FROM ‘TIMOR KOEPANG’ TO ‘TIMOR NTT’:
A POLITICAL HISTORY OF WEST TIMOR, 1901-1967

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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I hereby declare that the work herein, now submitted as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the Northern Territory University, is the result of my own investigations, and all references to ideas and work of other researchers have been specifically acknowledged. I hereby certify that the work embodied in this thesis has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not being currently submitted in candidature for any other degree.
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Abstract

This study traces the history of West Timor from the beginning of the twentieth century up until the late 1960s. Despite a Dutch presence in West Timor from the seventeenth century the area was only brought under comprehensive Dutch control in the early twentieth century. During the Second World War West Timor was occupied by the Japanese and after the war it became a part of the Dutch ‘puppet state’ of Negara Indonesia Timur. Since 1950 West Timor has been a part of the Republic of Indonesia. The history of the area is examined up until the end of the rule of Indonesia’s first president, Soekarno, in 1966. One of the recurring themes of the study is the role played by the power holders in the indigenous political system, which is closely allied to the indigenous animist religion. The central thesis is that the various groups from outside the Timor region who have exercised power there during the period covered by this study - the Dutch, the Japanese and non-Timorese Indonesians - have all had to accommodate the local system. The old power holders adapted themselves to the situation and continued to play a role in the new system also. The local rulers, who used various titles, were generally referred to by the Dutch as ‘rajas’. The Dutch largely utilised a system of indirect rule and from their earliest days in Timor they made contracts and agreements with local rajas and relied on their support to maintain their authority in the area. Over the years the rajas’ powers were gradually whittled back. Towards the end of the period of this study their kingdoms were formally abolished. In the meantime there was increased political awareness among Timorese who did not belong to the traditional power groups. The availability of formal education and the ever-growing influence of the Christian religion provided opportunities for new players who could challenge the authority of the traditional leaders. Nevertheless, despite the many changes, the rajas and other power holders in the indigenous political and religious systems in West Timor have remained a force to be reckoned with.
### Abbreviations and foreign terms

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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adat</strong></td>
<td>custom, tradition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amaf</strong></td>
<td>title of traditional power holder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>API</strong></td>
<td>Angkatan Pemoeda Indonesia; Indonesian Youth Generation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>APRIS</strong></td>
<td>Angkatan Perang Republik Indonesia Serikat; Armed Forces of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assistent Resident</strong></td>
<td>Assistant Resident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atupas</strong></td>
<td>ritual lord.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bakin</strong></td>
<td>Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara; State Intelligence Co-ordinating Agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BGIM</strong></td>
<td>Bond van Gepensioneerde Inheemse Militairen; Union of Pensioned Native Soldiers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BGTS</strong></td>
<td>Badan Gereja Timor Selatan; South Timor Church Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BTI</strong></td>
<td>Barisan Tani Indonesia; Indonesian Farmers’ Front.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bupati</strong></td>
<td>Regent; head of administrative district called <em>kabupaten</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Camat</strong></td>
<td>head of administrative sub-district called <em>kecamatan</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Civiel Gezaghebber</strong></td>
<td>Civil Administrator.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Equivalent</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controleur</td>
<td>Controller.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Communist Party of Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DBI</td>
<td>Democratische Bond van Indonesie; Democratic Association of Indonesia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dips</td>
<td>displaced persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djeraal</td>
<td>General, or Lieutenant-Colonel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPR</td>
<td>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat; People’s Representative Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPRD</td>
<td>Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah; Regional People’s Representative Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fettor</td>
<td>head of administrative sub-district called <em>kefettoran</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAPI</td>
<td>Gabungan Politik Indonesia; Indonesian Political Federation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gerwani</td>
<td>Gerakan Wanita Indonesia; Indonesian Women’s Movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gezaghebber</td>
<td>Administrator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMIT</td>
<td>Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor; Timor Evangelical Christian Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRISK</td>
<td>Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia Sunda-Ketjil; Lesser Sundas Indonesian People’s Movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gunung</td>
<td>mountain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Heiho auxiliary military force established by the Japanese.

HIS Hollandsch-Inlandsche School; Dutch Native School.

IEV Indo-Europees Verbond; Indo-European Union.

IKVP Indisch Katholiek Volkspartij; Indies Catholic People’s Party.

IPI Ikatan Peladjar Indonesia; Indonesian Students’ Union.

Kabupaten Regency; administrative district.

Kampong rural or urban village.

Kecamatan administrative sub-district.

Kepala Daerah Regional head.

Kepala desa Village head.

Keizer Emperor.

Klewang machete or short sword.

KNIL Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger; Royal Netherlands Indies Army.

Korte Verklaring Short Declaration.

KOTA Klibur Oan Timor Aswain; Association of Timorese Warriors.
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<th>Full Form</th>
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<td>KPM</td>
<td>Koninklijk Paketvaart Maatschapij; Royal Packet Service Company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le’u</td>
<td>fetish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liurai</td>
<td>traditional ruler.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrasah</td>
<td>Islamic school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafefa</td>
<td>spokesman for traditional rulers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makdok</td>
<td>traditional healer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meo</td>
<td>warrior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merdeka</td>
<td>independent, independence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPR</td>
<td>Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat; People’s Consultative Assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAA</td>
<td>National Archives of Australia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nasakom</td>
<td>Nasionalisme Agama Komunisme; Nationalism Religion Communism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEFIS</td>
<td>Netherlands Forces Intelligence Section.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICA</td>
<td>Netherlands Indies Civil Administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NIT</td>
<td>Negara Indonesia Timur; State of East Indonesia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTT</td>
<td>Nusa Tenggara Timur; East Nusa Tenggara.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacificatie</td>
<td>pacification.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pancasila</td>
<td>five principles; the governing ideology of the Indonesian state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkindo</td>
<td>Partai Kristen Indonesia; Indonesian Protestant Party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkit</td>
<td>Partai Katholik Indonesia di Timor; Indonesian Catholic Party in Timor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoor</td>
<td>Catholic minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastor</td>
<td>Catholic minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pax Neerlandica</td>
<td>Dutch peace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDI</td>
<td>Persatoean Demokrasi Indonesia; Indonesian Democratic Union, later Partai Demokrasi Indonesia; Indonesian Democratic Party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pemuda</td>
<td>youth, especially those involved in the independence struggle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pendeta</td>
<td>Protestant minister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perang</td>
<td>war, or battle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permesta</td>
<td><em>Piagam Perdjuangan Semesta Alam</em>; Universal Struggle Charter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persit</td>
<td>Persatoean Islam Timor; Timor Islamic Association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peta</td>
<td>Pembela Tanah Air; Defenders of the Homeland.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGIIT</td>
<td>Persatoean Goeroe-goeroe Indonesia Timoer; East Indonesian Teachers’ Union.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PKI  Partai Komunis Indonesia; Indonesian Communist Party.
PKM  Perkoempoenan Kebangsaan Maloekoe; Association of the Maluku Nation.
PKT  Perserikatan Kebangsaan Timor; Union of the Timorese People.
PKTI  Persaudaraan Kaum Tani Indonesia; Brotherhood of Indonesian Farmers.
PNI  Partai Nasional Indonesia; Indonesian Nationalist Party.

Posthouder  Postholder.

PoW  Prisoner of war.

PPPKI  Permoevakatan Perhimpoenan-perhimpoenan Politik Kebangsaan Indonesia; Consensus of Indonesian People’s Political Associations.

Prauw  Dutch rendering of Indonesian perahu; boat.

PRN  Partai Rakyat Nasional; National People’s Party.

Prokrol bamboe  Indonesian para-professional lawyer.

PRRI  Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia; Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia.

PSD  Perkoempoenan Selatan Daja; South-west [islands] Association.

PTB  Persatoean Timoer Besar; Great East Association.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Puputan</em></td>
<td>Balinese term for ritual death in battle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF</td>
<td>Royal Australian Air Force.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIS</td>
<td>Republik Indonesia Serikat; Republic of the United States of Indonesia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMS</td>
<td>Republik Maluku Selatan; Republic of South Maluku.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Romusha</em></td>
<td>forced labour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Rust en orde</em></td>
<td>peace and order.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVD</td>
<td>Regeerings Voorlichtings Dienst; Government Information Service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sate</em></td>
<td>pieces of meat roasted on a skewer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Secretaris</em></td>
<td>Secretary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKBI</td>
<td>Serikat Kaoem Boeroeh Indonesia; Indonesian Labour Union.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOBSI</td>
<td>Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia; All Indonesia Central Labour Organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Sonaf</em></td>
<td>palace.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STOVIL</td>
<td>School tot opleiding van inlandsche leraars; School for the training of native teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Suku</em></td>
<td>clan or ethnic group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Temukung</em></td>
<td>title of traditional power holder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TNI</td>
<td>Tentara Nasional Indonesia; Indonesian National Army.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongkat</td>
<td>Baton of authority given by Dutch to recognised traditional rulers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNTAS</td>
<td>Uni Timor Aswain; Union of Timorese Warriors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOC</td>
<td>Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie; Dutch East India Company.</td>
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Alexander Koroh. (From the collection of the Koroh family, Baun. Copy courtesy of Donald Tick.)

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Introduction
Introduction

This study focuses on the political history of West Timor in the twentieth century; from the time the Dutch took full control of their half of the island in the first two decades of the century up until the end of the rule of Indonesia’s first president, Soekarno, in the aftermath of the so-called communist coup attempt in the mid-1960s. During those years there were many changes in West Timor and political power changed hands a number of times: from the Timorese to the Dutch, then to the Japanese in the Second World War, back to the Dutch, and ultimately to the Indonesians. The thesis presented is that the indigenous Timorese political system, which is closely allied to the indigenous animist religion, was never completely destroyed or supplanted by the political systems introduced by the new power holders. Indeed, as occurred elsewhere in the former Netherlands Indies, the Dutch attempted to establish a system of indirect rule in West Timor that utilised the indigenous political system. There were many problems associated with this, but the Timorese rulers, who used various titles, but were generally referred to by the Dutch as *radja* (hereafter, raja), proved to be quite adaptable to the new conditions. In some cases the new power holders ignored or sought to exclude the old rulers, but they usually managed to continue to exercise some influence. Thus, while the indigenous rulers were not strong enough to prevent new players from entering Timor and seizing power, their political and religious systems proved resilient and with adaptations have survived under various conditions. The period chosen for this study, the early twentieth century until the 1960s, is considered apt because it extends from the time when the majority of the Timorese rajas were first forced to acknowledge the superior might of the Dutch up until the time they faced the dissolution of their kingdoms under the rule of the first president of an independent Indonesia.

Giving special attention to the role of the rajas does not distinguish this study from Indonesian historiography in general. Indeed, the study of the history of Indonesia, especially before the Second World War, has often revolved around the concept of kingship and the fates of royal personages and their domains. Examples are the

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1 Some works which have examined traditional authority and the social order are S. Moertono, *State and statecraft in old Java: a study of the later Mataram period, 16th to 19th century*; and B. J. O. Schrieke, *Ruler and realm in early Java*; cited in J. D. Legge, ‘The writing of Southeast Asian
histories of the legendary empires of Sriwijaya and Majapahit, the struggles of Pangeran Diponegoro in the Java War, and the heroic deaths of the rajas of Denpasar, Pamecutan and Klungkung in the bloody puputans of the early twentieth century in Bali. As indicated above, the coming of the Dutch colonisers did not greatly change this as the Dutch did not simply dissolve the old royal houses, but rather sought to co-opt them. By using a system of indirect rule the Dutch merely placed themselves in a level above the existing hierarchy and let the old system continue on its way; although all real authority was now with the newcomers. In this way many of the old rulers were able to retain their positions of pre-eminence among their people even though they had surrendered their powers to the Dutch. The political skills of many Timorese rajas and other traditional power holders, however, enabled them to exercise influence greater than that which their Dutch masters had probably intended. The Timorese rajas also managed to retain a pre-eminent position because of the special role they played in Timorese religion. In this respect they were not so different to many other Southeast Asian rulers. However, while there are similarities there are also many differences, as will be explained further below.

