

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian province of Papua (Irian Jaya) differs markedly from the rest of the Republic. As the western half of the island of New Guinea, its flora, fauna and geography are closely linked with Papua New Guinea, the independent state on the eastern half of the island. New Guinea as a whole is a diverse land of tropical jungles, lakes, swamps, highlands and snow capped mountains. It is the second largest island in the world and covers a total of 792,540 square kilometres.

Although some coastal populations have inter-mixed to a degree with Indonesians from elsewhere, the vast majority of the indigenous people of Papua, who commonly describe themselves as Papuans, are ethnically and culturally very different to the Asian populations of Indonesia. Instead, their ethnic and cultural links lie primarily with the neighbouring people of Papua New Guinea. They are also similarly connected with the inhabitants of other islands such as Fiji, Vanuatu, the Solomons and to a lesser extent the aborigines of Australia¹. Nonetheless, there is much cultural diversity among these people. In Irian Jaya alone, over 250 different languages are spoken.

Despite the affinity between the two sides of New Guinea, they were officially separated by a border drawn down the middle by European colonialists in 1895 and 1910. Although the British and Germans claimed the eastern half and

the Dutch the west, it made little difference to the indigenous inhabitants, few of whom outside the coastal settlements had even seen a European. However, this border was to have a profound effect on the people in the Dutch territory following the independence of Indonesia in 1949.

Papua had been nominally administered by the Netherlands from Batavia (Jakarta), because the negligible Dutch presence did not warrant a separate governor and administration. But this arrangement led Indonesia to claim that the territory was an integral part of the Republic. Following a Dutch refusal to hand it over, it became a source of growing tension between the two countries throughout the 1950's and early 1960's. Eventually, under threat of Indonesian attack and pressure from the United States, the Netherlands agreed to withdraw from the territory and hand it over to a temporary United Nations administration. In the New York Agreement signed by the Dutch and Indonesians on 15 August 1962, it was agreed that the UN would subsequently transfer administration of West New Guinea to Indonesia. Within five years of this, a UN team was to return to assist Jakarta in organising an act of self-determination in the territory. Its purpose was to determine whether the Papuans wished to become part of Indonesia, or choose independence.

The subject of this thesis is the UN's political involvement in West New Guinea from the signing of the agreement in 1962, until the aftermath of the act of self-determination in 1969. Specifically, it involves an examination of two UN operations. The first is the UN Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA) which administered the territory from October 1962 until May 1963. The second is the

mission of the Secretary-General's Representative, Fernando Ortiz-Sanz.. This mission spent a year in West New Guinea, beginning August 1968, and was responsible for "advising, assisting and participating" in the Indonesian organised act of Papuan self-determination, known as the "Act of Free Choice".

In particular, I will consider whether the terms of the New York Agreement were fulfilled, and if not, the extent to which the UN was responsible. As part of this, I will look at the relationship between the UN and Jakarta, particularly during the period of Ortiz Sanz's mission.

In order to put this study of the UN into some context, I will also discuss the role of other countries and their attitudes towards the territory during the 1960's. Primarily this will concern Australia, which as the administering power in East New Guinea, had a direct interest in developments over the border. In addition, British attitudes towards the territory will be considered. Although Britain did not have a direct interest in New Guinea, it was involved in the region for much of this period due to its conflict with Jakarta over Malaysia. Furthermore, traditional links with Canberra ensured that British contemporary reports provide an alternative, but informed, viewpoint on Australian policy and events in West New Guinea generally. The attitudes of other countries, including the United States and the Netherlands, will be discussed as well.

I do not contend, however, that it is necessary to conduct a detailed study of this issue to identify serious concerns about the legitimacy of the Act of Free Choice. The factual accounts given in the 1969 UN Secretary-General's report

describe clearly how, under conditions of tight political control, 1022 Papuans decided unanimously, on behalf of the entire population, to join Indonesia. In particular, Indonesia's own account, which formed part of the Secretary-General's report, portrays a situation in which it is difficult to identify much evidence of genuine participation in the Act.

But at the time of writing, the official position of Indonesia, the UN and the international community as a whole, is that the Act fulfilled the requirements of the Agreement with regard to Papuan self-determination. Challenging this position are many Papuans and their supporters who point to the UN report and eyewitness accounts as evidence that genuine self-determination did not take place in 1969.

However, to come to an informed conclusion on this issue, it is necessary to examine comprehensively the relevant material, particularly that which is contained in official documents only recently made available for research. The main objective of this thesis is to provide such a study. Interestingly, in December 1999, Dutch Foreign Minister Van Aartson agreed to authorise a historical re-examination of the Agreement and the Act.

