The West New Guinea Debacle:
Dutch Decolonisation and
Indonesia, 1945-1962
To my daughter Stephanie Stewart and her husband Anthony in appreciation of your caring support of Christine and Daniel.

Cover photo: Sukarno, holding a hoe (pacol), poses as the ‘first farmer’ of the nation. Photo courtesy of Greg Poulgrain.
The West New Guinea Debacle: Dutch Decolonisation and Indonesia, 1945-1962

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This study is concerned with the final and traumatic years of the Dutch colonial presence in Indonesia. After the official transfer of sovereignty by the Netherlands to the federal states of Indonesia in December 1949, Dutch policies and actions were still able to exert a significant impact on its former colony both politically and economically. The modern economic sector in Indonesia in particular remained Dutch dominated. The Indonesian nationalist dream of establishing a free nation from Sabang to Merauke also had not yet been fully achieved owing to the Dutch refusal to hand over West New Guinea.

The story focuses on the Dutch decolonisation process from 1950 onwards, including the West New Guinea debacle. The Indonesian Revolution period of 1945 to 1949 is treated only summarily, concentrating chiefly on Dutch policies and perspectives, which so far have been scantily treated in the existing English language literature on the subject. The history, however, of the genesis of the West New Guinea question, beginning in the 1920s, is looked at in more detail. Secondly, an attempt is made to describe and analyse the emergence of a Papuan national consciousness and the fight for Papuan freedom. In this context also the policies of the United States and Australia are examined.

The basis of Dutch colonial power

Dutch power in the Indonesian archipelago dated backed to the arrival of the Dutch East India Company (VOC), at the begin-
ning of the 17th century. Superior Dutch naval power, and commercial wealth in Europe, was also quickly felt by other European contenders in Asia. In the Indonesian area the existing Portuguese prominence was annihilated and other competitors, namely the Spanish, British, and the Danes, were pushed out by force of arms. But also in other parts of Asia, the Dutch, as worthy disciples of Calvin, manifested an inordinate zeal in their quest to add to the glory of God and their own pockets, taking control of the Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon, and establishing fortified trading posts in Japan, China, Formosa, Thailand, India and the Persian Gulf.

In the East Indies the company’s fortified headquarters were located at Jacatra at the mouth of the Ciliwung River in west Java. Renamed Batavia it grew into a large trade emporium and government administrative centre. The other centre of the VOC power was in the Moluccas – the Spice Islands – in eastern Indonesia. It was their precious spices like nutmeg and cloves that had been the main attraction luring the Dutch to the Indies in the first place. Essentially a trading body, the company showed little inclination to establish itself as a land-based power and its servants were instructed to avoid, as much as possible, involvement in indigenous affairs. The maximising of profits was the motto. Unlike the Portuguese, who were fired with a burning zeal for saving souls and waging a holy war against Islam, as well as amassing filthy lucre, the company forbade its religious ministers to proselytise in Muslim areas out of fear of causing political repercussions, which in turn were bound to lower profitability. In the rest of the archipelago the company tried to enforce a monopoly by tapping the trade from the interior at the mouth of major rivers. Local princes were cajoled into signing contracts, granting the Dutch overlordship, sole trading rights, regular delivery of produce like timber, rice or forest produce at fixed prices. The company’s power normally extended no further than the reach of the guns of their fortified trading posts and the local rulers were left to their own devices in internal matters.
Continued political unrest in Java adversely affected profits, causing the company to meddle ever deeper into Javanese affairs and eventually to become a territorial power itself. As a result, by the middle of the 18th century, most of Java had been brought under Dutch political control with the previously powerful kingdom of Mataram divided into two principalities: Surakarta and Yogyakarta, both having been reduced to fiefs of the company represented at the courts by powerful Dutch residents. Javanese independence and power had been severely weakened, showing only a bleak image of its earlier glory.

Also, by the middle of 18th century, the VOC itself was showing signs of decay. Still generally a viable commercial venture, corruption among its personnel, from high to low, caused most of its profits to end up in private coffers. But also in the international Asian context the company was losing ground, suffering from increased competition from the British East India Company, which was also attempting to increase its direct influence in the East Indies. Similarly, in Europe the power of the Dutch republic was declining being surpassed commercially and in military terms by Britain.

In 1795 Holland was occupied by a French revolutionary army, and the Prince of Orange, the head of state of the Dutch republic, and his entourage were forced to flee to England. This allowed Britain under the terms of the 1788 defence treaty to occupy the Dutch colonies in order to stop French overseas expansion.

The restoration to the Dutch of their former colonial possessions in South-East Asia after the Napoleonic era was far more the product of Britain’s continental European concerns than of Holland’s own military strength at the time. As such the Dutch empire that gradually emerged in the East Indies archipelago during the 19th century was positioned right in the centre of the British imperial arc extending from the Middle East to New Zealand and remained largely dependent for its external protection on British power.
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Dutch policy of non-alignment

In Europe the Netherlands had been reduced to small nation status after the secession of Belgium from the kingdom in 1830. This caused The Hague to base its foreign policy on the principle of non-alignment on the realisation that this was the only way for a small nation to maintain its independence. But there were also other factors leading to this decision. During Holland’s long mercantile history national politics had always contained a strong pacifist element to allow international trade to proceed safely and without interruption. In this connection the work of Grotius – Hugo de Groot – provides a splendid example. The fascination and insistence of the Dutch on the rule of law in the international sphere must also be partly attributed to the impact of Calvinism in moulding the national character. Calvinism emphasised the importance of action, but in accordance with rules, which also helped to instill the other annoying Dutch trait of moralism, both in home and in international politics. There is, of course, also the proverbial frugality of the Dutch, who, during most of their history as a nation, were loath to spend money on large armed forces. Even at the zenith of its naval power during the 17th century the Dutch republic kept the number of warships to a minimum, preferring to augment firepower with hastily armed merchantmen.

The distinct anti-militarist strain that runs through Dutch history flows from the staunch anti-feudalism, fierce individualism, and strong attachment to personal freedom and particularism in religion and politics underlying the national character. Furthermore, pacifism was especially germane to the Low Countries with its long humanist and internationally oriented tradition, exemplified by the celebrated figure of Erasmus. The pacifist movement was further reinforced at the end of last century by the rise of socialism, which started to exert a strong impact on Dutch national politics.

The Netherlands in fact played a prominent role in the peace
movement that gained momentum during the detente in the European international scene after the Franco-German war of 1870 to 1871. Holland was in the forefront of those pushing the ideal that international arbitration rather than war should become the norm in settling disputes between nations, and it envisaged the establishment of a world government and an international police force. The Hague hosted the peace conferences of 1899 and 1907 and was chosen to house the Permanent Court of Arbitration, now the International Court of Justice.1

The policy of neutrality and the peace movement, however, also had their critics in the Dutch parliament and the press where a minority, including Kuyper, the leader of the Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (ARP), a neo-Calvinist faction, and some business leaders, advocated a treaty with Germany, the main trading partner of the Netherlands on the continent. Moreover, Britain was very much out of favour in Holland because of its imperialist war with the Boers, the Dutch Calvinist settlers in South Africa. All this was grist to the mill of Germans such as Admiral von Tirpitz, and other army, business and academic spokesmen, who for some time had been pressing The Hague for a customs union and close political and military cooperation against England, both in Europe and in the colonies.2

Still, the attachment to the traditional policy of neutrality prevailed, because the majority of Dutch politicians remained acutely aware that British and Dutch national interests were closely intertwined. Britain's balance of power policy demanded an independent Holland unbound to one or a combination of continental great powers. In the case of foreign invasion the Netherlands could certainly count on British help. Moreover, the Dutch were always forced to dampen down any anti-British feelings and actions out of fear of losing their colonial empire, which in the last analysis was held under British auspices.3

Dutch-Indies defence policy
By 1900 Britain no longer ruled the seas singlehandedly and had
been forced to abandon its two-ocean naval policy. In 1902 it concluded a defence treaty with Japan. As a result during World War I the protection of Britain’s Asian colonies to a large extent was left to the naval forces of Japan.

Japan as a modern, industrialised great power, suffering from a shortage of Lebensraum and primary economic resources, tried like its Western precursors to take recourse to imperial expansion, firstly in China and Manchuria, and later in 1942 also in South-East Asia.

The American occupation of the Philippines at the beginning of the 20th century was seen as a boon, allowing Britain to leave the defence and the security of South-East Asia for the main part to the USA’s Pacific fleet. The British defence was to be concentrated in Singapore, which was to be developed into a large naval base and an invincible fortress. In the case of war, British naval power could be augmented with the dispatch of a rapid deployment force of dreadnoughts from the home fleet. But as Australian scholar Don Dignan put rather tersely, the 1942 disaster of the Repulse and the Prince of Wales, and the collapse of the supposedly impregnable Singapore, showed that: ‘… A single-ocean navy could not protect a three-ocean empire’.4

In Holland and also in the dominions of New Zealand and Australia the British-Japanese treaty had been received with much misgiving. The treaty was condemned by the Dutch government and the parliament as foolish and very dangerous to the security of the Netherlands Indies. Abraham Kuyper (ARP) went as far as to call it an unholy alliance with a pagan country, alienating England from all other Christian nations, and perhaps leading to the demise of the British empire.5

In 1914 the Netherlands declared its neutrality and mobilised its armed forces. The country was fortunate to remain out of the war, partly because both Germany and England considered that this served their interests best, and partly because of deft and careful Dutch diplomatic manoeuvering. In fact the South-East Asian region was largely left untouched by war, although Japan’s
involvement as an ally of Britain caused the authorities in Batavia great misgivings about future Japanese expansionist intentions. The fact that the USA did not enter the war until 1917 and the British were forced to maintain only a skeleton force in South-East Asia, at least until after the battle of Jutland in 1916 when German naval power was contained, meant that the Allied presence in Asian waters was almost solely Japanese. Ships of the Japanese Imperial Navy were patrolling as far south as Singapore. On the request of the British government in 1916 Japanese cruisers were sent to help patrol the Indian Ocean and in 1917 Japanese destroyers entered the Mediterranean for anti-submarine duty. The precarious military situation of Britain during the war in India and South-East Asia was compounded by the radicalisation of the Indian nationalist movement presenting a fertile ground for German agents to ply their trade. This impasse is forcefully brought home by the Foreign Office’s suggestion in 1915 to use Japanese forces to protect the north-west frontier against a possible Russian attack, a proposal indignantly dismissed by the India Office in London as hugely damaging to British prestige in indigenous society. Such a loss of prestige was indeed suffered when, in February 1915, Japanese marines had to be used to quell a mutiny of the Indian garrison of Singapore.

These obvious signs of Britain’s military weakness could only have heightened the security concerns of the Dutch in the Indies and their southern neighbour, Australia. Batavia and The Hague were certainly worried about the possibility that a British vote of thanks to Tokyo might occur at the expense of Dutch territory. In fact such a scenario had been depicted by the British Consul General in Batavia, Becket, who argued that the reality of Japanese military dominance would have to be recognised and suggested the partitioning of the Netherlands Indies between Britain and Japan, leaving the Dutch only Java. He also stressed that the Dutch both in Europe and in the Indies were too pro-German. The British government, however, was unwilling to exchange the harmless Dutch, even though they were somewhat
unfriendly, for a powerful, and potentially dangerous rival and made it clear that the traditional status quo in the East Indian archipelago and the informal alliance with Holland was to be maintained.7

On the eve of World War I the Dutch government, unconvinced about the effectiveness of Britain’s one-ocean naval policy, had come to the conclusion that to ensure the security of the Indies it was necessary for Holland itself to build a large modern navy, powerful enough to keep the Japanese at bay. A government commission of 1913 proposed the construction of an imposing new naval force consisting of nine battleships, six cruisers, eight destroyers, and twenty-two submarines. This submission had not yet been passed by parliament when the war broke out and in fact very little of this grandiose plan was put into effect. In 1916 the keels were laid for two new cruisers, the Java and the Sumatra, which in 1925 and 1926 finally joined the fleet. The proverbial national stinginess in defence matters finally won out again, as another government commission in 1922 scrapped the projected battleships for the reason that the country lacked the capacity to pay for such capital ships. The principle of self-sufficiency in the defence of the Indies adopted in 1913 was again dropped and the colony’s ultimate security was made dependent on Britain and the USA. The prime task entrusted to the Dutch navy was to retard the advance of the enemy. Eighteen new submarines were to be added to the core of the naval defence, protected by the two new cruisers, six destroyers and ninety-eight seaplanes. These proposals caused a pacifist furore, orchestrated by the Socialist Party (SDAP) and the leftist union movement (NVV). A petition signed by 1.3 million people condemning the Navy Bill, was presented to the government. In parliament the Bill was defeated by the narrowest possible margin of one vote after ten members of the Catholic Party had crossed the floor to vote with the opposition.8

In 1917 it had been agreed amongst the Allies that Japan was to keep the German Pacific possessions north of the Equator and
those to the south would remain under Australian control. The other Japanese demands for territorial expansion were denied by the Western powers, most strongly by the Americans, who had also become extremely worried about the vast Japanese naval expansion program. Washington also had long been critical of the Anglo-Japanese alliance, charging the British with thereby unwittingly having helped to strengthen Japanese imperial ambitions.

In order to settle the international power configuration in the east Asian and Pacific areas a conference was held in Washington in November 1921, which resulted in three important treaties. Firstly, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was replaced by the Four-Power Agreement in which the USA, Britain, Japan and France undertook to respect their mutual possessions in the Far East, in the Pacific, and China. Secondly, in an obvious rebuff to Japan a Nine-Power Treaty protected the political integrity of China and reaffirmed the ‘open door’ policy in trade. Finally a naval treaty was signed in which the USA, Britain and Japan undertook to reduce the total tonnage of capital ships in the ratio of 5:5:3 respectively. In addition the three powers agreed to refrain from building naval bases in newly acquired areas. This assured Japan naval superiority in the north-west Pacific and restricted British and American naval concentration to Singapore and Hawaii.9

Neutral Holland, although not having been directly involved in the Washington negotiations, was nevertheless highly satisfied with the public pledges by the signatories to respect the political status quo of the Netherlands Indies.10 This probably encouraged the Dutch to continue in their neutralist and pacifist dreams. Similarly, in 1941, America was caught napping and the British in Singapore were rudely awakened from their colonial slumber by having their rock-solid belief in the white man’s superiority smashed on the first day of the war by Japanese bombs.

It was not until the late 1930s, when Japanese aggressive in-
intentions towards the Indies had become clearer, that belated attempts were undertaken to build up the Dutch armed strength so as to hold a Japanese attack in check. Between 1938 and 1940 the cabinet, parliament, and the Dutch nation at large were involved again in a controversy about plans to augment the navy’s firepower with a number of heavy cruisers modelled on the German pocket battleship *Gneisenau*. Finally, at the end of April 1940, the Dutch cabinet approved a plan to build three heavy cruisers, six destroyers, a number of motor torpedo boats, a tanker, and to increase the number of flying boats to ninety-six. The parliamentary debate started in the evening of 9 May, just a few hours before the German invasion of the country, rendering the whole exercise futile. ¹¹

In 1941 the actual Dutch naval strength in the Indies consisted of the outmoded cruiser *Java*, the new cruiser *De Ruyter*, the modern light cruiser *Tromp*, seven destroyers, seven outmoded and eight modern submarines, one gunboat, six mine-layers, and eight minesweepers. In addition there were twelve MTBs, twenty-three patrol boats, two supply ships, two tankers and four flying boat tenders.

The Naval Air Service had ten old and thirty modern Dornier flying boats, twenty-five newly delivered American Catalinas and forty-eight Ryan trainers. There were still ten antiquated Fokker seaplanes in service. A number of modern Fokker torpedo planes had been prevented from leaving the Netherlands by the German invasion. The thirty-six Douglas torpedo planes bought in the USA had also not arrived.

The air force had a sizeable number of new American fighters, comprising twenty-four Curtiss Interceptors and seventy-one Brewster Buffaloes which, however, were no match for the much faster Japanese Zeros. Even less effective were the twenty older Curtiss Hawks and thirty Curtiss Falcons. Finally, there were eighty outmoded Glenn Martin bombers and twenty new Lockheed transport planes. The 162 Brewster dive bombers and an equal number of B-25 bombers ordered in the USA could not
be delivered in time. To make matters worse a lack of trained personnel resulted in only forty-five fighters and sixty-six bombers being used at the outset of the war.

The colonial army, the KNIL, was essentially a police force, trained and equipped to put down internal rebellions and disturbances. Its defensive capacity to expel an external enemy was very limited. A program started in 1937 to modernise and mould the KNIL into an effective defence force had only been partly completed when the Japanese struck. Most of the modern weapons ordered overseas had also failed to arrive in time. From the arms ordered in Britain in 1937 only twenty armoured cars had arrived; from the seventy tanks only twenty, armed only with machine-guns, had been shipped. From the 600 American tanks purchased only seven made it to Java, and they again were only equipped with machine-guns; from the 400 light armoured cars on order only twenty-five showed up. Also only a small part of the ordered American trucks, jeeps, and technical goods arrived. The delivery of 100,000 rifles was stopped by the US War Department because they were needed by the American forces themselves.

At the outbreak of the Pacific War the KNIL numbered close to 42,000 men, of whom 10,000 were Europeans; the remainder were indigenous troops consisting of about 13,000 Javanese, 2000 Sundanese, 5000 Menadonese, 4000 Ambonese, and 1000 Timorese. In addition most of the male European population from eighteen to forty-five years was either called up or served as volunteers, forming a force of about 32,000 men, who were used mainly for police and guard duties and to maintain internal security.

Significant here is General Nasution’s comment that, as late as 1940 when he was a cadet at the military college in Bandung, most of the lectures were still oriented towards how to deal with internal rebellions and riots. The training in defence strategy and tactics against an outside aggressor took second place. 5

The internal security situation had indeed been complicated
by the rise of radical Indonesian nationalism, which had been gaining momentum since the early 1920s. But unlike India where the British were too weak to contain a massive nationalist upsurge by suppression and had been forced to make important political concessions, in the Indies the Dutch had managed to keep the situation under firm control. In the 1930s the strength and the politically explosive capacity of the Indonesian nationalist movement was still too weak to pose a real danger to the colonial regime. This scenario was to change fundamentally towards the end of the Japanese occupation and the immediate aftermath of the Japanese surrender in August 1945.

It took less than three months after the devastating Japanese attack on the American fleet in Pearl Harbor in December 1941 for the whole Allied defence effort in South-East Asia to crumble. After the sinking of the *Repulse* and the *Prince of Wales*, and the ignominious debacle of Singapore, resulting in the imprisonment of the vast majority of the British, Indian and Australian forces, the fall of the inadequately armed Netherlands Indies was now a foregone conclusion. General Wavell, the British supreme commander, classed the military situation in Java as hopeless and decided against reinforcing the small British and Australian contingents stationed there with more troops and armour. This further undermined the Dutch colonial army’s morale, already badly bruised by the British and Australian defeat in Malaya and Singapore.

After the valiant stand by the outclassed and outgunned Dutch air force and navy, supported only by a token Allied force, their heroic feats, performed mainly out of sight of the Indonesian population, had failed to stop the Japanese landings in Java and Sumatra. On 8 March 1942, the Dutch commander, General Ter Poorten, surrendered his forces, including the Allied units, to the Japanese. It is highly unlikely that Ter Poorten and the other Europeans present at the signing of the surrender outside Bandung realised that this sealed the definitive end of the Netherlands Indies.
The bulk of the Dutch colonial forces, like their British and Australian counterparts, ended up in Japanese prisoner of war camps. A sizeable number of Dutch merchant vessels and some naval ships and airforce planes had managed to reach Ceylon and Australia, but only very few army units were able to escape.

Unlike their allies the Dutch had no territory left to rebuild their armed strength as the Netherlands, the main source of manpower, was under Nazi occupation, and the remaining part of the Dutch empire in the West Indies was too economically underdeveloped to provide the required human and material resources. Moreover, attempts by the Netherlands government in exile to find recruits for its armed forces among Dutch citizens residing in North America and South Africa produced only meagre results. This meant the few remnants of the Netherlands Indies armed forces that had managed to escape to Australia and Ceylon could not be substantially augmented and the role they could play depended solely on the decisions of the Allied High Command and the goodwill of the host nations. Hence, after March 1942 the Dutch military role in the Pacific war had been reduced to that of a minor player.13

In the grip of Japan

The speedy Japanese victory caused the Dutch to suffer a huge loss of prestige among the Indonesians, and the idea of the white man’s superiority and invincibility, so carefully nurtured during the ages among the masses, was destroyed forever. Indeed many Indonesians came to the conclusion that if the Japanese could defeat the mighty Western nations, they could do the same.14 Many among the traditional Indonesian ruling classes and bureaucrats, who were beholden for their position to the Dutch colonial regime, and had supported the Dutch colonial policy of gradual political and economic development, felt betrayed. They argued that the Dutch, by failing to defend their colonial subjects against the Japanese invaders, had lost their right to rule
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(wahyu). There was indeed nothing to be seen of the supposed bond of sympathy between brown and white in sharing the same misfortune, a deep disappointment to many Dutchmen, who really had always believed that such a link existed. The status of the Dutch and the Eurasians was further seriously eroded by the harsh, denigrating and often cruel treatment meted out by the new masters. Such was the case in Yogyakarta where, after the surrender, the all-powerful Dutch Resident was forced by the Japanese to direct the traffic. This was a gross insult and a public degradation causing irreparable damage to the Dutch reputation, and even more so here in the heartland of traditional Java, where power and prestige still strictly depended on the point reached in the highly socially stratified status system. Similarly, the impudent treatment of the governor-general and the armed forces commanders, who were transported from Bandung to Jakarta by train in a third-class compartment guarded by insolent soldiers, could only have caused the respect for the Dutch among indigenous onlookers to plunge even further. Early in 1943 most Europeans, including women and children, had been interred. A sizeable number of Eurasians, although legally recognised as European, were left free. In an attempt to lure the nationalists to their side and to reduce any possible Indonesian resistance the Japanese, immediately after their arrival, had allowed the national red and white flag to be hoisted and the anthem to be sung. This stunt did not only fool the prewar cooperative nationalists, many of whom, already before the outbreak of the war, had decided to leave the sinking Dutch colonial ship. Some of the radical nationalists and Muslim leaders also fell for this propaganda trick, believing that the Japanese were genuine in their promises of Indonesian self-government and even independence.

The real intentions of the Japanese were revealed when, after control of the country had been established on 20 March 1942, regulations were issued prohibiting all Indonesian nationalist activities and revoking permission to use the national Indone-
sian flag and anthem. It was Japanese policy to erase all vesti-
ges of the former Dutch colonial regime and to bind the Indo-
nesian people as closely as possible into supporting Japan’s war
aims.

In fact the Japanese turned out to be far stricter and more cruel
masters than the Dutch had ever been and rather than bringing
freedom they were busy turning the Indies into a Japanese colony.
Any sign of an anti-Japanese stance or action was ruthlessly sup-
pressed by the notorious secret police, the Kenpeitai, whose ef-
ficiency was considerably increased by the enlistment of a large
number of Indonesian informers left behind by the Dutch intel-
ligence service (PID). The Japanese used fascist-like front organi-
sations and the centrally controlled radio service to conduct a
propaganda and indoctrination campaign to try to mobilise the
people for their war effort.

Indonesian leaders who desired to stay in the political lime-
light without wanting to commit suicide, could only agree to
cooperate, hoping to guide the situation towards the national
advantage. But according to General Nasution’s recollection of
events:

Quite a number of leaders in this first stage truly believed in offi-
cial and unofficial propaganda ‘to support Japan to death’, to
‘prosper together within Greater East Asia’, and the implicit geo-
political theory behind it and so forth, a position which they
maintained until the end of Japanese rule …

The relatively small number of Indonesian social democrats
in the nationalist movement, as convinced anti-fascists such as
Sjahrir, remained true to their ideals, laid low and refused to
cooperate. Mohammad Hatta, who before the war had visited
Japan, was also known as a committed social democrat, and
hence was viewed with great suspicion. Probably because of his
high national profile, the Japanese wanted to keep him under
close observation, and put him on the spot by appointing him
to a sideline job as head of an advisory bureau to army head-
quarters. Later in his autobiography Hatta tried to whitewash his involvement by stressing that he only agreed to cooperate as an adviser not as an official after having been assured by General Harada, the head of military government (Gunseikan), that Japan intended to give Indonesia its independence. This story remains unconvincing as at this point of time ideas of Indonesian independence were still far removed from Japanese thinking. More likely Hatta was forced to comply at gunpoint.22

Indeed, many Indonesians and their leaders, as was demonstrated during the subsequent turbulent flow of Indonesian political history, showed no such deep commitment to Western democracy at all.

The most prominent critic of Western democracy was Sukarno, who, rather than being forced, gave the distinct impression of being keen to offer his services to the new conquerors. The metamorphosis of Sukarno from a prewar Marxist-tinged anti-imperialist into a Japanese cooperator par excellence is striking, and cannot solely be attributed to his consummate acting skills. The deeper reasons for this must be found in Sukarno’s own political philosophy that showed some similarity to the Japanese model. Certainly, his dismissal of Western democracy and values, his insistence on a one-party state, the advocacy of the musyawarah and mufakat political decision-making machinery, which in essence was a native Indonesian version of the corporate state, all points in that direction. Still Sukarno was too complex a political figure to be readily slotted into one of major the political ideologies. He was a radical nationalist who tried to devise a political philosophy and government system which he believed suited the existing Indonesian situation. He was influenced by Western political thinkers as well as by Javanese traditional concepts.23

Sukarno and the other leaders tried to use the Japanese imposed mass organisation, PUTERA, primarily to strengthen nationalist sentiment among the people. But the Japanese remained silent on the question of Indonesian self-government and inde-
pendence. In fact PUTERA was forbidden to establish branches in the countryside. The peasantry was of central importance in the war economy and had to be closed off from any nationalist propaganda by urban leaders, which potentially could easily inflame an already smouldering anti-Japanese feeling into open rebellion. Agricultural production, particularly the target of self-sufficiency in food, had become even more essential, as the supply lines to Japan and other parts of Asia were coming under an ever-growing threat by Allied submarines. In a policy reminiscent of the notoriously oppressive forced export crop cultivation system (Cultuurstelsel) of the 19th century the peasantry was pushed and cajoled into increasing their output, which had to be delivered to officially controlled village cooperatives. The Japanese tried to control both the supply and demand of rice, but the price offered to rice producers was too low for production to rise. A resulting inflation spiral, a growing black market, and a spread of official corruption caused a great deal of economic hardship and widespread rural unrest.

But to keep Indonesian expectations alive, in 1943 in a ‘magnanimous’ gesture Japan endowed the Javanese people with a Central Advisory Council, which was powerless and forbidden to criticise their colonial masters and their policies. It was a real parody of the prewar Volksraad, whose members had enjoyed the normal parliamentary privileges making its proceedings an important source of Indonesian nationalist criticism of the Dutch colonial government policies and other failings.

More important to the Indonesian national cause was the decision to transfer more higher echelon administrative posts to Indonesians at a much larger scale than the Dutch had done. On the other hand the recognition of the authority of self-rulers of Yogyakarta and Surakarta in central Java in their own areas was merely a return to the Dutch colonial status quo, a move that hardly could have impressed leftist leaning nationalists.

In order to retain peace and order in the countryside the Japanese reversed the old established Dutch colonial practice of reli-
ance on the services of the priyayi and adat chiefs and suppressing Islam; instead they took up direct contact with rural Islamic teachers to gain their support. By indoctrination courses and granting concessions the Japanese tried to increase the social status and power of rural religious leaders vis-à-vis the priyayi. Furthermore, they attempted to widen the divisions within Islam itself by ostracising the more radical PSII and legally recognising the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and the Muhammadyah, which were essentially non-political Islamic organisations. In November 1943 the Japanese set up the Masjumi, or the Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims, which comprised the NU, the Muhammadyah, and individual religious teachers (ulama), but the more politically radical Muslims were not included. The Masjumi was meant to link the moderate urban Islamic leadership with rural Islam, to form an effective counter against radical-leftist agitation. While this tended to heighten Muslim self-esteem and political consciousness it also, as intended by the Japanese, created an ever-growing fissure between Islam and the rest of the nationalist movement. Still, the efforts of Sukarno and other leaders who used their cooperation with the Japanese to advance the Indonesian nationalist cause remained unrewarded.

By the end of 1943 the war was going badly for Japan and even more stringent measures were taken to involve the Indonesian people directly in the defence their country against an expected Allied invasion. The PUTERA had not lived up to Japanese expectations and in March 1944 was replaced by the Djawa Hokokai, which tried to mobilise the whole of the population for the war effort. It was under direct central Japanese control and Indonesian leaders were only used in an advisory capacity. Nationalist demands for greater political concessions were ignored and in fact the secular nationalists no longer had an organisation of their own. In contrast the Masjumi, although linked with the Djawa Hokokai, remained a separate entity and also the priyayi again came to play a predominant role. With the Djawa Hokokai, as indicated both by its name and intent, the
Japanese had clearly abandoned any attempts to alleviate any Indonesian nationalist sensitivities. The main objectives of the new organisation was to increase the impact of official indoctrination at grass roots level and mould the people into a more cohesive and effective national force to aid the war effort. For that purpose the traditional Japanese system of neighbour associations (tomari gumi) was introduced, which were to be joined by all ethnic groups, including the Chinese and Eurasians. The tomari gumi were led by the lower priyayi, and village chiefs, but the Masjumi affiliated local religious teachers were also recruited on a large scale.

Radical nationalists, such as Sukarno, who had been cooperating with the Japanese, were now only used as propaganda tools to spread the gospel of the Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and Greater East Asia slogans of ‘Asia for the Asians’ and staying united with Dai Nippon for victory. It was especially Sukarno with his demagogic talents who proved to be an important asset to his masters. It was owing to his urgings that thousands of young Javanese were duped into volunteering as labourers (romusha) to be sent to various parts of the archipelago and mainland South-East Asia to build airfields, harbours and roads. Working conditions were often atrocious and inhumane causing thousands of romusha to die of starvation and disease.

In 1943 the Japanese war machine showed signs of being stressed to the limit. Japan was in retreat in the Solomon Islands and New Guinea, and the occupying forces in Indonesia were depleted to bolster the defence capacity at the front. The military authorities in Java decided to fill the shortfall of manpower with indigenous recruits. As a first step in April 1943 a Java-wide paramilitary youth movement, the Seinendan, was set up to mobilise men to be trained for local defence and the spreading of Japanese war propaganda. Of great value to the national cause were the exhortations of Sukarno and other national leaders to young Indonesians to join the Seinendan, and various other auxiliary armed services set up by the Japanese. The Seinendan is
The West New Guinea Debacle

reported to have numbered half a million members in mid-1945. There are also reports that from 1944 some branches of the Seinendan, following the Japanese example, set up training suicide units (Barisan Berani Mati). Another development was the formation of an auxiliary police force, the Keibodan, which was more than 1 million strong at the end of the war. This was followed in mid-1943 by the Heiho, an Indonesian auxiliary force forming an integral part of the Imperial Japanese Army, and containing many former KNIL soldiers and NCOs. The officers were all Japanese and Indonesians could not advance above the rank of sergeant. The main tasks of the Heiho were to man anti-aircraft batteries and to defend airfields and other military installations.

In October 1943 an Indonesian volunteer defence, Pembela Tanah Air (PETA), or Defenders of the Fatherland, was founded, which was commanded by Indonesian officers up to the battalion level. Obviously not entirely sure of Indonesian loyalty, the PETA was left without a central command structure; it was a lightly armed infantry force of individual battalions each bound to defend a particular region. Training emphasised the development of fighting spirit (semangat) and other Japanese military values, but tactics and strategy were neglected. In 1945 PETA was estimated to have comprised 37,000 men.

Continuing their classical colonial divide-and-rule tactics, in August 1944 the Japanese allowed Sukarno to found the Barisan Pelopor (Vanguard Corps), another paramilitary youth movement, which attracted a large number of radical nationalist recruits.

In order to balance the political situation again, in December 1944 the Masjumi was given permission to set up its own military organisation, the Hisbullah, the Army of God, which, like the Barisan Pelopor, was only armed with sticks and sharpened bamboo poles (bambu runcing).

In the meantime the cause of Indonesian independence had received an unexpected boost with the announcement, on 7 Sep-
September 1944, of Prime Minister Koiso in the Japanese parliament that the whole of Indonesia would be granted its independence in the future. On the next day there was an official announcement in Jakarta by the occupying authorities allowing Indonesians to use their national flag and anthem. But this was as far as the Japanese wanted to go at this stage. The main point of the Koiso declaration was to arouse Indonesian nationalist feeling to such a high pitch, that Indonesians would be eager to cooperate with the Japanese to defend their country against an Allied invasion in order to elude the re-imposition of Western colonialism. Tokyo directed the occupation authorities in Java to retard the process toward promised political self-government as long as possible and to get the people on side by increasing Indonesian participation in government administration and by stepping up political indoctrination. As a result, at the end of 1944 more Indonesians were appointed as mayors in various towns and in leading positions in the civil service.26 The call for an intensification of indoctrination was grist to Sukarno’s mill who now excelled himself by trying to turn the growing hate of the people for the Japanese onto the Allies with such hysterical outbursts as: ‘we will flatten America, and we will crush England’.27 Sukarno and most other leaders argued that with a Japanese defeat coming closer the chances of exacting substantial political gains and even independence for loyal cooperation were a distinct possibility. And it was believed that the realisation of a free Indonesian state before the end of the war would be difficult to be pushed aside by the victorious Allies.

The Indonesian leadership, in the main, attempted to keep the lid on the surging anti-Japanese feeling among the population, and frantically tried to avoid a national rebellion that was advocated particularly by a large section of the younger generation (pemuda), that is exactly that part of society that had been trained for warfare and primed for armed action. The older leaders such as Sukarno and Hatta argued that this patriotic fighting spirit (semangat) should be directed at the invading Allied
forces rather than the Japanese, who were to depart but in the meantime were still strong enough to crush the lightly armed Indonesian forces thereby obliterating any chance of staging a national revolution against the real enemy, the Allies, and particularly the Dutch.

In 1944 to 1945 the economic situation had even further deteriorated because of crop failure. Rice stocks, already low as a result of the defective Japanese organisation of food supply, fell far below national requirements, causing widespread famine, malnutrition and disease. Medicines and clothing were unobtainable, and many people were clad in gunnysacks. The black market was flourishing and corruption was rife serving only the better off, many of whom were civil servants already receiving rice rations. The urban poor and the rural landless classes, comprising by far the largest proportion of the population, remained outside the official food distribution. As a result starvation was spreading widely in Java in 1944 to 1945. Still, the attempts of the nationalist leadership to prevent the steaming cauldron of hate of the Japanese from boiling over were not entirely successful. In May and August 1944, anti-Japanese rebellions broke out in Indramayu, a long-standing economically depressed area, followed in February 1945 by a rebellion at Singaparna in west Java, led by a local Islamic teacher (kiai). Both uprisings, reminiscent of the spontaneous, ill-planned anti-colonial rebellions of the 19th century, were quickly and ruthlessly suppressed by the Japanese. More significantly there were uprisings in February and March 1945 of PETA units in Blitar and Kroya, indicating to the Japanese that during an Allied invasion their own created Indonesian army forces might turn against them.

With the war approaching Indonesian territory itself, on 1 March 1945 the Japanese announced that a committee to investigate Indonesian independence would be established. As the title suggests the Japanese still wanted to move slowly and the first meeting of the committee did not take place until the end of May.
To keep the fervour of the radical nationalists in check, not Sukarno but the more conservative nationalist Dr Radjiman was put in charge. Still, Sukarno seemed to have dominated the proceedings and managed to push through his formula for national unity, namely the Panca Sila, and the draft constitution, which showed a strong influence of his corporate state ideas.

The rapid deterioration of the Japanese military situation in South-East Asia forced the time schedule for the granting of Indonesian independence to be put forward and on 7 August 1945 the Radjiman committee was replaced by a committee for the preparation of independence, headed by Sukarno and Hatta, and consisting of twenty members representing a cross-section of opinions and interests of the nation as a whole. Sensing that the great event, fervently yearned for so long, was near, Sukarno, in a now famous speech, referring to the prophesies of Djojobojo an ancient Javanese king who had foretold the demise of Dutch colonial rule, told the Indonesian people that the country would be free before the corn would ripen.

On 8 August, Sukarno, Hatta and Radjiman were flown to Japanese headquarters in Saigon to be told by Marshal Terauchi that Indonesia would be granted its independence in the immediate future and urged them to speed up their preparations.

The Japanese occupation policies had engendered enormous psychological and social changes in Indonesian society shattering any chances for a return to the prewar colonial system. Indeed, the Japanese occupation meant much more than merely a change of colonial masters. In fact it proved to be a major watershed in modern Indonesian history in forging an entirely different dimension in the popular Indonesian mentality regarding colonialism and imperialism. It was particularly the younger generation that, unlike many of their elders, was absolutely opposed to the return of the Dutch colonial regime, which not only had lost all credibility and prestige by their 1942 defeat, but also was hated as a result of Japanese indoctrination and military training. The Dutch myth of the Javanese being the most gentle
and pliable people in the world had been exploded by the impact of Japanese fascist training. A colonially instilled national inferiority complex had been replaced by a greater feeling of self-worth and a will to control one’s own national life and destiny. Moreover, pressed together into nationwide organisations and subject to constant anti-colonial and anti-Western propaganda served up by nationalist leaders like Sukarno, national fervour and a sense of national belonging had vastly increased in the masses. So in 1945 a situation had been created that was very different from the one in 1942. A strong revolutionary ethos had emerged that cried out for fulfilment, a situation that was further aggravated by a general economic malaise and great suffering caused by hunger, malnutrition and social despair.

The Dutch, almost hermetically closed off in the camps from the outside world for three and a half years, were not at all or only partially aware of the vast traumatic upheavals and fundamental change that had taken place in Indonesian society. Neither the Allied command nor the Netherlands Indies government in exile in Australia seems to have been any better informed about the situation in Indonesia. A rude awakening was awaiting Dutch prisoners, who, on leaving their camps expected to take up again what they had left in 1942. Also in the Netherlands it took some considerable time for reality to sink in.

The Indonesian revolution

Most of the existing histories in English dealing with the Indonesian freedom struggle in 1945 to 1949 have largely focused on the Indonesian side. Here an attempt will be made to fill some of the gaps by concentrating on the Dutch reactions and policies.

The news of the proclamation of Indonesian independence by Sukarno and Hatta on 17 August 1945 was dismissed by the Dutch authorities in Australia and the government in The Hague as Japanese inspired. The Indonesian republic was seen as a Japanese puppet and Sukarno and its other leaders, as Netherlands-
Indies citizens, were branded as traitors.

The spell holding the Indonesian nation in anxious suspension since the proclamation of independence had, by early September, started to weaken, when groups of pemuda commenced to break up the delicate power-sharing arrangement of the republican government with the Japanese authorities. After first testing the Japanese will to retaliate by raising the national flag on public buildings, and painting nationalist slogans all over the cities and holding rallies in defiance of the Kenpeitai, the emboldened pemuda went on to occupy government offices and installations. This also triggered off a more revolutionary response from the masses, causing clashes with the Dutch and Eurasians, many of whom had just returned from the prison camps. 31

Mountbatten, the SEAC commander, charged with liberating the South-East Asia mainland and Java and Sumatra, was stretched to the limit in terms of ships and troops. The six-week interval between the proclamation of the Indonesian republic and the first Allied landings in Java, partly caused by the lengthy time needed to clear mines in the Straits of Malacca and the shortage of shipping, proved to be crucial to the Indonesian cause. But perhaps even more important was the fact that Allied intelligence was not aware of the highly explosive political situation in Java, which allowed Mountbatten, after the British returned to Malaya and Singapore, to give priority to the occupation of Saigon, where Japanese headquarters and a vast number of troops were concentrated. It is irrefutable that this long delayed arrival of the British forces in Java presented the Indonesian revolutionaries with a welcome and highly valuable breathing space in which to reinforce their position.

The first contact of the Allies with Java was finally made on 15 September with the arrival in Jakarta of two warships, the British cruiser Cumberland and the Dutch cruiser Tromp, under the command of Vice-Admiral Patterson and accompanied by Charles van der Plas, Dutch representative at SEAC and com-
mander of the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration, better known as NICA, a name intensely hated and despised by republicans. NICA was a semi military organisation consisting of a number of small contingents of Dutch colonial officials attached to the Allied forces and charged with establishing Dutch rule in the areas reoccupied.

Just before leaving Singapore for Jakarta, van der Plas is reported to have boasted that only a hundred Dutchmen, supported by the British forces, would be needed to annihilate that small group of desperadoes that had proclaimed a republic in Java. Still, van der Plas was aware of Mountbatten’s warning to Patterson that a British attempt to stamp out the Indonesian freedom movement would be extremely dangerous and that he was to ignore the Indonesians and only deal with the Japanese. As a result Patterson ordered that only the Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War (RAPWI) teams and the British troops on the Cumberland were allowed to land; the Dutch army detachment on the Tromp was ordered to remain on board.32

Soon after his arrival van der Plas was forced to change his tune considerably, confronted by a political scenario far worse than he and his colleagues in Australia could ever have imagined. He was also painfully taken aback by the fact that so many of the higher-echelon priyayi (indigenous colonial officials), the backbone of former Dutch rule on whom he had based his hope, were siding with the republic. He reported to Lieutenant Governor-General van Mook, who was still in Australia:

We have underestimated the size of the anti-Dutch action and the corroding effect of years of anti-Netherlands propaganda. Certainly the Japs are hated. But we Netherlanders are also …³

The Dutch themselves were powerless to stop the revolutionary tide as they lacked the necessary armed forces. After the defeat by the Germans in 1940 the Netherlands army had been disbanded and part of the officer corps interred. Only a very small section of the Dutch armed forces, mainly from the navy, had
managed to reach England. The army units became part of the Netherlands ‘Irene’ brigade, which took part in the Normandy invasion. It was not until the end of 1944 that further army units could be trained again in the southern part of the Netherlands. Still, owing to the unwillingness of the Allied command to release Dutch shipping forthwith it was not until early 1946 that sizeable contingents of troops could be dispatched to Indonesia. The small KNIL units that escaped to Australia had joined the Australian campaign in eastern Indonesia. After the Japanese surrender the strength of the KNIL was increased by returned prisoners, although many were found to be unfit for service. In addition, in October units of the Dutch Marine Corps, trained in the USA, had arrived in Malaya.

Van der Plas, greatly upset by the horrible conditions and the terrible inhumane treatment endured by European women in the Jakarta prison camps, where he was reunited with his own wife, further commented on the very precarious food situation caused by crop failure and the general desolate situation in the city:

... everything is in disrepair: roads, sewage, irrigation. Even the lampposts have disappeared. There is a great shortage of drinking water and there are leaks everywhere ... In Batavia on the streets many of the Jap lovers and employees get about reasonably well attired, but in the interior and also in central Java many people walk around almost naked ...*

But van der Plas still believed that it was possible to reverse the situation in favour of the Dutch, if Allied forces were landed immediately with strong support of armoured units. Moreover, only European Dutch forces should be used, which were be to landed together with the British forces.

An even more strident example of wishful thinking is provided by Major-General van Straten, the NICA commander for Java, who, in a dispatch of 20 September to van Mook in typical pro-1942 fashion, dismissed the revolutionary movement with the following arrogant lines:
In my own opinion this whole republican movement does not amount to much. Some riots and pillaging will certainly occur during the takeover of Batavia – these are already happening now. But in my opinion after some show of armed power this whole business will fall apart like a house of cards, providing some of the leaders have been arrested, as is planned …

In a report of 22 September written by van der Plas on board the *Cumberland*, it was proposed that in order to avoid a dangerous power vacuum the Japanese forces should be ordered to stay at their posts until relieved by the Allies. After this the Japanese forces were to retire fully armed to the countryside to keep peace and order. Moreover, the Japanese should be ordered to arrest Sukarno and some other prominent revolutionaries twenty-four hours before the Allied landing.

Reports by RAPWI teams and other British observers in Java depicted the situation as extremely dangerous. This caused Mountbatten to tread extremely warily by keeping to a minimum British military interference in the political situation. During a meeting on 27 September attended by the British Minister of Defence, Lawson, he told van der Plas that the British government had firmly decided that not one British soldier was to be used to restore the Dutch to power. British troops were to occupy only two key areas of Jakarta and Surabaya and were to concentrate solely on two main objectives: to free and take to care of the thousands of prisoners in the camps and to disarm and evacuate the Japanese. British forces would only be allowed to operate outside these perimeters in case the people in interior prison camps were endangered. If necessary the Japanese were to be used to maintain peace and order. Completely galling to van der Plas was Mountbatten’s statement that the only way open for the British forces was to establish a working relationship with the Sukarno government, a method that had been effective in Burma. But van der Plas’s objection that the Dutch government was absolutely opposed to dealing with Sukarno, who was seen
as a despicable, fascist traitor, and his point that after all it was up to the Netherlands to determine what policy to follow, not Britain, failed to make any impression. Mounbatten informed him that if the Netherlands refused to take up contact with Sukarno he would order General Christison, the commander of the Java operation, to do so; and he threatened that if because of this attitude the Dutch would get into trouble they should not expect to receive British help. He emphasised that this move was only designed to win more time for the Dutch. Van der Plas ended by stating that he would be willing to ask van Mook’s approval to invite, via a radio broadcast, all prominent Indonesian leaders of all political persuasions, including the Sukarno group, to discuss how the reforms promised by Queen Wilhelmina in 1942 alluding to a gradual process leading to autonomy, would be realised.37

In fact van der Plas made his promised broadcast on 30 September and started to meet with politically moderate Indonesians. But the impact of this move was almost immediately lost because of a broadcast by General Christison from Singapore on the previous evening, in which he declared that the British forces were not allowed to operate outside the key areas of Batavia and Surabaya in Java, and Padang and Medan in Sumatra, and that the responsibility for peace and order for the rest of the islands rested on the Indonesian government and the Japanese. Christison emphasised that the British had absolutely no intention of interfering politically and that their objectives were strictly limited to the evacuation of the detainees from the camps and the relocation and disarming of the Japanese. Furthermore, he stated his intention to bring Indonesian and Dutch leaders together at the conference table and that in deference to Indonesian objections, the landing of further Dutch troops was to be halted for the time being. The general’s message was confirmed the same day by a statement by British Minister of Defence Lawson to the effect that neither the Dutch nor the French in Vietnam had a legitimate right to call on Britain to restore their
colonial possessions to them. This essentially de facto recognition by the British of the Indonesian republic immediately caused a barrage of Dutch invective, charging that it was a betrayal of a loyal ally. In The Hague loud cries of ‘Perfide Albion’ could be heard, sentiments highly understandable and accusations surely difficult to refute. The British government’s Indonesian policy in 1945, if viewed in terms of the long history of Anglo-Dutch power-sharing in the Indies archipelago, could well be characterised by the epithet: Britain giveth and Britain taketh away.

Looking at it from a British perspective there were some compelling reasons for their actions. Firstly, Mountbatten lacked the military manpower and arms to engage in a protracted colonial war. Secondly, this problem was further compounded by the precarious political and military situation in India that had forced Britain to the point of granting independence. Hence it could not be expected that the predominantly Indian forces under Mountbatten’s command would agree to suppress another colonial people in their struggle for freedom. Thirdly, and probably most important of all was the fundamental change in the political situation in Britain itself where the Churchill-led Conservative government had been displaced by Labour. The Labour Party was ideologically anti-colonial and this, together with the ruling war weariness in the country, militated against the use of British troops in operations to return the Dutch to power in the Indies against the wishes of the local people.

The Christison declaration, apart from causing the expected deterioration of Anglo-Dutch relations, completely failed in its objective of defusing the highly explosive situation in Java. In reality the opposite occurred as the pemuda and other action groups took the cautious and conciliatory British overtures as a sign of weakness and intensified their actions. Now the defiant actions of the previous weeks grew into a fully-fledged armed revolution, showing also in some areas the distinct signs of a social revolution. During this bersiap (literally ‘be prepared’)
period an amok-like national frenzy pervaded sections of the revolutionary movement. It raged on for about three months in the main cities and many rural areas of Java, causing thousands of Dutchmen, Eurasians, Chinese, including women and children, Indonesians suspected of pro-Dutch leanings, and also a sizeable number of Japanese, to be murdered. Their mutilated bodies became familiar sights floating in rivers and canals. There was little either the Allies, or the Indonesian government and its official army, the Badan Keamanan Rakjat (BKR), could do to stop the carnage. As it happened the Netherlands was unable to gain hold of the situation since for the first six months the available Dutch colonial armed forces were too thin on the ground to turn the tide and the restoration of Dutch rule depended on the British forces under Mountbatten. But the British government prohibited its task force to turn against the Indonesian revolutionaries and instead insisted on Netherlands-Indonesian negotiations. Unlike the situation in Saigon there was no pukka British officer like General Gracey to be found in Indonesia willing to disobey orders and attack the Republican forces.

Still the Netherlands government stuck to the position that any meetings with the republicans, whom it condemned as rebels, Japanese stooges and traitors, were absolutely out of question. A conference about political reforms as envisaged in the Queen’s promises of December 1942 would have to wait until Dutch rule had been restored. 39

Obviously The Hague seems to have been oblivious to the fundamental and drastic socio-political changes which had been put into motion during the Japanese occupation and were now being pushed towards their final completion.

After their liberation from the Nazis in May 1945, the vast majority of Dutch people expected as a matter of course that the Indies would return to its prewar normality after the Japanese defeat. For most people the Indies still brought to mind the comfortable 1940 scenario, indoctrinated by school and the media, of an indigenous people, still often called inlanders (natives) liv-
ing happy and contented, with the exception of a few communist troublemakers, under a benevolent, just, and socially-committed colonial government. Public knowledge about the Indies was still largely restricted to the idyllic images evoked by the songs learned in school, for example, *Sarinah in de desa*, and the wall posters and maps. All Dutch schoolchildren were drilled in naming the main islands and cities in the archipelago in the same way as Indonesian children were expected to be familiar with the map of the Netherlands. Sukarno later was wont to demonstrate to Dutch visitors his geographical knowledge about the Netherlands and asked them if the dunes were really as white as the school song suggested. Secondary students in Holland learned more about the geographical and economic features of Indonesia and colonial history, but knew little about Indonesian nationalism. In the Netherlands knowledge of Indonesia and its conditions was restricted to a relatively small number of people: experts in their fields in universities (mainly in Leiden and Utrecht), the Department of Colonies, various missionary bodies, trade, commercial and transport circles, and retired colonial servants and employees of private colonial enterprises. It was especially from these last two categories that Indonesian experts in parliament were drawn. There was, however, a general appreciation that the Indies were essential to the Netherlands’ economic prosperity and that indigenous socio-economic development depended on the continuation of Dutch colonial rule. The Netherlands’ civilisation mission, that had been interrupted by the Japanese occupation, had to be taken up again. There was a national consensus in Holland that self-government for the Indies – full independence was out of the question – was still a question of the distant future, and the demands of Indonesian nationalists for far-reaching political concessions were dismissed again, as in the late 1930s, as immature and untimely. The new elite of Dutch-educated Indonesians was generally considered as still too small and inexperienced to be able to replace Dutch colonial rule.

The Indonesian question initially caused only a muted public
reaction in Holland, where most attention was directed towards the rebuilding and rehabilitation of the national economy and infrastructure devastated by the Nazi occupation and the Allied invasion.

Negotiations between the Netherlands and the republic lumbered on excruciatingly slowly, resulting at last, on 13 November 1946, in the Linggajati agreement by which the Netherlands recognised the de facto republican authority in Java and Sumatra, and the republic agreed to join an independent federal state of Indonesia constituting an integral part of a Netherlands-Indonesian union, headed by the Netherlands monarch. Both parties also agreed to a cease-fire.

The agreement was only passed by the Dutch parliament after the addition of extra clauses ensuring that the Netherlands had paramount political and economic power in the projected Indonesian federation, and the inclusion of the principle of political self-determination allowing any region within the archipelago to decide to stay outside the federation. The majority of Dutchmen remained opposed to full decolonisation and seemed to have considered the time-consuming negotiation process as a breathing pause necessary to build up a military machine strong enough to annihilate the Indonesian republican forces. As in France too many Dutch socialists, accounting for a third of seats in parliament, played a dubious role putting Dutch nationalist views and national interests above their avowed anti-colonial platform. The Linggajati agreement was seen by the Netherlands as only granting a limited degree of self-government in a federal construction leaving the Netherlands still with considerable political as well as economic power.

A crucial new element that entered Dutch policy considerations was the financial and economic aspect of the Indonesian question, which hitherto had been pushed sideways by the almost exclusive concentration on the political dimension. Early in September 1946 the Minister for Finance, Lieftinck, had drawn attention to the precarious foreign exchange situation of the...
Netherlands, which allowed only short duration military expenditure in the Indies, and that only at the existing level.\textsuperscript{41}

The Minister for Overseas Affairs, Jonkman, during a meeting with his departmental heads on 13 September, also put it on the line that the only way open to the Netherlands was to come to an agreement with the Indonesian revolutionaries, on matters economic included. He pointed to the urgent need for political stability and the guaranteed legal security of capital necessary for the rehabilitation of plantations and the Western economic sector in general. But he rejected calls from the colonial diehard conservative factions for the subjugation of the republic by military means.\textsuperscript{42}

During the almost three-month long, tortuous, protracted way taken by the republic to finally, on 5 March 1947, ratify the Linggajati agreement, the Netherlands trading position had continued to deteriorate to the point where a speedy resolution of the Indonesian dispute had become absolutely essential.

In 1938 Dutch private investment in Indonesia had amounted to 2.8 billion guilders accounting for one-sixth of the Netherlands national capital resources and producing about 15 per cent of the national income. The external trade of the Netherlands Indies was conducted for a good part in US dollars, which were used to balance the trade deficits with the Netherlands.

In 1945 a vast part of the European industrial complex had been destroyed by the war, and the huge demand for consumable and capital goods dammed up for years by wartime economic contingencies had, for the most part, to be filled by imports, mainly from the USA, causing a serious dollar shortage in Europe. In the Netherlands this situation could not be ameliorated by the traditional supply of American currency earned by Indonesian exports owing to the disastrous impact on the Indonesian economy of the Japanese occupation and the outbreak of the revolution. Hence a speedy settlement of the Indonesian dispute and the rehabilitation of the plantation and mining sectors were regarded as an important precondition for the effective
In February 1947, Posthuma, the economic adviser to the Commissie-Generaal, a body of negotiators sent by the Dutch parliament, told Minister Jonkman that the Netherlands Indies’ foreign exchange reserves would run out by the end of 1947 and that the Batavian government had requested of Lieftinck an extra 300 million guilders to stave off imminent insolvency. Lieftinck himself, in April 1947, warned the cabinet that both the Netherlands Indies and the Netherlands were on the brink of bankruptcy and advocated a military attack on the republic to take control of the most productive areas to provide the Netherlands with an extra 300 million guilders of foreign exchange. Similarly, van Mook wrote to Minister Logemann on 22 February that because of the continuing political uncertainty and economic and financial problems, especially the precarious food situation, the position was fast becoming untenable. The most important food-producing regions were in the republican-held parts of west and east Java and if by mid-March no agreement had been reached with the Indonesians then the only option open would be military action. However, van Mook argued that the unilateral changes made to the Linggajati Agreement in The Hague were the cause for the republican procrastination during the negotiations. Still, considering war as disastrous for both sides he would, in such an event, immediately resign as he did not want to be accused of having negotiated with the republic for one and a half years only to buy time to build up the Dutch military potential to the point that a devastating blow could be delivered to the republic. He was very scathing about what he called the weakness, indecisiveness, and stupidity of the Dutch government, and obviously disillusioned, indicated that even in the event the agreement was signed he still wanted to quit, as the difficulties would continue and he deserved a rest.

In fact the Linggajati Agreement was seen by the republic government as more than mere de facto recognition. Rejecting the Dutch insistence of de jure sovereignty in the interim period
The republic presented itself to the world as an independent nation with its own overseas representatives, armed forces, and currency. To the great chagrin of the Dutch the first international recognition of the republic was accorded by the Arab states in March 1947, followed by Britain, the USA, Australia, China, and India. The republic also tried to use this de facto recognition by the Dutch to break the Dutch navy's economic blockade. A number of Western nations were pressing The Hague for permission to establish direct trade and commercial links with the republic, while some USA and Australian trading interests simply ignored the Batavia government in their commercial dealings with the republic. The American government, although officially keeping its distance, did nothing to stop this activity. As it was, the USA was intensely interested in restarting its large prewar trade with Indonesia, which in 1940 had accounted for half of American rubber, 10 per cent of tin, 90 per cent of quinine, 80 per cent of palm oil, and 25 per cent of tea imports. Moreover, the Netherlands Indies was the second largest recipient of American investment in Asia, which further explains the urgency of American pressure on the Netherlands, apart from its traditional anti-colonial rhetoric and its new-found anti-communist mission, to settle the Indonesian problem.

On 29 January 1947, Batavia introduced regulations to stop these international trading contacts of the republic and came down particularly hard on the lucrative smuggling operations from Singapore by Chinese and British vessels. This Dutch naval blockade caused British and Chinese protests. Furthermore, an American ship the *Martin Behrman*, and a British vessel the *Empire Maybower*, both of which had loaded at republican ports, had their cargoes confiscated by the Dutch navy again resulting in protests from the respective governments.46

In the republic the Linggajati accord caused general condemnation and serious political upheaval. The republic considered the Linggajati agreement merely as a further stage towards the final aim of full independence and a welcome opportunity to put
itself in the international limelight. It also provided a sorely needed breathing space to build up its armed forces. Another factor causing the republican government to take a ‘haste slowly’ attitude was that it was aware of the dire straits in which the Netherlands found itself economically and financially, hoping to use this impasse to drive the Dutch towards more concessions.47

The Netherlands’ foreign exchange problem continued to worsen. During a cabinet session on 21 April, Minister Lieftinck argued that the Indonesian situation was so serious that it could only be solved by Anglo-American help. He suggested the establishment of an American-British control commission to oversee the maintenance of peace, a move that also would make Washington more amenable to providing the Netherlands with financial help.48 He further warned that the Netherlands was financially unable to continue an arms race with the republic. Instead, current military expenditure had to be severely curtailed and in order not to bring the Dutch position to a dangerous impasse, all efforts should be directed at achieving gradual demobilisation and disarmament by both sides, creating a more favourable climate to reach a final solution of the problem. Lieftinck, pointing at the recent example of Britain, which when similarly confronted by national bankruptcy had moved the target date for Indian independence forward to 1948, stressed that the Netherlands should follow suit and leave the Indies as soon as possible after having secured a guarantee for Dutch investments and commercial interests.49

While these proposals were realistic in themselves, they were rejected by cabinet in view of the very inflammable political situation in the Netherlands. So owing to the continued refusal by the republic to offer new concessions and with the armed truce starting to break up, all signs were pointing towards war.

The resulting military action (politieele actie), ostensibly to establish peace and order was, in reality, dictated by pressing Dutch national economic needs, as pointed out above. The main
objective was to take possession of the major plantation areas and oil fields in Java and Sumatra. The occupation of Yogyakarta and the annihilation of the whole of the republic was not intended at this stage.

The subsequent Renville agreement recognised the Dutch conquests, causing serious political turmoil in the republic. Netherlands-Indonesian relations continued to deteriorate owing to the Dutch attempts to hem in the republic by creating additional federal states and to reduce its power by trying to encapsulate it in an interim federal Indonesian government.

The Indonesian question became more complicated by being drawn more deeply into the Cold War. In 1948 the Moscow affiliated Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) started a strong offensive in opposition to the Renville agreement and pushed towards a showdown with the politically more moderate Hatta government. The USA, deeply troubled by this development, decided to change course by transferring its support from the Dutch to the Hatta government. Undoubtedly to Washington’s relief this gamble paid off, as by the end of October the Hatta government’s armed forces had been able to put down a communist armed rebellion after a great deal of bloodshed.

Still the Netherlands government refused to bow to American pressure to give in to the republic’s demands and to speed up the transfer of sovereignty. An important reason for this was the role of the Catholic Party, a major power in parliament. In the past colonial affairs had been monopolised by the protestant parties and the liberals. Catholics had hardly been involved in the colonial power structure and administration. But as a major partner in the government coalition with the socialists from 1946 the Catholic Party gained a major say in the Indonesian question. It was particularly the persistent support of the powerful party leader Romme for a Netherlands-Indonesian union (Zware Unie) that still left the Dutch with considerable political power that was responsible for the protraction in the Dutch-Indonesian decolonisation negotiations. Romme was not convinced that the
vast Dutch business interests in Indonesia could be maintained without Dutch political power. He was supported in this by the diehard colonial camp that included Joseph Luns, a foreign affairs officer at the United Nations (UN) in New York, with whom he was in correspondence. It was the Catholic trio of Romme, High Commissioner Beel, and the Minister of Overseas Territories, Sassen, supported by the protestant parties and the majority of liberals, that was bent on destroying the power of the republic completely.

The Dutch army struck on 19 December 1948 and quickly sliced through the Indonesian defences occupying the urban centres of Java and Sumatra, including the republican capital of Yogyakarta, and capturing most of the cabinet. Still, the main objective of the annihilation of the republican armed forces was not achieved. In fact the Dutch military position had deteriorated because their lines of communication between their armed concentrations in the cities had become over-extended, leaving large parts of the countryside in the control of the Indonesian guerilla forces. To break this stalemate a large injection of extra Dutch troops was needed to defeat the republic’s armed resistance after time-consuming anti-guerrilla operations. In fact the Dutch treasury could not afford such a large additional outlay and this, together with the pressure of the United Nations and particularly the veiled threats of the Americans to cut off Marshall aid, forced the Netherlands to the conclusion that it had failed to achieve its political objectives in Indonesia. Now all efforts were directed at safeguarding its vast economic stake.

The Round Table Conference

The decision of the USA in 1948 to put its support behind the republic was of paramount significance in causing the Netherlands to return to the negotiation table and end its colonial rule in December 1949.

In contrast, a different American policy was adopted regard-
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ing the French in Vietnam, where the moderate nationalist forces were no match for the communist controlled Viet-Minh. It was hard pragmatic reasoning, rather than its much vaunted, popular, anti-colonialist stand, that determined the fundamentals of American policy in South-East Asia. In Indo-China after 1945 the USA initially had adopted a neutral stand, refusing military support to both the French authorities and the Ho Chi Minh forces alike. But after the communist takeover in China the Americans changed course dramatically putting their support behind the French puppet Bao Dai government, and pouring in massive military aid, surpassing more than $1 billion by 1954, amounting to 78 per cent of French war expenditure.\(^5\)

A similar American military boost to the Dutch in Indonesia might well have resulted in the demise of the republican forces. Fortunately for the republican cause the Indonesian government had been able, of its own accord, to avert a communist takeover, although only temporarily as became evident in the 1950s with the power of the PKI rapidly looming up again. Still there was no communist leader in Indonesia able to attract the same national support as Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam. The only leader in Indonesia to establish a similar hold on the masses was the charismatic, and eclectic, President Sukarno.

