchecked by his superiors, designed and executed his own master plan for the socio-political development of New Guinea. He complained that too many officials in Batavia were living luxuriously and were trying to appropriate the spoils for themselves as much as possible before the imminent arrival of the doomsday of Indonesian independence, which would put them out of business.⁹⁸ Van Eechoud seems to have been quite content left to his own devices and threw himself into his work with body and soul to achieve the separation of New Guinea from Indonesia.

It has been suggested by de Geus⁹⁹ that during van Eechoud's term of office almost imperceptibly the foundations were laid for the future international problem which West New Guinea would pose during the 1950s and early 1960s. Without any major constraints imposed on him by either Batavia or the The Hague, van Eechoud was given ample leeway to set his own plans into motion. This meant, in the first place, a conscious effort to immunise the indigenous population as much as possible against what was perceived to be the destructive radical-revolutionary ethos ruling the Indonesian political and social scene at the time. Through his Papuanisation policies and encouragement of the incipient Papuan national awakening he tried to give New Guinea

its own separate administrative and political status. It could be argued with some truth that as a result of van Eechoud's efforts, by 1949 New Guinea had in spirit and orientation become even more different to the rest of Indonesia than previously and had developed its own recognisable national identity, at least in urban areas. This allowed the Netherlands government to play the right of Papuans for political self-determination as a trump card in its dispute with Indonesia.

In addition, van Eechoud tried to influence directly the decision-making process about New Guinea's future in the Netherlands itself. He had kept in touch with the Dutch political scene through his correspondence with the New Guinea lobby, particularly Feuilletau de Bruyn, which often yielded valuable snippets of inside information about cabinet and party room deliberations. Significantly in 1949, he also pursued an active and secret correspondence with Meyer Ranneft, who exerted considerable influence in conservative circles in The Hague. Meyer Ranneft's son also served under van Eechoud as a *controleur*.

It was actually a secret letter sent by Feuilletau de Bruyn in October 1948 that alerted him to the danger to the New Guinea cause posed by a supposed solution for the New Guinea question dreamed up by four cabinet ministers: Götzen, Drees, van Schaik and Beel. He was probably referring here to the condominium idea, which made van Eechoud decide to carry the battle to Holland itself.¹⁰⁰

Furthermore, as a practising Catholic with a thorough Jesuit education behind him it was natural for him to turn first to his religious confrères; and he went boldly straight to the top and contacted Professor Romme, the leader of the KVP. He was aware of Romme's record as the main champion of a strong Dutch-Indonesian union, in which the Netherlands would remain the predominant partner, and of the principle of political self-determination for all regions and their right to choose to stay out of the Indonesian federation. In any case, in knocking on Romme's door van Eechoud could have expected to receive a

sympathetic hearing for his pleas and an opportunity to reinforce the support for the New Guinea cause in Catholic circles. He complained to Romme about the lack of expert knowledge about New Guinea in the Netherlands, even in the Parliament:

... I hope that you will not be upset if I say that I am not convinced that you have been properly briefed about this land; and I am actually writing to you to ensure that you, as the Catholic leader in the Netherlands, and a man, whose judgment is widely respected, will finally receive an appraisal from a qualified person ...

He then went on to detail the economic possibilities of New Guinea. More than 20,000 hectares of arable land had been found and another 500,000 hectares would be found suitable for agriculture. This still offered immigration some chance of success, however, he warned expectations should remain realistic in view of the rather moderate fertility of the land in question. Van Eechoud was, however, more sanguine about the promising future of minerals. Oil holdings in the Vogelkop had been estimated to last from sixty to seventy years and deposits of wolfram, bauxite, copper and gold had also been located. Furthermore, New Guinea was very rich in valuable timbers, copal and copra, while favourable conditions existed to establish a sea fishing industry. He excused his patent emphasis on economic motives, because:

... the businesslike Dutch are less sensitive to idealistic motives and are more interested in a paying proposition ... But it is undesirable to advertise this openly and to attract the attention of the State of East Indonesia and the Federation to New Guinea. I cannot see, why the Netherlands should surrender New Guinea. The people are politically still voiceless; and no objections were raised by Indonesia when the territory was included under the 'dependent peoples' classification by the South Pacific Commission ... Using the much used slogan of 'democracy' it should surely be pos-

sible to leave New Guinea under Dutch control, with the condition that after 25 years the people will be allowed to have their say. Whether they will then decide for a permanent connection with the Netherlands will depend on the conduct of our administration ...

Romme's reply, on 20 October 1948, must have been somewhat disappointing, as it referred mainly to the very recent Federal Interim Government compromise, under which, areas such as New Guinea, where the indigenous population was not yet capable of deciding their own political future, would be administered jointly by the crown and the interim government.¹⁰¹ It had been in fact the distinct danger posed by this idea of a condominium to control New Guinea, which had prodded van Eechoud to write to Romme in the first place. He still continued to press Romme about New Guinea's economic viability. In March 1949, in a secret memorandum about the territory's economic potential, he dismissed the report of the New Guinea Study Commission – of which he himself had been member – as too negative and biased. Admitting that the Papuan population was too small and still lacked the capacity to build the infrastructure necessary for economic development, he saw an important task for European immigrants, particularly Eurasians. All this should be seen in a time frame of twenty-five years, during which the Netherlands government would be required to invest the funds needed to start various agricultural projects such as in the Nimboran plains near Hollandia or areas around Lake Sentani. Van Eechoud pointed to the possibility of the production of cocoa, copra, and rice, and again emphasised the export potential of timber and minerals. He stressed though that far from trying to bypass the indigenous people:

The Papuans will have an important place in the development of their country. They are certainly not lazy and stupid, as they are so often pictured mainly by people who only know them superficially and have no understanding of their acculturation problems.

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Special skills are needed to educate Papuans ... they are very quick-witted ... Papuans are in general ambitious and want to better themselves. They lack the contemplative nature of the Javanese; and when they have come in contact with modern life, they quickly show themselves to have a special feeling for Western economic thinking. The population is, however, too small; and if even part mechanization and cooperatives are introduced the autochthonous population will not be able to develop this land on its own ... there remain large employment opportunities for many of overpopulated Holland's sons in the agrarian sector, and if minerals are found also in industry ... An enormous task is awaiting here, not for one or more 'companies', but for a 'nation' ...¹⁰²

Van Eechoud's argument here sounds identical to the claims of the various New Guinea immigration organisations, which greatly intensified their propaganda efforts on the eve of the round table negotiations, trying to influence Dutch political opinion in favour of retaining New Guinea as a crown colony.

In fact Romme's personal archives also contain a report of July 1949 of Dr W.C. Klein, who unfolded his plans for New Guinea's economic development, painting a very rosy picture for Dutch economic possibilities; and he argued that the required capital investment could dry up if the territory was surrendered to Indonesia. So, for the sake of both Holland and the Papuans alike, it was imperative for New Guinea to be made into a Dutch crown colony.¹⁰³

Furthermore, Romme and other Catholic parliamentarians could hardly be expected not to have been impressed by the strong calls of the Catholic missions to leave New Guinea under the Dutch crown. On 11 December 1949, the Apostolic Prefect of Hollandia, Bishop A. Cremers, OFM, sent a memorandum to the Dutch bishops and a number of prominent Catholic politicians, including Romme. Reminiscent of his 16th century precursors in Latin America, the bishop envisaged the transformation of New Guinea into a New Holland through the efforts of

Dutch and Eurasian officials and farmers. The Malay language should be pushed aside in favour of the Dutch language and civilisation; and the Papuans should be Christianised en masse, with the hope, of course, that the Catholic Church would become the largest denomination. He complained that the Catholic missions were discriminated against by the preponderantly protestant government administration; and furthermore, insisted that large numbers of Catholic officials should be sent out to redress this imbalance. Apparently the only prominent Catholic layman maintaining close liaison with the church was Resident van Eechoud, who had established a close rapport especially with Bishop Cremers.¹⁰⁴

Van Eechoud pushed the same argument in a secret letter, of 10 September 1949, to Meyer Ranneft when he advocated the introduction of a Western-Christian civilisation in New Guinea and the replacement of Malay by Dutch as the *lingua franca*. This would cause an ever larger disparity between New Guinea and Indonesia, which, he argued, would be the only way to safeguard the territory from Indonesian aspirations.¹⁰⁵ A little later he reported to Meyer Ranneft about his intention to have the Bishop of Batavia, Willekens, and Bishop Cremers to put pressure on the Catholic Party in Holland for support of the New Guinea cause.¹⁰⁶

Van Eechoud left no stone unturned to plead his cause; and on 13 August 1949, during another interview with his uncle, Beel, he tried to refute opposition arguments that New Guinea would be too much of a burden on the Netherlands treasury, especially as economic prospects were rather dim. Putting the annual budget at 30 million guilders at current prices he argued:

It is based on an autonomous New Guinea – a miniature Netherlands Indies – with its own central and regional government apparatus ... everything will of course be at a moderate scale; and with defence outlays excluded this would be adequate for the needs of the first five to ten years. Undoubtedly New Guinea will in the

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long run be at least self-sufficient; and there is a distinct possibility that the Netherlands administration will be kept afloat substantially by mineral production. We will secure this chance with an investment at a maximum of 30 millions ... And I have the strong impression that the results of nickel exploration in New Guinea will really awaken interest in Batavia; but it is now too late to direct this through normal channels before the Round Table Conference ...¹⁰⁷

At the end of October 1949, van Eechoud, following the advice of Meyer Ranneft, travelled to Holland hoping to influence more directly the outcome of the RTC on New Guinea's future.

It is of course difficult to gauge what effect these authoritative voices from New Guinea itself might have had on the final decision of The Hague on the future of the territory. At least in the case of Romme and some other Catholic politicians, who are known to have been influenced by strong ethical and religious motives, pleas of experts like van Eechoud would certainly have reinforced their already strong inclination for a Dutch-controlled New Guinea. According to a Catholic party parliamentarian, T. de Graaf:

I believe that Romme never intended to surrender New Guinea, particularly because the resolution about the right of self-determination weighed very heavily on his mind. Actually he wanted to mention it explicitly during the Round Table Conference, but I just managed to dissuade him. This right of self-determination was taken so seriously by him that we, from the beginning, elevated it to a moral question; and something we never wanted to abandon easily ...¹⁰⁸

Papuan anti-foreign and nationalist trends

The question as to what were the political desires of the Papuan population in 1949 is impossible to answer in any meaningful extent. One cannot talk about a Papuan people and even less a

Papuan nation in the sense that the large majority of the indigenous people were clearly seen to be impelled by a common will to form a separate national, political and cultural entity in terms of international law. In fact, at this stage, large areas had hardly been touched at all by the 20th century. Even in those regions, mainly in the coastal fringes, where Western civilisation had begun to have some impact, the acculturation rate showed considerable variation.

In 1950 only about 40 per cent of the indigenous population out of an estimated total of 1 million had been brought under Dutch administrative control.¹⁰⁹ Similarly, the Christian missions, which had been active since the middle of the 19th century, had been able to extend their work to only part of the territory, and in the early 1950s the number of Papuan Christians was put at about 170,000.¹¹⁰

At that time then the designation ‘the Papuans’, was for the main part still no more than a vague collective noun denoting a myriad of small, socially, culturally, linguistically different, and as a rule, mutually antagonistic communities, generally not counting more than a few hundred people, spread over thousands of square kilometres. Their civilisation was among the most primitive in the world: a mainly illiterate, Stone Age people, among whom headhunting was still practised in some remote and inaccessible areas.

The Papuan conception of reality, kinship and family, and in fact the whole culture and understanding of history was impregnated with mythology, and it was these myths that were played out, often in great detail, in sacred rites and feasts. Animism and ancestor worship formed the core of religious life; although in some areas also the Pacific-wide belief of *mana*, an impersonal force pervading actions and events, was prevalent. Moreover, life was ruled by magical forces and often people lived under constant fear of death through magic or headhunting; sickness was often seen as a result of black magic.¹¹¹ There was a low life expectancy and a high infant mortality.¹¹² The main diseases plagu-

ing the indigenous population were yaws, malaria, tuberculosis and leprosy.¹¹³

What first impressed outsiders about traditional indigenous culture was the totally closed nature of most Papuan communities and the utterly self-centred view of their world, in which their own community was perceived as the centre of the universe. For example, the Waropen of north New Guinea and the Marindanim in the south considered themselves as being the only 'real people' in existence; everybody else outside the village boundary, Papuan and foreigners alike, were looked at as sub-humans, unimportant, hostile beings, whose heads were fair game to be collected. The intensity of this belief of socio-cultural superiority seems to have differed from area to area.

Sometimes trade relations existed with the outside between the tribes of the mountainous interior and coastal communities. Contact with neighbouring villages might occur during the magic-religious feast cycle that might have introduced more peaceful conditions and a sense of rudimentary social rapport in those areas. Nowhere though had these somewhat larger local groupings been allowed to grow out into more tightly organised territorial organisational structures. The only exception to this occurred in the north-east where some larger socio-cultural groups existed, counting between 3000 to 4000 people and led by *rajas* (chieftains) who, however, did not possess the same power as their Indonesian counterparts.¹¹⁴

The Mimika region

In the areas influenced by the Dutch administration and the missions, traditional ways and beliefs had by no means fully disappeared. A pertinent example of this is provided by the Mimika, whose region is situated on a long south-west coastal plain extending from Etna Bay to the Otokwa River. Their first recorded contact with the outside world dates back to the 17th century when Dutch sources mention the existence, on various

small islands in the Etna Bay region, of a lucrative trade conducted by merchants from the Moluccan island of Ceram. The main attractions were slaves, and the *massoo* bark that was highly praised for its medicinal properties. The locals received in return, swords, textiles, sugar, and rice. Some Ceram traders superimposed themselves as *rajas* on the local population and levied taxes. The Dutch East India Company's attempts to monopolise these profitable ventures failed, and the Ceram *rajas* were able to continue their extortions and exactions until the beginning of the 20th century.