Much of the material on which this thesis is based is taken from documents which were de-classified at my request by the UN Archives in New York. The other major sources of information have come from British and Australian Government documents, the most recent of which were released in

January 2000. Additional material has come from United States and Dutch Government records.

In preparing this study, I also undertook research into other aspects of the subject, specifically the Dutch/Indonesian dispute and settlement. But ultimately, I chose to concentrate on the period where no recent academic work had been done. I hope therefore that this thesis will, among other things, significantly broaden the current understanding of Papua's recent history.

Of the existing academic work on the subject, a number deal with the dispute and settlement. Frederick Bunnell's 1969 Ph.D thesis concerns the "Kennedy initiatives in Indonesia 1962-1963." In 1973, William Henderson's book on the dispute and settlement was published, and in 1981, Christopher McMullen produced a book examining the mediation process involved. More recently, Terrence Markin's Ph.D thesis was submitted in 1996. In addition to interviewing all the surviving participants, Markin was able to make extensive use of previously classified US Government documents.

Australian policy towards West New Guinea is examined in Ph.D theses by Margaret Haupt and June Verrier. Haupt's study from 1971 examines the period 1945 to 1962, and Verrier looks at the the years 1949 to 1969 in a thesis completed in 1976. Other theses on Irian Jaya include Beverley Blaskett's 1989 Ph.D on PNG-Indonesian relations and the border conflict. Although mainly concerned with the post-1975 period, she also examines earlier material.

There are also a number of MA dissertations relating to the subject, including my own 1990 study on international involvement during and following the dispute. A 1965 dissertation by James Hermanson looks at the role of the mediator in the 1963 Dutch/Indonesians negotiations. Furthermore, a different area is covered in Yuriko Yamakawa's 1995 study which examines the transmigration programme in Papua and its impact on national integration and development in Indonesia generally.

Various academics and journalists have also written on Papua during the 1960's. Again, much of this deals with the dispute, but valuable material on the post-1963 period was published at the time by academics such as Paul Van der Veur, and Justus Van der Kroef. Of the journalistic material, eyewitnesses such as Hugh Lunn have written about their coverage of the Act. Another eyewitness was Brian May, whose 1978 book *The Indonesian Tragedy* has a detailed chapter on the same period. Finally, a comprehensive history of the Papuan nationalist guerilla struggle beginning in the mid-1960's was written by Robin Osborne in 1985.

I hope that future studies of Papuan history will carry out research using Indonesia material from the period, including memoirs and any government documents which might become available. In particular, a detailed examination of the role of Ali Murtopo and OPSUS during the Act would be valuable.

I also hope that my work will be of value to the study of international organisations and international relations in more general terms. Although it is

beyond the remit of this thesis to consider how it relates to the UN in a wider context, it should, as an examination of the first UN administration of a territory, be of interest to those concerned with more recent examples, such as the operations in Kosovo or East Timor. Furthermore, my research on the UN's conduct before and during the Act will have some relevance for any work carried out on other UN-organised, or -monitored, elections and referendums. Examples of this might include the 1999 referendum in East Timor, the UN organised elections in Cambodia in the early 1990's, or the much delayed referendum planned for the Western Sahara.

Finally, a clearer understanding of the events and politics surrounding the Papuan act of self-determination will assist in evaluating the current political situation in Indonesia as a whole. This will be particularly relevant as Indonesia attempts to address the growing demands from its regions for greater autonomy or even separation.

In a recent article on the subject, the Indonesian political analyst Soedjati Djwandono considers some possible solutions which, although controversial, may become less so in the near future. He argues that the younger generation in Indonesia are questioning many of the old values, including the merits of national unity. He further contends that the forceful maintenance of national unity by uniformity, slogans, and rhetoric, is counter-productive. While advocating broad regional autonomy as a possible solution for the regions, he warns that, after so many years of injustice from Jakarta, the people involved may no longer believe any such offer. To conclude, he broaches the 'taboo' subject:

Would we prefer to have a single nation-state out of this huge but almost unmanageable archipelago...marked by abject poverty among the majority of people, by continued injustice, continuous tension and conflicts because of seemingly irreconcilable differences in ethnic, religious and cultural terms? Or at the risk of being dubbed “blasphemous”, to split peacefully into two, three, four or even five smaller nation-states with a greater chance and hope for peace, greater prosperity, equality and justice for all?²