The negotiations that had started on 14 April, led on 7 May to the Roem-van Roijen Agreements. Accordingly the Indonesian negotiator, Mohammad Roem, in the name of Sukarno/Hatta, declared that the Indonesian armed forces would be ordered to stop their guerilla activities and the republican government consented to participate in the Round Table Conference (RTC) in The Hague to expedite the granting of unconditional independence to the federation of Indonesia. Sukarno and Hatta promised to have these agreements accepted by the republican government as soon as possible after its return to Yogyakarta. On his part van Roijen declared that the Netherlands government agreed to restore the republican government to Yogyakarta and to cease all military operations and free all prisoners of war.
taken after 19 December 1948. Furthermore, the Netherlands government agreed to refrain from creating and recognising new federal states in areas under republican control before 19 December and recognised the republic as a separate state, which was to form a part of the federated states of Indonesia. The RTC was to discuss and determine the ways and procedures under which Indonesian independence could be speedily effected.52

Among the Dutch community in Indonesia the Roem-van Roijen agreements were generally condemned. While part of the business world was favourably disposed, the people in the public sector in which the majority of Dutchmen were employed, and also the armed forces, were generally outraged, seeing the agreements as the last spasms of the death rattle of the colonial system, cutting off their jobs and careers.53 The following fragments of a letter written by General Spoor should not be dismissed as the deranged ramblings of a defeated military man but rather as truly portraying the general feeling of dismay and disgust in most of the Dutch community in Indonesia at the time. Spoor wrote:

In the meantime you will have heard about the latest disaster that has hit Indonesia resulting from our exhaustive efforts to give disastrous concessions in return for a ‘personal’ assurance from two Republican fellows known from experience as untrustworthy. You can imagine what the Army and [Dutch] citizens here feel about this ‘diplomatic’ success …

Spoor was furious about what he termed the unbounded fear of the Dutch delegates of the United Nations and the belief that:

… the rejection of this agreement or rather more truly this Republican imposition would be disastrous for the Netherlands. Whether we thereby push Indonesia into an abyss seems to be totally of secondary importance. Professions of faith in the future and other similar embellishments are irritating and unworthy after three years of experience with these gentlemen. I would have pre-
ferred that in the last resort we should have taken an uncompro-
mising stand in the Assembly and go down honourably rather than
[lose] to people of the level of Roem cum suis ...

Yet General Spoor decided to continue in his post in solidar-
ity with his troops and, as he put it, to limit the damage of the
new accord. On 23 May Spoor suffered a heart attack and died
two days later. It was a great loss particularly to the conserva-
tive camp.

High Commissioner Beel rejected the Roem-van Roijen Agree-
ments, because by recognising the republic as a separate nation
four years of Dutch policy were annihilated. Secondly, by con-
senting to cease creating new federal states and territories until
the transfer of sovereignty, Beel argued that the agreements re-
inforced the republican claims on the existing federal states, leav-
ing them feeling abandoned and having their chances of survival
greatly weakened. With the ground sagging away under his feet,
Beel, on 7 May, sent in his resignation.

In the Netherlands the reaction to the Roem-van Roijen agree-
ments ran along party lines; the Labour Party was in favour and
the Catholics were divided, although the majority leant towards
acceptance. The conservative ARP and the Communist Party
were opposed and the other protestant party, the CHU, and the
Liberal Party (VVD) were divided.

It was the Catholic Minister of Overseas Territories, van
Maarseveen who managed, by deft manoeuvring, to guide the
parliament towards approval. Attempts by the Catholic Party
(KVP) leader, Romme, to save some of his scheme of a Dutch-
controlled Netherlands-Indonesia Union (Zware Unie), by en-
ticing the supposed anti-republican federal state of Sumatra’s east
coast to his side, failed. His intention to cause a cabinet crisis
by forging a coalition with the protestant parties was also un-
successful owing to a lack of support in his own party.

In Indonesia the Roem-van Roijen agreement met with wide-
spread suspicion. In fact a rift occurred in republican ranks be-
tween the exiled Sukarno-Hatta government and the Sumatran-based emergency government of Sjafrudin Prawiranegara, supported by Sjahrir’s socialist party and the armed forces. It was also not until the end of May that the major parties, the Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI) and Masjumi announced their acceptance of the Roem-van Roijen agreements. It still took a great deal of persuading to have the Commander in Chief, General Sudirman, agree to leave his guerrilla hideout and return to Yogyakarta and announce a general cease-fire.

To put the agreements into practice took time. It engendered a great deal of political bickering both in Holland and the Republic and between the two delegations. During a visit to Indonesia van Maarseveen, although still worried about the political fallout at home, had become convinced that for the sake of the Netherlands’ national interest the Roem-van Roijen plan should be accepted. He received cabinet approval on 20 June.

At a crucially important Dutch-Indonesian meeting on 22 June the most fundamental issues about future Dutch-Indonesian power relationships were discussed and accepted by both parties. The document dealing with the RTC contained a charter of the transfer of sovereignty, incorporating the following stipulations:

1. Complete and unconditional sovereignty shall be transferred in accordance with the Renville Principles;
2. A Union shall be established by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the United States of Indonesia on the basis of voluntary and equal partnership with equal rights;
3. An agreement with regard to the transfer of the rights, powers and obligations of Indonesia (the Netherlands Indies) to the United States of Indonesia …

Another and no less momentous provision concerned the Netherlands-Indonesian Union, specifying that:

In the Union, neither of the two partners, namely the Netherlands
and the United States of Indonesia, shall be expected to transfer or concede any more rights to the Union than the other. Nor will this transfer include any rights other than those which either partner may voluntarily decide to concede in the conviction of serving thereby as best as he can the common interests as well as his own. The Union shall not be a super state …

Obviously, the original Dutch policy of containing the republic in a federal straitjacket and to superimpose on the new Indonesia a Dutch-supervised political construction, had utterly failed. Instead as Romme ruefully but nevertheless accurately predicted, on 27 June the republic would play a preponderant role in the United States of Indonesia. Secondly a favourable economic and financial arrangement with Indonesia without leaving the Netherlands with any political clout in the country would, in the long run, prove to be counter-productive to Dutch interests. Finally he dismissed the Union as a farce. On 24 June, van Roijen was able to announce that the preparations for the return of the republican government to Yogyakarta were completed and that the Dutch armed forces were to leave the city and the surrounding areas on 24 June.

Minister van Maarseveen again succeeded in gaining majority support in parliament for the 22 June agreements. Voting against were the ultra-conservative block and the Communist Party.

In Indonesia on 6 July there took place the triumphant return from exile to Yogyakarta of Sukarno and Hatta. On 13 July the emergency government of Sjafrudin returned its mandate, and the Hatta cabinet decided to confirm the Roem-van Roijen agreements. Furthermore, a working arrangement was established with the TNI command structure and the Sultan of Yogyakarta was appointed as Minister of Defence. This was followed by a Dutch-Indonesian ceasefire agreement, to be announced simultaneously by both parties on 3 August and to come into force in Java on 11 August and in Sumatra on 15 August.
The RTC was opened in The Hague on 23 August and ended on 31 October having reached agreement on all issues in the agenda, with the exception of the West New Guinea question.

The most difficult problems encountered concerned the Dutch-Indonesian Union, the right of self-determination of minorities, the future status of West New Guinea, the transfer of the national debt and related financial matters and the future of the Dutch colonial army.

The union question caused long and bitter debate. The Indonesian delegation strenuously opposed the Dutch proposal to designate the Queen of the Netherlands as the union monarch. It was only agreed to accept the Queen as a symbol of voluntary association of two fully independent nations, a function holding no powers in terms of constitutional and international law. In order to break this serious deadlock a special committee was appointed, which, with the help and pressure of Chairman Cochran, of the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI), reached a compromise by adopting the wording: ‘the Head of the Union symbolises and personalises the cooperation …’ Furthermore, agreement was reached on the exchange of high commissioners rather than ambassadors, the establishment of a Union Court of Arbitration and a Union Secretariat. In addition, mutual cooperation and coordination in foreign affairs was decided upon, a provision that in practice was almost totally meaningless. Clearly, the union remained a largely symbolic and powerless gesture. Another rather sharp clash happened on the matter of the right of self-determination of regions and states, including the right to decide not to join or secede from the United States of Indonesia. This principle had been included, after strong republican protest, in both the Linggajati and Renville agreements. But the provisional federal constitution, however, adopted by the republic and the Federal States Council (BFO) during the all Indonesian conference in June, had only acknowledged the right for greater autonomy for states or regions within the context of the Indonesian federal state, and denied the right to stay
out of the system. It was the latter possibility that was very close to the heart of the conservative sections of parliament, including a minority of KVP politicians led by Romme. Hence, strong pressure was put on the Dutch delegation at the RTC to have enshrined in the final agreement the right of self-determination, in the sense of secession from the United States of Indonesia. The agitation of the colonial diehard organisation, the Nationaal Comité Handhaving Rijkseenheid (National Committee for the Maintenance of Unity of the Kingdom), supported by the conservative parties and media, resulted in having the cause of the Indonesian minority groups included in the RTC agenda. Petitions were sent to the Queen, who received in audience representatives of TWAPRO, an organisation from Minahassa (north Sulawesi) demanding to be accepted as the twelfth province of the Netherlands, and envoys of the PTB (Ambon) wanting to maintain a special political relationship with the Netherlands. In addition the status was questioned of the areas in Sumatra invaded by the Dutch army during the second action causing republican suspicions to escalate. As Hatta put it: ‘The Republican delegation can only declare to find it impossible to cooperate in the destruction of the Republic.’

Both the republican and BFO delegations remained opposed to the right of secession. In the end, with the help of the UNCI, a compromise solution was reached in which the question of the composition of the federal states was left to the Indonesian Constituent Assembly. Population groups in a state would be allowed under the recommendation and supervision of the UNCI or another UN organ to hold a plebiscite on forming their own federal state. Also, federal states had the right to accept or reject the final constitution and in the latter case the state concerned was accorded the right to hold negotiations on establishing a special relationship with the United States of Indonesia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Still, the final decision on secession remained in the hands of the United States of Indonesia, and the reaction of Jakarta in such a case could be safely pre-
dicted to be in the negative, making this concession meaningless.68

Another complex question to be addressed was the withdrawal of the Dutch military forces, including the highly delicate problem of the dissolution of the colonial army, the KNIL. The Netherlands agreed for its remaining 80,000 troops to be repatriated within six months and for the KNIL to be dismantled as quickly as possible, its 45,000 Indonesian members being offered the choice of joining the Indonesian armed forces or resigning.

In addition, a Netherlands Military Mission was to be established for the following three years to help in the training and development of an efficient and modern Indonesian army.

The RTC expended most of its time and effort on the settlement of financial and economic questions, which, as has already been stressed, was now seen by the Netherlands cabinet and most of the parliament as being of paramount national importance. To safeguard Dutch investments as much as possible and to retain the overpowering Dutch hold on the Indonesian economy had become the first article of faith.

Speedy agreement was achieved on the protection of Dutch business interests and trade relations. The greatly profitable Dutch-dominated transit trade in Indonesian products remained intact and Dutch economic interests in Indonesia were guaranteed. Nationalisation of Netherlands-owned enterprises would only be allowed when the interests of the state were at stake and legally determined compensation was to be paid. The transfer of profits, however, could be restricted during times of shortages of foreign exchange. The traditional Dutch preponderance in the import trade was to be reduced in favour of Indonesian traders, and Dutch firms and plantations were required to employ and train more Indonesians to fill higher staff and managing positions. Finally, Indonesia was to adopt an open door trading policy according the Netherlands most-favoured-nation status.

The biggest obstacle during the negotiations was posed by the transfer of the national Netherlands Indies debt. The Dutch del-
egation based its position on the point of international law requiring that the United States of Indonesia, as legal successor of the Netherlands-Indies, in principle should take over all financial obligations. On 31 December 1949 the total debt was put at 6.5 billion guilders, consisting of 3 billion guilders of internal and 3.5 of external debt, of which 3.5 billion was owed to the Netherlands.

Indonesia was only prepared to take over debts accrued until 1942. Those added after 1945 should be discounted since the new Indonesian state should not be expected to be burdened with the enormous bill of military expenditure incurred in the attempt to destroy it. Also subtracted should be Netherlands loans after 1945 as they had been mainly designed to facilitate the lucrative trade from Indonesia to Holland or to rehabilitate the plantation and other industrial enterprises, the proceeds of which ended up almost solely in the pockets of Dutch investors.

The greatest hawk in the Dutch cabinet on the debt question was Prime Minister Drees, who insisted that Indonesia should be required to take responsibility for the total internal debt and a part of the foreign debt. The rest of the cabinet was divided, with some ministers willing to reduce the Indonesian liability varying from 350 to 700 million guilders. During further negotiations the Netherlands offered to reduce the amount by 500 million and the Indonesians on their part indicated a willingness to take over 2.5 billion guilders of the total debt. But the Netherlands refused to bear the remaining 3.7 billion guilders, particularly because the Dutch deficit at the end of 1947 stood at 15 billion and in contrast Indonesia was showing a positive balance of 245 million guilders.

When the negotiations stalled on 21 October an ad hoc committee was appointed consisting of Dutch financial expert Hirschfeld, and from the Indonesian Djuanda (Republic) side, Indra Kusuma (BFO), and Chairman Cochran (UNCI). Pushed by time constraints and having the disastrous consequences of a failure of the RTC in mind, on 23 October, under pressure from
Cochran, a compromise was achieved. As such Indonesia agreed to be saddled with a debt of 4.6 billion guilders, consisting of 3 billion internal and 1.6 billion foreign debt. Hirschfeld had reduced the Dutch demand by 200 million guilders, which included most of postwar Dutch credits to Indonesia and part of the Dutch military expenditure. It was especially this last concession that made the Indonesian delegates agree.

The only major obstacle remaining was the question of the status of West New Guinea. The Dutch government was unwilling to transfer this territory to the United States of Indonesia mainly for the reason that otherwise the target of two-thirds of the votes in parliament needed, to pass the RTC agreement Bill, would not be reached. The conservative parties, after losing their fight in Indonesia, and with their national pride deeply hurt, still insisted on extracting their colonial pound of flesh in the form of a Dutch West New Guinea. The Indonesian delegation, doggedly defending their contention that West New Guinea, as part of the Netherlands Indies, should by right also be transferred to the United States of Indonesia, refused to give in. This time the Netherlands also dug in and it was again as a result of the efforts of the UNCI that a compromise was reached, in which the territory was to remain under Dutch control and that within a year negotiations were to be held to determine its final political status. While this solution had the immediate advantage of bringing the RTC to a successful end, its long-term effects proved to be disastrous totally wrecking the implementation of the agreement and leading the two nations to the brink of war.

Both in Holland and Indonesia the RTC agreements, like the earlier Roem-van Roijen accord, were received with a great deal of disappointment and misgiving.

In the Netherlands parliament the debates on the Bill of the transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia ran again along party lines. The most furious denouncements of the RTC accords came from the members of the Nationaal Comité Handhaving Rijkseenheid. This included such arch conservatives as former Prime Minister
Gerbrandy, and Welter, a former Minister of Colonies, who had founded a Catholic splinter party, and exerted a considerable influence on the protestant parties ARP and CHU, and also the Liberals (VVD). In the end they proved unable to sway the rest of their colleagues, and van Maarseveen, Minister for Overseas Affairs, managed to obtain the required approval from both houses. He argued that overwhelming parliamentary consent would strengthen the position of the union and stressed that High Commissioner Lovink, and the Netherlands business concerns in Indonesia were adamant for the RTC agreement to be ratified. The government was unwilling to bear the consequences of rejection or postponement and would resign. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Stikker, outlined the existing unfavourable international position of the Netherlands, which, he argued, would become untenable after a rejection of the RTC agreement. He also read out a telegram from the Dutch business community in Indonesia asking, in the strongest possible terms, for the Bill to be passed.

The Bill was passed by the Tweede Kamer (Second Chamber) by seventy-one votes for and twenty-nine against and in the Eerste Kamer (First Chamber) the required two-thirds majority was only just reached by thirty-four votes in favour and fifteen against. Strongest approval came from the Labour Party followed by the KVP.

Dutch public opinion seemed to lag behind the two major political parties and was generally condemnatory. For example, a poll of the KVP rank and file in December 1949 showed 34 per cent against, 20 per cent approving, and 46 per cent without opinion. A general poll at the time showed almost the same results: 33 per cent for, 21 per cent against and 46 per cent no opinion. Perhaps a more truthful measure of public opinion was provided by another poll in the autumn of 1949 testing the role played in the Indonesian question of various important personalities in which General Spoor topped the list with 60 per cent support. Second was van Roijen with 39 per cent, followed by
van Mook with 33 per cent. Among the Indonesians, Sultan Hamid of Pontianak was the most favoured and Sukarno appeared at the bottom of the list.\(^7\) In Indonesia the reaction to the RTC varied from condemnation in radical republican quarters to moderate optimism. As the agreements largely were a repetition of the Roem-van Roijen accords they generally were accorded rather muted public response, although confident predictions were lacking about future Indonesian-Dutch relations. In the more radical press such as in the nationalist *Merdeka*, and the socialist *Pedoman*, the RTC was criticised for not granting real independence because the Netherlands would still be able to wield a great deal of influence in economic and other fields. There had as yet been no economic decolonisation and that, together with the federal system, the union, and the West New Guinea question, showed clearly that colonialism was still fully alive. Most radical nationalist leaders such as Ali Sastroamijoyo also played the neo-colonialist Dutch drum. As he stated in an interview to the author in 1977, he, like most republicans, viewed the RTC merely as a first necessary step leading ultimately to complete Indonesian independence. Other leaders and newspapers showed a less sanguine attitude, although the Dutch unwillingness to withdraw from West New Guinea was universally condemned. The otherwise politically moderate prime minister of the State of Eastern Indonesia, Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, who had been at the forefront of the fight to retain West New Guinea within the United States of Indonesia, warned that the RTC decision on the territory would result in serious repercussions in the future, causing the union to be stillborn. Another moderate nationalist, Dr Abu Hanifah, a more Western-oriented Masjumi leader, was deeply perturbed about the large debt Indonesia was forced to carry and also saw the West New Guinea question as a major reason for the later debacle in Indonesian-Dutch relations.\(^7\)

The RTC agreements were ratified by the provisional Indonesian parliament (KNIP) on 14 December with 226 votes in
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favour, sixty-two against, and thirty-one abstentions.

On 27 December 1949, the ceremony of the transfer of the Netherlands sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia took place at the Dam in Amsterdam. Later on the same day a similar ceremony occurred in Jakarta. Dutch colonial rule of the Indonesian archipelago had officially ended.

Notes
10. ibid., p. 103.
27. Legge, 1972, p. 175.
Prologue

34. ibid., p. 123.
35. ibid.
36. ibid., pp. 152-53.
37. ibid., p. 229.
40. Hutton.
42. ibid., pp. 336-39.
47. ibid., pp. 335-39.
54. NIB, op cit., pp. 599-600.
57. ibid., p. 595.
60. Maas and Clerx, op. cit., pp. 488-89.
64. Jaquet, op. cit., p. 310.
69. Maas and Clerx, op. cit., pp. 584-86.
70. Bank, op. cit., p. 468.
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. 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
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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
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 …

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 …

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.\textsuperscript{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 \textit{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-
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Governor-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
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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. 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. 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. 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 ...’ 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.

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.

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-
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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 baulk 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 incompetents 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. 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 … ’
Perhaps unwittingly Jonkman here sowed the seed of the bitter disputes which arose between the Netherlands and Indonesia during the 1950s and 1960s. The ultimate decision to insist on a special status for New Guinea in the projected Netherlands-Indonesian Union was made on 5 December and Jonkman, in his final formulation, showing the influence of the prodding of Minister van Maarseveen 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 ... 

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. 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. 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.  
This bilateral decision to keep New Guinea outside the Indo-
nesian federation posed a great problem to van Mook during the
Denpasar conference. A number of delegates, including the Sul-
tan 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 popula-
tion was still too blurred to send a genuinely representative del-
egation 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 consti-
tuted 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 approp-
riate:

… not to tie an essentially non-Indonesian territory to an Indo-
nesian 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 …

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 fed-
eration.

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 today 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 …

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.

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 territory 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. Jonkman also insisted again that the possibility of a special status for West New Guinea should be kept open.

The assertion in the book by de Geus 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. 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.

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.

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 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
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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. 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 as 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 ...

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. He was strongly supported by Tilanus, the leader of the protestant CHU faction in the House.

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 1948 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. 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.

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 …’ 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.

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
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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. 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 …

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 …

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.

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-
eral 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-
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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 …

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’.

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-peddling 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.\textsuperscript{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.\textsuperscript{77} As an agricultural expert put it in a 1954 report:

\begin{quote}
… 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 …\textsuperscript{78}
\end{quote}

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:

\begin{quote}
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 …\textsuperscript{79}
\end{quote}

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. 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.

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.

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
(contreleur) 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-
particularly 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 …

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.

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 …

Clearly, van Eechoud had access to some members of the top layer of the Batavia government. This also included Raden Abdulkadir Widjojoatmodjo, 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 …

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 Bestuursschool, 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 …

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.\(^9\)

In the more culturally developed Biak area, where most indigenes under thirty-five years of age were found to be literate,\(^9\) 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.\(^9\)

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:

\[\ldots\] 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 them-
selves, 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 inter-
est, 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
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 ... 

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.

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. 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 Feuillletaup 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 …

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. 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 Geus 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 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. 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’ …

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.

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
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 …

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 …

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. 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.

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. There was a low life expectancy and a high infant mortality. The main diseases plagu-
ing the indigenous population were yaws, malaria, tuberculosis and leprosy.\textsuperscript{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 Marind-anim 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.\textsuperscript{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. 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.

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.

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. 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.

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) …

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 …

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

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. 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. 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.

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 leading positions.
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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’. 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.  

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.
The West New Guinea Debacle

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. 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. It is certain that Papuan slaves were noted in Java and other Indonesian islands as far back as the 10th century.

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. 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 (hongi) 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 island 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. 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 (hongi) 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.

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 Miei 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 Koreri 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 Koreri 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 reinstitution of the Koreri, the lost Utopia, which the original ancestors had enjoyed but had lost.

A Koreri 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 Koreri 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. 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.

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.

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 Insumbabi. 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 Insumbabi, 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 ...
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, 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. 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 beligerent 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.

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 Sowek 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
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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. 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 Koreri 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 Koreri 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 Koreri 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 Koreri 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 Koreri troubles, joined the police service, either voluntarily or by force, and are known to have grossly mistreated their own people.

The defeat of the Koreri 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 Koreri 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 Koreri 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 Koreri 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 …

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, paradisical conditions so long lost to the Papuan people. Peaceful methods such as singing and dancing were ab-
olutely 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 num-
bers 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 direc-
tion 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.
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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.

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-
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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 (Lingga jati) 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 seri-
ously 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 fight-
ing to achieve it …’

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 Lieu-
tenant 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 inde-
pendence movement.

During a meeting on 27 December in Enggros kampung in the
district of Tobati, it became clear that the demand for independ-
ence, in the sense of wanting to establish a free and democratic
Papuan state, was far from the minds of most present. Clan in-
terests and local considerations proved to be of paramount im-
portance. 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.

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. 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. 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 Towei 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.\textsuperscript{167}

### Pro-Indonesian agitation

Another centre of nationalist fervour was Serui on the island of Japen, where, as was related above, the \textit{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 \textit{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. 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 ambersies 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 Qur'an 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
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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. 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 selfgovernment and ultimately independence. 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 Koreri 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 *volksscholen* (elementary school) leavers was rather low, owing to absenteeism, and falling back into an illiterate milieu. 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 Bruyn 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.

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 amperies, 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 amperies 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 unrep-
resentative 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 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. 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 Miei.

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 socioeconomic 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 …

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. 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. 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. When Ariks returned to Batavia in August with a large number of signed requests from promi-
nent 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.  

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.

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
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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’ …¹⁸⁸

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 …

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 …

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. 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. It seems that Evatt concurred.
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with these overtures. 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 ...

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.

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:
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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.\textsuperscript{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 side-
tracked. 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 For-
eign 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 fol-
lows 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 imperi-
alist 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-
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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
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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 throwback 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.

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). 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.
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Notes
4. ibid., pp. 74-5; Drooglever, 1980.
5. Winkler, 1936, pp. 81-2.
8. Colijn, 1907.
10. ibid., pp. 85-6.
15. ibid., p. 94.
18. ibid., p. 255.
19. ibid., pp. 246-49.
21. ibid., p. 629.
24. NIB, Volume VI, op cit., p. 309.
25. ibid., p. 310.
26. ibid., pp. 432-33.
29. ibid., p. 522; p. 525.
30. ibid., p. 781; de Geus, op. cit., p. 34.
32. NIB, Volume VI, op. cit., p. 541.
33. ibid., p. 545.
34. De Geus, op. cit., p. 32.
35. ibid., p. 33.
37. ibid., p. 633.
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38. ibid., p. 634.
40. ibid., pp. 634-35.
41. ibid., pp. 691-92.
42. NIB, Volume XII, 1971-1996, p. 166.
44. ibid., p. 41.
45. Duynstee, 1961, p. 156.
46. Lijphart, op. cit., p. 104.
47. NIB, Volume VIII, op. cit., p. 502.
50. ibid., p. 230, note 9.
52. Duynstee, op. cit., p. 158.
54. ibid., p. 86
55. Lijphart, op. cit., p. 118.
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.
69. Van Oerle, op. cit., p. 97.
70. De Geus, op. cit., p. 46.
71. Van Oerle, op. cit., p. 93.
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.
79. Van Esterik, op. cit., p. 46.
80. ibid.; Drooglever, 1997.
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.
91. Lagerberg, 1977, p. 60.
95. ibid., p. 163.
96. ibid., pp. 166-67.
97. ibid., p. 174.
98. ibid., p. 154.
100. Derix, op. cit., p. 171.
101. ibid., pp. 171-72.
104. ibid., pp. 38-9.
106. ibid., p. 186.
107. ibid.
111. Van der Leeden, 1956, p. 15.
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.
137. Miedema, 1984, p. 73.
139. Miedema, op. cit., p. 6.
140. Kamma, op. cit.(a), p. 11.
142. Kamma, op. cit.(a), p. 11
143. Kamma, op. cit.(b), pp. 102-3.
144. ibid., p. 104.
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.
154. ibid., p. 160.
155. ibid., pp. 168-69.
156. ibid., p. 182.
158. ibid., p. 183.
162. Courtois, op. cit., p. 126.
163. ibid., p. 128.
164. ibid., p. 131.
165. ibid., p. 130.
176. Penders, op. cit., chapter VIII.
178. ibid., p. 54.
179. Miedema, op. cit.
182. ibid., p. 191
183. ibid., p. 182
184. ibid., p. 183
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.
197. Netherlands Embassy, Canberra to BUZA, 9-8-1949, ad 83722-7854 G.S., Archief Buitenlandse Zaken, dossier G 11094.
199. ibid., p. 38.
204. ibid., p. 57.
The Western plantations and other industrial enterprises had been severely damaged during the Japanese occupation and the freedom struggle. In 1948 the total financial loss was estimated at 4.1 billion guilders. Those mainly affected were the large enterprises that had been able to rebuild their businesses. Many of the smaller and often family concerns lacked the necessary funds and were forced to sell to other Dutch, Chinese or Indonesian entrepreneurs.¹

During the immediate aftermath of the transfer of sovereignty in December 1949, the reaction of the Dutch business world had been generally positive. The first Indonesian government had tried hard to put the Dutch community at ease and had publicly supported the continuation of Dutch business and investments, emphasising their crucial role in national economic rehabilitation and development. It soon became apparent, however, that the general mood of large sections of the common people was far less accommodating to their former colonial masters, whom they saw continuing in the prewar comfort of their lifestyles and demeanours, while for the majority of Indonesians the promised fruits of the revolution were passing by.

In 1951, High Commissioner Lamping complained to The Hague about the prewar apartheid-like mentality that continued to prevail in most of the Dutch community and he stressed that in the new Indonesia there was no longer any place for the old Dutch colonial diehard generation. Lamping warned that atti-
tudes like this could only exacerbate the already deteriorating relations threatening the vast Dutch economic stake in Indonesia and could weaken the position of the small number of Western orientated economic rationalists in the Indonesian government and the public service. It was of the highest priority for the Dutch community to get off its high moral horse and to get rid of its colonial prejudices and to transcend old racial barriers by increasing social contacts at least with the Indonesian Western-educated elite.

Dutch business quickly attuned itself to the new situation and the changed commercial patterns, and these included corrupt practices. In their social life very little changed from the colonial era and the majority of Dutch people remained aloof from Indonesian society, continuing their prewar discriminatory attitude dismissing Indonesians with condescension and their new leaders as inexperienced and bumbling parvenus. A report by D.F.F. de Man, the officer in charge of the information section of the high commission, highlights this problem. In Bandung, invited to attend an informal meeting to discuss a reorganisation of the Sociëteit, the hub of former upper-class colonial society, it became clear to him that there the old ‘apartheid’ mentality was still fully alive:

It soon became apparent that this section of the Dutch society in Bandung is strongly in favour of distancing itself as much as possible socially from the Indonesian community. So far as the reorganisation of the Club is concerned … the idea is to give this club an exclusively Western international character and therefore to keep Indonesians out … later it might be decided to admit through the back door, a few, thoroughly Westernised, Indonesians … These Dutchmen sounded quite arrogant, arguing that it was impossible to hold a proper conversation with Indonesians and if they were admitted to the club they would only drink cordial laced with coconut juice …

In addition to the Dutch, the Eurasians and Chinese also gen-
erally refused to mix socially with Indonesians. Admittedly now called Indonesians the image of the inferior native had certainly not yet disappeared. Furnivall’s plural society was still fully alive in the 1950s. To complete the full picture, even among the Western educated Indonesian elite it was not uncommon even until very recently to hear the colonial-era remark: rakyat masih bodoh (the people are still stupid).

It was among the deprived masses that the call of the ultra-radical nationalist and left wing leadership for a continuing revolution to achieve full independence, both economically and culturally, received a ready response. Attempts at social revolution during the freedom struggle that had been stifled temporarily after the Madiun revolt, had started once again to push ever more powerfully for fulfilment with the PKI during the 1955 national elections, regaining a powerful voice and winning 23 per cent and 25 per cent of votes in east and central Java respectively.

The platforms for rapid socioeconomic development of the successive short-lived governments of the early 1950s in reality remained unfulfilled as a result of constant political instability and inter-party rivalry. With very few exceptions politicians used the parties as convenient vehicles to advance the interests of themselves, their families, their clans, and their close supporters. In many cases the traditional, feudal-like, patron-client relations pattern had simply been incorporated into a new organisational form namely the political party. Often parties acted more as mutual benefit societies for their members rather than concentrating their efforts on improving the national common good. Religious and ideological targets were often pushed with such fervour that compromise remained impossible and the parties neglected the golden rule that the interests of party should stop at the point where the interests of nation begins. It could well be argued that democracy on the Western model never actually existed in Indonesia and that in 1957 Sukarno and the army only buried a ghost.

The rule of law had already been tampered with before the
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introduction of guided democracy evidenced by a growing trend of the executive arm of government to exert undue political pressure on court proceedings. Notorious examples made international headlines. For example, a number of court cases against Dutchmen were orchestrated purely for political effect and which made a mockery of justice. In numerous other less publicised cases the course of justice also was demonstrably impaired.

The overthrow of the Netherlands colonial state had brought about national freedom, but the crucially important struggle as to what kind of political philosophy the new state was to embrace had by no means been concluded. The basically socio-democratic system of government on the Dutch model adopted in 1949 had no grassroots backing. Moreover, a sizeable portion of the Dutch educated elite was in favour of statist models ranging from Sukarno’s system to communism. In addition there was a minority Muslim group trying to establish by force of arms a Darul Islam, an Islamic State. The Indonesian masses neither understood nor wanted Western-style democracy and its concomitant economic rationalism, and were far more prone to throw in their lot with major populist parties such as the PNI, the NU and the Communist Party. In essence the general mood in the country remained strongly anti-Dutch and widespread dissatisfaction existed about the outcome of the RTC agreements which were regarded as limiting Indonesia’s sovereignty and granting the Netherlands too many economic and political concessions.

From the beginning of the revolution there had existed a popular radical, nativist-nationalist ground swell, that at least in the original republican areas clamoured for the immediate annihilation of all vestiges of Dutch colonial power. It was this same overpowering, raw, and often irrational force that, within a few years, was able to sweep into oblivion the various inherently unstable early moderate governments and eventually with them whatever had existed in the way of Western democracy, in the process sweeping aside the still predominant Dutch position in
the national economy. The great winners were the instigator and the leading guide of this popular anti-Dutch and anti-Western outburst: President Sukarno and the Communist Party. The immediate losers were the Dutch, but in the long run it was the Indonesian people themselves that were to pay the greatest price, as the nation was led into a quagmire of economic and social suffering and squalor from which even today it has not yet fully recovered.

The armed forces and politics

During the revolution the prewar Indonesian nationalist political configuration had become further complicated by the appearance of a new and powerful political player; the armed forces. In 1945 the Netherlands had been confronted by hundreds of thousands of armed revolutionaries, a veritable people’s army. The vast majority of fighters belonged to laskar bands, irregulars who saw themselves primarily as anti-colonial resistance fighters and not as professional soldiers and as such remained deeply involved in politics. A number of laskar organisations were directly connected with political parties and for many freedom fighters there was no difference between military and political power. As in most revolutionary situations, in Indonesia numerous robber bands sprang up terrorising all sides for their own gain. The TNI formed only a relatively small part of the total armed force in the field confronting the Dutch colonial forces. Moreover the TNI itself was by no means a politically homogenous force. Only a small segment of the officer corps had received Dutch military training. A very select few had graduated from the Royal Military Academy (KMA) in the Netherlands and another group, including the later generals Nasution, Simaputang and Kawilarang, had been trained at the KMA in Bandung, where Western democratic rule of the division of powers between the legislative, judicial, and executive branches had been instilled into them. Most of these former KNIL officers held
general staff positions in the TNI and generally kept out of politics. Their main objective was to forge the large number of motley and generally ill-coordinated and undisciplined fighting bands, constituting the bulk of republican forces, into an effective national fighting force under the control of the republican government.

In 1948 the Hatta government, with the strong support of most of the general staff, had launched a reorganisation plan for the republican forces, which envisaged massive demobilisation and the creation of a smaller but much better trained, armed, coordinated and more professionally attuned force; an objective that proved difficult to achieve. The only units that, during the revolution, came closest to reaching these targets were the Nasution-commanded and largely Dutch-speaking and officered Siliwangi division and the mobile police brigade. The majority of the TNI officers, though, had been trained by the Japanese, whose priority had been to inculcate semangat, fighting spirit, rather than teach military tactics and strategy. As well the Indonesian cadets were imbued with a great deal of Japanese fascist military philosophy which did not differentiate between political and military power. It was particularly these officers who from the beginning had been opposed to the republican government’s policy of achieving independence mainly by diplomatic means and many had supported the call of the communist Tan Malaka to drive the colonialists into the sea.

During the guerrilla war and with the republican government imprisoned after the Dutch occupation of Yogyakarta, the TNI and the irregular units in Java and Sumatra became the only official representatives of republican, political and administrative power in the large areas under their control. After the transfer of sovereignty many military commanders were loath to give up these positions of power. In some areas commanders assumed warlord status becoming involved in large-scale corruption, raking in a great deal of money and scarce goods. It took considerable time and effort for the central government to take over con-
trol and to obviate some of the worst abuses.

The army commander, General Nasution, remained committed to plans adopted by the Hatta government in 1948 for the reorganisation of the armed forces. At the end of 1950 he had managed to reduce the forces, swollen to 500,000 men, to 200,000, and the irregular bands to 80,000, while at the same time incorporating 26,000 ex-KNIL soldiers. First, late joining opportunists, the old and sick, and those with proven corrupt and criminal records were dismissed. Second, the irregular units and untrained members of the TNI were targeted and schemes for retraining for civilian employment were started.

The objective was to then create a modern, and well-disciplined force of about 150,000. Officers were required to obtain the necessary educational qualifications and skills to run a modern army. Supported by the large Netherlands Military Mission (NMM), training facilities and an inspectorate were put in to place. This blueprint for reform caused a great deal of resentment among the semangat officers, who on the whole had lower educational qualifications and were also strongly opposed to being trained by their former enemies. Also, it was mainly the semangat officers who were opposed to subjugating military power to civilian authority. Still, Nasution and the army command insisted on seeing their reforms pushed through, threatening recalcitrant officers with demotion.

A serious problem that militated against the creation of a modern, tightly disciplined army was the culturally based phenomenon of bapakism, that is, the kind of patron/client relationship that had emerged between commanders and their soldiers during the guerrilla struggle. This was especially evident in the former PETA-officered units and the irregular troops. Many of the pemuda had originated from the vast ranks of the unemployed, landless peasants who had migrated to urban areas, and students. Propelled by the Japanese and by Sukarno many of the young attached themselves as anak buah, loyal followers, to a
new brand of leaders, either Japanese-trained officers or jago, natural village firebrands. They selected their leaders (bapak) on the basis of their fighting skills and their charismatic qualities. The bapak was a feudal-like father figure, who, in addition to his semangat qualities, was also expected to provide shelter and food and take a paternal interest in the wellbeing of his soldiers and their families. It was a system that easily fell foul of modern public financial rules and regulations and often resulted in large-scale corruption of public funds.

After their crucial role in gaining national independence the republican armed forces also acted as an important catalyst in bringing the federal states of Indonesia to a speedy end by pushing the local people towards a unified and Jakarta-controlled Republic of Indonesia. There were, however, also some internal developments in some of the federal states that accelerated their downfall.

The Westerling affair

The first of these developments was the Westerling affair that sealed the fate of the Federal State of Pasundan (west Java).

On 23 January 1950, a coup d’état against the Indonesian government was mounted by some disgruntled KNIL soldiers, mainly Ambonese. Their leader was the charismatic Captain Westerling, the former commander of the Speciale Troepen (RST), the Dutch commando detachment which was notorious because of its harsh treatment of, and murderous exploits against, Indonesian insurgents, as, for example, in south Sulawesi where a large number of people had been massacred. While Indonesian nationalists condemned Westerling as a criminal killer, in Dutch army circles and in the Dutch community in general Westerling was, with few exceptions, looked upon as a national hero. Rather than officially censure him, on 9 July 1947 the Batavia government submitted Westerling’s name for a royal decoration, the Bronzen Leeuw. A decision was postponed by
the Minister of Overseas Territories, who awaited a report about Westerling’s Sulawesi activities. In a dispatch of 17 December 1948 to the Department of Overseas Territories, High Commissioner Beel wrote that the investigation had cleared Captain Westerling and therefore no objection existed against him being decorated. Commenting on a note passed on by the prime minister, a high departmental official stated that although Westerling on various occasions had: ‘… over stepped the bounds … they were not serious enough … to reject this request. Beel apparently agreed but wrote that the decoration had to be withheld for political reasons.’

Westerling retired from the army at the end of 1948 and became director of a Chinese transport firm, Koh Hien. He lived in the Puncak area and set up the Angkatan Perang Ratu Adil (APRA). Dutch intelligence reports in December 1949 described the APRA as large, recruiting 10,000 fighters from various sources. They included local Sundanese, who wanted to turn their Pasundan federal state into a separate independent nation to stop Javanese domination. In addition there were deserters from the TNI, members of Muslim and communist fighting groups, and soldiers from the RST and other KNIL units. The Dutch authorities in Bandung were only able to obtain vague information about the activities of the APRA, as members were sworn to secrecy. The objectives of the organisation appeared to have been, in the first place, to safeguard the security of the state of Pasundan and to avoid its takeover by the republic. Supposedly, there was a plan to occupy Bandung on 25 December in order to keep the city out of TNI control. Support was said to have been offered by various Sundanese leaders, and even some TNI commanders, while financial help came from Chinese quarters. According to a police source these early reports caused only lukewarm reactions from Dutch intelligence services and Central Military Intelligence members were even forbidden to show any interest, which caused new information to dry up.

The Indonesian authorities became very anxious about
Westerling’s activities and especially his frequent contact with the officers and soldiers of the KNIL. Vice-President Hatta in fact at one stage suggested to High Commissioner Lovink, that he should deport Westerling from Indonesia in order to avoid serious trouble. Lovink was less worried and a short investigation by the army commander failed to find any incriminating evidence while the officer corps in the Bandung area played dumb, though in reality many of them were aware of, and sympathetic to, Westerling’s actions.8

Westerling also tried to ensure support for his plans from the highest echelons of the Dutch army. On 25 December he directly contacted the army commander, General Buurman van Vreeden, asking for his reaction to a military coup he was planning immediately after the transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia. The general insisted that the RTC agreements had to be adhered to and immediately ordered an investigation which revealed that, in addition to lower-rank officers and soldiers, Westerling had extensive talks with Major-General Engles, the commander of the ‘7 December’ division, Colonel Cassa, the commander of Bandung and Cimahi, and Major-General van Langen. The latter had impressed upon Westerling the need to avoid causing embarrassment to the Dutch government and to postpone any action until after the transfer of power. During meetings just before Christmas General Engles told Westerling that he did not want any trouble in his area and would cooperate with the TNI to put an end to it.9

Indonesian anxiety increased. Hatta announced on 27 December that Westerling was involved in the delivery of weapons to the Darul Islam and newly appointed High Commissioner Hirschfeld was ordered by The Hague to look into the matter. This was followed with another complaint by Hatta which included a letter of 5 January from Westerling to the Pasundan government and the Indonesian cabinet with an ultimatum demanding recognition before 12 January of the APRA as the official Pasundan state-armed forces. Hatta added that the major-
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ity of the KNIL in west Java wanted to join Westerling and that the ultimatum had been handed to the Pasundan government by KNIL Lieutenant Rijhiner.¹⁰

This development caused governmental involvement at the highest level and Minister for Overseas Territories Götzen, Minister of Foreign Affairs Stikker, and High Commissioner Hirschfeld, demanded strong action to be applied against Westerling. Suggestions of arrest or recall to active duty were opposed by General Engles for the reason that this carried the high risk of setting off a massive revolt and division in the KNIL, the consequences of which would be disastrous, tearing the RTC agreements apart. As a result, General Engles resorted to persuasion and contacted Westerling, telling him again that, in case of a rebellion, he would be opposed by the Dutch army. The Dutch high command was indeed deeply worried about a wholesale desertion of KNIL soldiers to the Westerling camp. This fear, however, abated somewhat after a meeting with all local commanders on 11 January, who generally were more worried about their troops defying orders to take up arms against Westerling, than about actual defection.

It was perhaps portentous that Colonel Borghouts, the commander of the RST, Westerling’s former unit, was absent. The Indonesians strongly pressed for the immediate removal of the RST from the region. Despite initial refusal, under strong pressure from Hirschfeld, the army commander on 19 January decided to demobilise the whole unit, comprising 450 officers and soldiers. A number of Indonesian RST members and their families were to be shipped to Holland and a subsequent group of 340 rank and file was to be returned to east Indonesia.

Westerling in fact decided to act before the order to disband the RST could be put into effect, and on 23 January APRA units attacked Bandung and managed to occupy a number of important points, including the headquarters of the TNI Siliwangi division. During the fighting sixty TNI soldiers, twenty-five civilians and two of Westerling soldiers lost their lives. The APRA
force consisted mainly of Ambonese soldiers of the RST, amounting to 140 men, and another 190 former KNIL soldiers, who had deserted from the Indonesian armed forces. The rumoured existence of thousands of other dissident armed groups poised to join the APRA, which had deeply worried both Indonesian and Dutch authorities, proved in fact fallacious. Realising that no further reinforcements were to arrive, the APRA soldiers became disillusioned and the coup fizzled out. After negotiations with General Engles a solution was reached to allow the APRA forces until 5.00 p.m. to leave the city unmolested by the TNI. Many of the RST soldiers wanted to return to barracks and agreed to be disarmed there and were then transported to the stockade on the small island of Onrust in Jakarta Bay. A small troop left the city and disappeared into the mountains. Finally 124 participants were sentenced to jail by the military tribunal and sent to West New Guinea to serve their time.

Westerling, however, disappeared and, apparently with the help of the Dutch military authorities and the approval of the Dutch Secretary of State for Defence, Fockema Andreae, in Indonesia at the time to supervise the repatriation of the Dutch armed forces and the dismantling of the KNIL, was able to flee to Singapore. He had first been taken by a Dutch navy Catalina close to the Malayan coast and then paddled ashore in a rubber boat. The British government in Singapore refused an Indonesian request for extradition considering Westerling a political refugee, and en route to Holland via England he managed to escape to Belgium, finally entering the Netherlands in 1952 when the heat had died down.

Fockema Andreae later related that in fact before his departure he had been instructed by Prime Minister Drees to do his utmost to have Westerling removed from the Indonesian scene. The Dutch army command, having used Westerling and the RST for various shady operations, was also very keen to keep him out of an Indonesian courtroom to avoid their own nest being soiled.
Westerling’s flight caused a highly indignant call from the Indonesian press for extradition and the death sentence.

The Indonesian official response, however, proved to be less sanguine particularly after Fockema Andreae’s frank admission to the Sultan of Yogyakarta, then Indonesian Defence Minister, about his part in the affair. Apart from sending a stiff protest to The Hague it seems that the Indonesian government, including the highly influential President Sukarno, was unwilling to allow the affair to cause a serious break with the Netherlands. Indonesian-Dutch relations at the highest level remained cordial and the resolute steps taken by High Commissioner Hirschfeld and Fockema Andreae helped to defuse the crisis.

The cabinet minutes of 27 February 1950 revealed that after consultation, Commissioner Hirschfeld and the Dutch government had decided against requesting the British government to refuse to hand over Westerling to Indonesia, but resolved that in case he appeared in the Netherlands to have him put under preliminary detention on the charge of murder. The cabinet minutes also referred to a suggestion on 18 January of President Sukarno to have Westerling deported, and Hatta’s argument that after the bloody coup in Bandung this was no longer possible and the only option open was punishment. Cabinet concluded that probably the Indonesian government also would be happy to see the back of Westerling. It accepted Fockema Andreae’s appreciation of the situation that if the integration of the KNIL with the Indonesian armed forces failed, a chaotic situation would occur in which the lives of Europeans in Indonesia could well be in danger. Therefore, the removal of Westerling had to be seen in that context.

The affair proved to be more corrosive of relations than expected, as it apparently had jolted the Indonesian nation, undermining the already brittle feeling of trust towards the Netherlands even more. This was something that could only be further accentuated by the general reaction of ridiculing the new nation by the Dutch in Indonesia and in Holland itself. Some ultra-con-
servative figures advocated official support for Westerling, while in an opinion poll in Holland only 35 per cent condemned his actions, 18 per cent approved and 30 per cent had no opinion. In another poll Westerling came to the fore as the seventh most admired contemporary personality, bypassing world-beaters such as Eisenhower and Marshall.\(^5\)

**The demise of federalism**

Another crucially important result of Westerling’s intervention was that rather than strengthening the federal system it in fact accelerated its downfall. The first victims were a number of prominent Sundanese leaders of the federal state of Pasundan, who had been compromised through their contact with Westerling. The Pasundan head of state, Wiranatakusuma, was forced to resign and the republican army took control of the government and continued its fight against the Darul Islam.\(^6\) A further shock to the federal cause was the arrest and the sentence to ten years jail of the Sultan of Pontianak, one of the most important BFO leaders, for his involvement in the Westerling affair. Known as Max to his Dutch friends, the sultan had received a thorough Western upbringing. His wife was Dutch, and as an officer in the KNIL he had been imprisoned by the Japanese together with his European colleagues. He was considered to be pro-Dutch and anti-republican, and it seems that dissatisfaction with his ranking in the federal Indonesian cabinet caused him to join the Westerling coup. Attempts by the Dutch government, including Prime Minister Drees, to save him from jail by having him exiled to Borneo were resolutely rejected by the Hatta government.

The Westerling affair facilitated the realisation of the republic’s program to replace the federal system by a unified Indonesian state. The Prime Minister of the Republican Federal State, Dr Halim, on 8 February 1950, stated that the republic, having gained freedom for the nation, would find it hard to accept its status being reduced to one federal state among many others:
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It will be difficult for the Indonesian Republic having gained freedom after four years of fighting to acquiesce ... to move to a small house while for some considerable time it already had been used to living in a large house ...

He dismissed the federal system as a vestige of the Dutch colonial policy of divide and rule and the Round Table Conference agreements had only resulted in a partial victory for the Indonesian people. Hence, the Republic of Indonesia was committed to continue the struggle to regain the position lost at the RTC and to present the people with a unified Indonesian republican state.17

An important weakness of the federal states was that individually they lacked their own defence forces. This left the field completely open to the strongly republican-orientated TNI to infiltrate the states, indoctrinate and, if necessary, push the population to join the republic into a united Indonesian state. A kind of dual governmental system came into existence in the federal areas with the arrival of the TNI. A regional commander was placed in each kabupaten (regency). He was assisted at district level by the KODAM (Kommando Onder District Militair), and in the villages by kader desa units. In theory the military were to function alongside the civil government but in practice the TNI took over all power pushing federal civil authorities aside and village heads also lost their authority. A report at the end of January 1950 about the situation in the region around Jakarta mentioned that the kader desa had usurped practically all power in the villages, raising taxes, selling licences, demanding part of the income of agriculture and cottage industry and strictly executing orders from the KODAM.18 In another report the high commission stressed that in other federal states the military also seemed to have superimposed itself on the power structure, undermining federal authority:

The government of the United States of Indonesia seemed not powerful enough to stop successfully the unlawful and utterly
arbitrary actions of local military authorities. There are numer-
ous examples of the imposing of unlawful taxes on the local popu-
lation as well as on the Western entrepreneurs. The misappropria-
tion of taxes, money from public bodies and business, trading on
their own account, and the devising of their own export regula-
tions outside the Federal government, which have often occurred
in East Java, South Sumatra, and elsewhere, are symptomatic of
a shocking lack of a sense of responsibility of the commanders
and of the powerlessness of the central government. With the
exception so far of the Federal State of Eastern Indonesia, it seems
in reality, that the whole of Indonesia has been placed in a state
of emergency under which the military power has gained not only
precedence over civil authority but also has appropriated this ..." 
The most powerful reason for the debacle of the federal sys-
tem in Java and Sumatra was the popularity of the Indonesian
republic among most of the intelligentsia and the masses, the
latter often being propelled by millenarian expectations or com-
munist-led anti-feudal motives. The leadership in the federal
states was, in the main, still drawn from the old ruling classes of
the nobility and adat chiefs, who had always been at the beck
and call of the Dutch colonial power. The republic was glowing
in the aura of being the instrument of freedom and independ-
ence and by propaganda and military pressure tried to extend
and deepen its hold on the national ethos. Furthermore, the re-
publican government and military administration had existed in
the major part of Java and Sumatra for most of the revolution-
ary era, with the two Dutch police actions proving unable to bring
drastic change. The federal states were seen as Dutch construc-
tions, and were not allowed sufficient time to outlive this colo-
nial taint and to gain enough local popular support. A number
of Indonesian nationalists, such as Abu Hanifah, indicated in
interviews that a federal system of government might have been
ideal in the context of Indonesia’s highly diversified political,
cultural and ethnic situation, but that its Dutch origins caused
its death knell.
With the ink on the RTC signatures hardly dry the Netherlands felt deeply aggrieved to have to witness the speedy demolition of the federal form of government by the Indonesians in favour of unification.

This process had started as early as 28 November 1949 when the newly created state of Central Java requested to be amalgamated with the Republic of Indonesia. This was followed on 19 January 1950 by the appointment of a republican government supervisory administrator to the state of East Java. Next there was a request from the state of Madura for a similar republican government official to take over.

After the Westerling affair the state of Pasundan came under central government control and soon after, the state of West Sumatra – Minangkabau – indicated it would join the republic. The autonomous status of the states still remained intact until 8 March 1950, when Jakarta enacted an emergency law sanctioning voluntary unification by referendum and only in exceptional circumstances by other methods. As a result, by 4 April most of Java and Sumatra had joined the Republic of Indonesia. Jakarta and its immediate surroundings were declared a special area, Jakarta Raya. On 5 May the state of East Indonesia also agreed to join the unified state of the Republic of Indonesia.

The Macassar revolt

Unification had generally been achieved smoothly and without holding a referendum. The great exception was East Indonesia where a number of armed revolts broke out directed against the breaking up of the federal system and at what was perceived as Javanese imperialism. At the core of this reaction were the problems associated with the dissolution of the colonial army, the KNIL, particularly its indigenous soldiers.

The first problem occurred in Macassar, the capital of the federal state of East Indonesia, where, on 5 April 1950, Captain Andi Azis, in charge of a federal army unit of former KNIL soldiers
and opposed to unification, initiated a coup. This action was triggered by the decision of the TNI high command, supported by the Jakarta government, to dispatch to Macassar the Worang battalion, a unit consisting of East Indonesian soldiers, who had fought on the side of the republic during the revolution. With the support of leading East Indonesian politicians, Andi Aziz and his 300 ex-KNIL soldiers occupied various strategic points to stop the TNI landing and arrested the local TNI commander, Colonel Moko, and other republican officers. After Hatta’s reconciliation overtures had failed President Sukarno denounced Azis as a rebel. A supposed plan for the East Indonesian government to proclaim a separate republic of East Indonesia seemed to be losing support when Jakarta insisted on having its troops garrisoned in Macassar after the implicated politicians left the sinking ship, leaving the military plotters in the lurch. As a result the coup failed and pressured by the East Indonesian president, Sukawati, Captain Andi Azis left for Jakarta where he was promptly arrested and convicted to fourteen years in jail.

This still did not solve the KNIL question and at the end of May fighting occurred between former KNIL soldiers, mainly Ambonese, and Worang battalion units. The security situation in south Sulawesi was unstable with various armed groups, including Darul Islam, KNIL and TNI deserters, and bands of brigands roving around. Ambonese and Menadonese armed KNIL soldiers and their families, congregated in a transit camp and protected by Netherlands army troops, refused to be demobilised. In order to resolve this impasse Dutch High Commissioner Hirschfeld, and Prime Minister Hatta, on 14 July came to an agreement to temporarily transfer the indigenous KNIL soldiers to the Netherlands army and on 26 July officially abolished the KNIL. This arrangement was overtaken again by the reaction of the TNI in Macassar by, on 26 July, attacking the KNIL camp with the intention of eliminating the Ambonese soldiers before the later planned TNI attack on Ambon, where a major anti-republican revolt was also in progress. With the or-
der for a ceasefire by the Indonesian Minister of Defence being ignored, Hirschfeld contacted the UNCI and, in conjunction with the Indonesian government, sent Major-General Scheffelaar and Colonel Kawilarang to Macassar by plane to stop the fighting. But General Scheffelaar was arrested on arrival making it clear that the TNI was unwilling to negotiate. In response Hirschfeld ordered the Dutch destroyer *Kortenaer* to the scene which, with its guns trained at the city, forced the TNI to give in and to release the Dutch general, who then, together with Colonel Kawilarang, succeeded in effecting a ceasefire on 9 August. The Menadonese soldiers and their families were repatriated to the Minahasa and demobilised and the Ambonese were transported to camps in Java.21

**The Republic of the South Moluccas**

The strongest resistance against republican encroachments was shown by the Ambonese KNIL soldiers. The Moluccas had been in close contact with the West for 400 years, first being colonised by the Portuguese and then for more than three centuries by the Dutch. The people of Ambon and its adjacent islands were 65 per cent Christian (Dutch Reformed), with the rest being Muslim, and showed one of the highest literacy rates in the country. Many Ambonese Christians were among the most loyal supporters of the Dutch colonial regime, with some holding low echelon positions in the colonial service and many serving in the KNIL. Ambonese Christians held a privileged position in the colonial social-economic status system, as soldiers, for example, received higher pay than other indigenous troops and showed an especial attachment to the Netherlands royal house.

On the other hand a section of the Ambonese had been involved in the Indonesian nationalist movement from its inception. While the nationalist call did not attract mass support before the war, it received, as elsewhere in Indonesia, a boost during the Japanese occupation, particularly among the Muslim
Decolonisation and Nationalisation, 1950-1958

population. In 1946 a pro-Republican movement entered the scene, and although doing well at the polls it seems that in reality the majority still remained loyal to the Dutch. Many Ambonese supported the demands at the RTC for self-determination and gave a strong indication of wanting to remain part of the Netherlands kingdom.22

In 1950 three political parties existed in Ambon: the Partai Indonesia Merdeka (PIM), led by Urbanus Pupella, was Marxist-influenced and demanded fusion with the Indonesian republic. Secondly, there was the conservative Gabungan Sembilan Serangkai (GSS) supported by the traditional rulers, the rajas and chieftains, and a sizeable numbers of officials. The third organisation was the Gerakan Democrat Maluku Selatan (GDMS) by J.A. Manusama, politically middle-of-the-road group that did not entirely preclude the possibility of joining the Indonesian republic. Ambon had remained fairly quiet and the political game was being played mainly by the intellectual elite with the masses remaining apolitical. This pattern changed abruptly in January 1950 with the arrival of Ambonese KNIL paratrooper and commando units that soon clashed with supporters of the pro-republican PIM, resulting in nineteen deaths. The police also became involved taking the side of the KNIL soldiers. Conditions worsened with the rumours of the imminent dissolution of the federal system and that an invasion of Javanese troops was near at hand. The news of the impending landing of a TNI battalion in Macassar and the Azis revolt, caused a panic in the Ambonese leadership and the leader of the GDMS, J.A. Manusama, called a great public meeting in support of the federal system. After the debacle of the Azis coup the more conservative group of the Ambonese leadership decided on 25 April to proclaim their own independent state, the Republic of the South Moluccas (RMS).23

A controversy exists among historians about the actual extent of public support the RMS was able to enlist. The categorical statement in a recent publication by H. Meijer based on some earlier studies24 that the RMS was not supported by the major-
ity of Ambonese seems too stark. His argument that the RMS was only supported by the Christian Ambonese, who in fact accounted for 65 per cent of the population, points to this. According to Utrecht nearly all Christians and a third of the Muslims were in support of the RMS. H. Feith also agrees with the existence of strong local support.25

The RMS certainly was strongly supported by the local Ambonese KNIL and thousands of Ambonese soldiers in other parts of Indonesia also showed considerable sympathy. Their demand for repatriation was refused by both the Indonesian and Dutch authorities in order to avoid the creation of an even more indomitable bastion of resistance. Initially the Hatta government tried to solve the problem by peaceful methods. But a mission of the republican cabinet member Dr Leimena and other prominent Ambonese republicans, sent on 1 May, returned empty-handed. A Dutch delegation was also unable to defuse the situation by ordering the KNIL soldiers to return to barracks. This resulted in most of them resigning and transferring their loyalty to the RMS. In order to gain international recognition the RMS government offered the United States and Australia naval and airforce bases in the defence against communism in South-East Asia. In addition, young volunteers were trained for the defence force.26

The Netherlands government had asked the Indonesian government officially not to undertake a military action in Ambon and offered its help in finding a peaceful solution. The Jakarta government seemingly agreed and on 27 September another Leimena mission arrived in Ambon to be greeted the following day by a bombardment by the Indonesian air force. Apparently the Indonesian military had won their way, and with their confidence boosted by the outcome in Macassar seemed bent on annihilating the last vestiges of KNIL resistance. Large TNI forces were landed. But the defence of the RMS army, although completely outnumbered, was ferocious, and fighting continued until 3 November. The 20,000-strong Indonesian force had suffered
20 per cent casualties as compared to 50 per cent of the thousand RMS fighters. Civilian casualties were also high and the town of Ambon was severely damaged, making 20,000 people homeless. The fact that TNI despatches were intercepted by the Dutch military intelligence service in West New Guinea and were directly sent on to the RMS defenders was also responsible for the prolonged fight for Ambon. The RMS was still able to continue its resistance on the neighbouring island of Ceram until well into the 1970s.

It also proved difficult to find a solution to the resettlement of the thousands of Ambonese soldiers and their families living in the camps in Java. The Indonesian government declared, on 6 December 1950, its agreement for these soldiers to be demobilised in Ambon; weapons were to be left behind, and three months' salary and food were to be provided. The Indonesian government also promised that no reprisals would take place. About 1000 Ambonese soldiers agreed with these conditions and on 18 December left for the south Moluccas. In the meantime another hitch occurred as a result of a committee of Ambonese spokesmen submitting the question before a Dutch court and advising the rank and file to no longer agree to demobilisation. According to the court decision the Ambonese soldiers, still in the service of the Netherlands army, could not be forced to move against their will. This caused the Ambonese to demand their demobilisation either in the Netherlands, West New Guinea, or Suriname. Finally, the saga of the Ambonese in the camps in Java was finally closed early in 1951 when 12,000 soldiers and their families were transported to the Netherlands.

By this time the initial promising relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia had been severely damaged. The Westerling affair, the dissolution of the federal Indonesian state, the Ambon question, the growing anti-Dutch utterances of Sukarno and the Indonesian press caused more Dutch politicians and a larger sector of Dutch public opinion to dig themselves in more deeply on the still unresolved West New Guinea issue. It
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was the West New Guinea problem that in the end caused a total breakdown in Dutch-Indonesian relations and speeded up the demise of the Dutch hold on the national Indonesian economy.

The security question

A sizeable Dutch and Eurasian group with Dutch citizenship had remained after the transfer of power, numbering, in 1950, about 226,000. At least those in the urban areas had uttered an initial sigh of relief at not being confronted and hassled by an obviously hostile population. Certainly a new bersiap period, as some had feared, had not eventuated. Admittedly Europeans, as a whole better off economically than the Indonesians, were subject to widespread theft, but a general life-threatening situation did not exist. The position in the countryside, especially in the plantation areas, was often far less secure, as a result of the marauding activities of armed bands of demobilised TNI soldiers, irregulars, Darul Islam groups, and traditional robber bands.