In 1898, a Dutch government post was established in Fak-Fak from where the Mimika coast was gradually explored. But it was not until 1926 that the first permanent government settlement was made, partly to control the activities of Chinese traders involved in a recently started and thriving trade in birds of paradise, crown pigeons and crocodiles. The actual hunting was usually done by Papuans from outside the region, mainly from Aruni Bay near Kaimana. The Chinese were interested also in the delivery of timber, resins and sago. Through a system of advances (*voorschot*) for food and other needs, which had to be bought in his store, the Chinese trader caused the hunters to be almost constantly in his debt. Another reason for the government presence was to protect the local population from the ever-increasing incidence of headhunting incursions of the Asmat tribes from the southern borders.¹¹⁵ Stringent budget cuts during the depression of the 1930s reduced the government's role almost solely to tax gathering. Every adult was forced to gather 2 guilders worth of *damar* – a sort of pine-like resin – as a tax in kind.¹¹⁶

Establishment of the Catholic missions began in 1927 and were received favourably. The teachers were Indonesian Christians from the Kai Islands and 460 boys and 160 girls were attending school in the Kaokonao area in 1929; and in 1932 there were twenty-one schools with 1200 pupils.¹¹⁷

The Japanese occupation was rather traumatic and demoralising; education stopped and the people were forced to produce

food to be delivered to the army. The mission teachers were put in charge and if food deliveries were late they would be publicly flogged. In Keawkwa all villagers were forced to witness the beheading of Allied fliers, who had been shot down in the area. After the capitulation the locals hardly needed any official compulsion to track down and often kill Japanese fugitives.¹¹⁸

After the war the missions intensified their efforts and in 1948 the children in all villages received education, and by 1952 almost the whole of the Mimika region had been Christianised.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, it was found that the incursions of the Europeans to date had affected the traditional culture and value system only very marginally. These foreign intrusions had been seen essentially as a challenge to the traditional, egocentric and ethnocentric perception of themselves. Somewhat similar to the reactions of the culturally syncretic Javanese (Sakender cycle) to Dutch encroachments, the people of the Mimika region responded by adopting an attitude that could be described as we cannot beat them let us join them, but then on our own terms. So, the foreign influences were simply incorporated into the existing mythologically-based view of life and reality. The Mimika people consider their region to be the cradle of humanity, and believe themselves to be descended from 'supermen', who arrived from heaven. These 'culture heroes' later sailed away towards the west to become the progenitors of the Indonesians, the Chinese, the Dutch, and all the other nations. As the first humans, however, the Mimika see themselves as the 'real' people, while all foreigners are dismissed as simply 'ordinary people'. All products of modern technology: iron manufactures, machines, aeroplanes, mirrors, looking glasses, rifles, and so on, were also believed to have been created in Mimika land by the 'supermen', who took those accomplishments with them when they sailed and taught the Westerners the production techniques. The Mimika remained deprived of these goods until the descendants of the 'supermen', namely merchants, colonial officers, and missionaries, arrived returning some of this richness to the Mimika

people. The following segment exemplifies how Christianity and the Dutch colonial presence have been mythicised. The story deals with two sisters ('superwomen'):

They reached Kaimana or Fatema (i.e., Fak-Fak, the first Dutch government post) and there they built an aeroplane and left for the land of the white man. There they called themselves respectively Maria (the eldest one) and Wireremiina (Wilhelmina). Maria went to heaven by plane. And she born Jesus and that is how Christianity came about. Wilhelmina founded the Kompenie (i.e., the Dutch colonial government) ...¹²⁰

What the story seeks to convey is that Christianity and the Dutch government are interconnected and originated in the Mimika region. A common origin was not yet seen by the Mimika as bridging the gap between their world and that of the foreigners. They were realistic enough to realise that they had to come to terms with the modern world, although their reaction was somewhat schizoid wanting to live simultaneously in two different worlds:

Both worlds have their own values, norms and demands. The art of living of the Mimika consists of accommodating oneself, either outwardly or for real, to the new, while at the same time honouring the old. As such the Mimika is a realist and sometimes an opportunist ...¹²¹

The Mimika region is culturally fairly homogeneous, although communities are necessarily small as group solidarity is based mainly on kinship.¹²²

Of the 250 labourers contracted in the Mimika region by the Netherlands New Guinea Oil Company in 1951, only very few elected to settle in the oil town of Sorong. The number of Mimika students in the boarding schools in Merauke and Fak-Fak, and Mimika policemen employed outside the area was extremely small.¹²³ So the Western impact, particularly because of the way it had been absorbed, had hardly been able to break through the

hard shell of the essentially ethno-centric world view of Mimika culture. It remained largely a closed, introspective, society; its attention remained directed solely at oneself and was unaware of, or interested in, belonging to a much larger whole.

Finally, it is interesting to note that in some way the Mimika people showed a more realistic grasp of their future chances in that, unlike a number of other Papuan communities, they did not put faith for their salvation on messianic expectations.

The Muju region

A different reaction to the encroachment of the West was shown by the Muju, a group of about 18,000 people, living in south New Guinea in an area bounded by the Kao and Digul rivers and close to the Papua-New Guinea border.¹²⁴ Dutch exploration had started just before World War I, although initially only little contact was made with the local population. More intense was the impact of the bird of paradise hunters, who swarmed into the area from 1914 to 1926. The first government post established in 1919 at Assike on the Digul River was closed again early in the 1920s; and it was not until 1935 that another post was established. The Christian missions started their work in 1933 and gradually increased their influence, mainly through education. In 1955 Christians comprised 66 per cent of the Muju population. The actual literacy percentage must be put considerably lower, as more than 40 per cent of mission schools were found to be below par and therefore were not eligible for government subsidy.

As is common to all Papuan societies, Muju life is deeply influenced by kinship considerations, mythology, the belief in spirits and the power of magic. There are still, today, a number of special traits, which make the Muju people stand out. Firstly there is the comparatively high degree of individualism. Normally families live in separate dwellings and the family head has considerable individual powers and decides on marriage matters and other

communal relations. Individual property rights are also strongly developed. Land, water, and all its products are owned individually, and within the family both husband and wife own their own land, money (seashells) and other valuables. Furthermore, no judicial organisation or communally acceptable judges exist and wrongs and misdeeds are punished arbitrarily by the injured person either by murder or sorcery. The Muju are extremely vengeful and hence their whole life is permeated by the constant fear of being suddenly attacked and killed by an enemy. But what stands out above all among the Muju is their strong acquisitive trait: their absolutely overpowering preoccupation with gaining money and other possessions. Barter and trade were well developed both within the tribal area and outside. Muju men travelled a great deal, often for long distances, seeking profitable relationships and gain. A crude money economy existed using cowrie shells and dogs' teeth as currency, although after the Pacific war modern coin also began to be used. The ability to become rich and prosperous depended greatly on the ownership of pigs, the raising of which was by and large the most lucrative industry among the Muju. Pigs are raised not for consumption, but only for sale to accumulate wealth. Money is essential, because it is the only commodity acceptable as a bride-price and it is further necessary for the trade in bows, tobacco, drums, stones possessing magical powers, dogs, and to pay sorcerers to cure illness.¹²⁵

This capitalistic bent made it easier for the Muju to deal with the impact of the West, particularly when it became clear that economic gain could be expected. So, when the bird hunters arrived in 1914 the locals soon realised that money could be made as guides and translators; and it did not take long before some learned how to handle a gun and help in the hunt itself. Later the government decreed that only Muju were allowed to hunt for birds. Another important result was that a large number of young Muju ended up as servants of bird hunters in Merauke, and several of those on their return took up leadings positions

as village chiefs.¹²⁶

The establishment, in 1927, of the internment camp for radical Indonesian nationalists in Tanah Merah on the upper Digul River was also seen by the Muju as another opportunity to better themselves. Several young Muju found employment as servants of colonial officials, soldiers and the Indonesian detainees. As a result a number of Muju were able to enlarge their view of the world when they accompanied their masters on their transfer to other parts of the archipelago, usually Ambon.¹²⁷

During the war years more Muju came in contact with the West, as a large number of them were put to work in Tanah Merah. Many also found work in the military projects in Merauke with a sizeable number of them settling in the area permanently.¹²⁸ After the war this emigration continued, but now the Muju went further afield finding work in the oilfields in Sorong, while some went as far as Port Moresby.

It was solely the confrontation with the hitherto undreamed of glittering wealth of foreigners that strongly stimulated the Muju to readily accept all sorts of Western elements in order to gain the same economic advantages. The readiness by which education, the Roman Catholic religion, and colonial government policy were acquiesced in should therefore be viewed in this light.

The main exception to this acceptance was the continued resistance to the official policy of village settlement. Originally the Muju had been scattered all over the forest living in houses supported on high stilts for reasons of protection. The most important economic activity of raising pigs also took place adjacent to the houses. As part of their civilisation task, firstly the missions, and later the government, tried to force people to live in villages, where a church and school was to be built and for hygienic reasons pig-raising was not allowed. The Muju resisted as this was felt as a direct attack on one of the essential pillars of their culture, typified by one observer as being in the iron grip of the all-important cycle of pig, money and women. As a result, people insisted on maintaining an additional house in the

forest to be able to continue traditional pig-breeding. This often caused long spells in which people lived outside the village also causing a high incidence of school absenteeism.

The values and belief system underlying Christianity and Western civilisation as a whole had generally only been imperfectly understood and adopted. Among the non-Christians, original religious beliefs had hardly been affected, while older Christians tended to maintain the old and new religion side by side. Even mission school educated younger Christians, although showing a more sceptical attitude, had often not been able to remove themselves entirely from the pull of the magical power of the old myths and the spirits of the ancestors. The ideas held about Western civilisation and its production of wealth were unrealistic and bordered on the fantastic. As has been stressed repeatedly, the main motivating factor pushing the Muju to adopt Western ways was their strong desire to obtain the same economic prosperity enjoyed by Westerners. When these great expectations could not be realised quickly enough by natural means, some Muju, in the early 1950s, tried to speed up the process by calling on the help of the spirits of the ancestors. This spiritualist-based salvation movement provides a useful gauge to evaluate the extent of acculturation among the Muju.

Started initially among the Muju community in Merauke, the movement later moved to the Muju area proper. The leader, a certain Kuram, asserted that he had been invaded by a spirit, which would show him how the people of south New Guinea would be able to progress and attain knowledge and riches. God Almighty himself would institute the necessary changes. Kuram's followers were taught how to get in touch with the spirits of the deceased, particularly Americans. In a letter to the Dutch Resident, all nations in the world were exhorted to send money, each at least 100,000 guilders, to Merauke, which would be distributed by God the Father. Also, the Netherlands government should ask other nations to send 'money factories'.¹²⁹ It was further believed that their actions not did contravene Christian

teachings, as all this originated from God. Moreover, the missionaries were accused of keeping to themselves secret ways by which to receive knowledge from the spirits.¹³⁰

It is clear that Christianity and money were inextricably intertwined in the mind of the Muju, who also had no idea of the real workings of the modern Western economic system. In fact the Muju could not understand where all the goods unloaded regularly by Dutch ships in Merauke came from. They were also amazed at the large quantity and variety of the imports that simply could not be the work of men only. Surely the Dutch had been aided by the spirits. How otherwise could such ships come into being and how could an aeroplane fly and why were the doctor and the Resident so clever? This inference was pushed even further, through the belief that all those goods actually had originated in the Muju region in the first place. They had been sent underground to Europe, where, after modification and the changing of the Muju trademark, they had been exported back to Merauke.¹³¹

The Kuram-led movement also showed some traces of anti-foreign and even proto-regional nationalistic sentiments. The spirit had promised that Klapalima, the area near Merauke where the Muju had settled, would be instantly transformed into a big city with banks, a 'money factory', a ship, many shops and everybody would be given a car. The governor, the Resident, the bishop, the doctors, air pilots, navy officers and teachers would all be Muju. Kuram, as the governor, would be seated on a golden chair looking down on his subjects. All Muju would now be also a *tuan*, a master, and the people would no longer have to work until they dropped. Furthermore, plenty of food and even immortality was promised as the Muju doctors would be able to raise the people from the dead by uttering the command: 'Stand up'. Obviously, the story of Lazarus had made a deep impression.¹³²

In addition to this insistence on socioeconomic equality there were also demands for 'ethnic cleansing'. Indonesians were asked

to return to their own country and particularly the Eurasians, who had taken up market gardens in the Merauke area and so were seen as competitors by the Muju, had to disappear. The Indonesians were resented because they obstructed the growth of social mobility for the Muju, and if they remained they would not be allowed to act in their normal arbitrary manner. The Chinese also would have to depart leaving their shops to be run by the Muju themselves. Only the representatives of the Netherlands government, that is, the *tokok* – full-blooded Dutch – with whom full union was advocated, were asked to remain. Perhaps the spirit realised on what side the Muju bread was buttered.¹³³

Similar movements appeared in the Muju heartland, but there the proto-nationalist overtones seen in Merauke were missing, as they concentrated simply on economic matters. Moreover, it should be stressed, that these movements were spiritualist based and not messianic as was the case in some other parts of New Guinea, particularly in the north.

The Koreri movement

The growing awareness by the Muju of the existence of another alien, baffling world outside their own was a very recent phenomenon. In contrast, some northern coastal regions in the Vogelkop, the Onin peninsula (Fak-Fak) and Geelvink Bay, the Raja Empat Islands, and the Schouten Islands (Biak, Japen and Numfoor) had, for a long time, been in contact with, and were influenced by, nations in the eastern Indonesian archipelago, particularly the Moluccas. The most southward point of this contact was the Etna Bay area (Mimika), where, as was seen above, merchants of the Moluccan island of Ceram had established a trading monopoly of *masso* bark and slaves. In 1848 the Netherlands Indies government, in a secret decree, included the Mimika coast in the long recognised political sphere of influence of his vassal, the Sultan of Tidore, in parts of northern West Guinea.¹³⁴

On the basis of local legends, the subservient relationship of Biak, and presumably the other affected areas in the Geelvink Bay, to the Sultan of Tidore seems to date back to the second part of the 15th century.¹³⁵ A two-way traffic of pirates and traders between the Moluccas and the northern shores of western Guinea had been in existence long before that. This in fact formed the easternmost limit of the intra-insular trade patterns in the Indonesian archipelago, which in turn were inter-linked with the ancient Asian trade sea routes between Japan, China and India.

The most important and most valued items of trade or tribute from the area were apparently slaves. This trade goes back deep into history and it is possible that a black girl who, in the year 724, was presented to the Chinese court by envoys of the south Sumatra-based trading empire of Srivijaya, could well have been a Papuan slave.¹³⁶ It is certain that Papuan slaves were noted in Java and other Indonesian islands as far back as the 10th century.¹³⁷

People were hunted down by both Papuan raiders and Moluccan-based pirates. The inhabitants of the Raja Empat Islands and Schouten Islands had built up a particularly fearsome reputation in this context.

Some of people of the agriculturally poor islands of Biak and Numfoor, in addition to raiding for slaves, migrated to the west of New Guinea. The origin of a considerable part of the population of the Raja Empat are believed to have originated from the Numfoor-Biak islands, and as far back as the 15th century migrants from the same area settled in east Halmahera and Ceram. Later at the beginning of the 18th century, Biak-Numfoor colonies were established on the shores of Geelvink Bay in the Amberaken region from Doreh – the present Manokwari – to Wandamen.

The westward Numfoor-Biak settlements are known to have regularly conducted raids deep into the Moluccans and far beyond, including Timor, Gorontalo, Salayar Island (off south Sulawesi), and even east Java.¹³⁸ At the end of the 15th century

they seem to have been forced to accept the Sultan of Tidore as overlord, who also extended his right of tribute to parts of north New Guinea, including the original Numfoor-Biak heartland in the Geelvink Bay region.

The VOC, intent on protecting its highly lucrative spice monopoly in the Moluccas, and to safeguard its maritime trade in various treaties, supported Tidore in these claims. Tidore, as a vassal of the VOC, was expected to curb Papuan piracy and the company also perceived its recognition of Tidore's rights in north New Guinea as a convenient and cheap way of protecting its Moluccan monopoly against possible Western interlopers from the East.¹³⁹

The actual power of the Sultan of Tidore in New Guinea proper, although varying considerably over the centuries, seems never to have been strong enough to close off the area completely to other contenders, and company reports abound with complaints about the continuance of 'illegal' slave-hunting raids by Papuan and Moluccan pirates. For long periods the Geelvink Bay coastal areas were regularly plundered by Moluccan pirates, mainly from Gebe Island, and Patani (Halmahera). To add to these disasters there were the demands imposed by the vassals of Tidore, that is, the *rajas* of Salawati and Waigeo (Raja Empat), who periodically despatched armed ships (*hongl*) to collect tribute. The latter were often no more than marauding parties, which, in their hunt for slaves, were as murderous and destructive as the 'unofficial' raiders. From early in the 18th century, the situation of the local people deteriorated even further when they were subjugated by Numfoor-Biak immigrants in the Doreh Bay, who superimposed a trading monopoly in the Amberaken coast.¹³⁹ The slave trade gradually disappeared during the second half of the 19th century as a result of a combination of factors such as a greater official interest shown in the area by the Dutch government, the appearance of Dutch traders and bird hunters, and the arrival of the Christian missions.

In comparison with the generally closed and inward-looking

Papuan communities on the mainland, the Numfoor-Biak people, with their long history of extended travels, raiding ventures, and migration, had been deeply exposed to the outside world, making them more receptive to modern Western ideas, including the concept of nationalism. In fact, before the arrival of the Europeans the Biak people had stood apart from the rest of the Papuans, particularly in terms of their material culture. As a result of their contacts with Halmahera, the use of the bellows in iron forging had found its way to the island¹⁴⁰ and itinerant Biak smiths were partly responsible for propelling the people in the Geelvink Bay region into the Iron Age, producing and selling iron bush knives, arrow points and harpoons.¹⁴¹ Another industry in Biak was pottery manufacture. A more advanced shipbuilding technique from the Moluccas had been adopted for larger vessels, using wooden boards rather than the traditional method of hollowing out logs. Furthermore, a number of foreign products had ended up on the island – either by trade or piracy – such as copperware, Chinese porcelain, amber beads and red and blue dyed textiles, both from India, as well as pottery, and rods of iron.

