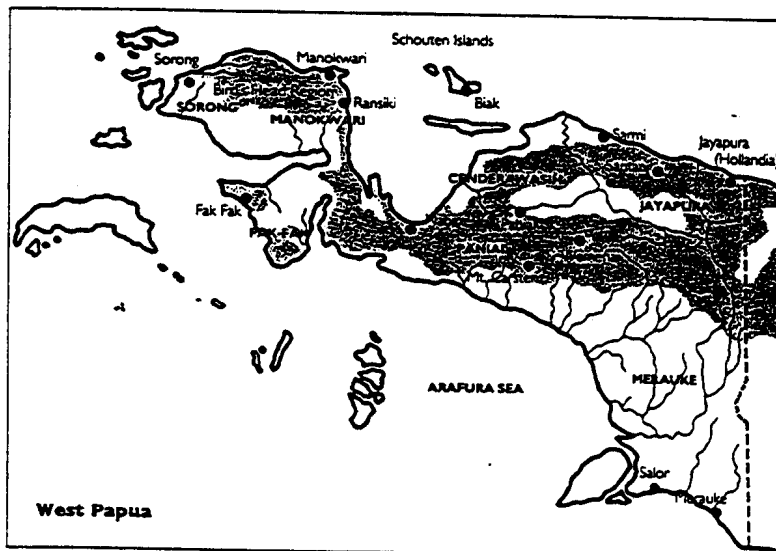
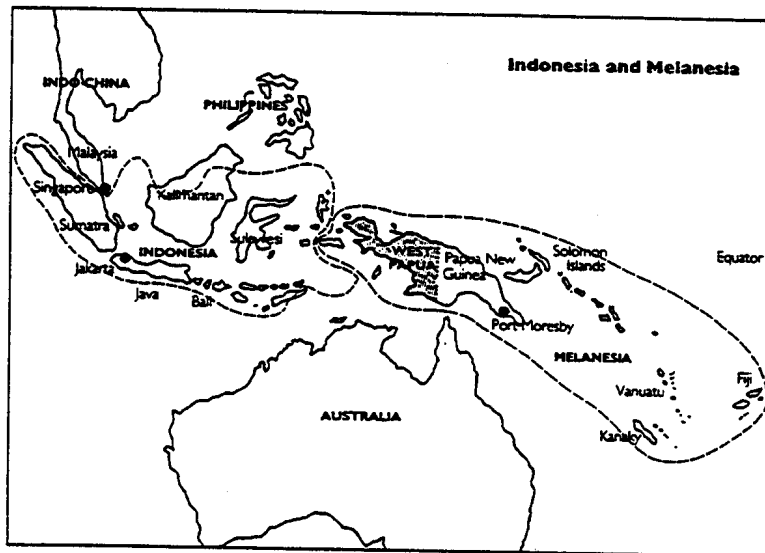


## CHAPTER 2.

### A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF IRIAN JAYA.

#### 2.1 BACKGROUND

Indonesia bases its claim to Irian Jaya on the fact that West New Guinea formed part of the Dutch East Indies colonial empire, and as such is an automatic and non-negotiable part of the successor state. The western portion of New Guinea came under the control of the Dutch through an agreement signed with the Sultan of Tidore in 1660, whereby the Dutch recognised his authority over the region as a proxy for Holland <sup>1</sup>. The Dutch claimed sovereignty directly in 1828 for the area up to the 141st meridian east of Greenwich upon their establishment of an initial settlement <sup>2</sup>. Little occurred in this archetypal colonial backwater, save for crocodile and bird of paradise



shooting, until 1928 when the prison camp of Boven Digul was constructed for political prisoners held following the failed 1926-27 Java revolt.

During the Second World War, West New Guinea was occupied by the Japanese along with the rest of the Netherlands East Indies. Their control did not extend inland but concentrated around the capital, Hollandia, and some provincial centres, particularly on the north coast. Japanese occupation did not seem to have the watershed effect for the local elite in West New Guinea that it had in Java and the populous north east regions. There, collaboration between the Japanese and the emerging Indonesian nationalists, such as Suharto and Sukarno, created an alternative ideological and bureaucratic framework that would survive the war and eventually eject the Dutch. That this process did not occur in West New Guinea can be attributed to the fact that a local indigenous elite was virtually non-existent. Thus, the post war period that was characterised by violent confrontation between the nationalists and the returning Dutch colonial regime in most of the East Indies, passed relatively quietly in West New Guinea. Although several disturbances marred the tranquillity of the province, it is not inaccurate to say that the Dutch reasserted their control over West New Guinea easily and completely after 1945.