The TNI was beset with a number of very serious problems relating to discipline, transport, and finance, as its numbers had vastly increased with tens of thousands of irregulars joining. Reportedly, in East Java the TNI had grown from 8000 to 40,000, swamping the available official resources and causing the majority of soldiers to resort to the exaction of money and goods from the people and from businesses, including the plantations. For instance, in Besuki, Resident Kusumowinoto acted as chairman of the TNI support committee and had calculated that, for the following three months, 250,000 guilders were needed which had to be supplied for 40 per cent by the rice mills, mainly Chinese-owned, 30 per cent by sugar and tobacco plantations, and 30 per cent by the upland estates. In the Sidoarjo delta a surcharge of 1 per cent was to be imposed on all salaries, while the TNI commander in Banyuwangi exacted a quarterly levy of 5 per cent on each 100 kilograms of rubber and 50 per cent on a quintal of coffee.
In addition to such demands the estates in East Java were exposed to terrorism by bands of pemuda armed with bambu runcing (pointed bamboo sticks) who hit, mistreated, and kidnapped Indonesian foremen and former home guards. During a meeting of planters of the Besuki region it was decided to offer a substantial financial contribution to the TNI coffers in the hope of reducing the activities of the irregular bands. Corruption was also spreading very rapidly. For instance, 700,000 guilders earmarked in the provincial budget of East Java for the repair of the irrigation system in the Kediri region completely disappeared. Allocations for official salaries were misappropriated such as in the case of the Regent of Bondowoso, who received only 70 guilders out of his total December salary of 1700 guilders. Apparently the TNI command in East Java was the main culprit. Colonel Sungkono, commander of the East Java division, in particular was raking in thousands of guilders from granting casino licences to the Chinese. TNI superior officers had appropriated the biggest houses in Surabaya and had them furnished luxuriously with the funds accumulated by squeezing citizens and stealing the pay of their subordinates. The situation in East Java was highly precarious and it was feared that looting of coffee in the estates had taken on such proportions as to endanger the whole crop.

Various representations were made by the plantation industry to the Indonesian government, which still lacked sufficient policing power and authority to deal with this crisis rapidly and effectively. The TNI chief of staff, General Simaputang, explained the situation as follows:

One should never forget that to the large part of the population the results of the RTC were very disappointing. A number of Dutchmen still hold important positions and also plantations and other industries are still led by Dutchmen. To put it plainly the people see the Dutch still travelling by car while they at the most might use a becak and we want to change this as quickly and
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spectacularly as possible. We are constantly confronted with this attitude and we must keep in mind that this is often the underlying reason for many of the difficulties encountered particularly in the interior. This explanation is clearly applicable to the typically leftist oriented regions …

In a review early in March 1950 of developments since the transfer of sovereignty, the high commissioner stressed that:

By simply comparing matters with how things were in the past or with the situation in the Netherlands today is neither helpful to us nor just to the independent Indonesia …

He went on to tell Europeans to keep in mind that the new nation of Indonesia was born under very difficult circumstances as a result of social and economic dislocation by the Japanese occupation and the revolution. The new Indonesia ended up with a defective and partly destroyed infrastructure and an industrial apparatus needing a massive injection of capital investment and imports of consumption goods. Secondly, as a legacy of the Dutch colonial system only a few Indonesians had been able to gain experience in government at the top level, and furthermore, the country suffered from a high rate of illiteracy. Thirdly, a revolutionary mentality had pervaded the Indonesian people, particularly affecting the small, modern Dutch-educated elite and the student population, which was driven by an almost religious fervour demanding an immediate elimination of all vestiges of the former colonial power. Entry to government and the public service was generally decided on the basis of participation in the armed struggle against the Dutch, and often the ideal of appointing the right man to the right place was pushed aside and experienced federal Indonesian officials were being superseded by republican novices. Finally, the report impressed on the Dutch community the realisation that:

… in judging the present situation and the future development of Indonesia … no longer are Western criteria applicable regarding
politics, and the efficiency and incorruptibility in public administration. In particular Western democratic norms are not fully applicable in an Eastern society and they too also during the Netherlands regime were not completely adhered to. The need for strict incorruptibility insisted upon in the West is not felt as strongly in the East … This loss of Western norms … may from a Western point of view be felt as deplorable. But it is a result of the transfer of sovereignty. Something that we have to accept and must take in our stride …

Corruption and other unlawful behaviour of both military and civil authorities continued unabated. Very few honest officials could be found. It was reported from East Java that the extortion practices of the TNI put a very heavy burden on the people. Even the rice in the desa lumbung intended to provide food during the dry season was taken and draft cattle had been requisitioned by the military causing the planting of rice and other crops to be affected. In addition, nature exacted its toll by a plague of menek in the crop. More than 60 per cent of government allocations of scarce items such as sugar and textiles were sold by the military directly to the Chinese, and the remaining 40 per cent were sold at high prices. As a result people were forced to buy at black market prices causing them to sell their valuables and even draught cattle to the Chinese, and to sell expected harvests in advance, either wholly or partly, at one-third or one-quarter of the market prices to Chinese and other usurers. Apparently the local TNI was often directly implicated in these Chinese practices:

Everything is for sale … by paying the military authorities from the military governor and commander of Surabya down to the least important sergeant … As a result Indonesian traders with moderate means, needing a motor vehicle for their business, are not issued a licence, while wealthy Chinese … are. Three days ago a Chinese from Banjuwangi was trying to sell four car licences
In order to secure part of this lucrative business the TNI commander of Surabaya issued a military regulation granting him the power to levy vehicle delivery charges. In the harbours the military imposed illegal duties on exports. For example, in Surabaya the military prevented access of custom and trade officials to a Chinese ships laden with coffee and other goods for Singapore.36

By the middle of the year some improvement in the situation in East Java was reported. The initial popular support for army commander Sungkono, a protégé of President Sukarno, had waned considerably owing to his arbitrary and corrupt behaviour, and the Surabaya population began to show open support for the actions of left youth groups against military and civilian authority. In May in a speech to an enthusiastic crowd, with Colonel Sungkono present, the freedom fighter Bung Tomo, highly revered for his role during the battle of Surabaya in 1945, declared that the people of East Java should not be allowed to fall prey to the colonialism of their own compatriots. After careful preparation, including the weakening of Sungkono’s military base of support, the Minister of Defence, the Sultan of Yogyakarta, removed him and his close collaborators from their posts. In a radio message the sultan told the people of Surabaya that hard measures, including on-the-spot execution, would be taken against corrupt and unruly elements. Furthermore, the problem of the demobilisation of the military was receiving urgent attention by the government and the first rehabilitation camps had been opened. Elsewhere in East Java a beginning had been made with the abolition of the KODAM.37 In the countryside too an improvement in the security situation appeared to be taking place.38

The anarchic situation in Indonesia caused great concern in government and business circles in the Netherlands. Minister van
Maarseveen told the high commissioner that:

> Indonesia is working hard to lose the goodwill of the Dutch business world, which at the beginning of the year was still very strong … The Indonesian government is not blameless in this. The speeches of Sukarno in regard to West Irian and other matters, are stirring up the Indonesian people against the Dutch and the Western world in general. Sukarno, who hereby strongly plays into the hands of the Communists, and will in the end himself fall victim to this …

The Ondernemersraad had indicated to the Minister that many of their best and most courageous employees were getting discouraged and were planning to leave Indonesia. Furthermore, a number of firms had decided to relocate their activities to other parts of the globe where normal conditions existed:

> We understand that leaders such as Natsir, Hatta, and Roem clearly realise the impending dangers, but as they fail to get Sukarno under control … we see a very dark future ahead …

These comments proved to be highly prophetic.

**Social revolution**

The actions against Western estates in fact intensified and it was not only the robber bands but also the plantation labourers unified in various labour unions that caused serious problems to the industry. In June 1951, State Secretary for Union Affairs and Overseas Territories Götzen, referring to the dangerous crisis affecting Dutch business in Indonesia, particularly in respect to the plantation sector, demanded that a strong protest be sent to the Indonesian government.

According to the reports from the high commissioner and the various plantation organisations, the members of the robber bands were often retrenched soldiers, who were supported by returned fighter organisations such as the Badan Pemupuk Bekas
Anggota Perang Republik Indonesia (BPBAPRI) under the leadership of Dr Mustopo. Moreover, these bands often elicited sympathy from old comrades in the TNI, the very organisation charged with the task of obliterating them.

The estate labourers were led by the left-orientated SARBUPRI, supposedly with a membership of 875,000, and was affiliated in 1952 with the SOBSI, the labour union federation. A large peasant organisation was the leftist BTI which, according to Dutch sources, was trying by means of unreasonable wage demands and illegal practices, to cause the highest possible harm to the plantations. The union movement was clearly opposed to the RTC accords and wanted to nationalise the whole of the plantation industry. To achieve these objectives it supported and encouraged the illegal occupation of estate lands, opposition to the return of plantations to the legal owners, large-scale thieving of crops, destruction and arson of factories, buildings and crops, ambushes, shootings and murders. The wage demands of the labour unions and frequent strikes were seen by the Dutch plantation industry not only as attempts to improve the living conditions of the labouring classes but even more as tactics to cripple the industry. A general strike in the tobacco areas in East Sumatra had been called for February 1950, exactly at the time when seedlings had been planted and so would threaten the loss of the whole crop. A general strike in the textile industry in West Java came about when large quantities of yarn were immersed in chemical baths causing them to become total losses. It was estimated that as a result of strikes and other labour unrest in 1950, losses for rubber, tea, palm oil and Deli tobacco were around 216 million guilders, and in the sugar industry, 32 million guilders. A great deal of damage was caused by a general strike involving 700,000 workers starting in August 1950 and lasting for four weeks. Some coffee plantations reported losses of up to 50 per cent. Strikes and a vast hike in wages, in some cases between 60 and 100 per cent, in many cases destroyed profitability and caused smaller family holdings in particular to
sell out. Early in January 1951 the Dutch ownership of the plantation sector had decreased to 51.5 per cent as compared to 63 per cent in 1929.44

Squatting

Squatting on plantation lands was an enormous problem particularly in the estates of north-east Sumatra, where the Western plantation concerns had been forced to return to local farmers about half of the original plantation area of 256,000 hectares.

The situation in East Sumatra was extremely complex as a result of a social revolution during 1946 to 1947 in which the colonial social-political order of the region had been overturned. The original Malay population of the various East Sumatran sultanates had, since the establishment after 1870 of the Western plantation sector, gradually lost its predominance as a result of the arrival of large numbers of migrants from Java, China, and the Batak hinterland. In the contracts between the sultans and the Netherlands Indies government the Malay peasants had been accorded special rights to land in the Western plantation areas. This privilege was denied to the other population groups causing resentment especially among the Batak settlers, who despised the sultans and their Malay subjects as Dutch colonial pawns. In 1946 this ethnic tension, intensified by Japanese policies, exploded into a bloody insurrection against the ancient regime resulting in the murder of many of the sultans, their families and their officials. The laskar forces occupied the plantations and distributed the land to their supporters, Batak and Javanese farmers. Many of the Malay peasants were driven from their holdings. The laskar commanders took on warlord roles, basing their power on receiving arms and medicines through Chinese merchants from Penang and Singapore by the sale and barter of such plantation crops as rubber, sisal, and palm oil. The hold of the military on the regional economy remained intact after the end of the anti-Dutch guerrilla war in 1949. The revolution
had drastically changed the old social order and the Dutch attempts by way of the establishment of the federal state of East Sumatra, to reverse the situation, failed as their old partners, namely the aristocracy, the Malay population and the Chinese, had lost power to the revolutionary armed forces and the Javanese and upland Sumatran immigrants. The TNI now controlled the entire government apparatus as well as the economy.

A major problem in the post-1950 era was that of the squatters on estate lands. Between 1950 and 1956 more than 250,000 people had moved from Tapanuli into the east coast estate areas and the Toba Batak proportion of the population had also increased rapidly constituting the second largest group in the region. Various accords concluded between the government, the plantations and the labor unions, resulted in a large reduction of the prewar estate allotment allocated to the plantations. While in some areas squatting continued to such an extent that plantations were no longer able to continue their operations effectively, in general, despite the difficult working conditions, the estates were still able to make substantial profits.45

In Java also the occupation of plantation land was a serious problem. In West Java, peasants believed to have been incited by the returned soldiers’ union lead by the maverick Dr Mustopo had, during the three months of 1950, taken over eleven estates. In Central and East Java the BTI and SARBUPRI had been involved in illegal land takeovers. Apparently in South Malang a special company was supposed to have been founded to manage these seized estates. Moreover, a great deal of damage was caused by theft and pilfering and it was only the high price on the world market for Indonesian estate produce that had kept the industry alive. The rubber industry was hit especially hard and despite the return of various plantations to the legal owners and the rehabilitation of the land and trees since 1949, the export of rubber in 1950 was lower than that of the previous year falling from 165,426 to 159,298 tonnes. Theft using inefficient tapping methods also caused serious damage to the trees, result-
ing in subsequent lower yields. In contrast the production of indigenously grown rubber had increased in 1950 to 494,816 tonnes clearly surpassing estate rubber production which, during 1938 to 1940, had been equal to that of Indonesian growers.

The situation in other parts of the plantation industry was also grave. During the ten months of 1950, according to an investigation of the syndicate of sugar factories, an amount of 53.6 million rupiahs worth of damage had been sustained by theft of cane and sugar, cane fields arson, and pilfering and destruction of railways. In East Java estate coffee trees were damaged by inexperienced handling on the part of squatters. Other reports told of the theft of tea leaves, cocoa, kapok and pepper. In the latter part of the year a deterioration in security and peace and order in East Java occurred again. From 10 November an enormous increase in arson occurred in the tobacco areas of Besuki. The Sukowono plantation reported that only fifteen of its sixty-five sheds were still standing. Between 10 and 15 November about 1 million kilograms of tobacco were estimated to have been destroyed amounting to a loss of about 7 million guilders worth of export income. In the whole of the Besuki region until 15 December 1950 the tobacco industry had suffered a loss of 400 drying sheds and 1530 tonnes of tobacco, estimated at a value of 30 million rupiahs. By mid-February 1951, a total of 440 sheds had been destroyed and 2,295 tonnes of tobacco burned or stolen. It was reported at the end of February 1951 that the situation in Besuki was still serious. Attacks on plantations were being repulsed by armed planters and police and the governor had announced that the TNI was to start a campaign to arrest the hundreds of known murderers and thieves. Gruesome murders had been committed in the villages including those of women and children. The regional TNI commander, Colonel Bambang Sugeng, obviously vexed by his difficulties in establishing peace and order, tried to blame the West Irian question as one of the causes for the deterioration of security in the Besuki region. In other plantations, buildings and factories, some of which had
recently been rebuilt, had been wholly or partially destroyed by robber bands. One example of this was the destruction by arson of the storage shed of a newly built bag factory at Delanggu near Solo before its opening, resulting in the loss of employment and affecting the transport of sugar from the factories. In some areas such as South Sukabumi, South Malang and the Sidoarjo delta, murders of planters were so common that the estates had been abandoned. In some areas in West and East Java, European personnel could only remain on the plantations during the day under armed protection, and at night had to retire to specially guarded dwellings.

Darul Islam

In West Java the plantation industry was plagued by the marauding of Darul Islam followers and a number of robber bands. While the other threats to Indonesian unification such as the state of Pasundan and the Westerling affair, had been quickly disposed of, the Darul Islam movement proved to be a much more tenacious and dangerous foe. Its armed resistance to the TNI lasted until 1963 when its leader, Kartosuwirjo, was finally captured and executed. From 1948 onwards thousands of people were killed and a great deal of property destroyed and damaged. Since their return to the estates in 1948 Dutch planters had often been attacked by Darul Islam bands. In 1950, after the withdrawal of Dutch troops and the disarming of the planters and estate guards by the TNI, the security situation in West Java further deteriorated. The Darul Islam bands operated all over West Java with their main strength concentrated in the Garut, Tasikmalaya, and Ciamis regions. There were also strong pockets in the Sukabumi, Cianjur, and Bogor areas. In Central Java the Darul Islam was active in the north coastal regions of Tegal and Brebes.

The high commission received numerous reports of attacks. For example, on 14 February 1950 in the Cianjur area, the Vada estate was attacked by a band of marauders during which a
European employee and a number of Indonesian plantation guards were killed. On 16 February a fifty-strong band armed with sten guns and rifles shot at a car belonging to the Pasir Maung plantation near Bogor. One employee and the driver were seriously wounded and the vehicle was gutted.48

The TNI seemed unable to provide the population and the Western plantations with the necessary protection against the Darul Islam and the raids of other robber bands. The planters' decisions to ensure the safety of themselves and their property by paying off the Darul Islam forces had some success and an improvement in security was reported for the period May to July 1950.49 Still, the situation in West Java remained precarious with attacks continuing. For instance, in the period 22 September to 25 October 1951 it was reported that the theft of rubber was on the increase to the extent that some estates were unable to operate profitably. One of the most affected areas was the Sukabumi-Cianjur district where a number of estates had been hit by large robber bands. The Bandung and Purwokarto areas were also unsafe and the administrator of the Sukamandi plantation was murdered. The Vada estate was overrun by a 200-strong band resulting in seven deaths. An attack by 500 men on the Panglipurgalih plantation was repulsed by the police leaving one employee dead and the administrator seriously wounded. In the period 5 to 18 October in West Java, forty-three people were killed, of whom eighteen were robbers, while twenty-eight persons were wounded, twelve kidnapped, and twenty-nine robbers were taken prisoner.50

In the period 26 October to 29 November, security in the Sukabumi-Cianjur area was reported as improving owing to the activities of the police and the military. A number of gang leaders were captured. In the Bandung area attacks on estates continued and a police detachment fell into an ambush suffering heavy losses. Again the Vada estate was targeted and six police were killed and two employees were kidnapped. On the Bandung-Cheribon road a car was attacked and burned out, the passen-
gers were robbed and one European murdered. In January 1952, a tea planter of Gedeh estate was murdered and another planter, of Pasir Maung near Bogor, was kidnapped. This put the number of Dutchmen murdered since the middle of 1951 at sixteen. There was no improvement in the security situation. In Bantam, European workers were forced to leave plantations at night out of fear of attacks by robber bands. All estates reported large-scale thefts of rubber and feared that owing to unprofessional tapping, large rubber complexes were being ruined. In the Sukabumi area the Cigepong estate was pounded by hand grenades and all buildings of the Baajabang estate were burned down at the cost of 1 million rupiah. One plantation overseer was murdered, but a second attack was repulsed. In the Pamanukan-Ciasem area ten were killed during a heavy fight between police and robbers, with the latter standing their ground. During a surprise assault on a police truck near Purwokarto, five policemen were killed. On 3 July the rubber estate of Gunung Sesuru near the Padalarang-Purwokarto road was attacked by a 300-strong group and the administrator was wounded by a hand grenade. His house was completely ransacked. Typewriters and calculators were taken from the office, and five village houses were put to the torch. A well-armed and uniformed Darul Islam unit on 2 August invaded the Pemengatan tea plantation near Cikajang. The manager was forced to open the safe and 40,000 rupiahs were taken. At the same time another unit raided the Cikajang village burning and pillaging the police post and shooting a civilian.

The security report of 19 February 1953 showed no improvement. In the Banten-Jakarta-Bogor area the situation was deteriorating. In the Ciseeng district a shed had been burned down, and estate villages robbed. In Citari a smoking shed was burned down and a guard at Cingkasbitung was kidnapped and murdered. In Sukabumi-Cianjur rubber smoking sheds were destroyed, and storage sheds were raided. A similar story was told regarding the Bandung-Garut-Ceribon region.
Decolonisation and Nationalisation, 1950-1958

The situation in Banten, Jakarta and Bogor seems to have been improving and a report of October 1954 described security as good. In the rest of West Java the terrorising of estates continued. On 25 October in the Garut region the Conong plantation was attacked by a band of close to 100 men who plundered and burned a large number of houses belonging to local people and the estate at an estimated cost of 290,000 rupiah. A military detachment, sent to the rescue, fell into an ambush losing one soldier. This was the nineteenth attack on this plantation since 1 January 1953. Security in West Java remained a serious problem until the final defeat of the Darul Islam insurgents in 1963. In the rest of Java and Indonesia the police and the armed forces were gradually able to ensure more peaceful and orderly conditions.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Survey of attacks on estates and personnel</th>
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<tr>
<td>1952</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Java</td>
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<td>Central Java</td>
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<td>Sulawesi</td>
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<td>Totals</td>
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In 1950 the number of Dutchmen murdered in the whole of Indonesia stood at fifty-three with seventy-two wounded. But personal security improved greatly and in 1954 only one Dutchman was murdered and the number of robberies was reported to be on the decline.

**Pillage of cargoes in ports**

Another great problem plaguing foreign business and trade was
unchecked corruption and lawlessness in the harbours. As an illustration the following are translations of some examples found in the report of the Scheepvaart Vereniging regarding the harbour of Surabaya during April 1951:

Amsterdamkade [wharf] … all ships were pillaged and plundered. Cloves were taken from the ‘Both’ … Later robbers started to remove indigenous produced rubber … On board the ‘Tjitjalingka’ various cases were plundered … mainly singlets … the remainder was stolen on the wharf … ‘Plancius’: at 1300 hours one of the holds had to be closed because of thieving and resulted in a fist fight. Textiles and Escort cigarettes were looted. ‘Janssens’: a consignment of Escort cigarettes, soap and beer was pilfered. ‘Bunabaai’: petrol, yarns and salt were either spoiled or stolen … Tandjong Perak wharf. During the transhipment to lighters, despite the presence of police, cases were being opened and many workers returning home were burdened by their stolen gains hidden under their clothes and found it difficult to walk. It seems that in many cases it was difficult to obtain police assistance … At 11.45 it was noticed that … lively trade was taking place at the market place before the entrance to the Surabaya Veem …

Phone calls to the police for help proved to be ineffective and pillaging and thieving in the harbour areas continued unabated.60

Despite all these problems Dutch business, aided by higher export prices caused by the Korean war, still managed to make reasonable profits. This lucrative windfall experienced by Dutch and other foreign firms also profited the Indonesian treasury. But the Indonesian government, mainly for political reasons, failed to take this opportunity to drastically reduce the public deficit and to severely cull the greatly overstaffed and inefficient public service.

When, in the second part of 1951, the Korean boom began to wane, it caused a fall in Indonesian export income that pushed the Indonesian economy gradually towards the abyss of national insolvency. During this process real per capita income and liv-
ing conditions further deteriorated causing most of the population, already living in poverty or on the brink of it, to be driven into the hands of political agitators such as Sukarno, the PKI, and the radical wing of the PNI, who found it easy to blame the Dutch for their miserable existence.

**Demands for nationalisation**

From the beginning radical-nationalist and leftist groups had been opposed to the RTC clauses protecting the vast Dutch economic stake in independent Indonesia. An immediate takeover of Dutch business concerns, as demanded by the political left, however, had been dismissed by the early moderate cabinets on the grounds that short-term Indonesian economic survival was dependent on continued Dutch and other foreign investment and expertise. Hatta and other ‘administrator’-like politicians stressed that foreign capital was absolutely essential to achieve the rehabilitation of the economy devastated by the Great Depression, the Japanese occupation and the revolutionary fighting, and argued that the liberation of the economy from foreign – mainly Dutch – domination could only be a gradual process.

A wider national consensus existed on the question of the destruction of the remaining vestiges of Dutch political power. This process had started early in 1950 with the demolition of the federal system and was followed later in the year by Indonesian moves directed at the abolition of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union. Furthermore, in response to the hardening of the Dutch government’s position on the West Irian question, the Indonesian government also dug in its heels. No Indonesian government, however moderate politically, could afford to ignore the nationalist ground swell that demanded the return of West Irian to the homeland. It was this irredentist fervour that determined Indonesian demands, not the niceties of international law or the rights and feelings of the Papuan population.

The vast majority of Indonesian politicians, the armed forces,
and the public at large dismissed the RTC agreements as unjust since they left the country in a semi-colonial status and burdened the nation with an unfair share of the public debt left by the previous Netherlands Indies government. There seemed to have been agreement from within the whole range of the Indonesian political spectrum for the removal of the union statute that still linked Indonesia in a type of Commonwealth arrangement with the Netherlands and other parts of the realm under the Dutch crown. The failure of the West Irian conference in December 1950 pushed the deterioration in Dutch-Indonesian relations further towards the brink and braced Jakarta’s demands for the abolition of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union.

**The Dutch government freezes discussions on West New Guinea**

The Dutch High Commissioner, Lamping, argued that the failure of the West Irian conference had weakened the position of moderate Indonesian leaders such as Mohammad Roem and the whole of the Natsir cabinet. The Dutch offer to place West Irian under control of the union had upset Indonesian feelings. Indonesia had always showed no more than minimal interest in the union and had only ‘tolerated’ it because of its ephemeral nature. Acceptance of the offer of union sovereignty over West Irian would have made the union a much more formidable force making its dissolution far more difficult for Indonesia. Lamping further pointed out that the Natsir cabinet could be forced to exert a harder line to take the wind out of the sails of the leftist opposition parties and would push for the dissolution of the union. In any case this would neither cause any economic harm nor international repercussions. In fact, apart from Belgium and Australia, the diplomatic corps generally supported the call of the local Dutch community to surrender West Irian. Furthermore, the British and the Americans, who were trying to reinforce their influence in Indonesia both commercially and politically, were naturally not too distressed to see a further deterioration occur-
ring in Dutch-Indonesian relations. The high commissioner stressed that Dutch policy and actions should be based on more understanding of Indonesian sentiments and should avoid the use of a heavy-handed approach.61

In reply the Department of Foreign Affairs agreed that in case Indonesia indicated that it wanted to abandon the union and the RTC agreements the Netherlands government had to agree. In the meantime the Netherlands should quietly await Indonesian reactions.62

In fact, on 2 January 1951, all Indonesian parties had accepted a resolution demanding the abolition of the union and changes to the other clauses of the RTC agreements. The Natsir government, to avoid an abrupt break with the Netherlands, tried to defuse the matter by referring the issue to a commission of inquiry under the leadership of the legal expert Professor Supomo.

Natsir’s cabinet was replaced on 20 March 1951 by the Sukiman cabinet, forming a Masjumi-PNI coalition. The more moderate Mohammad Roem was replaced in the foreign affairs portfolio by Subardjo, a radical nationalist with a somewhat colourful and intriguing career. Subardjo was a highly ambitious and chameleon-like politician.63 Another appointment foreshadowing trouble for the Netherlands was that of the maverick Mohammad Yamin, a leftist, nativist-inclined, radical nationalist preaching the message of the return of Indonesia to the power and splendour of the Mojopahit empire of the 14th century, which supposedly had ruled most of the South-East Asian area including West Irian.64

The Sukiman cabinet took a less conciliatory line towards the Netherlands as PNI members insisted on the adoption of a more radical nationalist hard line, causing the more pragmatic Masjumi Ministers to lose some influence. According to Feith, it was during the Sukiman cabinet that the ‘solidarity makers’, strongly supported by Sukarno, were able to make their first gains against the ‘administrators’.65

On the Dutch side too an increasingly inflexible position was
noticeable in the decision of the new cabinet, formed on 13 March 1951, to ‘freeze’ – *ijskast* formula – the West Irian issue. This pushed Indonesia into a ‘freezing’ act of its own by showing less willingness to compromise.

The *ijskast* formula, although carrying the strong support of the Dutch right and a reluctant acceptance by the left, was condemned by High Commissioner Lamping, the Department of Foreign Affairs and also the Secretary General of the Dutch-Indonesian Union, Idenburg.66

In reply to Indonesia’s demand for the abolition of the union statute and other changes in the RTC agreements, in June 1951 the Second Chamber of the Dutch parliament agreed that changes in the relationship with Indonesia were necessary. Public opinion was far less amenable to this idea and Prime Minister Drees was not disposed to give in to the ostensibly more anti-Dutch Sukiman government. Finally, on 21 September 1951, the Netherlands government issued an official communiqué indicating its support for the reversion of the union relationship.67 The matter continued to drag on and early in 1952 Indonesia insisted on connecting the union discussion with the New Guinea issue. At this time Rijkens, director of the vast Unilever group, had succeeded in gaining Sukarno’s acceptance of his plan for the shared responsibility of West Irian, with the Netherlands holding the main accountability of administration and economic exploitation. This found a deal of support in The Hague, but the cabinet rejected it mainly because of the refusal of Prime Minister Drees to discuss the proposal just before the elections in June 1951.68

In any case the negotiations had abruptly stopped due to the fall of the Sukiman cabinet on 23 February 1951. So far, negotiations had been proceeding at a painfully slow rate, managing to produce only a rough plan for the dissolution of the union. The economic clauses of the RTC had not yet been touched upon and the only results were the scrapping of the foreign affairs cooperation and agreement on the replacement of high commissioners by ambassadors after the demise of the union.
The new Wilopo cabinet included mainly moderate figures such as Roem, Leimena, Djuanda and the Sultan of Yogyakarta, who were less sanguine on the West Irian question and emphasised the importance of internal peace and order.

Still, massive problems caused by the deterioration of living conditions and the serious balance of payment deficits caused widespread dissent and popular unrest with the blame for their problems being heaped upon the shoulders of the Dutch-owned economic sector. The masses, disappointed by the absence of the socioeconomic gains promised by the revolution, were being manipulated by the populist ideas of Sukarno, the PNI and the PKI. The moderate element in the Indonesian political configuration, always proportionally small, was now being gradually pushed further towards the outer bounds of power. The Wilopo government was thus forced to put more emphasis on the Indonesianisation of the economy and was unable to stem the growing anti-Dutch mood in a nation demanding the cutting of all vestiges of former colonial ties and power. The first victim of this anti-colonialist offensive was the Netherlands Military Mission.

The Dutch military mission

The main source of Indonesian support for Dutch military aid came from the Sultan of Yogyakarta, then holding the portfolio of Defence, and the high command, consisting mainly of Dutch-trained officers.

In the Dutch armed forces the imperial idea still remained alive and the Dutch navy, for example, argued that by cooperation in union terms with the Indonesian navy the Netherlands would still remain an international military power rather than being reduced to a small, insulated nation on the North Sea. It continued to press for a permanent naval base in Surabaya after the surrender of sovereignty. Another important objective was to create an effective Indonesian navy able to protect national se-
curity and to deal with the increasing problem of piracy. Safety of passage in Indonesian waters would of course also benefit Dutch shipping and trade. As such, the Netherlands in 1950 had transferred four corvettes and one destroyer to the Indonesian navy, in order to take the wind out of the sails of other Western nations, especially the United States, in their attempts to monopolise the training and arming of the Indonesian armed forces.

The Dutch army saw its main task as assisting in the construction of a modern, disciplined, and well-trained defence organisation that would be able to provide external security and internal peace and order. Of course, this would be of great benefit to the vast Dutch economic sector as well as being absolutely essential to keep at bay the ever-increasing threat of communism.70

The Netherlands was clearly interested in maintaining a strong military presence in Indonesia, but its proposal for a 5000-strong military mission was resolutely refused by the Hatta government. Agreement was reached in the end on an 800-man force to train all sectors of the armed forces for a period of three years.71

In fact, the NMM took a considerable time to start its operations. One problem was the difficulty in finding officers willing to serve in the military mission. Officers of the expeditionary Dutch military force showed little interest in training their former enemies, while many KNIL officers were worried about possible Indonesian retaliation. An offer of a higher duty bonus proved only a partial success and higher officer ranks in particular had to be recruited from the Netherlands, causing a depletion in the higher echelon staff of the Dutch NATO forces.72

The NMM finally started its operations in May 1950. Its acceptance by the Indonesian military varied. Some commanders such as those in the PETA-dominated East Java province ignored the NMM completely, while in other areas contact, although often initially reserved, was made. Most of the Indonesian demand was for technical help and training, while Dutch attempts to advise on operational and tactical matters were generally resisted. Moreover, the NMM found it difficult to establish regu-
lar contacts with the Indonesian upper military hierarchy as a whole. Indeed the relationship with Nasution, Simatupang, and the sultan were cordial, but day-to-day contacts were almost exclusively restricted to middle and lower echelons. Still, the head of the mission, former KNIL Major General Pereira, who incidentally was on good terms with Sukarno, a former schoolmate, told Simatupang that he was struck by the general spirit of cooperation found in the Indonesian armed forces. Unwilling to lose Simatupang’s support he took a cautious approach and gently pointed to a number of problems such as a general lack of discipline in the rank and file, a cavalier attitude regarding lecture attendance, a great incidence of unapproved leave, the use of arms for private use, and impunity for insubordination. In despatches to The Hague, Pereira stressed that in reality these abuses were far more serious.73

In 1951 the situation was gradually improving and more positive reports about the operations of the NMM were reaching The Hague. In March 1951, the high commissioner wrote that he considered the military mission as the most successful venture resulting from the Round Table agreements and stressed that the success of the mission was important in supporting the Dutch position in Indonesia and the world at large. The creation of an efficient and reliable defence force would not only serve the Indonesian state but also the vast Dutch interests. It seemed that the NMM was gaining more acceptance from the Indonesian government and the Indonesian high command. High Commissioner Lamping dismissed as short-sighted and damaging to the vast Dutch interests in Indonesia the objections raised in Dutch political quarters about the costs of maintaining the NMM and the argument that in view of the scarcity of Dutch resources, precedence should be given to the requirements of NATO. He attached a copy of an article by the Indonesian Chief of Staff, Colonel Simatupang, in which a strong plea was made for the continuation of the military mission, arguing that the objections raised against a Dutch military mission, because of its previous
enemy status, should be put aside and the matter should only be considered in a rational vein and free from linkage to the West Irian problem. Of great importance to military cooperation was the language question. After all Dutch was the lingua franca of the Indonesian modern elite from which the future base of the officer corps would have to be drawn. In addition to these concerns, there was the consideration that the Netherlands was a relatively small nation without the power to influence the official Indonesian policy of self-reliance in foreign affairs. Training in the United States and other powerful nations would pose serious problems in this respect. The Indonesian military attaché at The Hague, Lieutenant Colonel Harjono, also expressed his appreciation of the operations of the NMM seeing it as an important counterweight to the expected growth of Japanese influence in South-East Asia. Similarly to Simatupang he argued that Indonesia preferred Dutch assistance to that of the United States out of fear of the loss of some freedom of movement in foreign affairs. General Nasution also declared that the NMM was absolutely necessary in setting up a modern, disciplined defence force and issued instructions setting down the perimeters of its operations. This included the transfer to the NMM of full responsibility for his plan for the retraining of twenty-four battalions. Initial problems occurred in the cadet training courses caused by the lack of necessary educational qualifications of students and control of commanders.

Regarding the navy (ALRI), the NMM was involved in the setting up of an officer training college, the establishment of the marine corps and the provision of technical courses. In 1951 a few Dutch naval vessels, including the Dutch destroyer Tjerk Hiddes, renamed the Gadja Mada, were transferred to the Indonesian navy. Indonesian commanders were to be assisted by Dutch instructors, an arrangement that caused nationalist resentment and was sometimes not maintained. In June 1951 the Gadja Mada, without a Dutch instructor on the bridge, ran into serious trouble suffering heavy damage, causing a big dent in na-
tional pride and sarcastic comments in the Netherlands press.

The NMM involvement in the air force (AURI) was less intensive and was restricted to technical training. Pilot training was in the hands of private American instructors.

As a whole the relationship between the NMM and the Indonesian armed forces personnel was, in Dutch reports, seen as being from reasonable to good. The NMM, however, soon became enmeshed in the bitter dispute within the Indonesian armed forces (ABRI) between the modernisation and *semangat* factions. This in turn caused the ABRI to be used as a political football in the power struggle in parliament between the ‘administrator’ and ‘solidarity makers’ factions. Deeply involved in this process was President Sukarno, who, through his populist and radical-nationalist speeches, managed to bring the existing widespread anti-Dutch sentiment closer to the boil.

The first radical nationalist attack in parliament on the military leadership and the Wilopo cabinet was mounted by Zainal Baharuddin of the NU and chairman of the parliamentary defence committee. The high command was accused of having lost its revolutionary rapport with the people; and its modernisation policy and reliance on emergency regulations to deal with peace and order problems, were dismissed as ineffective and reeking of the colonial past. This parliamentary attack encouraged the large *bapakist* faction in the armed forces to intensify their opposition to the rationalisation policies of the high command. The key figure was Colonel Bambang Supeno, a former PETA officer from East Java and a distant relative of Sukarno, who strongly backed the president’s call to save the nationalist impetus from being toned down by Western rationalist policies. To put it more prosaically, the vast majority of the officer corps had gained their rank and position by *semangat* rather than by higher education and training and were unwilling to lose their position and socioeconomic status and prestige. Nasution reacted by closing down the Chandradimuka Military Academy of which Colonel Bambang Supeno had been commandant and where Sukarno,
as guest lecturer, had tried to fill the minds of cadets with his supernationalist ideas. A new staff college, SSKAD, later renamed SESKOAD, modelled along Western lines was founded.

This attack on the army headquarters intensified, leading, on 17 July, to the sacking of Bambang Supeno by Nasution. This caused an uproar in parliament where the whole of the military rationalisation policy was attacked including the role of the NMM. The army training and educational programs conducted by the NMM were seen as proof of the pro-Western attitudes of the high command and their attempts to demote and get rid of former PETA officers. The fracas ended with Zainal Baharuddin tabling a motion of no-confidence in the Minister of Defence, an amended version of which was passed overwhelmingly on 16 October. The chances of reaching a reasonable and workable compromise were evaporating and the high command and its supporters responded on 17 October by staging an armed demonstration in front of the presidential palace to reinforce the demands of a delegation that included Wilopo, Hatta, the Sultan of Yogyakarta, and Simatupang, for general elections. Sukarno was still able to win the day by defusing the situation through mesmerising the demonstrating masses and obliterating any political advantage the organisers might have had. The 17 October affair broke the hold of Western-oriented officers on the high command and the Department of Defence. Nasution and some of his close supporters were suspended from active duty on 15 December and the sultan was pushed aside and the Prime Minister, Wilopo, took charge of the Department of Defence. General Simatupang resigned in 1953. The 17 October affair also proved to be the death knell of the Dutch military mission.

With the loss of power of its major supporters in government and the military, NMM was doomed and it was now drawn squarely into the anti-Dutch maelstrom that was gaining momentum. During the 17 October demonstration, the Dutch flag at various offices had been pulled down and torn to shreds by the mob. Lamping, referring to the Wilopo cabinet’s struggle to re-
tain good relations with the Netherlands, dismissed these incidents as the actions of some hotheads, forgetting that in parliament and in the nation as a whole the government was actually losing the battle to keep the forces of the Left under control and a reasonable Dutch-Indonesian relationship alive.\textsuperscript{76} Accusations in parliament and the press against the NMM as a fifth column endangering Indonesian national security were intensifying. The West Irian question was also pulling the two nations further apart and was used especially by the Indonesian radical left to accelerate the demise of the remaining Dutch economic power and any continuing political influence in the country.

This growing anti-Dutch agitation in turn acted to harden public opinion in the Netherlands against Indonesia causing parliament and the cabinet to dig in even more deeply on West New Guinea. Matters deteriorated even further when the Dutch ships \textit{Blitar} and \textit{Tallee}, with a consignment of arms for West New Guinea on board, were impounded in Indonesia.

Nasution had been replaced by Colonel Bambang Sugeng, an officer moving in Sukarno’s ideological orbit and a supporter of an Indonesian revolutionary army, and opposed to the creation of a modern force on the Western model. He agreed with Sukarno’s idea that the armed forces were a people’s army and as such had the right to take part fully in political life. It was a stance that received majority support in the officer corps. As a result this caused a major objective of the NMM to fail, namely to help in the creation of a professional, non-political, and disciplined Indonesian armed forces, able to withstand political pressure and interference. Also wrecked was another prime target of the NMM to have the TNI adopt the model of the former colonial Army (KNIL) and thereby raising substantially its ability to deal more effectively with the maintenance of internal peace and order. This had been seen as vital for the smooth operation of the vast Dutch business interests in the country.

For the NMM the writing was on the wall and the Wilopo government was forced to decide on its withdrawal. In March
1953, The Hague was informed accordingly. An accord was signed on 21 April for the NMM to be dissolved on 1 January 1954. Ruslan Abdulgani, Secretary General of the Department of Information and co-signatory of the accord, considered the demise of the NMM as an important prelude to the liquidation of the RTC accords as a whole.77

The rule of Indonesian ‘law’

The anti-Dutch agitation, which had been steadily growing since 1950, had accelerated to a high pitch during the period of the Ali Sastromijoyo cabinet that, in July 1953, had replaced the Wilopo government. The new cabinet was a coalition of the PNI, other minor nationalist groupings, and the NU. The PNI, enjoying the support of Sukarno and the PKI, was the dominant partner. The new cabinet leader, Ali Sastromijoyo, and also his Foreign Minister Sunario, were far more radical than their predecessors with their political views dating back to their activist student days in the Netherlands in the 1920s when they had played a prominent role in the affairs of the Perhimpunan Indonesia and its dissemination of the entirely new idea of Indonesia as a free nation. They had been men of the first hour, who were still moved by the original PNI ideals of self-reliance and radical nationalism. They rejected the dallying of the previous governments with the former colonial power and the West and strove to have foreign influences removed from the Indonesian scene as speedily as possible. Thus, the Ali Sastromijoyo cabinet put in motion a new policy designed to speed up the nationalisation of the economy.

At the same time the anti-Dutch agitation took on a much more threatening tone. Whether, as Ali Sastroamijoyo76 insisted, this was not officially encouraged, is difficult to prove. One thing is clear, that in order to remain politically viable the government could do little to keep this popular anti-Dutch upsurge within reasonable bounds. As it was, the Ali cabinet had seriously mis-
judged the strength of public opinion when, on 23 August 1953, it decided to free six Dutchmen who allegedly had been involved in the Westerling affair. This caused a furious reaction particularly in leftist circles and the armed forces. In the Indonesian media the Dutch were pictured in the darkest colours, as bent to reclaim their colonial hold on Indonesia and being responsible for the existing economic and social malaise. The Netherlands was used as a convenient whipping post for all the country’s evils and numerous stories were churned up by the rumour mills (kabar angin) of Jakarta and other cities that were eagerly devoured by a public driven to anger and frustration by their continued deteriorating living conditions.

In the press Dutchmen and their families living in luxury were compared with the abject poverty of the Indonesian masses and this was snapped up readily as an explanation for the lack of social justice and inequality for the people. Yusuf Ronodipuro, at the time an official government spokesman, told the Dutch scholar Hans Meijer in 1992:

We used the Netherlands as a scapegoat to hide our own failures. There even were scapegoat jokes circulating. At a crossing two Indonesian cars collided and of course the blame was heaped on the Dutch. The mood in Indonesia was an expression of rancour and a retribution of the colonial period …

The general fear caused by the Westerling affair had never been allowed to die down fully. The radical nationalist press in 1951 portrayed the tribute Dutch plantations in West Java were forced to pay for protection to the Darul Islam as actual support for the rebels. The very small number of Dutchmen that had joined the Darul Islam were made out to be agents of the Netherlands government, which was accused of being involved in the supply of arms in order to cause further security problems. The Dutch government of course strenuously denied these allegations pointing out that Dutch planters were forced to take action as the Indonesian armed forces and the police were unable to provide
sufficient protection. So far as deliveries of arms were concerned Dutch official reports pointed the finger at the large smuggling operations in Indonesian waters and the fact that some supplies originated from the TNI itself. 80

Generally the Indonesian government had ignored this agitation and played dumb to Dutch complaints. But by 1953 public anger had reached such a high pitch that the Ali Sastromijoyo government was forced to act and in October a law was passed leaving local authorities with considerable arbitrary power to deal with foreigners suspected of posing a national security risk. 81

This resulted almost immediately in the mobile police brigade arresting thirty-four Dutchmen accused of being members of the Nederlands-Indische Guerrilla Organisatie (NIGO), which was supposedly trying to create the largest possible outbreak of disorder in order to pave the way for the Netherlands to reimpose its colonial rule over Indonesia. The Indonesian newspapers were flooded with stories of the NIGO, often serving up the most improbable details. On 5 January 1954, the Indonesian news bureau Antara announced that the leader of the NIGO had not only close connections with the NMM but also had frequently been seen in a Netherlands High Commission car. The daily Berita Indonesia argued that there was sufficient evidence available to charge the NIGO of acting as an agent between the Darul Islam and the Netherlands government. Again the Dutch business sector was accused of financially supporting the robber bands in order to secure its hold on the Indonesian economy. An almost unanimous cry rose up for an immediate abrogating of the RTC agreements, while some newspapers were demanding the immediate breaking off of diplomatic relations. The new high commissioner, van Bylandt, dismissed letters received supposedly from Dutch Darul Islam fighters asking for financial help, as probably originating from Indonesian ultra-nationalist quarters. Apparently similar letters had been received by the high commission earlier, one at the end of 1951 from former KNIL Captain W.P. Bosch, and in March 1952 from C.H. van Kleef.
The mesmerising speeches of President Sukarno provided an imprimatur to these wild and totally unsubstantiated stories put forward in the press. In a speech during Heroes Day on 10 November 1953, Sukarno, referring to the Darul Islam and the recent outbreak of Islamic rebellions led by Daud Beureuh in Aceh and Kahar Muzakar in South Sulawesi, exhorted Indonesian patriots to immediately douse the fire in the national house and build a grand house to accommodate the whole of the people. The president then quoted from an intercepted letter of the Darul Islam leader, Kartosuwirjo, dated 9 April 1952, in which the abovementioned van Kleef was put on the stage as a new Dutch recruit and a number of points were highlighted to show official Netherlands’ collusion with the Darul Islam cause. Through his high national profile and magnetic personality Sukarno’s outburst could only push the popular anti-Dutch agitation even further, and in this frenzied state the question of the veracity of these allegations did not even enter the mind of most Indonesians. The few who saw through this charade were too frightened to raise their voices.

A visit by van Bylandt to the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sunario, to obtain an official explanation drew a blank and a request to visit the prisoners was refused.

On 17 January 1954 an official Indonesian communiqué was issued tersely stating that the Dutchmen were arrested on suspicion of being members of a criminal organisation and that owing to the present stage of the investigations no further information could be released. But the necessary evidence, however, was expected to be handed by the police to the prosecution shortly. Attempts by the high commission to gain information were in vain. A note sent on 13 February 1954 by the Netherlands government to the Indonesian government, complained that, since 29 December 1953, seven requests had been left unanswered and
that normal diplomatic usage had been ignored and consular assistance to the prisoners and legal aid had been refused. In its reply the Indonesian government continued to refuse permission for legal aid and consular visits. Another Dutch protest on 8 April about a contravention of consular practice and expressing concern about ill-treatment of the prisoners finally resulted, in May, in a high commission official being allowed to visit the prisoners. In the actual official Indonesian reply to the April note, that took two months to arrive, the Indonesian Department of Foreign Affairs charged that the allegations of ill-treatment were deeply hurting the feelings of the Indonesian government and its officials. Still, consular assistance was now approved.

Soon after, the Netherlands authorities managed to provide tangible evidence of serious maltreatment, contained in letters smuggled from prison with the help of some Indonesian policemen, who were appalled at the inhumane interrogation methods being used. In another note, on 14 July 1954, the Netherlands government strongly condemned this inhuman conduct and included a list of atrocities committed. This included cases of prisoners being knocked unconscious with fists, clubs or bayonets. Some were submerged in a pond in the grounds of a villa near Bandung to the point of drowning in order to extract confessions. There was the matter of a prisoner who had been tortured and his genitals kicked by a Bandung police inspector, Enduh, and another case of a confession being forced at the point of a gun. Some fellow-prisoners were apparently used by the police to assist in these tortures.

Again, a stern protest was lodged in which a speedy release or trial of the prisoners was demanded and the use of testimony obtained by torture declared invalid. The Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sunario, in the Netherlands at the time, was also confronted with these charges and promised to conduct a thorough investigation.

Unwilling to drive the issue to the brink, the Netherlands government decided to take a low public profile. But when the
Indonesian government took three months to merely deny all charges and put aside another protest about further abuses. The Hague, in October and November, issued communiqués castigating the Indonesian authorities for procrastinating with its legal proceedings. After ten months in prison only six of the accused had been charged. Furthermore, prisoners were held in atrocious conditions. A number of them were physically and mentally weakened by continuous isolation, bad ventilation, and lack of exercise, and three had to be hospitalised and one transferred to a mental asylum.

It seems that the prisoners were also forced by beating, torture, and blackmail, to confess to having been involved in the NIGO and to testify against their supposed main leaders, fellow prisoners Schmidt and Jungschläger. Those prisoners, who had managed to have their plight made known to the outside world in their letters revoked these confessions as having been obtained by force.

The most frequent names cropping up during the interrogations of the supposed Darul Islam members were of Smit, Bosch, and van Kleef. It was van Kleef who had been mentioned in Sukarno’s speech in November 1953. Bosch had returned to the Netherlands in 1949 and was still living there in 1953. No Smit could be found so for good measure J.G. Schmidt, a former KNIL officer and then a businessman in Bandung, was conveniently re-baptised into the alleged renegade Smit, who was accused for years of having provided the Darul Islam with weapons and food and having joined the rebellion with his own armed followers. An attempt was also made by the police to ‘fabricate’ Bosch. Another Dutchman wearing a beard, part of the description of Bosch, was arrested in Jakarta in January 1954 and transferred to Bandung and found good enough to fit the part. When this unfortunate man was asked about the NIGO and denied any knowledge of such an organisation he was beaten with a piece of wood and received blows on the back of his head. Kicked in the face and abused he was taken to the infamous pond and tor-
tured and his life threatened. In the end he ‘confessed’. Later he was ‘recognised’ by a number of Indonesian witnesses as the legendary Captain Bosch and was interrogated by the police for twenty-eight hours at a stretch. There is no record of a trial of a Captain Bosch and apparently even the Indonesian prosecution found the evidence too flimsy. In a letter, a Dutch prisoner painted the situation as:

… bewildering in its indescribable violation of justice and its hatred against the Dutch. The whole issue has become so chaotic through this forced lying, that is now almost impossible to condense events into a short account … Some sort of underground activity had to be alleged and that is how the NIGO was thought up. The whole NIGO does not exist and all of us have only first heard of the NIGO during the investigation. Sometimes one became a member ‘automatically’ without having knowledge of it. Sometimes the initials were taken to mean Netherlands Indies Guerilla Organisation and sometimes Netherlands Indies Secret Underground. Complete stories were invented, and on the strength of this, the proceedings had to be fabrications …

Further Netherlands protests continued to be ignored and allegations denied. A declaration of a prisoner attesting good treatment and a statement that the alleged pond did not exist were tended as evidence. The Netherlands replied that it had ample information to prove that the Indonesian police had destroyed hard evidence by having the pond filled in November 1954. Furthermore, the Indonesian position was even more weakened by an interview on 1 March 1955 with the public prosecutor, Sunarjo, admitting that the police had used force to obtain confessions when arguing:

There are naturally different definitions of maltreatment. When somebody tries to keep statements from the police and after a few blows he would be willing to tell the truth, those blows of encouragement have little significance if it appears that his statements...
bring out the truth. In such a case it is difficult to speak of maltreatment ...

The trial of Schmidt started on 23 September 1954 and the Indonesian press immediately tried him as guilty and the radical nationalist papers demanded the death sentence. The belief of the Dutch defence counsel, H.A. Bouman, that the charges could be easily unmasked as spurious, causing the prosecution case to fall down like a house of cards, was not realised. It soon became apparent that not justice but political gain was the objective. Not the accused but the Netherlands was on trial, accused of a neo-imperialist plot in concert with the Darul Islam to regain its former colonial power. The hard facts brought forward by Bouman demolishing the charges had no effect on the prosecutor, Sunarjo, and the judge, G.K. Liem, trying to ensure that the normal procedure of law would be followed, worried about later reprisals, decided in December 1954 to retire for 'health reasons'.

The hearings of the Jungschläger case started on 13 January 1955 under G.A. Maengkom, a judge who soon proved to have far fewer judicial scruples than his predecessor. The national press again fulfilled its expected role, painting the accused in the most sinister colours. The media circus started with a report of the sighting of a Dutch submarine in Moluccas waters, carrying weapons and food to the RMC rebels. Official Dutch denials, that after 1945 no Netherlands submarines had been operating in the Indonesia area, were merely shrugged off.

Jungschläger had been a reserve captain and had headed the Netherlands Intelligence Service during World War II, and on retiring in 1948 had joined the KPM, the inter-island Dutch shipping company. He was charged with being the head of the NIGO and having been involved in supplying arms to the Darul Islam. The NIGO was also accused of coordinating the efforts of British and American planes in dropping arms and ammunition for the Darul Islam in West Java. It was charged that planes of the Royal Dutch Shell, Standard Vacuum Oil Company, and the
NMM had also been involved in these operations. The evidence produced was so shaky that it was easy for the defence counsel, Bouman, to disprove these charges. The judge, however, tried to push the defence arguments aside. Upset about the trial being shown by Bouman to be a farce and a travesty of justice, the police tried to blacken Bouman’s name and accused him of corruption and of buying witnesses.

The Indonesian government by now was getting very perturbed about the averse publicity the country was receiving in the international press. Hence, the trials had to be concluded as fast as possible. The plot constructed to incriminate Bouman seemed to have been taken directly from one of those seedy, second rate, detective films abounding in the popular, cheap Indonesian movie houses. The story ran as follows: Bouman was to be invited by a certain Broeks, a police informer, to meet Manoch, a main prosecution witness, who wanted to revoke all his evidence. All Bouman was asked to do was to pay Manoch’s travel expenses and when this transaction was to take place a photo would be taken resulting in his arrest on a charge of bribing a witness. In fact Bouman did receive a written invitation of this kind. But when the Indonesian attorney-general refused his request to accompany him, Bouman, probably having his suspicions, also desisted and instead informed the Indonesian Department of Justice. Not to be discouraged Manoch, during one of the Jungschläger court sessions, interrupted his ‘evidence’ with a special statement charging Bouman of having tried to bribe him. It was alleged that in September 1954 he had been stopped by a Netherlands High Commission car, number plate CD 61, and asked to get in. In Jalan Imam Bondjol another passenger joined, whom he recognised as Bouman, and offered 150,000 Dutch guilders and an overseas job for withdrawing his evidence against Jungschläger. Manoch further stated that a few months earlier he had been approached by a certain Cohen, an official of the Netherlands High Commission, offering the same money as a bribe. This resulted in Bouman being subjected to fifty hours of
interrogation by the prosecution. His house was ransacked by the police but no evidence could be found. His Indonesian co-defender, Mrs Nani Razak, was attacked in the press and hassled by police. At the end of March 1955, Bouman was accused by another witness of being a member of the NIGO, and his request to be granted immunity from prosecution during the current trials was refused by the Minister of Justice.

The court sessions were pervaded by a Kafkaesque spirit with the defender’s arguments being constantly pushed aside by the bench as irrelevant. The Netherlands press compared the proceedings to the Dreyfus affair and the Nazi trial of van der Lubbe in the Reichstag fire case.

Intimidated, and even fearing for their lives, both Bouman and Mrs Nani Razak withdrew from the case. Bouman was refused an exit permit and a request for asylum in the high commission was not granted by van Bylandt out of fear of creating serious repercussions. He was, however, issued with a diplomatic passport and took the first possible opportunity to flee the country. Apparently he bought a ticket to Medan and left the boat at Singapore under the assumed name Bosman, arriving in the Netherlands on 13 May 1955. The Indonesian press was of course incensed, arguing that this clearly proved Bouman’s guilt. The high commissioner was accused, as in the case of Westerling, of being instrumental in Bouman’s flight.

The cases against Jungschläger and Schmidt continued without any defence counsellors being present. A request by van Bylandt for a halt of proceedings until a defence attorney could be found was dismissed by Judge Maengkom under direct orders from the Department of Justice.

In order to thrust this mock trial towards wide international media attention the Netherlands government hired the services of D. Curtis Bennet, a well-known British barrister. This was rejected by the Indonesian government using the pretext of language problems and the further argument that as enough qualified Indonesian lawyers were available, foreign practitioners
would not be allowed. As a last resource, Bouman’s wife, Mieke S. Bouman-van den Berg, was appointed. She was not a lawyer but a classical scholar, who had closely assisted her husband during the trial and had mastered most of the details. Mrs Bouman turned out to be a tenacious adversary in court.

The case against Jungschläger closed on 23 February 1956 with the prosecution demanding the death sentence. On 19 April, before sentence had been pronounced, Jungschläger, fifty-two years old, suddenly died from a stroke preventing the radical Indonesian masses from having their revenge.87 Fifteen years of imprisonment was demanded against Schmidt. The masses were in uproar.

Mrs Bouman, after making her final plea on 17 September 1956, managed with great difficulty to escape the rage of the multitude milling around the building, first hiding in a cupboard and later scaling a back fence, and she was taken to safety in a waiting car. Mrs Bouman, fearing for her life, departed for the Netherlands at the end of September, where she was given a hero’s welcome.

On 15 October 1956, the court confirmed the fifteen years’ jail term demanded by the prosecution. It seems that Indonesia had obtained its pound of flesh and the other prisoners were quietly released during 1957. Schmidt was freed on 18 March 1959.88

Moves toward nationalisation

In 1950 Indonesia, although politically independent, was still to a large extent Dutch controlled in economic terms. The successive Indonesian cabinets of Hatta, Natsir, Sukiman, and Wilopo, were mainly moved by economic rationalism, pursuing policies in which the maintenance of the Dutch economic sector formed a cornerstone of Indonesian economic rehabilitation and development. Nationalistic and anti-imperialist aspirations were, for the time being, put on hold and nationalisation
was given a low priority.89

The only nationalisation that occurred was that of the privately owned Javasche Bank, the bank of circulation of the Nederlands Indies, which, after independence, continued in this role. This politically untenable situation was rectified in May 1951 by an Indonesian government takeover. In close consultation with the Netherlands a two-year bridging period and financial restitution was agreed upon. It was renamed Bank Indonesia and continued as the bank of circulation, while previous other banking activities were transferred to a new institution: the Bank Indonesia Negara.

At the conclusion of the Jungschläger and Schmidt trials in 1956, the anti-Dutch offensive had reached full momentum and the leftist Ali government was closer to the realisation of its major platform; the nationalisation of the Dutch-owned business sector. In this the Ali cabinet sharply veered away from the policies of the previous governments which, as much as possible, had left untouched the foreign – mainly Dutch – owned business sector as it was seen as the indispensable motor driving the national economy.

An important factor that put the support of the Indonesian masses behind the PNI and communist economic policies was a fall of living standards of wage earners that had been occurring since the end of 1951. In 1950, Indonesia, as a result of the Korean War boom, enjoyed a sizeable balance of payments surplus. These extra funds, however, were mainly used to pay for a vast expansion of the civil service rather than being invested in productive projects. To the great majority of Indonesians the hope of a better life kindled by the revolution remained not only unfulfilled but in fact living conditions were deteriorating. In the period June 1950 to December 1951, the price of rice in Jakarta rose by 350 per cent and the index for nineteen food items nearly doubled. According to the Javasche Bank, the cost of living for working-class families rose by more than one-third during 1951 alone.89 In Jakarta, the prices of twelve food items increased 158
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per cent between 1953 and 1958; the percentage increase for nineteen food items in the same period was 145 per cent in Ujung Pandjang, 159 per cent in Medan and 189 per cent in Pontianak.91 By the middle of 1952, as a result of the waning Korean War boom, the balance of payments situation steeply reversed owing to sharp falls in the prices of export products. The balance of payment changed from a surplus of 627 million rupiah in 1951 to deficits of 2947 million in 1952, 1620 million in 1953, and 757 million in 1954.92 As a result of the close links between export earnings and tax revenue, the budget deficit also increased, in turn resulting in inflationary pressure.93 The gold and foreign exchange reserves had decreased from a high of 6.1 billion rupiah in December 1951 to 4 billion at the end of September 1952.94 Until the end of 1954 inflation had been steadily increasing and starting to speed up in 1955, getting out of control after 1958. The weighted index of twenty food items in Jakarta increased by 117 per cent between 1955 and 1958; and by 126 per cent between 1958 and 1960.95

The fundamental cause for this situation was too much money chasing scarce goods. And the initial increase in purchasing power caused by higher wages had not been followed up with the same rate of production of local goods and services. An attempt was made to close the gap with budget deficits and excessive lending by the bank sector. Price increases, firstly cushioned by high rates of imports, broke the barrier after 1952 when the government tried to reduce imports in order to check the degree to which the country’s reserves were shrinking. This, together with extravagant budget deficits in 1953 to 1954, formed a major inflationary force. Government attempts to induce production came to nothing as a result of proliferating public service interference and large-scale corruption. The situation improved somewhat as a result of the Sumitro reforms in 1955 that removed market controls and prices generally remained stable in 1956. But in 1957 inflation increased again as a result of the vast deficits incurred to overcome the regional rebellions. After 1958 the
problem was magnified by export levels falling by about 20 per cent after the nationalisation of the Dutch estate and industrial sector.96 Real wages generally did not keep up with price increases, and even the additional income provided in kind by some industries in the form of rice, oil and sugar, suggested that living conditions were falling.97 By 1953 the growth of real national income had reached a plateau, and by 1955 showed a downward trend. After an upward movement again in 1956 the rate tumbled down sharply in 1957, reaching its deepest point in 1958. The country seemed to be on the verge of bankruptcy. In contrast Dutch and other foreign business concerns were, as a whole, making profits.

**Indonesian government measures to reduce Dutch economic prominence**

To reduce the foreign dominance in the modern economic sector national governments, from the beginning, had tried to encourage and support Indonesian traders and firms. Indonesians were given preference in government contracts, and private Indonesian banks were founded with government support in order to strengthen Indonesian competition against foreign banks and to finance the development of small-scale indigenous industries reducing dependence on foreign imports.