The history of West Timor is but a small part of the history of the greater state of Indonesia, but it must be acknowledged that the historiography of Indonesia itself is littered with myths. For example, the fourteenth century text Nagarakertagama from the Javanese kingdom of Majapahit lists numerous states throughout the Indonesian archipelago and beyond. It is implied from the text that these states were part of the Majapahit ‘empire’. Some Indonesian nationalist writers have used this text to bolster the modern unitary Indonesian state, arguing that it has existed since Majapahit times. As the Nagarakertagama includes Timor in its list of ‘vassal-states’ this antique text was even used to justify the invasion of East Timor in 1975. The

2 Or even European rulers. Queen Elizabeth II, for example, is head of the Anglican Church.

3 This was not a new idea. Based on his interpretation of the Nagarakertagama, the Indonesian writer and radical politician, Muhammad Yamin, expressed the idea that Portuguese Timor should be part of the Republic of Indonesia as early as 1945. His idea was supported by President Soekarno, but nothing was done about it at the time; see A. C. Brackman, Southeast Asia’s second front: The power struggle in the Malay archipelago, pp.122-123. In an official Indonesian booklet published after East Timor’s annexation, it was claimed not only that the territory had belonged to Majapahit, but even the much earlier Sriwijaya empire; see Decolonization in East Timor, p.12.
The myth of ‘Great Majapahit’ is, however, generally recognised by historians to be just
that, a myth. Most likely the states listed in the text had trading relations of some sort
with Majapahit (the trade item most sought from Timor was sandalwood), but it is
very doubtful that the Javanese kingdom ever exercised any real authority over
Timor or many of the other states. Another enduring myth in Indonesian
historiography is that there were three hundred and fifty years of Dutch colonial rule
over the entire archipelago. This standpoint was favoured by many of the old
‘colonial’ Dutch historians as it seemed to add legitimacy to the Dutch desire to
continue to rule over the Indonesian people. Ironically, this myth has been
perpetuated by ‘anti-colonial’ writers also. By exaggerating the extent and duration
of colonial rule they can attack the colonial system with even greater fervour. This is
the position favoured by many nationalist Indonesian writers as well. It might be
supposed that the colonial era is one that the nationalists would rather forget, but the
opposite is the case. The myth of three hundred and fifty years of Dutch rule is
strongly promoted by Indonesian nationalists as it serves several purposes. As
Soedjatmoko has put it, the supposed long years of Dutch oppression provided the
Indonesian people with a ‘basis for a common fate and common enmity’. As with
the Majapahit myth, the myth of many centuries of Dutch rule over the entire
archipelago provided a basis also for maintaining the diverse regions of Indonesia in
the one unitary state. In fact, the Dutch claim was really true for only a few areas,
such as the ‘spice islands’ of Maluku, especially Ambon, and parts of Java and
Sumatra. In Bali, for example, the Dutch exercised no authority at all until the mid-
nineteenth century when they took over the northern part of the island. It was only in
the early twentieth century that they could claim to control the whole island. In
Timor it is a similar story. The Dutch established a settlement at Kupang on the
south-west coast in the mid-seventeenth century, but apart from a few other small
settlements they achieved little more. It was only well into the twentieth century that
they could claim control of the interior.

4 Theodore G. Th. Pigeaud, Java in the 14th century. A study in cultural history. The
Nagarakertagama by Rakawi Prapanca of Majapahit, 1365 A. D., pp.17, 29. See also Soedjatmoko,
‘The Indonesian historian and his time’, in Soedjatmoko et. al. (eds.), An introduction to Indonesian
historiography, pp.404-405; M. C. Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia: c. 1300 to the present,
p.17.
5 J. R. W. Smail, ‘On the possibility of an autonomous history of modern Southeast Asia’, in L. Sears
6 Soedjatmoko, ‘The Indonesian historian and his time’, p.17.
Timor had a long exposure to the outside world because of the sandalwood trade and Europeans were present in Timor from their earliest days in the archipelago. Yet it is fair to say that the pre-twentieth century indigenous political and religious systems of Timor were little affected by outside contacts. Conflicts and alliances between the Dutch (or Portuguese) and the Timorese tended to weaken or strengthen various kingdoms, but Christianity and European notions of political organisation played only a minor role. Some Timorese rulers swore allegiance to the colonial powers and even adopted Christianity, but the indigenous political and religious systems retained their paramount positions. In most pre-Second World War historiography of Southeast Asia it was presumed that the arrival of the Europeans in the region caused great changes in the political and economic patterns. This position was challenged by the Dutch scholar Jacob van Leur who proposed that at least until the nineteenth century the Europeans had to fit into the existing system and were no more than equal players with the indigenous power holders, and often much less than that. This was certainly the case in Timor. Van Leur was also very influential in challenging the notion that Hindu-Buddhism from India and later, Islam, brought fundamental changes to the Indonesian social and political order. While not denying that these religions have had an impact in Indonesia, van Leur insisted that they had only supplied a ‘thin and flaking glaze’ over the old indigenous forms, which continued to exist. Although the Timorese had contact with Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic traders for centuries it seems that they never felt the need to apply even the ‘glaze’ and their indigenous religious and political systems remained intact.

In considering Timorese notions of political and religious power one is confronted with an ideology far removed from the type usually thought of as typically Southeast Asian. For most of Southeast Asia this means the Hindu-Buddhist tradition from India with its *dewa-rajas*, or god-kings. In Indonesia Hinduism and Buddhism were later largely supplanted by Islam, although there are constant reminders of the older tradition in the arts, in Sanskrit loan words in the Indonesian language, in the great religious monuments such as the Borobudur in Java and an abiding impact on architecture in general. There are surviving pockets of the Hindu-Buddhist tradition

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in some regions also, such as the Tenger highlands of East Java and the island of Bali. Timor, however, has never been part of either the Hindu-Buddhist tradition or the Islamic one. Timor is not alone in Southeast Asia in being virtually untouched by Indian influence. The same can be said for much of eastern Indonesia; it is true also for the archipelago to the north of Indonesia: the Philippines. It might be supposed that the relative isolation of these areas precluded them from contact with anyone who could transmit to them some of even the more basic elements of Indian culture. Yet there was trade and through this contact the Philippines is believed to have been exposed to some aspects of Indian culture which left a legacy in the shape of Sanskrit loan words in the Tagalog language, the names of some pre-Christian gods and heroes, and some similarities between Filipino folklore and tales from the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.9 There would appear to be less Indian influence in Timor even though it was involved in the international trade in sandalwood from at least the thirteenth century and probably much earlier.10 There is no evidence that India ever conducted direct trade with Timor, although much of Timor’s sandalwood was no doubt shipped to India. Timor did, however, certainly trade with the Indianised states of Java. So why are those aspects of Indian culture so commonly found in western Indonesia and most of mainland Southeast Asia absent on Timor?

Van Leur believed that there had been a conscious borrowing of Indian ideas, arts and political systems in Southeast Asia ‘as local polities of substance emerged’.11 Could it be that the systems of government that operated in Timor were not ‘polities of substance’? Without a working definition of the term it is difficult to answer, but it can be said that early Chinese records from the Timor trade state that the rulers of Timor exercised considerable power and were treated with great respect by their subjects.12 Considering the wealth that must have flowed to the Timorese rulers as a result of the sandalwood trade it is difficult to imagine that their kingdoms were

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10 It should be noted, however, that Clark E. Cunningham in his study of the Atoni, the majority ethnic group in Timor, claimed there was evidence of Indian influence in their tales, death rituals and concepts of kingship. Any such influence would, however, appear to be minimal; see Cunningham, ‘People of the Dry Land. A study of the social organisation of an Indonesian people’, Abstract, p.7.
anything less than ‘polities of substance’. The Timorese were not naive or unsophisticated in the matter of political systems. Their own system was quite complex and it would appear that they were quite satisfied with it and had no desire to change it for another.

Having rejected the trappings of the Hindu and Buddhist religions and Indian concepts of kingship and sovereignty, the Timorese then managed to avoid being influenced by the great wave of Islam which swept aside most of the old Hindu-Buddhist polities of Indonesia. Not only were many of the old Hindu-Buddhist states transformed into Islamic ones, but many of the more isolated regions of the archipelago, which had hitherto retained their indigenous religion and culture, adopted the new faith also. Timor was exposed to Islam by the frequent visits of Muslim traders, but it would seem that the Timorese were just not interested.

The greatest changes in the political life of the Timorese came with the full implementation of Dutch authority in West Timor in the twentieth century, but even then the old system remained powerful. F. J. Ormeling, writing in the mid-1950s, noted that many of the smaller kingdoms in Timor had been amalgamated over the years by Dutch administrators to form larger states. Despite this, the rajas of those states retained the loyalty of the people and Ormeling compared the situation to the feudal regimes of medieval Europe. Without the support of the rajas, he said, all innovations and attempts to modernise the social and economic systems were bound to fail.13

H. G. Schulte Nordholt in his study of the political system of the Atoni, the majority ethnic group in West Timor, noted that the imposition of direct Dutch rule had brought about ‘revolutionary’ changes to Timorese political organisation. Despite the changes he noted throughout his study also the continuing paramount role of the rajas in the Timorese political system. Under the traditional system the raja, he stated, was not only the ‘apex of the hierarchical order’ in the Timorese political world, but also in the religious system. He was the preserver of the divine order, responsible for rituals relating to matters as varied as the success of the harvest and the conduct of

warfare. In short, he was ‘the religious centre of his realm’. Clark E. Cunningham, in his 1962 study of the Atoni, noted that even in the highly Christianised areas of that time the Atoni rulers had to ensure that the traditional religious duties were fulfilled.

The Australian anthropologist Andrew McWilliam has characterised the indigenous Timorese domains as being of ‘considerable complexity and variability’. These domains were not static entities and there had been a marked tendency for them to fuse and integrate into larger federations and an equal counter-tendency for them to divide into smaller, independent territories. As McWilliam describes it, the process was dependent on the ‘relative capacity of competing political centres to attract and maintain networks of alliances’. The ability of various domains to adapt to external influence has been crucial in their survival also. The sandalwood trade brought Chinese, Javanese and other foreigners to Timor from as early as the thirteenth century. Later came the colonial Portuguese and the Dutch, and most recently the Indonesian government. These external powers became part of the system of local alliances, at least in Timorese eyes, and while they have helped bring about changes in the character of the Timorese political system they have never totally eclipsed it.

It may seem contradictory to argue that traditional power holders in West Timor have managed to retain a role in the political system by adapting themselves to external influences. If the system has been altered by outsiders and the indigenous players have adapted themselves to those changes, then surely they cannot be said to be ‘traditional’? This is not necessarily the case and such matters have been part of an enduring debate over recent decades.

This debate to a large degree has originated from Edward Said’s very influential work of the late 1970s, *Orientalism*. Said argued that western writers have been presenting a distorted picture of alien societies and that the Orient had been assumed to be ‘unchanging’ and ‘absolutely different’ from the West. Said, of course, was

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15 Cunningham, ‘People of the Dry Land…’, p.179.
not the first to criticise the Eurocentric tendencies of many western writers and such ideas have been common among scholars of Indonesian history dating back at least to the pre-Second World War writings of Jacob van Leur. Said’s *Orientalism* has, however, clearly brought the issues to the forefront. Among anthropologists also there has been an on-going critique of the ‘static models of cultures’ of indigenous peoples and an acceptance of the notion that tradition itself ‘is not some static condition unchanged through time’. As George Marcus and Michael Fischer noted: ‘Most local cultures worldwide are products of a history of appropriation, resistance and accommodation’. This was certainly the case with the Timorese. The historian Eric Hobsbawm has noted that while ‘tradition’ can be characterised as unchanging there have always been adaptations made in ‘traditional’ societies because life itself is not invariant. Various changes were no doubt made to the Timorese political system over the years to deal with novel circumstances, but the system remained a ‘Timorese’ system. Even when quite drastic changes were demanded as a result of the imposition of Dutch rule, and later, that of the Indonesian government, the Timorese never completely abandoned their traditions. The capacity of the Timorese kingdoms to endure was underscored by James J. Fox when he pointed out that the four kingdoms identified by Antonio Pigafetta while on the first documented European visit to Timor in 1522 remained in existence throughout the turbulent colonial period. The dominant features of the Timorese system will now be examined.

**The political system of the Timorese**

The Timorese social system revolves around the fact that all members of society are also members of clans. Clan and kinship relations, and bride-giving and bride-taking connections between clans, form the basis for political alliances. The Timorese political system, however, is not just reliant on the relationships between clans.