This fact was tacitly acknowledged at the Round Table conference held in The Hague in 1949, where Holland ceded sovereignty to the independent state of Indonesia of all its East Indies territories except West New Guinea<sup>3</sup>. This last area was, in effect, left in abeyance, its ultimate fate to be determined at a later period. For the Indonesians this fate was, unquestionably, to become part of the Republic. The Dutch, however, decided instead that Netherlands New Guinea should follow another road, one that would lead to the establishment of a separate, sovereign Melanesian state. They established a national council called the Volksraad, after conducting elections in 1960 in which about 100,000 people out of a population of 800,000 voted<sup>4</sup>. The Volksraad was designed to eventually inherit the sovereignty of 'West Papua' (the official name), with a date for independence being set for 1971. Eventual confrontation over the status of West New Guinea was therefore inevitable, but it was postponed to the 1960's as the new state of Indonesia lurched from one crisis to the next.

The period between 1949 and 1962 was crucial in the development of West Papuan nationalism, and, from the Indonesian perspective, primarily responsible for the problems that beset the province today. Holland pursued a program that would allow for early independence. This entailed a rapid buildup of infrastructure, both physical, in the form of roads and ports, etc., and mental, by establishing an indigenous elite and instilling throughout the population the notion that a sovereign Melanesian state was under construction. This concept of an independent West Papuan nation is deeply held by many people who feel that their right to self-determination has been denied through incorporation into the state of Indonesia. The fundamental mind-set that West New Guinea is a separate racial, cultural, religious and geographic entity, and thus deserving of its own nation state status, is at the core of the problems in Irian Jaya today.

From the Indonesian viewpoint Holland's nurturing of Melanesian nationalism was at best irresponsible, and at worst neo-imperialistic. If a sovereign state of West Papua had emerged, it would clearly have been under the influence of the Dutch through ownership of private capital and through ties to the metropolitan power: in a similar manner Australia influences PNG. The Indonesians believed the only way to completely rid themselves of colonialism was to eject the Dutch totally, including from what was seen as a neo-colonialist fiction in West New Guinea. To the nationalists in Jakarta the birthright of Indonesia was all the Dutch East Indies, with no exceptions.

Holland's attempt to create an independent Melanesian state had several motivations. There was a genuine belief that the Melanesian population of West New Guinea, as a distinct racial and geographic entity, would fare better in an autonomous state, rather than under Malay control. There were also potential economic benefits from the presumably vast resources of West New Guinea, which, if independent, would have been open to exploitation by Dutch business interests. In addition, many people who felt their future did not lie in Indonesia, but were disinclined to return to the cold climes of Europe, foresaw the birth of a country in which they could continue an equatorial existence. But perhaps, as Peter Hastings has noted, the strongest motivating force for wanting an independent West New Guinea was to remove the Dutch image of '300 years of

the whip and the club' <sup>5</sup>. There was a desire on the part of Holland to extract itself from centuries of empire with some semblance of dignity. However, this was not to be. The Dutch had left it all too late. In 1962 President Sukarno launched a campaign to reunify what was now referred to as 'West Irian', with the rest of Indonesia. This campaign included diplomacy on the international stage as well as a military operation named 'Mandala' <sup>6</sup>. 1419 commandos under the command of Benny Murdani parachuted into West Irian in April 1962, as naval engagements with the Dutch took place in the Aru Bay <sup>7</sup>. These military ventures were not very successful, but heralded a build-up of forces on both sides. Pressure mounted on the Dutch as Indonesian diplomacy succeeded in progressively isolating Holland.

Australia, while sympathetic to the concept of an independent West New Guinea, was not prepared to go to war against Indonesia. This position was primarily taken as it had become clear that the United States would not intervene militarily in the situation. Holland's situation became hopeless as the US swung further behind the Indonesians. Their support was given to counter the influence of the USSR, which had provided a low interest loan of US\$450 million to Indonesia in 1960 <sup>8</sup>. America was playing Cold War geo-politics with a large and potentially communist Indonesia at stake. Non-strategic issues, such as the future of West New Guinea, were sacrificed to enhance relations between the two states. The Dutch were left with the choice of either fighting a major war on their own, or acquiescing in Indonesia's plans for the incorporation of West New Guinea.