Under the Natsir government the so-called *benting* system was introduced ensuring a monopoly of Indonesian traders for certain goods such as cottons for the batik industry, which had been produced by Japanese and Dutch textile mills and imported by Dutch trading houses. This initiative, however, produced meagre results. Many Indonesians procuring these import certificates lacked the necessary business acumen and drive and often left the day-to-day running to Chinese partners thereby defeating the real intent of the program. These so-called Ali-(Indonesian)Baba (Chinese) arrangements in business in fact have continued to
flourish to the present day. Tradition, particularly in the highly socially stratified Java, which accorded trade and manual labour a low place on the social ladder, certainly played a role. The vast majority of Indonesians with modern educational and training qualifications were obsessed with obtaining employment in the public service that conferred the highest possible social prestige. Lower and middle echelon officials earning pitifully low salaries surpassed successful businessmen on the social ladder.98

In addition, corruption was rife, reaching a zenith during the Ali cabinet, when a PNI member’s card and a party contribution did wonders in obtaining an instant benting certificate. The Netherlands High Commissioner reported in February 1954 that, according to reliable sources, the PNI funds had passed the 600 million rupiah mark. He pointed out that since the advent of the Ali cabinet an official sponsored process had become clearly visible intending to systematically eliminate foreign import firms. Trade Minister Iskak had decreed that only firms incorporated in Indonesia were allowed to import and all transactions had to take place through nationally recognised importers. Furthermore, large firms, such as plantation companies, the KPM, Unilever, and Philips, were curtailed in importing directly, being now forced to obtain their raw materials through Indonesian middlemen, who of course profited by such commissions. The regulation – circular P 41 – allocating the import of some goods to Indonesian nationals, although rescinded owing to the pressure from the governor of the Bank of Indonesia, Sjafrudin, was still enforced by Minister Iskaq. It seemed that, in addition to the use of the norm ‘national’, quite often also ‘membership of the PNI’ was a criterion, causing bitter criticism from Masjumi supporting santri traders. Measures were also taken regarding exports. Exporters of indigenous produce, for example rubber, were granted a special subsidy, and Indonesian firms were granted a monopoly on sugar exports and the national distribution of sugar, the latter worth an estimated 700 million rupiah. Clearly, a more biting anti-Dutch offensive on the economic front was
waged by the Ali government. As the high commissioner put it:

This whole process is evolving not silently, but quite openly. Each ‘national’ measure is applauded in the nationalist and communist press often causing diatribes against imperialism, capitalism, foreigners, and especially against Dutchmen. All labor troubles in factories and plantations, decisions taken on labor demands, provide opportunities … to make nationalistic meaning often anti-Dutch – propaganda. And there is no doubt that this partly inspires the Communists, the state of unrest, and the press commentaries. As my American colleague [Ambassador Cummings] recently remarked, so long as the government remains sustained by conscious or unwitting support of fellow travellers the Communist can lay low …

During 1954, two Dutch-owned public utilities, OGEM and ANIEM, producing 70 per cent of Indonesia’s electricity, were nationalised. On 24 March 1954, a new accord was concluded with KLM, the Dutch national airline, by which the Indonesian government acquired all KLMs shares in Garuda, thereby in fact nationalising the national carrier. Until that time Garuda had been almost totally Dutch run. There were no Indonesian pilots or flight engineers and Indonesians were only employed on lower levels. A contract for Dutch cooperation was reduced to six years and could be revoked after a six-month term. Garuda would have a Dutch director until 1956, who was responsible for technical aviation matters. On the other hand a push to transfer Dutch stevedoring firms into Indonesian hands did not, in fact, come to fruition until the second Ali cabinet in 1956. New fiscal pressure was also applied to Dutch businesses with company tax exceeding 50 per cent, profit transfers being charged by another 60 per cent, and the remission of pensions and personal savings were also targeted. Some Dutch enterprises had heeded the RTC requirement to train and appoint more Indonesians to higher and top positions. Others had only paid lip service and staff positions had remained
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a near-Dutch monopoly. In 1952 the Wilopo cabinet had tried to push the issue by the reduction of work visas for new European (mainly Dutch) personnel. The Ali government followed suit by even further lowering the quota for visas for Dutch work permits.

Owing to the serious fall in the foreign exchange reserves further restrictions were applied in the granting of import licences to the point that the stock of raw materials and machine parts were rapidly being depleted, drastically effecting the efficiency and productivity of the industrial sector. A number of textile, cigarette (kretek) firms and bakeries had to close and other factories had to reduce production. The tyre and rubber-dependent industries employing 10,000 workers and using 15,300 tonnes of rubber each year were forced to scale down operations. The Goodyear factory in Bogor reduced production by 50 per cent, the Bata shoe manufacturer by as much as 70 per cent and the paint manufacturer Regnault in Jakarta by 60 per cent. A lack of solder caused stagnation in tin plate production, and in turn the food industry and also the production of cast iron was affected. The Talens factory reported a fall in the supply of chemicals and paper, resulting in a drop in the production of stencil carbon paper.

The high commissioner commented that representations to the Minister of Finance had resulted in some temporary relief to some of the firms concerned and he further pointed out that the new policies announced by the government were not consequently executed. Self-importing Dutch concerns still received foreign exchange certificates under their own name without any trouble and he commented that the few cases where Dutch firms tried to go through Indonesian firms and traders had ended up in failure. Firstly, Indonesian firms generally showed little interest, but in the few cases where they did they proved unable to comply with the Dutch firm’s requirements. The government’s national industrial plans, widely trumpeted in the media, proved largely to be a product of official wishful thinking. Nothing had hap-
pened to the loudly hailed plan for a Norwegian fish plant in Ambon, a new shipping yard in Surabaya (partly German financed), a paper factory in central Java using rice straw as raw material, and the projected new textile, tyres, glass, and hardboard factories. The only project that seemed to have passed the drawing board stage was a cement plant to be built at Grissee.101

The opposition attacks on Iskaq’s policies and his favouring of PNI interests resulted, in April 1954, in a motion of no-confidence in the Minister, which was defeated with some difficulty. Rumblings amongst the coalition partners continued and when, in July, the NU demanded a cabinet reshuffle, replacing the Ministers for Economic Affairs, Finance, and Interior, the resulting boilover led to Iskaq being replaced by Professor Rooseno as Minister for Economic Affairs on 18 November 1954.102

It seemed that, thus far, rather than trying to control corruption the whole exercise had been for the coalition parties to get their hands on part of the spoils. A Dutch report of early August mentioned a promise by Minister Iskaq that 76 million rupiah worth of import licences were shared by the government parties, which would then make contact with national importers, who in turn, after approval by the Department of Economic Affairs, would pay an amount – normally 10 per cent – for licenses to the particular political party involved.103

As a result of the official policy of Indonesianisation the preponderant Dutch position in trade was gradually being whittled away. The lucrative Dutch transit trade was also being affected by Indonesian efforts to establish a direct trade relationship with the rest of the world, and as little as possible use was made of the so-called A-Account by which the rupiah could be exchanged via Dutch guilders for currencies of member countries of the European Exchange Union. In fact efforts had been made to join this union through West Germany, which, together with the United States and Japan, had been able to make considerable inroads into the Indonesian market. To the consternation of the Western powers Indonesia had also opened embassies in Mos-
cow and Peking in order to emphasise its non-aligned foreign policy.

**The abrogation of the Round Table Agreement**

Despite the souring of relations The Hague agreed to restart negotiations on the abolition of the Dutch-Indonesian union statute and its replacement by a normal diplomatic relationship between the two countries. In reality the union, strongly felt by Indonesians to be a colonial legacy limiting true independence, had never found effective support. It was also generally recognised in the Netherlands that the union was a stillborn construction. The first high commissioner, Hirschfeld, wrote in April 1954 to Minister Luns:

> It is generally felt in the Netherlands business community that the Union is a handicap. According to my own experiences in Indonesia it soon became [apparent] that in fact the Union was an obstacle … It soon became clear that the Union secretariat practically meant nothing. It never was important before the short interval when the great tensions caused by New Guinea and the Indonesian unitary state appeared …  

He believed, however, that it would be a mistake to include negotiations on the RTC financial and economic agreements in the conference agenda as this would only result in Indonesian attempts to reduce their significance for Dutch interests. The only way to solve this problem was to deal only with the union issue and leave the financial and economic matters, if necessary, to later separate talks.

A similar stand was taken by Prime Minister Drees. But in the end the cabinet adopted the recommendations of a departmental advisory committee which proposed that the union should be discarded providing that, in any new arrangement, Netherlands economic interests at least would remain protected as much as possible and the Netherlands would be granted most favoured
nation status. In a report emanating from the Department of Foreign Affairs the more realistic view was taken that after all it was reasonable that Indonesians wanted to gain a greater say in the running of their economic affairs by reducing Dutch preponderance. This was an unremitting process and the only possibility for Dutch business to secure their future existence was to set up joint ventures with Indonesian firms.105

High Commissioner van Bylandt though was far more pessimistic about the outcome of negotiations and pointed out that the Ali government would never be willing to leave the RTC financial and economic (FINEC) clauses intact. It was a prediction that, in view of the ugly anti-Dutch mood in the country, was realistic.

The conference started on 29 June 1954 in The Hague. The Netherlands wanted to avoid national embarrassment by a unilateral Indonesian abrogation of the union, while Foreign Minister Sunario was keen to reach an agreement that would increase his own prestige and score points against the Masjumi in the coming Indonesian election campaign. Still the negotiations were proceeding rather slowly. Luns refused to accept the Indonesian demand for the abolition of the union, the RTC agreement and the surrender of West New Guinea. To set a conciliatory tone Sunario put the West Irian question aside and acted on Luns’s complaints about the ill-treatment of the Dutch prisoners that resulted in a considerable improvement in conditions. Another major obstacle caused by the Indonesian refusal to accept international arbitration in disputes, was finally resolved by the acceptance of the provision that each party would be allowed to appoint one judge in a five-member court. Only minor changes were made in financial and economic RTC clauses and the most important guarantees protecting Dutch business interests remained in place.

The accord caused great fury in the Indonesian press that accused the government of sacrificing fundamental national interests and screamed for the abolition of the FINEC. Nevertheless
the Luns-Sunario protocol was finally signed on 10 August.

In reality the abrogation of the Dutch-Indonesian union was only a symbolic act, ending something that in fact had never fully existed and had exerted no impact on affairs. Seeing another vestige of colonial rule being to put to rest did provide Indonesians with a considerable emotional uplift. On the other hand, it became an issue in the press and parliament where the Masjumi and other more moderate factions tried to obtain the support of the communists to force the Ali government to resign. The move failed, although the government in the end refused to ratify the agreement making it even more worthless than it was already.106

The Luns-Sunario protocol, rather than serving to abate, in fact intensified the anti-Dutch campaign. During his Independence Day speech on 17 August 1954, Sukarno castigated the Netherlands for its uncompromising colonialist-imperialist stance on West New Guinea and announced that Indonesia would submit the issue to the next UN General Assembly meeting. By the internationalisation of the problem Indonesia tried to break up the 'refrigerator' formula adhered to by The Hague since 1951.

The anti-Dutch mood in Indonesia, already growing ugly during the concurrently staged NIGO drama, was further pushed to hysterical proportions by the manipulation of the West Irian question by the communists and PNI. A special official body was established to coordinate the liberation of West Irian and a few small Indonesian military units raided parts of the west coast during which a Dutch policeman, van Krieken, was captured and taken to Indonesia. Constant, unruly demonstrations in the main cities and a ferocious onslaught by the leftist press caused an explosive situation and made the Dutch community fear for its safety. A great deal of anxiety had crept into the high commission despatches particularly after a statement by Dr Abu Hanifah, chairman of the Indonesian delegation to the UN in New York, pointing to a possible anti-Dutch pogrom:
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There are ten thousands of Dutch hostages in Indonesia who are completely defenceless and helpless. Netherlands interests are open to attack from all quarters. For the last few months diplomatic contacts between the two countries have become a mockery. None of the numerous protests, requests … have led any reasonable dialogue or real solutions …

Furthermore, the Luns-Sunario protocol was dismissed as irrelevant as it had been completely ignored by Indonesian Ministers since their return from The Hague. The high commission condemned both the Indonesian and Dutch media for their undisciplined behaviour and the issuing of outrageous allegations, and stressed that the situation had deteriorated to the point where measures for total evacuation should be prepared.

Foreign Affairs agreed that the mass agitation put in motion by the Reichstag fire-style trials could well lead to another ‘bersiap’ onslaught on the Dutch population. In fact, sporadic attacks on Europeans were already occurring such as the attempted murder of an Englishman in Jakarta by an Indonesian ‘… who was upset about the high living of the Blandas [Europeans] paid for by the exploited people …’, and a similar incident occurred in Surabaya. Then there were the instances of Dutchmen having recently received threatening letters in which daggers had been enclosed. In view of these concerns the high commission asked that plans for evacuation be prepared, such as the pooling of all ships operating in Indonesian waters, alerting the Red Cross, to start a gradual evacuation of economically non-essential Dutch citizens, and even to set up an underground refugee organisation.

The KPM assured the high commission that it had sufficient tonnage available to transport thousands of persons to Singapore in a matter of a few days. The main problem would be the transport of refugees from the interior to the ports for which the help of the Indonesian armed forces would be essential. An important factor favouring the Dutch position was that in the case
of Indonesian recalcitrance a KPM withdrawal of all its vessels from Indonesian ports would cause widespread economic dislocation and ruin, driving the already shaky national financial situation into bankruptcy. Even the American Embassy, as a good Netherlands ‘ally’ that had recently been instructed to distance itself politically and socially from the beleaguered Dutch, was disturbed by events and was having second thoughts. It was the argument of American business concerns such as Stanvac that in the case of an outbreak of popular violence all Europeans, whatever their nationality, would be in danger that had caused this American change of heart. Still, the American chargé d’affaires, Steeves, proved to be pessimistic as all American pleas to the Ali government to abandon, for the time being, the New Guinea campaign and direct its full attention to national economic and social development had failed. He dismissed Sunario as a ‘nice fellow’ with impaired vision, but had harsh words for Ali Sastromijoyo, dismissing him as a chameleon and opportunist who, during his term in Washington, had sported great friendship for the United States and now revealed himself as an anti-Western leftist.

In reply to a request by van Ittersum, Councillor in the High Commission, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sunario, guaranteed the safety of the Dutch and other foreigners and of their economic interests. He emphasised that his statements and those of Abu Hanifah had been misrepresented. There was no intention to threaten, but only to point out that the government’s preference for negotiation would be bypassed by the will of the people to obtain West Irian by force. Sunario complained bitterly about the Dutch attitude to Indonesia:

You Dutchmen have never understood us nor were you ever willing to understand us. You have always dismissed our national ambitions and have always tried to put them aside by vague answers, following a policy of procrastination. In 1952 it was clear to us Indonesians that you were unwilling to talk about Irian.
can not wait until finally a change occurs in the Netherlands. We must act because the people will no longer wait …

Trying to turn the table around Sunario constructed anti-Indonesian comments in the Netherlands parliament into a threat of Dutch aggression:

It is not you Netherlanders who are threatened, but we are! This threat is felt by the whole nation and also the opposition is taking the same line and any attempts to help the opposition into the saddle will fail. Public opinion in the Netherlands towards Indonesia has been poisoned; and nobody wants to talk to us any more …"

In reply, van Ittersum tried to put the Dutch version of events stressing that Indonesian public opinion towards the Netherlands was also negatively affected by the media and official pronouncements and actions. In particular the treatment of the Dutch prisoners and the trial procedure had enraged the Netherlands people. He closed his dispatch by remarking that the meeting had been conducted in a cordial atmosphere, but it had failed to ease the deeply strained relations between the two countries.

The outcome of the UN Assembly meeting of 10 December 1954 proved to be very disappointing for Indonesia as the two-third quorum of votes was not reached. Most of the Third World and the communists supported Indonesia, while the Netherlands gained most of its support from Western Europe, while significantly the United States abstained.

This failure did not cause the Armageddon so feared by the Dutch community. The situation remained generally calm, as if an invisible hand had put the highly explosive mood temporarily into a low gear.

Nonetheless, it was in foreign policy that the Ali government scored its most spectacular success by staging the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in April 1955. It bought together for the first time most of the Third World countries, including India,
China and North and South Vietnam and it laid the foundation for the later organisation of non-aligned nations. It was a response by the new nations recently liberated from colonialism to what was perceived to be a new colonial threat to their independence by the Cold War, as experienced in the Korean War and the Vietnamese conflict, and as such it was a reaction to the American engineered SEATO treaty of September 1954.

Ali Sastroamijoyo had been one of the prime movers in getting the idea of the conference off the ground. The event went off without any major problems providing Indonesia with a great deal of public pride and self-confidence. An important result for Indonesia was the strong support engendered by the conference for its claim on West Irian. Undoubtedly the Bandung conference put Indonesia on the international map.112

The Ali government, however, proved less successful in Indonesian internal affairs. Political strife between the government and the armed forces caused a temporary lull in the anti-Dutch campaign.

The divide and rule policies of the Ali government and parliament and the inadequate budget allocations for defence were causing a serious deterioration in the living conditions of soldiers. This, together with considerations of national prestige, caused the warring military factions, divided by the 17 October 1952 affair, during February 1955, to bury the hatchet and issue the Yogyakarta Charter to form a united front against the government and its interference in military affairs. Political parties and politicians were generally seen within the military as corrupt and incompetent economic managers and traitors to the ideals of the revolution. The army commander, Bambang Sugeng, severely criticised for a lacklustre performance against an anti-armed forces government, resigned on 2 May 1955. Demands by senior officers that his replacement must be chosen on the basis of seniority and skill and not for political considerations were blandly ignored. Instead Ali appointed a relatively junior officer, Bambang Utoyo, who had close relations with the PNI. The
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Yogyakarta Charter leadership rebelled and refused to accept the Ali cabinet decision and the united resolve of the armed forces was demonstrated during the inauguration ceremony of Bambang Utoyo when only a few junior officers were in attendance and recourse had been taken to a fire brigade band, causing a huge loss of face to the government.

The political mill continued to grind on and the Masjumi urged the government to accept the Yogyakarta Charter resolutions. When also the other coalition partners turned tail Ali Sastromijoyo was forced to resign on 24 July.113

Moves of the Burhanuddin Harahap government

Attempts by the succeeding more moderate Burhanuddin Harahap government to improve relations with the Netherlands, in the end, failed. The perimeters within which the new government was able to move were constrained to some extent by its caretaker role as it awaited the outcome of the national general elections set for 29 September. A more essential obstacle to a fundamental change in Indonesian policy towards the Netherlands was posed by the emotionally charged political situation in the country engendered by a nationalist upsurge against what was seen as the continuing Dutch colonial economic preponderance and its continued hold on West Irian. It would have been suicidal for any political party to try to effect a substantial easing in Indonesian-Dutch relations by offering concessions. Hence, Dutch reactions were cautious in response to Indonesian feelers intended to reduce tension and reopen negotiations on the RTC agreements and New Guinea.

In order to boost Dutch confidence the new Indonesian government decided to release a number of Dutch prisoners, who had not played any essential a role in the Schmidt and Jungschläger trials. In addition, the diplomatic status of The Hague, lowered by the Ali government in favour of Bonn, was restored again with the appointment of a higher-ranking representative.114
Dutch business was impressed by the Harahap government’s measures designed to return the country to sound economic management after the disastrous impasse created by the Ali government’s policies. The governor of Bank Indonesia, Sjafrudin, assured the chairman of the Ondernemersraad that the new government was keen to improve relations, indicating that a small overture by the Netherlands on the West Irian problem would not only create better mutual understanding but would also strengthen the position of the government and the Masjumi in the coming election struggle. He realised that the West Irian question would not be solved in the short term but a great deal of prestige would accrue to the Indonesian government by a mere indication on the part of the Netherlands to a willingness to re-start talks. Sjafrudin also intimated that Indonesia on its part would possibly move to have West Irian removed from the agenda of the next UN meeting. As part of the government’s economic rehabilitation policy the benting import system, that had caused huge losses to the treasury and the Indonesian foreign exchange reserves, would be stopped and the Dutch import-export firms would be allowed their traditional allocation of the trade. Finally, the import system would be simplified and its control transferred from the Department of Economic Affairs to Bank Indonesia, a move that would greatly enhance the foreign exchange position and taxation receipts.\footnote{115}

In fact, during the following months Dutch firms reported a considerable relaxation in their treatment by Indonesian officials and departments. In Holland, profit transfers were regularly received, reasonable allocations for foreign exchange for imports were coming forward and the granting of immigration visas had much improved.\footnote{116}

The Dutch government agreed to the Indonesian requests for talks. The Indonesian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Anak Agung, met with Ministers Luns, Beel and the prime minister, but was squarely told that negotiations about a transfer of sovereignty over West New Guinea remained out of bounds. Anak Agung
promised that van Krieken, the Dutch policeman kidnapped from West New Guinea, would be released soon and that he would take up the question of the imprisoned Dutchmen, and agreed to a gradual return to Indonesia of former KNIL Ambonese soldiers and their families. He requested that the Netherlands government would clearly announce that West New Guinea would not be used as a base for aggression against Indonesia, and secondly, that the RTC financial and economic clauses should be replaced by a new general agreement about economic cooperation. Luns strongly opposed the Indonesian plan to place West Irian on the UN Assembly agenda again and remained unmoved by Anak Agung’s argument that to desist would cause the Indonesian government to lose too much political goodwill.117

The results of the general elections held on 29 September did not show a clear winner. The PNI and the Masjumi won fifty-seven seats each and the NU obtained forty-five. Causing consternation and fear was the spectacular rise of the Communist Party (PKI) from seventeen to thirty-nine seats. The Socialist Party (PSI), its mainstay being provided by the more Western-oriented Dutch-educated elite, was devastated with its seats being reduced from fourteen to five.118

In consequence the Harahap government, still remaining in a caretaker capacity for another five months, had no mandate to effect fundamental policy changes, particularly in regard to the highly sensitive dealings with the Netherlands. But it was exactly because of the distinct veering towards the left that the Masjumi and its other moderate coalition partners became even more determined to achieve a spectacular breakthrough in Indonesian-Netherlands relations, including the West Irian impasse, in order to improve their chances of forming the next government.

But it was the continuing Dutch obstinacy on West Irian that had ruined any chances for the projected negotiations to be successful. In Indonesia, President Sukarno and the left (PNI and PKI) were strongly opposed to negotiations, although the Harahap cabinet persisted.
Minister Luns, as well as the Netherlands parliament, was not impressed by the weak power base of the Harahap government and the continuing power play between the government and the armed forces, that resulted in the reappointment, on 27 October 1955, of General Nasution as army chief of staff. Another feud in the air force occurred, leading first to the resignation of Air Vice-Marshal Suryadarma that was followed later by his reappointment as chief of staff by Sukarno against the wishes of the cabinet.

Nevertheless, Luns decided, although reluctantly, to agree to talks. Anak Agung, and other spokesmen including Abu Hanifah in New York, pushed by the volatile internal Indonesian political situation, kept on trying to have the West New Guinea question included in the negotiations. Again Luns emphasised that any discussion regarding the sovereignty of the territory remained out of the question, but as a compromise Prime Minister Drees agreed that in case West New Guinea would be discussed none of the parties should be expected to withdraw from their positions. On 7 December it was agreed jointly that West New Guinea could be discussed, but only to allow for both sides to explain their positions.

The negotiations opened in The Hague and were moved, on 10 December, to neutral territory in Geneva. Initially, quick progress occurred. The earlier Luns-Sunario protocol of 1954 was re-adopted without any difficulties as were new arrangements on financial and economic matters, including Indonesian legal guarantees protecting the Dutch plantation industry.

A great obstacle still proved to be the matter of the dispute settlement, which the Netherlands insisted should occur by international arbitration. This was felt by Indonesians to be a slur on their legal system. On the other hand, to the Dutch this seemed a reasonable request in view of the concurrent juridical charade taking place in the Schmidt and Jungschläger trials.

The negotiations, having been suspended for deliberations to be held with the respective governments, started again on 5 Janu-
ary 1956. Now Luns, despite the precondition agreed to on 7 December, announced that the Dutch delegation refused to discuss the West New Guinea question and that no agreement would be signed unless a satisfactory solution could be found regarding the Dutch prisoners on trial in Indonesia. Anak Agung tried to find mutually acceptable formulas. But the suggestion of simply announcing that West New Guinea had been discussed and that no agreement had been reached was pushed aside by Luns as unacceptable. Similarly, the Dutch cabinet seemed unable to reach a decision on a proposal for some of the Dutch prisoners to be exchanged for Indonesian soldiers captured in West New Guinea. In addition Luns’s usual practice in negotiations, to break the ice by adopting a jovial tone and telling jokes, often risqué ones, upset the Indonesian delegation, who dismissed him as uncivilised – *kasar*. Finally, Mohammad Roem failed in his attempts to move Luns to agree to a statement by the Dutch government that West New Guinea would be discussed at a later stage, thereby leaving the question of sovereignty still open. Luns told Roem that he could not be expected to be drawn into internal Indonesian political matters and by making concessions to help to advance the political future of the Masjumi and the Harahap cabinet. He pointed out that on the basis of hard-learned previous experience he no longer believed in Indonesia’s integrity and its willingness to stick to agreements. This made it clear to Roem that Luns had closed the door to any concessions. On 7 January, at the request of the Dutch, negotiations were prorogued in order to enable consultations to be held with the respective governments.

Luns’s report to cabinet caused lively discussion. Prime Minister Drees accused Anak Agung of duplicity and dismissed him as untrustworthy, stressing that no essential change should be allowed in the position of the Netherlands. A number of other Ministers took a less sanguine stand and, although aware that the days of the Harahap government were numbered, preferred to give it a confidence boost. Luns therefore was requested to
consult again with Anak Agung to construct a formula to be used in discussions on the West Irian question.\textsuperscript{120}

In Indonesia, where from the beginning the Geneva negotiations had been severely criticised by Sukarno and the leftist parties as being too conciliatory to the Dutch demands, the position of the Harahap cabinet went from bad to worse. On 11 January, two coalition partners, the NU and the PSII, put up a motion in parliament demanding the abandonment of the Geneva talks and when the government refused they decided to resign from the coalition. After the loss of its parliamentary majority the Harahap cabinet was no longer in a position to have the Dutch-Indonesian agreement ratified.

The high commissioner signalled The Hague that in his view the Harahap cabinet now intended to cause the negotiations to fail and for internal Indonesian political consumption to heap the blame on Dutch intransigence.\textsuperscript{121} Luns agreed with this view and decided on a strategy designed to put the blame of the failure on the Indonesian side. In fact, during the whole period of negotiations, Luns had been able to exactly anticipate the moves of the Indonesian delegation through intercepted telegrams from Jakarta to Anak Agung. Apparently an Indonesian official in Geneva had been bribed to transfer daily to Blom, a high Dutch Foreign Affairs official, photocopies of all incoming telegrams from the Jakarta government. Only very few people knew about this arrangement and even Prime Minister Drees did not know how this information had come to hand.\textsuperscript{122}

The Indonesians tried to start the ball rolling again by issuing a statement to the press on 26 January declaring that the last meeting had ended with an interim accord which, in regard to West New Guinea, each party had agreed to hold its own position and that the Dutch delegation had accepted the Indonesian arbitration demand. The Dutch had as yet not signed this accord and were now told that any revision was out of the question and were given the choice to either accept or reject it. This ultimatum, in an attempt to railroad through the Indonesian demands,
caused confusion and resentment in the Dutch cabinet. Luns completely denied the Indonesian assertion that an interim accord had been achieved, as the questions of West New Guinea, the Dutch prisoners, and arbitration were still defying a solution. Cabinet decided to allow Luns to play his own game and continue the negotiations during which advances were made on most points. The main obstacle remaining was the arbitration question. Luns knew from an intercepted telegram from Natsir to Anak Agung that the Masjumi were unwilling to allow any concessions and saw that failure was looming large. Prime Minister Drees remained unconvinced about the independence of the Indonesian judiciary and informed Luns that the cabinet was unanimous in maintaining the demand for international arbitration. Luns imparted this decision during the 11 February session, but, in a further private meeting with Anak Agung, he rephrased the Dutch demand by insisting that recourse to international arbitration would only be taken as a last resort.

Earlier Luns had told Drees that Anak Agung had received a telegram from Sukarno ordering him to end the negotiations whether Dutch concessions were forthcoming or not. According to Luns the Indonesian government was so constrained by the internal political configuration that the only solution was to ensure the failure of the Geneva negotiations. The end came on 13 February with the joint communiqué announcing the collapse of the conference. 122

The role of Luns in this affair has caused considerable controversy. Anak Agung has constantly denied the existence of a telegram from Sukarno ordering him to abort the Geneva conference:

One thing I can declare with certainty: neither I nor other members of the delegation have ever received instructions from whatever quarters in Jakarta to have the Geneva negotiations fail. This would after all have been illogical as the Burhanudin cabinet’s first objective was to normalise Indonesian-Netherlands relations by
peaceful means, notwithstanding the strong opposition of the radical groups in Indonesia and even from the late President Sukarno ... 123

Luns stuck to his description of the course of events during negotiations and kept repeating that after having read the intercepted telegram from Sukarno he had acted in tune with his foreknowledge of Indonesian moves at the talks.

Anak Agung insisted on his reading of events causing some Dutch interviewers to raise the question as to whether the so-called Sukarno telegram only existed in Luns’s imagination. In an interview with the Dutch scholar Hans Meijer, an emotional Anak Agung called Luns a liar. 124

In fact a search for this telegram in the Rijksarchief and the archives of Buitenlandse Zaken by Hans Meijer, and also by this author, proved fruitless. Luns was never willing or able to show a copy and argued that a great part of his dealings during the conference had been written on pieces of scrap paper and no records had been kept. It all sounds a little too glib. The truth only came out in 1971 in a letter from Drees to Anak Agung, published posthumously by request, in which he frankly confessed that Luns had been mistaken and that there had been no telegram from Sukarno. 125

Still the support for Luns from Drees and the cabinet did not waver. Luns was a Realpolitiker who, when necessary, saw truth as a malleable commodity. There is further ample evidence for this in his subsequent diplomatic dealings regarding the West New Guinea question. To put all the blame on Luns would be too harsh. After all his machinations would be put into the shade when compared with players in the great league like Foster Dulles, Krushchev, and even Sukarno. But to the Indonesians he became persona non grata having lost all credibility. On the other hand, in view of the existing overwhelmingly anti-Dutch temper in the country and a tottering Harahap cabinet, even a successful outcome in Geneva would have been short-lived.
The Harahap cabinet went immediately into damage control and on 14 February told High Commissioner van Bylandt that it unilaterally repudiated the union, and on 21 February informed the Netherlands government that the union as well as all other RTC agreements were null and void.

The Netherlands parliament and the Dutch community, almost as a whole, accepted as gospel truth Luns’s explanation that the Indonesian government had orchestrated the demise of the Geneva talks in order to create an excuse to demolish the RTC agreements and the last special bond between the two nations. The only dissenting voice came from the Netherlands Communist Party.

In Indonesia this discarding of the last colonial ties with the Netherlands set off general applause and enraptured eulogies, particularly in the leftist press. Still, Sukarno accused the Harahap government of having, as a caretaker cabinet, overstepped its mandate and refused to sign the order. The honour of officially annulling the RTC agreements was allotted to the second PNI-led Ali Sastroamijoyo cabinet that took office on 20 March 1956. Both the Masjumi and the NU had been allotted Ministerial posts, but power was leaning toward the PNI, causing a difficult and labile political situation.

The final curtain: 1956-1958

Antagonism against the Dutch grew more intense and diplomatic contacts in Jakarta were further polarised and kept by the Indonesians to a minimum. For the first time the Indonesian government was not represented at the Netherlands Queen’s birthday reception. The Ali government, trying to put the thumbscrews on the Netherlands regarding West New Guinea, refused an exchange of ambassadors and lowered diplomatic representation to consular level. With this slap in the face Jakarta wanted to show The Hague that it no longer held a special place in Indonesian affairs and had been reduced to a minor player. To put
salt in the wounds, the Dutch acting chargé d'affaires was told by Foreign Minister Abdulgani that he must change his title simply to diplomatic representative to indicate the absence of a normal diplomatic relationship. All this, of course, was intended to cause the Netherlands as much embarrassment as possible, no doubt leaving an indelible impact especially on the Javanese feudal psyche and resulting in an even greater loss of respect among the masses for their former colonial masters.

The demolition of the Dutch economic position continued and, on 4 August 1956, the Indonesian government repudiated the large debt burden it had been bequeathed in 1949, arguing that it was unwilling any longer to repay debts incurred by the Dutch to stage their military campaigns during the Indonesian freedom struggle. In fact, Indonesia had already paid back substantial amounts: 450 million guilders of a total of 743 million guilders of 1935 and 1937 loans; 3.3 million guilders representing the whole of the Indonesian portion of the 1896 Netherlands state debt; and 26 million from a total of 44 million in loans from the Nederlandsche Bank and the Javasche Bank.

The anti-Dutch campaign was continued, although it lost some of its momentum as the government was forced to direct most of its attention to deal with a number of extremely serious political, economic and military problems besetting the country. The factional troubles in the armed forces that had erupted into the open during the 17 October 1952 coup against the government had never been fully healed. The Piagem Yogyakarta of 1955 had only plugged the fissures temporarily.

Owing to its bad record in civilian-military relations the return to power of the Ali government in 1956 was received with open hostility in most of the officer corps. Ali’s decision to take over the Defence portfolio himself was felt to be an affront by the military hierarchy as the earlier debacle caused by his handling of the army commander appointment was still fresh in the mind. To make matters worse the Ali government continued on its earlier happy way committing corruption as a matter of
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course. So the takeover of Dutch and Chinese stevedoring firms, envisaged in 1954 and put into effect in May/June 1956, resulted in the division of the spoils among the main coalition partners and also encouraged corruption in the allocation of other government grants of funds and credits. Moreover, the disastrous economic policies of the Ali government and the insufficient funds allocated to armaments, army housing, together with deteriorating living conditions of soldiers, caused widespread resentment and a threat of rebellion in the armed forces.

The anti-government action started in the Siliwangi division with the arrest of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ruslan Abdulgani, on a charge of corruption. It was only due to the intervention of the army commander, General Nasution, that a release could be effected. It was not only corruption but also the Javanese hold on national affairs that had motivated a number of Sundanese high Siliwangi officers to move against the Ali government. Implicated in the plot was Colonel Lubis, moved from his post as deputy army commander to replace Colonel Simbolon in North Sumatra. General Nasution was able to outwit the main plotters and the plan to move rebellious units into Jakarta failed. Still, Colonel Lubis had been able to escape and remained on the run pushing for the Ali government to be replaced by a Hatta-Sultan-led business cabinet and the armed forces command to be put in the hands of younger officers.

On 1 December 1956, Vice-President Mohammad Hatta resigned in protest of the ever-growing impact of Sukarno’s anti-democratic actions. Long seen as the champion of the interests of the areas outside Java, this action was also seen as support for the grievances of islands such as Sumatra and Sulawesi about being deprived of the use of their export income for their own economic development by the policies of the corrupt and wasteful Jakarta government. The long-simmering ethnic resentment against Javanese imperialism since the abolition of the federal system was now reaching boiling point. In November 1956, the military in West Sumatra established a Banteng Council which,
on 20 December, announced it was taking over the government of West Sumatra, Riau and Jambi. Without wishing to secede from the republic it would now export its produce directly. Similar revolts occurred in North Sumatra and South Sumatra.

This situation of general unrest and growing discontent, with falling living conditions and ever-increasing corruption touching all layers of society, provided President Sukarno with the opportunity to break out of his constitutional cage by blaming the country’s ills on the Western system of parliamentary government and calling for its abolition. On 21 February 1957, Sukarno revealed to a large gathering of political party leaders his grand plan for fundamental constitutional change and in this Konsepsi proposed to replace the unworkable, and unstable Western democratic model, bestowing power on the basis of ‘fifty per cent plus one’ of votes, by a system of ‘guided democracy’. As the name suggested this was a travesty of democracy as it was partly a Javanese-coated version of the ideal of the corporate state of the 1920s and 1930s. Political participation was to be diffused over all political parties, including the PKI, and functional groups of workers, intellectuals, artists and military personnel. Towering above all this stood Sukarno himself, possessing dictatorial power, ‘guiding’ the nation towards a millennium of milk and honey (zaman emas) in which prosperity and social justice for all would prevail. He gained most of his support from the PKI which, through Sukarno, tried to protect its ever-increasing popular support since the 1955 elections, and from the PNI which, being attacked from all sides, tried to secure presidential support to shore up its position. Strongly opposed by the Masjumi, PSI, and the other political parties and portions of the armed forces, the fundamental changes proposed by Sukarno, particularly the legalisation of and accommodation with the communists, led, in 1957 to 1958, to open rebellion against the Jakarta government.

In direct response to Sukarno’s Konsepsi, Lieutenant Colonel Sumual, the army commander of East Indonesia, declared a state
of emergency cutting all ties with the Jakarta government and issued a Piagam Perjuangan Permesta (Charter of Common Struggle), which demanded far-reaching regional financial autonomy, and a fair share of development funds and Japanese war reparations. Moreover, the centralist and Javanese imperialist policies of the Jakarta government had to be abolished with more powers to be transferred to regional and provincial governments. Sukarno’s proposed National Council would only be acceptable in the form of a senate, with 70 per cent of members being regional representatives. Finally, a Sukarno-Hatta-led cabinet, with a guaranteed five-year term, was to be formed and the army leadership be passed on to younger officers selected according to the principles laid down in the Yogyakarta Charter.129

On 14 March 1957 the Ali government, unable to act effectively in this anarchical situation, resigned after having first declared a state of emergency and putting the country under martial law. This left the army commander, General Nasution, to deal with the rebellion unimpeded. Sukarno was now also provided with much more leeway to pursue his political ambitions. On 14 April 1957, as ‘private citizen’ Sukarno, he formed a business cabinet under Djuanda Kartawijaya, a non-party Sundanese politician. Dr Subandrio, a career diplomat and former PSI member, was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Chaerul Saleh, a follower of Tan Malaka under the Revolution, was allotted the portfolio of Veterans’ Affairs. Military officers were appointed respectively to head the departments of Health and Navigation. The communists were represented by the BTI, the Peasants Front. Full national participation, however, was not achieved owing to the refusal of the Masjumi and the Partai Katolik to join, thereby leaving a large opposition bloc intact particularly in the Outer Islands. A major task imposed by Sukarno on the new cabinet was to put his plans for constitutional remodelling into motion and on 12 July 1957 the National Council, as envisaged in the Konsepsi, was set up. It was headed by Sukarno and the second in charge was the PNI stalwart Ruslan
Abdulgani, a former high school classmate of the president, who later, during the heyday of the guided democracy period in his capacity of Minister of Information, masterminded and directed the vast Sukarnoist indoctrination program. One of the first acts of the National Council was to call a *musyawarah nasional*, a vast meeting of all political parties in order to reintroduce sanity into the political and economic morass. It resulted into a grand talkfest that, apart from some vague general resolutions, did not come up with any meaningful breakthroughs.

On his part, General Nasution, with his support based mainly on the ethnic Javanese Diponegoro and Brawijaya divisions and a far less enthusiastic Siliwangi division, initially desisted from using force and pursued a strategy of diplomacy, trying to talk the various rebellious warlords and their units back into the fold. Nasution’s hopes of finding a solution through patient negotiations were shattered on 30 November 1957 by an assassination attempt on Sukarno when he was leaving a prize-giving ceremony at a school in Cikini (Jakarta) where his eldest son and daughters were pupils. Sukarno escaped unhurt but eleven people, mainly children, were killed and others badly wounded. The blame was put immediately on the Darul Islam, and later a group of Muslim fundamentalists from Sumbawa, one of the Lesser Sunda Islands, were charged. Nasution pointed the finger at the rebel Colonel Lubis, whose machinations, he charged, were the main source underlying the rebellions.

The whole conflict was further aggravated by the actions of PNI and PKI affiliated unions which, in December, supported by Sukarno, seized Dutch firms and plantations in protest at the failure of Indonesia’s bid in the UN to force the Dutch to hand over West New Guinea. The alleged Dutch support for the Darul Islam, the supposed assassins of Sukarno, the father of the nation, so strongly pushed in the recent Jungschläger and Schmidt trials, still remained deeply engraved on the popular mind. This leftist inspired takeover of Dutch assets was countered by the central army command under General Nasution, who appointed
Decolonisation and Nationalisation, 1950-1958

military caretakers of plantations and industries. Still, many politicians were taken by surprise with the speed of the Labor union actions. Even Ali Sastromijoyo admitted during an interview that although nationalisation was part of his government’s policy its execution had been planned to occur more gradually to avoid economic and social dislocation.

**Dutch profit and loss account – 1950-1958**

The financial contribution of Indonesia to the Netherlands home economy had remained substantial, although in percentage terms it had, by 1957, been reduced by more than half. This lowering of the rate at which Indonesia helped to fill the Netherlands coffers was not only due to the Jakarta government’s attempts to weaken the Dutch hold on the national economy, but should also be seen in the context of the fact that in the period 1949 to 1955 the Dutch national income itself had almost doubled from 13.6 billion guilders to 24.6 billion guilders at current prices, as a result of increased intra-European trade and a very successful industrialisation policy.\(^{130}\) Hence, by 1957, the strength of the Dutch home economy was far less dependent on its former imperial ties than had been the case in the immediate aftermath of World War II. So Indonesia’s nationalisation of the vast Dutch economic sector, although no doubt painful to Dutch investors did cause, to the great chagrin of the Indonesian left, less damage to the Netherlands than to Indonesia itself. In 1948, Indonesia had accounted for 6.3 per cent of the Netherlands national income, as compared to 7.4 per cent in 1938.\(^{131}\) This ratio, however, increased again until 1953 and then began to fall until it reached 2.9 per cent in 1957.

The data opposite are based on calculations from the Netherlands Central Bureau of Statistics. Owing to duplication in the figures the value of exports was reduced by 50 per cent, the actual total value of exports to Indonesia being represented by part of factory profits, trade profits and freight. The figures under
### Indonesian contribution to Netherlands National Income

In million Guilders

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<tr>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Exports from the Netherlands</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Processing of Indonesian Products</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Transit Trade</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Profits, dividends, interests, and other capital incomes</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Freight (ship and air), cash surpluses</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Pensions (government and private), insurance premiums, assignments, office costs</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Savings of Dutch employees</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Oil Industry</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Customs Duties</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Added Income (70% of items 1 - 9)</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. % of Netherlands National Income</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
category 2 represent the value added to imported Indonesian primary produce, estimated at 30 per cent of the import value. Category 3, transit trade, consisted of goods transported via both the Netherlands and non-Dutch ports through Dutch trade channels. In the case of Dutch ports of call considerable income was engendered through, freight, insurance, port costs, commissions, and trade profits. In foreign ports income consisted mainly from trade profits, and bank and freight charges. The added (secondary) income under category 10 was calculated from 70 per cent of primary income from Indonesia.

In essence an important trading relationship between the Netherlands and Indonesia continued. Indonesia exported almost totally untreated primary produce to be processed in Holland and other industrial countries. Most of Indonesia’s exports, however, were destined for other countries. In 1949 the imports of Indonesian produce into Holland was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Tonnes</th>
<th>% of Total Imports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copra</td>
<td>177000</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Kernels</td>
<td>9900</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tin Ore</td>
<td>24200</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cinchona Bark</td>
<td>1619</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Oil</td>
<td>60356</td>
<td>87.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubber</td>
<td>9615</td>
<td>97.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco</td>
<td>3150</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapok</td>
<td>2957</td>
<td>74.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1952 more than 50 per cent of imports into Indonesia went via the four biggest Dutch trading firms and eight Dutch export firms accounted for 60 per cent of export.¹³³

Despite all the problems caused by the lack of security, wage demands, squatting on plantation lands, and government engendered obstacles, as a whole the Dutch business sector had managed to make considerable profits. As a result of the Korean War the prices of oil and rubber, and to a lesser extent other prod-
ucts, showed a steep increase enabling most firms to cope with the doubling of wages. In 1950, many larger estates started to pay out dividends, varying between 4 per cent and 9 per cent, and in case of the Nederlandse Handelsmaatschappij reaching 10 per cent and in 1951 even 12.5 per cent, accounting for half of the 400 million guilders transferred to the Netherlands in 1950. Also the ‘the big five’ Dutch trading concerns, Borsumij, Internatio, Jacobergh, Geo-Wehry, and Lindeteves, which controlled most of the import and export business, were making profits. It was generally recognised in Dutch industrial circles that, despite great difficulties, many Dutch firms had been able to make more profits and to transfer more foreign exchange than for many years previously. For example, in East Sumatra in 1953, tobacco, rubber and palm oil production had increased by 50 per cent compared to 1949 and dividends were higher than in 1938 to 1940. In 1954, profits transfers to the Netherlands were 100 per cent higher than in 1953. Dutch business in Indonesia in the period 1953 to 1956 is estimated to have made a profit of about 1 billion guilders, and between 1954 to 1957 close to 800 million guilders were transferred to the Netherlands.

It was yet again the remaining small family-run plantations, already reduced in number in the late 1940s after their inability to rehabilitate their holdings from war damage and attacks by robbers, which were now hard-hit by the wage explosion and were forced to sell or even abandon their properties. Most of these ended up in the hands of Chinese and Indonesians or larger Dutch concerns. As a result, the Dutch control of the estate sector had declined from 63 per cent in 1929 to 51.3 per cent in 1951, and down to 43 per cent in 1952. In the period 1950 to 1957 in Java alone, 120 Dutch plantations were sold.

Nonetheless, new Dutch company investment in Indonesia in the period 1946 to 1957 still amounted to the sizeable sum of 892 million guilders, consisting mainly of profits made in Indonesia. This preference for ploughing back profits rather than drawing from overseas sources had to do with an overvalued
rupiah rate, and further surcharges and taxes that pushed the effective foreign rate to the point that money transfers lost their attraction. Most of this investment was used to rehabilitate existing plantations and other industries ravaged during the Japanese occupation and the Revolution.141

In 1947 the Department of Finance estimated private Dutch investment in Indonesia globally at between 5 and 6 billion guilders, representing 11.4 per cent of the Netherlands national wealth, a fall of 1.6 per cent compared to 1938.142 Van Esterik, however, mentions a large total of 1.5 billion guilders of Dutch investment during 1950 to 1957 alone, which probably included government loans.143 The accumulated stock of Dutch investment in Indonesia has been estimated by van der Eng at 3.1 billion guilders for 1947 and 4.5 billion for 1957.144 A Dutch official calculation in October 1955 put the stock accumulated of investment in Indonesia at 4.9 billion guilders, consisting of 4.01 billion guilders of private capital investment and 902 million guilders of public debt owing to the Netherlands state and private bond holders.145

In 1966 the Netherlands government claimed 4.5 billion guilders of compensation for the Dutch business interests nationalised in 1957 to 1958, consisting of 3 billion for private companies and 1.5 billion for outstanding government loans and public debentures. All the Indonesian government was able and willing to agree to was a payment over a thirty-year period of 600 million guilders leaving the Netherlands with a massive loss of close to 4 billion guilders.

Total losses were incurred by the Netherlands treasury, as well as smaller plantations and industries that were short of capital and therefore unable to move their operations outside Indonesia. Affected this way, for example, were mining firms and public utilities (electricity, gas, water, and tramways). On the other hand, most of the larger plantations, banks, and trading firms had been able to take precautionary measures by creating emergency funds, and from the early 1950s had been moving most
of their new capital investments offshore, mainly to Africa, and South America. The large inter-insular Dutch shipping company KPM had, in 1950, decided to stop long-term investment in Indonesia; the existing fleet was not being renewed and necessary extra ships were chartered. Capital was transferred as much as possible offshore and new ships were only used for new international routes. In fact the attempt to nationalise the KPM vessels largely failed as most of them managed to escape, while those ending up in Indonesian hands had finally to be released as the Indonesian government was presented with an enormous insurance compensation bill which it was unable to pay.146

After the transfer of sovereignty in 1949 all the trading companies had started to internationalise their operations. For example, Borsumij had, by 1957, managed completely to reverse its dependence on Indonesia from 70 per cent to 30 per cent. Large plantation concerns had reduced their pattern of replanting from the normal 4 per cent to 2 per cent, and the largest producer of rubber and tobacco, N.V. Deli Maatschappij, had reduced its stake in Indonesia from 53 per cent in 1947 to 31 per cent in 1956. The air carrier KLM, although hurt by the loss of its Indonesian operations, as a large international concern was able to weather this storm comfortably, paying out in 1958 the same 7 per cent dividend as in 1957. Other firms tried to save their skins by paying out high dividends, such as the Escompto Bank, which increased its rate from 7 per cent in 1955 to 25 per cent in 1956. But not all estate companies had taken measures in time to prevent their total ruination.147 Dutch firms were also allowed by the Netherlands government to compensate their losses by taxation concessions.148 The 4.5 billion guilders loss account presented by The Hague to Jakarta in 1966 in reality only showed the nominal worth of Dutch assets in 1957 to 1958. In fact, it has been argued that this had only theoretical value as a number of large concerns such as the Nederlandsche Handel Maatschappij, since 1950, had been writing off their total Indonesian investment down to 1 guilder; and it is suggested that the
real loss lay closer to a sum between 500 to 750 million guilders. In addition, in 1966 the actual value of former Dutch plantations, factories, offices, and housing had seriously decreased through neglect and mismanagement to the extent that most former owners showed no interest in reclaiming them.

Nationalisation proved to be a two-edged sword. In 1953 and 1954, Dutch firms paid 1233 million guilders to the Indonesian treasury, accounting for about 65 per cent of the total Indonesian taxation revenue, and oil exports created 25 per cent of the nation’s foreign exchange income. After nationalisation, Indonesian exports of main commodities, including oil, fell from $955.1 million in 1957 to $696.4 million in 1963, causing serious financial and economic repercussions which, together with increasing corruption and Sukarno’s economic mismanagement, pushed the nation into bankruptcy.

In human terms, on the Dutch side the hardest hit groups were many Eurasians and those Dutch families born and bred in Indonesia, who considered the country as their fatherland, and as victims of the colonial debacle were now forced to leave. Most of them ended up in the Netherlands, but a sizeable number also migrated to Hawaii and California. Australia, relatively speaking, took only a few Dutch refugees from Indonesia as admission largely depended on skin colour.

The Dutch policy on West New Guinea was certainly responsible for speeding up the final destruction of the Dutch economic preponderance in Indonesia. But on the other hand, in view of the radical, leftist, political forces at work at the time, an earlier handover of the territory to Indonesia would not have stopped the nationalisation process.

Notes
2. BUZA, Hoge Commissaris aan de Minister voor Uniezaken en Overzeese Rijksdelen, 7 Maart 1951, no 9262/G.S.1090/1210.
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Commissaris. Memorandum, 3 Maart 1951.
8. De Moor, op. cit., p. 47
9. ibid., p. 48.
10. ibid., p. 48.
14. BUZA, Uittreksel Notulen Ministerraad d.d. 27 Februari 1950, Geheim Mrd. no. 286.; See also Memorandum van Stikker aan DOA, 7 Maart, 1950.
25. ibid., p. 27; Feith, 1962, p. 70.
27. Palmier, 1962, p. 79.
30. BUZA, Resumé 17 Januari 1950 van de vergadering van de dagelijksche besturen van de ALS, ZWSS en CPV. met de Ondervoorzitter
der Bonden. reh. 21542-1776.

31. ibid., Memorandum inzake georganiseerde geldinzamelingen, 26 Januari 1950.

32. BUZA, J.G. van ‘t Oever, voorzitter ALS/ZWSS aan Jhr. Mr W.J. de Jonge, Voorzitter van de Federatie van Verenigingen van Bergcultuur-Ondernemingen in Indonesië Jan. 1950, 15992-1366G.

33. BUZA, J.G. van ‘t Oever aan de Jonge, no.5, 2 Februari 1950.

34. ibid.


38. BUZA, J.G. van ‘t Oever aan W.J. de Jonge, 5 Juni 1950, V.V./nr. 36; BUZA, Memorandum van van Eldik aan Chef DOA/IN. 30 Juli 1950.

39. BUZA, Maarseveen aan Hoge Commissaris, 18 November 1950, ref. no. 22043. Geheim.


41. Dr Mustopo, a Dutch-trained dentist, head of the Army dental service and military adjutant of President Sukarno.

42. BUZA, Voorzitter van de Ondernemersbond voor Indonesie, 24 Januari 1951. Memorandum over de invloed van partiële zowel als algemene stakingen op de productie der ondernemingscultures gedurende 1950 en over de eerste weken van 1951; Min. Uniez. aan Minister-President 4 Juni 1951, op. cit.


44. Meijer, op. cit., pp. 247 and 265, note 86.


46. BUZA, Codetelegram 737. Lamping 22 January 1951, Ref. no. 273
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1119; Voorzitter van de Ondernemersbond voor Indonesië. 24 Januari 1951. Memorandum over de invloed van partiële zowel als algemene stakingen op de productie der ondernemingscultures gedurende 1950 en de eerste weken van 1951.


48. BUZA, Hoge Commissaris aan de Minister President, de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, aan Drs Moh. Hatta. Ar. no. G.3102, 24 Februari 1950.

49. BUZA, Ministerie voor Uniezaken en Overzeese Rijksdelen aan Kabinet, Letter O76 Geheim, GS7223x, 6 September 1950.

50. BUZA, Hoge Commissaris aan Buitenlandse Zaken, 29 October 1951, Geheim S 5386-5867.

51. BUZA, Hoge Commissaris aan de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, no. 44047/GS 5913/6712. Onveiligheid der ondernemingen. 1 December 1951.

52. BUZA, Hoge Commissaris aan Minister van Uniezaken en Overzeese Rijksdelen, 29 January 1952, Geheim ref. 1298, Codetelegram 356.

53. BUZA, Hoge Commissaris aan Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken, 7 Maart 1952, Geheim 13584/GS 1227/1098.

54. BUZA, Lamping codebericht 33 and ref. no. 7654, 9 Juli 1952.

55. BUZA, Lamping codebericht 86 ref. 8555, 6 August 1952.


57. Meijer, op. cit., p. 190, note 162.

58. ibid.

59. ibid., p. 469.

60. BUZA, gs/1945-1954/170. Memorandum van DOA/IN no. 577.


64. Yamin, nd.


67. ibid., pp. 301-3.
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68. ibid., pp. 341-43.
69. ibid., p. 387.
70. BUZA, C.J. Valk, Kolonel van de de Chef van de Generale Staf van de Chef van de Generale Staf. Hoge Commissariat. Militaire Attaché no. 9028/GS.1082.3 Maart 1851; De Staatssecretaris van Buitenlandse Zaken aan de Voorzitter en leden van de RAVI, DOAV. In no. 30769/2888 GS. Zeer geheim, 5 Mei 1951.
72. ibid., pp. 390-91.
73. ibid., p. 391; Schoonoord, 1990, pp. 65-7.
75. Penders and Sundhaussen, op. cit., pp. 81-90; BUZA, Lamping aan Min. Buitenlandse Zaken, 26 September 1952. Ref no. 11192; 98577-5972 GS.
77. Meijer, op. cit., p. 422.
78. Interview with Ali Sastroamijoyo, January 1975.
82. ibid., p. 452, note 89.
85. ibid., p. 20.
86. Meijer, op. cit., p. 468.
87. ibid., pp. 541-42; Schmidt, 1961; Beynon, n.d.
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89. BUZA, Minuut, 7 September 1950. DOA/IN/Redacteur v. Eldik. briefno. 90019-7274GS.
91. Paauw, 1963, p. 204, Table 17.
92. Higgins, op. cit., pp. 150, Table II, and 157, Table VII.
93. ibid., p. 3.
94. ibid., p. 23.
95. Paauw, op. cit., p. 204, Table 17.
98. Feith, op. cit., p. 373.
101. BUZA, Hoge Commissaris, 10 Juli 1954, 57087/GS.4243/3149, 89135-4145 GS.
103. BUZA,GS/1945-1954-613.211.0 Indonesië-Handelspolitiek deel 1 1949-1954. Received 30 August 1954. 107524-4880.
104. BUZA, Dr H.M. Hirschfeld aan Mr J.M.A.H. Luns, 6 April 1954, no. 44.163.Codig/1945-154/2046.
106. ibid., pp. 441-45.
107. BUZA, van Ittersum, code telegram 657, ref.no. 12903, 26 November 1954.
109. BUZA, ref. 13025. HC-van Ittersum codetelegram 669, 30 November 1954.
110. BUZA, ref. no. 13168. HC-van Ittersum codetelegram 687. 3 December 1954.
111. BUZA, ref.no.13401. HC-van Ittersum codetelegram 701, 9 December 1954.
113. Penders and Sundhaussen, op. cit., pp. 94-6; and Ali Sastroamijoyo, op. cit., pp. 312-16.
115. BUZA, Luns to HC, ref. no. 5356.121171-465-GS. 5 September 1955.
116. BUZA, Memorandum no. 33. N.S.Blom, 7 April 1956.
120. BUZA, Hoge commissaris aan Luns, codetelegram 234, 18 January 1956.
123. ibid., p. 47.
126. Meijer, op. cit., p. 543-44.
133. Meijer, op. cit., p. 351.
134. ibid., p. 265-66, note 87.
135. Van Esterik, op. cit., p. 103.
137. Van Esterik, op. cit., pp. 133-34.
139. Meijer, op. cit., p. 265, footnote 86.
142. BUZA, Minuut 7 September 1950, op. cit.
143. Van Esterik, op. cit., p. 103.
144. Van der Eng, op. cit., p. 21, Table 5.
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145. BUZA, Memorandum no.162, 12 October 1955, van DBI/EF
     DVB/VO (Mr Brink). Nederlandse investeringen in Indonesië.
147. ibid., pp. 594-97.
148. Clerx and Stevens, op. cit., p. 11.
150. BUZA, Memorandum no. 162, 1955, op. cit.
The Netherlands and West New Guinea

During the first Ministerial conference of the Netherlands union at the end of March 1950, the Indonesian delegation seems to have taken a rather low-key stand on the New Guinea issue, supposedly in response to an assurance by Minister van Maarseveen that the island, if for some time left alone and kept out of public attention, would eventually become Indonesian. It was decided to stage a special New Guinea conference later during the year. A Dutch-Indonesian commission was set up to prepare the groundwork for these negotiations, which included two Papuan advisers, Nicolaas Jouwe on the Dutch side and Silas Papare on the Indonesian side. The commission conducted a fact-finding tour of New Guinea from 17 May to 5 June. Only important population centres in the north, north-east, Merauke and Tanah Merah were visited, where meetings were held with prominent Papuan chiefs, colonial officers, political party leaders, and representatives of the Christian missions and private enterprise. But differences between the two sides proved to be so fundamental that the commission had to resort to producing two separate final reports.

The Dutch report started off by emphasising that political development in New Guinea had remained far behind other parts of Indonesia, where already, for thirty to forty years, people had been trained in democratic procedures and practice in various kinds of representative councils. So, the question as to whether the Pauans would be able to indicate in a democratic way if
they wanted to join Indonesia or not, could only be answered in the negative, and it was stressed that not only did the Netherlands take this position but also that Dr Hatta, during the RTC in 1949, had made this point.

It was for this reason the Netherlands had insisted, before signing the Linggajati Agreement, that it should be clearly laid down that New Guinea should be accorded a special status in regard to the Netherlands kingdom and to the United States of Indonesia. In this the Netherlands had been guided by its obligations under article 73 of the UN Charter, according to which those nations holding the responsibility of the administration of non-self governing territories, recognised that the interests of the inhabitants of those areas should be treated as paramount.  

During the RTC discussions, however, this argument had been dismissed, particularly by the BFO delegation, which had insisted that the predominant issue was the fact that New Guinea formed an inseparable part of Indonesian territory and that the question of catering for the interests of the indigenous population was only of secondary importance. Again the Indonesian members of the commission took the same position, arguing that Indonesia held unquestionable sovereign rights over the territory and discussions about this and the condition of its people were both irrelevant and inadmissible. The Dutch view that ethnologically and geographically West New Guinea belonged to the Pacific and was distinctly different from Indonesia proper was countered by Indonesian attempts to show the opposite by calling in the help of the disciplines of anthropology, linguistics, zoology and botany. In return, the Indonesian historical claims to the territory, which harked back to the old empires of Srivijaya and Mojopahit and the prerogatives of the Sultan of Tidore over parts of New Guinea, were dismissed by the Dutch as irrelevant; and it was stressed that the hold of Tidore on the area had always been tenuous and that the indigenous population had never shown any attachment or loyalty to the sultan. In fact, the population had only bad memories of the sultan and there had been
no protests whatsoever when, in 1949, the merely administra-
tive relationship had officially been broken. So the commission, rather than producing a workable com-
promise to speedily end the impasse, in fact seems to have aggra-
vated the situation. In any case, with the submission in August 
1950 of the commission’s report, Dutch-Indonesian relations had 
already soured to such extent that the possibility of solving the 
New Guinea problem quickly had already greatly receded. 
In the period immediately following the transfer of sovereignty 
in December 1949 two factors seem to have been crucial in de-
termining Dutch actions. Firstly, there was the continued exist-
ence of the same political configuration in parliament, which 
precluded the achievement of the target of the two-thirds ma-
jority of votes needed to transfer West New Guinea to Indone-
sia. Secondly, the original goodwill towards Indonesia shown by 
the Labour Party and a section of the powerful Catholic Party 
was rapidly ebbing away, caused by what was perceived to be 
the anti-Dutch actions and policies of Indonesian governments. 
Many parliamentarians and a large section of the Dutch public 
saw the dismantling of the federal government system as a per-
fidious act. This, together with the constant stream of reports of 
ill-treatment of Dutch citizens and damage to Dutch commer-
cial interests through sabotage, corruption, and labor unrest, 
caused Indonesia to be seen as untrustworthy. Moreover, nego-
tiations were considered to be a waste of time as agreements with 
Jakarta would not be worth the paper they were written on. The 
imposition of a Javanese-controlled central government over the 
whole of the archipelago had stifled regional and local rights, 
including the freedom of self-determination. It was exactly these 
rights which the Dutch-designed federal system had tried to pro-
tect and its demise acted to reinforce the West New Guinea lobby 
in parliament and to add new recruits to its cause. But, as Palmier has argued it was the composition in parliament that was piv-
otal to the decision to remain in West New Guinea. Doubtless 
also a minority of colonial diehards and a widespread moral
condemnation of the way Indonesia had scorned legal commitments also played a role, although Lijphart’s Volksgeist argument, laying the blame on supposed Dutch national traits of stubbornness and being sticklers for legality and religious morality, seems much overdone. These same traits can surely be found in many other nations, and an outstanding case in point is Lijphart’s adopted country, USA, that very much outstripped the Dutch in this area by its largely moral and religious motivated fervour, reaching hysterical proportions at some stages, setting itself up as the saviour and protector of the rights of man against the worldwide onslaught of the anti-Christ, the evil empire of communism. The syndrome of the American will to win at any cost has become almost proverbial.

All this tended to harden public opinion in the Netherlands regarding West New Guinea. In the most recent treatise dealing with the West New Guinea question, Hans Meijer repeats Lijphart’s argument that the dogged insistence on the part of the Dutch on the right of self-determination of Papuans was in general motivated not so much by considerations of principle but rather by emotional reactions to the Indonesian decolonisation process. Against this it must be pointed out that the protection of the rights of the various peoples and tribal areas of the Indonesian archipelago and the preference for a federal solution to an eventual Indonesian state was not new but dated back to the schemes for political development proposed after World War I by conservative figures such as Colijn. These ideas were still supported widely in the Dutch colonial world after 1945.