In the second part of the 19th century the traditional raiding parties (*hongl*) and piracy in the Geelvink Bay, although not disappearing entirely, were largely superseded by bona fide commercial ventures undertaken by both European and Indonesian traders, the latter mainly from the Moluccas and Sulawesi. At the same time Dutch government surveillance increased and more frequent official inspection tours were made in north-west Guinea coastal areas by officials from the Moluccas (Ternate). In 1864 the colonial government established a coal bunkering station for its ships in the Doreh Bay area, where, at Manokwari in 1898, the first permanent Dutch government post was founded. But it was not until 1915, after the murder of a Christian mission teacher, that Biak was pacified and brought under effective Dutch colonial control.¹⁴²

The Christian missions, however, predated the establishment

of Dutch government control in the Geelvink Bay area by about half a century. The first protestant missionaries arrived in the Doreh Bay region in 1855. But for a long time their proselyting efforts met with little success and it was not until the early 20th century that a breakthrough occurred. The main reason for this was that the missionaries, by the use of vaccination during a major outbreak of smallpox during the years 1904 to 1905, proved to have vastly superior healing powers compared to the traditional magicians. The Christian missions were the first Western organisations to train indigenous Papuans as helpers in their work spreading the message of the Gospel. Young men were sent to the church training school in Depok in west Java, and later in Tobelo in Halmahera, until finally, in 1918, the first training school for Papuan teachers and clergymen was founded on the island of Mansiam. This school was transferred in 1924 to Mieï in the Wandamen area.¹⁴³

From early this century Biak had been visited by pastors from the mainland, but it was not until Petrus Kafiar, a former slave from Biak and a Depok-trained teacher, was posted to the island in 1908 at the request of the local population, that Christianity took off. In fact Biak came to be seen as the most promising and successful Christian venture in the whole of New Guinea, producing many teachers and ministers, who were employed also in other regions. A mission hospital was built at Korido on the neighbouring island of Supiori.¹⁴⁴

As in other parts of New Guinea traditional religion in the Schouten Islands, of which Biak formed a part, consisted mainly of animism, ancestor worship, and mythologically and magically based belief systems. But what set these islands and the Geelvink Bay littoral apart from other areas was a history of strongly held beliefs in messianic expectations. The so-called Koreri movement periodically and particularly in times of stress continued to reappear even after the area had been almost entirely converted to Christianity.

Messianic expectations of the coming of a perfect world, a

utopia, in which death had been conquered and people were prosperous and living in a just society, can be found in the history of most nations and civilisations. The role of a messiah has been of fundamental importance in the history of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; while in the Nazi and Marxist creeds of modern times, mythological and millenarian elements can be found.

The Korero movements, although no doubt deeply anchored in local religious and spiritual life, seem in their main objectives to have been more concerned with achieving happiness and riches in this life rather than in the next. In fact one of the main beliefs of Korero followers was the expectation of being granted exemption from sickness and death and a comfortable eternal existence on this earth. So in 1897 one leader exhorted the people to sing and dance assiduously in order to keep the smallpox at bay. He also promised that the Dutch KPM steamer *Camphuis* was on its way under the command of Manseren (Lord) Jesus Christ – who had taken the place of the traditional prophet – with a large treasure of 2.5 million in guilder coins, blue cotton, earthenware, copperware, and rifles with powder and lead pellets.¹⁴⁵

In the minds of the Numfoor-Biak people, Manseren Manggundi, meaning Lord, embodied the original, pristine condition of mankind. It was a situation in which people were truly masters of their own destiny, immortal and unburdened by economic hardship, murder, black magic, and the vagaries of nature. The return of Manseren Manggundi meant the reinstatement of the Korero, the lost Utopia, which the original ancestors had enjoyed but had lost.

A Korero movement usually was started off by a *konoor*, a precursor, often a medicine man, a magician who, in a vision or dream, had been told about the imminent arrival of Manggundi. In order to speed up the coming of the Korero the people were exhorted to congregate at the place indicated in the vision, to pay tribute to the *konoor*, to stop raising and eating pigs and *labu* fruits, and demonstrate their faith through night-long dancing. The constant drumming and singing accompanying these

nocturnal gyrations of hundreds of sweating bodies, at times induced a case of mass hysteria, with people falling into convulsions and screaming ecstatically.

Messianic belief is believed to have been inherent in indigenous Biak-Numfoor culture, although the mythological content as well the intent of the stories certainly changed during the centuries of contact with the outside world.

Western reports, mainly Dutch, about Koreri movements date back to the middle of the 19th century. It is significant that soon after the arrival in the area of European missionaries and traders a distinct anti-foreign sentiment became notable. As an example, in 1867, a *konoor* in the Wandamen area is reported to have blamed the Dutch for various recent disasters such as earthquakes and pox epidemics.¹⁴⁶ In 1886, in Numfoor, a *konoor* and his followers attacked a small trading steamer, which was supposed to be carrying a Koreri 'treasure', killing the Dutch captain and three of the crew.¹⁴⁷

In fact there occurred in these movements a syncretic adaptation of myth and historical reality and at first the foreigners from the West were seen as returning ancestors and later as messengers of Manseren Manggundi. These ancestors, who originally had travelled to the West, taking their magical powers with them, were criticised for their unwillingness to divulge on their return their secret knowledge to their own kin; calling themselves Christians they were socioeconomically much better placed than the local population. They were therefore able to command, to raise taxes, and imprison people for acts that locally were considered heroic such as headhunting. Moreover, they kept secret the fact that Jesus Christ was in reality Manseren Manggundi, because they were unwilling to transfer his power of life and death and the richness of the earth to their lawful heirs, the Papuan people.¹⁴⁸

The ever-growing impact of modernisation since the end of the World War I, rather than causing the expected obliteration of traditional beliefs, did in contrast tend to strengthen them

through introducing Christian and secular Western ideas into the system. This is clear from the large-scale Koreri movements in the period 1938 to 1943, which in addition to showing strong anti-colonial sentiments, firstly against the Dutch and later even more violently against the Japanese, also contained some distinctly, modern, proto-nationalist elements.

The main figure in these movements was originally a woman, Angganitha Menaeafur who lived on the island of Insubabi. She claimed that she had been cured of a serious illness by a mysterious visitor, who was immediately dubbed as Manggundi. He had blessed her and appointed her as a *konoor* to guide the people of New Guinea to the promised utopia. The visitor had referred to the great misery suffered by the people caused by the foreigners and predicted he would establish a kingdom in which lasting peace would rule.

The movement continued to spread for a considerable time before the colonial authorities got wind of it. The immediate official reaction was one of suppression and Angganitha was arrested. Taken before the court in Serui she was freed by the Dutch *controleur*, who was apparently swayed by the representations of relatives and followers, and dismissed the charges on the basis that the whole affair had been inflated out of proportion. It also seems to have increased the confidence of Angganitha who, from that time onwards, began to utter direct threats to the government, warning that boats carrying police would be turned into stone and would be smashed on the reefs if they dared to attack Insubabi, which was now renamed Judea.

The outbreak of war with Japan caused the movement to be left undisturbed for some time. An estimated crowd of 6000 followers is believed to have congregated around Angganitha, who was now venerated by some as a deity. At dusk this massive throng of people would start singing and dancing, continuing until the early morning, providing a perfect example of mass psychosis. When, after all this frantic activity, the Koreri had still not come the people's spirits were kept up by the explanation

that still too many people had kept themselves aloof from the movement. So it was decided to mount a more effective propaganda effort. This, though, resulted in clashes with the authorities in early 1942 in Korido where an Ambonese policeman was killed by a propagandist. A Biak colleague narrowly escaped the same fate through the efforts of the local missionary, while the assistant-district officer fled his post leaving all his belongings behind.

In May 1942 another punitive party again burned all the houses and took Angganitha as a prisoner to Bosnik. There was no immediate popular resistance because of the assistant district officer's assurance that the Japanese intended to return Angganitha home. But the anger of the Koreri followers reached boiling point when it leaked out their leader had been imprisoned by the Japanese in Manokwari.

Now, with the 'Princess of Judea' in Japanese hands, a new leader came to the fore: Stefanus Simoparef. Hailing from Biak, he had been committed for murder and sent to prison, first in Java and then in Ternate and finally in Manokwari. There, he was freed by the Japanese. Among his own people he was believed to be endowed with magical powers, including invulnerability in battle, attributes he had obtained during his stay overseas. His further assertion that in a vision he had seen Manggundi was readily accepted immediately assuring him of a large following. Stefanus was highly contemptuous of the behaviour of the *amberies*, the Indonesian officials of the Dutch government, during the Japanese invasion:

They fled like women, and their manners towards the Japanese were in such sharp contrast to the haughty way they always treated the people. So in fact the ones who had earned most and lived in the nicest houses had only shown their courage on the parade ground. And as soon as they were given the opportunity to show that they deserved their high salaries they turned out to have the character of women rather than of men ...¹⁴⁹

This criticism in fact added grist to the mill to the already growing hate of the populace for the *amberies*, many of whom were now working for the Japanese, and in order to save their own skin often harshly treated the Papuans. To prevent any future revenge they denounced many locals as spies and saboteurs to the Japanese.

Stefanus, during his prison term in Java and Ternate, had apparently heard a great deal about Islam and might have been affected by radical Indonesian nationalist propaganda. It is certainly clear that he intended to use his divine status in the Koreri movement to pursue political objectives such as the establishment of a united Papuan kingdom.¹⁵⁰

During a meeting in June 1942, on the small island of Wabruk north-east of Roon, Angganitha was acclaimed as Queen of New Guinea and Stefanus was appointed as commander of the armed forces, called Amerika-Blanda (America-Holland), or alternatively, Amerika-Babo (New America).

The Koreri flag, under which protection of the whole of New Guinea from Gebe to Hollandia and Merauke was placed, was to be blue-white-red (the Dutch flag) with a white star on the blue part and a blue cross on the white portion.

The ideal of New Guinea unity was to be widely and assiduously propagandised, although each area would have its own leaders. The time had arrived for the peoples of New Guinea to conclude peace among themselves and to ban internecine wars.

All people opposing the movement had to be eliminated and all foreigners, Indonesian soldiers of the Japanese army, all government officials, and recalcitrant church ministers and teachers, who were contemptuous of the movement, had to be imprisoned. Schools and churches, however, should be left untouched and religious services should not be interfered with. Furthermore, all savage behaviour, theft and pillage were severely forbidden.

The leaders were obviously aware that frontal attacks on the Japanese forces meant suicide. Accordingly they tried to curb aggressive actions as much as possible. It was decided that force

should be used only as a last resort. Stefanus, who had publicly heard the Japanese commander in Manokwari promising that local organisations and leaders would be respected,¹⁵¹ rather naïvely argued that the Japanese should be persuaded to recognise the flag and New Guinea unification.

A fundamental split occurred in the movement between the original followers, who remained faithful to Angganitha's teaching on the necessity of peaceful means to reach the Koreri, and the more numerous factions of less orthodox hangers-on, who advocated direct armed action.¹⁵² The first group was led by Steven Wanda, called Raja Supiori, and the right-hand man of Angganitha, who resented the ascendancy to power of the belligerent party under the command of Stefanus and was moving closer to the Japanese for support. Later, Steven Wanda sold out completely to the Japanese, having fallen for their promises that he would become king of the whole of north New Guinea and be given a palace and his own warship, providing that the Japanese army would be supplied with the necessary Papuan labour.¹⁵³

In reality the people had worked themselves up to such a pitch and the atmosphere was so highly charged that only a small spark was needed to start off a general rebellion. This actually was not long in coming. The Koreri army struck on 6 July 1942 at Soweik where an Ambonese teacher and two Chinese were mistreated. During the second day Korido was attacked and the new Japanese-appointed Assistant District Officer, Picanly, a former prison warder at Manokwari at the time when Stefanus had been detained there, was beaten up and imprisoned together with a large number of mission teachers and their families. A few days later Assistant District Officer Tilly was killed after a provocative show of force and his police escort was detained.

On 13 July a ship with Japanese soldiers arrived. Stefanus's order not to attack was not adhered to and an armed outrigger boat was sunk and four men killed by gunfire.

The Japanese officer in charge told the people that Japan was bringing freedom, although everybody had the duty to help the

war effort. Japan was the elder brother and the Papuans the younger one, while the emperor, Tenno Heiko, was the father of them all. Stefanus insisted, however, that the Japanese should free Angganitha, recognise the blue-white-red flag, expel all foreigners (*amberies*) from the country, allow the Papuans to live according to their own *adat* (customary laws) and allow New Guinea to attain its independence. Stefanus, although suspicious, agreed to accompany the Japanese to Manokwari to put his case. He was told that the flag question had to be referred to Tokyo first, but the people were allowed to drink palm wine, dance and play their drums as much as they liked. If the Biak people decided to support Nippon their leaders would be invited to visit Japan and would be trained in the construction of ships and aeroplanes.

Initially the authorities in Manokwari were unsure what to do with the two Koreri leaders, but they seemed to have been convinced by the pleas of their local Indonesian advisers for them to be sentenced to death. Angganitha and Stefanus are believed to have been executed at the end of August 1942.

The Koreri movement had also spread to neighbouring islands like Numfoor where, in July 1942, the situation had grown very ugly. All foreign mission personnel and their families, and also recalcitrant Papuan teachers and church wardens, were imprisoned. Despite orders forbidding pillage and killing, some of the prisoners were beaten half unconscious and their possessions stolen.¹⁵⁴ Anti-Japanese feeling increased and in August 1942, a Japanese landing party at Namber (Numfoor) was confronted by fifty local warriors. Their leader sent an invitation to the Japanese to fight him and his men the following day, starting at dawn and finishing at sunset. The news spread quickly around the island and at the appointed time close to 2000 armed men were assembled in battle order on the beach. Seeing themselves completely outnumbered the Japanese decided to ignore the challenge and at noon despatched some Biak men as envoys to deliver serious warnings and threats that the whole of the island would

be destroyed by naval guns if the people did not comply. This enraged one of the leaders who, together with twenty men, jumped in a boat and rowed to the ship challenging the Japanese to a man to fight on the deck. The Japanese again decided to decline the honour and lifted anchor and steamed in the direction of Biak. The crowd became ecstatic at this victory and returned home to their villages.¹⁵⁵

In January 1943, in Biak, the government post at Bosnik was attacked and overrun. Again orders prohibiting violence were ignored and Chinese shops were plundered. Armed only with spears and knives, some of the warriors stormed a stronghold in the centre of the village, defended by Japanese soldiers with machine-guns. The attackers, managing to penetrate the defence perimeter, were forced to withdraw but not until heavy casualties had been suffered by both sides.

Early in August 1943, during an important meeting of Korero army commanders, it was decided to mount a general attack on the whole of New Guinea. It was emphasised that this was a freedom war, a war of the flag of the cross against that of the rising sun. Hence, the people of Biak were expected to show the other peoples of New Guinea that they were liberators and not robbers.

The Japanese, through spies, were soon aware of the plans of the Korero Army and decided to act fearing that a rebellion would seriously interrupt their all-out efforts to complete the building of airfields before the expected Allied invasion.

The first Japanese attack occurred on 10 October 1943 and was directed against the main Korero concentration at Manswam. The Papuan forces were waiting, and after a murderous artillery barrage and fierce man-to-man combat with knives and spears against guns, held their ground. They were finally forced by superior Japanese firepower to retreat into the hills. A large number of people were killed and their leaders were taken prisoner and beheaded at Korido.

Another confrontation occurred at Wops between the forces

of the prominent Korero commander, Birmori, and some patrols of policemen and soldiers. The Japanese commanding officer called for a parley. He berated Birmori for sowing unrest and called him a coward. When the Japanese playfully unsheathed his sword Birmori cut his head off with one stroke of his hatchet. After heavy fighting the patrol fled. Birmori and his fighters, fearing vengeance from the Japanese, withdrew into the forests. He was finally killed by one of his own men who had become tired of being constantly hunted down. As a price had been put on Birmori's head the murderer cut it off and presented it to the Japanese.

Biak police played an important role in tracking down rebels. The most prominent among these collaborators was Steven Wanda, who had become a police officer. In the service of the Japanese his power in the villages was almost unlimited; only one word from him to his masters was needed to endanger people's lives. Also some local mission teachers, now unemployed because of the Korero troubles, joined the police service, either voluntarily or by force, and are known to have grossly mistreated their own people.

The defeat of the Korero forces at Manswam and Wops spelled the end of the movement in the Numfoor/Biak area.