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Timor has been divided into numerous hereditary domains also. McWilliam describes the ideal Timorese domain as being made up of four sub-territories surrounding a fifth sacral ruling centre. The sub-territories supplied the ruling centre with harvest tribute and in return received ritual services to ensure the prosperity and fertility of their land. In the more easterly domains of West Timor a dual-sovereignty existed at the centre with a ‘so-called immobile and conceptually “female” ritual Lord (Atupas, “one who sleeps”) and an active, “masculine” executive counterpart, indicated by various names, which integrated the outer quarters in political affairs’. In the western regions there was no such ‘female’ counterpart, but the ruling centre was likewise responsible for the main rituals and in control of the sacred emblems of the domain. Cunningham described the traditional Atoni political domain in a similar fashion. A symbolically ‘female’ lord at the centre of the domain conducted rituals for the fertility of the land and for war and gave adjudication. Four secular lords ruled in their own quarters and were responsible for the payment of tribute to the ritual lord. Fox, in his description of Wehale, the greatest domain of the Tetun people of eastern West Timor, showed that the ideal political system of the Atoni was very similar to that of the Tetun. Wehale dominated in the Tetun area, but had a great deal of influence among the Atoni also. Many of the principal domains of Timor claim some sort of descent from Wehale and the relationship of the other domains with the great Tetun centre mirrors to some extent the ideal system which operated within domains. Thus, Wehale was the superior spiritual centre of Timor. Like the ritual centre of the ideal Timorese kingdom in relation to its sub-territories, Wehale had authority over the other domains, but it did not exercise power. The system was characterised by Fox as ‘the paradox of powerlessness’. The case of Wehale will be discussed further in Chapter One.

23 McWilliam, ‘From Lord of the Earth to Village Head...’, pp.129, 131.
25 J. J. Fox, ‘The Great Lord rests at the centre: The paradox of powerlessness in European-Timorese relations’, Canberra Anthropology, Vol.5, No.2, October 1982, pp.24-26. It is useful to note that while the Timorese political system varies a great deal from the introduced political ideas which helped shape the Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic states of Southeast Asia, there would seem to be much in common between the Timorese system and that which prevailed in other areas of the region in former times. An immobile ritual leader coupled with an active executive authority was found in many other parts of the archipelago, including the ‘immobile’ sultans of Malaya with their active helpers, the ‘prime ministers’. The division of realms into four or five units was fairly common also. Thus, the Timorese system may be a surviving remnant of a once more common style of government in the
In attempting to implement indirect rule when faced with this system the Dutch had many difficulties and created many problems. They gave paramount power to one ruler, whom they styled as ‘raja’, who was then to have control over the rulers of the four sub-territories. The ritual lord was, in the old system, the only one whose authority united the kingdom as a whole, yet if a ritual lord was recognised as raja the secular lords would reject his right to speak on purely secular governmental matters. This obviously made it impossible for him to rule. If a former secular lord was chosen as raja his authority to rule was respected only in his own sub-territory. As Cunningham put it: ‘Disputes flared and smouldered from 1920-1940 as Atoni sought to adjust their traditional system with the new one of “native rule”’. The Indonesian government greatly reduced the powers of the rajas, but there were still many problems. They only retained the system of kingship for as long as they did, said Cunningham, because of the great respect the Atoni had for the principle. The Dutch might have avoided the various problems they encountered, Cunningham suggested, if they had scrapped the traditional order altogether. This has now been done under Indonesian rule, but, as will be shown in the Conclusion, the traditional rulers in West Timor still exercise considerable influence. Alternatively, said Cunningham, the Dutch could have pursued their policy of ‘native rule’ on Timor to greater effect if they had managed to make their notions of how the kingdoms should have been run conform with the reality of the existing Timorese political system.

Imposing an alien system on the Timorese and leaving it to them to adjust was bound to create problems.

The complexity of the Timorese political system is made even more difficult to understand for the outsider because of the bewildering number of titles that have been used for various office holders. Although many of the indigenous titles seem to have been in common use throughout the territory, there was much regional variation also. There are many ritual titles as well, which were not used on a daily basis, but which appear in the Dutch official records from time to time. There were also various honorary titles bestowed on the rulers by the Dutch, and some that dated back to

region. For a general consideration of this matter, see Schulte Nordholt, *The political system of the Atoni...*, pp.460-479.


Portuguese times. The same individual might appear in the Dutch records at different times under his Timorese title *usif*, his official title *raja* and his more honorary title of *keizer* (emperor). In the eastern parts of West Timor the traditional titles of the rulers of the Tetun people of that area are referred to regularly as well, such as *nai*, *loro* and *liurai* (these titles were used in some Atoni kingdoms also). Many rulers had been given European military titles, which became hereditary. There are *kornels* (colonels), *majoors* (majors), *djeraals* (generals, or lieutenant-colonels), *kapitans* (captains) and others. The actual position of these individuals in the hierarchy is not always clear from their titles. In general, under the system introduced by the Dutch, a raja was supported by a number of district heads called *fettor* (from the Portuguese *feitor*, administrator), who in turn were supported by a number of *temukungs*, or village heads. Even with these generally recognised titles there was still much ambiguity. For example, Resident Loriaux noted in 1908 that the head of the small kingdom of Kauniki was an independent *temukung*. Many more problems were initiated by individual Dutch officials, such as in the case of two *fettors* in south Belu who introduced themselves to the new Dutch Gezaghebber (Administrator) and he, apparently not understanding their positions, declared them to be rajas and thus arbitrarily created two new kingdoms!

Cases such as those described above were not isolated. Although the Dutch attempted to define the hierarchy in the *zelfbesturende landschappen* (self-governing regions) they found that the imposition of their rigid model onto the existing, more-fluid Timorese system was no easy task. There were many misunderstandings and many cases of wilful manipulation of the Timorese political system also, by both the Dutch and the Timorese. These matters will form a regular feature of this study.

**Why study half an island?**

This study is concerned with the history of the western half of the island of Timor. So why study only half an island? When Europeans first arrived in Timor it seems

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28 Also often spelt *keser*.
29 Cunningham, ‘People of the Dry Land...’, p.67.
30 E. Loriaux, ‘Rapport van den Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden betreffende een landreis door Timor van Koepang naar Atapoeope in September 1908’, 14 October 1908, in Politieke verslagen en berichten uit de Buitengewesten van Nederlands Oost-Indie, 1898-1940.
31 H. Gramberg, ‘Tournee rapport van de Civiel en Militaire Assistent Resident’, 6 May 1915, in Politieke verslagen...
that there was a measure of political unity on the island (discussed in Chapter One), but this was largely destroyed by the military action and political manoeuvring of the Dutch and Portuguese who ultimately split the island in two and claimed the separate halves as their own territory. The two European powers had agreed on the borders defining their respective colonies in the mid-nineteenth century, but minor variations continued to be made and it was not until the early twentieth century that the issue was finally settled. The borders agreed to then are still in effect and the island has remained divided until the present day. The eastern half of the island was under Portuguese control until 1975 when it was invaded by Indonesia. It was then forcibly ‘integrated’ to became the twenty-seventh province of the Republic of Indonesia. After years of bloody conflict a plebiscite held under United Nations (UN) auspices in 1999 resulted in the formation of a new state of East Timor. Dutch Timor, on the other hand, became a part of the Republic of Indonesia in 1950. In 1958 the original Dutch settlement on Timor, Kupang, became the capital of the new province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT; East Nusa Tenggara). Along with several smaller islands the main components of the province are the islands of Flores and Sumba and the former Dutch Timor, often referred to previously as ‘Timor Koepang’ and now known as Timor Barat (West Timor), or Timor NTT.

Although Timor was artificially divided by the Europeans it is true to say that there are variations in the culture and languages of the people of the two halves of the island. The differing policies of the island’s former colonial masters brought about even greater differences. Even though the peoples of the two halves of Timor probably have more in common with each other than with the people of any other place, the historical legacy of Dutch rule as opposed to Portuguese rule, and the long standing Indonesian orientation of West Timor, appear to be enough to keep the island divided. All these factors make it realistic to study one half of the island while to a great extent ignoring the other. The controversial Indonesian take-over of East Timor and the bloody aftermath of the 1999 plebiscite have generated much interest in the former Portuguese colony, but the history of the western half of the island

32 As opposed to ‘Timor Dili’, which was used to designate East Timor. It should be noted that there is great variation in the spelling of place names in the relevant literature. For example, there is Kupang, Coupang, Koepang; Dili, Dilly, Deli; Sabu, Savu, Sawoe; Rote, Roti, Rotti, etc. Except for where quoting directly from source materials, the general policy followed in this thesis is to use the contemporary local spelling.
remains obscure. It is an aim of this study to help remedy that situation. At times it will be preferable to refer to Timor as a whole. It will also be necessary on occasion to discuss events on other nearby islands, insofar as they concern individuals or organisations closely connected with West Timor. The emphasis, however, will remain with West Timor itself.33

**Literature review**

The present topic was considered appropriate for detailed research because there is no existing study of the twentieth century political history of West Timor. There are, however, a number of studies that partially cover this topic. Of the best known published works dealing with West Timor written by western authors only one is the work of an historian; the others are by anthropologists and, in one case, a geographer. In order to make their studies comprehensible these latter authors have included some historical information and their contributions are considered below. A number of works of a more purely historical nature, which partially deal with the subject, have been produced in Indonesia and these are considered also.

Dr. F. J. Ormeling, a former Head of the Geographical Institute in Jakarta, produced a study of Indonesian Timor in 1956 entitled *The Timor problem: A geographical interpretation of an underdeveloped island*. Ormeling’s aim was to provide basic information to allow for future development planning in West Timor. His main

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33 For much of the period covered in this study West Timor was part of a single division of ‘Timor and Islands’ (which included the much smaller islands of Rote, Sabu, Alor and Pantar) within the ‘Residency of Timor and Dependencies’ (*Residentie van Timor en Onderhorigheden*); see Ormeling, *The Timor problem...*, p.11. In the early years of the twentieth century there was little cohesiveness within the Residency and even though Kupang was the capital it was little more than a local centre. The people tended to look to the towns on their own islands (such as Ende on Flores, or Bima on Sumbawa) to satisfy their needs; see A. Couvreur, ‘Memorie van overgave van de residentie Timor en onderhorigheden. 1924, juni’, in *Indonesia: memories van overgave*. These facts make it practical to consider the history of West Timor separately to that of the other components of the Residency. The Residency of Timor and Dependencies was identical to the present province of NTT excepting that the former also included the island of Sumbawa (now a part of the province of West Nusa Tenggara) and for a short part of the period of this study included the South-western Islands (Kepulauan Selatan Daya: Wetar, Roma, Damar, Kisar, Leta, Moa, Lakor, Sermata and others), which, although physically very close to Timor, were thought to belong geographically to Maluku and were transferred to Ambon in the 1920s. (There were movements in the 1960s, 1970s and 1990s to have the islands returned to NTT; see *Pos Kupang*, 23, 25, 26, 27 March 1999 and 19 April 1999.) During the Dutch period the senior official in the Residency was the Resident, followed by the Assistent Resident. The Residency was divided into ‘Divisions’ (*Afdelingen*) and ‘Subdivisions’ (*Onderafdelingen*), each in the charge of a Controleur or Gezaghebber. The more localised position of Posthouder was sometimes filled by Indonesians. Immediately following the ‘pacification’ many of these essentially civilian posts were filled by the military.
concerns were problems such as soil erosion, the effects of livestock grazing, shifting agriculture, road building and so on. To give an overall picture, however, he outlined also the historical background of West Timor, the traditional political, social and economic systems of the Timorese and the roles played by immigrants such as the Rotenese, Chinese and, of course, the Dutch. The work contains an extensive bibliography. Ormeling’s study has been a starting point for most works concerning West Timor which have been produced subsequently. During his field work in Timor Ormeling seems to have gained a good understanding of many of the problems which have arisen as a result of a lack of co-ordination between the plans of administrators, both Dutch and Indonesian, and the needs of the Timorese themselves. In his study he considered how the Timorese viewed many of the issues under discussion and blamed Dutch and Indonesian planners for not considering their position when drawing up plans for matters such as village formation and house design.34

Ormeling’s study was written in an era when few authors were concerned with the modern pre-occupation with ‘representations of the Other’ and the need to escape from our own culture-bound interpretations of peoples of other cultures; ideas much popularised by Said’s Orientalism. Ormeling’s work, however, shows that there was some consideration given to bridging the gap between his own western culture and that of the Timorese. Nevertheless, it must be said that the general tenor of Ormeling’s work is that Timorese conservatism and adherence to their traditions was part of the ‘Timor problem’. On the other hand, he has shown that many Indonesian officials were not particularly receptive to the Timorese viewpoint on various matters. This may have been because they were from outside the area, or were strongly influenced by western-style training and education. Ormeling’s study is an excellent starting point for research into West Timor and it has provided much background material useful for the present study, but it has relatively little to contribute to the main area of concern: the political history of West Timor in the twentieth century.