In May 1950, strong criticism of Indonesia in parliament, particularly from the Liberal Party, the CHU, and the third largest faction in the Lower House, the ARP, led to a motion of no-confidence, which, although beaten, still put the cabinet on the back foot. As a result Minister van Maarseveen announced that the government had not changed its view on the status of New Guinea and believed it should remain under Dutch control. Moreover, the parliament would be given the opportunity to
debate the issue before the commencement of the negotiations with Indonesia, scheduled for December. According to some commentators this concession by van Maarseveen was a costly mistake as it took away the initiative from the cabinet.11

At this stage, however, there still existed sufficient support in the major parties, including the KVP (Catholics) and Labour (PvdA), to go along the road of negotiations in the hope of reaching a workable compromise. This hope was dented by Indonesia’s rash action in abolishing the federal system.

Attempts by the government to control the damage were in vain as parliament was in an uproar and in no mood to listen to pleas for moderation. With the exception of some Labour members, whatever goodwill that may have existed towards Indonesia took a severe battering. Hence, the prospects of a real breakthrough in the forthcoming Dutch-Indonesian negotiations in December started to look distinctly dim, since the KVP also was changing its earlier willingness to compromise.12

Failure of Dutch-Indonesian negotiations on West New Guinea

During the conference, held from 4 to 27 December, the Indonesian delegation, led by the experienced Mohammad Roem, from the outset made any chance of success highly unlikely by insisting that West New Guinea by right belonged to Indonesia and therefore was not a matter open for negotiation. Indonesia was still willing to offer a number of concessions by leaving intact the existing Dutch predominance in the economic and financial field and giving preference to Dutch investment. Furthermore, Dutch civil servants would be able to remain and their pensions would be guaranteed, and the emigration of Dutch settlers and workers would be allowed. The work of Christian missions would also be safeguarded, and the local population would be given the opportunity to participate in the running of public affairs. A representative council would be established immediately and other measures would be introduced leading
to eventual autonomy. So, the Indonesians tried to beat the Dutch at their own game by taking them up on their loudly professed concern for the welfare of the Papuan people by leaving Holland in charge of most of the socio-economic development of the territory, albeit under official Indonesian rule. Finally, Roem demanded that the transfer of sovereignty should take place by the middle of 1951.\textsuperscript{13}

On its part the Netherlands, although continuing to adamantly refuse Indonesian claims, held out its own palliatives and agreed that the eventual act of self-determination should be preceded by a period in which both parties would be allowed to mount their own information campaigns. Indonesia would thus have the right to further spread its own culture and language, although political propaganda would remain out of bounds. More helpful, perhaps, was the suggestion to set up a joint supervisory body, either a New Guinea council or a Ministerial conference of the Netherlands union, in which matters touching Indonesia could be directly discussed. Finally, the self-determination process was to be restricted to the Papuan people and was to be jointly supervised. The Netherlands also undertook to prevent New Guinea becoming a refuge for pro-Dutch Indonesians.\textsuperscript{14} After consultations with his government Roem returned from Jakarta on 23 December with the message that Indonesia rejected the Dutch proposals and demanded that the transfer of sovereignty should occur by June 1951.

In parliament the West New Guinea question continued to be hotly debated. Some Labour members, including the former prime minister, Schermerhorn, advocated the transfer of the territory to Indonesia. The Labour parliamentary leader, van der Goes van Naters, having openly defended this kind of action, was forced to resign. As a whole the Labour Party and the Catholic Party supported the government’s handling of the issue and clearly rejected the Indonesian claims. The Liberal Party, however, was utterly set against any compromise at all. As a result Stikker resigned causing a cabinet crisis.
During an interview in 1973, the former prime minister, Drees, put the blame on the failure of the 1950 talks squarely on Indonesia, and particularly on Sukarno, who absolutely refused to compromise and even dismissed a Dutch face-saving formula to grant an autonomous status to New Guinea within the United States of Indonesia.15

The political composition of the new cabinet had hardly changed and was led again by Drees, while Stikker returned to the Foreign Affairs portfolio. On 17 March 1951, in an important announcement concerning the New Guinea problem, the government declared that in view of the existing configuration in parliament and the intransigence of Indonesia, the only sensible action in the meantime would be to continue the status quo. It was this so-called ijskast (refrigerator) formula which remained the basis of Dutch policy for most of the rest of the decade.

After the debacle of the December 1950 talks, the Indonesian government instituted a commission, under the leadership of the legal expert Professor Supomo to look into the possibilities of revising the RTC agreements in favour of Indonesian interests. The Hague government indicated agreement in principle to reopen talks, including a discussion on New Guinea, providing Indonesia would show sufficient willingness to compromise. New negotiations, which started in The Hague in January 1952, almost immediately foundered because of the Indonesian argument that according to the RTC agreements West New Guinea had always been legally part of the Indonesian state. The Netherlands again refuted this, but its suggestion to submit the matter to the International Court of Justice was dismissed by Indonesia on the grounds that the dispute was not judicial, but politically based. The Supomo delegation proposed that during the interval preceding the Dutch general elections in June 1952, New Guinea should be administered jointly by both countries. Unfortunately the Indonesian mission was called back abruptly to Jakarta owing to a cabinet crisis, and this proposal was never studied by the Dutch government.16
As a result of the 1952 Dutch general elections the centre of power moved more towards the right of the political spectrum. While the Labour Party (PvdA) gained three more seats, the Catholics (KVP) lost three seats to an ultra right, colonial die-hard, Catholic breakaway party, led by Welter, a prewar high colonial official and Minister of Colonies. The Labour-Catholic coalition, led again by Drees as prime minister, continued in office, and was now supported by the other protestant sectarian parties namely the CHU and ARP. The Liberals had moved to the opposition benches. This caused West New Guinea to become even more entrenched than ever as a source of division between the Netherlands and Indonesia. The Queen’s speech on the opening of parliament on 16 September 1952 made it clear that the ‘refrigerator’ policy would be continued. Significantly, now also the right of self-determination and the attainment of eventual Papuan self-government and independence were openly elevated to the status of official policy.

Two other important developments leading to a deepening of Dutch intransigence regarding West New Guinea were the appointment of Joseph Luns as Minister of Foreign Affairs and the growing criticism by the Labour party of the reigning anarchy and corruption in Indonesian political and economic life, which, it was believed, was clearly leading towards the emergence of a totalitarian state. This caused more Labour members to change their earlier preference for a Dutch withdrawal from New Guinea and to support the official government line. The rapid ascendency of Joseph Luns, an hitherto little-known career diplomat in Washington, to the apex of power as Foreign Minister, seems to have been more the result of the machinations of his soul mate, the powerful Catholic leader Romme, than the product of his own innate abilities.  

Indonesia and West New Guinea

The Netherlands West New Guinea policy of keeping the
territory out of Indonesian hands had been one of the factors responsible for a steady deterioration in relations between The Hague and Jakarta. It was the irredentist ranting of Sukarno and other nativist-inclined radical nationalists such as Mohammad Yamin that had succeeded in engraving on the national mind the return of West Irian to the fatherland as imperative. Greater Indonesia should be restored to the grandeur of the long-gone Madjapahit empire, that supposedly had pushed geographically into other parts of South-East Asia. Despite the lack of hard historical evidence for the existence of an earlier Indonesia-like nation state this mythical dream readily appealed to the Indonesian nationalist psyche. The vast majority of Indonesians believed that West New Guinea, as part of the former Netherlands Indies, should belong to its successor the Republic of Indonesia; and the continued existence of the Dutch colony of West New Guinea was felt to be a threat to Indonesia's national security. In interviews conducted by the author many Western oriented Indonesians stressed that they could not see why the Netherlands insisted on holding on to an economically under-developed and backward territory unless darker motives were at work.

The West Irian question had been driven to the brink by the PNI and PKI both of which had attached themselves to the Sukarno bandwagon. The West Irian campaign acted as a life-line to the leftist radical-nationalist and communist factions providing protection against the ever-increasing power of the military. As was related in the previous chapter, in 1954 renewed negotiations had been held resulting in the Luns-Sunario protocol. Another attempt by the Hararap government, during the Geneva negotiations in 1955, to come to some arrangement regarding New Guinea had failed, causing the lowest point to be reached in Dutch-Indonesian relations.

The Dutch position had by 1956 grown so irrevocable that parliament voted to have West New Guinea enshrined in the constitution as part of the Netherlands kingdom, emphatically
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closing off any avenues for Indonesia to find a solution by diplomatic means.

Growing criticism in The Netherlands about official West New Guinea policy

In the Netherlands, however, criticism against the official West New Guinea policy had been growing. The cry of big business and the Dutch community in Indonesia not to sacrifice the vast Dutch economic stake for the sake of a useless show of national grandstanding nevertheless failed to make an immediate impact on the government.

The first crack in the hitherto almost unanimous support for the government’s New Guinea policy occurred in 1956 and came from an entirely unexpected quarter: the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church. In the past it was this church that had provided most of the moral justification of the Netherlands colonial enterprise, and it had been its political counterparts: the ARP and CHU which had been the soul of the opposition to Indonesian independence. From the beginnings of the century the ARP had been the main architect of Dutch colonial policy with leaders such as Kuyper, Colijn, and Idenburg leaving their distinct imprints. After 1945 their rejection of revolution and the support of a policy of gradual social-economic Indonesian development remained in place and in 1949 Kuyper’s ideals of moral vocation and Christian guardianship towards underdeveloped peoples were continued in West New Guinea. Hence, great consternation was caused in the Dutch Calvinist world by ‘The Call for Reflection’ issued in June 1956 by the Dutch Reformed Church criticising the government’s West New Guinea policy for poisoning Dutch-Indonesian relations and driving the Netherlands into an untenable position internationally. The Netherlands was morally bound to do its utmost to get out of this existing quagmire, although everything possible should be done to guarantee Papuan rights. The synod wanted negotiations to be re-
started and dismissed Dutch historical claims and the profession of unselfish motives as too feeble to justify continued Dutch rule of West New Guinea. It questioned whether Dutch policies were genuinely directed at Papuan socioeconomic development, or whether lost national pride caused by the loss of the Indies played a role. It further argued that an artificial separation of West New Guinea from Indonesia, with which age-old relationships had existed, made Dutch insistence on a free choice rather suspect. Finally, the synod pointed out that the West New Guinea question was influenced by the vagaries of international politics and that Dutch rule could well have been terminated long before its Papuan policies had been able to come to fruition. The synod’s attack had its origins in an earlier draft report of the Missions Council of the Dutch Reformed Church that had expressed serious concern about the damage caused by the New Guinea issue to missionary work in Indonesia.\textsuperscript{18}

The ‘Call for Reflection’ had a devastating effect on the faithful, causing anger and refutation. The cabinet and parliament remained generally unmoved. Its major effect, however, was to open up national discussions, gradually leading to a wider demand for policy change. The first significant outcome was a petition signed by 116 mainly leftist and pacifist-inclined intellectuals, including many university professors, arguing that continued Dutch rule was not absolutely necessary to safeguard Papuan human rights, and political parties were urged to reconsider their positions and institute a commission to study and advise on adopting a more realistic policy.\textsuperscript{19}

Of crucial significance was the fact that some Labour Party ranks became disaffected and their latent uneasiness about the West New Guinea developments burst into open criticism during a party conference in early 1957. A situation developed whereby the Labour members of cabinet and those in the Second Chamber stuck to the official government line while Labour deputies in the First Chamber became very critical of the government’s West New Guinea policy and even advocated Dutch
abandonment of the territory in favour of international control. As a result of this split the party executive called on the Wiardi Beckman Stichting, the Labour Party research bureau, to prepare a study on the West New Guinea question. Its report appeared in July 1958 and rather than a UN trusteeship it favoured West New Guinea joining Papua-New Guinea and other adjacent islands into a Melanesian federation.20

The cabinet and most of the non-socialist factions in parliament remained unwilling to allow any fundamental change in its West New Guinea policy. In fact the Indonesian takeover of the Dutch economic sector at the end of 1956 and its final nationalisation in 1958, made reaction in the Netherlands even more bellicose and obdurate.

The USA and West New Guinea

By 1958, however, the USA started to exert its powerful influence over the whole of the West New Guinea issue, taking away most of the initiative from the Netherlands. The chance for the Dutch to realise their plans to guide the Papuans to nationhood and independence had in the last analysis always depended on Washington’s fiat. The extent of Australian support for the Dutch position was similarly dependent upon America.

The rights of the Papuans to national self-determination would normally have found general support from Americans. But the issue was pushed aside by the all-engrossing task and missionary zeal engulfing the USA in its anti-communist crusade. In this campaign to obliterate the Red anti-Christ and safeguard the all-powerful dollar the rights of the Papuans faded into insignificance.

From 1948 onwards after the Sukarno-Hatta government’s victory against the PKI in the Madiun rebellion, Washington had definitely placed itself on the Indonesian side. Pushing its traditional anti-colonial line the USA was supportive of the postwar revolutionary wave in which the European colonial states were
replaced by independent indigenous states. At the same time Washington tried to expand its historical open door policy designed to secure Western capitalist trade and investment ventures. With China on the verge of falling to the communist colossus, and Indo-China and Malaya at the risk of a similar fate, Indonesia, with its strategically crucial position straddling the South-East Asian trade crossroads, became an absolutely essential bulwark for the Americans to stop any further Soviet or Chinese southward aggression. In addition there was a further impetus to deny communists access to the vast, strategically vital, Indonesian stocks of rubber and oil.

In 1949 the military impasse in Java and Sumatra had largely been broken by Washington forcing the Netherlands to the conference table and to transfer sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia. Like the Dutch the Americans put their faith on the hope that the existing politically moderate Indonesian forces would remain in charge and lead the country gradually towards economic rehabilitation and development.

The insistence by the Dutch on keeping West New Guinea was only grudgingly tolerated by the Americans, but never openly supported. Initially Washington took a neutral stand and, keeping a low profile, tried to sail around the two cliffs of Dutch NATO membership and the all-important objective of keeping Indonesia anti-communist.

Immediately after the abortive Dutch-Indonesian conference in December 1950, a high State Department official told Dutch Ambassador van Roijen that it was deplorable for the Netherlands to risk good relations with Indonesia for a useless piece of territory. Although dismissing Indonesian claims on the territory as spurious and the threat to boycott Dutch business interests as pure blackmail he insisted that negotiations should continue out of fear of harming the moderate Natsir government and pushing Indonesian politics further to the left.21 So it was by no means clear that Washington, when put to the test, would openly support Dutch sovereignty over the territory.22 This was epitomised
in the American view that West New Guinea was of little value in the fight against communism as compared to the linchpin position held by Indonesia.

Certainly, any hopes still held by the Netherlands Department of Foreign Affairs about American support for the Dutch position received an unwelcome jolt when, in 1954, attempts to include West New Guinea in the SEATO treaty failed. It leaked out that Bonsal, director of the office of South-East Asian Affairs in the State Department had fully informed the Indonesians regarding discussions about SEATO between the Under Secretary of State Bedell Smith and Luns in Geneva, and had made clear to Jakarta that:

... our position is completely neutral concerning New Guinea. We do not want a trouble spot nor shall we take any action to strengthen the Dutch position here. The Dutch contribution to the defence of the South Pacific by including New Guinea is not important to us. Of course we will inform the Dutch of our defence plan in the South Pacific, they being a loyal member of NATO, but we are not interested in getting New Guinea to join ...23

In 1953 the State Department told a British embassy official in Washington that the USA had never considered the legality of the Dutch claim and did not have a position on this point.24

There was, though, a section in the State Department, including Bonsal and Allison, which wanted the USA to abandon its neutral stance and squarely support Indonesia on West New Guinea. American Ambassador Cochran, one of the main architects of the RTC agreements, in his last report on leaving his Jakarta post, had also emphasised the need for a settlement arguing that as the Dutch were only in West New Guinea temporarily, Indonesian friendship could be cultivated to the extent that the country could be included in a Pacific security system.25

Still, Washington maintained its non-committal stance, although it exhorted the Sastroamijoyo cabinet to put all its ef-
forts into socio-economic development and to leave the West Irian question in abeyance until it could demonstrate to the international community its ability to put its own house in order.²⁶

**Washington and Sukarno**

The Hague was deeply disturbed by the indifference of the USA to the ever-intensifying anti-Dutch atmosphere in Indonesia. The unilateral Indonesian abrogation of the RTC agreement in 1956 had not even caused a ripple in Washington. When this was followed by an announcement by Secretary of State Dulles of an imminent state visit to Washington by Sukarno, it caused a furious reaction in the Netherlands. A livid Luns and the national press accused Dulles of clearly having violated his often-stated neutrality principle. The Dutch reaction became vitriolic when a State Department official, Robertson, tried to parry these accusations by referring to Mao Tse-tung’s abrogation of all overseas debts and the imprisonment of innocent foreigners, including many Americans, and charging that this had apparently not stopped the Netherlands officially recognising the Peking regime.²⁷ These Dutch protests seemed to have little impact on the State Department, which categorised them as having only nuisance value. The Dutch stand on West New Guinea was irrelevant in itself but had to be endured for the sake of the NATO alliance.²⁸

The new American policy of establishing deeper friendly relations with recently independent and uncommitted Asian nations, of which Dulles’s tour and Sukarno’s state visit were a part, according to van Roijen did not affect USA neutrality towards the West New Guinea question. In fact, during his visit to Washington Sukarno had been spurred by Dulles into adopting a more conciliatory approach to the Netherlands by making it clear that the American policy on West New Guinea had not been changed.²⁹

Sukarno, though, tried to save his position by stating that in
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Washington he had gained the distinct impression that in the long run the USA would support the Indonesian claim on West New Guinea. This view was based perhaps on the assurances he had received from the pro-Indonesian faction of the State Department. In Indonesia the USA received another blast in the national press with the communists chalking up another winner and the communist *Harian Rakjat* thanking Dulles for clearly demonstrating that America belonged to the colonialist camp.30

During 1957 when Dutch-Indonesian relations were fast deteriorating, the passive policy of Washington towards the West New Guinea question began to be seriously criticised by its diplomats in the field. The first advocate for a change of direction was the newly appointed Ambassador to Jakarta, John Allison, who all along had been favourably disposed to the Indonesian claim, and now supported by his faction in the State Department wanted to help Indonesia into the saddle. He suggested that in view of the real danger that the West New Guinea issue would drive Indonesia into the communist camp, Washington should force the Dutch to the conference table. Allison’s package deal firstly envisaged the transfer of the territory to Indonesia on the condition that Dutch investments would be guaranteed. Secondly, the actual transfer of sovereignty would take place after five years during which period the USA would continue economic aid. Thirdly, also after five years, Indonesia would be associated with the ANZUS treaty, becoming a formal member. Bringing Indonesia into the Western security fold should satisfy Australia and stop its opposition to an Indonesian takeover. The deal depended on Sukarno’s efforts to deliver his part of the bargain by distancing himself from the communists. If he remained obdurate on this point then he should be forced out of office. Allison later claimed that the heads of Royal Dutch Shell and the Dutch Chamber of Commerce in Jakarta were supportive of his plan.31

The communists, though, were an essential part of Sukarno’s power play and the extent of his power was determined by his ability to keep in balance the major political forces in the coun-
try, that is to say the armed forces, Islam and the communists. The loss of one of these fundamental ingredients would seriously weaken his power and the structure of guided democracy. It was foolish to expect a vain and power-hungry individual like Sukarno ever to give up his dream of leading his people into a nirvana of social justice and economic prosperity. Certainly the State Department had far less confidence in Sukarno’s promises and absolutely rejected Allison’s plan, transferring him soon after to Prague.

**USA support for anti-Jakarta rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi**

As it stood, by the end of 1957 the American flirtation with Sukarno during his state visit was turning sour and the State Department was giving up on the ‘Washington of Indonesia’ and actively plotted his downfall. The outbreak of the anti-Sukarno and anti-central government rebellions in Sumatra and Sulawesi by moderate and more Western oriented politicians and anti-communist warlords was seen as a godsend to the State Department, which decided to lend active military support to the rebel forces.

Early in January 1958, Ambassador van Roijen was informed by the assistant secretary of Far Eastern affairs, Robertson, that the State Department had completely written off Sukarno and was stopping the delivery of arms to the central government until he had been removed from power. Asked about his most suitable replacement van Roijen pointed to Hatta, but warned that Sukarno’s support was still far too strong for him to be de-throned. Robertson also intimated that moderate Indonesian politicians had been told that their requests for USA support would only be granted after they had broken with Sukarno. Van Roijen was also asked about General Nasution and the rebel leadership and Robertson was very surprised to hear that, according to Dutch reports, the percentage of communists in the Indonesian armed forces corresponded to PKI electoral support.
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Any Dutch hopes that Washington’s discarding of Sukarno might result in more open American support for their West New Guinea position were almost immediately crushed as the American Embassy in The Hague insisted that the anti-communist struggle remain the main objective. The message was that the Netherlands should expect further American pressure in case a moderate Indonesian government wanted to discuss West New Guinea.33

The Dutch government for its part held great misgivings about the open support for the rebels by Secretary of State Dulles that would cause them to be depicted in Jakarta as puppets of foreign subversive elements. According to Luns the Americans had rushed in, severely compromising themselves towards Sukarno and the central government without being reasonably sure that a substantial turnaround in the Indonesian political situation could be effected. He argued that it was still an open question whether the rebellions in the outer islands would be lifted from their provincial level to incite the nation as a whole.34

Sukarno, with the PKI close on his heels to maintain the revolutionary fervour in the country, needed tangible results on West New Guinea and took a far more bellicose stance. Indonesian armed infiltration was stepped up and the Dutch feared that a full-scale invasion backed by Russian-supplied naval vessels and aircraft would be a distinct possibility.

Dutch demands for American military support in West New Guinea

The request by the Netherlands for a clear American military commitment in the case of a frontal Indonesian attack was not forthcoming. All that Dulles was willing to offer was a rather ambiguous statement to the effect that such an eventuality would not leave the USA indifferent. Attempts by van Roijen to obtain a more solid assurance from Dulles received the stock response that this would drive the anti- and pro-communist forces together
negating the effect intended by the direct support of America to the rebels. Nevertheless the Australian embassy in Washington reported that in effect Dulles had promised aid to the Dutch in the case of a major Indonesian attack.

The Dutch fears about a possible failure of the anti-Jakarta rebellion proved to be well-founded. After the successful landing and campaign of pro-central government troops in Sumatra and Sulawesi the rebel cause was doomed. This caused Washington to pull out all stops in Jakarta to repair the damage. As part of this conciliatory process and its continued efforts to steer Indonesia away from being trapped in the communist orbit also, a more pro-Indonesian stand emerged in American policy towards West New Guinea. Dulles told van Roijen in detail about the American help to the rebels and went on to stress that after the failure other ways had to be found to stop a PKI takeover. Any concessions that would help the pro-Western factions in Indonesia would have to be granted.

To smooth ruffled Dutch feathers, Ambassador Young, during a meeting with Luns on 28 May 1958, read aloud an explanatory telegram from Dulles that referred to an instruction to Howard Jones in Jakarta to make it clear to the Indonesian government that to maintain good relations with the USA depended on abstaining from military action against Netherlands New Guinea:

... the Dutch and Australian governments know officially that the United States of America would be greatly concerned about an Indonesian military attack on Western New Guinea ... the Dutch government need not now or in the future harbour any concern about the United States attitude towards an Indonesian military attack on Netherlands New Guinea ...

Obviously Dulles was, in these words, giving a much stronger commitment than previously and more credulous souls than Luns could be pardoned for taking American promises as genuine.

Still, the Dutch quest for an entirely unreserved American
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defence undertaking persisted. During an informal meeting with Dulles on 18 September at the UNO in New York, Luns reviewed the recent history of the American-Dutch relationship. Admitting that, compared with China and eastern Europe, the Indonesian problem was relatively less important to the USA, Luns emphasised that in contrast for the Netherlands the relations with Indonesia and the West New Guinea question were of crucial significance. As a long-time faithful ally in NATO the Netherlands was exceedingly disappointed with the lukewarm American support for the Dutch cause in Indonesia. Censuring the role of the USA in the Indonesian revolution and dismissing the UNCI as a failure he upbraided Washington for its unwillingness to demand that Indonesia pay damages claims for the nationalised Dutch business sector. Also, the recent American decision to deliver arms to Indonesia was attacked. Luns warned that the lack of a public American declaration of military backing for the Dutch could well entice Jakarta into staging an all-out attack on West New Guinea. Dulles replied that, on the contrary, the USA considered Indonesia to be of vital importance in the framework of the Western Pacific defence strategy. Indonesia was an absolutely essential link in the rather thin defence line stretching from Japan through Taiwan, the Philippines and New Guinea to Australia. The USA did not expect the Netherlands to give in to Indonesia on the question of West New Guinea. In return Luns replied rather tartly that in that case the Netherlands should surely not be expected to pull the chestnuts out of the fire singly.39 Ambassador van Roijen was less impressed by Dulles’s stand and confessed to Australian Ambassador Beale that he did not believe, as matters stood, the Americans would involve themselves militarily in West New Guinea. Beale seems to have been of the same opinion.40 Van Roijen’s appreciation of the situation was in fact born out by American actions during the following months.

In early October, President Eisenhower admitted to Luns that after the war the United States had pushed Indonesian independ-
ence too fast and was now reaping the bitter results. But he stressed that despite his mistrust of Sukarno and the Indonesian government he stood behind the State Department’s policies. Eisenhower, repeating Dulles’s assurances of American support in case of an unexpected Indonesian attack, recognised New Guinea’s strategic importance and indicated his total opposition to an Indonesian takeover.41

After the secret meeting with Eisenhower, Luns submitted a memorandum asking the USA to state equivocally that it would take all appropriate measures to stem Indonesian aggression against West New Guinea. This request was restated by Dulles in a draft statement emphasising that the USA was firmly opposed to the use of force to effect territorial changes whether this affected Taiwan or West New Guinea and comparable issues in other countries. Still he played down the possibility of an Indonesian attack pointing to the assurances of the Indonesian government that force would not be used.42 To a request from van Roijen for further clarification Dulles replied:

We are not in a position to make advance statements. I expect when it occurs, we would give you logistical support and find other ways to help you. You could count on the same patterns as we have shown in other parts of world. We acted, as you know, in Lebanon and in the Formosa Straits. But definite promises can not be given as prior authority of Congress is necessary ...43

Luns pointed out to the cabinet that American promises were stronger than before and believed that Dulles’s reference to the Formosa Straits could actually be taken as a kind of guarantee of American military support.

In January 1959, Luns told van Roijen that immediate guarantees for military help from America, Britain and Australia could not be expected. But he stressed that constant harping of the idea of an Indonesian invasion hanging as a Sword of Damocles over the Dutch might in the end produce the desired result from the Americans.44 As one recent Dutch commentator
put it: “Luns for years cherished Dulles promise of October 1958 like a young boy looking at his pet rabbit.”

In reality a different scenario was evolving as constant Dutch requests for Allied consultations to plan logistical support were steadily ignored on the grounds that the Dutch fear of Indonesian aggression was overstated. Luns’s suggestion to have units of the Seventh Fleet visit West Guinea ports as a deterrent to the Indonesians was brushed aside in Washington. In May 1959, Luns berated the USA for the miserly way it was treating one of its staunchest allies and threatened to leave NATO if military aid was not offered to the Dutch in West New Guinea. All the State Department was willing to do was to repeat its refrain of the American belief that an Indonesian attack was not imminent, thus making any American military involvement premature.

In June 1959, the Netherlands, in order to reinforce its West New Guinea defences, delivered a ‘shopping list’ to the Americans, which included twelve long-distance patrol planes, nine troop transport helicopters, two landing craft, and various other military items and stores. The American embassy in The Hague assured the Dutch cabinet of a sympathetic response by the State Department and added that, during the current Congress session, the American government would secure agreement on the delivery of nuclear power plants for Dutch submarines. But the matter shifted from the promised sympathetic review into another highly annoying case of procrastination. In July the new Secretary of State, Herter, indicated that the situation looked promising, though possibly not all items would be delivered. In reply Luns underlined that anxiety was rising in the Netherlands about the vast arms build-up in Indonesia that clearly had exceeded the need to maintain internal peace and order. A fortnight later Luns bitterly complained to Ambassador Young about America’s delaying tactics regarding the ‘shopping list’ and stated that the Netherlands might be forced to transfer military personnel and armaments from its NATO force to the Pacific. The vacillating policy of the USA government on the West New
Guinea issue continued until the advent of the Kennedy administration in 1961.

**Australia between Scylla and Charybdis**

Almost immediately after gaining power in December 1949, the new conservative Australian government went far beyond the earlier, fairly quiet, although persistent, prodding of the Labor government over West New Guinea, when it imperiously, and vociferously demanded that under no circumstances should the territory be surrendered to Indonesia. The new Australian Foreign Minister, Sir Percy Spender, in January 1950 during a visit to Jakarta, told Dr de Beus, a high official in the Netherlands High Commission and later Ambassador to Australia, that although he considered good relations with the newly independent Indonesian state to be of great importance, it was on the other hand absolutely vital to Australian national interests that West New Guinea should stay outside Indonesia. Spender made it clear to de Beus that he intended to tell the Indonesian government of the Australian position.51

Spender followed up this initial approach on 8 February 1950 with a formal note to the Dutch Ambassador in Canberra, emphasising that West New Guinea held the same vital strategic interests to Australia as Papua and New Guinea:

The Australian Government does not regard Dutch New Guinea as forming part of Indonesia. We believe that the peoples of West New Guinea have little in common, except a past common administration, with the peoples of Indonesia. Their developmental problems are separate and the level of political development necessitates placing them in a category quite different from the United States of Indonesia. In fact, we regard Dutch New Guinea as having much in common from an ethnic, administrative, and developmental point of view with our own territories of New Guinea and Papua ...
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Australia therefore was anxious to hold discussions with the Netherlands as quickly as possible about the future political status of New Guinea and asked to be kept fully informed about any Dutch-Indonesian negotiations about West New Guinea. Furthermore, if necessary, Australia was willing to offer financial help in the development and defence of the area.\(^52\)

When delivering this note to the Dutch embassy counsellor, Hasselman, Dr Burton again repeated the offer of substantial financial support and stressed that as Sukarno had publicly declared West New Guinea to be part of Indonesia it was high time for the Netherlands to reveal publicly their future plans regarding the area.\(^53\)

These rather impetuous Australian moves initially caused some considerable distrust among the Dutch, who still had fresh in their minds Australian activities during the Indonesian revolution, and feared that this might be a new example of unwanted meddling and interfering in internal Dutch affairs and even a renewal of Australian imperialistic expansionism.

An interesting illustration of this suspicion is provided in a dispatch of 15 February 1950 from Jakarta to The Hague by High Commissioner Hirschfeld, who stressed that the note, in addition to emphasising Australia's adamant opposition to an Indonesian takeover, also showed that it wanted to play a controlling role in West New Guinea. Thus he advised that while Canberra should be thanked for the Australian support of the Dutch cause, it should at the same time also be told that any attempts by Australia to obtain a direct say in political and security matters in West New Guinea would be extremely unwelcome, unless a reciprocal arrangement be offered regarding the Australian part of the island. As it was, this unexpected Australian initiative was seen as untimely, coming just when the political situation in Indonesia was still fluid, keeping alive the hope that fruitful Dutch-Indonesian cooperation could be achieved. Hence, it was hoped that Australia could be persuaded to postpone sending a similar note to Jakarta, at least until after the first
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Ministerial conference of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union in March had been concluded. This would prevent Indonesia from accusing the Dutch of having engineered this Australian move on West New Guinea. It was clear, however, that Hirschfeld considered West New Guinea relatively unimportant in the scheme of Dutch interests in the archipelago. Seen in this light he seems to have been quite willing for West New Guinea to be administered under the aegis of the Netherlands-Indonesian Union, or to transfer sovereignty to Indonesia in return for further concessions to the Dutch. He further warned that if the worst scenarios should eventuate and Dutch-Indonesian negotiations should fail, and the Netherlands government insisted on retaining West New Guinea, it would take massive investment to develop the territory properly. At the same time security would be seriously affected by Indonesian armed infiltration and internal political unrest. Finally, Hirschfeld pointed out that as support from USA and Britain would be highly doubtful, an assertion which history proved correct, a Netherlands-Australian partnership would not be able to muster the necessary international clout to maintain its position to any length. These were rather prophetic words, indeed!54

The Australian Foreign Minister, Spender, still continued to push the Dutch for a firm commitment on New Guinea. In late April 1950, he told Dutch Ambassador Teppema in Canberra, that Australia could no longer afford to sit idly by and wait for developments. He intended to make clear to Jakarta that it could not allow an Indonesian takeover of West New Guinea. Teppema’s pleas for Australia to wait until July, when the results of the New Guinea Commission would be known, fell on deaf ears. After Spender’s request for inside information on the frame of reference of the commission, and the nature of discussions held so far, was refused, Spender again stressed that Australia could no longer run the risk of being outstripped by events. He pointedly asked whether the Netherlands would be willing to transfer West New Guinea directly to Australia, or to make it into a
trusteeship territory either under Dutch or combined Dutch-Australian management. The ambassador replied that all this was very premature and could not be taken into consideration as in his view if ever a decision was taken to transfer the territory it would be to the United States of Indonesia. Finally Spender stressed that all efforts should be taken to avoid UN involvement as this would be harmful to Australian interests, and if it came to the point Australia would rather break off relations with the UN than to have to comply with its directions. Indeed this was a far cry from the passionate support of the UN by Spender’s predecessor, Dr Evatt.55

It was this Dutch stance that profoundly worried Australia, where political opinion was almost unanimously against the transfer of West New Guinea to Indonesia. The island was believed to be essential to Australian security and an important link in its northern defence cordon. It was a view reinforced by the threat posed by the victory of Mao Tse-tung in China in 1949, the Korean War, the Indo-China War, the Malayan Emergency, and the growing strength of communism in the Philippines and Indonesia. The traditional forward line defence policy was still paramount in Australian strategy, hence substantial Australian forces were involved in the Korean and Malayan campaigns. The fear of the yellow peril, this time in communist garb, pushing its way southwards came to the fore, causing in the 1950s and 1960s a kind of national neurotic reaction against communism. McCarthyism hysteria mounted against party members and fellow travellers who dared to attack or question the validity of the traditional colonial trinity of God, Queen and Country. It is only when viewed in this national frame of mind, nurtured by a terror of communism and a racist ultra nationalism, that the brash and emotional outbursts of Australian government Ministers, such as Sir Percy Spender, become understandable.

A few days after his stormy interview with Spender the Dutch ambassador signalled to The Hague that despite his attempts to calm matters in the Department of External Affairs, the politi-
cal atmosphere was so tense and emotionally laden that rash action could well occur. He feared that being unwilling to wait for the report of the Nieuw Guinea Commissie, Canberra might try to force the issue before the beginning of Dutch-Indonesian negotiations, and possibly would either hold talks with the Indonesians without reference to the Dutch, or would send a warship into New Guinea waters for a flag-showing exercise.56

In reply to the Australian note the Dutch Foreign Minister, Stikker, pointed out that Spender had misinterpreted the role of the New Guinea Commission, which in reality was only to report to their respective governments about possible ways and means for further negotiation. The commission had not been charged to provide any definite solutions. The Netherlands government was at a loss to understand Australia's change of heart only a few months after it had, in a successful manoeuvre, saved the RTC from ruination, by having the contending parties agree to further discussions on the West New Guinea question postponed until the end of 1950. Surely the Netherlands could not be expected to suddenly abrogate its obligations incurred under the RTC agreement, including the undertaking, of which the Australian government was fully aware, not to transfer sovereignty over West New Guinea to third party.57

Spender did not relent and, on 10 May 1950, informed the Dutch that a note regarding Australian concerns over West New Guinea would be handed to the Jakarta government the following week.58 Bipartisan support on the West New Guinea question in the Australian parliament is illustrated in a speech in early June 1950 by Dr Evatt, who, while acknowledging that the future of the territory was primarily a matter between the Netherlands and Indonesia, nevertheless insisted that Australia's vital interests also were involved and should be accommodated. Evatt argued that Australia's task in its own part of the island would be adversely affected by an Indonesian takeover of the western part. Presumably he was referring here to the probability of Indonesian revolutionary fervour jumping the border. He further
stressed that New Guinea was, ethnically, distinctly different from the rest of Indonesia, which precluded any validity to Jakarta’s claims and had in fact led the Netherlands to be invited to join the South Pacific Commission in 1946. Hence, Evatt claimed Australia had a right to participate in Dutch-Indonesian discussions, and a UN Trusteeship should be established either under Australian or joined Dutch-Australian control. But if the Netherlands decided to vacate the area, Australia, following well-established colonial practice, might consider offering to purchase the territory. 59

Still, the new Menzies government went much further in supporting a continued Dutch presence in the area than Labor had ever envisaged. The more conservative section of the Australian electorate had always been highly critical of the strong support from Labor of the Indonesian republic. The Liberal-Country Party coalition indeed went to some considerable lengths to ensure The Hague of its disapproval of Labor’s anti-Dutch policies and actions during the 1945 to 1949 period. For example, the Dutch consul in Melbourne, Colonel Wright, wrote to a Dutch diplomat friend:

Neither he (Menzies) nor myself, and for that matter the same applies to many thinking Australians, have any doubts as to the tragic errors of the previous government here in regard to their policy over the Netherlands Indies generally. I may assure you that Bob told me categorically that his government definitely would back the Dutch up to the hilt if they decided definitely to retain New Guinea. In my opinion the reason why Sukarno is making such an issue of this point is that he knows very well that once the Dutch are out of New Guinea all hope of ever getting back to any influence at all, of any nature worthwhile, in that part of the world, is gone. I think and hope on our side we also recognise that once Sukarno gets Dutch New Guinea, notwithstanding his protestations, he will not rest happy until he gets the Australian section under his control also ... 60
Prime Minister Menzies, in fact, did not hide his antipathy to Sukarno and publicly voiced his strong opposition to an Indonesian takeover of West New Guinea. In an interview with the Dutch representative to the UN in New York, he stressed his pro-Dutch stance during the period of Indonesian revolution and that he certainly had not changed his mind on that score. He welcomed Dutch immigration to Australia and stressed: ‘We want to retain you as our neighbours in New Guinea and want nobody but you. In no case do we wish the Indonesians to take over ...’

According to Menzies the Dutch should not be unduly worried about opposition in the UN and should take a leaf out of the book of South Africa and Israel, which had both been successful in defying the organisation’s demands. Finally, he was adamant that his government would continue to push its view also in Jakarta and made it clear that he did not trust Indonesian assurances regarding Australian New Guinea.

These Australian-Dutch diplomatic exchanges led to a meeting between Spender and Stikker on 29 August 1950. Stikker began by repeating that the Netherlands at that stage would be prevented from entering into definite agreements with Australia, because of its current commitment to conduct further negotiations with Indonesia. No doubt also, Stikker, who actually was disposed to give away New Guinea in order to safeguard and strengthen Dutch economic interests in Indonesia proper, saw Australian initiatives as unwelcome complications, which should be defused as quickly as possible. On his part, Spender reiterated that under no circumstances would Australia be prepared to tolerate a situation in which Indonesia would gain a foothold in New Guinea. Although no cabinet decision had yet been taken on this point he insisted that in the case of an armed Indonesian invasion or infiltration Australia would take up arms itself. Stikker replied that even if the Dutch government wanted to vacate New Guinea to Indonesia, this would be impossible as the required two-thirds majority in parliament required for such
a move would, in view of the ruling political configuration, prove to be unobtainable.

So, during forthcoming negotiations the Netherlands would maintain the status quo, which probably would cause the Indonesians to place the issue before the UN. Still Spender remained unsatisfied and argued for a united Australian-Dutch resolve to remain absolutely unmovable in their position regarding New Guinea. Realising that the active support of both Washington and London would be necessary, he undertook to lobby both governments by emphasising the high strategic value of the island in the Pacific defence system. Spender felt that Britain would be more responsive to this line of argument than the USA, as it wanted to protect its supply of foodstuffs from Australia and New Zealand. In addition the Americans, owing to the Korean War, had recently decided to extend their defensive line westwards below the Equator. Yet the most fundamental reason, according to Spender, underlying Dutch-Australian policy would have to protect the right of self-determination of the Papuans and their eventual achievement of self-government and independence. In addition, Spender argued, it was of crucial importance to insist that New Guinea belonged ethnically and geographically to the Australian sub-continent and not to Indonesia.

On the other hand it seems that some of the Dutch concerns had sunk in and Spender conceded that, in view of the forthcoming negotiations with Indonesia, it would be improper for Australia to become openly involved. This would have to wait until after the failure of talks, something of which he seems to have been quite confident. In the meantime Australia would offer the Dutch navy and merchant fleet full cooperation and the use of repairing and bunkering facilities, including those on Manus Island. Moreover, he suggested that informal machinery should be set up to facilitate the discussion of common defence, economic and socio-political questions. Furthermore, a concerted internationally staged public relations exercise should be mounted to propagate the Dutch-Australian stand on West New
Guinea. Rather significantly, feelers already put out by the Dutch for Australian support by the way of UNCI regarding the Ambon question, were countered by the argument that this was an internal Indonesian affair. Only when the American and Belgian members of the commission would be willing to approach the Indonesian government on the Ambon issue would Australia follow suit.62

Dutch sources continued to report about strong indications of Australian armed intervention in case of a Dutch withdrawal from West New Guinea. As an example, the Netherlands ambassador in Manila reported on 26 September 1950, that an Australian military intelligence officer, Second Lieutenant Weaver, had intimated to him that the Australian armed forces wanted to occupy West New Guinea as soon as the Dutch decision to withdraw had become known. The Japanese air raids on Darwin, Broome and Townsville, launched from airfields in Timor and New Guinea, were still fresh in the minds of Australians. Australian military authorities had pressed on Menzies their view that Australian security demanded immediate access to West New Guinea in order to maintain direct connections via Allied territory with American bases in east Asia. This might also make it necessary to put out of action possible enemy air and naval bases (such as in Morotai, Timor, and Surabaya), and to secure oil supplies from North Borneo and Indonesia itself. The Australian government, according to Lieutenant Weaver, was of the opinion that it would be impossible to conclude a military security pact with Indonesia, because of that country’s foreign policy of ‘active neutrality’ toward potential aggressors such as China, Russia and Japan. Australia, although fully aware that an invasion of West New Guinea would cause widespread international condemnation as had happened to South Africa after its occupation of South-West Africa, was still convinced that the demands of national security were so pressing that it had no alternative.63 On 7 November 1950, the Dutch Consul General in Singapore reported that the Australian representative, McIntyre,
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had handed a note to the governments of Singapore and the Malayan federation asking for their reaction to an Australian takeover of West New Guinea in case the Dutch decided to leave.64 This was followed by a report from Canberra about unnamed Liberal parliamentarians who considered Australian armed intervention unavoidable in the case of an Indonesian takeover and mention was made of a supposed offer to send Australian bombers to Biak on a ‘demonstration’ flight.65

The Dutch ambassador in Manila stressed that it would be profitable to the Dutch cause to impress upon the Jakarta government, by providing clear documentary evidence, that Australia’s position regarding New Guinea was irrevocable and went far beyond what was believed in some Indonesian diplomatic circles as to be Spender’s exaggerated bluster.66 It is doubtful whether Australian pressure at this stage substantially influenced the Dutch decision to stay on in West New Guinea.

Australians were even more adamant about keeping West New Guinea out of Indonesian hands than the Dutch themselves. In fact Canberra was rather worried about a possible Dutch withdrawal from the territory as the Dutch Labor Party in particular was initially only lukewarm about continued Dutch rule. Debates in the Dutch press and parliament were dutifully transmitted by Australian diplomats to Canberra. Initiatives by some Dutch Labor parliamentarians to have West New Guinea transferred to Indonesia caused Australian misgivings.67 A conversation between the Australian ambassador in The Hague and Reuchlin, Director-General of Political Affairs in the Dutch Foreign Affairs Department, further increased Australian fear about Dutch intentions. Reuchlin believed that in view of the political and economic chaos and the escalating anti-Dutch mood in Indonesia that the Netherlands should leave its former colony altogether. In fact Dutch business was already looking for investments elsewhere particularly in Africa and many Dutch technicians and other experts, though badly needed in Indonesia, wanted to leave. New Guinea was economically useless to the Dutch, who might
still decide to hang on to it merely for reasons of national morale. The ambassador added that this represented the view of only one section of upper-level Dutch bureaucrats and that by no means were all similarly disposed: ‘Reuchlin also said that he fully realised the importance of the island to Australia. He added – “Speaking personally – Australia really ought to control the Western half as well ...” ‘

Gradually, Australian dispatches from The Hague started to show a more positive tone, suggesting that nationally a general tend was appearing in favour of the retention of West New Guinea. Furthermore, worthwhile Dutch-Indonesian negotiations were not on the cards and the union was doomed to failure.

The policies of R.G. Casey

The change in the Australian Foreign Affairs portfolio from Spender to Casey introduced a more subtle approach to relations with Indonesia. The Dutch ambassador in Canberra reported that the Minister of Territories, Hasluck, under whose control Papua and New Guinea resorted, was more hawkish on the West New Guinea question than either Casey or Foreign Affairs chief Allan Watt. Unlike Spender, neither Menzies, Casey nor Watt had ever raised with him the possibility of Australian military cooperation. It seemed that Spender had acted without full cabinet approval. The only person who privately had supported Dutch-Australian military cooperation was the Navy Chief of Staff, Sir John Collins, who had always been a great friend and ally of the Netherlands.

Nevertheless, Casey’s smoother and more careful diplomatic style had certainly not pervaded his department as a whole as is evident from the blunt remark of Ambassador Hood in Jakarta to Dutch High Commissioner Lamping, that in the case of the Netherlands deciding to transfer West New Guinea: ‘... we will just take it over ourselves ...'
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Developments in Dutch politics, and in particular anything touching on the West New Guinea issue, were monitored closely by the Australian mission in The Hague. On 15 July 1952, Ambassador Stirling wrote that the retention of West New Guinea still received majority public support in Holland, but this situation could not be expected to continue indefinitely, unless genuine efforts of international support and encouragement were forthcoming. As Stirling summed up:

I believe we still have a fair chance that the Dutch will remain in New Guinea, at any rate through the next few critical decades, after which we hope the situation in Asia will have stabilised ....

This hope seems to have been based more on wishful thinking than a real grasp of the highly volatile nature of Indonesian politics at the time. In fact, Casey instructed Stirling to play down Spender’s 1950 offer of Australian financial support for West New Guinea as Australia should not be involved officially. In addition budgetary constraints were mentioned.

The hardening of the Dutch stand on West New Guinea in 1952 also caused The Hague to place more urgency on the need to cultivate Australian support for establishing tangible cooperative arrangements between both parts of the island. A Dutch Foreign Affairs paper of 1953 detected a basic change to have taken place in Australian postwar policy towards the newly independent South-East Asian nations. Australian support of the Netherlands claim on West New Guinea was based on political expediency and contemporary national defence needs caused by political instability and the ever-increasing communist threat in Indonesia. Positive changes in this situation could well alter the view of Australia towards the West New Guinea issue. To prevent such an eventuality Australia and the Netherlands should be drawn more deeply into the development of the island as a whole by close and effective mutual cooperation between both the eastern and western parts. The objective should be to effect a certain administrative integration which would make it much
more difficult for Australia to change later, when circumstances had changed, and to become perhaps more accommodating to Indonesian demands. For a start Ministerial and official visits to the two areas should be encouraged and organised as soon as possible.74

Casey also indicated the need for more effective cooperation of this kind, although he did not show the same enthusiasm as the Dutch Foreign Office. He told Ambassador Winkelman that there was a great need to improve sea and air communications especially and suggested that an Australian offer of six Catalinas would be useful. But Casey did not take up Winkelman’s point that it certainly would not be desirable for the two areas to develop differently.75 Australia remained cautious and insisted that any cooperative ventures should be kept at a low key and with the minimum of publicity. Always lurking at the back of Canberra’s mind was the crucial need not to have the already shaky relations with Jakarta deteriorate even further.

The extent of the Australian commitment on cooperation between west and east New Guinea and the principles underlying it were firstly officially set out during the visit of Ministers Luns and Kernkamp (Overseas Territories) to Canberra in July 1953. The Australians restricted their agreement on cooperation to local issues such as quarantine, health, labour and land questions and shied away from any political and defence involvements. Dutch proposals for frequent contact between the respective governors and high officials received only lukewarm support and the demand for the eventual integration of both colonies was dismissed as being too drastic by Casey, who only made rather vague references to cooperation regarding political, economic and social development. The Australian government seemed relieved that the Dutch had not insisted on a formal treaty of support.76

Still, on its part the Netherlands delegation considered that a positive outcome had been achieved despite the rather vague wording and carefully crafted contents of the agreement designed
to limit possible fallout from Jakarta. It was the first time that Australia had officially supported the Dutch side, reluctantly and circumspectly crossing the Rubicon about three-quarters of the way. Plimsoll, Assistant Secretary of External Affairs, agreed with Ambassador Lovink’s assessment that Australia was trying to ride two horses simultaneously, though adding that Australian support of the Dutch had never wavered.77

The fundamental reason behind this subdued and hesitant Australian stand regarding the West New Guinea issue was the hitherto uncommitted position of its major defence partners, namely USA and Britain. Australia was militarily too weak to provide a decisive edge to the Dutch defence in West New Guinea. Hence a great deal of Australian diplomatic activity was directed at getting Washington and London on side. But like the Netherlands also, Australia was only able to elicit vague and lukewarm promises. Casey, in March 1957, told Winkelman, the Dutch ambassador in Canberra, that he had complained to Dulles about the American neutralist stance on the West New Guinea question. He argued that this had encouraged the increasingly powerful Indonesian left to escalate the problem to the point where Australia felt threatened. As to his question as to what America was intending to do Dulles replied:

... that the justice of the Netherlands’ and Australian standpoint had never been denied by the American government, but it had taken up a ‘tactical’ position along the lines of ‘lesser evil’. In other words, to avert an even stronger anti-Western atmosphere in Indonesia would occur for the profit of the Communists if America offered open support to the Netherlands and Australia …8

Winkelman commented that, although this brought out little that was new, it was pleasing to note that for the first time an Australian confrontation with Dulles on West New Guinea had been reported to him quickly. He also pointed out that Dulles was introducing a more delicate dimension to the American position of neutrality.
In 1957 the growing communist threat and Sukarno’s sabre rattling over West New Guinea caused Australia to strengthen its cooperation with the Dutch in New Guinea. In November a joint statement on administrative cooperation in New Guinea was issued in which existing arrangements were substantially upgraded, and among the mutually agreed principles reference was made to the responsibility of both governments to safeguard the inalienable rights of the indigenous population in accordance with the UN charter. Furthermore, it was stressed that, geographically and ethnically, both parts of the island were closely interrelated and administrative and developmental cooperation would be of benefit to the Papuan population as a whole. In this light the Netherlands and Australia should direct their political and social-economic policies in tune with this existing ethnic affinity on the island as a whole. Both governments were determined to continue their development policies to the point where the indigenous people themselves would be able to decide on their own political future. As a result Dutch and Australian liaison officers were appointed and a special Dutch envoy on New Guinea affairs was stationed in Canberra. In addition to extending and deepening existing programs in agriculture, forestry, and health, particular attention was paid to education. In all these measures the objective was to stress cultural and ethnic common bonds in the island. In Australian reports the call of ‘consonant’ developments in all fields became a common theme between 1957 and 1960. In Australia the idea of combining west and east New Guinea and the adjacent islands into one nation, a Federation of Melanesia, first mooted by Dutch Foreign Minister Luns, was receiving public support. A more detailed plan was presented in January 1958 by J.R. Kerr, the director of the training school for Australian colonial officers. Casey, although more circumspect had, in December 1957, stated that a single political unit of New Guinea as a whole could be a possibility. He followed this up with a stronger line of support in The Hague, arguing:
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... it is most important that the two administrations should not pursue policies that are in conflict on any basic matter or which would hinder understanding between people in the two halves of the island, if at some future date they should decide, of their own free will, that they want to come together politically. Melanesia and Indonesia are distinct entities ...³

The Australian Labor Party showed itself to be even more adamant than the Liberal government on keeping West New Guinea out of Indonesian hands and, in 1958, Evatt revived his earlier idea of bringing the whole of New Guinea under Australian trusteeship.⁸⁰

But by 1958 the ejection of the Dutch from Indonesia and the nationalisation of their economic stake were followed by Sukarno’s stridently belligerent calls for the liberation of West Irian. This was fanned further by the communists and other leftist groups, causing the time left for the Dutch and Australians to gradually steer their colonies to independence to evaporate very quickly. Indonesia was heavily arming itself with modern weapons from communist countries and Indonesian firing power would soon surpass that of the Dutch and Australian armed forces combined. In fact, the relative ease by which the central Indonesian armed forces under Nasution had been able to defeat the Sumatran and Sulawesi rebels showed the existence of greater military discipline, as well as tactical and logistical ability, than had been expected. This worried both the Dutch and Australian governments and military leadership, although the popular Australian saying that ‘one digger was worth seven of the little yellow bastards’ was still having the run of the pubs at the time. The feeling of the ordinary Australians towards Indonesia and anything Asian was far removed from the high sentiment expressed in December 1957 by Casey, who, in the usual ‘have your cake and eat it’ mode, stated:

It is therefore most important that in Australian statements and actions in the present Indonesian crisis should not give the im-
pression that Australia is motivated by considerations of colour or by some wish to see force applied against a former colonial people ..."

Surely, even at that time it must have seemed to be a case of self-deception and wishful thinking to believe that educated Indonesians could be duped in that way. In fact whatever goodwill Australia had enjoyed in Indonesia had long since dissipated. To most Indonesians Australia was seen as a bastion of Western imperialism. Australia’s policy of trying to satisfy both contenders in the West New Guinea issue was becoming untenable and the time had come for the government to show its true colours especially in regard to the matter of military support for the Dutch in the case of an Indonesian invasion. A few days later, Casey, now prevaricating, ordered the ambassador in Washington, the formidable Sir Percy Spender, to urgently plead with Dulles that the USA could no longer stand aloof on West New Guinea and also to stress that Australia felt exposed to danger.

The Netherlands on its part continued to press Australia for overt military support. Luns told the Australian ambassador, McClure Smith, that the absence of military cooperation between the two countries would have disastrous consequences. Strictly secret technical military planning was now absolutely necessary and the Dutch people should be told that Australian military backup could be counted upon and that a formal agreement was in the pipeline. Apparently McClure Smith did not entirely preclude the possibility of military planning but made clear that a binding agreement was certainly not on the cards. Pointing to the present very weak Dutch military position in New Guinea he argued that a willingness to shore up their defence capability could make it more attractive for Australia to agree to close defence cooperation. The head of the Dutch Foreign Affairs Department, van Houten, contended that as USA and Britain were not expected to change their tune, the Netherlands should concentrate their efforts on Australia, which had shown some
willingness to lend military aid, but had as yet refused to publicly declare its support:

    Australia will prefer for the Netherlands to pull the chestnuts out of the fire and will only come to the party when it becomes clear that the Netherlands will no longer be able cope on its own ...\(^8\)

    He pointed out that when, in the case of a large-scale Indonesian attack, Dutch lives were being lost public opinion in the Netherlands would move away from supporting the government’s West New Guinea policy if no aid from its Allies materialised. This should be put forcefully to the Australian government, because:

    Without a definite commitment by Australia we run the risk not only of becoming involved in war that in the end would prove to be beyond our capacities, but also would markedly raise the risk for us to fall victim to an Anglo-American policy reconciliation with Sukarno ...

    But if Australia was fully wedded to a policy of military support, it would be nearly impossible for Washington to maintain its pro-Indonesian position when confronted with a resolute stand by two reliable allies on military aid and the creation of a Melanesian federation.

    The Australian government remained unwilling to bite the bullet without American backing. During a cabinet meeting on 3 June 1958, Casey suggested that any agreement for military staff discussions with the Dutch should exclude intelligence exchange and stressed that only the USA possessed the clout to influence the course of Indonesian actions on West New Guinea. Hence, Australia had to keep on pressing the Americans at the highest level about the dangers of Indonesian aggression. It was also noted that after the expulsion of Dutch economic interests from Indonesia it could be expected that the Netherlands intention to hang on to West New Guinea had become even more determined.\(^9\)
The Australian government agreed with the Dutch assessment that an Indonesian invasion of West New Guinea was a distinct possibility. But military cooperation with the Dutch was complicated by the fact that Australian planning and military capacity was dependent on its main ally, the USA, which had to be consulted by Australia before deciding to throw in its lot with the Dutch. It was a step that Canberra did not dare to take on its own. Instead it was decided to pressure Washington again to try to restrain Indonesia. In addition, Australia was to mount an international effort to have Indonesian aggression condemned and to elicit the widest possible support for the protection of Papuan rights. It was thought that this would kindle support in parts of the Third World such as the Philippines and Thailand. The possibility of a future union of both parts of the island into a Melanesian federation should be publicised, although it would be emphasised that such a venture would be left solely to the initiatives of the Papuan people themselves.84

Dulles responded in the same reassuring vein to Australian concerns as he had done to Luns. Of interest in this regard is an Australian report of early June from Washington claiming that, in recent meetings, Dulles in effect had promised the Dutch help in case of an Indonesian attack.85

Australia continued to stall and in July 1958, Ambassador Lovink, after a meeting with Casey, reported to Luns that in his view Australia would not come immediately to the rescue in the case of an Indonesian invasion, although it would continue to try to convince America that such an attack should be seen as a casus belli under the ANZUS pact. The chances of success were rated very poorly by Lovink.86

The position of the Australian defence establishment

At this stage the possibility of Australian military involvement could still not be discarded entirely and certainly some sections of the Australian defence forces made clear their willingness to
cooperate with the Dutch. The Netherlands navy attaché, Captain van Straaten, reported on an informal discussion with Rear-Admiral Gatacre, who on his own volition had emphasised the great necessity for mutual defence cooperation. He wanted the existing deadlock to be broken, and to start the ball rolling suggested an investigation into the possibility of the Dutch Seahawks using HMAS *Melbourne* and the Australian Sea Venoms landing on the Dutch aircraft carrier *Karel Doorman*. Other possibilities for collaboration mentioned were for a modern Dutch destroyer to escort the *Melbourne*, the devising of mutual oil supply tactics at sea, the question of supplying jet fuel, exchanging information about harbours, and logistical data. All this could be intensified later and he even envisaged the *Karel Doorman* at anchor in Jervis Bay and made it clear to van Straaten that the whole question was being seriously studied by the Australian armed services. But in the end Gatacre underlined that to organise anything beyond strategic planning depended on the fiat of ‘big brother’; the USA.87

In fact various studies were being undertaken by the Australian Department of Defence to assess the military situation in Indonesia, concentrating on such questions as the Indonesian capacity to stage a successful invasion of West New Guinea and what strategic planning and military buildup Australia would need in order to counter and defeat this aggression. In June 1958 the Defence Committee concluded that in the short term Indonesia would be unable to sustain protracted military operations as it lacked the necessary shipping and other logistical backup. Indonesia had a small-vessel navy that was considered inefficient by Western standards. Still, as had been proved in the anti-rebel operations in Sumatra and Sulawesi, it was able to land forces of brigade strength when unopposed. It was estimated that the army would, by the end of 1960, have at its disposal nine effective battalions at the most, estimated at 7200 men in total. The Indonesian airforce was still almost solely equipped with obsolete aircraft. The new jet planes to be provided by the commu-
nist bloc would still take another two years to become fully operational. But fighter-supported bombers and transport planes would be able to cover large parts of West New Guinea and a smaller area of north Australia.

In this Australian defence prognosis a number of other factors were singled out that could reduce the fighting capabilities of the Indonesian armed forces. One of these was the scenario of a communist takeover causing a purge of the armed forces bringing in its wake a period of instability and a diminished offensive capability. On the other hand a defeat of the communists would produce the opposite effect. Another limiting factor was that Indonesia’s own arms industry was too small to supply its own war requirements. Most of the armaments had to be procured from overseas, a hazardous operation in view of the Indonesian geographical location. Straddling the main South-East Asian sea lanes made Indonesia susceptible to maritime blockade, which the Indonesian navy was too weak to lift. It was thought unlikely that Indonesia, by the end of 1960, would be able to muster sufficient military strength to overrun the whole of West New Guinea. Admittedly, the Indonesians would have the capability to mount successful sea and air landings at battalion strength on the coast between Sorong and Merauke. But it was expected that the Dutch would be able to force their withdrawal fairly quickly. In the case of an invasion at brigade level the Dutch would be given enough warning to allow them to have reinforcements flown in. It was expected, however, that in view of its great logistics problems Indonesia would not attempt such hazardous major amphibious operations. Another possible scenario envisaged was that Indonesia, after having succeeded in securing a bridgehead in West New Guinea, would then call on the UN for a cease-fire that would enable the Indonesian troops to stay put. Such an eventuality would of course be detrimental to the Dutch position. There was also always the possibility that the Dutch, left in the lurch by the Allies in the face of ever-increasing Indonesian military pressure, would decide to leave.
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The question of possible Australian military involvement had apparently been studied in some depth. The chief of staff's committee report of July 1958 assumed that Australian operations would basically be limited to West New Guinea, although adjacent targets in Indonesia proper would also be liable to attack. These included ports, airfields, shipping and other logistical facilities. Reconnaissance operations would also have to be undertaken. There was no danger of nuclear attack, although the Indonesian forces were being bolstered by extensive aid from the communist bloc. On this basis the chief of staff laid down firstly that consultation, staff planning and exchange of intelligence were absolutely crucial. Secondly, it would be essential for action to be prompt and effective as only a few weeks were available to defeat the Indonesian forces and to prevent UN interference. Australian involvement without American and British help would not be able to prevent an Indonesian brigade from establishing a coastal stronghold, although in time a Dutch-Australian force would be able to stop most further supplies reaching the invading army. This situation could change in the enemy’s favour in line with the expected growth in Indonesian air power. Still, on the basis of the existing respective armed strength a Dutch-Australian force would be able to defeat an Indonesian attack. It had to be recognised that Australia’s own offensive capacity was limited, as defence planning had been based on the assumption of combined operations with American and British forces. Hence Australia was weak in the field of photographic and tactical reconnaissance, ground and shipping attack aircraft, supply vessels, amphibious craft, and air defence. The report concluded that in the case where the Dutch were unable or unwilling to repulse the Indonesians and in particular the important defence installations on Biak were lost, an Australian operation would become unfeasible.90

At the time Australia was able to contribute the aircraft carrier Melbourne with ten Sea Venoms and ten Gannets together with five destroyers, three frigates, two sloops, and two mine-
sweepers. An army brigade with one battalion and the Special Air Service Company were ready to be dispatched within forty-eight hours and the other units following within fourteen to twenty-one days. Twenty-four Canberra bombers, seven Nep-tunes, seven Lincolns, thirty-two Sabre fighters, eight Hercules and eight Dakotas were also available. The Dutch forces in West New Guinea could be reinforced by an aircraft carrier, two modern light cruisers, modern destroyers and frigates, submarines, front line fighters and bombers, and more Marines and army units. Combined with the Australians this would indeed have constituted a formidable fighting machine able to out-gun any Indonesian invasion force. But this meant that the Netherlands would have been forced to reduce its NATO commitment to a skeleton.