It was around the same time that a large Korero movement on the island of Japen was ruthlessly suppressed by the Japanese. In June 1943, a large force of local fighters, organised by Biak instructors, unleashed a reign of terror during which many people were killed, including a number of *amberies*, and a large number of churches were burned down. In retaliation the Japanese burned down villages and killed numerous Korero followers and executed the leaders on the soccer field in Serui.

Brute force was only able to stop the external manifestation of the movement, while the belief in the coming of the Korero continued to stay alive among large parts of the population. In fact these latent messianic expectations flared up again in 1944. All the signs, including the Allied occupation of Hollandia, the

bombing of Manokwari and Numfoor, pointed at the impending invasion by the Americans of Biak itself. Already the message was spread that Manggundi himself was the commander of the Americans, who would bring freedom.¹⁵⁶ This notion fitted logically into the mythologically programmed mind of the Biak people and represented historical and contemporary reality to them. Progress had always been attributed to the ancestors. Everything emanated from the central figure of Manggundi, who after all had been responsible for the development and advanced state of the West. For example, the clothing worn by the Dutch had, according to the myth, been given them by Manggundi; also, the initial defeat of the Dutch in World War II was attributed to the fact that Manggundi had departed from the Netherlands, because the Dutch had kept for themselves all the goods he had destined for his people in New Guinea. So he went first to Japan and afterwards to America.¹⁵⁷

The terrible destruction wrought by the gigantic armadas of aeroplanes and ships and the sudden confrontation with hitherto unimaginable powers of modern science and technology had entirely perplexed and bewildered the local population. As the vast majority was unable to furnish a scientific explanation, most closed themselves off again in their own traditional, mystical, magical cocoon, finding almost automatically the answer in the catch cry: the *Koreri* is imminent. Tangible proof of the arrival of this long-expected paradise was provided by the landing of hundreds of American ships disgorging masses of clothes and food, which the soldiers and sailors were wont to distribute liberally among the local population. It seemed though that religious and spiritual elements of the *Koreri* belief had been swamped by a general scramble for material gains:

The *Koreri* had come. All that had been prophesied had come true. The only exception was the return of the dead. The fulfilment of these hopes, however, had been drowned in a flood of goods. In reality what had happened proved to be much more complex and

confusing than they had expected in their dreams. The *Koreri* was finally being swallowed up into the roaring tumult of battle and the obliteration of the Japanese. The utopia was swept away in the waves of Western technology ...¹⁵⁸

Of special significance in the context of this study of the *Koreri* movement of the early 1940s is the appearance of some distinctly nationalistic elements, for example, the exhortation for all Papuans to unite to form a New Guinean kingdom. These basically modern, rationalistic ideas emanated clearly from the small Dutch-educated elite, who tried to use the *Koreri* movement as a convenient vehicle to gain wider popular support for their aspirations. Still, it would be absolutely fanciful to see Papuan nationalism as responsible to any meaningful degree for the outbreak of the anti-foreign pogroms, which set the whole country ablaze in this period. In reality they were the ultimate outcome of a long latent, sullen, popular resentment of the repressive policies and actions against *Koreri* movements of both the Dutch government and the Christian missions in the past. This, in the end, had been fanned by the harsh and inhumane treatment meted out by the Japanese into acts of open defiance and violence. Rather than signifying a positive response to the accelerated rate of acculturation and modernisation of the previous twenty years, this bloody rebellion was in essence a nativistic response: an anguished cry for the return of their original culture. What was demanded was a return to the ante-colonial status quo, gratuitously enriched with the products of Western industrial and scientific endeavour. The vast majority of *Koreri* followers neither understood nor were propelled forward by modern nationalist considerations. Their motives were still wholly confined within their traditional, mythically bounded perimeters. Some adhered strictly to original *Koreri* teachings, emphasising the return of the ancestors who would reintroduce the pristine, paradisaical conditions so long lost to the Papuan people. Peaceful methods such as singing and dancing were ab-

solutely necessary conditions for the Koreri movement to flourish. To strengthen the appeal of this religious belief system, attempts were made to adopt and adapt Christian elements and to convince the people that the message of the gospels and the Koreri were identical. A much larger group, more interested in the predicted material wealth, argued that by expelling the foreign authorities, the main obstacle to the Koreri would be removed.

The Simson movement

Another messianic movement of some importance had been started off in the Tanah Merah district near Hollandia, probably around 1939, by Simson Sommilena, a thirty-seven-year-old labourer from the village of Tablabronsee. The movement was strongly anti-colonial, being opposed to taxation, *herendiensten* and forced labour. Opinions differ regarding the origin of Simson's ideas. One version runs as follows: Simson, recently converted to Christianity, had worked as a labourer in the Eurasian colonist village of Bijlslag. It is believed that a certain colonist in the village, Jan Goldbach, and some of his friends, themselves rather lax in the Christian faith, as a prank told Simson, while attending his first movie show, that the figures moving on the screen were actually his ancestors, who had risen from the dead to tell people about the ancient times. This is supposed to have confused Simson completely and, after considerable encouragement by the colonists, came to believe he possessed the power to resurrect the ancestors.

After this, he preached that by raising the ancestors he would be able to recoup all the goods and abilities for the Papuan people, which had been lost in the past. Furthermore, he promised that the Papuans would become white-skinned and as clever, rich and powerful as the Europeans. Thus, the Dutch government would no longer be needed and the Papuans would govern themselves and rule over other peoples. These promises of economic

and political advancement and power quickly caused large numbers of people to flock to Simson's banner.

The movement grew more complicated with the appearance of additional leaders. With Simson solely in charge in the Tanah Merah district, there were three other fanatical followers trying to spread the new creed in adjacent areas. In the various villages 'commanders' and so-called 'telegrafists' took charge.

It was particularly these 'telegrafists' who were able to gain much power over the followers through their ability to contact the ancestors. This was done by first leading a wire, which in turn had been fastened to a peg put in the grave of an ancestor, to the house of the 'telegrafist'. At the end of the wire a used milk tin had been attached into which the 'telegrafist' would speak to try to establish contact with the ancestors, who were all believed to be living in Bandung. At the end of his conversation he would then put the tin to his ear and listen to what tasks the ancestors wanted to be performed. Whatever they were had to be strictly followed up by the believers. This provided the 'telegrafist' with unlimited powers to lead the people in any direction he fancied. Apparently Simson himself was the inventor of this new telecommunication apparatus. Why the west-Javanese city of Bandung was chosen as the home of the ancestors was probably because the 'organizers' were aware that this was the main telecommunications centre in the Netherlands Indies. It is also possible that Simson had heard from real telegrafists in Hollandia, who themselves hailed from Bandung, how large and sophisticated this city was. Thus it was a place worthy to be identified by Simson with Heaven, and a fitting abode for the ancestors, from where they eventually would depart together with the promised goods on the ship that would arrive in Tanah Merah Bay on the Day of Judgement. Bandung was also the domicile of the 'Queen of Women' (Raja Perempuan) with whom only Simson himself was allowed to take up contact during a secret ceremony at the cemetery accompanied only by a number of unmarried women.

The second important functionary at village level was the 'commander', who taught the men military drill, training them for possible armed resistance against the colonial authorities. His wife had to be of good character and was usually somebody he found attractive, whatever her marital status, and was given the title of Princess Juliana and was the leader of the female followers.

Other functionaries were the *dokter desa*, who held the lucrative monopoly of dispensing medicine, consisting of holy water that was used for treatment of all ills and pains. People were forbidden to use their own healing methods. Then there followed a whole row of official figures with undefined duties, for example, there was an Allah, a Jesus Christ, and a parson, and an education inspector; any title would apparently suffice to ensure the bearer a portion of the takings from the public for himself.

It seems that the main objective of the movement was to amass wealth and power and to get rid of colonial rule. The ceremonies were held in the cemeteries where people, through incessant and monotonous flute-playing and singing, fell into a trance. During this activity the spirit would enter causing the men to grab the closest women available, whatever their marital status, and have sexual intercourse with them. After this mass copulation the ceremony would conclude.

In addition to this sexfest, Simson exhorted the faithful to desist from taking part in any work or labour. People should stop producing food and fish or hunt for pigs, because later the earth would burst open and the ancestors would rise up and set off on their journey to New Guinea on the ship from Bandung bringing with them plenty of supplies of rice, meat and all sorts of other foodstuffs. Unbelievers would perish and be transformed into pillars of salt (Sodom and Gomorrah). The fact that the date predicted by Simson for the day of judgement had to be frequently put back seemed not to have worried the followers unduly, as the leader seemed to have been adept at thinking up acceptable excuses.

Reported rumours in May 1941 that Simson's 'armed forces'

were planning an attack on police headquarters and other government buildings in Hollandia, caused preventative action to be taken by the police, and a number of the most troublesome followers were jailed.

The Japanese, probably because of their experiences with the Koreri movement, reacted much more forcefully against the Simson movement than the Dutch government. Simson was arrested in August 1942, but was freed again by the Japanese in the following December after having agreed to stop his activities. Immediately reneging on this promise Simson continued to agitate for forceful action against all non-believers. In order to obtain the necessary arms, Simson again let his fertile imagination take over. He ordered a large wooden case to be constructed and had it put in the cemetery and told his followers it would be filled with weapons by the ancestors. A few weeks later, when the case, which in the meantime had become very heavy, was opened, it contained only a number of large rocks. To the greatly disappointed large crowd, a very angry Simson blamed 'enemies' for having stolen the arms.

The Japanese, having been alerted about Simson's activities, arrested him again and executed him in February 1943. Simson's place was taken over by Stephanus Sesory, who kept the movement going for some time. The Allied landings and the defeat of the Japanese caused most people to lose interest in Simson's teachings. The emphasis was now turned towards the Americans, with the hope of getting hold of some food, cigarettes, and clothing. As this showed more concrete results than Simson's promises it caused the movement lose its potency and its hold on the people.¹⁵⁹

Anti-Dutch colonial movements

In the immediate aftermath of the Pacific war anti-foreign agitation, sometimes mixed with proto-nationalist notions, continued to rear up its head. Koreri-type movements, mainly of the

cargo cult variety, continued to sprout up regularly during the last years of the Dutch colonial presence.

There were distinctly utopian traces evident in the so-called Suara Rajat movement, which appeared in September 1945 on the island of Nusi in the Padaido group, east of Biak. Its leader was Roemkorem, who had been sacked before the war as a mission teacher, and, as a reward for his exemplary strongly anti-Japanese stand, had been selected to follow a government administration course and was appointed as an administrative assistant. The most important followers of this movement were people who had been evacuated during the Allied attack to Nusi from villages in south Biak, south Supiori and north Japen. These people were awed by the enormous sizes of the American supply dumps in the area and were deeply impressed by the liberality of the distribution of army stores to them. Furthermore, they felt happy to work for the Americans, in contrast to the *herendiensten* they had been forced to perform for the Dutch authorities. Understandably the islanders tried to ensure the continuation of this blissful state of existence in which no taxation had to be paid and seemingly unending supplies of food and other goods kept arriving. The trick would be to establish a permanent connection with the fountain of this undreamed wealth, namely the USA itself. So the people of Nusi Island, helped by an American officer, sent a formal request to President Truman for them to become part of the USA. Soon after their return, the Dutch authorities suppressed the Suara Rajat movement abruptly ending their dreams and forcing them to accept harsh reality again.¹⁶⁰

Acting Resident van Eechoud, in October 1945, alerted the head of Netherlands Indies Intelligence, Colonel Spoor, about possible political problems in Hollandia. He feared that trouble was brewing on the one hand between the ever-intensifying hostility between the *amberies* and the Papuan population and between pro- and anti-Sukarno groups.¹⁶¹ In fact, in December 1945, a plan by Indonesians to overthrow Dutch rule was foiled.

The leading figure in the plot was Sugoro, the first director of the NICA public administration school, a post entrusted to him by van Eechoud, who had worked closely with him in Australia and was convinced about his loyalty to the Dutch cause. This was a mistake for which van Eechoud was to pay dearly in the end, and was never forgotten by his detractors in the upper echelons of the colonial service and the protestant missions.

The presence in Hollandia at the time of hundreds of stranded Indonesian auxiliary soldiers of the Japanese army (Heiho) was apparently seen by Sugoro as a good opportunity to deliver a blow for the recently proclaimed Indonesian republic. No Papuans were involved. The plot leaked out and Sugoro was sentenced to prison by the military tribunal. This seems not to have stopped his ability to engage in anti-Dutch activities, as in August 1946 the Dutch authorities got wind of another imminent coup, which had been planned by Sugoro from prison. But this time, in addition to the displaced Indonesian Heihos, the plot also involved some members of the Papuan Battalion and their Javanese NCOs, Papuan students of the police school in Hollandia, and the people of the Lake Sentani area. The plan was to get hold of the battalion's weapons and after occupying the airstrip to push on to take Kotabaru and Joka. The plotters expected that in the end the Indonesian KNIL troops in Hollandia would join them. Sugoro, who was imprisoned in Tanah Merah (Digul), managed to avoid further legal persecution by escaping to Australian Papua.¹⁶²

Of further political significance was the establishment in Hollandia in March 1946 of the Komite Indonesia Merdeka (KIM) by two Indonesians, Dr Gerungan and Assistant District Officer B.B. Pujasubrata. While the majority of members were Indonesians, a number of modern educated Papuans had also joined. The most prominent of these were Corinus Kre, a head nurse hailing from Numfoor, and Marthin Indey, a police sergeant from Hollandia.

On 11 December 1946, Resident van Eechoud held a meet-

ing regarding the political future of West New Guinea with a number of prominent Papuan figures in Hollandia which included Kre, Indey, Milibella from Sorong, Beratobui from Japen, Wetabosey from Babo, and from the Hollandia district itself: Nicolaas Jouwe and Lucas Jouwe from Kaju Pulu, Mallo from Skou, Bernabas Jufuway from Depapre, and Andreas Mamano from Tobati. Van Eechoud reported that as a result of his discussions with the authorities in Batavia it was agreed that New Guinea would be excluded from the United States of Indonesia and would form a Dutch administered mandated territory. It was also decided not to send an indigenous representative from New Guinea to the Denpasar conference, for the reason that the area was still far too diverse socially, culturally, and ethnically. Moreover, there was still a lack of political cohesion among the estimated 1 million indigenous people. Perhaps also, the role played by Frans Kaisiepo, the Papuan delegate at the earlier Malino conference, might have influenced this decision. Kaisiepo's unexpected advocacy for the incorporation of New Guinea into the region of Moluccas did not only take the Dutch by surprise but also certainly upset many educated Papuans, who hated the *amberies*.

Most of the Papuans present at the meeting rejected the Resident's plans for the political future of New Guinea. They considered themselves as the true representatives of the New Guinea people, an assertion if not firstly inculcated in their minds by the KIM, then certainly encouraged and further cultivated by it. In protest they insisted that New Guinea should remain part of the Indonesian federation, which extended from Sabang to Merauke, referring here to the claim held by Indonesian nationalists from the 1920s. The protesters agreed with the provisions of the preliminary agreement (Linggajati) concluded between the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia. They believed that New Guinea had the right to have its voice heard in the parliament of the United States of Indonesia and therefore should be allowed to send a representative to the Denpasar conference. Finally, they

argued that the Dutch colonial government had never been seriously interested in the socioeconomic and political advancement of the Papuan people thus there was no reason why New Guinea should remain a Dutch colony and the people were called upon to '... wake up and strive for independence also for your area in the same way as your Indonesian brothers at the present are fighting to achieve it ...'¹⁶³

In an attempt to spread these ideas as widely as possible among the people a statement about the meeting with the Resident, signed by Indey, Kre and Nicolaas Jouwe, was circulated in the Hollandia area. Telegrams of protest were also sent to the Lieutenant Governor-General, van Mook, other prominent Dutch colonial officials, republican and federal officials, delegates in Denpasar, and Papuans in Biak and other parts of the territory. Furthermore, *koranos* were asked to attend KIM meetings and were pressed to sign promises for financial support for the independence movement.