H. G. Schulte Nordholt worked as a government administrator in West Timor from November 1939 to May 1942, and then again from September 1945 to July 1947. He

34 Ormeling, The Timor problem..., pp.231, 233.
took courses in social anthropology at the university in Utrecht as part of his administrative training and devoted more time to anthropological study later in his life. His *The political system of the Atoni of Timor*, published in 1971, was an adaption of his 1966 doctoral thesis. Schulte Nordholt’s study utilises the existing literature, unpublished reports and his own observations. His work is valuable as an aid to understanding the Timorese political system and provides useful information regarding Timor for the period before the twentieth century. The book has value also as a primary source for the present study as Schulte Nordholt gives outlines, taken from his own notes, of many events that occurred while he was working as a government functionary in West Timor. Through his study of the official records he gives many interesting examples of how the adaptation of the Timorese political system was manipulated by both the Dutch and the Timorese to achieve their separate aims. Schulte Nordholt spent much time talking to various Timorese people to gain an understanding of their political system, but he dismisses the Atoni oral traditions as being of no use in making an historical analysis because they do not supply ‘concrete data’.\(^35\) It is understandable that Schulte Nordholt may have felt this way as many of the oral histories from the different regions of West Timor seem contradictory and clearly often serve a politically legitimising function. However, this can be said of many of the documents regularly used in historical analysis. Nevertheless, for Schulte Nordholt the only reliable sources are the documents written by ‘outsiders’, essentially the records left behind by the Dutch and Portuguese colonisers. He recognises that these records place the ‘outsiders’ at the centre of the narrative, but argues that a real Indonesian historiography must be based on the colonial records as interpreted by Indonesian scholars in co-operation with their ‘Dutch (or Dutch-reading)’ colleagues.\(^36\) Schulte Nordholt’s prescription that Indonesian scholars be involved in the interpretation of colonial records in order to write their own history seems to fall short of what is really required to prevent a repetition of the Eurocentric historiography which had prevailed in the past. It would be madness to deny the value of the colonial records in the writing of Indonesian history and such records form the cornerstone of the present study, but it is rash of Schulte Nordholt to deny any validity to the Timorese oral tradition. These stories are one of the few sources available for seeing various events from a Timorese


\(^{36}\) Ibid., p.158.
perspective. Like any source they have to be treated with caution, but if there is to be any attempt made at all to write history ‘from below’ in relation to Timor then these sources must be considered. Fortunately, Schulte Nordholt does not take his own advice literally and makes regular use of the Timorese oral tradition to elucidate the historical record. In the present study all oral traditions, where known, are considered side by side with the documentary evidence in order to give a more balanced perspective.

An author often quoted by those writing about the Timor region is the anthropologist James J. Fox. Fox has produced many articles which have provided useful background material for this study, but his most influential work is his *Harvest of the palm: Ecological change in eastern Indonesia*, published in 1977. Fox’s concern was with ethnographic research of the peoples of Rote and Sabu, two islands near Timor. The people from these islands have had a long connection with West Timor. Fox’s work eventually evolved into a broader history of the region and he contends that adding the historical dimension to his work was a ‘counter to ethnographic narrowness and a corrective to oversimplified generalizations’. He argues also that ‘often historical records cannot be understood without...intimate knowledge of the ethnographic situation’.37 The author concurs with the latter statement and freely acknowledges that this study could not have been attempted without the existence of a number of anthropological studies of the people of Timor. *Harvest of the palm* gives much useful information regarding the migration of Rotenese and Sabunese people to Timor, especially in the nineteenth century, and the Dutch policies which facilitated those migrations. Fox’s study shows also how Dutch policies were influential in these people being able to play leading roles in the economic and political life of the territory. Although a minority in West Timor, it is astounding just how much influence these two migrant groups have had, as will become apparent in the unfolding of the present study. The influence of the Rotenese in particular has led to a popular saying (at least it is popular with Rotenese) which the author has heard several times in West Timor, that is, that the name Timor is really an acronym meaning *Tanah ini milik orang Rote* (This land belongs to the Rotenese).38 Fox’s work is important also as it is one of the few sources to provide information about

38 Fox records a variant of this saying also; see *ibid.*, p.148.
the political history of West Timor in the twentieth century. It is, however, reliant
mainly on two sources: an unpublished manuscript (which was subsequently
published and is discussed below) by I. H. Doko, a Sabunese politician who was
active in the Indonesian independence movement in Timor; and a report by the Dutch
Resident C. Schultz concerning his period in office 1924-1927. In this regard Fox’s
study can at best be said to provide a basis for further historical research.39

The only published work by a western historian which deals with the subject matter
of the present study is R. A. F. Paul Webb’s *Palms and the cross: Socio-economic
development in Nusatenggara, 1930-1975*, published in 1986. Webb’s work is
mainly concerned with the ‘cultural and socio-economic development of the Catholic
and Protestant churches in the Lesser Sunda Islands’.40 Webb focuses his study on
the predominantly Christian islands of Flores, Sumba and Timor; as well as
examining the small Christian community on the mainly Hindu island of Bali. He
points out how these islands at the eastern periphery of the old Netherlands Indies,
and the modern Indonesian Republic, were largely outside the mainstream of
political and economic developments, which were centred in the western half of the
archipelago. Nevertheless, Dutch colonial policy, the Japanese occupation, the
struggle for Indonesian independence and the so-called communist coup attempt of
1965, were all matters that reverberated in the far eastern reaches as well. Webb’s
work is extremely useful in this regard as he has utilised material from various
sources, including rarely cited Church archives, and conducted numerous interviews
in the field, and in so doing has provided much sorely needed information
concerning the changing conditions in these areas. Some of the most useful
information in Webb’s book is that concerning the aftermath of the ‘communist
coup’ in eastern Indonesia, an area of study which had been previously almost
completely ignored. Through further documentary research and interviews in the
field, it has been attempted in the present study to build on the basis supplied by
Webb in order to provide a more comprehensive picture. Webb argues that the
Church has been a major agent of change in eastern Indonesia and that it has played a
special role, particularly in education, and more recently in economic development.

39 These are noted in the footnotes where appropriate and can also be seen in the bibliography.
40 R. A. F. Paul Webb, *Palms and the cross: Socio-economic development in Nusatenggara, 1930-
1975*, p.i.
It is certainly true that many political leaders from West Timor have been closely associated with the Church and Webb argues persuasively that the role of the Church must be taken into account when considering political developments there. For the needs of the present study, which focuses on West Timor, the usefulness of Webb’s work is limited in that he covers too wide an area. Nevertheless, his study has provided many suggestions for fruitful avenues of further research.

As well as the works mentioned above there have been a number of unpublished doctoral theses dealing with West Timor which have appeared over the years. Most of these have been anthropological studies and some of the most useful have been the 1962 thesis of Cunningham, mentioned already; Gerard Francillon’s 1967 thesis, ‘Some matriarchic aspects of the social structure of the southern Tetun of Middle Timor’; Andrew McWilliam’s 1989 thesis, ‘Narrating the gate and the path: Place and precedence in South West Timor’; and the only known thesis to date on the subject produced by a Timorese, Gerzon Tom Therik’s 1995 thesis, ‘Whehali: The four corner land. The cosmology and traditions of a Timorese ritual centre’. These works have all been useful in helping the author to understand the Timorese political system and have provided various other bits of information, but it is not necessary to analyse their content here as they are by and large concerned with matters outside the scope of the present study.41

Apart from Therik’s thesis mentioned above, most of the work relating to West Timor by Indonesians has been written in Indonesian. Most of this material is of an official or semi-official nature with a strong nationalist thread running throughout. One of the most important of these works is Izaac Huru Doko’s Nusa Tenggara Timur dalam kancah perjuangan kemerdekaan Indonesia (East Nusa Tenggara in the arena of the struggle for Indonesian independence), published in 1975. Doko was born in Sabu, but studied in Bandung and returned to Kupang to work as a schoolteacher in 1937. He was active in nationalist groups in both Java and Timor. During the Japanese occupation he was a high-ranking civil servant. After the war he became a member in the parliament of the Dutch ‘puppet state’ Negara Indonesia

41 There have been numerous theses written concerning East Timor also. Two which could be used to compare different aspects of East and West Timorese history are Katharine G. Davidson, ‘The
Timur (NIT; State of East Indonesia) and held a number of ministerial portfolios. In his book Doko gives many accounts of political events in which he himself played a part. As can be seen from the title, the book concerns all of the NTT province, not just West Timor, but most of the material in Doko’s book is relevant to the present study. Doko’s book is important because it provides a local perspective on many events which are otherwise only known of from Dutch sources. Because of Doko’s central role in the proceedings, however, it is necessary to be vigilant when considering his testimony. It is clear that Doko is proud of his nationalist pedigree and would appear to have been on good terms with the Soeharto New Order regime also. His book is endorsed by the Governor of NTT and has a short chapter outlining the rise and fall of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI; Indonesian Communist Party) in NTT and contrasts this with the years of development under the New Order. The obvious bias shown in this chapter serves as a warning to check Doko’s claims closely. The strong nationalist element in Doko’s writing needs to be kept in mind also, as the point of view he adopts is often that of an Indonesian, rather than a Timorese.

The Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Department of Education and Culture) in Indonesia has been responsible for publishing a number of books concerning the present subject. These include: Sejarah Revolusi Kemerdekaan (1945 s/d 1949) daerah Nusa Tenggara Timur (History of the Independence Revolution [1945-1949] in East Nusa Tenggara), Sejarah kebangkitan nasional daerah Nusa Tenggara Timur (History of the national awakening in East Nusa Tenggara) and Sejarah daerah Nusa Tenggara Timur (History of East Nusa Tenggara). These books deal with the history of the whole province so the specific information on West Timor is limited. Much of the material included can be found elsewhere and a lot of it falls outside the scope of the present study. One has to be aware also that these books have been designed for a political purpose, that is, to bolster nationalist feelings in the eastern islands of Indonesia, and as such must be considered critically.

Kupang dari masa ke masa (Kupang from era to era), written by A. G. H. Netti and Hans Itta and published by the Kupang Kabupaten (Regency) Government in 1997,

Portuguese colonisation of Timor: The final stage, 1850-1912’; and one which has been published as a book: Gudmund Janissa, The crocodile’s tears: East Timor in the making.
is another example of state-sponsored historiography. Netti and Itta tell the story not only of Kupang town, but the whole kabupaten of the same name, which at the time of writing also included the islands of Sabu and Rote.\footnote{Sabu is still a part of Kabupaten Kupang, but Rote and the adjacent small island of Ndao have since become a separate kabupaten.} While the book does not cover the whole of West Timor it does nevertheless provide much useful information about events which occurred in the capital and the surrounding districts. The book covers the history of Kupang from the earliest days until the present, so that much of the material included is outside the scope of the present study. For the post-Second World War years of their story Netti and Itta make critical use of various local sources and some attempt is made to clear up contradictory versions of the same event. Many of the statements, claims and observations of I. H. Doko, for instance, are taken to task. The critical attitude of the authors makes this book a useful tool for comparison with other Indonesian writing about West Timor. Nevertheless, the political nature of this book must be kept in mind also as it was written at the behest of the incumbent Bupati (Regent) of Kupang and the last section of the work, which contains an overview of the recent governance of Kupang and biographical details of the Bupati, can best be described as panegyrical.

The last set of writings to be considered here are a number of research reports obtained from the Biro Penelitian (Research Bureau) of the Universitas Nusa Cendana, the state university in Kupang. Many of these reports are concerned with quite narrow themes, such as the development of the Church in certain districts. Others deal with broader subjects, such as M. M. KoEhuan’s Suatu studi tentang bangsa Belanda di NTT (1613-1942) (A study of the Dutch in NTT [1613-1942]), or Munandjar Widiyatmika, Sukendro and Niti Suroto’s Sejarah daerah tematis zaman kebangkitan nasional di daerah Nusa Tenggara Timur (1900-1942) (Thematic regional history of the national awakening era in East Nusa Tenggara [1900-1942]). Much of the material in these studies is based on interviews done in the field with people who were involved in the events described and as such provides much useful information. As with all the other Indonesian writing on West Timor mentioned so far, these reports have a strong emphasis on nationalist themes. This is a useful counter to the Eurocentric style of the Dutch government report writers, whose work informs much of the present study, but the trouble is that nationalist writers can
easily be led into merely reversing the bias of the ‘colonial’ writers, so that all the positives of colonial historiography become the negatives of nationalist historiography. The result can be, as G. J. Resink put it, ‘the transformation from an outlandish colonial history into an inlandish nationalist one’. This phenomenon is well illustrated in a report by KoEhuan concerning the activities of Allied forces in Kupang before the Japanese invasion of the Second World War. KoEhuan set out to discover how local people responded to the arrival of the Allies and states that if the people were co-operative and helpful this would have been considered positive by the Allies, but that it was really a negative and was indicative of a low level of nationalist awareness. Alternatively, says KoEhuan, if the people did not participate or help the Allies in their preparations before the Japanese arrived, then this must be seen as a positive and is proof of a high nationalist awareness. As Japanese rule in Timor was noted for its cruelty and brought great suffering to the people, and the return of the Allies to Timor at the end of the war was a matter for rejoicing, KoEhuan’s logic seems somewhat askew. In fact many Indonesian nationalists were aware that fascist imperial Japanese rule was likely to be more severe than that of the Dutch and had wanted to fight to prevent them landing. The Dutch, however, had been reticent about arming the Indonesians and capitulated soon after the Japanese landing. It is true that in some places the Japanese were greeted as liberators, but the arrival of the Japanese in West Timor does not seem to have been greeted with any great joy and escaping Allied servicemen received much help from local people. The help given seems to have been motivated by feelings of human kindness and a desire to alleviate suffering, rather than from a sense of loyalty to the Dutch and the Allies. Following KoEhuan’s logic patriotic Indonesians in Timor should have surrendered the fleeing Allies to the Japanese, but why satisfying the needs of one colonial power rather than another is a sign of nationalist awareness is a matter left unexplained. Fortunately, KoEhuan’s handling of this matter is an extreme case, but it does serve to remind one of the need to look closely at such material as nationalist sentiment can be a distorting factor.