For their part, however, the Dutch military authorities in West New Guinea were not interested in intelligence cooperation, dismissing Australian agents as unreliable. Nor were they impressed by the size of the Australian defence establishment: 3500 men in Australia, 800 in Malaya, and eighty Sabres that would be no match for the Migs being supplied to Indonesia.

In any case the Australian government was very divided on the military aid question and the problem was compounded by mixed signals from Washington such as Dulles repeating to Australian Ambassador Beale the remark made to Luns during the NATO conference in Copenhagen in May, to the effect that 'sometimes I wish the Indonesians would attack Dutch New Guinea because then we could put an end to the present regime'. Perhaps this was a lamentation on the blow suffered by America through its unfortunate involvement in the failed Sumatran and Sulawesi rebellions. In reality Washington continued to refuse to take sides in the West New Guinea question and both Dutch and Australian diplomatic pressure on the American government proved fruitless.

In the Australian cabinet a number of Ministers emphasised that Australian public opinion would be outraged if the Indone-
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Siamese were allowed to take over West New Guinea with impunity. Others again argued that Australian support of the Dutch would cause widespread hostility in South-East Asia. Some objected to merely following the American lead as being too negative and desired Canberra should frankly put to Washington the view that Australia felt fully obliged to support the Dutch in the case of an Indonesian attack.94

It was recognised, though, that the Americans would not change their stand and that they considered Dutch New Guinea to be little more than a nuisance and that a strong anti-colonial feeling existed in the State Department. In contrast there was considerable evidence that the USA would abandon its neutral stance and side with Indonesia as it was unwilling to put its interests in South-East Asia in jeopardy and, as during the Suez crisis, would likely desert its allies. On the other hand Australia did not want the Dutch to leave West New Guinea and so it should render support as much as was politically feasible, but any Australian plans for a military engagement should be discarded. The Dutch should not be told this bluntly, but they should be kept in the dark as long as possible. Australia realised that, as a small nation dependent for its security on the goodwill of the USA, it had very little leeway in pursuing its own foreign imperatives and in the final analysis would be forced to conform with Washington’s dictates.95

In December 1958 the Australian joint intelligence committee revised its earlier estimates of Indonesian offensive capacity, and the date for a possible invasion was brought forward. It pointed out that the large spending spree on armaments, including heavy weapons, clearly surpassed the requirements of internal security and pointed to offensive uses in the future. Despite the lack of hard intelligence evidence pointing to an imminent attack the report concluded that it would be unwise to discard the possibility that the Indonesians were planning an attack as early as March 1959 concurrently with a move in the UN. The Indonesian assault was expected to be in the form of commando
and paratroop infiltrations at battalion strength, while large-scale landings seemed less likely.96

**Australia in retreat**

It was in January 1959 that Australia officially retreated from the Rubicon when Prime Minister Menzies stressed to Ambassador Lovink that it would be impossible for Australia to ally itself militarily with the Netherlands without the cooperation of the USA and Britain. All Australia could do was to keep on impressing on the Americans the great importance of New Guinea for Australian security. Lovink bluntly replied that mere vague promises would no longer do and he feared that the moment would arrive at which an isolated Netherlands would no longer be willing for the Sword of Damocles to fall on it in the defence of the vital interests of an uncommitted outsider. Hence the Netherlands, bereft of allied military backup, would be forced against its will to begin talks with the Indonesians. Furthermore, he pointed out that the invitation to Dr Subandrio, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, for a formal visit to Australia surely had done little to bolster Dutch confidence in Australian promises. Menzies retorted that Subandrio’s visit had to be seen as part of a diplomatic jousting match. Lovink remained unconvinced and reported to The Hague that as matters stood no Australian military help could be expected.97

Subandrio must have been pleased to see that the initially bellicose Australian stand on West New Guinea in the early 1950s had now been whittled down to a mere whisper as is clear from the following official statement made during the visit: ‘The fact is, that on the question of sovereignty Australia does support the Dutch. Australia is neutral on the matter of whether negotiations are to be held ...’98

Menzies informed Lovink that Subandrio had been told that Australia no longer opposed a change in the sovereignty of West New Guinea provided this was achieved by negotiations. This
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was seen by Lovink as a sell-out.99

The Dutch government was acutely aware of the difficulties Australia was facing in trying to maintain at least a working relationship with its nearest neighbour, Indonesia, and at the same time safeguarding its national security. In fact a Dutch Foreign Affairs background paper for the use of Prime Minister Drees during the visit of Prime Minister Menzies to The Hague in June 1959 pointed out that what for the Netherlands was the Far East for Australia was the ‘near north’. The Netherlands’ national existence was not endangered, while Australia’s security was directly threatened. It argued that the key to successfully outflanking Indonesia’s plans lay in the harmonisation of rapid political indigenous development in the Dutch and Australian controlled parts of New Guinea. Australian cooperation at the local level had improved a great deal and the Secretary of the Department of Territories, Lambert, had shown keen interest in the Dutch proposals for accelerating political development. His Minister, Hasluck, though would try to torpedo this initiative. Hasluck held antiquated views on colonial policy, believing that Australia would still be given thirty or forty years in which to gradually lead Papua and New Guinea towards self-government. It was suggested that Drees should direct Menzies’ attention to the virulent anti-colonial movements in Africa, a version of which would soon engulf New Guinea if speedy indigenous political reforms were not taken in hand. The only means to reinforce the Dutch-Australian position in the island was to speed up the process of establishing an independent sovereign Papuan nation. It was a policy that would surely be supported by the UN and the Third World generally and so would seriously weaken the Indonesian claim.100

In order to keep the Dutch on side the Australian cabinet had to take a hard look at the available options. In February 1960, in a long submission, Casey argued that it was imperative for the cabinet to clearly decide on the policy to be followed on West New Guinea and to consider the possible implications of this for
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Australian New Guinea. He argued that although the strategic importance of Indonesia was much greater to Australia and the USA than West New Guinea, its loss on its own would not assure a non-communist Indonesia. A communist takeover in Indonesia was an internal threat not an external one. Moreover, there was no evidence that the West Irian issue had played a decisive role in the surge of communist power in Indonesia, although admittedly an Australian change of policy in favour of an Indonesian takeover might result in a momentary improvement of relations. But obviously worried about further possible neo-imperialist ventures by a clearly aggressive Indonesia he asked how long this state of bliss might last, and he pointed to the possible Indonesian demand for the ‘liberation’ of Papua and New Guinea, Portuguese Timor, and the British Borneo territories. An Indonesian takeover of Dutch New Guinea would mean that the Australian territories might be bordered by a communist state, and apart from this possibility it would be preferable, for Australian strategic defence and commercial reasons, to avoid an Asian country gaining direct access and political influence in the Melanesian world.

Casey outlined the same train of thought pushed by Spender in 1950 and he strongly pressed the cabinet to take a clear decision on what Australia really wanted to happen in New Guinea in the immediate future. He emphasised that a continued Dutch presence in West New Guinea provided a buffer against further Indonesian aggression eastwards, and moves for unifying both parts of the island could be of benefit to the security of Australia and elevating it as the major political and economic power in the South Pacific. Hence the Dutch should be encouraged as much as possible to hold on to West New Guinea without Australia entering into a military arrangement. At the same time everything possible should be done to minimise the damage to relations with Indonesia. Thus, in the end, recourse was taken to a policy of fence-sitting that made it impossible to satisfy either side. In essence Casey admitted this when stressing that Australia
was hamstrung as long as the USA and Britain kept on refusing to divulge more precisely their responses to an Indonesian invasion. Hence, to agree to the repeated Dutch requests for military staff, talks would be useless and Australia could only continue by barraging Washington and London to provide an effective military response.

Turning to the question of Papuan unification Casey, though supporting it in principle, remained circumspect and kept insisting that a much longer time span than the Dutch had in mind would be needed to effect an orderly transfer of power to the Papuan people. He still suggested that cabinet should come to a decision in principle and devise a framework within which the voluntary political association of west and east New Guinea could be achieved. A new formal, public, arrangement should be avoided and cooperation with the Dutch should continue on the basis of the 1957 agreement. Fundamental changes in terms of Papuan political development remained a highly sensitive question in terms of relations with Indonesia and therefore should be dealt with at government level and in great secrecy. Indonesia would soon realise that the new measures were directed at eventual political fusion and were meant to bring pressure on the UN. This would not cause grave difficulties provided that Australia, in public announcements, put the emphasis on eliminating obstacles to the free exercise of the right of self-determination and made positive efforts to promote integration.\textsuperscript{101}

It is hard to imagine that anybody in cabinet would have believed that the Indonesians and the Third World would have been taken in by this kind of diplomatic doubletalk. Still, Casey went to ludicrous lengths in this process by decreeing that all replies to Dutch requests and proposals should be made orally with no written evidence to be left behind. The fear of matters offensive to Indonesian sensitivities being leaked seems to have reached pathological proportions, and truly the roaring Australian lion of the early 1950s seems to have been transformed into a paper tiger by the end of the decade.
In fact, little happened to Casey’s grand design. During subsequent Dutch-Australian meetings Dutch demands for synchronising the education, political emancipation and the inclusion of indigenous representatives in deliberations were refused. The rejection of these crucial elements in the Dutch development strategy could only reinforce The Hague’s growing realisation that the Australian government’s involvement was only half-hearted.

According to a report from the Dutch embassy in Canberra, Prime Minister Menzies, observing the rapid and unruly de-colonisation taking place in Africa, had come to the conclusion that Australia would have to accelerate the political emancipation process in Papua and New Guinea. This call for a change in direction came too late. Not only because the parliament remained divided and Menzies was unable to have his ideas accepted, but also, and more crucial, was the advent of the Kennedy administration in the USA which took away both the Dutch and Australian initiative in the West New Guinea question. The only chance to obtain USA and UN approval would have been a strong united Dutch-Australian front setting out to defend the right of Papuan self-determination and show serious efforts to create a Melanesian federation. But as it turned out, in Canberra, national interests were allowed to run roughshod over the human rights of the Papuans of West New Guinea. Concerns of Realpolitik pushed aside the Rights of Man perhaps setting a precedent for a policy adopted by Australia twenty-five years later in the case of East Timor.

The demise – 1960-1962

In 1960 the West Irian question was reaching boiling point. Indonesia broke off diplomatic relations with the Netherlands, the armed buildup continued, armed infiltrations into West New Guinea were increasing, and a full invasion seemed imminent. The nationalisation of the Dutch business sector apparently had not satisfied the ever-growing nationalist fervour and clearly
Indonesia was preparing to take West New Guinea by force. The Netherlands was becoming acutely worried particularly as Allied military support was by no means sure. It was decided in The Hague to strengthen the existing thin defences in West New Guinea and to engage in some sabre-rattling of their own by sending the aircraft carrier *Karel Doorman* and two destroyers for a visit.

On the other hand the Netherlands realised that it stood virtually alone internationally and was being seen, together with Portugal, as the last remaining old-style, diehard colonialist country, and this isolation forced it to take a policy change. This involved a two-pronged attack: firstly an attempt to have West New Guinea placed under a UN trusteeship without Indonesian involvement, and secondly, an acceleration of political development consisting of more education and direct Papuan participation in government by the setting-up of more councils crowned by the opening of a national representative council.

The fall in 1959 of the second Drees government, which until the end had stubbornly stuck to its guns, made it somewhat easier for the new prime minister, de Quay, to try another tack. De Quay had for some time been considering a form of internationalisation, that is the coopting of a number of neutral nations to the task of the socio-economic development of West New Guinea. This offered the possibility of getting the Netherlands off the hook without having to bow to Indonesian demands. He revealed this train of thought to some Reuter correspondents on 5 September 1960, thereby causing a furore in the national press and an instant rejoinder by Foreign Minister Luns, on the point of departure to New York, strenuously denying that the government had changed its West New Guinea policy.103

Nevertheless, the prime minister put the question up for discussion to cabinet and it was probably not coincidental that de Quay decided on this move with Luns being out of the country. Clearly cabinet solidarity on the West New Guinea issue had been seriously eroded. For example, the Minister for Defence, Visser,
argued that the Netherlands would probably not be given the time to reach its goal of developing the territory economically and socially:

The Netherlands has landed itself in such an isolated position as to force the government to investigate other ways and possibilities. The question has already been internationalised through the constant questions on New Guinea in the UN ... Sticking to the condition ‘unless Indonesia will not get its way’ indicates too much unwillingness to achieve a solution. The speaker would be willing to go very far to find a solution ...  

Finance Minister Zijlstra argued that the interests of the Papuans should not be allowed to be pushed through to the great detriment of the Dutch people. Prime Minister de Quay stressed that merely to acquiesce in a position holding that no solution was possible was not the correct one under the present circumstances. If the government remained inactive it would run the risk of being superseded by events outside its control. Luns had also moved closer to de Quay’s position, but he was told by Secretary-General Hammarskjöld that a UN trusteeship for West New Guinea would be unattainable in the present political configuration in the assembly and the security council.  

West New Guinea was again propelled to the fore of international attention in a speech by Sukarno at the Fourteenth UN Assembly meeting on 30 September in which he likened the territory to a colonial sword poised at the heart of Indonesia. He charged that the Netherlands had failed to act according to the laws of history, but that Indonesia was absolutely committed to reach its objective by its own methods.  

In reply, Luns argued that the Netherlands was seriously engaged in developing the area economically and to lead the Papuan people to self-government and independence, and invited the UN to send a fact-finding mission to judge Dutch claims. He further challenged Indonesia to declare openly that it was not harbouring plans for military aggression. In a bellicose vein Subandrio
retorted that Indonesia could not be expected to remain passive when confronted with hostile Dutch activities.108

On 5 April 1960, the Dutch government unfolded in parliament the outline of a ten-year development plan that included bringing the whole of the colony under effective Dutch administrative control. This plan envisaged the expansion of education, the systematic inclusion of Papuans in government by establishing local and regional councils, stimulation of private enterprise in economic development and the creation of employment opportunities, and finally a scheme of transmigration of Papuans to areas short of labour.

A move designed to catch international attention even further was the announcement of the institution of a national New Guinea Council, composed of a Papuan majority. The council was seen as an important training device for democracy and it was meant to be much more than merely a government decision-stamping body and as such was endowed with some parliamentary powers, such as the right of petition and interpellation, to advise on legislation and regulations, the drafting of ordinances including the right of amendment, and participation in budget discussions.109

The Kennedy intervention

The New Guinea Council proposal was meant to act as an emphatic reminder to Indonesia that the Netherlands was very serious in creating an independent Papuan nation. By the time that this proto-parliament was inaugurated on 5 April 1961, the chances for a free Papuan nation being born had actually become exceedingly slim, owing mainly to the policy of the USA which, since the coming to power of Kennedy, had begun to veer in its support towards Indonesia. The basis for this had actually been laid during the last months of the Eisenhower administration when Dulles’s successor, Herter, had taken heed of the State Department’s advice that the American policy of ‘neutrality’ in
the West New Guinea question was no longer feasible, because Indonesia was being propelled ever more closely into the orbit of the PKI and the Soviet bloc. To solve the problem, Herter advocated placing West New Guinea under a UN trusteeship.\(^{110}\)

Initially the Kennedy administration had supported the idea of a trusteeship, but from the beginning had adopted a much tougher stand towards the Netherlands than previously had been the case. Foreign secretary Dean Rusk, in a memorandum to Kennedy on 10 April 1961, stressed that the West New Guinea issue had to be solved quickly, meaning that the Netherlands should be forced to retreat by being denied American military aid in the case of an Indonesian invasion.\(^{111}\)

In fact a few days earlier Washington had already indicated its position by declining the invitation to attend the official inauguration of the New Guinea Council in Hollandia. In March, Ambassador van Roijen had already warned that an American policy change on West New Guinea was in the wind and Luns was enraged when told about the American decision to give Hollandia a wide berth.

Ambassador Howard Jones, early in 1961, had warned Washington about an imminent Indonesian attack and advised that the problem could only be solved by the USA ensuring a speedy Indonesian takeover. He emphasised that the powerful Eurocentric wing in the State Department should not only be made to see the inevitability of an Indonesian victory but also that the USA should be allowed to take some of the credit for this.\(^{112}\)

Jones's machinations received a considerable boost by the coming to power of Kennedy, who was widely perceived as being more sympathetic to Third World problems than previous presidents. Sukarno told Jones that Indonesia expected great things from Kennedy, who in fact soon obliged. The exhortations of Jones were now being given more attention in Washington than previously, because a change had taken place in the power configuration in the inner sanctum of advisers around the president. Hitherto, foreign affairs had been the prerogative of the State
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Department, although its power had been impinged upon by other agencies such as the National Security Council (NSC), the CIA, and the Pentagon. The extent of this shift of influence had, however, been curbed as much as possible by dominating figures such as Dean Acheson and John Foster Dulles. President Kennedy, in contrast, started off by diffusing the State Department's power and transferred more responsibility for foreign affairs to the NSC. He also surrounded himself with a coterie of young intellectuals such as his personal adviser Theodore Sorensen, and NSC members including McGeorge Bundy, Walt Rostow, Robert Komes and Robert Johnson, the last two being especially involved in Indonesian affairs, including the West New Guinea issue. This so-called Harvard 'mafia', most of the group being graduates of the president's alma mater, formed an iconoclastic, barnstorming think-tank to act as a counterweight to the more sedate and unwieldy State Department, now led by Dean Rusk and George McGhee.

Kennedy endorsed the crucial importance of the Third World in the gigantic battle against communism. In South-East Asia it was Vietnam that was seen as one of the most fragile links, a domino on the brink of falling over, setting a similar process in motion in neighbouring Cambodia, Thailand, and Malaysia, and finally reaching Indonesia, a nation reeling on the abyss of economic collapse in the wake of which the fortunes of the PKI could only prosper. As in South America, the dictatorial regime of the mercurial Sukarno had to be humoured, and the anti-communist groups in the armed forces had to be supported. The Americans put their hopes especially on the staunchly anti-communist General Nasution, who was considered to be the most serious contender for power after the expected demise of a very ill Sukarno. Having to choose between the two evils of communism and military dictatorship the Americans opted for the latter. This made the crusade of saving South-East Asia from the anti-Christ and safeguarding the values of a free and democratic world sound rather hollow. In this context of course West New Guinea had
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to be surrendered to Indonesia, whether the indigenous people wanted this or not. In Washington the human right of self-determination of Papuans ended up in the wastepaper basket.

Kennedy’s White House staff viewed a trusteeship for West New Guinea solely as a device for the Dutch to save face before handing over the territory to Indonesia.¹¹³

Luns fights on

During a visit to Washington, Luns remained unmoved by American plans and only agreed to a trusteeship providing the Netherlands were given the leading role. On this occasion also Luns’s notorious propensity to tell jokes apparently lived up to its reputation. One of his offerings was about Indonesian infiltrators: ‘… they were simply eaten by the natives, but not on Fridays when they only eat fishermen.’ This humour, though, did not work to soften the American view of Luns as a stubborn, die-hard character. Nor did it weaken their resolve to make it crystal clear that for the Netherlands the game was over and that USA military support was out of the question.¹¹⁴

Sukarno’s state visit at the end of April 1961 turned into an American crawling charade to provide for the desires both political and carnal of the ‘Great Leader of the Indonesian Revolution’. President Kennedy called him the George Washington of Indonesia, surely causing the first American president to turn in his grave, and presented Sukarno with a $900,000 helicopter similar to his own. In addition, a $100 million economic aid package was promised. In return, Sukarno indicated his agreement with the proposal for a short interim UN trusteeship to be followed by an Indonesian takeover and promised to put the PKI on the lash.¹¹⁵ Apparently Dean Rusk was happy to see the back of Sukarno, being appalled by his insatiable demands for call girls and his highly indiscreet behaviour.¹¹⁶

It seemed that Luns could not or did not want to realise that American policy regarding West New Guinea had undergone
fundamental change, and he kept on believing that the Dulles promises of military help were still in force. Reports to cabinet and parliament about his negotiations in Washington were coloured by this belief. Officials at the Dutch embassy in Washington had been warned by State Department sources that Luns’s impressions of American policy on West New Guinea were plainly wrong.117

Luns, however, continued to act in his own stubborn manner, and in a speech in parliament in May 1961 declared that the government would accept a transfer of West New Guinea to the UN providing that the principle of self-determination would be upheld.118 This was followed up with more detailed proposals, the so-called Luns Plan, consisting of three main propositions:

1. Sovereignty had be transferred to the indigenous Papuan people;
2. For the time being the task of day-to-day government administration was to be entrusted to the UN;
3. The UN authority was to continue to educate and guide the Papuan people towards political self-determination.119

The Luns Plan showed a fundamental change in Dutch policy in that, for the first time, there was a willingness to part with its insistence on sovereignty over West New Guinea, although emphatically not to Indonesia. The plan earned wide support in parliament where the old diehard factions had finally been forced to realise that, in view of the Indonesian military threat, existing policy was no longer feasible. The rightist ARP, which was closely connected with the Dutch Reformed Church and in the past one of the most influential pro-colonial forces in Dutch politics, performed a complete about-turn and criticised the government for not going far enough in advocating direct negotiations with the Indonesian government. Perhaps this was a belated reaction to the Synod appeal of 1956.120 More likely it was due to an ARP politician, Biesheuvel, who had his eyes opened
during a sojourn in Washington when told by Ambassador van Roijen and State Department officials about the real position of the USA regarding Indonesia and West New Guinea. This proved to be remarkably different from the assurances propagated by Luns in the Netherlands. \(^{121}\) During a cabinet session on 21 July 1961, Luns seemed not entirely confident of the American support for his plan. Having pointed out that the American government recognised the primacy of the right of self-determination and did not consider the Dutch policy on West New Guinea as opposing its South-East Asian and Indonesian policy, he still warned that American support could not be expected under all circumstances. \(^{122}\) Luns’s assertion that his plan was actually based on the secret Dutch-American talks during the summer seems to have been exaggerated. In fact, Washington held great doubts about the Dutch proposals, which in essence were designed to keep Indonesia out of West New Guinea. This ran completely counter to American plans to use the opportunity created by this fundamental change in the Netherlands’ political position to facilitate Indonesia’s takeover of West New Guinea.

Jakarta’s negative reaction to an American suggestion for a UN commission and a UN investigation, as proposed by the Dutch, confounded the State Department. Rusk tried to temporise by attempting not to upset either party. This inaction led to more intense discussions among the rival factions in the State Department and within the presidential staff on the question of what policy to follow. American representatives in NATO advocated open USA support for the Netherlands, a solid post-war ally and a country with a long history of ties of friendship. In Washington early in October, Luns referred rather sarcastically to America’s duality: one voice talking about support for the Netherlands and another one simultaneously cajoling it in agreeing to hand over West New Guinea to Indonesia. \(^{123}\) Adlai Stevenson, American Ambassador to the UN, considered the Dutch plan as reasonable because it allowed, although indirectly,
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an Indonesian takeover without a Dutch loss of face. Similarly, Howard Jones was in raptures about the clause regarding Papuan self-determination to be enacted later by a plebiscite with an inbuilt pro-Indonesian result. The Americans appreciated the Luns Plan though plainly ignored its real intentions that were to keep the territory out of Indonesian hands.

It was under these inauspicious circumstances that, in September 1961, the Luns Plan was presented to the UN General Assembly. The Americans in the end decided not to support the Dutch proposal mainly because it tried to bypass the Indonesians altogether. It was this aspect of the Dutch plan that incensed Subandrio who, in a very fiery speech, retorted that Indonesia would only be willing to allow Papuans a say on the extent of autonomy within the Indonesian state. Washington advocated bilateral talks to which Luns finally agreed on the condition that these were to be secret and at a venue of his choosing. This meeting, between Luns and Dutch UN delegate Schurman on the one side, and Mohammad Yamin and Indonesian Ambassador Zain on the other, utterly failed. Breaking the secrecy condition Indonesian newspapers reported that Luns had dominated the meeting laying down impossible demands while the Indonesians were unable to get a word in. Indonesian complaints of not having previously been informed of the Luns Plan, were put aside by Luns with the retort that this was their own fault as Indonesia had broken diplomatic relations meaning that now Indonesia meant to the Netherlands even less than Outer Mongolia. It was a remark not exactly meant to smooth Indonesian ruffled feathers. It seems that Luns intended the talks to fail and he hinted at this in his report to cabinet on 27 October 1961 when he stressed that Indonesia had put the sovereignty of West New Guinea as a pre-condition.

When it became clear that Indonesia could muster forty-one votes in the UN assembly, consisting of the communist nations, the Islamic bloc, and other Asian and African countries, the Luns Plan was doomed to failure. The situation was further compli-
cated by the submission of two other motions. The first was by India designed to strengthen the Indonesian claim. The Indians were motivated by considerations deriving from their planned armed invasion of Portuguese Goa that later occurred on 17 December. This was the main reason for Nehru’s support for Indonesia who hitherto had always showed his distaste and contempt of Sukarno’s antics.

The Brazzaville proposal

The second submission hailed from the Brazzaville group of African nations, former French colonies that had been granted independence by President de Gaulle on the basis of the principle of self-determination and with the choice of remaining in the French Union. During a meeting at Tananarive in September the group had supported the right of the Papuans to self-determination. The two Papuan members of the Dutch delegation, Nicolaas Jouwe and Herman Womsiwor, had been actively involved in the construction of the Brazzaville resolution, which laid down that Indonesian-Dutch negotiations without any preconditions should take place as soon as possible. It was urged that the right of self-determination of the Papuan people should not be prejudiced and the UN Secretary-General’s good offices should be sought. If by 1 March 1962 no result had been achieved a five-member UN commission should be appointed to investigate the possibility of establishing an interim international authority.\textsuperscript{127}

The Brazzaville concept contained sufficient elements of the Luns Plan for the Netherlands government, prodded by the USA, to signify its agreement. Washington itself also supported the Brazzaville plan, which gained fifty-three votes for and forty-one against, and nine abstentions. This result still remained below the three-quarters majority needed for the motion to be carried. A subsequent Indian resolution gained forty-one for and forty against with twenty-one abstentions, a result less favourable to Indonesia than in 1957. It showed that the whole of the world
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had not closed its eyes to the plight of the Papuans, although this provided cold comfort to the Netherlands, now being forced to find a solution outside the UN.

In fact the demise of the Brazzaville resolution caused the Netherlands position to weaken considerably, particularly in the USA. The Asia-orientated group in the State Department had been reinforced at the end of November 1961 by the appointment of W. Averell Harriman as Under-Secretary for East Asia, who together with the White House ‘mafia’ advised President Kennedy to push the Dutch towards direct negotiations with Indonesia. Robert Komes stressed that after the failure to reach a solution through the UN it was essential for the USA to opt for a pro-Indonesian position, because it seemed inevitable that West New Guinea would end up in Indonesian hands. This shift in policy should be made immediately so as to leave the USA the opportunity to ingratiate itself with Sukarno. Another presidential advisor, Robert Johnson, agreed with the assessment that Indonesian control was a certainty, adding that this was also the view of rationally thinking Dutchmen including the Dutch ambassador in Washington, van Roijen. President Kennedy took this advice and instructed Howard Jones to explain to Sukarno that during the UN debate the USA had actually tried to find a method by which Indonesia would be able to obtain most of its objectives.

The Netherlands abandoned

In Washington the die had been cast and the Netherlands had to be persuaded or, if necessary, forced to follow the American line. In The Hague those in the cabinet were in a quandary not knowing how to proceed; their minds were made up by President Kennedy. The State Department stated blandly that the New Guinea question had to be put to rest immediately. To Robert Johnson the Papuan right of self-determination paled into insignificance compared to the disaster of a possible communist take-
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over in Indonesia and it should have been made absolutely clear to the Dutch that the USA was siding with Indonesia.\textsuperscript{130}

Continuing war-like utterances by Sukarno, and reports of a further build-up of Indonesia’s invasion forces caused a great deal of anxiety in the Netherlands. During an interview with Harriman it became patently clear to van Roijen that in the case of an Indonesian attack the Dutch would be on their own. Harriman stressed that the USA would follow an active role on the diplomatic front trying to solve the New Guinea problem and strongly pushed for bilateral negotiations without preconditions.\textsuperscript{131} Other State Department officials also tried to convey to van Roijen that owing to the ominous military situation which, according to expert advice could result in an invasion within six months, the Netherlands’ chances of avoiding a bloody conflict were diminishing by the day.\textsuperscript{132}

The Americans responded to van Roijen’s questions about military protection only in the usual vague way and pushed the matter of negotiations, but could see the sense of the Dutch proposal for a third party to attend such talks, as this would tend to keep negotiators in a reasonable frame of mind. Van Roijen replied that so far only the Netherlands had been prepared to make concessions and that it was high time for Indonesia to shift from its obdurate stand and follow suit, and he added that the Netherlands, despite its moral victory at the UN, was still willing to continue to seek a basis for negotiations.\textsuperscript{133}

In a dispatch of 20 December 1961, van Roijen clearly stated that in his view American military support in West New Guinea was now out of the question:

As I have reported previously the Kennedy administration is bent on getting rid of the problem. The events in Goa and the risk of an Indonesian military adventure have led the State to the conclusion that a solution must be found now ...

Unwilling to endanger the Dutch position regarding sovereignty and the question of Papuan human rights the Americans
believed they had found the solution in a procedural approach by which both parties would agree to waive the initial demand for no preconditions. The presence of a third party was considered necessary to ensure fair reporting of views and standpoints. According to van Roijen the State Department believed that under these conditions an agreement was conceivable in respect to the fundamental question of an interim administration and a plebiscite. The impression was that Indonesia would not insist on setting up its own administration but would agree to a structure supervised and administered by the UN. Indonesia only wanted access to the territory to redress Dutch influence, a point that already had been agreed upon under the Brazzaville scheme.

In a final, crucially important observation, van Roijen commented that if the Indonesians remained obdurate the USA would fully support the Dutch position, but – and this was absolutely essential – not to the point of stopping Indonesian armed attacks and to allow a complete break in relations.134

The urgency for a solution of the West New Guinea problem was also widely shared in government circles in the Netherlands. A memorandum from the Indonesian section of the Foreign Affairs Department bluntly put it that in view of an imminent danger of Indonesian military action the Netherlands’ reaction could only be to agree to renewed negotiations. Under the circumstances the only possibility of reaching an agreement with the Indonesians was for the Dutch to tone down their insistence on Papuan human rights. But any change in Dutch promises would pose a serious danger to public order in the territory and the safety of the 14,000 Europeans living there. The Papuan elite, whose national consciousness had been encouraged by the Dutch government itself, would not sit idly by if the Dutch government should now try to tinker with their rights without consultations. Hence, during any negotiations the Papuan population would have to be represented and the Indonesians had to be told that the Netherlands no longer held a free hand on Papuan human rights. It was a problem to convince the Indonesians that the
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Netherlands would cease to use the self-determination issue to perpetuate their influence on the indigenous population. It seemed necessary to sound out the Indonesians in advance about their stand on Papuan rights and Papuan participation in the talks. It could be expected that a number of influential Papuans would try to avoid the outbreak of aggressive behaviour and chaotic conditions in West New Guinea. In the margin of the report it was noted that although these ideas might not conform with official policy, differing views could be important and should not be ignored.135

Prime Minister de Quay, during a cabinet session of 22 December 1961, pointed out that the government had to act to continue to look to the UN to provide a solution or to follow the American initiative of bilateral negotiations with a third party in attendance. A proposal to take recourse to the Security Council in case of an Indonesian invasion was rejected because such a move was likely to be ineffectual as the recent example of Goa had proved. Another possibility canvassed was an appeal to the Decolonisation Commission of the UN, but this also was dismissed because of insufficient international support. Another Minister wondered whether, similarly to Aceh, Indonesia would be willing to accord West New Guinea the status of Daerah Istimewa (Special Territory). Minister Zijlstra dismissed the idea of a Melanesian union as illusory. In the end Luns declared his support for conditional talks with the clear understanding that the Netherlands remain wedded to the principle of self-determination and opposition to an Indonesian takeover if the Papuan people disagreed with it. The cabinet declared itself in favour of this formula and had this transmitted immediately by Luns to Washington.136

The State Department took this message to mean that The Hague was keen to leave West New Guinea providing a face-saving formula would be found. Reality proved to be different. Both parties continued to skirmish, putting obstacles in the way of preliminary talks. Luns had apparently still not been converted
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and kept on hammering the State Department for American military support. For his part Sukarno remained unwilling to compromise, and Indonesian military preparations for a full attack continued and armed infiltrations were being increased.137

The Vlakke Hoek incident

This brinkmanship brought the possibility of the outbreak of full-scale war ever closer, particularly so after a spectacular naval engagement on 15 January 1962 at the Vlakke Hoek near Etna Bay. A Dutch Neptune surveillance aircraft had spotted on the radar three objects in Dutch waters speeding towards the New Guinea coast. The Dutch frigates Eversten and Kortenaer were alerted and reported three ships at 40 kilometres from the Vlakke Hoek. At twenty-two hours the Neptune pinpointed what proved to be three Indonesian MTBs at 19 kilometres from shore running at speeds of about 32 knots. The Indonesians opened fire on the Dutch plane which was followed by a barrage first by the Evertsen and later by the Kortenaer. One of the ships, the Matjan Tutul, was hit and sunk and the other two turned around and fled in a south-eastern direction; the Dutch warships were ordered by the navy commander and Governor Platteel to stop their chase. Fifty-two Indonesian survivors were picked up. The dead were buried at Kaimana, and the wounded were transported to hospital in Biak. Nine sub-officers were flown to Hollandia and thirty-nine ratings were detained at Sorong. From interrogations it transpired that the MTBs belonged to the Jaguar class in use by the Soviet navy, and in addition to their normal complements carried motorised rubber boats, and more than 100 soldiers, armed with mortars, automatic weapons, transmitters, and a three-week supply of food. Their objective had been to land near Kaimana and to annihilate the Dutch defence. The operation was under the command of Colonel Domo. Apparently the Matjan Tutul had been hit aft and the ammunition store had exploded killing its commander, Wiratno. In addition a top navy officer,
Commodore Sudarso, was missing, presumably killed. This Indonesian naval disaster was received with great Schadenfreude in the Western press, particularly in the Netherlands and Australia. Although this was overshadowed by the fear of Indonesian retaliation leading to open warfare. The Americans were worried about possible Dutch preventative strikes at naval strongholds in Ambon, Surabaya and Jakarta. This scenario was not entirely unrealistic as such actions had in fact been seriously proposed by the Dutch military to the cabinet.

In fact, Howard Jones was sufficiently alarmed and was preparing plans for the evacuation of American personnel, as he was seriously worried that the inflammable Indonesian masses would direct their anger against the USA, putting American lives at risk. Rusk ordered Jones to tell Sukarno that the USA would stop all deliveries of arms and supplies, including parachutes and aircraft parts. Unexpectedly, Sukarno took up a more warlike posture perhaps to present Robert Kennedy, during an imminent visit, with a *fait accompli*. On the other hand Sukarno repudiated his earlier undertaking on unconditional preliminary talks with the Dutch. This became clear from a meeting of Subandrio and President Kennedy, Adlai Stevenson, and UN Secretary-General U Thant, during which Indonesia insisted on agreeing to negotiations only after a Dutch pledge of immediate transfer of power over West New Guinea to Indonesia. For its part Indonesia would bind itself to holding a plebiscite after five years.

Luns immediately rejected the Indonesian proposal viewing it as part of Sukarno’s offensive package of psychological warfare combined with physical aggression to achieve his long cherished objective. He instructed Schürmann to direct U Thant’s attention to Prime Minister de Quay’s earlier letter to the effect that the Netherlands, in the case of further Indonesian hostile acts, was bent on dispatching armed reinforcements. The American response to the Dutch rejection seems highly peculiar since on the one hand they criticised the Dutch for their
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weak defence efforts in West Guinea – ‘We could not mobilize American troops and call up young men in Kansas and Pittsburgh for a cause the Dutch themselves were unwilling to mobilize for’\(^{142}\) – while on the other hand they tried to persuade the Netherlands not to send anymore warships and troops in order to avoid provoking Sukarno even further. Obviously this kind of reaction could do nothing to repair the already damaged relations. In fact, on 15 January 1962, immediately after the naval incident at the Vlakke Hoek, the cabinet had decided to dispatch an extra 100 troops immediately. This operation was conducted through commercial charter flights using the route Amsterdam-Anchorage-Tokyo-Biak with soldiers in civilian dress. The Japanese suddenly refused further landing rights and the flights were now routed via Honolulu. But early in February 1962 the Americans also followed the Japanese example and closed their airports to Dutch military transports. Not to be denied, a new route was established through Curaçao – Dutch territory – Peru and Tahiti.

Public reaction in the Netherlands was furious and the rather lame explanation by Rusk did nothing to alleviate the situation. Nevertheless, after what was seen as an American betrayal, the Netherlands, of necessity, resolved to hold bilateral talks. Van Roijen complained to Rusk that it was the Indonesians, through their demands for an immediate Dutch withdrawal, who were responsible for holding up the proceedings. He moreover gave an assurance that the Netherlands had no objections on any subjects to be discussed, providing that it was clearly understood that the principle of the Papuan right of self-determination would not be for sale. The Netherlands continued to object to an Indonesian takeover against the wishes of the Papuan population and similarly rejected a trusteeship solely under Indonesian supervision. Van Roijen also insisted that an interim government, presumably under UN auspices, would be necessary not only to safeguard Papuan human rights, but also to avoid a possible bloodbath brought about by the strong anti-Indonesian feelings of the local population. To Rusk’s question as to whether the
Netherlands might agree to an immediate plebiscite, for example, thirty days after the signing of the accord, van Roijen replied that in his opinion, because of the existing widespread anti-Indonesian feeling in the country, the Papuan people would opt immediately for independence.143

Unofficial Dutch-Indonesian contacts

In the meantime unofficial Dutch-Indonesian meetings were taking place. The pressure of the earlier Rijkens group of Dutch industrialists still continued, their activities gaining more notoriety owing to the revelations of the journalist Oltmans.144 Other private lobbyists opposed to the official government stance on West New Guinea were becoming more strident. Prominent among these was Duynstee, a law professor at the Catholic University of Nijmegen. He had been one of the most outspoken critics of the Luns Plan because it had deliberately ignored any consultation or input from the Indonesian side and the contribution made by private Dutch contacts with Indonesian leaders. Duynstee lashed the Luns Plan for missing the crucial point that internationalisation would be doomed as long as Indonesia was opposed and so it increased the risk of war.145 He told Luns about his contacts with Oejeng Soewargana, an Indonesian intelligence officer and close friend of General Nasution. The general wanted to establish contacts with the Netherlands government through the Indonesian military attachés in Paris or in Bonn, both trustful intermediaries, in order to achieve a peaceful solution. Nasution argued that war would severely weaken the hold of the Western oriented officers in the army on Java, and would increase the chance of the outbreak of a communist rebellion.146 During a visit to Paris, Nasution told Kho, an Indonesian sociologist at the Catholic University of Nijmegen, that he stood for a peaceful settlement, which would improve the position of the TNI and he wanted to talk preferably with Stikker, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs.147 During January 1962, Duynstee
intensified his efforts to achieve a breakthrough on the West New Guinea problem and held frequent consultations with Indonesian diplomats in Bonn. This resulted in Jakarta sending two senior plenipotentiaries to Bonn, who held a meeting with a number of Dutchmen, including some KVP politicians. De Gou, the KVP mayor of Venlo, was allotted the task of submitting a number of proposals to Prime Minister de Quay. These firstly stipulated that any possible talks were dependent on the Netherlands’ prior undertaking to agree to hand over the territory, and secondly, in order to repair the mutual loss of trust between the two countries, it was deemed absolutely necessary to hold confidential talks at ministerial or ambassadorial level. Indonesia agreed to any venue with the exception of the Netherlands itself and was willing to discuss the presence of a third party, preferably an American ambassador. A significant gesture was an Indonesian assurance of taking over Dutch promises made to the Papuan people, including the matter of the right of self-determination, and a suggestion of a plebiscite after ten years. Duynstee sent the same proposals to Queen Juliana in a letter of 3 February 1962. A departmental marginal note read: ‘... the Prime Minister should insist that the Queen should not involve herself in correspondence on this matter ...’ The initials could not be deciphered. On 1 February, de Gou had a stormy meeting with an angry de Quay, who sharply condemned this approach and dismissed the Bonn proposals.

Other groups also pressured the government to change course. On 17 December 1961, Professor van Hamel addressed a petition to the Queen for the appointment of confidential agents to meet with Indonesian counterparts to find ways and means to end the New Guinea debacle, with the special proviso that care be taken of Papuan interests. A similar petition signed by Professor Smelik was received by the prime minister on 9 January 1962. Another approach suggesting confidential Dutch-Indonesian exploratory talks came from a certain van Eeghen, honorary
consult in Tanzania, who reported that the Indonesian government had empowered a confidential spokesman to negotiate using a procedure previously used in the case of Tanganyika. This would involve declaring West New Guinea a UN trusteeship territory under Indonesian administrative control, but with the Papuan people being given the opportunity to implement their right of self-determination at a later date. Van Eeghen reported later that the Indonesian Ambassador to Moscow, Adam Malik, had a message from Jakarta to be delivered to the Dutch prime minister. De Quay directed for this to be sent via the Dutch ambassador in Moscow. This resulted in Adam Malik travelling to London where he was received as directed by the Dutch ambassador, Bentinck.  

In cabinet both the prime minister and Luns complained that the activities of the Rijkens lobby, and other groups, had harmed the official Dutch position and had created a false impression in Washington that the Dutch people no longer stood behind the government’s New Guinea policy. Luns then emphasised that the Bentinck-Malik contact definitely should not be constructed, as the Indonesian press had implied, as leading towards negotiations. Malik supposedly carried supporting letters from Sukarno and Subandrio in which the precondition of a Dutch transfer of power and an Indonesian promise to uphold Papuan rights were again repeated.

De Quay and Luns were also annoyed about these private initiatives as they were interfering with the current efforts of U Thant to find a solution. Furthermore, the presence of Indonesian intelligence agents during the secret Dutch-Indonesian meetings in Bonn were found highly undesirable. Hence, the Bentinck-Malik meetings were stopped and parliament was told that the government disapproved of meetings of parliamentarians and private citizens with Indonesian emissaries. Still, according to CIA reports, official Dutch contacts and meet-
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ings continued with Indonesians such as UN Ambassador Sudjarwo, Colonel Magenda and Adam Malik.\textsuperscript{158}

U Thant’s activities flowed directly from the Vlakke Hoek incident when he had received messages from Sukarno clearly indicating a reversal of the earlier Indonesian agreement on unconditional preliminary talks. Sukarno rejected the Netherlands’ proposal of a UN development committee for New Guinea as well as the idea of a trusteeship. All that Sukarno had been willing to accede was an immediate Indonesian takeover followed later by the implementation of the Papuan right of self-determination. After this had been resolutely rejected by Schürmann, the Dutch representative at the UN, U Thant asked what the Netherlands reaction would be to a possible public appeal by him to Sukarno to smooth the way for an immediate opening of a Dutch-Indonesian meeting to establish an agenda for negotiations with himself acting as the third party. Luns reacted very enthusiastically while the cabinet reacted positively and appointed van Roijen and Schürmann to attend the proposed talks.\textsuperscript{159} Indonesia assented and deputised ambassadors Suwarno and Adam Malik.

The Indonesians immediately took a hard line rejecting any idea of internationalisation and were only willing to offer, at the most, a kind of provincial autonomy. But in essence, Indonesia seemed only interested in the matter of the transfer of power, and offered the Netherlands one week to come to a decision, putting on additional pressure by threatening war and the nationalisation of part-Dutch-owned enterprises. These bullying tactics were too much for the Americans, who told Jakarta to adopt a less strident and more reasonable tone. This resulted in the end with Sukarno agreeing to a short UN interim administration and to respect Papuan rights. It is clear that Washington was adamant in creating a situation conducive to a fruitful outcome of the imminent visit of Robert Kennedy to Jakarta, which had as its main objective to offset the ever-increasing influence of communism in the country. In fact, a communist diplomatic
offensive was being staged, highlighted by the recent state visits of Khrushchev and Chou En-lai. Lavish supplies of Soviet heavy weapons and the arrival of Russian ‘advisers’ made a large-scale Indonesian invasion of West New Guinea feasible; something that could only be an advantage to the PKI. Furthermore, this growing Indonesian military power, it was feared, could destabilise Western security in the Western Pacific.

The involvement of Robert Kennedy

Robert Kennedy’s visit turned out to be very stormy and the earlier belief that he might fall under the mesmerising spell of Sukarno and his wily ways proved to have been off the mark. The visit started on a very sour note caused by the situation of Allan Pope, a CIA pilot who had been shot down over Ambon in 1958 during the American-supported Permesta rebellion. During his 1961 visit to Washington, Sukarno had promised to release Pope, but nothing had happened. Robert Kennedy’s reminder of this promise was pushed aside by Sukarno in his usual cavalier way, indicating his unwillingness to comply in the short term. Apparently an altercation occurred during which Kennedy exploded in anger with the shouting being heard in the corridor. This had the desired effect and three weeks later Pope was released. This blunt kind of ‘diplomacy’ seemed also to have forced Sukarno to decide to abandon the precondition requirement for the Dutch to transfer power before the beginning of talks. A promise of American help, during the negotiations with the Dutch, undoubtedly would have acted as an inducement to adopt a more reasonable attitude, and it must also have become patent to the Indonesians that the Netherlands could not count on American military assistance during an Indonesian attack.160

At the same time in Washington the axes were sharpened to cut down Dutch resistance to being forced out of West New Guinea. In a memorandum to President Kennedy, security ad-
viser McGeorge Bundy stressed that the time was ripe to apply ‘real heat’ on the Netherlands. It was argued that this was not a case of choosing sides, or of condemning colonialism, but the position of the West in South-East Asia was in question here. A war in New Guinea would escalate an already deepening security crisis in the region, where the USA was already fully committed in Laos and Vietnam. An Indonesian takeover of West New Guinea was inevitable, but to appease Dutch qualms Sukarno had to be pressed to agree to the right of self-determination of the Papuans, although Bundy believed that in the end he would not stick to his part of the bargain.161

Programmed this way, Robert Kennedy arrived on 25 February for a whistle stop in The Hague where he managed almost immediately to put a large number of ministerial noses out of joint. He had been told that in addition to Luns he should also talk with Prime Minister de Quay to ensure that the American standpoint would penetrate to the top. Kennedy started by butting up his hosts stressing that, during the last six weeks, Sukarno and Subandrio had lost a great deal of international support owing to their unyielding stand. In Jakarta, however, he had finally achieved a breakthrough with Indonesia assenting to self-determination for the Papuans, and an interim government, providing the Dutch agreed to hand over the territory. Indonesia rejected U Thant as third party for the negotiations and opted for the USA in this role.

Luns treated Kennedy to a long review of Dutch-Indonesian relations since 1949 illustrating the untrustworthiness of Indonesia, since it had torn up agreements in order to achieve its objectives at any cost, including recourse to war. Apparently Dulles’s policy of deterrence was no longer working and Indonesians were obviously under the impression they would get away with warlike acts with impunity. A strident example of this was the Vlakke Hoek incident. Luns continued his usual tirade against Jakarta and handed two memoranda to Kennedy, one which included the text of the 1957 Australian-Dutch cooperation
agreement, which he just passed on to Ambassador Rice. In the end, Luns, realising that the Netherlands was on the losing side, offered cooperation with American efforts to find a solution, providing a face-saving formula for the Dutch withdrawal was found. He closed his speech by throwing the lot of the Papuans to the wolves by stating ‘... that we certainly would not encourage the Papuan population to maintain ties with the Netherlands, which also would not be in the interest of the Netherlands itself.’

The Kennedy meeting with the Dutch cabinet was disastrous and most Ministers did not take kindly to the same bullying tactics he had used in Jakarta. Anti-colonial remarks during a dinner, and complaints about the lack of higher education facilities in West New Guinea, together with uncalled-for wisecracks such as Indonesia being more powerful and would therefore win, incensed people, and caused one Minister, Toxopeus, to leave the table disgusted with this ‘loutish performance’.

Later, Ambassador van Roijen also branded Kennedy’s behaviour as uncouth and arrogant. But he argued that, although Dutch public opinion was justifiably upset by Kennedy’s antics, the reason for the people’s surprise at hearing the real American position on West New Guinea was largely due to the faulty information supplied by the Dutch government in the past. The cabinet had for far too long continued to put its faith on the vague promises of Dulles in 1958, despite the regular warnings which Luns had been wont to denigrate and push aside.

Admittedly it was not that the whole of the cabinet and parliament had been hoodwinked by Luns’s assurances, but the majority of parliamentarians in fact had become angry when it became clear, finally, that the game was up. Prime Minister de Quay wrote in his diary:

The visit of Robert Kennedy caused many of us to fully change our expectations. We were now convinced that... our plans could not be realised. Kennedy put the question: ‘Will the Netherlands
fight if we will not join in?’ We answered quite clearly: No, we will not commit such a stupidity, because we obviously are too far away and would be overwhelmed by superior numbers. It would be irresponsible to shed blood and fight on our own for the cause. This would be out of the question of course....165

Luns had still not fully capitulated and doggedly pursued Kennedy to Paris sticking to his old line, but to no avail. Not to be deterred he repeated his old refrain to Rusk and President Kennedy in Washington in March 1962, asking for assurances of American military backup. He also suggested that as a deterrent units of the American Seventh Fleet should visit West New Guinea. This was rejected by Rusk as impossible under the circumstances, impressing on Luns that the USA was forced to consider the West New Guinea question first of all in the light of national American interests. According to Rusk this American stand should not be seen as an interference in Dutch affairs, but rather it should be looked at in the context of the American worldwide responsibilities in the fight against communism. Future developments in Indonesia were a crucially important element in this pattern. For years the USA had tried to maintain a balance between the Indonesian military and the communists and wanted to retain its contacts with moderate political elements in the country. Dangling a carrot, Rusk stressed that the Netherlands was sorely needed in the rehabilitation and development of the Indonesian economy and should regain its historically prominent position after the solution of the West New Guinea problem and the establishment of normal diplomatic relations. Robert Kennedy had told him of being amazed at seeing, during his tour, the enormous goodwill towards to the Dutch which still existed in Indonesia and it would take the USA decades to build up a similar position. Luns, however, stuck to his guns and revealed that on the basis of reliable Dutch intelligence reports a large Indonesian attack was imminent and the Dutch government had decided to strengthen the territory’s defences by dispatch-
ing another two destroyers and two submarines, and a further detachment of marines. Indonesian propaganda had also been stepped up, with radio broadcasts boasting that all white people would be killed. Luns insisted that after the start of secret talks the Indonesians, although claiming to work for peace in order to cause the Netherlands to desist from sending for reinforcements, would in fact continue to prepare for a large invasion. He appealed again to the USA and other Western powers to stop their arms deliveries to Indonesia. But Acheson replied that the American military mission in Jakarta was an important instrument for extending USA influence in Indonesian affairs.166 The next day Rusk tried to allay Dutch fears of a full-scale invasion and told Luns that, although the USA could not back the Dutch political position, it would still use all possible means to prevent the use of force, although warning that this should not be taken to mean American military involvement. A decision on this would only be taken at the outbreak of hostilities emphasizing, however, that in the case of a frontal attack the fate of Dutch citizens, women and children were uppermost on his mind and he promised to consider how the USA could help. In his dispatch to The Hague, Luns added that van Roijen had reported to him that Harriman had talked to him in the same vein.

Finally, and highly significantly, Rusk stated to Luns that according to American intelligence Sukarno’s health was deteriorating. This made it even more important for Washington to keep its hand on the pulse of happenings in Jakarta and to remain in contact with and further cultivate moderate Indonesian political forces rather than solely concentrating on the volatile figure of Sukarno: ‘We don’t want this very important question decided upon by one son of a bitch …’167 Later in the day Luns was received by President Kennedy, who also showed his contempt for Sukarno. On the other hand Kennedy believed that Sukarno was trying to find a way out by way of secret talks initially designed to prepare an agenda for further negotiations. Luns indicated Dutch acceptance for an American third party at
the talks. But Kennedy was put out about the Dutch decision to send naval and army reinforcements and asked for a postponement until the Indonesian position on negotiations had been clarified. In the evening during a dinner party at the Dutch embassy, Kennedy repeated this request and restated his earlier undertaking that in the case of Indonesia engaging in open hostilities during the negotiations the USA would be forced to rethink its position. He added that a Dutch willingness to defer sending further forces would put extra responsibility on the USA. Luns signalled The Hague that apparently the chances of American armed involvement in the case of an Indonesian invasion had improved and also that American protection of the Dutch civilian population was likely. Apparently Rusk showed him a typewritten note from President Kennedy referring to the help of the Seventh Fleet in the evacuation of Dutch citizens and confirming that a presidential order had gone out to set the necessary preparations in motion. Worried about Luns’s known propensity of presenting coloured reports regarding the American position the State Department instructed its ambassador in The Hague, Rice, to convey this information directly to the cabinet.

Initially the cabinet was not impressed by Luns’s meagre results in Washington and found the American assurances sadly wanting. The Minister of Defence insisted that in view of persistent Indonesian armed infiltrations the American request should be ignored and reinforcements sent immediately. Cabinet was divided with some Ministers arguing that the game was finished, pointing out that the Netherlands stood alone and that obviously the Americans showed little respect for the Papuans’ right of self-determination, making it impossible to stick to the existing policies.

In the meantime Sukarno, in a pugilistic mood, continued to push the Americans to distraction in a merry-go-around by regularly alternating between conciliatory and warlike utterances. According to some important Indonesian sources, including Ali Sastromijojoyo and Adam Malik, Sukarno probably did not
really want to go to war fearing that this might carry with it the seed of his own destruction as his power depended on his ability to balance between the major power contenders, namely the armed forces, the communists, and the Muslims. Furthermore, a number of high-ranking staff officers saw a large-scale invasion of West New Guinea as a dangerous venture. They pointed out that the Indonesian task force lacked sufficient logistic support and its success was dependent on a long distance supply line, which was open to enemy attack. The High Command was also loath to denude Java of its elite divisions in view of a possible communist uprising.

Sukarno’s announcement on 4 March on Indonesia’s agreement to take part in preliminary talks, was followed up on 8 March with a strongly warlike speech stressing that the liberation of West New Guinea would definitely occur in 1962 with Indonesia making use of all available options. In response the Dutch cabinet, by way of compromise, decided to direct naval units to sail through the Panama Canal and tour the west coast of the USA.

The Bunker Plan

On 16 March, Luns announced to the cabinet that the Americans had proposed to have the preliminary talks held in Washington with the American diplomat Ellsworth Bunker in attendance. The American government underlined the highly secret nature of this exercise and made strong appeals to both parties to avoid aggressive action. The Dutch cabinet remained sceptical because of the obvious Indonesian unwillingness to call off the invasion preparations, and in fact, intelligence reports pointed to Indonesian armed forces being moved closer to the operational area. KVP member Dr Marga Klompé put a question about the reactions of Papuans themselves regarding recent developments and their need to be represented at the talks. It seems that the old colonial paternalistic rule of ‘everything for you, but noth-
ing by you’ was still held strongly in some quarters even at this

The talks commenced on 20 March 1962 at Huntland Estate, a secluded, private mansion near Middleburg, about 80 kilo-

tres outside Washington. The Indonesian side was represented by Adam Malik and Sudjarwo Tjondronegoro; the Dutch side was headed by van Roijen and Schürmann. Bunker was assisted by Bob Lindquist, a State Department officer in charge of the Indonesian desk and formerly USA Consul in Medan. The Dutch in the beginning were sceptical about Lindquist, who during earlier dealings had shown a distinct pro-Indonesian bias. The meetings were held in English, although in informal contacts both delegations used Dutch. Bunker opened the proceedings by explaining his own role, which was to act as the representative of UN Secretary-General U Thant. In his opening remarks van Roijen felt that the composing of an agenda for further negotia-
tions should really not pose any great difficulties and suggested that in order to smooth the way the first matter to be handled should be to decide on the operation of the interim government. He put it that such an interim body should be able to ensure that the Papuans would be allowed a fair chance to decide on their political fate. It should also pay especial attention to maintaining peace and order in the territory since as a result of the Dutch withdrawal many Papuans were highly upset and the security situation was volatile. Finally, van Roijen suggested that with the establishment of an interim government the grounds for the hostility between Indonesia and the Netherlands should have disappeared and normal relations could be established.

Adam Malik wanted to know whether after the installation of the interim body and the departure of the Dutch the territory
would be handed over immediately to Indonesia. To this van Roijen reiterated that the Netherlands still stuck to its long-held principle that a transfer of sovereignty would not be effected against the will of the Papuan people. On the other hand, van Roijen assured Adam Malik that the Netherlands would certainly not object to a Papuan choice in favour of integration with Indonesia. This strengthened the American belief that the Dutch were no longer in principle opposed to an Indonesian takeover, providing a face-saving formula could be found. This assumption was certainly correct in regard to van Roijen, but it was a miscalculation in respect of most of the Dutch cabinet and a sizeable section of the Dutch nation.

For his part Adam Malik refused to discuss the mechanics of an interim government and the question of Papuan human rights, insisting that his instructions were strictly restricted to the discussion of the transfer of power to Indonesia in West New Guinea and the normalisation of Dutch-Indonesian relations. But van Roijen had been strictly forbidden from having a direct transfer of power to Indonesia included in the agenda and as a result the talks came to a halt.

Adam Malik flew to Jakarta in a bid to obtain wider negotiating room, but failed to return. This was taken as an indication that Indonesia was unwilling to restart discussions in the short term. President Kennedy, angered with this turn of events, told Sukarno he was greatly disturbed about these artificially contrived obstacles put in the way of a solution which was close to being achieved.

Indonesia continued to make difficulties and decided to apply more military pressure. A new infiltration of the island of Waigeo and a plane attack on a small Dutch naval vessel were reported. This caused the more hawkish Dutch cabinet members, including Luns and Defence Minister Visser, to insist that two destroyers and two submarines visiting the American west coast be directed forthwith to West New Guinea. In addition it was requested for another battalion of marines and an extra 2400
army personnel to be dispatched. In the end this was agreed to by cabinet.\textsuperscript{178}

Washington, although unhappy with the Dutch move, this time facilitated the crossing of the Pacific of the Dutch naval vessels. The troops though were transported via the Azores, Curaçao, Lima and Tahiti.\textsuperscript{179}

Bunker, in order to entice the Indonesians back to the negotiating table, tried to achieve a breakthrough by submitting to van Roijen a formula according to which Indonesia would participate in an interim UN government, to be followed by a definite transfer to Jakarta. The wishes of the Papuans would be tested in a plebiscite after a number of years. Van Roijen, although rejecting this plan, decided not to report this alarming discussion to The Hague in order to avoid a further fall in the Netherlands’ trust of American intentions. But it soon became clear that van Roijen had failed to persuade Bunker to abandon his plan, as, aided by the State Department and the White House, on 2 April he submitted a fully worked-out set of proposals.

By this time President Kennedy had decided that shock therapy, mainly applied to the Netherlands, was needed to start the talks off again. Apparently, President Kennedy had decided to take over the wheel himself and, giving in to the requests of his personal staff, had initially left Dean Rusk out of the picture and determined that the transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia would take place after a Papuan plebiscite had been held. Rusk was informed of this crucial step two days later.\textsuperscript{180}

Rusk quickly countersigned the Bunker Plan under which the Netherlands would, on a specific date, transfer its authority to a temporary UN body. A mutually acceptable non-Indonesian administrator was to be appointed to oversee the government of the territory for a period lasting from one to a maximum of two years, using non-Indonesian and non-Dutch officials. To placate the Netherlands’ qualms Indonesia once in charge would be bound to prepare arrangements with the assistance of the UN to give the Papuan population the opportunity to exercise its right
of self-determination. The signing of this agreement would signify the resumption of normal Dutch-Indonesian diplomatic relations.181

President Kennedy immediately sent a personal letter to Prime Minister de Quay strongly recommending the Bunker Plan and again stressing that the West New Guinea question should be seen in the context of the domino effect of communist aggression. If a war broke out because of West New Guinea the chances of Indonesia falling into communist hands would increase sharply.182 Ambassador Rice threw in his own contribution with the explanation that the USA was unwilling to fight for the Papuans, as they would be unable to deal with independence anyhow. Apparently Rice had never properly read the UN Charter of Human Rights or perhaps conveniently suffered a loss of memory.183

Howard Jones reported from Jakarta that the Bunker Plan had been well received.184 Sukarno accepted the proposals, though insisting that the interim government be shortened in order to enable Indonesia to take over in 1962.185 In the Netherlands, as expected, the mood was very sombre.186 De Quay wrote:

I was paid a visit by Ambassador Rice. Luns was also present and he presented a letter from Kennedy that provoked a great deal of indignation. He meant to transfer New Guinea to Indonesia ‘indirectly’. A façade. Luns felt personally cheated ... 87

Similarly van Roijen was deeply upset and told Bunker that the plan was a mere face-saving exercise, that it would be seen by the Papuans as a betrayal by the Dutch selling out their rights for economic gains. He further criticised Bunker for not having provided a foolproof guarantee for the act of choice by the Papuans, as the role of the UN was kept at a minimum and was only worded in the vaguest terms. Bunker promised further amendments. Finally, van Roijen underlined that in view of continuing Indonesian military aggression, it would become even more difficult for the Netherlands to make more concessions as
Luns conveyed to Washington the dismay and shock of the Dutch cabinet dismissing the Bunker proposals as an example of rank appeasement rather than an honest American attempt at arbitration. Surely the Netherlands did not need the USA to help them to surrender, as this it could have done on its own volition a long time ago! He warned he would expose this shameful American treatment internationally. At the 3 May NATO meeting in Athens, Luns waded into the Americans with no holds barred.

N.S. Blom, Under-Secretary for Indonesian Affairs, labelled the ‘free choice’ after a number of years of Indonesian rule a mere mockery. A plebiscite would be absurd as there would be no real choice, because even in the hypothetical case of the Papuans being able to vote for independence, obviously no nation in the world, including the USA, would push Indonesia to give in. The Bunker Plan in essence meant the abandonment of the self-determination principle. He warned that the Netherlands would stand alone if it rejected the plan and pointed out that to fall back on the UN would be useless as U Thant, during the last few months, had been manipulated by the USA in order to bring about the existing situation. If the cabinet decided to continue with talks it would be up to the Papuans to state their views during the coming negotiations. The Netherlands should ensure that the Papuan representatives at the talks would be given the opportunity to fight for their own political future.