During a meeting on 27 December in Enggros *kampung* in the district of Tobati, it became clear that the demand for independence, in the sense of wanting to establish a free and democratic Papuan state, was far from the minds of most present. Clan interests and local considerations proved to be of paramount importance. As such the question as to who was in favour of the ideas of Kre and Indey, the *kampungs* of Tobati and Enggros answered in the affirmative, while their traditional enemies, Naafri, Kaju Pulu and Kajubatu en de Skou *kampungs*, refused to join. Nicolaas Jouwe had also changed his mind and joined the Dutch side.¹⁶⁴

The Raja Hamadi movement

The Hamadi clan of Tobati was widely hated and feared for its haughty, aggressive manner and terrorizing methods by which it had tried to expand its power in the region. Once it had caused the gardens of the neighbouring Kaju Injou to be destroyed; they

prohibited Naafri access to parts of Jotefa Bay for fishing and obstructed its entry into the open sea; and had destroyed the temple of the Jouwe clan in Makanoweet. The curriculum vitae of the *korano* of Tobati, Kaleb Hamadi, a faithful follower of Kre and Indrey and the KIM, reads like one of a Mafia thug. Before the war he had been dismissed twice: firstly because he had destroyed a coconut plantation of his opponents, and secondly because of a sexual affair. He was reappointed by the Japanese and became hated because of his hard and cruel treatment of the people. After the American landings he fled to Wanimo in Australian New Guinea. How, a little later, he managed to be reinstated by the Dutch as *korano* of Tobati calls into question the judgement of the district officer or whoever was responsible.¹⁶⁵ The political ambitions of Kaleb Hamadi were bordering on the ridiculous, since he was claiming to be overlord over a large part northern New Guinea. In 1940 he had requested Controleur Hoogland to be reappointed as 'ruler' of the original Tobati holdings which he claimed, according to tradition, encompassed a sizeable area along the Humboldt Bay, extending from Tarfia in the west to Cape Juar in the east.¹⁶⁶ These assertions could not be verified historically and seem to have sprung from Kaleb Hamadi's fertile imagination. Similarly spurious was the even larger territorial stake made by Kaleb Hamadi in 1946 covering the whole of north New Guinea from Air Merah at the Toweï River in Australian New Guinea to Sorong in the west. To prove his claim Kaleb Hamadi sent the colonial authorities a long, pseudo-historical tale, written by his relative, the teacher Laurens Mano. It mentioned various visits of Dutch naval vessels in the misty past, to Humboldt Bay, which resulted in a Tobati ruler becoming a Dutch vassal and his territorial claims being accepted by the colonial government. No dates nor any other verifiable historical data were supplied nor could any be found, causing the government to dismiss the story as fictitious. This so-called Raja Hamadi movement caused Hollandia to take action as Kaleb Hamadi had tried to force people in the area into

signing a declaration of support without knowing the actual content of the document. This act and the belief that Kaleb Hamadi had been aided and abetted in his endeavours by his friends in the KIM led to his arrest.¹⁶⁷

Pro-Indonesian agitation

Another centre of nationalist fervour was Serui on the island of Japen, where, as was related above, the *Koreri* movement had left a marked impact. This latent anti-colonial feeling was fanned again by the arrival in 1946 of a group of Indonesian political detainees from Sulawesi, including the prominent republican leader Dr Ratulangi. Contact with modern educated Papuans took place as the detainees enjoyed complete freedom of movement within Serui itself.

The most important Papuan to link up with the Indonesian nationalists was Silas Papare. Before the war he had been a head nurse in the oil town of Sorong and during the war he had distinguished himself as a resistance fighter and had been awarded a Dutch military medal (Bronzen Leeuw). After the war he worked as head nurse in the hospital in Serui. The servile attitude towards the Japanese adopted by many Indonesian teachers and government servants, and their often cruel treatment of the local population, had engendered in Papare an almost pathological hate of the *amberies*. This caused the Dutch authorities to bypass Papare in favour of Frans Kaisiepo as a Papuan representative at the Malino conference. Deeply hurt by this decision, and also disappointed by the very slow rate of socioeconomic advancement of the Papuan people set in train by the postwar Dutch colonial government, he was an easy target for Indonesian republicans like Dr Ratulangi. As a result, in November 1946, Papare founded the Partij Kemerdekaan Indonesia Irian (PKII), which had as its main objective the achievement of the independence of the whole of Indonesia, of which West New Guinea was an inseparable part. The main method used by the

PKII was propaganda. The initial target was the Papuan modern-educated elite, which in turn was instructed to get the more traditional elite and other well-situated persons in the community on side. These tactics apparently met with some successes as PKII leaders were able to obtain leading positions in the public service, the missions, and the police. Soon the movement counted hundreds of members and was able to export its ideas to other areas such as the Waropen coast across from Japan. There, some Papuan teachers and assistant district officers led the way, giving the *merdeka* salute and telling their pupils and the people to follow suit by using intimidating tactics against opponents. The government reacted by removing some officials involved from the area and sacking them from the service. Furthermore, the public image of the PKII was sullied by the criminal behaviour and imprisonment of two members of its central committee: Dumatubun, an official of the Public Health Service and originally from the Indonesian Kai Islands, and a Papuan, Woriori, who was a head nurse. Finally, in 1947 the Ratulangi group decided, in view of the Dutch military attack on the republic in Java and Sumatra, to stop any further involvement with the PKII. After this the organisation started to lose its potency.¹⁶⁸ Still, this pro-Indonesian sentiment in Serui remained fully alive until the end of Dutch colonial rule.

The other areas where anti-Dutch activities happened were Sorong, Fak-Fak, and in Merauke. The situation in Sorong and its environs in 1945 to 1946 was initially marked by a vicious retaliatory campaign by the Papuan population against Indonesian officials, teachers and policemen. They, as in other areas during the Japanese occupation, had tried to ingratiate themselves with the new masters. In order to save their own skins they had often resorted to cruel and inhuman treatment of the local people. Members of the Papuan Battalion, in particular, had tended to take the law into their own hands and were prone to attack and beat up *amberies* at will. The lawlessness of the battalion at the time deeply troubled District Officer Hoogeveen who, in

October 1946, wrote in his diary:

These people, who yesterday were still respecting their own customs and institutions, and were working as coolies, are now lazing about in comfortable quarters and have access to a flood of material goods ... They collide with their own society, because they believe that they were issued with jackboots to kick with. They are themselves discontented and sow discontentment. Furthermore, they disseminate the germs of primitive, religious-political movements ...

These proved to be prophetic words indeed, as within the month some of these soldiers, local chiefs, and a sizeable number of local people, moved by Indonesian nationalist propaganda, linked up to plan an anti-Dutch rebellion. The leader was a certain Malam, an *adat* chief and colonial official, who was to organise the people in his area to take part in a raid on Sorong to dislodge the Dutch colonial authorities. Moreover, he had been in contact with youth groups in the Raja Empat Islands, where local residents originating from Buton (Sulawesi) and Ternate (Moluccas) had, through propaganda and fear tactics, been trying to drum up support for the Indonesian cause. Nationalist youths from the Indonesian islands of Gebe and Ceram had also been visiting the area. In Sorong itself the plotters had been meeting regularly in the mosque.

Apparently the policy, laid down by NICA Captain van Capelle, the first Dutch official to arrive in Sorong, regarding the access to and disposal of Japanese supply dumps and vehicles had caused relations with the detachment of soldiers of the Papuan Battalion to sour almost immediately. Discontent among the local people was also rising because of the inability and the unwillingness of the Dutch government to quickly rehabilitate the area from the ravages wrought by the war and to restart the local economy. Food was being supplied to the people from the Japanese dumps, but the feeling of euphoria brought about by the promises of the Allied landings, reinforced by the material

largesse of the Americans, started to fade rather quickly after their departure. Confronted by the return to the harsh reality of having to live in a state of poverty it was therefore relatively easy for Indonesian agents to turn this widespread anti-government sentiment in their favour. An anti-Dutch plot leaked out in time to enable the Dutch administrator, van Capelle, to take preventative action in early November. A large number of the ringleaders and their followers were arrested.¹⁶⁹

Similarly in the Fak-Fak region a great deal of social and political unrest and dislocation occurred in the wake of the Japanese surrender. One of the first acts of the Japanese had been to reinstate Raja Sekar who deeply hated the Dutch; before the war they had sentenced him to fifteen years imprisonment for attempted murder. Raja Sekar apparently had also been used to prop up the Japanese Islamic policy, a policy which used the classical colonial device of divide and rule and attempted to control and guide Indonesian nationalism into actively cooperating with the Japanese war aims. As such his claim as an Islamic ruler was recognised by the Japanese and he conducted a reign of terror forcing people to adopt the Muslim faith.

At the same time the Japanese also cajoled Indonesian mission teachers and colonial officers into the service of their war effort. When food production fell below the official target and Japanese fortunes in the war were turning against them an increasing number of these unfortunate *amberies* were convicted for treason and executed. One Papuan, a certain Solomon, who particularly hated the Ambonese and was a stooge of the Kenpeitai, played an especially bloody role in this cruel affair. Together with some Butonese he headed a sort of lynching court in the Onin peninsula. As a result about 200 Ambonese teachers and officials, most of them Christian, and some Chinese, were denounced and later executed.

After the Japanese surrender the food situation grew even more precarious than before and law and order began to break down. This situation was compounded by the arrival of hundreds of

displaced Javanese, mainly *romusha*, who had been transported by the Japanese to West New Guinea to build roads and airfields on the north coast. After the American landings at Manokwari, these people, together with many of their masters, tried to escape through the jungle to the east coast. Many of them were ambushed by Papuans and killed. These Javanese *romusha* were, of course, easy targets for Indonesian republican propagandists in places like Kaimana, although some local Papuans were also recruited. The most prominent among these was Mohammad bin Achmad, the son of the Raja Commissie, who before the war had completed a Vervolgschool, and in terms of intellectual development, towered over the rest of his compatriots in the region. He was apparently an accomplished orator and was able to establish a lot of influence over various village chiefs. Attempts by the Dutch district officer to defuse the political danger posed by Mohammad bin Achmad by sending him away to Arguni Bay misfired, as he continued his propaganda activities there. He travelled with some village heads to the north coast and in Biak managed to meet and impress Resident van Eechoud who, to the great consternation of the local authorities, appointed him as assistant district officer of Kaimana. But in the end this appointment was downgraded to a lower rank. In Biak he had also been in contact with Kaisiepo and had attended nationalist meetings. On his return to Kaimana he engaged in similar tactics confronting the authorities with nationalist demands in the form of motions, supported mainly by the local Javanese refugees.

All this paled into insignificance compared with the ever-growing threat of rebellion posed by the Javanese *romusha*, whose number had increased to about 500 by February 1946. The local police force was outnumbered and immediate armed help from Sorong could not be expected. The police, however, believed they could count on the help of the fifty or so refugees from Macassar, who were strongly anti-Javanese, providing an interesting example of the fact that the Indonesian republican motto of 'Unity in Diversity' was often still no more than a pi-

ous dream. The Dutch district officer decided to try a preventative coup. He had the Javanese plotters assembled on the local tennis court, and surrounded by police with their arms at the ready, he told them that their plans had leaked out, and warned that any attempt at subversive activities would have to be dealt with by the courts, causing their repatriation to Java to be delayed indefinitely. The ruse worked and, together with the arrival of armed reinforcements ten days later, defused the danger of the *romusha*, who were shipped home at the end of March 1946.

Another political intrigue came to the fore early in 1948 when the Rajas Fattagas and Kombati requested that their areas be included in the United States of Indonesia. Apparently behind this move was a certain Dr Ali, a government medical officer. Hailing from Sulawesi he had initially shown himself loyal to the Dutch government but had become disillusioned and unhappy about his promotion opportunities. After a visit to Ambon, where he had been influenced by Dr Sitanala, an Indonesian nationalist, he gathered a group of prominent people around him, consisting of the abovementioned *rajas*, teachers, clerks, a number of Ambonese and sons of various *rajas*, including Mohammad bin Achmad. They met regularly in the hospital. Significantly, most of them were members of the Partai Islam Oemoem (PIO), which was led by an Alazar University (Cairo) trained scholar. The main aim of this organisation was to establish modern Islamic schools (*madrasah*) which, in addition to modernist Qu'ran teachings, also included modern secular subjects in their curriculum. As the Dutch *controleur* in his report at the time remarked: in Islam, religion and the rest of life, including politics, are inextricably intertwined. In the case of this movement the demand to be included in the federal Indonesian state must be seen in the Muslim context. Islam could boast a long history of opposition and armed resistance against Western *kafir* colonial regimes. In Indonesia Islam had always been an important source of anti-Dutch resistance and had remained

a major pillar in the modern nationalist movement and the revolution. Hence the *rajas* of north West New Guinea, who were all Muslims, and their people who, in 1949, were 63.5 per cent Muslim in Fak-Fak and 53.3 per cent in Kokas, would have been affected and influenced by the struggle for freedom of their co-religionists in Indonesia. Another factor was the fear that political partition would hamper and harm age-old family and trading contacts with the Moluccas. Still, the organisational strength and leadership of the Ali group seemed to have been rather limited and after the doctor's departure to Macassar it fell apart.¹⁷⁰ Anti-Dutch colonial sentiment in the area remained simmering under the surface as is evidenced by the local help extended to various Indonesian infiltration parties during the 1950s and early 1960s.

Papuan nationalism

In an important report in 1948, District Officer Courtois concluded that it was undeniable the Papuans were politically on the move. However defective their perception of political happenings might be, they clamoured for effective measures to quickly improve their socioeconomic conditions. Courtois warned that if the Dutch colonial government proved to be too slow in changing its long ingrained policy of neglecting New Guinea as a useless backwater, nationalist leaders would throw in their lot with Indonesia. He emphasised that while the vast majority of Papuans were still putting their trust in the Dutch, this could change rapidly if the government failed to react positively and quickly to Papuan demands and concerns. Therefore it was of paramount importance to speedily finalise the effective reoccupation of all the prewar Dutch-controlled areas and the pacification of the rest of the island; and to extend and improve education and the government information service in order to lead the Papuan national awakening in the right direction. Courtois presumably was advocating these actions to ensure an

orderly and gradual evolution under Dutch tutelage towards self-government and ultimately independence.¹⁷¹

These recommendations echoed the policy laid down in 1946 by Resident van Eechoud who, as was shown above, had insisted that after the suppression of the Indonesian-inspired attempts at rebellion a more positive policy of encouraging and guiding the budding indigenous Papuan nationalist aspirations should be adopted. Looking at the situation at the time of the RTC these Papuan nationalist stirrings were still almost solely confined to the northern and north-western coastal areas and the adjacent island groups. But even there the concept of establishing a united modern independent Papuan state was in fact still largely limited to a very small elite of Dutch-educated Papuans.

Anti-foreign feeling and the desire to get rid of foreign overlords, whatever their skin and creed, had never faded during the period of colonial dominance. Swept up to a high pitch during the Koreroi movements of the late 1930s and early 1940s, the fury of the people had been directed especially against imported Indonesian teachers, policemen and other civil servants, who had often treated Papuans as inferior beings, dismissing them as *binatang bodoh* (stupid animals).

One of the worst cases reported of cruel and inhuman treatment of Papuans is perhaps that of Ambonese Assistant District Officer Sahetapy Engel. In 1943 he was dismissed from the government service for gross misconduct at Tanah Merah in the Muju region, where, ironically, he had been transferred as punishment for mistreatment of Papuans at other postings. During the hearing conducted by Controleur Wegner at the time, Sahetapy Engel is alleged to have confessed that he, just for his own amusement, ordered Papuans to parade past his house and shot blunt arrows at their penis-holders; that he had shot dead Papuans who had not transported him quickly enough across a flooding river; and that he had imprisoned an excessively large number of Papuans in a small timber-built enclosure, leaving them exposed to the rain and sun. He had chained a number of

women to the upper beam forcing them eventually to urinate and defecate on the men below; and he admitted that a number of these prisoners finally succumbed to their cruel sufferings and died. It seems incredible that soon after his sacking, the Dutch colonial authorities, plagued by an acute personnel shortage, again employed this obvious psychopath as part-time clerk in Upper-Digul, and on his return to Ambon reinstated him in the service, where he soon joined the Indonesian republican cause. All this could only have severely damaged the prestige of the Dutch colonial government in the eyes of the Papuans concerned. It was the same Sahetapy Engel who was appointed by the Indonesian government as an 'expert' in 1950 to the Dutch-Indonesian Commissie Nieuw-Guinea.¹⁷²

Modern education

Conversion to Christianity and a high rate of literacy, such as was found in the Schouten Islands, had obviously not obliterated among the majority of the population, the old ingrained messianic expectations about the coming of a golden age of prosperity and social justice. It is also interesting to compare the situation here with the one in Java. At that time, although civilisation had reached a much higher degree of sophistication than in West New Guinea, it was still the case that a large part of the population believed that the revolution was the fulfillment of long-held messianic beliefs about the fall of colonialism and the coming of a golden era, in which injustice, taxation and other government vexations would disappear, inaugurating a time of prosperity and happiness for all. Hence, there are reports from Java in 1945 of some people taking *merdeka* in an anarchistic sense and refusing to pay taxation of any kind, including fees for public transport.