44 M. M. KoEhuan, Peranan tokoh masyarakat saat pendaratan dan menjelang berakhirnya
The sources

F. J. Ormeling reported that during the British interregnum in West Timor from 1812 to 1816 many of the Dutch East India Company’s archives in Kupang were destroyed.\(^45\) Indeed, it had been recorded by P. J. Veth that Resident Burn in 1814 had prepared for a large expedition by having cartridge cases manufactured out of the Dutch archives.\(^46\) Ormeling went on to say that many other documents were lost when the Records Office in Kupang was destroyed during the Second World War.\(^47\) A. D. M. Parera noted that during the Japanese occupation the official records were moved from place to place and during the process many were lost or ruined.\(^48\) It would appear that many of the records had been destroyed on purpose and Cunningham reported that all the government records kept in Kefamenanu, Central Timor, had been burnt by the Japanese.\(^49\) Webb noted that many Church records kept in Timor had been destroyed during the Second World War also.\(^50\) Foreign occupation was not the only cause of the loss of the historical record and some documents seem to have just disappeared into the ether. In a report which has survived from 1930 it is noted that archival sources relating to events which had occurred in Timor less than twenty years prior to that time were missing from the records.\(^51\) Those archives related to the somewhat controversial death of Raja Bil Nope of Amanuban (discussed in Chapter Two) and it is possible the records were removed on purpose. In the 1960s Francillon noted that many records had gone missing from the Atambua Archives and put it down to the fact that many of the people who worked there were members of local noble families; it was in their interest to get rid of any records which contained inside information about the families and their feuds.\(^52\) As well as this piecemeal erosion of the records there was one more episode of large-scale destruction. Most of the records which had survived

\(^{46}\) P. J. Veth, *Het eiland Timor*, p.87.
\(^{47}\) Ormeling, *The Timor problem...*, p.4.
\(^{49}\) Cunningham, ‘People of the Dry Land...’, p.163.
\(^{50}\) Webb, *Palms and the cross...*, p.73.
\(^{51}\) ‘Militaire memorie van Timor, omvattende de afdeeling Timor en eilanden, 1930, maart’, in *Indonesia: memories...*
\(^{52}\) Francillon, ‘Some matriarchic aspects of the social structure of the southern Tetun of Middle Timor’, p.129.
the ravages of war in Kupang were finally housed in the new governor’s office in 1962 and were lost when the building burnt down in 1964.\textsuperscript{53}

Despite the discouraging prospects, research undertaken for this thesis has uncovered many valuable archival sources. Many authors have mentioned \textit{memories van overgave} as a source of information. These were reports written by departing Dutch officials to outline the social, economic and political conditions in their area and to note any particular events that had occurred during their term of office. These records have survived and are now kept in the Netherlands. Furthermore, these reports have been transferred onto microfilm and copies are available in Australia.\textsuperscript{54} These \textit{memories van overgave} are a wonderful resource. Because a Resident, for example, would serve a number of years in his post his final report would be a summary of all the major events which happened during that time. Many report writers felt it necessary to summarise the events that had occurred during their predecessor’s term also, so one is presented with a number of pocket histories of the region. Another series of reports has also survived in the Netherlands and is likewise available on microfilm: \textit{Politieke verslagen en berichten uit de Buitengewesten van Nederlands Oost-Indie, 1898-1940} (Political reports and dispatches from the outer islands of the Netherlands East Indies, 1898-1940). These reports were written for the benefit of the Governor-General by the Resident. They appeared regularly, sometimes as frequently as monthly, but never less than twice a year. A great deal of correspondence relating to various matters has been preserved alongside the reports. These reports have become the cornerstone of the research material for the present study. While the \textit{memories van overgave} have been well exploited, it is curious that these other reports seem to have been so little used by those doing research into the political history of Indonesia.

The \textit{Politieke verslagen} collection, however, is not complete. The reports for 1940 and 1941 are missing, presumably because the reports had previously been sent to the Netherlands and this practice ceased when the country was occupied by Germany in 1940. There are frequent mentions made in the reports of other reports, or pieces

\textsuperscript{53} Parera, \textit{Sejarah...}, pp.13-14.
\textsuperscript{54} Indonesia: \textit{memories van overgave}; and \textit{Memories van overgave: Collecties van het Ministerie van Kolonien}. 
of correspondence, which are simply not there. This is the case, for example, in the Bil Nope matter mentioned above. In the report on this incident it is stated that a full account is being sent by way of ‘secret letter’. Although other ‘secret letters’ appear in the collection, those referred to in relation to Bil Nope do not. As much of this correspondence was forwarded on in multiple copies to various government offices it is not hard to imagine that copies of the missing letters still exist somewhere. The question is, where? Some of the reports have been censored at some time also. There is a sentence missing here, a paragraph there, and in some cases whole pages are missing, although this is rare. Quite possibly there are complete, uncensored versions of these reports still in existence somewhere, or perhaps they did not survive. If they have survived they are probably in the Netherlands, but it has not been possible to secure any definite leads on this matter.

The Algemeen Rijksarchief (State Archives) in The Hague have a number of archives relating to West Timor for the post-Second World War period. These are mostly Resident’s reports made during the NIT era of the late 1940s. A complementary set of archives relating to the same era was found to exist at the Arsip Nasional (National Archives) in Jakarta. These archives have been very useful for piecing together a picture of life in West Timor during that time. A number of archives relating to West Timor are available in Australia also. The National Archives of Australia offices in Darwin, Melbourne and Canberra have a number of relevant archives in their collections. The Australian War Memorial in Canberra has many relevant archives also. Many of these archives, as one might expect, are concerned with Australia’s role in Timor during the Second World War, but there are many others dealing with general intelligence, some of which date back to First World War days and others dealing with the growth of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in the 1960s. The Australian material thus covers nearly the whole period of the present study. These Australian reports have the virtue of having been written by an ‘outsider’ group and often reflect a different interpretation of events from that shown in Dutch or Indonesian records from the same period.

Indonesian records are hard to find. As stated above, many of the records in Indonesia appear to have been destroyed. The Arsip Nasional office in Jakarta has little material that is obviously relevant to the present study apart from the records
relating to the NIT era, already mentioned. The Arsip Nasional office in Kupang has been established only a relatively short time and claimed to have no records at all when visited by the author in 2000. Indonesian officials, like their Dutch predecessors, are expected to write a memori when they leave their posts and it had been hoped it would be possible to track down some of those still held in Kupang. After the NIT ‘puppet state’ had been dissolved and West Timor became part of the Republic of Indonesia it was made part of a new province which included all the islands between Bali and Timor. The memori written by the governor of that province is available in a United States of America (USA) government translation.

In 1958 Kupang became the capital of the new province of NTT with W. J. Lalamentik as governor for the remaining period of the present study. Unfortunately, his memori has not been found, but a copy of the memori written by his successor, El Tari, was found in private hands in Kupang. Fortunately, Tari relates a lot of information about what happened during his predecessor’s term of office. Tari’s report is important as he gives quite a bit of information about the PKI and what was done to its members in NTT after 1965; a matter about which there is otherwise very little information and one which Tari was well placed to discuss as he was a high ranking army officer during the period in question.

Apart from archives some material relating to the present study has been published from time to time. Journal articles have been written by various Europeans, usually Dutchmen, who had visited Timor. There is virtually no material written by Timorese apart from those few items already mentioned. The heavy reliance on Dutch sources means there is a risk that the present study will achieve nothing more than tell the story of the Dutch in Timor. The aim, however, is to write about West Timor and all the people who were a part of it: Dutch, Timorese and others. The Dutch reports touch on many aspects of Timorese life and contain lots of information about individual Timorese, but the reports were nearly always written in a highly Eurocentric fashion and the prejudiced attitude and sense of superiority of the report writers is often quite clear. By being aware of the possible prejudices of the report

56 In the library of former NTT governor, Ben Mboi.
writers, however, it is believed possible to use this material without reproducing the original’s Eurocentric stance. The author is aware also of the warning made by Edward Said that while the standard for producing knowledge in the West is to be non-political, impartial and academic, there is no device for removing the scholar from his or her own everyday life, class beliefs and so on. 58 However, while being aware that one’s own cultural background can be an impediment in trying to understand the actions and motives of people from another culture, it is believed to be possible to attempt to see how various incidents may have appeared to the Timorese, rather than to the Europeans who wrote about them. If this was not believed to be true there would be no point in going on with the present study.

The largely European created historical record for West Timor has some other weaknesses. One of these is the gender specific nature of the reports. The Dutch officials at the time were exclusively male, as were the major post-holders in the Timorese camp. Women are infrequently mentioned in the Dutch reports, although they did from time to time play leading roles in millenarian-type movements and some women are mentioned in relation to the early political groups of the region. It was women also who led many of the teams that became active in West Timor during the ‘Revival movement’ that swept the countryside in the mid-1960s (referred to in Chapter Six). Undoubtedly women were involved in many more activities than they are given credit for, but the nature of the historical record just does not reflect this. Ann Laura Stoler remarked in a study of rural workers involved in the Indonesian independence movement, that women were absent from most Dutch intelligence accounts and Indonesian reports of the time, but that the women were not singled out for omission. Rather, it was a function of the fact that the poor in general were given little attention and the work and activities of the women usually went unnoticed. 59 This would seem to be the case in Timor also and as the present study is quite reliant on Dutch records it could be criticised for presenting too much of the history of the elite groups: the Dutch officials and the Timorese rajas and their courtiers. But it is these people of whom the most is known.

58 Said, Orientalism, p.10.
Ranajit Guha, a member of the ‘Subaltern studies’ group of Indian writers who have sought to express the voices of the ‘subalterns’ (those of inferior rank), has argued that although there was a dominant group in society that should be considered when writing about that society, it should not be given the ‘spurious primacy’ it has usually received in standard South Asian studies. In Guha’s view there must be some attempt to tell the story of the common people, not just the elite.60 Indonesian writing on West Timor is mostly the product of members of the elite. Two of the most important works, those by Doko and El Tari, were produced by members of the Timorese elite who were strictly speaking not even Timorese, as both came from the island of Sabu.61 The close links of the two men with the central government in Jakarta could be used to underline just how far away from the common people of Timor these elite figures really were. But their testimonies must be considered and the possible prejudices they may display have to be kept in mind just as for the material written by outsiders from the West. The difficulty, though, is how to let the ‘subaltern’ speak? How does one write a history ‘from below’ for West Timor? It is not claimed that the present study has succeeded in doing that, but it certainly has been attempted to consider the Timorese point of view, non-elite and elite, wherever it could be found. While the Timorese had no written history before the arrival of outsiders on their island, they do have a rich oral tradition. Some of this has been collected by anthropologists and others and exists in manuscript form. Other aspects of the oral tradition have been collected by the author through interviews in the field in Timor during numerous visits to the island over the last ten years. As well as collecting Timorese versions of events that occurred long ago, the author has conducted numerous interviews with people who were involved with many aspects of West Timor’s more recent history, such as the Second World War, the independence struggle and the aftermath of the 1965 so-called communist coup attempt. Some of those interviewed were closely involved with these events, others could best be described as bystanders. By combining this material with the existing historical record it has been attempted to tell the story of the twentieth century political history of West Timor in as balanced a manner as possible.