In the cabinet the situation was polarised, with the Ministers from the Protestant faction arguing that in view of the overpowering pressure of the Americans and the mounting Indonesian military threat, the essential objective of Dutch plans to create a free and economically viable Papuan state was no longer achievable. So, in the existing circumstances all the Netherlands realistically could do was to give in and accept the Bunker Plan. The Catholic Party was divided: Luns, Klompé and Bot, the Under-Secretary for New Guinea, continued their resistance, while Prime
Minister de Quay veered towards acceptance. So, the Dutch response could only be ambiguous and Bunker was requested to come up with more watertight guarantees for Papuan rights.\(^{191}\)

Bunker’s offer to insert the wording: ‘adequate guarantees for safeguarding the interests, including the right of self-determination of the Papuans’, still did not meet Dutch demands. Rusk, trying to push things along, pointed out that all clauses were conditional and Dutch delegates would be in the position to propose amendments to the Bunker proposals. He argued that the suggested amendment by Bunker indicated that at least in principle Indonesia now recognised the Papuan right of self-determination. This elucidation seemed to sway van Roijen to the extent that he recommended to The Hague not to reject the Bunker Plan.\(^{192}\)

On 25 April, Rusk, in a letter to Luns, again argued that the Bunker Plan provided a suitable framework for resumption of talks and that neither party would be committed at this stage, adding: ‘My government will support an arrangement for the expression of self-determination by the Papuan people which would be real and not a mockery …’\(^{193}\)

**Luns’s last stand**

These were strong words that nevertheless still did not satisfy Luns. Sukarno again threw a spanner in the works by his insistence that there would be no talks until the Dutch halted the despatch of reinforcements. In addition, the obviously pro-Indonesian faction in Washington and their attempts to push the Netherlands towards a speedy decision in fact were counterproductive, and also, Dutch public opinion was in an uproar about what was seen as the shameful role played by the USA. A visiting mission of Papuan leaders to The Hague, at the time, made a strong impact on the cabinet. Finally, it was argued by Luns that after the recent shoring-up of the Dutch defences in West New Guinea the military situation there had been stabilised and there was no
need anymore to sacrifice principles for opportune reasons. How this assessment could be squared with the estimates of Dutch intelligence reports showing that in terms of military firepower the odds were favouring the Indonesians, seems baffling and perhaps should be ascribed to Luns’s wishful thinking syndrome. On more solid ground was Luns’s observation that, according to reliable information, the Indonesian economy was on the verge of collapse and that there were serious rifts between Nasution and Sukarno, and suggested that the Netherlands should hang on a little longer for the Indonesian military threat to collapse. Finally, he dismissed the opposition Labour Party’s demand for an immediate liquidation of the West New Guinea problem as grandstanding, directed at the coming elections.

Remaining obstinate as ever Luns was adamant that the Dutch bargaining position could actually be improved, a belief not shared by van Roijen, who actually had been appalled at Luns’s intended fireworks at the Athens meeting, which in his view would produce the opposite effect. He had tried to steer Luns towards holding private talks with Rusk, but to no avail. As van Roijen had foreseen, the tirade by Luns against the USA at the NATO meeting in Athens, an attack supported by most NATO members, especially Germany and France, greatly upset Washington. Subsequently, during private talks this caused Rusk to retaliate angrily, leaving it up to Luns to either replace Bunker or stop American involvement altogether. This caused Luns to retreat a little, although he was still intent on gaining some advantages. The outcome was that a mutual agreement was reached for both the Netherlands and Indonesia to remain free to include all their important concerns in the agenda for the final negotiations. This was seen by Luns as opening up the possibility of pushing the original Dutch position of a UN interim government remaining in charge until the completion of the plebiscite on Papuan self-determination. In effect, Luns told Rusk that the Netherlands had not yet agreed to the transfer of the administration of West New Guinea to Indonesia, and he pointed
out that there were still qualms in The Hague caused by the fear that the arrival of an Indonesian authority in the territory could be accompanied by the injection of communist influence. Furthermore, Luns stressed that in view of the example of Ambon, Aceh, and Sulawesi, and other areas unhappy under Jakarta rule, it was crystal clear that the Indonesians would never honour their promise regarding the Papuans’ rights of self-determination. In the end Rusk agreed with this so-called Athens formula.198

Nonetheless the Americans proved unwilling to forget the Luns attack on their fidelity in front of the NATO leadership in Athens. The first sign of this was the recantation of the previous facilities granted by the Americans for the transport of Dutch troops and the transit of Dutch naval units. Washington was also tired of Luns’s procrastinating tactics.199 Relations took a further dive when it became clear in Washington that Luns, with his usual aplomb, had again indulged in too much poetic licence during a highly-coloured version he had presented to cabinet about his Athenian meeting with Rusk. Quite ironically the story had been leaked deliberately by some Dutch parliamentarians to the American embassy. But this was not all, as Luns had also, in cabinet, portrayed Rusk as in accord with his own assessment that time was working for the Dutch and the scope of the talks would be widened. Finally, he had intimated to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Second Chamber that a difference of opinion existed between the State Department and the White House on the West New Guinea question.200 Luns squarely denied the American accusations of trying to retard the talks and directed the blame at the Indonesians.201

Washington continued its attack and charged Ambassador Rice to deliver a letter to Luns negating everything he supposedly had transmitted to the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee about the Athens meeting. In reply Luns showed his amazement about this American reference to a secret Dutch government meeting. Pointing out that all Dutch cabinet matters were confidential he was not at liberty to reveal either what
he or the prime minister might have said on that occasion. It was obvious that a number of Dutch members of parliament were trying to create mischief between the Dutch and American governments, a charge not denied by Rice. Then Luns went on the attack again asking what Washington had to say about the scandalous Indonesian military aggression that was taking place. To this query the ambassador remained silent.202

The Indonesian reply to the Luns-Rusk Athens initiative arrived finally on 15 May in the form of the resumption of airborne landings in West New Guinea. On 20 March, General Nasution during a speech in Semarang had referred to airborne attacks declaring that the Dutch delaying tactics would force Indonesia to take West New Guinea by force. This was followed on 2 April by a statement from Nasution in Bandung to the effect that 75 per cent of all Indonesian military efforts were directed at the conquest of West New Guinea and claimed that soon Indonesia would possess sufficient military strength to chase the Dutch out of the territory. On 11 March he exclaimed in a speech:

Indonesia is not prepared to wait for two years for New Guinea. It does not matter whether it will be returned to us by the United States or even Satan, as long as it happens this year. There are nine months left and we are not afraid to use force, as we are ready.

Then, on 15 May, there was the declaration by Nasution:

We will continue to drop and land volunteers in West New Guinea. And if this proves not to be sufficient we will call on the armed forces to act. We have received heavy armaments from the ‘socialist’ countries that in firepower surpass the Netherlands’ NATO-supported forces. We cannot trust the Netherlands in transferring West Irian via negotiations ...

On 26 April, eighty paratroopers were dropped north of Kaimana, and seventy near Fak-Fak, followed the next day with forty-five near Mambumibu. On 7 May, sixty paratroopers landed on the south-west coast and on 19 May, eighty were
dropped on the Onin peninsula and 100 ended up near Temina-buan. From the interrogation reports of captured paratroopers it appeared that all the airborne operations had been conducted by regular Indonesian army units, supported by ‘volunteers’.  

Notwithstanding these actions, Luns continued his delaying game, and in an interview with the American journalist Paul Ghali he is reported to have stated that Netherlands policy was directed towards creating an independent Papuan state, and it was willing to transfer the territory to the UN but not to Indonesia. This, according to Jakarta, proved that the Netherlands had rejected the Bunker Plan. The State Department and U Thant also came to the same conclusion.

As it happened Luns was finally tripped up by the majority of his parliamentary colleagues voting to accept the Bunker Plan. The Lower House, already upset about the long delay in being able to debate the Bunker proposals, when finally confronted with them, deserted the cabinet. The general feeling in the House was that if it had been informed earlier the talks could have been restarted much sooner. Furthermore, Bunker’s elucidation on 23 March on the question of Papuan rights was found sufficient and the Athens formula was deemed unnecessary. To the great chagrin of Luns and de Quay, reading the mood of the chamber the cabinet decided to scrap the Athens agreement. But a Labour Party motion calling for an unconditional acceptance of the Bunker Plan was found too drastic and the government was merely directed to resume talks on the basis of the Bunker proposals. An angry, but undeterred, Luns left the chamber, and managed again to put his stamp on the dispatch to U Thant stating that the Dutch government’s decision to continue the preliminary talks did not mean that the Netherlands had agreed to the precondition of a transfer by the Netherlands of West New Guinea. This proviso was also conveyed to Ambassador Rice to whom Luns brought up his disbelief about how Washington could possibly put trust in such a completely unscrupulous and
devious character as Sukarno.\textsuperscript{205} All this of course achieved exactly Luns’s objective of preventing the Indonesian willingness to return to Middleburg. Certainly Sukarno’s suspicions of Dutch intentions were raised to a high pitch and as he told Howard Jones: “… I know the Dutch. They are deceiving the USA as well as U Thant …”\textsuperscript{206}

Van Roijen, long at odds with the cabinet, finally lost his patience and dispatched a highly critical appraisal to The Hague making it clear that the original Dutch plan of a UN interim administration followed by a Papuan plebiscite was no longer achievable. The plan to guide the Papuans to independence was doomed. All that remained was to lobby as strongly as possible to put in place the best possible guarantees for Papuan human rights. Even the chances in this respect were diminishing daily and he put it on the line that the Bunker Plan afforded the Netherlands its last chance. Deprived of American and other Allied military support the Netherlands could only conduct a defensive war, which the USA believed in the end was not sustainable. The result would be to surrender the Papuans unconditionally to the Indonesians. Van Roijen also disagreed with the policy of waiting for an economic Indonesian collapse. Firstly, this was not certain, and with an expected army takeover during such a scenario the military threat to West New Guinea would remain except that an invasion would be postponed temporarily.\textsuperscript{207} Following up van Roijen’s letter the Indonesian Bureau in the Dutch Foreign Affairs Department stressed that during further negotiations the question of Papuan representation should be strongly pressed.\textsuperscript{208}

From their side the Indonesians exploited the Dutch delaying tactics to the hilt, using this as a legitimate excuse to press on with their military buildup and to step up airborne operations.

\textbf{On the brink of war}

In Washington it began to look as though Indonesia was not
genuinely interested in a peaceful solution, but wanted, in a pique of anti-colonial rancour, to settle the issue by a military victory in order to enhance its national grandeur. Certainly Luns was convinced, and with some justification, that Sukarno wanted the return of West New Guinea as a result of armed struggle and not as a present from whatever quarter. Indonesian accusations of Dutch recalcitrance according to Luns were only a pretext to hide their warlike intentions. All along Sukarno had only been interested in humiliating the Netherlands, and the possibility of war had very much increased as a result of a recent change in Soviet thinking. Hitherto, Moscow had tried to prevent a war over West New Guinea, fearing that this would push the Soviet Union into a wider armed conflict with American forces. The Soviet arms deliveries to Indonesia had been intended primarily to keep the anti-American cauldron at boiling point. But the realisation that the Bunker Plan could succeed had moved the odds in Jakarta towards the Americans causing Moscow to re-define its strategy.

In fact, the arrival of hundreds of Soviet military advisers and Soviet-manned submarines soon after Subandrio’s arms buying spree in Moscow, seems to provide credibility to Luns’s contentions. Soviet embassy actions in Jakarta also pointed to this, because immediately after news had filtered through about imminent sponsored Dutch-Indonesian talks to be held in Washington, Ambassador Mikhailov was very angry about this turn of events and his efforts to obtain more detailed information from the American embassy remained fruitless. Mikhailov, up in arms at this development, sped to the presidential palace and demanded that Sukarno write an explanatory note to Krushchev and warned that Indonesia was falling into a trap set by the Americans designed to take over former Dutch economic interests and also to grab the oil fields in West New Guinea. According to the Russians the USA was on the point of investing millions of dollars in Indonesia. Angered by Mikhailov’s imperial tone the Indonesians responded with a sharp protest about this
unwarranted Soviet interference. Jakarta, keen to create a favourable impression in Washington just before the Middleburg meeting, reported this incident to the American embassy. Anything that might upset Indonesian-Soviet relations was welcome there. The Americans believed that this might rob the PKI and the Soviet Union of a potent weapon against the West and could take away the brake so far applied by Sukarno on the army to act against the PKI. Howard Jones’s deputy, Henderson, however, emphasised that a delay in negotiations would help the PKI, which in any case would do its utmost to ruin the Middleburg talks. 210

Roger Hilsman, head of the intelligence and research section in the State Department, now concluded that Moscow was absolutely opposed to a peaceful solution of the West New Guinea problem. The Soviets were clearly upset about the American initiatives, although Hilsman believed that Khrushchev did not want to escalate the dispute towards war. One reason for this was the possibility of the Indonesians bungling an invasion attempt that would cause the Soviet Union a loss of prestige and might force it to intervene, resulting in direct confrontation with the USA. On the other hand an Indonesian victory would lessen Jakarta’s dependence on the communists. Hence, it suited Moscow to simply keep the issue on the boil. The West New Guinea question served communist goals admirably as it highlighted the role of Moscow as the champion of anti-colonialism, helping to draw Jakarta and the Third World deeper into the Soviet camp. Since 1960, the situation had been complicated by the growing Sino-Soviet rift. An increasing orientation of the PKI towards Peking had caused tension between the party and the Indonesian government. The Soviets tried to exploit this situation by strengthening their relationship with Sukarno. 211 Moreover, in its attempts to entangle Jakarta into its web Moscow continued to supply an enormous array of armaments, including heavy weapons, making Indonesia the most powerful military power in Asia outside China. The Indonesian Air Force had undergone
a virtual metamorphosis, growing from a motley collection of World War II-era piston-engine aircraft into a strong modern force, equipped with the latest Mig-19 and Mig-21 fighters, Tupolev-16 and Ilyushin bombers, and ironically, American Hercules transport planes. The navy was considerably enlarged and included the latest Soviet destroyers, submarines, a Sverdlovsk-class heavy cruiser, Italian MTBs and modern transport craft. The army was equipped with modern East European small arms, tanks, rocket launchers, and both surface-to-air and surface missiles.212

The reported massing of Indonesian armed forces in the vicinity of West New Guinea caused a red alert in the Netherlands. A report of the joint chiefs of staff to the cabinet stated that since March the Indonesians had been clearly preparing for a major attack. Its strike power had grown rapidly to the point that at the beginning of June at least three battalions, supported by strong naval forces and holding air superiority, could be landed. Sukarno wanted an Indonesian feat of arms and by establishing a large bridgehead would have anchored Indonesian sovereignty on West Irian soil. This in fact would strengthen his position at the negotiating table. The Netherlands would be militarily outclassed and there was very little time left to find a political solution. The cabinet considered the situation not yet urgent enough to order the evacuation from threatened areas, as had been requested by Governor Platteel. The military authorities in fact supported Platteel and stressed that opportunities for the Dutch forces to take decisive action were rapidly disappearing.

So, on 13 July, the date on which the negotiations were resumed again, van Roijen was instructed by The Hague to demand Washington to call for a stop to the Indonesian war preparations. If this was not heeded the State Department had to be told that the Netherlands was considering a pre-emptive strike on Indonesian naval bases and airfields. On 27 July, the Dutch received intelligence information that the Indonesian task force commander had ordered the chartering of a large number of ships
and the transfer of another 8000 soldiers from Java to invasion massing points in East Indonesia. The Dutch chiefs of staff of the army and the air force told the cabinet that Dutch defence positions on the west and south-west coast were no longer viable and the troops should be relocated to the main defensive positions in the Geelvink Bay area. This move was opposed by the naval chief of staff arguing that these points would be immediately occupied by Indonesian troops and be used as bridgeheads from whence they could easily swarm out to make the defence position in Geelvink Bay untenable. In his view it would be preferable for the local commanders when attacked by overwhelmingly superior numbers to resist and then surrender. This view was shared by the cabinet. Again, on 31 July, the cabinet had to deal with another request of the Dutch armed forces commander in New Guinea to engage in offensive actions against various targets in the invasion massing area. The cabinet decided against this and restricted Dutch armed action to Indonesian ships and aircraft that had passed the 40-kilometre limit and were clearly moving towards the New Guinea coast.213

After the Dutch government’s announcement of its decision to return to Middleburg, Sukarno kept on playing his obstructive game. In letters to U Thant he was evasive and feigned a misunderstanding to Washington of the Dutch interpretation of the Bunker Plan. Adam Malik returned to Middleburg and the talks started again on 13 July. Prior to this van Roijen had been recalled to The Hague for further consultations. De Quay wrote in his diary that van Roijen had complained to him that he did not have the trust of the cabinet. In fact, during the cabinet session van Roijen and Luns sharply clashed and de Quay tried to ease the hostile tension and to achieve a working relationship between the two, as he considered van Roijen indispensable to the negotiations.214 Van Roijen was sent back with the following specific instructions:

1. to ensure an adequate guarantee for Papuan interests, including the right to self-determination;
In Adam Malik’s case the radius of operation was again strictly prescribed and bargaining about the crucial questions of the Indonesian takeover and the Papuan right of self-determination remained out of bounds. He was only allowed to discuss technical matters such as Dutch aid for economic development, and the nature and composition of the civil administration and economic concessions. In fact, the real negotiations commenced with the arrival on 18 July of Subandrio, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, who, as suspected, almost immediately started to try to demolish those parts of the Bunker Plan crucial to the Netherlands. On 26 July, during a personal meeting with van Roijen, he demanded that the UN interim government should be reduced to a few months in order to comply with Sukarno’s demand for a 1962 victory. But far more interesting was Subandrio’s point that during twelve months’ UN interim government, as envisaged in the Bunker Plan, Indonesia would still be forced to remain on a massive war footing. He argued that being saddled with such an enormous financial outlay could cause the country, already on the verge of bankruptcy, to be pushed into the abyss. Van Roijen replied that he could not see any valid reason after the signing of the agreement for Indonesia not to reduce military expenditure. Subandrio further stressed that the Indonesian military was suspicious of a long interim period during which too many political booby traps could be left behind and Westerling-like actions could be prepared. He referred here to the statement of a Papuan member of the New Guinea Council that the Netherlands intended to arm the Papuan population. Van Roijen tried to refute this by pointing out that the sole reason for instituting an interim authority had been precisely to avoid the outbreak of a Congo-like chaos. As a result, Subandrio offered to try to persuade Jakarta to agree to an extra two months of interim government, and in response to van Roijen’s objec-
tion that this contravened part of the Bunker Plan, he asserted that from the beginning the Indonesians had told the Americans about their reservations concerning the time factor. Van Roijen retorted that he had never been informed about this and that such a fundamental change in the Bunker formula would justifiably cause the Netherlands to conclude that it had been deceived. This would accentuate even more the already strong anti-Indonesian mood in the Netherlands, putting the outcome of the negotiations at great risk. Subandrio argued that it would be folly to go to war on the time question, and volunteered that Nasution also did not want a large-scale military operation as this would drive Indonesia ever closer into the Soviet orbit, putting its non-alignment status at risk. Turning to the Dutch demand for the right of self-determination for the Papuans he abruptly obviated all previous Indonesian promises. As he put it Indonesia would surely not be required to accept such obligations, which went further than the rules applying to a UN trusteeship. This would be taken by Indonesia as a national affront. For full measure, Subandrio insisted that Indonesian forces already operating in West New Guinea should remain there and should be amalgamated with the UN troops. The Dutch were given an ultimatum of four days after which he and Adam Malik would return to Jakarta.216

The reaction in The Hague was furious, while in the White House and the State Department patience was running very thin. The Americans seriously started to wonder whether Jakarta was really interested in a peaceful solution or only intending to humiliate the Netherlands. Rusk told Subandrio that while the USA would baulk at such recalcitrant behaviour from the Russians, it certainly would not take this from the Indonesians. Rusk insisted that President Kennedy had to be called upon to lay down the law to the Indonesians and that Sukarno had to be told that if war broke out because of this nonsensical stand, the USA would be involved. McGeorge Bundy tried to calm Rusk down by arguing that although it was time to slap down Sukarno, it would
be dangerous if an inkling of this reached van Roijen.  

In an interview on 26 July, Rusk left van Roijen under the impression that American military help was out of the question when he indicated that any such USA involvement would have to be preceded by a total mobilisation of the Netherlands forces to defend West New Guinea. This caused van Roijen to remark bitterly that even that would not cause the USA to lift a finger to help. Subandrio was carpeted by President Kennedy and in a stormy interview was told that the USA was absolutely fed up with Sukarno’s sabotaging antics. Kennedy stressed that it would be crazy to go to war when peace was in reach and made it clear that if Indonesia persisted on this course the USA could not remain indifferent and would have to reconsider its policy. A somewhat chastened Subandrio emerged from this meeting and indeed started to adopt a more reasonable attitude.

In the meantime, in The Hague, the government was propelled into action by a reliable intelligence report about an expected major Indonesian attack during the first part of August. This caused the cabinet to cave in and inform van Roijen of its decision to concede to the Indonesian request for a shorter UN interim period and minimum UN supervision of the actual Papuan plebiscite.

Subsequently, during a meeting on 28 July, a breakthrough occurred and an agreement was reached on all outstanding points. This was followed by the signing of a preliminary accord, signifying the end of 350 years of Dutch colonial presence in the Indonesian archipelago and leaving the Papuans in the hands of another colonial power.

Notes

3. Ibid., pp. 6-7 and 8-9.
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4. ibid., 3e stuk, pp. 22-43.
5. ibid., pp. 54-6 and 61-4.
6. ibid., p. 83.
11. Duynstee, 1961, p. 190
12. ibid., p. 192.
17. Meijer, op. cit., p. 373.
19. ibid., 209; De Geus, op. cit., pp. 80-1.
21. BUZA, van Roijen, 6-19151, Ref. no. 338.
26. BUZA, Van Itterson, codetelegram 687, 3 December 1954, ref. no. 13168.
27. BUZA, van Roijen nl, 1942, 15 Januari 1957, ref. no. 10379.
28. BUZA, Washington, 23 Maart 1956, codebericht 34, ref. no. 10248.
29. BUZA, Washington, 22 Mei 1956, codebericht 220, ref. no. 11805.
30. BUZA, Jakarta -Hagenaar, 29 May 1956, codebericht 321, ref. no. 12013.
32. BUZA, Washington, 2 January 1958, Ref. no. 5056.
33. BUZA, DOA Memorandum, 11 Februari 1958, no. 35.
34. BUZA, aan Washington, 14 Februari 1958, ref. no. 1910.
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35. BUZA, Washington-van Roijen, 13 Mei 1958 codebericht 380, ref. no. 9021.
37. BUZA, Washington-van Roijen, 27 Mei 1958, codebericht 418, ref. no. 9368.
38. BUZA, Luns, Memorandum no. 55, 28 Mei 1958.
39. BUZA, New York, 17 September 1958, codebericht, 342, ref. no. 11984.
40. BUZA, van Roijen, 18 September 1958, codebericht no. 716, ref. no. 12008.
41. BUZA, New York, 2 October 1958, Schürmann, codebericht 289, ref. no. 12334.
42. De Geus, op. cit., Bijlagen I, II.
44. BUZA, Luns aan van Roijen, 6 January 1959, codebericht 8, ref. no. 68.
46. BUZA, aan Washington, 12 Mei 1959, codebericht 253, ref. nl. 3476.
47. De Geus, op. cit., p. 110.
49. BUZA, Luns Memorandum, 13 Juli 1959.
50. BUZA, Memorandum no. 86. Luns to Minister van Defensie, Geheim, 31 Juli 1959.
52. BUZA, Afschift, P.C. Spender, Minister of State for External Affairs, to Mr P.E. Teppema, Netherlands Ambassador, 8 February 1950 (C. 5/630/74), Top Secret, 15288-1338 G-S.
53. ibid.
54. BUZA, Hirschfeld aan Min. van Buitenl. Zaken 15 Februari 1950, ref. no. 1603, 16542-1432 GS .
55. BUZA, Canberra 20 April 1950, ref. 4128.
56. BUZA, Canberra (Teppema) 25 April, 1950, Geheim, 42186-34 54 G. S.
57. BUZA, (Stikker) to Canberra, 2 Mei 1950 43983-3623GS Geheim.
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58. BUZA, Canberra, 11 Mei 1950, ref. no. 5049.
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10765.
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148. BUZA, Ministerraad Notulen, 12 January 1962.
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151. BUZA, see 148.
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188. BUZA, van Roijen codebericht 303, 2 April 1962, ref. 4500.
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193. BUZA, Dean Rusk to Luns. Confidential. 61897-3791GS, 25
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April 1962.

194. Huydecoper van Nigtevecht, op cit., p. 112.
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203. ibid.; The speeches of Nasution and report of landings taken from Appendix to Luns Memorandum no. 47/6, 16 Mei 1962.
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211. ibid., pp. 107-9.
218. BUZA, van Roijen, ref. no. 7416, codebericht 640, 26 Juli 1962.
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The West Irian victory provided a great boost to nationalist Indonesian pride, and particularly enhanced Sukarno’s prestige and position among his own people and in the Third World in the fight against colonialism and imperialism. But Sukarno continued to push his own dogmas of the ‘continuous revolution’ and the struggle of the ‘new emerging forces’. In reality, he was a dictator, who tried to stay in power through his mesmerising demagogic talents, the constant juggling between the major political contenders and by keeping his nation on a permanent war footing. Thus the West New Guinea problem was followed by the anti-Malaysian campaign.

After the nationalisation of the Dutch business sector and the vast armaments purchasing program the national economy continued to deteriorate, pushing the nation into bankruptcy and causing widespread poverty, starvation, malnutrition and disease. The bubble of indoctrinated hallucinations about national Indonesian grandeur finally burst as a result of the 30 September 1965 coup in the wake of which more than a million people were murdered. Sukarno had utterly failed in his dream of leading his people into a millennium of social justice and prosperity.

Ironically, the economic cost of the West Irian victory in fact turned out to be one of the major causes of Sukarno’s fall, and in contrast to the expectations of the Indonesian left the destruction of Dutch economic power in Indonesia had not plunged the Netherlands economy into the expected disarray. On the contrary, the Netherlands during the 1950s entered into an era of
rapid economic development, producing a higher standard of living and prosperity for the Dutch people than ever previously enjoyed in the nation’s history. In comparison, Sukarno’s dictum that a revolution could not live on bread only, uttered during his speech on 17 August 1963 celebrating the return of West New Guinea to the fold, had a hollow ring to it as millions of Indonesians were starving.

The biggest losers were the Papuans, who had been betrayed by the United States, and most of the rest of world, and had been sold against their will as chattels to the Indonesians. As in the heyday of 19th century imperialism the human rights of a subject people had been trampled upon.

Papuan nationalism had, since 1949, grown more strongly and in 1963 a sense of belonging to a nation rather than only to a specific tribe or clan was felt by more people, particularly in the urban centres. Still, the vast bulk of the population was not affected and their reactions and feelings remained focused on purely local affairs. Those living outside tribal and clan boundaries were considered as foreign enemies, and that included also, of course, any colonial usurper, whether Dutch or Indonesian. In addition, not all of the territory had been explored and brought under effective Dutch colonial control.

**Papua under traditional colonial rule**

In the early 1950s it was believed that it would be impossible to achieve autonomy or independence for Papua within the immediate future. Similarly, the Australian colonial government of the neighbouring Territory of Papua and New Guinea was convinced that it would take at least thirty years to prepare the Papuans properly for nationhood. Furthermore, in West New Guinea, the enthusiastic and iconoclastic reformer and Papuan champion, van Eechoud, had been replaced in 1950 as governor by van Waardenburg, an administrator of the old Netherlands-Indies school. He was supported by top level bureaucrats of the De-
partment of Overseas Territories in The Hague, most of them with a similar Netherlands Indies background. Van Waardenburg then tried to run West New Guinea as an old-fashioned colony. As such little interest was shown in the rapid expansion of education and vocational training facilities for the indigenous people. The aspirations of the budding, small Papuan nationalist elite, although not entirely ignored were nevertheless put aside as being unrepresentative of the population. The official policy was to move the masses into the 20th century without avoiding unnecessary cultural dislocation and political unrest. All this sounds familiar and recalls the Dutch colonial education policy in the early 1920s in Indonesia, which had been designed to stifle radical nationalist agitation by reducing the growth of an indigenous Western-educated intellectual proletariat.

The colonial administration regulations of 1949 had projected a New Guinea council, which together with the governor would hold legislative power. This body was to be composed of twenty-one members: ten Papuans to be elected; nine Dutchmen, of whom seven were to be elected and two appointed by the governor; and two members from the non-Papuan communities were added, one to be elected and one to be appointed. But the actual establishment of the New Guinea council was postponed indefinitely, not only because of the great difficulties in organising proper elections, but even more so because of the lack of experience of prospective members of democratic institutions. Instead it was decided to first institute advisory councils to deal with specific indigenous concerns to act as training grounds for modern Papuan politicians. On 28 April 1951, three of these councils were set up, wherever possible, with a Papuan majority. In 1950 also, a National Education Council had been established, counting only one Papuan representative with the majority of members having been drawn from the Christian missions. The earlier experiment with advisory sub-district councils during van Eechoud’s term of office had failed, with the exception of the Kankain Kankara Biak, founded by Vic de Bruyn. This council
dealt with *adat* questions as well as public health and hygiene. In this connection mention should also be made of the generally un-Papuan institution of the *rajas* in twelve areas of the predominantly Islamic Raja Empat islands and the Fak-Fak area. Unlike their Indonesian self-ruler namesakes, the *rajas* in Papua wielded no official power but acted as a link between a number of village heads and the Dutch colonial administration.

In 1951 in The Hague, an interdepartmental commission, consisting of officials from the departments of Foreign Affairs, Finance, and Administrative Affairs, was set up to deliberate on the question of political development in West New Guinea. The commission agreed that the gradualist policies adopted by the colonial government in Hollandia leading from training in village government, to regional and finally to the national level, would be preferable. On the other hand it stressed that the spirit of the times and international pressure would preclude such a time-consuming approach and that the New Guinea council would have to be set up considerably earlier than was envisaged. It was suggested that owing to the limited competency and low educational standards of Papuans the powers of the New Guinea council should initially be restricted, as the Netherlands-Indies Volksraad had been given on its inception in 1918, to the right to assist in the preparation of the budget and to propose amendments to legislation. In conclusion, the commission recommended that an overall plan should be adopted having as its first priority to rapidly bring the whole of the territory under direct Dutch colonial control; secondly, it should accelerate the spread of education, health, proper housing and agricultural extension services. Thirdly, it should speedily open up more opportunities for Papuans to be appointed to the public service, including the judiciary. The commission also believed that the introduction of Western village councils and courts would be more useful tools to create national unity than genealogical-based institutions.\(^4\)

The earliest call in the Netherlands parliament to protect the right of Papuan political self-determination dates back to the
efforts by the Liberal Party leader, Oud, during the debates on
the RTC negotiations in 1949. He repeated this demand in par-
liament in May 1950, but his calls remained ignored until 1953,
when the second Drees government adopted the principle of
Papuan self-determination as an important plank of the West
New Guinea platform.\textsuperscript{5} The government pointed out that dur-
ing its first term a more positive policy had been put in place and
in the 1952 Queen’s address to the nation it had been announce-
cd that the government intended to advance Papuan social-
economic, and political development, although a time frame was
not set within which self-government would be expected to be
achieved.\textsuperscript{6}

The Minister for Overseas Territories, Kernkamp, put it to
parliament at the end of 1954 that in view of an overestimation
of the economic potential of West New Guinea it was absolutely
necessary to proceed carefully and gradually in the way of na-
tional development.\textsuperscript{7}

In fact the Dutch government persisted until the end of the
decade with this gradualist approach. As late as 1958 the cabi-
net, pointing to a very slow Papuan national awakening process
among Papuans, emphasised the prime importance of indigenous
economic development and the creation of wider opportunities
for education and vocational training. But it showed less inter-
est in political training on the grounds that it was impossible to
predict how long it would take for the acculturation process to
run its full course and to create a feeling of Papuan national iden-
tity. Hence, it concluded that it would be impracticable to lay
down a date for self-government. As a result only a minimum of
democratisation occurred and the territory remained governed
in the old-style colonial pattern with power centred on the gov-
ernor, advised by a council of departmental heads.

The successor to Governor van Waardenburg was Dr van Baal,
an anthropologist with considerable local field experience in West
New Guinea and who held more progressive views on Papuan
emancipation. His attempts, however, to increase Papuan par-
participation in government administration were obstructed by some of his own officials and the Department of Overseas Affairs in The Hague. A government commission on constitutional revision for West New Guinea in 1956, led by the ultra-conservative and colonial diehard Professor Lemaire, a parliamentary running mate of Welter’s break-away National Catholic Party, in its recommendations remained wedded to traditional colonial practice.

In 1952, van Baal, still in parliament as an ARP member, had severely criticised the West New Guinea constitutional regulations as unworkable and demanded an entirely new approach in which the governor would be responsible for the running of the territory assisted by an executive council. In addition an appointed legislative council should be established, reflecting the various interests in the colony and a New Guinea council, as envisaged in 1949, should be instituted. Van Baal further suggested that the territories be divided into a number of regions each with its own advisory council, and that smaller units should be created for example in the Sentani and Nimoran areas with councils to concentrate on special local concerns. Another part of his scheme was to enlarge the civil service and to set up more specialised departments. Finally, van Baal pushed for a five-year plan to stimulate auto-activity and self-help among the Papuans, and demanded a total reorientation of attitudes and objectives: ‘… in which we must free ourselves from stereotypes particularly from the late Netherlands Indies which still influences the thinking … of officials of all ranks …’

However, during his tour of office as governor (1953 to 1957), van Baal, owing to the obstructionist tactics of the old colonial clique in the Netherlands as well as from some local officials, was only able to realise a part of this reform program.

Van Baal was opposed to having the old Dutch colonial local and regional government system of Java, anchored on the lurah, the village head, planted on West New Guinea soil. The model of the lurah, appointed for life and wielding a great deal of arbi-
trary power and dovetailing into the semi-feudal Inlands Bestuur, was unsuitable for Papuan conditions. He argued that it would be futile to introduce such an entirely foreign element into an essentially very loosely organised and strongly anti-authoritarian structure, where power rested on clan heads and magicians. As it was, the concept of the village as an administrative unit was not known in Papua, since most Papuans lived in clan groupings, numbering no more than 200 or 300 people. Van Baal believed that for the government to achieve a higher degree of social bonding and eventually a feeling of national identity the process should be started by setting up supra-clan Papuan-run administrative units.\textsuperscript{10}

In 1955 the first local advisory councils were established in Hollandia, Manokwari, the rural areas of the Schouten Islands, Japen, and Sorong. This was followed by regional advisory councils in Fak-Fak (1958), and Biak-Numfoor (1959). These communities were empowered to take part in the implementation of general ordinances; to regulate and administer certain local affairs; and to enforce local ordinances and to levy taxation. Dafrosoro council was elected directly, while for the others the indirect ballot was used; and to reflect the multicultural nature of the various areas about 20 per cent of members were appointed. In addition, the regional communities were empowered to subdivide their areas into village communities. As such the Biak-Numfoor regional council set up eighteen village units. In the Mimika region village councils had already been in existence since 1953.\textsuperscript{11}

Spurred on by the ever-increasing international pressure and the Indonesian threat of invasion in 1960 this policy of building a democratic system organically by leading gradually from the grassroots to national representative bodies, was abandoned. Instead, the long-vaunted New Guinea Council was inaugurated. This body was invested with extensive powers. Legislative power and the responsibility for framing the budget were shared with the governor and a council of departmental heads. Furthermore,
members enjoyed parliamentary immunity, and held the rights of petition, interpellation, and amendment. Twenty-two out of the total of twenty-eight seats were held by Papuans.

Social and economic development

In May 1961 the Dutch government adopted a ten-year plan for socioeconomic and political Papuan development. Without wishing to lay down a definite date for self-government, the plan envisaged the escalation of training of Papuan cadres and educational facilities. The stated goal was to fill the civil service at a level of 90 to 95 per cent with Papuans, including a number of top-rank positions requiring tertiary qualifications. It was expected that by 1970 only a small number of foreign technical experts would still be needed.  

In the period 1950 to 1960 the number of pupils in village and urban three-year elementary schools teaching the three R's and social skills, had only increased from 25,791 to 32,686. More important in terms of emancipation was that a significant increase had occurred in Papuan attendance in the more advanced primary school types such as the Vervolgscholen, the number of pupils growing from 804 to 2734. A certificate from the Vervolgschool provided entrance to technical and vocational courses. The number of Papuans in teacher training courses had grown from ninety-five to 404; and in technical schools from seventy to 212.  

The number of Papuan students in secondary schools remained small, growing from only twenty in 1950 to 116 in 1958. Some improvement occurred and in 1960 the number of Papuans attending the junior high school (MULO) had increased to 430. In 1960, twenty-nine Papuans were studying in the Netherlands: three at university, two at the tertiary level Tropical Agriculture Institute, seven at secondary schools, and the remainder undertaking college-level vocational and technical courses. In 1961, fifty Papuans went to the Netherlands to follow advanced training courses. In addition, Papuan students
were sent to Port Moresby, seven to attend the medical college and six to take a radio engineering course; another two were at the Auxiliary Medicine and Dentistry School in Fiji. The Government Administration School set up by van Eechoud in 1946 had gradually improved its standards, delivering a growing number of graduates, with the result that in 1960 almost half of the seventy-four districts in the territory were run by Papuan patrol officers. Furthermore, there were 966 Papuan village schoolteachers, 270 nurses, but only sixteen Papuan teachers in continuation schools. The number of Papuans in the civil service had grown from 1290 in 1956 to 2192 in 1960, holding mainly lower ranked positions.

Obviously by 1962 only a very small Western-educated Papuan elite had been created. To many observers at the time this was too insignificant in terms of numbers and experience to run a modern, independent Papuan state. Against this there stood the example of the recently declared independent African nations, most of which were certainly no better equipped and prepared to take care of their new states. It could even be said that in 1945 and 1949 Indonesia had hardly any better chances in this respect. Surely in percentage terms of the population the size of the Indonesian Western-educated elite was not that much larger than the one in West New Guinea. Admittedly in Indonesia the nationalist movement had developed far more strongly and widely. Still, the question remains why an independent Papuan nation was not allowed to emerge in West New Guinea. In accordance with the stipulations of the UN Charter the Papuan people, after a further period of UN trusteeship, should have been allowed a genuine choice to determine their political future. The act of self-determination staged by Indonesia in 1969 was a sham and a shocking betrayal of the principle of universal human rights. This outcome had clearly been predicted, as the documents testify, in Washington, the Netherlands and in Australia.

In addition to human rights another essential question that must be looked at was the economic viability in 1962 of an in-
dependent Papuan state. It would be unrealistic to expect a mira-
culous metamorphosis to have occurred between 1949 and
1962 in the basic structure of the West New Guinea economy.
This in fact remained for the most part totally underdeveloped
in the modern capitalist sense. Still some success had been
achieved in the coastal areas and in the north-west island groups
where a larger number of Papuans had been drawn into the
modern labour force, the export production sector, and the
money economy.

In 1960 there were 461,858 people living under direct Dutch
colonial administrative control, as compared to 342,600 in 1956.
In addition, a further 71,079 people had been brought within
the radius of regular government patrolling. An estimated
169,020 Papuans, mainly in the Central Highlands, still remained
outside the government umbrella. They were living in their
original self-sufficient economic pattern with trading activities
based on barter. Food production was primitive, the largest crops
being sago and tubers such as taro and yam, sweet potato,
sugarcane and banana. Domestic pigs were almost exclusively
kept for ceremonial and religious purposes and as bride dowries.
The population was generally suffering from dietary insuf-
ficiencies.

Under these circumstances the possibility of the accumulation
of savings and capital from indigenous sources were obviously
non-existent. Therefore, the funds needed to construct a modern
infrastructure of roads and communications, and the apparatus
to run a modern government, had to be provided largely from
the outside, namely by the Netherlands taxpayer.

This lack of indigenous capital also forced the economic
development of the island to be run on traditional colonial lines.
Accordingly, emphasis was put on further exploration and
exploitation of minerals, the vast forest resources, and Western-
run and owned plantations, with the local population supply-
ing the required labour force. Over-enthusiastic reports spread
by the West New Guinea lobby about the island’s economic
wealth, proved to be unrealistic. As it happened, oil, as the supposed mainstay of exports, did not live up to expectations. In the late 1950s reserves began to dry up and no new fields had been discovered. To make matters worse a government report of 1959 marked the death knell of earlier optimistic expectations regarding lead, zinc and copper deposits. The only promising discoveries made were of cobalt and nickel in the Cyclops Mountains and on Waigeo Island, and in 1962 a Dutch-American mining company, Pacific Nikkel Mijnbouw, was founded. The search for gold and uranium also remained unsuccessful.18

Timber exports were also slow to get off the mark, as the industry had to be built up from scratch. A major problem was that despite being covered with dense rainforests only relatively few stands of timber were available for commercial logging. The forests contained a great mixture of species, most of which were commercially useless; and in addition the rugged terrain made areas inaccessible.19 To obtain a realistic estimate of timber resources the government Forestry Service conducted a large number of aerial mapping sorties in the 1950s and also reforested areas with more commercially viable species. These surveys also tried to estimate the timber resources available for indigenous use. Another measure taken was to encourage the traditional indigenous gathering of forest products such as copal and damar resins and attempts were made to improve copal production by introducing conservation practices, improving access and starting new plantations. The Forest Service was also involved in the managing and development of commercial timber stands and set up a timber mill in Manokwari. The production of logs increased from 18,472 cubic metres in 1955 to 49,963 cubic metres in 1960. In the same period the output of sawn timber grew by 151 per cent with its export value rising from 51,000 guilders in 1955 to 1.118 million guilders in 1960. The production of copal and damar in the period 1958 to 1960 oscillated around an average of 714 tonnes per annum with the highest
The Papuans Betrayed

export value of 2.1 million guilders reached in 1959.20

Attempts to improve the fishing industry were less successful. A government-sponsored tuna fishery project failed, as the Papuan fishermen were technically inferior to their Japanese competitors and trawl fishing experiments in the Arafura Sea had to be abandoned owing to the rippled structure of the seabed.21

Soon the model of a classical colonial plantation economy, as envisaged in The Hague, had to be discarded as being entirely unrealistic. A major factor was that the required fertile and arable land was simply not available in West New Guinea. Soils were generally of poor quality and only a few areas were suitable for plantation agriculture. Only 5 per cent of an estimated total of 41.5 million hectares were arable. These approximately 2 million hectares, half the size of the Netherlands, were, however, widely scattered over a large number of relatively small pockets, severely reducing the possibility for economically viable plantation operations. Two other factors worked against the establishment of a plantation economy. The first was the scarcity of Papuan labor that would have necessitated the import of foreign indentured workers from Indonesia and other Asian countries. For example, the labor force in the oilfields in the Sorong area was overwhelmingly Indonesian. The second factor was that Dutch government policy was committed to developing the country for the Papuans themselves. Van Eechoud already in the 1940s had warned against the danger of transforming the Papuans into a nation of coolies. Other similarly enlightened officials such as the outspoken Governor van Baal put Papuan interests as their central concerns.

The colonial authorities were of course well aware that long-term foreign investments needed to accelerate and sustain economic development would be difficult to attract as long as the political future of the territory remained under a cloud.

Government policy tried to safeguard as much as possible the national heritage and wealth of the Papuans by education, training, and by encouraging them to take the modernisation of their
country into their own hands. To enable more Papuans to accumulate savings it was necessary for them to participate directly in the emancipation process, and colonial administrators, like van Baal, advocated the creation of a class of Papuan farmers producing export crops. Van Baal wrote in 1957:

Real independence is dependent on economic development. This again is affected by many external factors. But in any case the creation of a class of independent farmers must be strongly pushed forward. When 15,000 family heads can be persuaded each to plant 2 ha of cash crops, this already means an increase of 30 million in export income …

This, he argued, would prevent the creation of a people composed of coolies with no economic stake in their own country, and after independence would safeguard foreign businesses from immediate nationalisation.

During the few years remaining the Dutch administration made serious attempts to put these policy directives into practice. An important role in this was taken by the government agricultural extension services, agricultural schools and courses, and the provision of selected planting material. Some tangible gains particularly in the production of copra and nutmeg were made. During 1955 to 1957 and 1958 to 1960 respectively, 1055 and 2004 hectares of coconuts were planted with copra production between 1952 and 1960 increasing from 2945 to 5847 tonnes, adding in 1960 an export value of 3.9 million guilders to the economy.

The production of nutmeg and mace peaked in 1936 at 503 tonnes and 80 tonnes respectively, but had seriously declined after the war. Rehabilitation of the industry in the 1950s had been aided by favourable export price patterns and, in 1960, the area under nutmeg and mace in the Fak-Fak area had grown to 470 hectares. In the period 1956 to 1960 production had grown from 355 to 600 tonnes, increasing export earnings from 1.9 to 3.45 million guilders.
The Papuans Betrayed

The newly introduced cultivation of cocoa, which had proved to be so successful in the Tolai area in Australian New Guinea, also showed signs of promise in areas of north-west New Guinea. By 1960 the area under cocoa had increased to 1015 hectares and between 1958 and 1960 a rise from 3.2 to 52.0 tonnes had been produced with export earnings increasing from 6000 to 90,800 guilders.23 Other newly introduced crops such as coffee and rubber were still relatively insignificant, with rubber holding the best prospects.

In order to turn people away from traditional slash and burn production methods and to transform them into sedentary farmers, a number of experimental projects were conducted in Nimboran, Mappi, Japen, Biak, the Warmare plains, Akimura and Ajamaru-Teminabuan. A nucleus of farmers was allowed small plots of land of 3 to 4 hectares each to grow food crops, fruit, and export crops such as cocoa and coconuts, under supervision. In 1960 a pilot project in the Nimboran area had been completed with the fourteen participating farmers allowed to continue without any further financial aid. The Mappi project in south New Guinea had since 1956 trained seventy-five families from seventeen villages resulting, in 1960, in almost 1000 hectares of coconuts having been planted. Most of the 114 hectares under cocoa had failed, but better results were expected of the rubber crop. In Japen-Waropen in 1960 there were thirty-two agricultural nuclei consisting of 880 farms. The area under cocoa had increased to 517 hectares producing 43 tonnes.24 These were promising results, although the proportion of Papuan-engendered export income still remained relatively small, and the balance of trade heavily tilted towards imports, causing an ever-growing deficit to be covered by the Netherlands.

By 1962 the economic development program had still not gained full momentum. A money economy had only penetrated into parts of the coastal districts, particularly in the urban areas of Hollandia, Biak, Manokwari and Merauke. Barter still remained common in the interior. The number of Papuans em-
ployed in the modern sector was still small and in fact had stayed static in the last few years.

<table>
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<td>16,746</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>15,910</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>33</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In 1960 the government employed 57 per cent of the Papuan work force. In the private sector the building industry accounted for 33 per cent, followed by small industries that were responsible for 13 per cent of registered workers.

The recruitment of Papuan labour was beset by a number of problems caused, in the first place, by the sparseness of the population as a whole. As a result the labour demand in Hollandia, for example, would not be fully supplied from its surrounding rural districts and some workers had to be brought in from further afield, causing socioeconomic dislocation in the areas concerned. In order to ensure a balanced development in both the countryside and in the urban centres the government imposed regulations and, if necessary, restrictions on recruitment. This way the government tried to prevent a fall in the production of food and cash crops and hoped to stop a social drift from the country to the towns. The results were not entirely successful. An investigation by Broekhuijse, in 1960, of Papuan immigration into Hollandia pointed out that this policy was not realistic, as the country surrounding Hollandia offered very limited chances for self-betterment. Most of the land was not suitable for farming or horticulture and the only opportunity to gain employment was in the town.

In 1959 only 3.2 per cent of the rural population were involved
in government-sponsored economic development projects and only 17 per cent were employed in the western economic sector; 77.8 per cent of the population still lived in the traditional self-sufficient economic sphere. Only the Nimboran area was showing local economic potential through its copra and cocoa production, although this was not expected to provide any income comparable to urban wages until the end of the decade. Opportunities for people in the rural areas to improve their socioeconomic situation remained very restricted. Those with high intellectual ability were normally selected by the Christian missions to study for the priesthood or for teaching training, with others ending up in the civil service or the police force. The majority found employment as unskilled labourers in Hollandia. The indigenous population of Hollandia had grown from 20,943 in 1952 to 73,240 in 1960. The ratios of men to women had markedly changed from 1:8 to 1.9:1 and the number of children per woman from 1:0.92 to 1:2.22. This was a strong indicator of permanent migrant settlement and the reduction of temporary workers. Broekhuijse’s investigation was limited to the lower strata of the migrant population, mainly slum dwellers, not the Papuans with proper housing, that is, mainly civil servants and police, who enjoyed a comparatively higher standard of living. The investigation was based on a sample of 377 men, representing 20 per cent of the group as a whole. Of the sample, 289 were married and eighty-eight were single; ninety-six originated from the Hollandia countryside, sixty-two from Nimboran, seventy-six from Sarmi, sixty-one from Biak, thirty-four from Serui, and, interestingly, twelve from Australian New Guinea.

The estimated annual migrant intake was put at 100 families. Economic advancement often proved to be disappointing, because despite a higher income than in the countryside, wages were generally found to be too low to compensate for higher city prices and the more varied consumption patterns. The situation was often aggravated by penumpang, invariably young, unmarried, male relatives who, in accordance with the traditional Papuan
family system, expected to be fed and housed. Almost all families investigated supported *penumpang* of whom 7 per cent contributed to the house rent, 25 per cent to food and 34 per cent helped with household duties. In 7.5 per cent of cases extra income was earned by taking on additional work; 35 per cent of the sample added to their income by growing garden crops; and 23 per cent still received material help from their home villages. On the other hand, 40 per cent were able to send 24 guilders per month to their families in the village. About 7.9 per cent of the labourers were unemployed, but mostly for short periods. Broekhuijse pinpointed two crucially important problems that demanded immediate remedy. The first was the lack of training facilities, which were absolutely necessary for new migrants to advance socioeconomically, and secondly, housing was generally substandard. Still, more than 50 per cent of the new migrants indicated their desire to become permanent settlers, while 43 per cent desired to return to their villages. Significantly, 85.7 per cent of married men, 73.5 per cent of women, and 78 per cent of *penumpang* were deemed to be literate; but only 3 per cent had received education beyond the village school. The rate of literacy in this group was certainly much higher than in most villages in Indonesia at that time. These villagers perhaps felt the need to satisfy the demands of their new educational status by moving to the city.

In conclusion, Broekhuijse warned that the neglect of the government and the racist-tainted disregard and aloofness on the part of the white community, as a whole, for the economic plight of the Papuan urban dwellers could turn their still generally pro-government stance into hate. By the early 1960s the Papuan national awakening and demand for political emancipation, the first glimpses of which had appeared in the immediate postwar period, had adopted a much more strident voice.

**Papuan nationalist reaction**

In the years 1950 to 1960, typified by van der Veur as a period
of Dutch neo-colonialism, the traditionally hierarchical colonial government apparatus still ruled supreme and society was run on strictly racial lines. Papuan disapproval of government policy and practice was discouraged and was repressed if too strident. Indonesian allegations of Dutch political suppression in West New Guinea, although overdone, were certainly not entirely off the mark. More vocal Papuans complained of the colonial attitude of many Dutchmen: 'When trying to further their own [Papuan] personal interests, they were often told that they were too uncivilised, pro-Indonesian or even communist'.

Papuans were expected to follow the official line and to carry out orders. Students were reportedly wary of going public due to fear of harming their further educational and career opportunities.

The anti-Dutch rebellions and agitation after 1945 and the activist members of the pro-Indonesian PKII party, mainly organised and directed by local Indonesian citizens, had been resolutely repressed. Marcus Indey, a prominent PKII member, told the joint session of the 1950 Nieuw Guinea Commissie that he had been imprisoned from 1946 to March 1950 and that more than 1000 persons had shared the same fate.

In 1960, during an inquiry by Grootenhuis, a government official, more educated Papuans openly censured the European community for its racist and 'apartheid' behaviour and attitude. As an example the polyclinic in Hollandia harbour was cited. It had two entrances: one featuring a sign in Dutch for whites and the other one in Malay for the natives. Moreover, waiting Europeans made it abundantly clear to Dutch-speaking Papuans that they were not welcome in their queue. Another case noted was of a Eurasian bus driver waiving Papuans through to the back and allocating the front seats to Dutchmen. Similarly Europeans were served first in shops even though they arrived after waiting Papuans. The rancour caused by these discriminatory practices was accentuated by the social position the educated Papuans found themselves in, forming the highest class in their
own society and the lowest in the European-Eurasian dominated Western society. The situation was further complicated in the workplace where educated Papuans were filling lower echelon posts while often being lorded over by Eurasians, who generally were insensitive to Papuan feelings. It was a scenario reminiscent of prewar socioeconomic tensions between Eurasians and Dutch-educated Indonesians in the Netherlands Indies.30

Events during most of the 1950s created an anticlimax to the political turbulent times of the immediate postwar period. Overt anti-Dutch national agitation was suppressed, although in the Indonesian nationalist affected areas such as Serui, Fak-Fak and Sorong, anti-Dutch colonial feeling smouldered under the surface. Furthermore, the departure for Indonesia in 1949 of the charismatic Papuan nationalist leader Silas Papare left the pro-Indonesian movement largely leaderless.

The Dutch colonial authorities, as they had done in the Netherlands Indies, attempted to lead Papuan nationalist feeling into less revolutionary channels by increasing the rate of indigenous participation in public administration and advisory councils and encouraging Papuans to set up anti-Indonesian organisations.

The new elite of Dutch-educated and nationally inclined Papuans was divided between a relatively small but vociferous group advocating incorporation with Indonesia and a larger group of leaders opting for cooperation with Dutch policies to eventually achieve full Papuan nationhood and independence. The pro-Indonesian faction was centred mainly in Serui, Sorong, and Fak-Fak and was organised as the PKII set up in 1946. In its propaganda it targeted educated Papuans employed in the civil service, the teaching sector, and succeeded in recruiting some Christian mission teachers, as well as assistant district officers, policemen, and health workers. PKII workers in the Telecommunications Department had between 1945 and 1949 been able to maintain telephone contact with the republican government in Java. During 1950 the Dutch government took a number of repressive measures against the PKII. The importation and dis-
tribution of the Yogyakarta-published periodical *Suara Irian* was forbidden and the Papuan staff in the Telecommunication Department was replaced by Dutch officials. Furthermore, military reinforcements were sent from Biak to prevent possible anti-government actions.31 The repatriation, however, of the Indonesian nationalist detainees from Serui, and the departure of Silas Papare for Indonesia in September 1949, his fare having been paid by his followers, weakened the leadership of the party. The organisation now continued to work more covertly. In the village world Silas Papare became a cult figure, expected to bring back the *koreri*, the promised utopia, on the backs of the invading Indonesian armed forces.32 The people said: ‘We have paid for Papare’s trip (*sudah buang ongkos*) and we want to see the results of our money (*dulu ongkos kembali*)…’

Those interviewed indicated their fear of the Dutch government (*kami takut pemerintah*) and expressed their belief that once united with Indonesia, Papuans would be able to study anywhere in the world.34

This strong pro-Indonesian sentiment was still in evidence in Serui in the early 1960s. PKII adherents remained suspicious of the Dutch colonial government’s policies and intentions. This pro-Indonesian stand seemed almost axiomatic, although now more rational arguments were being put up against the Dutch attempts to speed up Papuan self-government and independence. Among these were that West New Guinea was still too underdeveloped and if granted independence the country would fall back again into darkness. Another important point was the self-image held of Serui being the most emancipated and advanced area in the country, while most of the rest was seen still as very backward and the objection was: ‘If we must wait until all the others have advanced to our level before we are able to gain independence we will never be free (from the Netherlands)…’

Obviously, local group chauvinism played a role here in sticking to the Indonesian option. The Netherlands government was also blamed for promoting the idea of Papuan independence.
The West New Guinea Debacle

without the necessary education and training opportunities being provided. Here, regional rivalry came into play as the government was being upbraided for being biased towards Biak, seen as a Dutch ally, in allotting higher education places. Moreover, the introduction of the New Guinea Council and regional councils was dismissed as diverting attention away from urgently needed improvements such as in education. At village level the councils were criticised as being superimposed by the government and the people were unable to participate in them because of a lack of education. The Dutch were accused of following a policy of *gila kedaulatan* (independence madness), thereby running the risk of creating a Congo-like situation. Papuans who decided to cooperate were fooling themselves. In general the people of Serui felt politically suppressed and the voices of the people were being ignored. These ideas as a whole were strongly held among the older generation.

But among the younger people with an educational level beyond the village school the ideal of Papuan independence rather than the goal of joining Indonesia was gaining more support in the early 1960s. In this group the Papare cult was also losing ground. In addition, District Officer Assink reported in 1960 that the Indonesian propaganda about Dutch neglect of socio-economic development in Serui had lost a great deal of appeal, since the lot of the people had improved considerably in recent years, as better housing, electricity and water had been provided. He warned, however, that the political situation might be affected by an influx of unemployed workers returning from the Sorong oilfields. Among these were many workers from Waropen, staying in Serui looking for work, who ‘infected’ by the propaganda of their Indonesian co-workers in Sorong would cause a good deal of political trouble.

In 1950 a pro-Indonesian youth organisation, Pemuda Indonesia (PPI), had been founded in Serui. Its leadership consisted mainly of Indonesian nationals and some local youths. In September 1950 the PPI was proscribed by the Dutch colonial au-
authorities for subversive activities and its leaders sentenced to long prison terms. After their release in 1954 an attempt was made to revitalise the organisation under another name, Pemuda Baru. To avoid a second jailing they stayed in the background, but found it difficult to find other leaders.37

Another important location of pro-Indonesian sentiment and activity was Sorong where a sizeable Indonesian labour contingent was employed in the oilfields. This resulted in many Papuan workers being indoctrinated by their Indonesian colleagues, who disseminated Indonesian propaganda after their return to their own villages. The fall of oil production since 1959 had caused hundreds of Indonesian workers to be repatriated, thereby markedly reducing Indonesian political agitation. The Indonesian cause suffered further with the sudden decision of the Jakarta government to put a stop to this repatriation of its own nationals, causing dismay and disillusionment. More harm resulted when the leader of the Indonesian group in Sorong, a Menadonese called S.K. Tumengkol, considered by Dutch intelligence to be a master spy, disappeared out of sight, causing a serious succession struggle. Of course Dutch suppression also had an impact. For example, one member of the Sorong group, an Indonesian called A. Ruman, who on the island of Misool had set up an anti-government organisation, was arrested by the authorities and he and his followers were sentenced to prison terms. By 1960, according to Dutch intelligence, Sorong was no longer a major centre of Indonesian subversion.38

The traditional pro-Indonesian sentiment in the raja districts of the Fak-Fak area and the Raja Empat Islands remained intact. Islam and family relationships in Indonesia bonded the rajas to the Indonesian cause.39 In his *Memorie van Overgave* of 1962, Controleur Mahler typified the attitudes of the rajas as follows. The raja Fatagas A. Uswanas showed no overt inclination one way or the other, waiting to show his colours until the political future of the island had been definitely settled. Among his relatives, however, some were definitely pro-Indonesian. The raja
of Rumbati was only out for the most profitable outcome for himself, and was open to all offers, although among his family strong support for Indonesia could be found. The raja of Argaeni, M. Rimosan, was considered politically trustworthy, but was not a dynamic person, keeping himself in the background. Also the raja of Ali-Ati was found not to have been affected by anti-Dutch propaganda.

There was still little political party activity in Fak-Fak. The Gerakan Rajat Irian party, wanting fusion with Indonesia, had recently been founded. There were few people actively involved in the Papuan independence movement. The growing newly educated Papuan elite consisted mainly of teachers and lower echelon government clerks. The status of this group was soon to be raised by the return of seven students in colleges in the Netherlands and two in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea.

The Indonesian colony from the island of Buton, which in 1946 to 1947 had been deeply involved in anti-Dutch plotting, was still politically active. It exercised a strong influence particularly on the Islamic Papuan families, who had helped Indonesian infiltrators that had come ashore near Kokas. The Butonese had, in 1958, founded the Partai Iran Barat that was almost immediately suppressed by the colonial power.

Controleur Mahler concluded in 1962 that in the Fak-Fak area the Papuan population generally did not prefer an Indonesian takeover, as they appreciated that their economic situation and their educational opportunities had been improved under Dutch rule. On the other hand he pointed out that an Indonesian takeover would not result in massive popular resistance as many people had relatives in adjacent Indonesian islands. If the Indonesians introduced an humane administration there would be no opposition to them. He also reported that overt threats were being made by fervent Papuan nationalists against local Indonesian residents. Mahler gives the impression that, although restrained by the official government line, in reality he wanted to convey that in his area the majority of Papuans were basically
In 1950, in addition to repression, the Dutch government tried to attack the pro-Indonesian movements by establishing in Biak its own political organisation, the Gerakan Pemuda Nieuw Guinea. This was the brainchild of Captain Sneep, an officer in the territorial intelligence service. At the same time a similar organisation, Persatuan Perwakilan Politik Irian (PPPI), appeared in Hollandia. In its periodical Warta Irian it pushed a strong anti-Indonesian tone, and exhorted Papuans to cooperate with the Dutch government to achieve a national Papuan identity and a government structure free from Indonesian influences. Soon afterwards both these parties were amalgamated into the Gerakan Persatuan Nieuw Guinea (GPNG), with branches set up nationally. Interestingly, a GPNG branch from the staunchly pro-Indonesian lion’s den of Serui, in 1952, defiantly sent a resolution to The Hague expressing support for continued Dutch rule. While this token of adherence no doubt had some propaganda value, particularly in the Netherlands, it of course fooled nobody in the country itself and in Indonesia for that matter.

In 1953 the GPNG took a stand against the promotion of the idea of creating West New Guinea as a new fatherland for refugee Eurasians from Indonesia. It similarly rejected the idea pushed at the time by some RMS followers of incorporating West New Guinea into a Great Moluccas State. As it was, the GPNG remained a rather weak and sluggish body, unable to generate the necessary energy to prove that it was more than a mere Dutch colonial government propaganda tool. So, in 1954 some government quarters dismissed the GPNG as a failure and called for its abolition.