Moreover, education in West New Guinea, as for the majority of Indonesians, when available, was of the elementary kind consisting of three years' training in the three R's using the ver-

nacular. In West New Guinea, Malay was used as the language of instruction, which acted as a *lingua franca* in most of the Indonesian archipelago and as such tended to widen the cultural horizon of literate Papuans. On the other hand the question remains to what extent literacy could have been achieved and more importantly be retained after a mere three-year period of elementary schooling. For instance, it was found in Java in the 1920s and 1930s that the rate of literacy retention of *volkscholen* (elementary school) leavers was rather low, owing to as absenteeism, and falling back into an illiterate milieu.¹⁷³ Perhaps in West New Guinea the result might have been more satisfactory as a strong demand was reported for education. This was almost totally provided by the Christian missions and the emphasis on religious instruction and Bible reading might have had a salutary effect on literacy retention. Furthermore, in the strongly acquisitive Papuan society, modern education was seen as an opportunity to achieve the same wealth and power as that of the Westerners. De Bruyn¹⁷⁴ remarked that the people of Biak were obsessed with education. Perhaps a comparison could be made with the Minahassa (North Sulawesi), an almost totally Christian area, where villages were actively competing for schools to be built, and according to the 1930 census showed a literacy rate above 21 per cent, far above the indigenous rate of 6.4 per cent for the Netherlands Indies as a whole and 5.5 per cent for Java.¹⁷⁵

While the spread of literacy in north New Guinea probably helped the people to see the modern world in a wider perspective, it could hardly be expected, because of the very elementary schooling available, to have created a modern, sophisticated polity.

A protestant missionary training college for Papuan evangelist teachers, established in 1918, was the only secondary-type school existing before the war. It produced about 200 graduates, who constituted a new, modern Papuan elite, and at least some of them were aware of, and were influenced by, the developments in the Indonesian nationalist movement. It seems, therefore, not

coincidental when, in 1933, three of its students, Markus W. Kaisiepo, B. Burwos, and G. Bonay, petitioned the Dutch Queen to have instruction in the Dutch language introduced just at the time when the Indonesian nationalist movement was involved in a fierce struggle with the colonial government about the question of private non-government Dutch language schools (*wilde scholen*) for Indonesians.¹⁷⁶

The Public Administration School set up by van Eechoud in 1945 in Hollandia also provided training at secondary level, while the Police Training School also went beyond the elementary school level. It was these institutions which produced most of the modern Papuan leaders, including Nicolaas Jouwe, Marthin Indea, Lukas Roemkorem, and Silas Papare.¹⁷⁷ As noted earlier, nationalist sentiment and self-confidence grew as a result of the often daring and fearless exploits against the Japanese, and the contact with Americans, particularly the Afro-American soldiers, who were seen by Papuans as being treated equally and possessing the same skills as the white man. Important too were the example of the Indonesian revolution and the propaganda of the republic, in which Sugoro, appointed by an unsuspecting van Eechoud as the first director of the Public Administration School, played a prominent role.

Still, Papuan popular demands for socioeconomic and political advancement were often only locally or regionally based. Ideas of wanting to join the other parts of the continent and the islands to create a Papuan state were still foreign to the vast majority of the people, who continued to cling to village and clan concerns. Even the small elite of modern Papuan political leaders were often divided by regional and even clan considerations, as was evident from the rivalry between urban centres at Sorong, Biak and Hollandia, and the clan hostility described earlier in the Hollandia region.

Another important fissure within the modern educated Papuan elite was caused by the question of which 'horse' to bet on: the Dutch or the Indonesians. It seems that the choice often depended

on the individual perception of the kind of future socioeconomic gains that could be expected. Loyalty considerations seem to have been, on the whole, less important than hopes of personal material gain and social prestige for the individual concerned. Another crucially important factor affecting Papuan thinking in this context was the resentment to and even hatred of those Indonesians, forming the second layer of what van der Veur has characterised as the system of 'doubled colonialism'.¹⁷⁸

It was clear that van Eechoud had been serious in his promise regarding Papuan social and economic development and, by 1949, his policy of Papuanisation of the public service was showing concrete results with a larger number of Papuans being employed as teachers, policemen, health workers, and in the regional and district administration. Thus an important breach had been made in the position of the *amberies*, moreover, the Dutch colonial government had announced publicly that it intended to step up efforts to educate and train Papuans to enable them to replace the *amberies* as soon as possible. Understandably the majority of the newly created modern Papuan elite, fearful of losing their recently obtained upward move on the socioeconomic ladder to newcomers from Java and elsewhere in the case of an Indonesian takeover, were convinced that their nationalist ambitions would be better served by a temporary continuation of Dutch rule. A somewhat similar situation had existed in prewar Java where an ever-increasing number of Dutch-educated Indonesians had been partly successful in breaking an earlier monopoly of Eurasians in lower and medium rank posts in the civil service and the Western sector. There, however, the Dutch colonial government had not been willing to abolish the existing plural colonial society leaving many modern-educated, young Indonesians no other choice but to find salvation in radical nationalism and the speedy overthrow of Dutch rule.

The argument in the report of the Commissie Nieuw Guinea, and in almost all subsequent Dutch official pronouncements, that the modern nationalist leadership was too small and too unrepre-

representative to speak for the Papuan people as a whole, while technically correct *per se*, was actually beside the point in the circumstances. This seems particularly true when viewed in the context of the universal history of nationalism and revolution, which records numerous cases of fundamental, political changes having been pushed through by minorities, sometimes only by a handful of forceful leaders able to superimpose their ideas and solutions on the rest of the people whether they either understood what was happening or actually wanted it.

In fact, a process of this kind was happening at the time in neighbouring Indonesia, where a numerically small, mainly Java-based, modern nationalistic elite, the top section of which arguably was no larger in percentage terms of the whole population than in West New Guinea, was trying to control the freedom struggle. This elite had been, from the 1920s onwards, on a path of transforming the Dutch-created administratively unified, but mainly indirectly ruled, Netherlands Indies colony into an independent, unified state called Indonesia. This was an entirely new political configuration. Something which, despite the propaganda of such vociferous, nativistic, radical-nationalist propagandists as Mohammad Yamin, had in fact never existed before. For the assertions that the ancient and essentially trading emporiums of Srivijaya and Mojopahit should be seen as the precursors of the new Indonesia are not backed by any solid historical evidence; hence, they should be dismissed as the products of the fertile minds and warped imaginations of these romantic-nativistic advocates.

Far more important than being not fully representative of the nation as a whole, a charge also applicable to the Indonesian republic leadership at the time, was the lack of a trained and experienced government apparatus staffed by Papuans and a tertiary educated political leadership. In Indonesia, by contrast, there were a sizeable number of university and college trained leaders at the apex of political power. Perhaps even more crucially the republic had inherited a well-trained, and effective regional and district government administration, the former Inlands

Bestuur, which had been an essential linchpin of Dutch colonial control.

While Papuan nationalistic stirring and demands had been encouraged by sympathetic colonial officers such as van Eechoud, they had raised very little interest either in Batavia or The Hague. In the immediate postwar years West New Guinea featured only as a side issue in parliament and in the media, being almost completely overshadowed by the traumatic happenings in Java and Sumatra. But even when West New Guinea managed to feature in the news it was almost solely in relation to Eurasian immigration, in which the desires and views of the Papuan population were largely ignored. The West New Guinea lobby, rather than concentrating on indigenous needs, seemed to have been much more concerned with trying to save Dutch national prestige by continued membership of the Western colonial club. West New Guinea was also used as a pawn in Dutch-Indonesian negotiations. The Papuans themselves were rarely mentioned in parliament and in the press, and then only as a people who, because of their currently very primitive level of civilisation, were unable to make a rational and democratic choice about their own political future. Hence, the assertion was made that a long period of Dutch colonial rule would be needed for Papuans to attain self-government, and that it would assure a new lease of life for the Netherlands *mission civilisatrice* role and prevent it from deteriorating into a fifth-class nation.

By the middle of 1949, some of the Papuan nationalist elite, realising that the imminent Dutch transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia was at hand, increased the pressure on The Hague to make a final decision on the future status of West New Guinea and made it clear that they no longer wanted to be kept on the sidelines. With the exception of the rather nominal representation of the Papuan people by Frans Kaisiepo at the Malino conference in 1946, all other deliberations about the political future of West New Guinea had been conducted along the old ingrained colonialist-paternalistic pattern summed

up as: 'to the people, for the people, but nothing by the people'. It was decided not only to step up propaganda internally but also to draw international attention to the Papuan cause. The most prominent nationalist leaders involved were Johan Ariks, Nicolaas Jouwe, and Marcus Kaisiepo.

Papuan reaction

Johan Ariks's biography makes fascinating reading.¹⁷⁹ His father, Jonathan, originated from the Kebar region in the eastern part of the Vogelkop. Sold as a slave, he was, in 1872, redeemed in Doreh (Manokwari) by a Christian mission lay-worker. He was baptised by the missionary van Hasselt, becoming his life-long friend and trusted adviser and accompanying him during his travels in West New Guinea, the Moluccas and even Java and Sumatra. So Johan, born in 1897, early in life had been exposed to the world outside the sleepy existence in Manokwari, when he was able to visit Ternate, and in 1907 he, together with his parents and van Hasselt, travelled to Java. There he entered the theological training school at Depok and in 1914 was appointed as a pastor in Mansinam, and then in 1931 was teaching at the mission training school at Mie.

In May 1949, Ariks went to Batavia to advance the Papuan case. In a letter of 15 June 1949 to the Chairman of the UNCI, he put himself forward as the spokesman of the Papuan people and argued that Indonesia had no right whatsoever to be involved in deliberations about the political future of West New Guinea. He condemned this involvement as an attack on the Papuan right of self-determination. While agreeing with the Dutch assertion that Papuans were not yet ready for full independence, he insisted, however, they were quite capable of giving a valid opinion on the question of political ties with Indonesia. Finally, the UNCI was asked to ensure that at the coming RTC, or any other conference concerning the political status of West New Guinea, decisions should be based exclusively on deliberations with rep-

representatives of the Papuan people conducted under the aegis of the UN.

In a letter dated 28 August 1949 to the President of the United Nations, Johan Ariks again deplored that the fate of West New Guinea was being deliberated upon by the Dutch and Indonesians without any reference to the major party involved: the Papuans themselves. This was happening in flagrant violation of the right of self-determination as enshrined in the UN Charter. He further elaborated on his earlier dismissal of Indonesian claims and emphasised that, culturally and ethnically, both people were entirely different from each other, and that the increasing contacts between them in the past, rather than diminishing these differences, had in fact accentuated them. In contrast, he presented a glowing defence of Dutch colonial policy in West New Guinea from the beginning of the century, and dismissing any colonialist and imperialist motives he argued that the colonial government, together with the Christian missions, had aimed almost entirely to produce a gradual intellectual and socio-economic uplift of the people. Therefore the Netherlands were still needed for some considerable time to come to lead this process to its final fruition. Cooperation like this had never occurred between Papuans and Indonesians in the past and would not eventuate in the future:

... Irian, however, opposes with all its might the imperialistic inclinations of a number of Indonesian leaders, who aim to bring our country and our people under the domination of a foreign people and foreign state with which it has never kept up friendly relations and cooperation of any kind. It determinedly and resolutely refuses to be negotiated on as a piece of merchandise, without being heard ...¹⁸⁰

It is interesting that while Ariks agreed that there was some foundation to the charge that the majority of the Papuans would not be able to exercise their rights of self-determination independently, he argued quite rightly that this could equally be applied

to the millions of illiterates in Indonesia, who still would vote and act according to the wishes of their feudal masters. Ariks then pointed to the existence of a large number of literate Christian Papuans and the fact that in many Indonesian regions the size of the modern intelligentsia in percentage terms of the total population was much smaller than in West New Guinea. He argued that the transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia had hardly affected the masses and that in reality political power was surrendered to a very small tertiary and secondary educated elite, comprising no more than .0035 percent of the population. Why, he asked, could not a similarly small elite in West New Guinea be given the right to speak and act for their less educated countrymen?

The initial reports of van Eechoud about Ariks to Batavia and Minister Beel had been rather lukewarm, dismissing him as a loyal Dutch supporter who, because of his slave origin, would probably command only little local backing. Perhaps also a feeling of mutual dislike might have been a factor here. Certainly, in an interview with Minister van Maarseveen in 1949, Ariks clearly objected to van Eechoud being considered as the first governor of West New Guinea.¹⁸¹ Van Eechoud also saw a danger for the Papuan cause in the efforts of the Eurasian lobby in Batavia to use Johan Ariks for its own purposes. As he wrote to Meyer Ranneft, the Eurasian cause was separate and should always be subservient to interests of the Papuans whose rights were paramount. West New Guinea should not be created into a white man's country and he further criticised Ariks's demands for Papuan delegates to be present at the RTC because this would undermine the intent of the decision of the Dutch cabinet to exclude West New Guinea from the conference's agenda.¹⁸² On the other hand, van Eechoud suggested to Dr J. Bannier, officer in charge of Indonesian affairs in the Department of Overseas Territories, that it would certainly be useful for the Minister to meet some educated Papuans.¹⁸³ When Ariks returned to Batavia in August with a large number of signed requests from promi-

ment Papuans in the north Coast regions to stay under the Dutch, van Eechoud adopted a more positive stance and recommended him more strongly to the government, particularly Beel.¹⁸⁴

High Commissioner Lovink reported in Batavia on 2 September about an interview with Johan Ariks, during which he had been presented with a petition to be forwarded to Queen Juliana, signed by sixty prominent Papuans, requesting Papuan representation at the RTC. In addition, he was handed another eleven identical petitions from various parts of West New Guinea addressed to himself. While Ariks again emphasised that Indonesia had no right to be involved in any discussions about West New Guinea and that Papuans had an aversion to Indonesians, another different and politically interesting dimension was introduced by imparting to Lovink his fears that West New Guinea would become part of a UN Trusteeship territory under Australian control. Ariks alleged that during a recent interview with the Australian Consul General in Batavia he had been asked how the Papuan people would feel about coming under Australian trusteeship rule. He is said to have replied that if it came to the worst the people would prefer Australian to Indonesian domination. He stressed though that the Papuan people wanted to be accorded the status of a Netherlands crown colony. Lovink assured him that an Australian takeover was out of the question and that the future of the Papuan people would remain in the good hands of the Netherlands Government, although a decisive answer about the question had not yet been made.¹⁸⁵

Other Papuan nationalists such as Nicolaas Jouwe tried to drum up public support for the Papuan national cause; but initially van Eechoud refused Nicolaas Jouwe's request to start a propaganda campaign to increase nationalist feeling among Papuans on the grounds that as a government official he should not meddle in politics. But when, soon afterwards, the Sultan of Tidore had been given the use of a government ship to tour Geelvink Bay, supposedly to inform people about political change, though in reality to make propaganda for New Guinea

to join the United States of Indonesia, Nicolaas Jouwe took matters into his own hands. During a tour of the Humboldt Bay and Lake Sentani districts he collected a large number of simply-worded requests in which the people clearly showed great fear of a possible Indonesian domination and indicated their desire to remain under Dutch administration until they would be capable to govern themselves. This show of strength of anti-Indonesian sentiment swayed van Eechoud and he allowed Nicolaas Jouwe and Marcus Kaisiepo also to visit the Geelvink Bay region. There too, with the exception of Japen, the population showed itself strongly opposed to an Indonesian takeover and let it be known:

... we have to thank the Netherlanders for a great deal; they brought peace here after stopping tribal warfare; they brought schools and medical care. We know the Netherlands government and expect that it will lead us to independence and self-determination in the same way ... as the Americans have done for the negroes ... ¹⁸⁶

After receiving news in early August of an official Dutch government statement that New Guinea would remain a part of the Netherlands kingdom with a special place in a Dutch-Indonesian union, van Eechoud felt no longer bound to remain politically inactive. He speedily deployed a number of measures to hamper the activities of the pro-Indonesian camp such as instructing his old friend Vic de Bruyn, district officer in Biak, to defuse Silas Papare's possible international political impact by keeping him away from Java at any cost:

Keep him away from the plane ... He will of course be unable to show valid travel documents and you can stop him because as a private person he has no access to the closed cities of Makassar and Batavia. Furthermore, Ophof [official] will surely cooperate by occasionally declaring aircrafts as 'full' ... ¹⁸⁷

Vic de Bruyn was also ordered to ensure that the local pro-

Dutch Biak leaders should write to the Raja Empat Islands to enlist their support. Van Eechoud was also particularly keen to ensure that the oil from Selawati would not end up in Indonesian hands. He wrote in the same vein to Marcel van den Brink, assistant-resident at Sorong, asking him to make sure of the support of the Raja Empat by inducing people in each island to send petitions supporting continued Dutch rule in their areas. He was empowered to promise financial rewards, higher wages, official hats and national emblems and so on. Obviously the situation in these islands was still volatile and van Eechoud was of the opinion that a good measure of official pressure could well win the day.