61 On the subject of political elites in Timor it is interesting to note that there has never been an ethnic Timorese governor of NTT province.
Chapter outline
Following on from this Introduction, Chapter One provides some broad background material to the history of Timor and covers matters such as the early sandalwood trade with Java and China, the arrival of the Europeans, the early activities of the Church in Timor and the division of the island between the Dutch and the Portuguese. Some consideration is given also to early connections between Timor and north Australia.

Chapter Two is concerned with the period of Dutch expansion in Timor in the early twentieth century. This was closely linked to the adoption of the Ethical Policy by the Dutch and the ambitions of Governor-General van Heutsz to establish a *Pax Neerlandica* in Indonesia. There were a number of important battles at this time, including the Perang Bipolo (Bipolo War), which resulted in the defeat of the symbolically important Keizer Sonbai; the Perang Kolbano, in which the Dutch suffered a rare defeat, and Perang Niki Niki, which culminated in the death of Raja Bil Nope, referred to above. Other resistance to the Dutch ‘pacification campaign’ is mentioned also and some details of the campaign are compared to the Dutch campaign on the island of Bali about the same time. The establishment of the Church in the interior is considered, as are the effects of the First World War on Timor and the Timorese. Mention is made as well of early aviation that linked West Timor with the outside world.

Chapter Three focuses on the 1920s and 1930s. During this period the people of Timor had to come to grips with the new system of ‘native rule’. The consequences of the new system are examined. During the 1920s modern Timorese political activity really began. An interesting angle to this story is that people from the islands of Rote, Sabu and Kisar were much more active in the early political life in West Timor than the ethnic Timorese. The reasons for this are examined. Various political groups are discussed, including the Timorsch Verbond, Perserikatan Timor and the Sarekat Rajat. Timorese support for the Indonesian nationalist movement is discussed, as is the relationship with Portuguese Timor and the growing fear of Japanese expansionism.
Chapter Four is concerned with the build up to the Second World War and the war itself. This includes the arrival of Australian and other Allied forces in Timor and their eventual defeat at the hands of the invading Japanese. The attitude of the West Timorese is compared to that of the East Timorese, who are remembered with great respect in Australia for the help that some of their number gave to Australian guerilla fighters who stayed on in East Timor to fight the Japanese. The effects of Japanese rule in relation to the rajas and the Church are considered, as are their policies on matters such as prostitution and forced labour (*romusha*).

Chapter Five covers the period after the war up until the achievement of full Indonesian independence in late 1949. The surrender of the Japanese, the prosecution of war criminals and the re-establishment of Dutch authority are all covered. The role of Timorese in the Indonesian revolution and the activities of Timorese politicians in the Dutch ‘puppet state’ of Negara Indonesia Timur (NIT) are examined. The activities of social, religious and political groups are described. The reconstruction of Kupang, the role of the Church and the rajas, and the relationship with Portuguese Timor are discussed as well.

Chapter Six concerns the 1950s and 1960s. In 1950 the NIT was abolished and West Timor became a part of the Indonesian Republic as a component of the new province of Sunda Ketjil with Singaraja (Bali) as capital. In 1958 the province of NTT was established with Kupang as capital. This was a period of growing political activity. The important elections held in 1955 are considered. The Permesta rebellion is discussed also. A major part of the story for the 1960s concerns the PKI and its growth and subsequent destruction. The consolidation of the Church and the abolition of the kingdoms are discussed as well. Consideration is given also to the causes and effects of the ‘Revival movement’ that swept parts of West Timor in the late 1960s.

The Conclusion offers a brief summary of the history thus far, with special emphasis on the role of the rajas. Despite the abolition of the kingdoms the rajas have survived. Many have held government posts and other senior positions. Although the rajas no longer have any official powers they are likely to remain influential in West Timor.
Figure 1.
Statue of Timorese warrior from South Central Timor.
NTT Museum, Kupang.
Chapter One
Chapter One

The sandalwood trade and the partition of Timor by the Dutch and Portuguese

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and place into context the situation in West Timor up to the beginning of the twentieth century. The physical setting and the people of West Timor are described, as are the early sandalwood trade and the political situation on the island before the arrival of the Europeans. The impact of the Europeans’ arrival on the scene is outlined, including the establishment of the Christian religion in Timor. Some attention is then given to early connections between Timor and north Australia, a matter which may have had some bearing on the final issue to be considered here: the political division of the island by the Dutch and Portuguese.

The physical setting

Timor is one of the most easterly islands of the Indonesian archipelago. The name Timor (equivalent to the modern Indonesian timur, or east) was probably given to the island by early mariners from the more prosperous and populous western areas. Timor lies further south of the equator than most of Indonesia and the nearby island of Rote is the southern-most part of Indonesian territory. At a distance of around four hundred nautical miles Timor is relatively close to the Australian mainland, a fact which has affected both the geography and climate of the island.

Timor is a very rugged island, nearly 500 kilometres long and about 30,000 square kilometres in area. East Timor compromises a bit more than half of the island.\(^1\) Its interior is dominated by a series of mountain ranges. The tallest mountains are the Tatamailau in the east at 2,963 metres\(^2\) and the Mutis in the west with a height of 2,427 metres.\(^3\) According to legend the long, narrow island was formed from the

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\(^1\) The figures given are approximate as there is no agreement in the relevant literature. Estimates of the area of the island vary from 26,000 square kilometres to over 33,000 square kilometres; see *Ensiklopedi Indonesia*, Vol.6, p.3552; E. H. G. Dobby, *Southeast Asia*, p.258; Fingegeir Hioth, *Timor past and present*, p.1; and Geoffrey C. Gunn, *Timor Lorosae: 500 years*, p.12.


\(^3\) Ormeling, *The Timor problem*, p.31.
body of a crocodile, an animal still honoured and respected by many Timorese. According to geologists the mountains of Timor and the island itself were formed by the action of the Australian tectonic plate pushing forwards towards its Asian equivalent. The major soil type on the island is a variety of soft clay. Areas dominated by this clay are unsuitable for agriculture and Timorese farmers have historically concentrated their shifting cultivation in the more fertile highland regions rich in limestone and marine deposits. On the coastal plains there has been the opportunity for more intensive agriculture.

Owing to its position West Timor has an average rainfall among the lowest to be found in Indonesia. The short wet season in Timor, which comes with the north-westerly monsoons, is characterised by intense bursts of heavy rainfall which often cause ruinous soil erosion. The wide, rubble-strewn, dry creeks and rivers of Timor can become raging torrents. For most of the year, however, from about April to December, the island is very dry. During this period Timor is subjected to south-easterly winds which have travelled across the arid inland of the nearby Australian continent. Severe droughts often grip the island and the high velocity dry winds add to the soil erosion experienced during the wet season.

Cultivation on Timor has been mainly of the slash and burn variety with farmers moving on to new plots once the fertility of the land begins to decrease. Scarcity of water has made the population extremely dependent on the seasonal rains. If the monsoon rains fail to appear or come too early or too late a period of food shortage, the lapar biasa (usual hunger period), is sure to ensue. In most areas the restricted availability of water means that farmers cannot hope for more than one harvest per year so it is difficult to establish reserves of food. These conditions affect not only Timor, but much of the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), which is often

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5 In many of the kingdoms of Timor it was believed that the raja had a special relationship with crocodiles and human sacrifices made to the reptiles have been recorded; see Schulte Nordholt, *The political system of the Atoni...,* pp.322-323.
8 Ibid., pp.25-26.
referred to as a *daerah minus* (backward area). Laughing at adversity, many Timorese say that NTT really stands for *Nasib Tidak Tentu* (Uncertain Fate), or *Nusa Tetap Tertinggal* (The islands that remain left behind). On Timor’s coasts, however, there are some alluvial plains such as the Bena, the South Belu and the Oesau-Pariti where conditions are more favourable. Such areas have been able to support far denser populations than the interior. On the South Belu (Waiwiku-Wehale) plain, for instance, the more fertile soil and more regular rainfall has made double cropping the norm.

*The people of West Timor*

The majority of West Timor’s population belong to a group known as the Atoni. Their neighbours, the Tetun, call them the Dawan. Called *orang gunung* (mountain people) by some Kupang city dwellers, the Atoni practise shifting cultivation which was previously confined to the mountainous interior of Timor. The adoption of maize (introduced by the Dutch) as a staple crop appears to have triggered a great expansion of the Atoni population and although they still predominate in the highlands they are today found throughout most of West Timor. Descriptions of Timor as a thickly wooded island persisted until the nineteenth century, but the farming methods of the Atoni have led to great deforestation.

The second largest group in West Timor is the Tetun, known also as the Belu; a name given to them by the Atoni. The Tetun live mainly in the eastern part of West Timor and on the other side of the border in East Timor, where they are in the majority. The much less numerous Kemak and Marae (Bunak) peoples, who also inhabit both sides of the border area, are often lumped in with the Tetun, but there are substantial differences in the language, customs and even physical appearances of the three groups.

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9 Personal observations in Timor.
12 Fox, ‘The historical consequences...’, p.269.
The last group considered to be indigenous to West Timor is the Helon. The Helon originally lived in the area around Kupang Bay and it was a Helon raja who granted the Dutch the right to establish a base in the place where Kupang now stands. The presence of the Dutch did not prove advantageous for the Helon, however, as the more belligerent inhabitants of the interior who descended on Kupang to do battle with the Europeans eventually drove them from the area. Most Helon today live on the coast to the south of Kupang and on the nearby island of Semau.  

Apart from these indigenous groups there are numerous settlers from the surrounding islands such as Solor, Flores, Sumba, Sabu and Rote. Many of these immigrants were encouraged to settle in Timor by the Dutch. Ethnic Chinese traders have been established in West Timor since at least the beginning of the colonial period and Javanese and Bugis traders are to be found in many large towns also.

The early sandalwood trade

Early foreign accounts of Timor have one thing in common: they nearly all mention the trade in sandalwood. There are a number of species of sandalwood tree, but the variety that grows on Timor, *Santalum album*, or white sandalwood, is usually considered to be the most valuable. The fragrant wood is valued for making furniture and ornaments, while oil extracted from the wood is used in making perfume. Incense and powder made from sandalwood have long been used for devotional purposes by Hindus and Buddhists; while extracts made from sandalwood have been valued for many centuries for their curative qualities in India, China and Arabia. Until relatively recently they were an important component of western medicines also.

It is not known when the international trade in Timor sandalwood first began, but Oliver Wolters has speculated that wood from the island was being transported to entrepot ports in western Indonesia for subsequent trans-shipment to India from the

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15 In the West sandalwood oil was valued for its antiseptic qualities, but it was eventually replaced by sulpha drugs and penicillin; see Ormeling, *The Timor problem*..., pp.92-94. See also J. G. Vondra, *Timor journey*, p.6; and A. Chevallier, *The encyclopedia of medicinal plants*, p.264.
earliest centuries of the common era. One of the earliest references to Timor is that made by Chau Ju-Kua, the Chinese Inspector of Overseas Trade, who noted in 1225 that the island was rich in sandalwood. He also recorded that Timor was one of fifteen dependencies of the Javanese kingdom of Kediri. However, as with the claim for Majapahit suzerainty over Timor made in the *Nagarakertagama* of 1365 (mentioned in the Introduction), it is very unlikely that Kediri ever exercised any real authority in Timor.

Chinese records of the early Timor sandalwood trade, although few and brief, give the most thorough description up to that time of Timor and its inhabitants. According to a fourteenth century Chinese account, Timor had twelve trading ports and its own ruler. Local prices for meat and spirits were said to be reasonable and sandalwood was very abundant. It was purchased by barter with gold, silver, iron, porcelain and cloth. Not everything in Timor, however, pleased the Chinese chroniclers and it was noted that ‘The women are shameless. The chiefs of the tribes are gluttonous and fond of wine and lechery’. Furthermore, many of the traders later died of malaria and venereal disease contracted during their stay in Timor.

Other early Chinese records claim that the mountains of Timor were so covered by sandalwood trees that they were cut for firewood. There were said to be chiefs to whom the people turned to settle their disputes and a king who was treated with great respect. The king, who travelled with a large retinue, had always to be present when the merchants wished to barter with the people for sandalwood and the traders were required to pay daily taxes.