The inevitable capitulation came with the signing of the New York Agreement in August 1962. This agreement allowed for the transfer of the administration of Netherlands New Guinea to an interim United Nations Temporary Executive Authority for the period from the 1st of October until the 1st of May 1963. Indonesia would then assume control of 'Irian Barat'. Part of the Agreement was that an 'Act of Free Choice' would be held within five years. This was to be a referendum of sorts to gain majority approval before West New Guinea became an official, UN sanctioned, part of Indonesia. In reality this Act was a farce, with the Indonesian regime appointing 1025 'community leaders' who, under coercion, voted unanimously for incorporation into

Indonesia<sup>9</sup>. The UN accepted this travesty of 'Free Choice' because the New York Agreement was essentially between the Dutch and Indonesia, both of whom accepted the outcome<sup>10</sup>. West New Guinea was removed from the UN Schedule of Non-Selfgoverning Territories and became 'Irian Jaya' (Jaya meaning victory) under Indonesian sovereignty.

The Indonesian explanation for the problems that have developed in Irian Jaya, given that it is inextricably part of the successor state, lie firstly in the misplaced Papuan nationalism engineered by the Dutch, and secondly in the fact of Irian Jaya's late incorporation into the Republic<sup>11</sup>. Irian Jaya was not involved in the 'trials of fire' that forged the nation. The war of liberation against the Dutch, and the early turbulent years did not include Irian Jaya; there are not the bonds of shared hardship that bind the rest of the nation. From the Indonesian perspective the problems in the province will subside as it is slowly 'Indonesianised'.

## 2.2 INDONESIAN MISRULE.

After Indonesia achieved control of West New Guinea in May 1963 many of the indigenous elite left with the Dutch; however many also remained. Within this latter group were those Irianese who had agreed with the Indonesian view that an independent West Papua was a neo-colonialist ploy, as well as those people who believed that they could co-exist with the Indonesian state. Those who stayed soon discovered the true nature of the successor state, as they came to be marginalised within the new bureaucracy, their jobs and perks of office being taken by the incoming Malays. This group became quickly alienated from the new regime as their previous status evaporated and any criticism of Indonesia was no longer tolerated.

A similar alienation swept the country-side as the rural population realised that they had been effectively dispossessed and were powerless in the new state. This was because the Indonesians considered all non-cultivated land to be a state possession. Compensation to traditional landowners was either nominal or non-existent: the government believed that the 'development' which occurred was sufficient compensation in itself. Alienated land was used for roads, schools and government facilities, forestry, mining and transmigration settlements. All these activities

caused conflict to some extent, especially as the local people were not included in any form of decision making or consultation.

Transmigration has been one of the most emotional issues in Irian Jaya. This is the process whereby poor peasants from other parts of Indonesia, especially Java, are given a few hectares of land on which to settle and grow cash crops. It is designed to alleviate population pressure on Java, and aid in the development of underpopulated regions. The Irianese are concerned about this process because they fear they will become a minority in their own country. In 1990 non-Irian born people represented 21 % of the total population of 1,730,000: they were only 4 % of the population in 1971 <sup>12</sup>. The fear Irianese have of being eventually overwhelmed by Malays is one of the root causes of the problems in Irian Jaya. Transmigration is examined in section 5.5 of this thesis.

Another deepseated concern of the Irianese is economic exploitation. The substantial profits generated from the natural resources of the province in forestry, mining and oil, are mostly repatriated to Jakarta. Only a fraction of the money finds its way back to the province, let alone to the traditional owners of the resource. For example it was calculated that while per capita GDP in Irian Jaya in 1985 was US\$620, per capita private consumption was only US\$167 <sup>13</sup>. The Irianese are justified in their belief that they are being economically exploited. This issue is discussed in chapter 5.

Together, employment discrimination, loss of political freedom, lack of compensation for loss of land, transmigration and economic exploitation have created much discontent throughout the Papuan population. But there has been no official medium in which dissatisfaction can be voiced: criticism of the regime is against the law. So opposition has been expressed by revolts, uprisings, and anti-government 'incidents', all of which attract a strong response from the Indonesian Armed Forces, the ABRI.