In October, van Eechoud agreed to the request of Meyer Ranneft to travel to the Netherlands to add his authoritative voice to the discussions about New Guinea's future, which were reaching a climax during the RTC. He was also informed that his earlier suggestion that Papuan observers be sent to the RTC had been officially approved; and he selected Johan Ariks, Nicolaas Jouwe, and Marcus Kaisiepo to accompany him. Probably it was already too late for this Papuan nationalist trio to exert any significant influence on the outcome of RTC regarding New Guinea, as the cards of the game had already been dealt. On the other hand, their presence in the Netherlands in itself could only have helped their cause; and interviews with Queen Juliana and various political leaders, including the powerful Minister of Overseas Territories, van Maarseveen, might well have helped to reinforce the Dutch determination to hold on to New Guinea. Certainly the first public proclamation in the Netherlands, by obviously civilised and articulate Papuan leaders, of their political rights and demands was actually well timed. Whether by design or accident, it occurred at a time when one of the chief reasons underlying the insistence of the Dutch retention of New Guinea, namely the settlement of Eurasians and even some of the Dutch surplus population, was fast losing its appeal. The issue of the Papuan right of self-determination was seen as a godsend

by the New Guinea lobby and its parliamentary supporters providing the Netherlands with a new and morally more powerful rationale for holding on to the territory. In fact from early 1950 onwards, and all along the tortuous road to 1962, the Dutch arguments for their continued rule of New Guinea were almost totally based on the need to protect Papuan rights and the Netherlands government's intention to guide the people to nationhood and eventually independence.

In addition to the demands of conservative and colonial die-hard political forces in the Netherlands, the Eurasian and Christian missions lobby, the activities of colonial officials like van Eechoud and a sizeable segment of the modern, nationalist, Papuan elite, as well as Australia, made it clear to The Hague that it was strongly opposed to an Indonesian takeover of West New Guinea.

Australian involvement

It would be erroneous, however, to believe that this stand by Canberra signified a *volte face* in the Australian Labor Party's policy of strong support for Indonesian independence. It would be more realistic to see this attitude as flowing from the existence of an inherently contradictory flaw in Australian foreign policy at the time. Australia had adopted a strongly anti-colonial line during the Indonesian revolution concurrently with the pursuit of a more traditional, nationalist, and jingoist security policy, which demanded that its first line of defence should be pushed forward into what was considered firstly by the Dutch and subsequently by the Indonesian government as being in their backyards. This policy line gives the distinct impression that Australia was trying to achieve the impossible, that is, to have its cake and eat it too. This incongruity in Australian policy resulted in a cooling-off of the originally excellent relations with Jakarta, causing many Indonesians to view the Australian anti-colonialist stance as suspect if not outright dishonest. Ganis

Harsono, a high official in the Sukarno government, rather aptly likened Australia's ambivalent feelings to Indonesia to those Americans who, after having taken great pains to emphasise their empathy towards Afro-Americans, did their utmost to prevent them moving into the house next door.¹⁸⁸

Dr Evatt's statement in parliament in 1949 that Australia would be prepared to cooperate with whoever controlled West New Guinea was as devious as it was meaningless because, in reality, the Labor government, even during the period of the Indonesian independence struggle, had never abandoned its original aim of keeping at least West New Guinea within the Australian sphere of influence and had tried to influence the Dutch to retain their hold on the territory. To reiterate, the main concern underlying Australia's interest in the Indonesian question was to work towards a solution that would be in line, as closely as possible, with its own national defence and trading requirements, although this is not to deny that anti-imperialist and anti-colonial principles played a role within the political left.

The question of how far Australia should interfere to try to bend the situation in the Indies in its favour caused considerable controversy in the Department of External Affairs. On the extreme right were the views of Kevin Kelly who, in a submission to Evatt in 1946 in relation to the recently concluded Linggajati Agreement, argued quite rightly, as subsequent history proved, that the republic had only acquiesced in its subservient role in the federation, and would later take over control of the whole of the country. He therefore supported the Dutch efforts to strengthen their power in eastern Indonesia and to exclude West New Guinea from the federation altogether, and stressed that:

... the emergence in the Indies of a strong unitary state of 70,000,000 Asiatics, whether in the form of the United States of Indonesia or of an expanded Republic is not likely to promote the security of the Australian people. It is submitted that Australian policy might well be directed towards the establishment in the

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long run of several separate independent and virtually autonomous states in the Indies. These would at least comprise (a) the Republic of Indonesia embracing, Java, Sumatra, and Madura; (b) a Dominion of Eastern Indonesia under substantial European hegemony, embracing the remainder of the Archipelago, with the exception of Dutch New Guinea; (c) a Colony of Dutch New Guinea. Such a policy will not appeal to Dutch Imperialists, or to Javanese Nationalists; but the creation in the Lesser Sundas, Borneo, the Celebes and the Moluccas of a native community, subject to European as distinct from Islamic hegemony, would serve as a southern counterpart of the Europeanised Philippines Republic and bring into being, in one great arc to the north of Australia, an area in which Western political traditions might be effectively reconciled with inchoate native political aspirations ...¹⁸⁹

Kelly's views would have been very pleasing to van Mook, who at that time was starting to put in place his scheme to hem in and reduce the power of the republic by creating a series of additional autonomous states in Sumatra, Borneo and Java.

Far less impressed were the newly appointed departmental head, Dr John Burton, and his coterie of left-leaning supporters, who held the opposite view and were adamant that the Indonesian republic should be strongly supported and protected against Dutch attempts to annihilate it. In the event, Kelly and other similarly minded officers were removed from South-East Asian affairs and sidetracked into other duties, though not all his views were discarded.

Thus, in March 1947, the rather incongruous situation arose whereby the Australian government was doing its utmost to protect the political viability of the Indonesian republic by constantly trying to thwart Dutch attempts to impose its rule in the Indies, and at the same time it tried to ensure that the same colonial 'oppressors' would stay put in West New Guinea. In addition, the Dutch were prodded to cede Timor to Australia. This was hardly an example of anti-colonial and anti-imperialist com-

mitment, particularly as the indigenous Timorese had not been consulted. The Dutch Chargé d’Affaires in Canberra, de Ranitz, reported at the time that Dr Burton, on his own initiative, had brought up the question of West New Guinea to him and had made a strong plea for the Netherlands not to transfer the island to the Indonesians, arguing that otherwise it would fall into the hands of ‘foreign bloodsuckers’. Furthermore, Burton advocated close cooperation between Holland and Australia and the adoption of a coordinated policy for the island as a whole, bypassing Indonesia altogether. In de Ranitz’s view Australia was trying to take advantage of the possible substantial loss of Dutch political power in the archipelago region and to extend its own control over all of New Guinea. He told Burton that these ideas could certainly be discussed in the framework of the South Pacific Commission and also that the Netherlands were currently assessing the possible economic potential of New Guinea, the results of which would also be useful in regard to the Australian part of the island. But

Mr. Burton insisted on political cooperation and suddenly stated rather surprisingly that if we responded favourably, Australia would assume a very sympathetic attitude regarding the question of the war debt incurred in Australia by the Netherlands Indies ...¹⁹⁰

Burton’s attempts to mollify the bitter feeling of the Dutch towards him failed utterly. De Ranitz emphasised that as a favourite of Evatt, Burton’s anti-Dutch disposition was dangerous, but added, rather venomously and condescendingly, that on his own account his threatening and insulting propositions merely deserved to be dismissed with an ironic smile as the ravings of an uncontrollable lunatic.¹⁹¹ Apparently Burton, conveniently shoving aside the nationalistic sensibilities of his Indonesian republican friends, in April 1947, during further discussions about Dutch war debts, suggested that as a financial concession Timor could be transferred to Australia.¹⁹² It seems that Evatt concurred

with these overtures.¹⁹³ Thus Australia continued the push for military bases in the Indies, which also had severely worried the Netherlands Indies government during 1944 to 1945.

While the Timor option seems to have faded in Australian official thinking, the West New Guinea issue remained fully alive. As the Dutch ambassador in Canberra, Teppema, reported on 1 September 1949:

During a discussion about the shipping ban, Burton of his own accord began to talk about the future status of Netherlands New Guinea. He said that, like Critchley, he was astounded that we at the Round Table discussions had not argued that New Guinea was not part of Indonesia ... [He further argued that] after the RTC and the retention of New Guinea by us, close defence cooperation would be necessary between The Netherlands and Australia ...¹⁹⁴

Almost at the same time, High Commissioner Lovink in Batavia also referred to the earlier mentioned interview of the Papuan nationalist Ariks with the Australian consul.¹⁹⁵

The distinct possibility that the West New Guinea issue might in the end still wreck the RTC, made reaching a compromise on the issue urgent. The proposal of the Australian representative on the UNCI, Critchley, to place West New Guinea under an international trusteeship was rejected by the Indonesians, although his second suggestion to postpone discussions on the problem for a year was adopted by both parties on 29 October 1949.

Following this, according to a despatch of 13 December 1949 from the Netherlands Foreign Affairs Department to Batavia, Critchley is reported to have stated that Australia preferred that West New Guinea should be declared a trusteeship area under Dutch administration. If the Indonesians could not be persuaded to agree to this then, as a second option, the territory might be ceded with the understanding of remaining under long-term Netherlands government administration:

Even if the Netherlands insisted on retaining its sovereign rights then Australia would support this, although Critchley was of the opinion that this would be unwise from our point of view, as it might harm our good relations with the RIS [United States of Indonesia]. He suggested that we should postpone for a few months further discussions about the New Guinea question, because in the meantime the RIS would probably be so deeply occupied with its own problems that New Guinea would be pushed into the background, making them perhaps more accommodating ...

Furthermore, Critchley apparently advocated the establishment of close relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands in order to keep the new nation on the right track.¹⁹⁶

It is doubtful that these various representations regarding West New Guinea by an Australian Labor government would have substantially influenced the Netherlands government's decision in 1949 to keep West New Guinea out of the Indonesian federation.

A pertinent illustration of this is provided in a despatch from the Dutch embassy in Canberra of 9 August 1949 in answer to an inquiry from The Hague about possible Australian support for the Netherlands regarding West New Guinea. It resolutely rejected as unrealistic, any hope of Australian cooperation in view of the constant anti-Dutch stance adopted by the Labor cabinet during the shipping bans, and in the UN where Australia had come to the fore as the great champion of the Indonesian republic. A scathing attack is made on Burton and Evatt, who are seen as the real villains:

We consider the well-known Dr J.W. Burton, the Secretary ... of the Department of External Affairs to be the leader of the anti-Netherlands group in government circles. This department is young and inexperienced; some of its officers think and feel mostly, if not exclusively, with emotion and are seldom rational. The group of officials, who are pro-Netherlands (and show this

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quite openly), exert no influence whatsoever, and have been sidetracked. Officially the department is lead by Dr Evatt. In practice the day-to-day running has been left to Dr Burton, because Dr Evatt is fully occupied with other tasks. He also holds the post of Attorney-General and his frequent overseas travels are well-known. His real interest in foreign affairs is presumably rather limited. But it is only his boundless vanity that makes the Foreign Affairs portfolio attractive to him; after all, this enables him to see his name regularly on the front pages in the world press. On the other hand there are indications that the Prime Minister is not primarily interested in foreign affairs and in practice follows the lead of Burton or is at least strongly influenced by him.

Thus, as long as Burton remained in charge, no Australian support for continued Dutch rule in West New Guinea could be expected. The report also insisted that Australia's own imperialist intentions in the area should not be merely discarded as fanciful. The attention of The Hague was directed again to the various remarks of Evatt and Burton about the possible sale of Timor and West New Guinea and the territorial ambitions of the Australian military. Moreover, it was stressed that West New Guinea's strategic importance had even further increased because of its reserves of oil, a commodity which was lacking in Australia making the country totally dependent on imports. Finally, a warning was given that it would be illusory to believe that an expected change of government would alter this situation, as the Liberals would prove to be as annexationist and imperialist.¹⁹⁷

To what extent this report portrayed the real thinking of the Australian government is of course open to question. What is fascinating was the unfolding scenario in the early 1950s in which Australia, by then under Liberal rule, seemed to be pushing the West New Guinea bandwagon faster than the Dutch themselves.

The Indonesian freedom struggle had indeed attracted support and sympathy from sections of the ideologically anti-colonialist Labor Party, particularly the left wing, and also from the Aus-

tralian Communist Party. The cause of Indonesian independence had been disseminated by a group of Indonesian radical nationalists and communists who, after the Japanese invasion, had been transported to Australia by the Netherlands Indies authorities from the notorious prison camp at Tanah Merah in West New Guinea.

At the end of September 1945, in support of the Indonesian freedom struggle, Indonesian crews of Dutch freighters in Australian harbours refused to load cargoes destined for the Indies. In a show of solidarity the communist-controlled Australian waterfront unions put a black ban on all Dutch shipping from Australia to Indonesia. Half-hearted attempts by the seemingly pro-Indonesian Australian cabinet to solve the problem caused relations with the Dutch, already strained during the war, to deteriorate even further.

The Netherlands-Indies government in exile, soon after their arrival in Australia in 1942, had become suspicious of the supposedly postwar imperialist designs of their hosts. In June 1942, Australian Foreign Minister Evatt reportedly told Dutch representatives that as they had surrendered the Indies without any serious resistance, Australia, for the sake of national security should, after the war, take over control of the Indies or at least form part of a Western condominium. Again, in December 1942, during a conference of the Institute of Pacific Relations, an Australian delegate argued for an international colonial mandate for the Netherlands Indies. The ambiguous nature of Australian announcements on its policy regarding the Indies during 1942 to 1945, veering from supporting Dutch claims and Australian professions of friendship and cooperation to ill-disguised hints of annexation plans, did little to assuage Dutch fears.¹⁹⁸

In the 1940s and 1950s many Australians were still deeply affected by British mores and values and suffered from a cultural cringe. In addition to this colonial mentality, racism was deeply entrenched in the national Australian psyche, as can be attested to by many European migrants, particularly those from the

Mediterranean and those of Asian extraction. Many migrants in the 1950s, considering themselves fortunate to have just survived one kind of supernationalist induced horror, could perhaps be excused for fearing they had landed into another one, being bombarded daily by highly chauvinistic propaganda in the press and the radio. They were bewildered, angered and sometimes amused at being forced to stand up for the image of the Queen in the cinema; to see high school boys in military uniform tossing big rifles about in the bus; to watch lifesavers on the beach marching past in military precision; and they were intrigued with the Australian preoccupation for sport and military exploits including defeats. All this, although perhaps an innocent throw-back to the law and order days of the 1930s and a result of the colonial imitation of English ways, looked somewhat suspicious to people who had recently lived under Nazi occupation. Certainly racism was still rearing its ugly head and the White Australia Policy was still fully applied, as can be attested to by those prospective Asian immigrants who failed a test in Gaelic or any other outlandish language, and also by hundreds of Dutch citizens (Eurasian) from Indonesia, who were made to understand that the colour of their skins did not meet Australian standards. People of non Anglo-Celtic stock believed that, though tolerated, they were still generally looked on as somewhat inferior beings. The officially supported 'Bring Out a Briton' policy only served to reinforce the perceptions of other migrant groups. Other examples are the verifiable stories of European migrant children who, on their arrival at school, were allotted a seat without any ado, but were ordered to stand up and welcome the 'superior' newcomers from Britain. These are only a small sample of the insensitive and racially coloured treatments that postwar migrants had to endure. Notwithstanding it must be stressed that there were also Australians who welcomed all newcomers regardless of colour, creed or language. Organisations such as the Good Neighbour Councils performed splendid work in helping to settle thousands of migrants.