*The political situation on Timor before the arrival of the Europeans*

Despite claims made on behalf of the kingdoms of Kediri and Majapahit it appears that early Timor was not subject to foreign rule. Chinese, Javanese and other traders

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18 Rockhill, ‘Notes on the relations and trade of China...’, pp.257-259. Timor became notorious as a source of venereal disease and it is somewhat ironic that the sandalwood that first enticed the traders to Timor was used in making medicines for the treatment of gonorrhoea; see Chevallier, *The encyclopedia of medicinal plants*, p.264.
19 From the ‘Tung Hsi Yang K’au’ (1618), quoted in Groeneveldt, *Historical notes on Indonesia...*, pp.116-117.
had to deal with local authorities. In the early records cited above it is asserted that Timor had chiefs and at least one king.\footnote{There is some confusion over this point. In Groeneveldt’s translation of the ‘Tung Hsi Yang K’au’ it is clear that Timor had both chiefs and a king. In his translation of the earlier ‘Hsing-ch’a Sheng-lan’, however, he mentions that there are twelve ports, each under a chief. There is no mention of a king or any other ruler. Rockhill translates the same passage to read ‘There are twelve trading ports. It has a ruler’. Thus it is unclear whether the Chinese thought that Timor had only one ruler or if they thought that each port had its own chief. If each port had a chief was that person autonomous or subordinate to some greater ruler? See Groeneveldt, \textit{Historical notes on Indonesia}..., pp.116-117; and Rockhill, ‘Notes on the relations and trade of China...’, p.259.} The trade in sandalwood must have brought material benefits to these figures; for example, from the aforementioned daily payment of taxes. An early seventeenth century Dutch account of the Timor sandalwood trade represents tolls and dues paid to ‘the king and his prominent nobles’ as being the major cost involved in purchasing the wood. The price paid to the king’s subjects who actually cut and carted the wood was considered ‘ridiculously low’.\footnote{P. A. Tiele and J. A. Heeres, \textit{Bouwstoffen voor de geschiedenis der Nederlanders in den Malaischen Archipel}, The Hague, 1886-1895, p.101; quoted in Schulte Nordholt, \textit{The political system of the Atoni}..., p.161.} Those in power in Timor must have gained great wealth from their dealings in sandalwood with foreign traders. The increased wealth of the ‘king’ and his ‘nobles’ would have resulted in increased power.\footnote{Schulte Nordholt, \textit{The political system of the Atoni}..., pp.50-51.} The trade would have particularly benefited those areas most easily visited by the traders, that is, near beaches, bays or river mouths. One of those areas was the South Belu plain near the mouth of the Benain River, occupied by the Tetun. This area was the centre of one of the most powerful of the Timorese kingdoms: Waiwiku-Wehale. As stated in the Introduction, most other Timorese kingdoms trace their roots back to Wehale or had some other connection with it.

The Tetun are thought to have been the last major group to arrive in Timor before the coming of the Europeans. According to one story they came from the island Seram in Maluku, but the most popular version traces their origin to a place known as Sina Mutin Malaka (White China Melaka). Although the significance of the words Sina Mutin is obscure, Malaka is generally taken to be a reference to modern-day Melaka, whose name was previously used to refer to the whole of the Malayan Peninsula.\footnote{Parera, \textit{Sejarah}..., pp.48, 140.} The Tetun may have landed on Timor’s north coast, which has two of the region’s best harbours (Atapupu and Gurita),\footnote{Ormerling, \textit{The Timor problem}..., p.69.} or they may have landed in the south on the
South Belu plain, the area which became the centre of Tetun power. Either way, they established their hegemony over central Timor from coast to coast and then spread out into the east and west.  

The fertility of the soil and more regular rainfall of the South Belu plain in comparison to other parts of West Timor put the Tetun in an enviable position. In terms of food production the South Belu plain is a wealthy area. This advantage must have played some role in helping the Tetun to reach the ascendant position in Timorese politics. The probable use of the Benain River mouth as a staging point for the sandalwood trade is a likely factor also. Nevertheless, these issues are not highlighted in Tetun legend and their success in achieving a pre-eminent position is attributed to superior weapons, the astute use of marriage as a means of forging political alliances, and the possession of supernatural powers.

The ruler of the Tetun settlement at Wehale had the title of Maromak Oan (Child of the Luminous, or Child of God) and was said to have great powers. He could cause it to rain or not rain. He could determine victory or defeat on the field of battle. And he could cause the spread of disease as well as cause it to stop. The Maromak Oan was the supreme power among the Tetun, but he did not bother himself with the day to day ruling of his kingdom. He was far too exalted for that and his only ‘duties’ were to eat, drink and sleep. For the other tasks required to be done to run a kingdom and an empire he had a number of helpers, the most important of whom were the liurais. The liurais were said to be ‘brothers’ and were all ‘sons’ of the Maromak Oan. They functioned like kings and were the Maromak Oan’s main representatives. There were two liurais who represented the Maromak Oan in the area now known as East Timor and there was one at Wehale itself. There was also the liurai Sonbai who reigned over the majority of the Atoni in West Timor. Wehale was the ritual centre for all Timor and received tribute from many of the other kingdoms on the island. There was thus a degree of political unity in Timor at this time, but this unity was undermined by the military actions and political manoeuvres of the Europeans, who first arrived in the region in the early sixteenth century.

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25 Fox, ‘The paradox of powerlessness...’, p.3.
26 Parera, Sejarah..., pp.149-150.
27 Ibid., pp.149-160.
**Arrival of the Europeans**

Before the arrival of Europeans on the island much of Timor’s sandalwood was transported to the great Malay entrepot port Melaka, from where it was trans-shipped to India, China and elsewhere. In 1511 the Portuguese conquered Melaka and in c.1518 Duarte Barbosa wrote from there the first known European account of Timor. Barbosa noted that the island had ‘its own independent King’ and that an abundance of sandalwood was brought from Timor by Melakan and Javanese ships. He noted that honey, slaves, wax and a certain amount of silver were brought from there also.\(^{28}\)

Although it is probable that Portuguese ships ventured to Timor soon after conquering Melaka there is no evidence that this occurred. The first documented European visit to Timor was that made by the *Victoria*, the last surviving ship of Ferdinand Magellan’s fleet, which was then on its way to completing the first circumnavigation of the globe. On 26 January 1522 the *Victoria* arrived on Timor’s north coast where it obtained supplies. Antonio Pigafetta from the ship noted in his journal that ‘On the other side of this island are four brothers, its kings. The names of the habitations of the four kings are: Oibich, Lichsana, Suai and Cabanazza. Oibich is the largest town’.\(^{29}\) Oibich has been identified as Waiwiku (Waiwiku-Wehale), the seat of the Maromak Oan. Suai and Camenassa are kingdoms in East Timor, while Lichsana might have been a reference to Insana, in West Timor, or Liquica, on the north coast of East Timor.\(^{30}\)

The visit of the Spanish ship was of little further consequence, but in 1561 the Portuguese made their first attempt at permanent settlement in the region when Dominican friars built a wooden fortress on Solor island, just north of Timor. This fortress was rebuilt in stone in 1566 and offered some protection from Muslim

\(^{28}\) M. L. Dames, *The book of Duarte Barbosa*, Vol.2, pp.195-196. The first three items are well documented, but there is doubt about silver coming from Timor. It seems that this was an invention of later transcribers of Barbosa’s work; see *ibid*. The slave trade was well established in the Indonesian archipelago before the arrival of the Europeans. Endemic warfare on Timor provided a steady supply of captives who could be sold into slavery. The Timor slave trade is mentioned in much of the secondary literature; see, for example, Ormeling, *The Timor problem*..., p.180. A number of useful articles concerning the slave trade in the Netherlands Indies can be found in Anthony Reid (ed.), *Slavery, bondage and dependence in Southeast Asia*.


\(^{30}\) See Schulte Nordholt, *The political system of the Atoni*..., p.160. See also Fox, ‘The historical consequences...’; p.264.
raiders for local Christian converts. A settlement grew up around the fort populated by local Christians and the offspring of Portuguese soldiers, sailors and sandalwood traders who had come from Macau and Melaka and married local women.

During the first Dutch expedition to the Timor area in 1613 the commander Apollonius Scotte made an agreement with the Helon ruler of the Kupang area. This agreement allowed the Dutch to establish a settlement at Kupang Bay and to participate in the local sandalwood trade. It was to be the first of many agreements, contracts and treaties that the Dutch were to conclude with local rulers on Timor and the surrounding islands. The Dutch did not take up the Kupang raja’s offer immediately, however, as Scotte had managed to seize and occupy the Portuguese fortress on Solor, which was renamed Fort Henricus.

The Portuguese and their local allies then moved a short distance from Solor and settled at Larantuka, on the eastern tip of Flores island. From there they continued their sandalwood trading activities. The Dutch were not secure on Solor, however, and the island and its fort changed hands between the Dutch and Portuguese a number of times during the next forty-odd years. It was sometimes left abandoned altogether. Meanwhile, the Dutch had to suffer the annoyance of two of their commanders from Fort Henricus deserting to Larantuka. The first died soon after, but the second, Jan de Hornay in 1629, became an important figure amongst the Eurasian community in Larantuka. These Eurasians were commonly known to the Dutch as the Swarte Portugeezen, the Black Portuguese, but were also called Larantuqueiros, or Topasses. Although the Topasses claimed allegiance to the Portuguese they in effect became an important third force in the fight for the control of the Timor sandalwood trade.

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31 Fox, ‘The paradox of powerlessness…’, p.5.
33 A. Scotte, quoted in Schulte Nordholt, The political system of the Atoni..., p.167. A detailed account, based on Dutch records, of the seventeenth century Timor sandalwood trade can be found in Arend de Roever, De jacht op sandelhout: De VOC en de tweedeling van Timor in de zeventiende eeuw.
34 Boxer, The Topasses of Timor, pp.2-3.
While the Portuguese remained stationed at Larantuka and the Dutch were precariously based on Solor, the Topasses established themselves on Timor itself at Lifao, in the present-day East Timor enclave Ambeno-Oecusse. Portuguese traders used this port also. The Dutch in the meantime had become increasingly powerful elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago and in 1641 had replaced the Portuguese in Melaka. In Timor, however, the Portuguese remained active and in 1642 they combined with the Topasses to send a military force into the interior of the island. At first they met and subdued the liurai Sonbai; they then marched on to Wehale, which was completely destroyed. The liurai Sonbai and the Maromak Oan are both said to have converted to Christianity.36

The system of alliances and political unity based around Wehale was greatly weakened by these actions. Alliances in Timor had always been ephemeral and warfare endemic. Headhunting, which had important social, political and ceremonial functions, was a constant feature of warfare in Timor.37 With the ascendancy of the Dutch, Portuguese and Topasses there were more opportunities for small kingdoms to seek greater independence by allying themselves with the newcomers. After the 1642 destruction of Wehale independent action for the small states was even easier. However, while a Timorese political hegemony based on Wehale had disappeared, the kingdom itself did not. It continued to exist and it was not until 1906 that a Dutch military expedition forced its way into Wehale and made the former power centre submit to foreign might once again. In the meantime, the role of Wehale as a spiritual centre, symbol of unity and traditional place of origin for many kingdoms of Timor was never forgotten and the kingdom retains a special place among the Timorese until the present day.

The Dutch finally established themselves in Kupang in 1653. There they built a fortress named Concordia that was to be their stronghold in West Timor for nearly three hundred years. The site is now occupied by the Indonesian military. In their early days in Kupang the Dutch were frequently attacked by some of the local

37 For more information on the importance of headhunting, see A. McWilliam, ‘Severed heads that germinate the state: History, politics and headhunting in southwest Timor’, in J. Hoskins (ed.), Headhunting and the social imagination in Southeast Asia; and P. Middelkoop, Head hunting in Timor and its historical implications.
kings and by combined Portuguese-Topass forces also. In 1749 the Dutch and their local supporters successfully fought off such an attack in the Battle of Penfui. The Dutch were never seriously challenged in their possession of Kupang again. The Topasses stayed on in Lifao, but resisted continued Portuguese attempts to impose their rule on the settlement. After several failed attempts to take control of Lifao the Portuguese removed themselves in 1769 to Dili, which then became their official seat of authority on Timor. The island was then divided into three spheres of influence: the Dutch in the west, the Topasses in the centre, and the Portuguese in the east. The Topasses often forged alliances by marrying into local rulers’ families. The Dutch and the Portuguese both continued to extend their alliances on the island by making contracts and agreements with the rulers. In 1756 Special Commissioner Johannes Andreas Paravicini of the Dutch East India Company concluded treaties with a number of Timorese rulers and some from surrounding islands, but in reality the Dutch had merely nominal control outside of Kupang. It was similar for the Portuguese in Dili.

During the Napoleonic Wars much of the Netherlands Indies was occupied by the British. They were in West Timor from 1812 to 1816. During this time the Portuguese planted their flag and began collecting taxes in the port of Atapupu. This settlement, close to the present central border in Timor, was claimed by the Dutch also, so when they resumed control the Dutch Resident in Kupang, Jacobus Arnoldus Hazaart, re-occupied the settlement for the Dutch. This was just one of a number of disputes between the two colonial powers in Timor which provided impetus for a formal settlement of their possessions on the island, although this was still many years away.