More important in advancing Papuan political emancipation was the Perkumpulan Sekerdja Kristen Di Nieuw Guinea (PERSEKDING), a labour union and the Papuan wing of the Christelijk Werknemersverbond Nieuw Guinea. Founded in 1952 it was mainly interested in wages and other socioeconomic issues such as education and housing and fought hard for just
wages and humane labour conditions to be enshrined in the law. In addition, women’s clubs, and literacy classes, some covering political topics, were established under its umbrella. By 1960 the organisation’s membership had grown to 3000 and acted as an important training ground for budding nationalist politicians, providing almost the whole of the top leadership of the most effectively organised Papuan nationalist party, the Partai Nasional (PARNA), set up in 1961.45

The Democratische Volkspartij

The GPNG was eventually replaced in 1957 by the Democratische Volkspartij (DVP), but soon lost its initial widespread and enthusiastic support owing to its inefficient and corrupt leadership. The party became disorganised and was torn apart by personal rivalries. The Western-style organisational structure was largely a façade behind which power was diffused along traditional clan lines where mutual suspicions and diverging personal demands still ruled supreme, pushing both the party’s and the national interests into the background. In these circumstances it was those endowed with a strong, charismatic personality who came to the fore, bending or ignoring the rules to suit their own whims and advantages and putting more store on increasing their own social standing and power than the welfare of the community.

The idea for the DVP actually came from Brandenburg van de Gronden, president at the time of the Eurasian-dominated organisation Nieuw Guinea Verbond, and it was he who chose its first leader, Lodewijk Jacadewa, a bizarre and dubious figure. Admittedly the range of choice in the Papuan world was of course very limited. More educated personalities such as Kaisiepo and Jouwe were wary of being branded as government stooges and most of the rest of the leadership of the modern intelligentsia such as Weajoi, Waruma, Ajamiseba, and Wettebossy were considered to be too pro-Indonesian. Still, the choice of Lodewijk
Jacadewa, with his unsavoury record, was certainly not reassuring. In 1946 Jacadewa had been sentenced to three and half years jail for anti-Dutch activities. Again in 1951 he had been sentenced, this time for possession of dynamite. In 1957 he grasped the opportunity of the visit of the Dutch Minister for Overseas Affairs, Helders, to put himself in the limelight and, granted an interview, he propounded the DVP objectives as the retention of Dutch rule, the rejection of Indonesian claims, and the improvement of indigenous socioeconomic conditions. Putting aside Jacadewa's dubious reputation, people joined the DVP in droves. Most of the support came from the north coast areas, but Biak and the villages around the Humboldt Bay, the tribal area of Nicolaas Jouwe and Kasiepo, stayed aloof. Jacadewa himself originated from Tanah Merah Bay, situated more westwards from Hollandia. Tribal and clan considerations still played a role in the determination of political allegiance. The Hollandia regional authorities from the beginning showed strong reservations about the DVP leadership and with just cause. Recruiters were going around the districts collecting membership fees without official approval. Many complaints were received in Hollandia, suspicions about corruption. The assistant district officer of Depapare (west of Hollandia) reminded authorities that previously Jacadewa had been involved in a case of a cooperative venture in his home district of Tanah Merah from which 6000 guilders had disappeared without trace. The Resident of Hollandia then ordered that the DVP should be steered away from political activity, and should concentrate its efforts in the socioeconomic field. The suggestion for an organisation to collect money for young, capable Papuans to be sent to the Netherlands to further their studies, though accepted by the party council, ended up with most of the funds disappearing into the wrong pockets. Only the party's treasurer put the money he had collected into the bank, leaving the passbook in the district officer's office for safe-keeping. Funds collected during another campaign for a school building project suffered the same fate.
In May 1958, Lodewijk Jacadewa, ignoring the official prohibition to stay out of the political arena together with his brother Mezach, a mentally labile figure, sent a letter to Prime Minister Drees, objecting to possible Japanese timber concessions in the Sarmi region, and accused the political opposition, including Nicolaas Jouwe and Womsiwor, of being involved in the deal. All this of course helped to heighten Lodwijk Jacadewa’s prestige and power within the party council and the rank and file. Nevertheless, his days of political prominence were numbered. Suspicions about financial irregularities continued and questions were asked about how the party’s leadership paid their expenses albeit unemployed. Finally, in 1959, Lodewijk Jacadewa was accused of having misappropriated 200 guilders and of later having falsified a bank passbook. He was found guilty and sentenced to four months in jail.

As a result the DVP fell into decline. Its original backer, the Eurasian leader Brandenburg, pushed forward Rumainum, a local administration officer, as leader. More intelligent than Jacadewa and endowed with an even more delusionary imagination, Rumainum proved to be equally unreliable and self-seeking. He was a confidence trickster who, as an intelligence informer, had managed to sell the same information to both the police as well as to the legal firm de Rijke, gaining a pretty sum out of these dealings.

Despite the Western image of the party, the DVP’s leaders were only partly progressive, and their objectives and actions were still often culturally hidebound and their horizons restricted to local and regional concerns. With their education generally not above the village school level most DVP leaders could be classed as still pseudo-mythical and in some cases even showed a traditional messianic orientation. Furthermore, as many of the initiators of the party had served in the postwar Papuan Battalion, a social bond of long standing existed between these party stalwarts, partly explaining their anti-Indonesian attitude. Having served under the Dutch flag and having been instrumental in the sup-
pression of Indonesian plots and rebellions, they saw the DVP as an instrument to continue their struggle. In fact, for Lodewijk Jacadewa, as an earlier pro-Indonesian supporter, to obtain the top leadership in the party surely testifies to his mesmerising power of persuasion. DVP support was also determined to an important extent on the basis of regional rivalries. The party saw itself as representing the ‘pure’ and ‘free’ Papuans from the Hollandia region as juxtaposed to the ‘mixed’ people of Biak and Serui who, for centuries, had been under the rule of the Sultan of Tidore and therefore were dismissed as pro-Indonesian spies. Other Papuan leaders such as Jouwe and Kasiopo, who turned their noses up at the DVP, were painted as self-seeking, untrustworthy, and accused of making plane trips overseas while forgetting the needs of the people. The DVP marketed itself as the only genuinely popular movement committed to Papuan socio-economic advance by supporting and cooperating with Netherlands rule and the rejection of Indonesian claims. The Netherlands was seen as the only power genuinely interested in trying to improve the lot of the Papuan people. Former Indonesians employed in the Dutch colonial service, and teachers and policemen had treated the Papuans as animals, and through their position in the civil service had prevented the Dutch from turning the Papuans into human beings. During his interviews with DVP members, Grootenhuis was surprised at the invariable litany about the ill-treatment received from Indonesian superiors. Assuming that the truth lay in the middle, he argued that this still left ample evidence to support these accusations, explaining this rancour and hate of Indonesians whose return they wanted to avoid at any cost. In contrast the Netherlands was seen as bringing light into the darkness, particularly after World War II, which had made ‘people’ out of the Papuans not only through education and economic welfare but also by greater social equality:

Previously we had to sit on the floor; we were not allowed to say anything. But now we are sitting at the same table and you listen to what we have to say …
Other complaints concerned the inaccessibility of former Indonesian government officials; people waited for days to see them only to be insulted at the end. Cases of ill-treatment at school were aired, such as pupils being dismissed and upbraided as stupid and backward; their inability to speak Malay properly being attributed derisively to the stickiness in the mouth caused by eating sago. The Indonesian officials were also blamed for seriously retarding any possibility for Papuan social mobility by invariably dismissing the locals as too stupid. The Sultan of Tidore, who for centuries had suppressed Papuans considering them as chattels to be hunted down and sold into slavery, was seen as the personification of the amberies’ attitudes toward Papuans. In fact the Jakarta government’s decision to appoint the Sultan of Tidore as the governor of Irian Barat to strengthen the Indonesian claims through historical legal rights, misfired as it poured salt into old wounds still nurtured at least in north-west New Guinea.

The picture conveyed by DVP supporters of greater social equality under the Dutch was in fact highly overdrawn and idealised. As related above, racial discrimination was still widespread among the Dutch in the colony, especially among Eurasians.

The DVP likened the relationship with the Netherlands as one of a father bringing up his son to the point where he could stand on his own two feet. The Netherlands was thus looked on as the essential source of development. The earlier mythical belief that the Dutch held the secret key to knowledge and hence power and development, still seemed to linger on here.

On the other side there existed a conscious appreciation of Papuan national rights and the DVP leaders referred to articles 72 and 73 of the UN Charter and the speech of Queen Wilhelmina of 7 December 1942. To highlight the Papuan right of self-determination and the falseness of Indonesian claims the DVP had sent a number of resolutions to the UN, The Hague and Hollandia governments. The party did have a lopsided view of
The Papuans Betrayed

the realities of the international situation West New Guinea found itself in. This is illustrated by its demand for a permanent stationing of the Dutch aircraft carrier *Karel Doorman* as a deterrent to Indonesian attack. It showed a childlike faith in the support of the Netherlands and the UN for their cause. One leader believed that all progressive countries, exactly twenty-seven in number, stood ready to rush to the aid of West New Guinea in the case of an Indonesian invasion. A DVP delegate from Depapre, west of Hollandia, tried to persuade the party to collect contributions to pay for an American mercenary army to keep the Indonesians at bay. Apparently the memories of American armed might that had staggered them in 1945 had still not dimmed.

The New Guinea Council was seen as a Papuan political training institute, and as an offshoot of the DVP that after all saw itself as standing at the centre of national Papuan politics. The DVP strongly pushed the New Guinea Council to take much more drastic action against the Indonesian and pro-Indonesian segments of the population. It was completely incomprehensible to them that these ‘Judas Iscariots’ were allowed to move around freely and to continue their efforts to convert ‘gullible’ Papuans to the Indonesian side. One informant in Sarmi wanted all Indonesians to be repatriated, if necessary by force, and played out the following imaginary scenario:

> With a rifle at the ready he ordered an imaginary group of Indonesians: ‘Cut down this tree to make a boat out of it. Sail home in it. If you don’t want to make a boat, you will die here’ (*Potong pohon! Bikin prahu! Tidak bikin prahu! Mati disini!*) …

Others expressed a more tolerant and Christian-inspired view for all population groups: Papuan, Chinese, Dutch, Eurasian and Indonesian, to be combined into one people under a Christian state. Others again agreed that after a security check Indonesians should be allowed to stay, providing they treated Papuans as equals.
The West New Guinea Debacle

Most DVP members still stressed that the majority of the Papuan people were too backward and too poor to handle self-government not to mention independence. The guiding hand and protection of the Netherlands would still be needed for a considerable time. As far as the political future was concerned options varied from union with the Netherlands to joining a Melanesian union. The demands of others for Papuan independence in the immediate future were derisively rejected as attempts by ‘intellectuals’ to shamefully expel the ‘father’ of the people. They were ignoring the plight of the people and were only after the good jobs and nice houses of the Dutch. As officials they sported an array of fountain pens, but without their jobs they were no better than anybody else.

The DVP leadership, living intermittently in a traditional and modern mode, considered themselves as ‘ambassadors’ of the Dutch colonial government with the task of elucidating to their people official policy objectives. This paternalistic and ‘all the way with the Dutch’ attitude of the leadership, however, no longer satisfied the rank and file, especially among the young in the urban areas of Hollandia where more emphasis was put on the provision of better housing, training facilities and general economic betterment.47

In fact some DVP members in Hollandia were critical of the vague ideas and expectations of the leadership, calling for their replacement by more realistic leaders such as Jouwe and Kasiepo.48 According to an investigation by Broekhuijse only 16 per cent of his sample were members of the DVP and 10 per cent of these regularly attended meetings.

During a general meeting on 24 August 1960 the DVP announced a new and more detailed political program of action. In addition to the continued support of Dutch rule a veiled criticism was raised about the speed with which the Netherlands intended to grant Papuan independence. A new feature was the demand for DVP participation in deliberations about political and economic development. Clearly, in a realistic appreciation
of the Dutch position, both internally and internationally, it was spelled out that such Papuan involvement was even more crucial now with the future of Netherlands rule of West New Guinea having become shaky. The Dutch government was also urged to appoint only those prominent Papuans who had showed a genuine interest in the socioeconomic and cultural advancement of the people - meaning of course the DVP leadership – to attend local and international meetings. Having urban membership greatly in mind the party pledged itself to fight hard for better wages, housing, and medical care for both manual workers and office staff in the private and government sector. Finally the DVP committed itself to work for the creation of a sovereign, democratic, and prosperous, Melanesian federation, and advocated that Dutch, English and French should be taught in secondary schools.

In October 1960 the DVP sent a resolution to Dutch Foreign Minister Luns insisting that West New Guinea should not be declared independent until a solid national economic basis had been established. The founding of a volkscredietbank as well as the sending of more Papuan students to the Netherlands was considered absolutely essential.

**Partai Nasional**

This DVP policy departure had partly been a reaction to the arrival on the political scene of a new, vigorous Papuan party, the Partai Nasional (PARNA), which was founded on 10 August 1960. The impetus behind the establishment of this new party came mainly from the small new intelligentsia consisting of students and graduates of secondary schools and tertiary institutes. About 700 people had attended the foundation meeting. Most of the members were civil servants holding lower echelon positions, people with a wider mental horizon and a more realistic understanding of the world both at home and internationally, rejecting the DVP as too paternalistic and too grovel-
ling to the Dutch. The party program stressed the need for self-reliance for Papuans to achieve their political and socioeconomic objectives without depending on outsiders. It was a plan of action reminiscent of that of the Indonesian nationalist activist organisation, Perhimpuan Indonesia, in the heady days of the 1920s in the Netherlands.

The central committee of PARNA consisted of President Wajoi, Vice-President A.F. Indey, and among the members were K. Krey and A. Bonnas, while F.J.S. Rumainum, a Protestant pastor, was appointed as an adviser. Frits Kirihio, a Leiden university student home on leave, had played a prominent role in the founding of the party, and was appointed as party representative in Holland. Wajoi and A.F. Indey belonged to the first intake of the Vervolgschool at Joka (Hollandia), and Frits Kirihio was a personal friend of Indey, both their fathers having been village schoolteachers. In fact Wajoi’s previous encounter with the colonial authorities had not exactly been entirely felicitous. After the completion of the Vervolgschool he had been awarded a cadetship to the Bestuursschool and, in 1949, returned to Sarmi for work experience. Similarly, to the majority of people in Sarmi, also, Wajoi was pro-Indonesian and after being caught passing on sensitive political information from a report of the district officer to the Partai Kemerdekaan Indonesia Irian he was convicted and spent nine months in jail. After that he wandered from the Village School Training School, to the Maritime Training School, to a course for taxation officers. Initially he had been attracted by the Indonesian freedom ideal of creating a unitary state from the various peoples at different stages of development, which, freely cooperating, would form a great empire. In contrast he believed that the Netherlands had little to offer in this respect. Subsequently, further political events in Indonesia opened his eyes: these included the rebellions against the central government, Javanese imperialism, and economic disorder, and they forced him to realise that Indonesia would merely turn out to be a suppressor of Papuans. The appointment in 1956 of the
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Sultan of Tidore as Governor of West New Guinea further reinforced this belief. Furthermore, like nearly all of PARNA’s top leaders, he had been involved with the labour union PERSEKDING, which had acted as a fruitful training ground for prospective politicians.

PARNA started off as a protest movement of the modern Papuan intelligentsia about their inferior status in the socio-economically stratified colonial society. They felt caught in an unenviable dualistic position, forming the upper layer in their own society while forming the lower social layer in the modern, Dutch-controlled public and private sector. One of the main slogans of PARNA was directed against racial discrimination, and a distinctly dialectical dimension came to the fore during interviews. The father-son dependency of the DVP was rejected and instead there appeared a more critical and uncompromising stance against the government and the colonial system. This criticism was directed at the lack of education and training needed by the Papuan people to become self-reliant and self-confident and to take their future into their own hands without foreign help. As in the case of the DVP, the establishment of a people’s credit system was put forward as a real panacea, opening up opportunities for establishing private Papuan ventures in agriculture, fisheries, and retailing. This would destroy the existing commercial monopoly held by the Chinese and the Dutch, and would also stop the drainage of profits overseas. The government was also attacked for its failure to provide employment and housing for the urban migrant population which was unable to lift itself out of its coolie existence. In regard to its cocoa projects the government was even accused of being involved in practices reminiscent of the notorious Cultuurstelsel in 19th-century Java such as requiring growers to pay back the government for seedlings supplied from the proceeds of the crop. The fact that the government actually lost financially, owing to these initiatives, of course makes reference to the Cultuurstelsel spurious. The policy of sending Papuan students to Holland was also censured as being
too expensive and it was argued it would be much cheaper to set up higher education facilities in the territory itself. This would also benefit a larger number of deserving applicants. All this breathed a spirit of self-confidence and a feeling of Papua centric nationalism, something so different from the DVP’s attitudes.

Some PARNA members objected to the export of Papuan artifacts and showed concerns about the disappearance of traditional skills and crafts. There were also signs of opposition appearing against the unwanted foreign interference of Christian missions in dismissing some traditional cultural usages and values as pagan.

But also in PARNA the extrapolation between binatang and manusia (human being) in the treatment of Papuans played an important role in the final judgement on the performances of the Dutch and the Indonesians. Until the mid-1950s the Dutch were seen primarily as a colonial power only resorting to force to keep the Papuan people under control. There was no real socio-economic development and political self-expression was forbidden. The participation of Papuans in shaping their own political and economic future had also been soft-pedalled and only official lip service given to the principle of self-determination. Thus, the Netherlands had done nothing to justify its presence. In contrast Indonesia initially had been seen as a national saviour. But disillusion about events in Indonesia sweeping away the promises of the revolution, which had included freedom and socioeconomic justice and prosperity for all, had turned Papuan support toward the Dutch. This was particularly so when it became clear that the Dutch government was seriously committed to the realisation of Papuan independence and economic development.

The first point in the PARNA political platform was the rejection of racial discrimination and the proposition that authority would be based on Christianity: that is, divine love. Secondly, it called for the entire Papuanisation of the public service within ten years, the creation of an infrastructure of main roads, the
foundation of a *volkscredietbank*, and the attraction of foreign capital.

In November 1960, PARNA sent a resolution to the Secretary-General of the UN, U Thant, requesting him to organise a conference of the Netherlands, Indonesia and a Papuan delegation under the auspices of the UN. In reply to DVP criticism PARNA stated that it wanted to make clear to the world at large that the future status of West New Guinea could not be decided without taking notice of the most important party involved: the Papuan people itself.50

The official PARNA preference for a separate Papuan independent state was not unanimous, as a minority still expressed support for a union with the Netherlands or joining a Melanesian federation. In fact, Nicolaas Jouwe and some other prominent pro-Dutch figures remained aloof from PARNA, after failure by Jouwe to take over the party and the rejection of his strong advocacy of a Melanesian federation.

There are, however, distinct indications at the end of Dutch rule that points to a considerable fall in pro-Indonesian support in the Papuan political leadership, even in the Serui area. A letter in April 1961, from a Papuan students’ association in the Netherlands to President Kennedy, stated that the Netherlands, because of its experience, was the most appropriate power to develop West New Guinea. It dismissed Sukarno’s claims about Dutch colonial suppression as deceitful propaganda, although stressing that Papuans did not want any kind of colonialism, be it Dutch or Indonesian. But the Dutch government was not considered as colonialist, as it was trusted by the people to lead them to eventual independence. Both parts of the island would be united into one independent, democratic nation. The Papuan people objected to Javanese imperialism and believed that Indonesia had nothing valuable to offer, apart from serious economic disorder. The students implored Kennedy, as the leader of the most powerful democratic nation in the world, to take serious notice of the democratic rights and national aspirations of the
Papuan people during Sukarno’s imminent visit to Washington. This radical nationalist Papuan tone is also evident in a speech of the PARNA president, Wajoi, on 10 August 1961, in which he severely took to task the activities of the Rijkens group and Professor Duynstee: ‘They consider us as Philips radios for sale. If Duynstee is a real Christian then surely he cannot deny our rights …’

Still the Indonesian propaganda machine continued to run on overtime. On 1 January 1962, the Indonesian newsagency Antara reported a meeting of President Sukarno and Foreign Minister Subandrio with Frits Kirihio, a Papuan student at Leiden university and an original organiser of PARNA, in which the latter stated that most Papuans were doubtful about the Dutch policy of self-determination and that in a general election most people would prefer integration with Indonesia. The New Guinea Council was dismissed as merely a powerless Dutch puppet.

Frits Kirihio, on his return to the Netherlands, told West New Guinea Affairs Secretary, Bot, that while he was not questioning Dutch good intentions, the aims of self-government and independence for West New Guinea could not be achieved. He pointed to political division in Holland itself and the obviously warlike intentions of the Indonesians. Therefore as the lesser of two evils the most sensible solution would be an Indonesian takeover. He then proposed to send as speedily as possible a delegation of Papuan leaders to Jakarta in order to create a better climate for further negotiations. Bot, although not entirely negative, pointed out that it was the responsibility of the West New Guinea government to appoint such a delegation. But he rejected Kirihio’s request to be allowed to go to West New Guinea to mount a propaganda campaign to spread his ideas, while still on the Dutch government’s payroll as a university student. Bot gave him the choice of either remaining in Holland to complete his studies as quickly as possible or to go into politics and lose his scholarship.

In West New Guinea itself Frits Kirihio’s actions had caused
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an uproar. In Merauke a delegation consisting of delegates from all population groups sent a loyalty declaration to the government, severely censuring the turncoat Kirihio. Again in Merauke about 300 Papuans agitated against Indonesia and pledged support to the Dutch government. In Hollandia a telegram from 500 Papuan students was sent to Dutch Prime Minister de Quay, accusing Kirihio of treason and further assuring their trust in Dutch leadership. Another and perhaps stronger condemnation came from the New Guinea Council, which pushed aside Sukarno’s claims as senseless, because the Papuan people felt no need to be ‘liberated’ by Indonesia as they were not suppressed:

Our brother Frits Kirihio, who left Holland for Indonesia, is no longer considered as a brother. In contrast he is a dirty enemy and traitor of his country and people …

But not all council members approved of this vilification of Kirihio. Members E.J. Bonay, M.B. Ramendey and A.K. Grebse considered by Dutch intelligence as pro-Indonesian, objected. They were joined by M. Indey and B. Jufuway, both members of the Dafensoro Regional Council, who were known as pro-Indonesian. Also dissenting was H. Womsiwor, another council member, who was known for making regular trips to Japan to confer with Indonesian officials.

Other political organisations

In the early 1960s a number of other political organisations appeared, fitting into the ideological spectrum between PARNA and the DVP. An interesting case of a tribally based organisation coated with a veneer of Western trappings was the Eenheids Partij Nieuw Guinea (EPANG) which had been set up by two Arfak tribal leaders, Lodewijk and Barend Mandatjan, and a Eurasian colonist, Gosewisch. The power of the Arfak leaders was largely tradition based and depended on their ability to control the barter trade and to provide gifts essential in inter-clan
marriage relations. Power then depended on the number of wives a man could afford; Lodewijk had seven wives and Barend had four, making Lodewijk the leader of the whole of the Manokwari mountainous hinterland. The two brothers living in Manokwari acted as mediators between the modern and the traditional world. Lodewijk had been a member of the colonial regional police force, which added to his prestige among his people. His fame and power had reached its zenith during the war when he had operated as a guerrilla leader against the Japanese, using modern arms dropped by the American forces. He acted as the main contact link between the mountain tribes and the Eurasian colonists, who depended mainly on Arfak labor.

Underlying EPANG was the Papua-wide dichotomy between the highlands and the coast. The Arfak people had only been touched incidentally by the 20th century, while on the coast modernisation had been proceeding at full speed. As a man who had defended his people against the Japanese, Lodewijk considered himself as holding the ‘secret’ of socioeconomic development. From the Indonesians, who in any case were mistrusted owing to their past record as slave hunters, nothing positive could be expected:

In the old days they also walked about clad in a loincloth. But when, however, they had some clothes on, they thought that they would be able to do everything themselves. But of course everything ended up in a great shambles …

There was also great resentment against the relatively greater economic wealth in Manokwari and its monopolistic hold on education and overseas aid. In addition, the coastal dwellers were censured for their critical attitude to the Dutch and some of their leaders were seen as unreliable and pro-Indonesian. The Arfak people rejected the idea of Papuan independence in the short term, as this would mean their subjugation to the coastal area. Something they would never tolerate. Thus, Dutch rule was considered necessary until the time the Arfak people had caught
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up economically and culturally.

Similar considerations underlay the founding of the Kracht Uit Eenheid (KUE) organisation in Sentani by prominent people in the village of Dojo Lama, who were advised by a Eurasian. Here, once more, the traditional distrust of the coastal people came to the fore as a major motive for this initiative leading to the demand for Dutch rule continuing as long as possible. The people of Biak and Sarmi were dismissed as racially mixed and unreliable. PARNA was condemned for trying to get rid of the Dutch government on which further development was so dependent:

Kirihio will push out all Dutchmen and will take over all the shops … Wajoi wants to give New Guinea to the Indonesians … Freedom will mean internecine war. How could the people of Servei rule us, as they are they not even familiar with the Sentani adat. If the government leaves we will have nothing left, no matches, no axes, no clothes …

Hence, independence could only become viable after Papuan society had been sufficiently modernised and developed.

In Manokwari another more Western oriented party, Partai Orang Nieuw Guinea (PONG), was set up mainly through the efforts of Ariks, one of the first Papuans to direct international attention to the Papuan national cause in 1949 to 1950. PONG viewed PARNA as irresponsible and too extremist and compared Wajoi to Sukarno. The DVP was ineffective because its leadership was uneducated leaving it prone to outside manipulation. Ariks’s original plan to combine the coastal and mountain peoples into one strong organisation was shipwrecked by the suspicions of the Arfak tribes and their leaders. The most crucial point PONG wanted to drive home to the international community was that the Papuan people, as a result of free choice, supported continued Dutch rule and rejected Indonesian claims. While Dutchmen and Eurasians were refused membership, the party on the other hand pushed the ideal of a multi-racial Papuan state, in which all groups, Papuans, Chinese, Indonesians, and Eurasians, would
be accorded equal rights. As PARNA had done the government was exhorted to accelerate socioeconomic development, but political development was considered less urgent. On the other hand PARNA’s demands for independence after ten years were considered ridiculous, unless accompanied by the creation of a viable national economic system. Similarly the call for full Papuanisation of the government apparatus by 1970, although perhaps attainable would, because of the lack of sufficient preparation time, result in a partially trained and corrupt civil service: ‘Papuans do not yet have a sense of duty … Papuans holding high office will mainly try to better themselves.’

Manokwari seems to have provided particularly fertile soil for political activity as yet another political party blossomed: the Partai Serikat Pemuda-Pemuda Papua (PARSEPP). The idea for this party had originated among the younger generation, although its leadership was in the hands of older men with a labour union background and with a DVP mentality. The program was largely directed at socioeconomic issues such as the abolition of the dowry in marriage, which was felt to be a pressing financial burden. As a modern society was in the making, a process in which youth played a prominent role, the old marriage customs (adat) were out of place. Secondly, education and training formed an important part of the platform and in addition to the need for more secondary and tertiary education, technical education was emphasised. In addition to learning Dutch, essential to appointment in the civil service and private enterprise, a knowledge of English was deemed necessary to master modern science and technology. Political problems seemed to hold little interest. The Netherlands was seen as the key and indispensable link with the modern world while Indonesia was considered backward. As in DVP circles the government tolerance towards the Indonesian minority was entirely baffling. The Indonesians were the ‘enemy’ to whom a ‘final solution’ should be applied, although there was a suggestion that the Indonesian minority should be exchanged with similar Papuan groups in Indonesia.
Thus a kind of bloodless ethnic cleansing was envisaged. The Grootenhuis investigation found that the group of educated Papuans without any direct political affiliation showed the same patterns of response as party members. Many of those interviewed carried great prestige in Papuan society with some showing the same concerns about racial discrimination as PARNA. Others again seemed less concerned on this point and exhibited a strong trust in the Dutch government. All of them, though, criticised the Papuan party leadership complaining that it was either too old, too young, or too inexperienced and uneducated to successfully carry the burden of public responsibility. As a postwar legacy political parties were often seen as essentially subversive organisations. Most had only a vague notion about human rights, considering this to mean to stifle opposition. There was also little awareness of international relations or for that matter of Western political ideologies. Only a few were inspired by Asian and African nationalism. In general the reactions here were of disapproval as the most mentioned leaders, Sukarno and Lumumba, were brought up as examples of the dangers caused by hasty political decisions. Those with primary school background and employed in lower grade public service positions emphasised racial discrimination and substandard living conditions. Others called the idea of independence premature and something that would be ridiculed internationally when the shoddy social-economic condition of the prospective ruling class was known. Obviously international aid would still be needed for a long time to ensure a reasonable degree of economic development and before self-sufficiency could be achieved. Among those with higher education qualifications, mainly employed in district and regional government offices, the example of the Congo fiasco was frequently brought up. They also pointed to the common people as being still too simple-minded to understand complex political concepts such as democracy and unable to come up with rationally based criticism. Furthermore, another two essential ingredients believed to be lack-
ing were, firstly, a reliable, modern-minded and efficient national leadership, and secondly, a strong national economy. Most envisaged independence as a matter of the distant future. One informant described the Nieuw Guinea Raad as being suspended in mid-air as no input was received from the people below and stressed that group chauvinism was still the main obstacle to the growth of a sense of nationhood. Against this there were others who saw the Nieuw Guinea Raad precisely as an effective instrument to create a feeling of national bonding.

Most revealing were the views expressed in a questionnaire by senior high school students, hospital trainees, and teachers’ college students in Hollandia. The high school students were the most critical of the recent rush to establish political parties, seeing this as acerbating the problem of Papuan disunity. The others, though also disapproving of parties, especially PARNA and its rash demands for independence, pointed to the current political and economic mess in Indonesia and the Congo and showed a strong dislike of the Chinese and Indonesian minorities.61

It seems then that the majority of the more politically vocal section of the Papuan community clearly believed that the indigenous population was still far from ready to take over the rudder of state. Hasty measures would lead to chaos as had happened in Indonesia and the Congo and so Dutch rule would still be needed for decades. The more radical national section, mainly congregated in the PARNA, was clearly aware of the international implications of the Indonesian-Dutch dispute, and realised that the idea of a free Papuan nation was on the point of being nipped in the bud by United States pressure, and therefore tried to accelerate the independence process as much as possible.

Another group consisting of Nicolaas Jouwe, Kaisepo, and most Papuan government officials, was less sanguine about immediate independence and advocated a long period of tutelage under the Dutch or the UN in order to achieve a more effective Papuan governmental structure and a viable national economic basis.
Nicolaas Jouwe, a leading proponent of a Melanesian federation, put his finger on the sore spot: the lack of an integrated national leadership. The existing structure was still too heterogeneous and too much ruled by traditional cultural values to prevent the formation of an effective and tightly-knit national front. Social isolation, mutual distrust and jealousy at the individual and communal level, were tearing apart any chance of lasting cooperation at the national level. He argued that the highest priority should be given to the creation of a socially responsible elite, driven by high moral and ethical values. This training should occur in the Netherlands where students would be directly exposed to the workings of a modern social democracy. He pointed out that there was already something positive embedded in Papuan culture such as individualism, a feeling of being free, and outspokenness. Unlike Indonesians the Papuans were neither suffering a *hormat* (feudal homage) complex nor being chained to a rigidly stratified social system. For such a training scheme in the Netherlands to succeed it be would necessary, before the return of these graduates, for the ground to be prepared for enough people to become receptive to these new ideas. To start off this process, emphasis should be given in education to the teaching of civic duties and social responsibility. Equally important were the emancipation of women and the modernisation of the family unit. To instil in society an acceptance of modern social virtues to the point that the creation of a modern, free Papuan state would be possible would take time.

This call for rational, modern thinking on the part of people like Jouwe could in reality remain no more than voices crying in the wilderness. This kind of reasoning would be beyond the capacity of the vast bulk of Papuans, who still lived in their traditional thought world in which messianic beliefs still formed the essential core.

In fact, to reinforce this point, early in 1960 a new cargo cult appeared in the hinterland of Sarmi. As a concession to modernity the ancestors appeared in white European clothing, prob-
ably imitating the official colonial dress code. They foretold their imminent return with large ships laden with food, clothing, axes, tobacco, and many other desirable goods. The dead were to be raised to life and a new world would come about overflowing with health and without sickness or death. Everybody would be rich. The message had to spread to neighbouring tribes before the ships were to arrive. As a result work stopped and was replaced by dancing and seances. The movement apparently gained momentum after the regional Dutch control post had been abandoned, as this caused the locals to conclude: ‘… The tuan is gone, now our tuans (the ancestors) will soon return …’ Dutch investigators saw embryonic nationalist feelings emerging here, showing traces of the earlier Simpson and the Koreri movements. Another more seriously rebellious cargo cult appeared in the Upper-Apauwar region of Sarmi at this time. It was led by a certain Bannie, a known anti-European stirrer, who preached that the coming of the utopia was held back by the Dutch and other non-Papuans.62

Turning again to the Papuan nationalist movement it was the Luns Plan of 1961 that made clear that the writing was on the wall, causing a number of leaders to leap into action. A five-member committee consisting of Nicolaas Jouwe, P. Tuy, Markus Kaisiepo, Nicolaas Tanggahma, and Eliezer Bonay, drafted a manifesto that highlighted the provisions of Article 73 of the UN Charter and Resolution 1514 XV of the UN Assembly of 14 December 1960, in which all colonial powers were charged with laying down target dates for granting self-government. A rider had been added for the achievement of self-government to be delayed owing to a lack of economic and political maturity. The manifesto also announced the establishment of a seventeen-membership Komite Nasional.

The Papuan rights for independence nullified

The Bunker plan caused a great deal of averse and condemned-
tory reaction in the Papuan community. For example, in May 1962 a resolution of twenty-six leading personages from Nimboran and Demta, west of Hollandia, was submitted to the Regional Chief Officer by M. Suwae, a member of the New Guinea Council, and T. Bukarsjou, a district officer. It was signed by schoolteachers, officials, village and adat chiefs, many sporting names of prominent Old Testament figures, demanding that the rights of the Papuans to their own country and national cultural identity be fully recognised. The people of West New Guinea considered its independence, as promised by the Netherlands, as an immutable right. It was because of this that during the RTC in 1949 West New Guinea had not been integrated into Indonesia, as it was the fatherland of the Papuans, who in any case did not want a repetition of the suppression suffered at the hands of Indonesians during the Netherlands Indies regime.

Moreover, the Bunker plans were not acceptable because after a two-year UN administration it would be followed by a transfer of power to Indonesia that:

… would obviate any prospects for an independent West Papua … If this proposal is accepted then the rights of Papuans to have their own country and national existence will have been taken away … we consider the Bunker proposals as a fire that will burn us citizens of West Papua to death …

Finally, the Dutch and Indonesian governments were called upon to arrive at a peaceful arrangement under which Papuan rights would not be endangered. It was stressed that the resolution was not a product of outside pressure as it represented the true feelings of the people of Nimboran.

On 9 March 1962, in a letter to the Dutch Foreign Minister, Luns, a number of Papuan leaders, including Rumainum, Itaar, Runtubay, Kaisiepo and Nicolaas Jouwe, strongly protested against the Bunker arrangement under which West New Guinea would be transferred to Indonesia. The Netherlands was held to
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its solemn promise to lead West New Guinea to independence, and an Indonesian guarantee to honour the rights of Papuans to self-determination was dismissed as worthless. Any negotiations about the future status of West New Guinea should be attended by Papuan representatives, as neither the Netherlands nor Indonesia had the right to take decisions without Papuan consent. The letter ended with the warning that in the case of an Indonesian takeover widespread disturbances would occur leading to a Congo-style situation. It threatened that Papuans were prepared to take up arms to prevent Indonesian sovereignty over their country.64

To many Papuans, who had continued to put their trust in Dutch promises, the announcement on 15 August of the Dutch and Indonesian acceptance of the Bunker plan caused anger, confusion and defiance.

In a meeting late in August, PARNA called for the establishment of a Papuan independent republic by 1970 and stressed that the Papuan people had the right of freedom like all other nations. Another important political event was the Kongres Nasional, called by Herman Wajo, which was attended by some eighty prominent Papuan leaders, representing all political shades and regional interests. From the week-long deliberations an almost unanimous distrust of Indonesian intentions emerged, and in the final communiqué it was demanded that the 1969 target of a plebiscite be changed to 1963. Furthermore, they pledged Papuan cooperation during the UN interim period. But it was spelled out emphatically that the act of self-determination, as included in the Dutch-Indonesian agreement, meant the right to choose independence, and that both the Papuan flag and national anthem should be used during the UN interim.65

In the New Guinea Council the chairman, Bonay, proposed that self-government be achieved at least by 1970, preferably earlier, and that the Netherlands should continue to administer the territory in the interim. Moreover, he urgently requested the UN to send a fact-finding mission to West New Guinea in ac-
cordance with the resolution of the Decolonisation Committee. Furthermore, the need for Dutch-Indonesian reconciliation was stressed after which a conference should be organised including Indonesia, the Netherlands and a Papuan delegation to recognise Papuan independence and to agree to further cooperation on economic development. In another resolution Nicolaas Jouwe insisted that Papuans should be represented at all international negotiations affecting their political future.66

In September, during the UN debate on the 15 August agreement, the leader of the Papuan delegation clearly declared that his country wanted independence and was hence strongly opposed to integration with Indonesia. Apart from some African support and the Foreign Minister of the Central African Republic charging that the agreement contravened the principle of self-determination, these Papuan pleas were ignored.

On 19 October 1962, the Komite Nasional called another meeting of seventy leaders, during which the name West New Guinea was changed into Papua Barat, and a national flag and anthem, Hai Tanahku Papua, were adopted. These spontaneous actions were, however, mainly Hollandia-centred and so caused criticism from other parts of the country. The Merauke nationalist leaders complained that no previous consultations had taken place giving the impression that Papua Barat seemed only to consist of the north and the west of the country. An open letter with thirty-two signatures from Ramsiki objected to the new national anthem and the name Papua, which actually meant ‘slave’. But perhaps even more significant was the fact that only forty from the seventy attending the Komite Nasional meeting had actually signed the manifesto, indicating that despite an obvious increase in national Papuan awareness the old particularist pattern of thinking was still strong.67

The same Papuan demands which had already been made at the end of August were again put to the Hollandia government by a delegation of the Front Nasional Papua. This caused the Dutch official Polderman to comment:
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... the entire interview ... had a somewhat doleful character because of the trustful and pathetic call of the last few weeks on the Netherlands for future help when in their view the curtain behind West New Guinea will be closed ...^a

The end of the Dutch colonial presence in the Indonesian archipelago came to pass. The Papuan people were transferred into the hands of another colonial power. The depth of the anti-Indonesian feeling of the majority of Papuans has never wavered and the demands for Papuan freedom continue to the present day.

Notes
2. Penders, 1968, see chapter VI.
4. ibid., pp. 41-2 and 43-4.
9. ibid., p. 357.
10. ibid., pp. 361, 480-81 and 570-72.
15. Van der Veur, op. cit., p. 71.
17. ibid., Appendix IV (A).
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22. ibid., p. 524.
24. ibid., p. 36-7.
25. ibid., p. 68, Table.
27. Van der Veur, op. cit., p. 60.
34. ibid., pp. 22 and 28.
35. ibid., p. 24.
36. ibid., p. 30.
37. BUZA, Kort Overzicht over de Politieke Situatie in NG. GG 14903x/OR, BUZA, dossier 68094, 28 October 1954.
38. BUZA, Algemene Politieke Situatie ... Geheim GS 1148x/NNG, 20 Juli 1960.
39. See Chapter II of this volume, pp. 117, 145, and 146.
40. ibid.
41. BUZA, Algemene Politieke Situatie in GGG 1148x/NNG, 20 Juli 1960.
42. Mahler, 1962.
43. Courtois, 1961, p. 60.
44. BUZA, Kort Overzicht, op. cit.
45. Van der Veur, op. cit., pp. 61-2.
46. Courtois, op. cit.
47. Information on DVP based on Grootenhuis report.
49. Courtois, op. cit.
50. ibid.
53. BUZA, aan Hollandia, 14 February 1962, ref. no. 1153.
54. BUZA, Hollandia, Platteel, codebericht 15, 10 Januari 1962, ref.
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no. 1214.
56. BUZA, Centrale Veiligheidsdienst. Onderwerp: Politiek stemmingsbeeld van autochtonen in Hollandia en omgeving.
58. ibid., p. 63.
59. ibid., pp. 64-5.
60. ibid., p. 70.
61. ibid., pp. 94-9.
63. BUZA, Hollandia, de Gouvensments secretaris, A. Loosjes, 24 Mei 1962, no. 2.9. 120/15040/2.
64. BUZA, Hollandia, 9 March 1962, telebericht.
65. Van der Veur, op. cit., pp. 70-1; Verrier, 1976, p. 231.
68. BUZA, New York, 3 September 1962. Codebericht 555, ref. no. 8525.
The Japanese blitzkrieg southwards in 1942, in addition to temporally stunning Allied military power, carried in its wake the permanent destruction of the Western colonial system. As such the fall of the Dutch colonial empire in Indonesia was part of the general collapse of Western colonial power in Asia after 1945. Australia and New Zealand were also deeply affected by this change as their northern security cordon provided by the British, Dutch, and French colonial powers had disappeared.

Britain was forced to grant concessions to the powerful Indian nationalist movement, including promises of independence immediately after the war. Moreover, exhausted by the war effort and hovering close to national bankruptcy in 1945, Britain was no longer able to sustain a military-based colonial regime in India and Burma. The British decolonisation process was speeded up by the fall of the Churchill Conservative government at the hands of the basically anti-colonial Labour Party, while the influence was felt also of the Atlantic Charter and Roosevelt's anti-colonialist stance. India gained its independence in 1947 and Burma in 1948. As a result of this the traditional British protective umbrella extending over the Netherlands Indies, shattered in 1942, was never repaired.

The British dominance in South and South-East Asia was superseded by the United States, which pushed a policy of decolonisation and the creation of new free and democratic indigenous states and tried to keep the influence of the other...
superpower, the Soviet Union, at bay. In 1946 the United States, keeping to its prewar promise, had granted independence to the Philippines. American policy in Asia, though basically anti-colonialist, was applied pragmatically as a function of the demands imposed by the Cold War. So in Vietnam, where the communist controlled regime of Ho Chi Minh was threatening to take over the whole of the country, Washington felt impelled to grant massive aid to the French colonial forces. In contrast in Indonesia an initial pro-Dutch attitude by the Americans changed to full support for the republic in 1948 after the communist Madiun debacle assured victory to the Republic of Indonesia. Thus, in December 1949, Indonesia achieved political independence, although the Dutch colonial economic hold on the country remained largely intact.

The continuation of Dutch and other Western enterprises was seen by the early Indonesian governments as an essential precondition for national economic rehabilitation and development. Against this an anti-Dutch mood in the country was gradually reaching a high pitch owing to a general fall in living conditions and the machinations of the ever more powerful political left. As a result, in 1957 and 1958, Dutch-owned plantations and firms were nationalised. Any vestiges of Dutch political influence were also obliterated and in 1960 diplomatic relations were broken off. The Dutch unwillingness to transfer sovereignty of West New Guinea to Indonesia played a role in the anti-Dutch campaign and speeded up the nationalisation process. On the other hand an earlier surrender of the territory to Indonesia would only have provided temporary relief to the Dutch economic sector, as the Sukarno and leftist controlled anti-Western upsurge could not be stopped.

The decision not to transfer the territory of West New Guinea was, in the first place, the outcome of the existing political configuration in the Dutch parliament where ultra-conservative forces insisted on their pound of colonial flesh. Without their support the RTC bill would have failed to reach the required
target of votes and to achieve the main objective of the creation of the independent Indonesian federated state. As a compromise the decision on the status of West New Guinea was temporarily kept on ice to be discussed during a further conference in 1950.

There is much truth in de Geus’s assertion that the official Dutch policy regarding West New Guinea, during the 1950s, flowed on directly from the policies pursued during the revolution, which were characterised by a Dutch under-estimation of the fervour of Indonesian nationalism.¹ Until the bitter end in the Netherlands, the government, pushed by the conservative Protestant, Liberal, and Catholic parties, and a still strong and vocal colonial diehard mentality in parts of the nation, both at home and among most of the majority of Dutch expatriates and Eurasians in Indonesia, continued to object to rapid decolonisation. The ghost of the prewar powerful, neo-Calvinist colonial figure of Colijn still seemed to overshadow national deliberations on Indonesia. His emphasis on the need to protect the rights of the various peoples of the Indonesian archipelago that had reached different levels of socioeconomic development and modernisation continued to receive strong support in Dutch colonial circles. In 1918, Colijn had argued that, for example, New Guinea, considering its low degree of modernisation could as yet only be represented by Dutch colonial officials, and advocated that rather than centralisation of power a federal model should be used for an eventual autonomous Indonesia.²

It is pertinent that from its beginnings early in the 17th century the Dutch colonial venture had been largely Calvinist-controlled. Catholics and Socialists remained unrepresented in the colonial service and only provided few colonial experts to parliament. After 1946 this situation changed when the Catholic Party, as a major coalition partner with the Socialists in government, was forced to preside over the liquidation of the Dutch empire in Indonesia. This provided an important boost to the anti-decolonisation Protestant-Liberal minority in parliament, as the Catholic leadership was also moved by the principle of a
‘moral vocation’ in colonial affairs. Catholic ministers Beel and Sassen, and the party leader Romme, had strongly pushed for a predominant Dutch power role in the projected Netherlands-Indonesian Union and stressed the rights of self-determination of the various regions and peoples of Indonesia. It was the more flexible Catholic minister van Maarseveen who had managed to sell the RTC agreements to the KVP rank and file after pacifying Romme by agreeing to the separation of West New Guinea.

The New Guinea lobby initially based its case on the demands of Eurasian organisations which, from prewar times, had tried to establish agricultural colonies in West New Guinea, and now feeling dispossessed by the Indonesian revolution clamoured for the territory to be created as their new fatherland under Dutch rule. Generally the Eurasian population in fact showed very little enthusiasm for starting a new life by hacking out a living from the New Guinea jungle. Most of the few actual ventures attempted in fact had failed, causing this essentially colonialist dream to lose its gloss. The main emphasis was now moved to the Papuan population itself and its right of self-determination and eventual independence as a separate nation.

De Geus is on very shaky ground when asserting that the self-determination question was a contrived argument as it had been thrust forward firstly by Dutch politicians and officials and not by the Papuans themselves. He seems to ignore the fact that a Papuan nationalist sentiment was on the rise and that some of the small elite of Dutch-educated Papuans, such as Ariks and Jouwe, had been pushing on their own account the matter of self-determination during the RTC negotiations. A part of this book is devoted to exploring and analysing the rise of Papuan nationalism, a matter that has been neglected so far, including in the major works of Lijphart and de Geus.

The fundamental issue at stake was the question of whether the Papuans of West New Guinea constituted a separate people having, under the provision of the UN charter, the right to determine their own political future. There was no doubt on this
score among the Dutch-educated Papuan elite and the majority of Dutchmen and Australians.

Large parts of the Netherlands-Indies had been ruled indirectly with traditional rulers left in charge of internal affairs. During the 1930s a beginning had been made by creating autonomous *adatgemeenschappen*, that is, regions ruled under their own us-ages and customary law regulations. The Dutch did not see the indigenous population of the Netherlands-Indies as forming one nation, but rather consisting of a large number of separate po-

tical, cultural, and ethnic entities. An important element of Dutch colonial policy was to protect the cultural identity of these various peoples and tribes. Unlike the British and the French, who imposed European law on all their colonial subjects, the major-

ity of Indonesians were left under their own *adat* laws which were felt to better serve the sense of justice in the community than Dutch law. An important drawback was that these essentially liberal ideas about human rights were also used by conservative colonial governments to maintain Dutch rule as long as possible.

The final Dutch decision to hold on to West New Guinea was also influenced indirectly by the activities of the first West New Guinea Resident, van Eechoud, who in 1949 presented The Hague with a largely independent separate colonial administra-

tion of West New Guinea. He was a great fighter for Papuan rights and had done much to encourage the rise of nationalism. He was well connected with the New Guinea lobby in the Neth-
erslands and as a Catholic had the ear of the missionary hierar-

chy. He was also in contact with Romme, the great apostle of the self-determination principle who, after his debacle during the RTC, had put all his energy into having his ideas realised in West New Guinea. Romme’s hold on the KVP proved to be a major obstacle to achieving a breakthrough on the West New Guinea issue in parliament, while his trust in the tenacious Catholic Foreign Minister, Joseph Luns, was well rewarded.

In addition the New Guinea cause was reinforced at least in conservative quarters by a feeling of Dutch patriotism and an
unwillingness to see their country reduced to insignificant proportions internationally as no more than a little market garden plot on the North Sea. Moreover, in colonial circles, a loud cry went up to take up again the Dutch civilising mission, interrupted by the Indonesian revolution.

Nevertheless, in early 1950 there was still opposition, mainly in Labour circles, to the Dutch retention of West New Guinea. This, however, was dissipating fast in response to the Indonesian destruction of the federal system, the armed suppression of opposition in Eastern Indonesia, and the increasingly anti-Dutch tone by the Indonesian political left and the media. So, by the end of 1950 Indonesia had also lost a deal of support from the Dutch left.

The most exhaustive work on the West New Guinea question is Arend Lijphart’s, _The Trauma of Decolonisation: The Dutch and West New Guinea of 1966_. This undeniably important book is marred by rash assertions: that the Netherlands decision to remain in West New Guinea was motivated exclusively by subjective and irrational factors; that the Dutch concerns for the Papuans were: ‘… overlaid by selfish motives …’; and that the Netherlands showed a pathological reaction to decolonisation.4

Firstly, the reaction in the Netherlands regarding the Indonesian question at the time was far less dramatic than is portrayed by Lijphart. The people traumatised by the Indonesian debacle were mainly returned expatriates who had been in Japanese camps and were later affected by the bloody _bersiap_, and Eurasians and Ambonese who arrived in the Netherlands, an unknown, unfriendly and cold place. Deeply affected also, of course, were the families of soldiers killed in action and many of the returned armed forces. In fact only a relatively small section of the Dutch nation was concerned directly. The reaction of the vast majority of the population to the loss of the Indies was rather muted, as knowledge and interest in the colony had always been low. In any case the average Dutchman had little time to reflect on colonial issues, being fully occupied in eking out a meagre
living during the depressed postwar economic conditions, and all attention was directed at the rehabilitation of an economy wrecked by the German occupation and the Allied invasion. Secondly, very much open to question, is the cavalier way in which Lijphart waves away as hypocritical the grave concerns expressed by politicians and thousands of citizens about the future destiny of the Papuan people. Thirdly, he pushes aside morality in politics and in international behaviour by the argument of convenience and ‘reality’, giving the impression of dismissing most Dutchmen as simple-minded do-gooders.

Whatever the Dutch motives were, whether pure or adulterated or a combination of the two, this still does not obviate the rights of the Papuans of the Western part of the island of New Guinea to an independent national existence. Why was an independent nation allowed to emerge in Papua New Guinea and not in West New Guinea? They are the same people ethnically. The ultimate blame for this must be heaped on United States policy, which completely ignored the right of self-determination for the Papuans of West New Guinea in favour of its political objectives in Indonesia. In the process, two of its staunchest allies, the Netherlands and Australia, were left in the lurch. This lesson was not lost on Australia as is evident from its stance on the East Timor question. But as recent happenings in Timor have shown, Australia’s policy of appeasement and turning a blind eye to abuses and repression has also been a failure. As a small and militarily weak nation Australia’s influence on South-East Asian affairs is very limited and any major action remains dependent on Washington’s fiat.

In any case the sacrifice of the Papuans proved to be in vain as Indonesia continued its aggressive posture in the anti-Malaysia campaign and communist influence kept growing in strength.

Radical nationalism in Indonesia, in addition to political freedom, also demanded full control of the national economy and cultural independence, and the West New Guinea question acted as a useful lever to speed up this process, including the nation-
alisation of the Dutch business sector. Jakarta also remained obdurate regarding West New Guinea because it could not show any sign of weakness in view of the opposition in parts of Eastern Indonesia to the centralisation of power in Jakarta. Hence, the territory was considered to be a fundamental building block in the Indonesian nation-creation process. Indonesian nationalists were empire builders, who looked at West New Guinea in territorial terms and designated all people in the former Netherlands-Indies as Indonesians whether they wanted this or not. There were no referenda and in a number of areas the people were forced to comply at the point of a gun. The referendum held in West New Guinea in 1969 was a farce. The hostile reaction of the Papuan people to the Indonesian military occupation has not abated and the armed resistance of the Papuan freedom movement has continued to the present.

Notes

2. Colijn, 1918, pp. 35-6.
**GLOSSARY**

*adat*  traditions, customary law  
*adatgemeenschappen*  regions ruled under their own *adat* law  
*amberies*  Indonesians employed by the colonial service and the Christian missions  
*anak buah*  loyal follower, supporter  
*bamburuncing*  pointed bamboo pole  
*bapak*  father  
*bapakism*  feudal-like patron-client relationship  
*Barisan Berani Mati*  suicide corps  
*Barisan Pelopor*  vanguard corps set up by Sukarno  
*Batavia*  capital of the Netherlands-Indies; after 1945 renamed Jakarta  
*becak*  pedicab  
*Belanda (Blanda)*  Dutch; European  
*benteng*  fortress, stronghold  
*Bersiap*  lit. ‘prepared’, motto of the Boy Scout movement; refers here to the murderous programs in 1945 directed at the Dutch, Eurasians, Chinese, and suspected pro-Dutch Indonesians  
*Bestuursschool*  public service training college for Papuans in Hollandia  
*binatang*  animal  
*Binnenlands Bestuur (BB)*  European branch of the regional colonial public service  
*blijvers*  lit. ‘those remaining’; i.e., Europeans and Eurasians
The West New Guinea Debacle

considering the Netherlands-Indies as their homeland

_Blitzkrieg_ lightning attack

_Buitenlandse Zaken_ Foreign Affairs

_Commissie Nieuw Guinea (Irian) 1950_ a Dutch-Indonesian commission to investigate and report on the New Guinea question

_Commissie-Generaal_ plenipotentiaries appointed by the Netherlands parliament to conduct negotiations with the republican government

_Controleur_ District Officer; lowest rank in the Binnenlands Bestuur

_cultuurstelsel_ forced export cultivation system 1830-1870

_daerah istimewa_ special territory with limited autonomy

_Dai Nippon_ Japan

_Darul Islam_ Islamic state

_desa lumbung_ village rice storing shed

_Djawa Hokokai_ Javanese service organisation

_Djojobojo_ a 12th century Javanese king accredited with messianic powers; his predications of the doom of the Dutch empire were widely believed

_domme inlander_ stupid native

_dukun_ medicine man, soothsayer, shaman

_Eerste Kamer_ First Chamber of Dutch parliament

_Gunseikan_ Japanese military government

_Heiho_ Indonesian auxiliary soldiers of the Japanese armed forces

_herendiensten_ seigneurial services; unpaid labour performed in lieu of money taxes

_Christelijk Werknemersverbond Nieuw Guinea_ Christian Workers’ Union of New Guinea

_Front Nasional_ Papuan national organisation

_Groter Nederland Actie_ movement to retain West New Guinea within the Netherlands kingdom

_Hisbullah_ Army of God

_hongi_ raiding parties to collect tribute and to capture slaves
Glossary

hormat  feudal homage  
ijskast  refrigerator  
inlander  native  
Inlands Bestuur  native branch of the regional colonial service  
jago  fighting cock, village firebrand  
kabupaten  regency  
kader desa  militarised village guards  
kaﬁr  unbeliever, non-Muslim  
kampung  indigenous quarters of urban areas  
Kankain Kankara Biak  Biak representative council  
Katholieke Nationale Partij  a splinter Catholic party  
Katholieke Volkspartij  main Catholic-based political party  
Keiboden  Japanese police  
Kenpeitai  Japanese military police  
klai  venerated Islamic scholar  
kiyai  Islamic scholar  
Kolonisatie Raad  council dealing with Eurasian emigration  
Komite Nasional  Papuan nation independence committee  
kompennia  Dutch India Company; Netherlands-Indies government  
konoor  precursor, prophet of Koreri  
Konsepsi  Sukarno’s plan for Guided Democracy  
koranos  village heads  
Koreri  messianic movement  
kretak  cigarette containing tobacco, cloves and sugar  
laskar  irregular fighting band  
lurah  village head  
madrasah  modernised Islamic school  
malu  shy, embarrassed  
manusia  world  
Masjumi  Majelis Syuro Muslimin Indonesia: A consultative council of various Islamic organisations  
Memorie van Overgave  a colonial officer’s final report of a region during his term of office  
mentek  rice borers, causing serious damage to crops
merdeka  free, independent
masyawarah/mufakat  process of deliberation and compromise
used in village government that eventually leads to mufakat
(unanimous consensus), and then becomes binding to the
community
masyawarah nasional  national consultation
Nationaal Comité Handhaving Rijkseenheid  national committee to maintain the unity of the kingdom
Nederlandsche Handelsmaatschappij  Netherlands Trading Company
Nieuw Guinea Beweging  lobby group (1923)
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development in West New Guinea
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Partai Katolik  Catholic Party
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pelopor  shock troops, vanguard, derived from the Dutch word
voorloper
pemuda  youth; refers here to the various youth organisations
and bands taking up arms during the revolution (1945-1949)
pendeta  Protestant parson
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politionale acties  Dutch armed aggression against the republic
prentah alus  official pressure
priyayi  upper-class (aristocratic) government officials later referring to upper class in general
Raad van Nederlandsch-Indië  advisory council to the governor-general
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raja princely ruler; in West New Guinea means a Muslim chief-tain
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rapat public meeting
Resident highest rank in the Binnenlands Bestuur
Rijksarchief Netherlands National Archives
romusha Indonesian ‘volunteer’ labour for Japanese military building projects
santri orthodox, pious Muslim
Scheepvaart Vereniging shipping association
Seinendan Japanese sponsored youth movement
semangat fighting spirit
sociale raden consultative councils to introduce people to democratic ideas and practices
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Studiecommissie Nieuw Guinea a fact-finding body set up in 1948 to look into the question of the political future of West New Guinea
tenno heiko Japanese emperor
totok Dutch-born or other foreign newcomers
tonariguma neighbour associations
tuan mister, master; only used for Europeans
Tweede Kamer Second Chamber of Dutch parliament
ulama Islamic scribe, teacher
Vaderlandsche Club Patriotic Club (a political organisation)
veem warehouse
vervolgschool primary school
volksschool elementary school
volkscredietbank people’s credit bank
Volksgeist national spirit
Volksraad proto parliament instituted in 1918 which, after 1928, had a Indonesian majority of members
wahyu divine right to rule
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*zaman emas*  golden age
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### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABRI</td>
<td>Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Indonesian armed forces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALRI</td>
<td>Angkatan Laut Republik Indonesia (Indonesian navy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANIEM</td>
<td>Algemeene Nederlandsch-Indisch Electriciteits Maatschappij (General Netherlands-Indies Electricity Pty Ltd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZUS</td>
<td>Australia, New Zealand, and the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APRA</td>
<td>Angkatan Perang Ratu Adil (Army of the Just Prince)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARP</td>
<td>Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (Anti-Revolutionary Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AURI</td>
<td>Angkatan Udara Republik Indonesia (Indonesian air force)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>Binnenlands Bestuur (European branch of the regional colonial public service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BFO</td>
<td>Bijeenkomst Federaal Overleg (assembly for federal consultation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BKR</td>
<td>Badan Keamanan Rakjat (people’s security organisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPBAPRI</td>
<td>Badan Pemupuk Bekas Anggota Perang Republik Indonesia (returned soldiers’ organisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTI</td>
<td>Barisan Tani Indonesia (Indonesian peasants’ organisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUZA</td>
<td>Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (Department of Foreign Affairs)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>CHU</td>
<td>Christelijk-Historische Unie (Protestant political party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPN</td>
<td>Communistische Partij Nederland (Netherlands Communist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVP</td>
<td>Demokratische Volkspartij (Democratic People's Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAFE</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPANG</td>
<td>Eenheids Partij Nieuw Guinea (Unity Party New Guinea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINEC</td>
<td>Financiën en Economie (finance and economy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDMS</td>
<td>Gerakan Demokrat Maluku Selatan (democratic movement of the South Moluccas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPNG</td>
<td>Gerakan Persatuan Nieuw Guinea (movement of New Guinea unity)</td>
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<tr>
<td>GSS</td>
<td>Gabungan Sembilan Serangkai (more conservative Ambonese organisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC</td>
<td>Hoge Commissaris (high commissioner)</td>
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<td>ABRI</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALRI</td>
<td>Angkatan Laut Republik Indonesia (Indonesian navy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANIEM</td>
<td>Algemeene Nederlandsch-Indisch Electriciteits Maatschappij (General Netherlands-Indies Electricity Pty Ltd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZUS</td>
<td>Australia, New Zealand, and the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APRA</td>
<td>Angkatan Perang Ratu Adil (Army of the Just Prince)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARP</td>
<td>Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (Anti-Revolutionary Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AURI</td>
<td>Angkatan Udara Republik Indonesia (Indonesian air force)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BB</td>
<td>Binnenlands Bestuur (European branch of the regional colonial public service)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BFO</td>
<td>Bijeenkomst Federaal Overleg (assembly for federal consultation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BKR</td>
<td>Badan Keamanan Rakjat (people’s security organisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BPBAPRI</td>
<td>Badan Pemupuk Bekas Anggota Perang Republik Indonesia (returned soldiers’ organisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BTI</td>
<td>Barisan Tani Indonesia (Indonesian peasants’ organisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUZA</td>
<td>Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (Department of Foreign Affairs)</td>
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<td>Christelijk-Historische Unie (Protestant political party)</td>
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<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPN</td>
<td>Communistische Partij Nederland (Netherlands Communist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVP</td>
<td>Democratische Volkspartij (Democratic People’s Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAFE</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPANG</td>
<td>Eenheids Partij Nieuw Guinea (Unity Party New Guinea)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINEC</td>
<td>Financiën en Economie (finance and economy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDMS</td>
<td>Gerakan Demokrat Maluku Selatan (democratic movement of the South Moluccas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPNG</td>
<td>Gerakan Persatuan Nieuw Guinea (movement of New Guinea unity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSS</td>
<td>Gabungan Sembilan Serangkai (more conservative Ambonese organisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H C</td>
<td>Hoge Commissaris (high commissioner)</td>
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