The declaration of solidarity and support of their Indonesian brethren by the communist-controlled transport trade unions were politically motivated and their anti-racial stance becomes suspect as these were exactly the same people who, in their own backyard, denied migrants – not to speak of Aboriginals – equal treatment. It was in the Australian working classes and the trade union movement that racism, particularly anti-Asian sentiment, and support of the White Australia Policy was strongest. One did not need to listen too long to the conversation in any public house in Australian working-class suburbs at the time to find ample proof of this contention. It is revealing that, in 1945, Prime Minister Chifley's clearly pro-Indonesian bias stopped short at waiving the Immigration Act (White Australia Policy) for the 500-odd striking Indonesian seamen, who had revoked their Dutch citizenship and ran the risk of retaliation by the Dutch authorities on their return to Indonesia.¹⁹⁹

The anti-colonial factor in Australia's post-1945 policy on the Indonesian question was overshadowed by matters of national security and defence. In reality public Australian support for Indonesian independence was by no means overwhelming. A poll taken in December 1945 showed that 41 per cent of Australians favoured the continuance of Dutch rule; 29 per cent supported the Indonesians; 13 per cent advocated a different solution; and 17 per cent held no opinion. This situation remained unchanged until 1949.²⁰⁰

The Pacific war had forcibly driven home the nation's great vulnerability to invasion from the north and the danger of relying too much on the defensive ability of allies in the region. The all-out national effort to keep the Japanese at bay engendered an upsurge of an Australian jingoist nationalism of its own. There was a strong feeling, particularly in Labor circles, that Australia should take more direct responsibility for its national destiny without having to depend any longer on the dictums and foibles of Whitehall.

Until 1940 when the first Australian ambassador was ap-

pointed to Washington, Australian foreign affairs had been run mainly from London. In 1943 Dr Evatt instituted a training scheme for diplomats to staff the fledgling Department of External Affairs, which, in 1945 was ready and keen to spread its wings in the international arena, where the first major challenge to confront it was the vitally important Indonesian question.

The ignominious defeats of the British and Australian forces in Malaya, and the Dutch in Indonesia, had seriously eroded the prestige of Western colonial rulers in the eyes of indigenous societies of South-East Asia. Also, many Australians resented having been left abandoned in their greatest hour of need by the Churchill government.

The Australian government therefore tried to upgrade its international image, particularly in the Pacific and South-East Asia. In November 1944 Australia and New Zealand, taking a leaf out of the Roosevelt creed, had accepted in principle that in the postwar era the colonial powers should no longer hold their territories as spoils of conquests but on the basis of trusteeships. Furthermore, Evatt claimed middle power status for Australia on a level with France and the Netherlands, and at the San Francisco Conference in May 1945 he put himself forward as the most ardent advocate of the trusteeship idea for dependencies.²⁰¹

This move further increased the loathing of the Dutch for Evatt, who dismissed him as a self-seeking, vainglorious humbug, posing a danger to Dutch imperial interests.

Australian demands to take part in a meaningful way in the final drive of General MacArthur to bring down Tokyo were not accepted; due to consideration of national prestige the Americans wanted to keep this solely in their own hands. As a kind of second prize the Australian forces were allowed to occupy the Netherlands Indies outside Java, Sumatra and Bali. Dutch suspicions of Australian imperialist designs were immediately aroused again when, during the surrender of the Japanese to Australian forces in Timor, only the Australian flag was allowed to be raised and no mention was made of Dutch sovereignty.²⁰²

The Australian Department of External Affairs still continued to push its trusteeship idea for the Netherlands Indies and sent W. Macmahon Ball as a representative to Batavia in October 1945. This move was not only resented by the Dutch but also by the British, who were annoyed at what was considered to be unwelcome Australian meddling. Further attempts by Evatt to gain direct involvement for Australia in a Dutch-Indonesian settlement were also rebuffed. Undeterred, Evatt, after the British military disaster in Surabaya in November 1945 and speculating on London's anxiety to be relieved from its responsibilities in the Indies, proposed that Australia should take over its military role in Java. Stressing the crucial importance for Australian security to achieve political stability in the Indies, Evatt suggested the Netherlands should speed up the matter of Indonesian self-government. Obviously Evatt tried to place Australia in the driver's seat in Dutch-Indonesian negotiations. This initiative was rejected by Chifley for fear of causing a domestic crisis in an already war-weary country by postponing the repatriation of the Australian forces.²⁰³

The Australian government's prime motive underlying its Indonesian policy was highlighted when, during a conference in Singapore in April 1946, Chifley and Evatt, along with Mountbatten and other British officials, stressed that a Dutch-Indonesian agreement should take into account Australian defence requirements such as the future use of naval bases in Surabaya and Kupang (Timor).²⁰⁴ Obviously the official anti-colonial creed was being smothered here by an old-fashioned imperialist demand for offshore defence strongholds, something with which neither the Dutch nor the Indonesian republic could ever have been expected to agree. For Evatt even to consider such a possibility, it certainly showed how unrealistic was his view of Australia's actual political and military status in the South-East Asian context.

Notes

1. Penders, 1968, pp. 273-309.
2. Beets, 1991.
3. Lijphart, 1966, p. 72.
4. *ibid.*, pp. 74-5; Drooglever, 1980.
5. Winkler, 1936, pp. 81-2.
6. Meyer Ranneft, 1936.
7. Van Gogh, 1954, p. 115; Beets, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-80.
8. Colijn, 1907.
9. Lijphart, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
10. *ibid.*, pp. 85-6.
11. Derix, 1987, p. 50.
12. NIB, Volume III, 1971-1996, pp. 543-44.
13. NIB, Volume V, 1971-1996, p. 97.
14. Van Wijnen, 1946, p. 93; p. 109. Motie no. 3.
15. *ibid.*, p. 94.
16. De Geus, 1984, p. 28.
17. NIB, Volume VI, 1971-1996, p. 199.
18. *ibid.*, p. 255.
19. *ibid.*, pp. 246-49.
20. NIB, Volume V, *op. cit.*, p. 628, footnote 2.
21. *ibid.*, p. 629.
22. NIB, Volume VI, *op. cit.*, pp. 396-97.
23. NIB, Volume VIII, 1971-1996, p. 503.
24. NIB, Volume VI, *op. cit.*, p. 309.
25. *ibid.*, p. 310.
26. *ibid.*, pp. 432-33.
27. De Jong, J.J.P., 1988, p. 306.
28. NIB, Volume VI, *op. cit.*, p. 494.
29. *ibid.*, p. 522; p. 525.
30. *ibid.*, p. 781; de Geus, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
31. De Geus, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.
32. NIB, Volume VI, *op. cit.*, p. 541.
33. *ibid.*, p. 545.
34. De Geus, *op. cit.*, p. 32.
35. *ibid.*, p. 33.
36. NIB, Volume VI, *op. cit.*, p. 602.
37. *ibid.*, p. 633.

38. *ibid.*, p. 634.
39. NIB, Volume XI, 1971-1996, pp. 615-16.
40. *ibid.*, pp. 634-35.
41. *ibid.*, pp. 691-92.
42. NIB, Volume XII, 1971-1996, p. 166.
43. De Geus, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
44. *ibid.*, p. 41.
45. Duynstee, 1961, p. 156.
46. Lijphart, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
47. NIB, Volume VIII, *op. cit.*, p. 502.
48. Van Esterik, 1982, p. 109.
49. NIB, Volume XIII, 1971-1996, pp. 226-30.
50. *ibid.*, p. 230, note 9.
51. NIB, Volume XV, 1971-1996, p. 59.
52. Duynstee, *op. cit.*, p. 158.
53. Van Oerle, 1989, p. 86.
54. *ibid.*, p. 86
55. Lijphart, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
56. NIB, Volume XIV, 1971-1996, p. 512.
57. NIB, Volume XVI, 1971-1996, p. 570, note 13.
58. NIB, Volume XV, *op. cit.*, pp. 295-96.
59. *ibid.*, p. 415.
60. *ibid.*, p. 623, note 4.
61. *ibid.*, p. 592.
62. *ibid.*, p. 641.
63. De Geus, *op. cit.*, p. 45.
64. Lijphart, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
65. Van Oerle, *op. cit.*, p. 89.
66. *ibid.*, p. 89.
67. *ibid.*, p. 91.
68. De Geus, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-8.
69. Van Oerle, *op. cit.*, p. 97.
70. De Geus, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
71. Van Oerle, *op. cit.*, p. 93.
72. Stikker, 1966, p. 97.
73. De Geus, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.
74. *ibid.*, p. 50.
75. Lijphart *op. cit.*, p. 96.

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76. *ibid.*, pp. 55-6 and 131-32; van Gogh, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
77. *Rapport van de Commissie Nieuw-Guinea (Irian)*, 1950, 2e stuk, p. 15.
78. Van Gogh, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-66; van Baren, 1954, p. 93.
79. Van Esterik, *op. cit.*, p. 46.
80. *ibid.*; Drooglever, 1997.
81. Van Bemmelen, 1954, p. 285.
82. This point was made by Dr P.B.R. de Geus during a colloquium at the University of Nijmegen, 2 July 1992.
83. Derix, *op. cit.*
84. *ibid.*, p. 160.
85. *ibid.*, p. 154.
86. *ibid.*, p. 160.
87. *ibid.*, pp. 163 and 168; van Eechoud, 1951, p. 174.
88. Derix, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
89. *ibid.*, p. 150; Courtois, 1991, pp. 131-32.
90. *Rapport van de Commissie Nieuw Guinea*, 1950, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
91. Lagerberg, 1977, p. 60.
92. Derix, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-66.
93. Klein, 1947, pp. 178-87; de Geus, *op. cit.*, p. 37.
94. Derix, *op. cit.*, p. 154.
95. *ibid.*, p. 163.
96. *ibid.*, pp. 166-67.
97. *ibid.*, p. 174.
98. *ibid.*, p. 154.
99. De Geus, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
100. Derix, *op. cit.*, p. 171.
101. *ibid.*, pp. 171-72.
102. *ibid.*, pp. 172-73; van Esterik, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-9.
103. Van Esterik, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-6.
104. *ibid.*, pp. 38-9.
105. Derix, *op. cit.*, p. 186.
106. *ibid.*, p. 186.
107. *ibid.*
108. Van Esterik, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
109. Boldingh, 1954, p. 197.
110. Kamma, 1954(b), p. 159; Verschuieren, 1954, p. 208.
111. Van der Leeden, 1956, p. 15.

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112. Oomen, 1958; van der Hoeven, 1956.
113. Kranendonk, 1958; Metselaar, 1957.
114. Van Baal, 1954, p. 234; *Verslag Studiecommissie Nieuw Guinea*, 1948, p. 31.
115. Pouwer, 1955, pp. 230-31.
116. *ibid.*, pp. 234 and 237.
117. *ibid.*, pp. 232-33.
118. *ibid.*, pp. 238-39.
119. *ibid.*, p. 241.
120. *ibid.*, p. 252.
121. *ibid.*, p. 263.
122. *ibid.*, p. 272.
123. *ibid.*, p. 242.
124. Schoorl, 1957, pp. 7 and 12.
125. *ibid.*, p. 80.
126. *ibid.*, pp. 132-33.
127. *ibid.*, pp. 135-38.
128. *ibid.*, p. 145.
129. *ibid.*, pp. 249-50.
130. *ibid.*, p. 258.
131. *ibid.*, p. 257.
132. *ibid.*, p. 252.
133. *ibid.*, p. 253 .
134. Pouwer, *op. cit.*, p. 225.
135. Kamma, 1954(a), p. 10.
136. Galis, 1954, pp. 5-6.
137. Miedema, 1984, p. 73.
138. Kamma, *op. cit.*(a), p. 10.
139. *Rapport van de Commissie Nieuw Guinea*, *op. cit.*, pp. 75-6.
139. Miedema, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
140. Kamma, *op. cit.*(a), p. 11.
141. Held, 1947, p. 15.
142. Kamma, *op. cit.*(a), p. 11
143. Kamma, *op. cit.*(b), pp. 102-3.
144. *ibid.*, p. 104.
145. Kamma, *op. cit.*(a), p. 119.
146. *ibid.*, p. 107.
147. *ibid.*, p. 114.

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148. *ibid.*, p. 139.
149. *ibid.*, p. 148.
150. *ibid.*
151. *ibid.*
152. *ibid.*, pp. 149-52.
153. *ibid.*, pp. 169-71.
154. *ibid.*, p. 160.
155. *ibid.*, pp. 168-69.
156. *ibid.*, p. 182.
157. *ibid.*, pp. 202-3.
158. *ibid.*, p. 183.
159. Kouwenhoven, 1947; Merkelijn, 1997, pp. 201-4.
160. Kamma, *op. cit.*(a), pp. 191-92; Courtois, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-25.
161. NIB, Volume I, 1971-1996, p. 343.
162. Courtois, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
163. *ibid.*, p. 128.
164. *ibid.*, p. 131.
165. *ibid.*, p. 130.
166. Galis, 1955, pp. 211-12.
167. *ibid.*, pp. 215-17; Kouwenhoven, 1947.
168. Courtois, *op. cit.*, p. 137-38; van Eek, 1954.
169. Hoogeveen, 1948.
170. Van Milligen, 1949.
171. Courtois, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-39.
172. Rijksarchief, Min. voor Uniezaken en Overzeese Rijksdelen, 2 December 1950. Van Maarseveen aan Hollandia. Codetelegram 23254. Dossier 122614.
173. Penders, *op. cit.*, pp. 326-44.
174. Gendt, 1954, p. 165.
175. *Volkstelling*, 1930, Hoofdstuk VII, Deel I, p. 65.
176. Penders, *op. cit.*, chapter VIII.
177. Van der Veur, 1963, pp. 57-8.
178. *ibid.*, p. 54.
179. Miedema, *op. cit.*
180. Australian Archives, ACT Office, A1838/2. Item 403/3/1/1., Pt.24.
181. Derix, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
182. *ibid.*, p. 191
183. *ibid.*, p. 182

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184. *ibid.*, p. 183
185. BUZA, Batavia aan BUZA 2.9.1949, ref. 11348, map, code 9/1945-1954/2262.
186. Derix, *op. cit.*, p. 175
187. *ibid.*, pp. 181-82.
188. Private conversation with Ganis Harsono, January 1976.
189. Australian Archives, A 18388/2 ;403/3/1/1 Pt. 3a.
190. NIB, Volume VIII, *op. cit.*, p. 211, note 4.
191. *ibid.*, pp. 211-12.
192. *ibid.*, p. 370.
193. *ibid.*, p. 371, note 12.
194. BUZA, Canberra aan BUZA, 1.9.49, ref. 11313 Codetelegram.
195. BUZA, Batavia to BUZA, 2.9.1949, Ref 11348.
196. BUZA, Codetelegram 332, uit Batavia, 13.12.1949, DIRVO (De Beus) 124356-11193GS; de Beus, 1977, pp. 254-55 .
197. Netherlands Embassy, Canberra to BUZA, 9-8-1949, ad 83722-7854 G.S., Archief Buitenlandse Zaken, dossier G 11094.
198. George, 1980, pp. 15-18.
199. *ibid.*, p. 38.
200. Mackie, 1963, pp. 319-32.
201. George, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-7.
202. NIB, Volume I, *op. cit.*, p. 145, note 3.
203. George, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-5.
204. *ibid.*, p. 57.