Many thousands of people have died. These people have perished through the ABRI's use of helicopter gunships, jets using napalm and extrajudicial executions, as well as in actual combat. The Anti-Slavery Society in London has put the death-toll at 300,000 <sup>14</sup>, although most commentators quote much lower figures. The real number will never be known as most of the

deaths have occurred in remote areas unobserved by outsiders. Yet it is indisputable that many have died at the hands of the ABRI, and that these deaths and the associated atrocities have cemented a fear and mistrust in the Irianese of the Indonesian state.

Confrontation between the Indonesians and the Irianese started soon after the takeover in 1963 and has continued to the present day. Large scale uprisings occurred in the Manokwari region in the mid 1960s, the Baliem Valley in the late 1970s and around Jayapura and the border region with PNG in the mid 1980s. These conflicts resulted in considerable loss of life. Perhaps the largest and best known of these uprisings occurred in 1984 after members of the OPM raised its Morning Star flag in Jayapura. One hundred Irianese soldiers deserted the ABRI and intense fighting took place along the border for some months<sup>15</sup>, resulting in over 10,000 refugees fleeing across the border into PNG. In addition to the large scale uprisings, as early as 1964 small clashes were occurring on a 'daily basis'<sup>16</sup>.

Behind a lot of this activity was the illegal Papuan nationalist movement, the OPM. This is a loose knit group that encompasses the alienated elite and the disaffected rural population in broad opposition to Indonesian rule. Estimates of the active membership of the OPM, like the death toll, vary widely. Adam Schwartz, in an article in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, puts the number of militants at 'no more than 200'<sup>17</sup>, while James Mathews quotes an OPM Colonel as claiming nearly 50,000 soldiers<sup>18</sup>. It is perhaps more accurate to describe the OPM as they describe themselves: as a 'state of mind', with actual numbers of combatants varying with the ebb and flow of relations between the Indonesians and the Irianese. The history of the OPM and a current assessment of the organisation are offered in chapter four.

The problems that have plagued Irian Jaya since the early 1960s have been exacerbated by Indonesian misrule. If the new regime had conducted just employment policies, a moderate and well-explained transmigration program, equitable economic relations, adequate land compensation and been prepared to negotiate instead of using force at the first opportunity, Irian Jaya would be a far more stable and contented province than it currently is. Indonesian misrule has caused West Papuan nationalism to grow, and the desire for independence remains strong.

## 2.3 CURRENT SITUATION.

Indonesia currently has firm control of a valuable asset. Irian Jaya provides the state with at least four substantial benefits. Firstly there are the economic benefits from large scale resource projects that are in production. These include the massive Freeport Copper Mine in the south, oil production and the forestry industry. Secondly there are the profits that will be derived from exploiting Irian Jaya's as yet undefined, but potentially vast additional mineral reserves, as well as the millions of hectares of loggable rainforest. Thirdly, Irian Jaya comprises approximately twenty percent of Indonesia's land mass. In a region of rapidly growing populations such a reserve of real estate is invaluable. And, finally, there are ideological benefits to the nation in the possession of Irian Jaya. It represents the complete victory over the Dutch. All of the former Dutch East Indies are now part of the modern state of Indonesia. This reinforces the archipelagic self-image of the state, and acts as a powerful symbol working against regional claims for autonomy (this is called *wawasan nusantara* - the unity of the Indonesian archipelago, a very important concept in Indonesian politics).

Compared to these attractive benefits the costs involved in holding Irian Jaya within the nation appear modest. An ABRI force of 3-4,000 has generally been sufficient to maintain order in the province, with additional troops flown in at times of crisis<sup>19</sup>. There is some international criticism of the Indonesian government for its activities, but this is mostly in the popular media and not at an official level because countries in the immediate region, such as Australia and Papua New Guinea, while sympathising with the Irianese, are not prepared to risk offending their large and powerful neighbour. The ASEAN countries are mute on the subject due to their policy of non-interference in each others' affairs, and other states such as the US and the European countries have little knowledge of, or interest in, Irian Jaya. So, it would appear, the benefits to Indonesia in possessing Irian Jaya far outweigh the costs. Yet these costs are likely to rise in the future if social unrest increases in the face of massive resource exploitation and migrant inflow. The consequences of social unrest, and its logical corollary a more powerful OPM, are examined in chapter 6.