38 Until the beginning of the ‘pacification’ campaign in the early twentieth century Dutch control was effectively limited to the zespalen gebied (the six palen area) around Kupang Bay. One pal was roughly 1.5 kilometres. Beyond a distance of six palen from the coast the Timorese were in full control; see Ormeling, *The Timor problem*, p.117.


Hazaart had two other problems: unrest on the nearby island of Rote, and a lack of security for Kupang, which was surrounded by large uninhabited areas. Hazaart solved these problems by transferring the restive Rotenese to the plains near Kupang. Sabunese immigrants settled here also, although on a much smaller scale. These people established successful agricultural communities which provided a buffer for Kupang against raids from the interior. The settlers provided a ready source of soldiers also to meet any challenge from the Timorese kingdoms which still opposed the Dutch. Incursions were made on the Kupang area by forces sent by the *liurai* Sonbai, whose power had been diminished since the arrival of the Europeans and the Topasses, but who was still a force to be reckoned with. There were incursions also from the central Timor kingdom of Amanuban. Rotenese troops were used in military actions against Sonbai (whom the Dutch usually styled as Keizer) and Amanuban in 1847, 1849 and 1857.

After these actions the Dutch government in West Timor, as in the rest of the Netherlands Indies at that time, was constrained by a policy of non-interference. There was little further military action to speak of for the rest of the nineteenth century. From 1869 all of the military strength in West Timor, including that in Kupang, was removed. In 1883 the garrison in Kupang was restored, but the interior of Timor was not effectively brought under Dutch control until the beginning of military patrols in 1906.

**Establishment of the Church**

The Portuguese came to the Indonesian archipelago in search of profit, but also in search of souls. It was ‘their desire to plant the Catholic faith in the new lands they discovered’, and for this purpose Dominican friars and Jesuit priests often travelled with the Portuguese ships. The Dominicans were the first to travel to the Timor region and they built the first church in the area within the stone fort on the island of

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41 Fox, *Harvest of the palm*..., pp.138-148. Rotenese farmers eventually spread throughout much of the interior. Because the Rotenese took readily to western education and generally accepted Christianity, they in many ways became the favoured people of the Dutch in Timor and were heavily utilised in the administrative bureaucracy also. The Rotenese on Timor today are still active in agriculture, government and politics.


43 ‘Militaire memorie...1930’, in *Indonesia: memories*...
Solor. For the first twenty years of its existence the captain in charge of the fort was nominated by the Dominican Prior in Melaka.

When the Portuguese were forced to leave Solor following the Dutch attack in 1613, they settled in nearby Larantuka under the leadership of the Dominican Augustinho de Magdaleno. The real power in Larantuka, however, was the Topasses. The Topasses rejected direction from the Portuguese crown, but tolerated the Dominicans, who maintained a similarly independent stance. As stated above, the presence of the Europeans and Topasses had weakened the old alliances on Timor centred around Wehale. One result of this was that a number of rulers had converted to Catholicism, the first being the ‘Queen’ of Mena, on Timor’s north coast, in 1640. Mena was then destroyed by Muslims from Sulawesi, apparently in concert with the ruler of Wehale, and it was this action which inspired the sacking of that kingdom in 1642. Along with the soldiers who marched across the island were three Dominican friars who christened the liurai Sonbai, the Maromak Oan and several other rulers.

There is no doubt that these conversions were primarily politically motivated and the old religion of the Timorese remained strong with the majority. The Topasses, however, were more strongly attached to the Catholic religion and it is revealing that while they would not tolerate Portuguese appointed officials in their settlement in Lifao, the ‘men of the cloth’ were always welcome. When the Englishman William Dampier visited the settlement in 1699 he saw only two Europeans in the place; one was an ‘Inhabitant of the Town’, the other was ‘the Padre’.

Even amongst the Topasses the Catholic religion was made to conform to local adat (custom). In Larantuka the Dominicans had established a Confreria de Rosario, or Brotherhood of the Rosary, comprised of laymen who were to assist the priests. As Portuguese power in the region become confined to the eastern end of Timor island the Catholics on Flores had to rely on periodic visits of priests from Timor. At one stage there was no visit for eighty years. The Catholics of Larantuka were then

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44 Webb, *Palms and the cross...*, p.11.
46 Schulte Nordholt, *The political system of the Atoni...*, pp.163-166.
protected by the local raja; and the devotional objects left behind by the Portuguese, the chalices, statues, rosaries and the like, as well as remnants of old Portuguese flags and armour, came to be considered as *pusaka*, or magical heirlooms. The Confreria kept the old Catholic traditions alive and rejected later attempts by Dutch Protestant missionaries to introduce their own variant of the Christian religion.\(^{48}\)

The Dutch East India Company was less concerned than its Portuguese counterparts to bring Christianity to the Timorese. A Protestant minister was with the Dutch in Timor as early as 1614, but his duties were confined to ministering to the servants of the Company. For the following two hundred years there were few resident ministers in Kupang and the most that the Christian community there could look forward to was the visit of a preacher from Batavia (Jakarta)\(^{49}\) every few years. In 1701, however, the Church opened the first school in Kupang and it helped establish Christianity in the community. In 1739 the Raja of Thie on the island of Rote accepted Christianity and others later followed suit. In 1756 six hundred people on the island of Sabu became Christians. Schools were established on both islands also.\(^{50}\)

In the 1820s the Netherlands Missionary Society became active in Timor and tried to revitalise the neglected Christian congregations. With insufficient staff and facilities, however, there was but little progress made with the Christianising mission. In the 1850s and 1860s the Missionary Society in Timor handed over most of its responsibilities to the Indische Kerk, the Protestant state church of Indonesia formed in 1817.\(^{51}\) Under the Indische Kerk for the remainder of the nineteenth century the

\(^{48}\) Webb, *Palms and the cross...*, pp.12-14. A somewhat similar situation occurred in the Portuguese enclave of Noemuti inside Dutch West Timor. According to tradition Catholicism first came to the area in 1642. The Portuguese pastors gave religious statues to each of the eighteen *suku*, or clans, of the district. Each Easter the people of Noemuti visit each of the houses where these statues are kept and then go to church. The church itself has been built to conform with local *adat* also, having inside eighteen pillars, one for each clan. Don Antonius Willibrodus da Costa and Don Yoseph S. da Costa, interview Noemuti, 25 June 2000.

\(^{49}\) The Dutch used the name Batavia throughout the colonial period. The name Jakarta was commonly used by Indonesians and others from outside Indonesia from the Second World War onwards, and that policy is followed in this thesis also.

\(^{50}\) Frank L. Cooley (ed.), *Benih yang tumbuh XI: Memperkenalkan Gereja Masehi Injili Timor*, pp.30-33.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., pp.36-39.
existing congregations in Kupang, Rote and Sabu were maintained, but there was little new work.52

In the meantime there had been an agreement between the Portuguese and the Dutch in 1859 (discussed below) to define their areas of interest on the island of Timor. The Portuguese conceded that most of what is now West Timor should be considered Dutch territory. However, as many of the people near the border area had adopted Catholicism the Portuguese demanded that they be allowed to continue to practise their faith. The Dutch agreed to this condition and until the present day the border area of West Timor is overwhelmingly Catholic. In 1883 Atapupu became the official centre for the Catholic mission in West Timor. A number of pastors were appointed to various areas and schools were established also. The government, however, would not allow the Catholic mission to operate outside of the eastern areas of West Timor. The rest of the territory was retained for the Protestants.53

By the beginning of the twentieth century there were only small isolated Christian communities in West Timor. After the ‘pacification’ of the interior the Church was established there also. It was not until well after the Second World War, however, that it could be said that the majority of the West Timorese had accepted Christianity. Of the other mainstream religions there are only few local adherents. There are some Balinese Hindus and some ethnic Chinese Buddhists and Confucianists in West Timor. Most of the territory’s minority Muslims are outsiders also: government workers, traders or fishers. There have, however, been Muslim communities on some of the surrounding islands such as Solor, Pantar and Alor since the time of the arrival of the Europeans. People from these islands and elsewhere have maintained small Muslim communities in large towns such as Kupang since the earliest days.

**Early connections with north Australia**

As stated earlier, Timor is relatively close to the Australian mainland, being only 400 nautical miles from the Northern Territory capital Darwin. This proximity made Darwin a natural choice as the operations base for the 1999 UN mission to East

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52 Ibid., pp.43-47.
Timor, but connections between Timor and north Australia go back much further than that.\textsuperscript{54}

Some of the earliest visitors to the north Australian coast were the Macassans. They came from south Sulawesi with their main port in Makassar and visited both the Northern Territory and the Kimberley coast of Western Australia to search for trepang. In most accounts of the Macassans’ voyaging Timor does not figure highly. However, there is some evidence that Timor was visited by many of the Macassans travelling to north Australia, and that some of them were actually based on the island.\textsuperscript{55} When the Macassans first visited north Australia is uncertain, but the earliest known record is a Dutch report of 1754 which also mentions Timor. Therein it is stated that Australia was visited ‘now and then’ from Timor and Makassar for trepang.\textsuperscript{56} In 1846 people from Timor were at the north Australian settlement of Port Essington;\textsuperscript{57} and in 1869 when surveyors arrived from Adelaide to lay out the settlement which became Darwin they met two shipwrecked Macassans who requested to be transported to Kupang, where one of them had a wife and children.\textsuperscript{58}

The Macassans and the Australian trepang industry were certainly well known in Kupang. The British explorer Matthew Flinders got information about the Macassans there in 1803,\textsuperscript{59} while Philip Parker King in 1818 met the Macassan ‘rajah’ Dramah in Kupang who told him that he regularly visited the Northern Territory.\textsuperscript{60} Also, although Makassar was the acknowledged market port for trepang, a north

\textsuperscript{54} For more information on early north Australia-Timor connections than can be provided here, see Steven Farram, ‘Some early connections between Timor and north Australia’, \textit{Journal of Northern Territory history}, No.11, 2000. For information on Darwin-Timor connections in the twentieth century, see Julia Martinez, ‘The “Malay” community in Pre-War Darwin’, \textit{Queensland Review}, Vol.6, No.2, November 1999.

\textsuperscript{55} The Macassans consisted mainly of Makassarese and Bugis, but always included other groups, such as the Bajo. The Bajo had settlements in the Timor region from the early eighteenth century; see J. J. Fox, ‘Maritime communities in the Timor and Arafura region: some historical and anthropological perspectives’, a paper prepared for the conference ‘Neighbours at sea: The shared interests of Australia and Indonesia in the Timor and Arafura Seas’, Darwin, 1-2 November 1995, p.8.

\textsuperscript{56} Charles Campbell Macknight, \textit{The voyage to Marege’: Macassan trepangers in northern Australia}, p.95.


\textsuperscript{59} M. Flinders, \textit{A voyage to Terra Australis: Undertaken for the purpose of completing the discovery of that vast country}, Vol.1, p.257.

\textsuperscript{60} P. P. King, \textit{Narrative of a survey of the intertropical and western coasts of Australia}, Vol.1, pp.135-140.
Queensland shipment of the holothurian was sold in Kupang in 1827 for what was considered to be a very good price.\(^{61}\) The Macassans continued to visit the Northern Territory until they were banned by the South Australian government in 1906.

Apart from the Macassans there were many others who could have crossed the sea from Timor to Australia. It is very likely that some Chinese or Javanese sandalwood traders bound for Timor were blown off course and landed in north Australia at a very early date, but there is no evidence for such a visit. The Portuguese are likely to have been early visitors also. It has been suggested that the Portuguese made slave-raiding trips from Timor to Melville and Bathurst islands.\(^{62}\) Again, there is no record of this ever taking place. The honour of the earliest recorded voyages between north Australia and Timor thus falls to the Dutch, who from the early seventeenth century were sending exploratory missions to the nearby continent. In 1636 the *Cleen Amsterdam* and the *Wesel* were sailing off the Arnhem Land coast and on the return journey did some exploring at Timor.\(^{63}\) This is the first recorded voyage from Australia to Timor. In 1705 the Dutch made the first known journey in the opposite direction when the *Nova Hollandia*, the *Vossenbosch* and the *Waijer* stopped at Kupang from Java en route for north Australia. After three months on the Northern Territory coast the ships returned to Java having discovered little new. As the various Dutch expeditions to north Australia had failed to reveal that any profit could be gained from the place the Dutch gradually lost interest.\(^{64}\)

The Dutch, however, were not the only ones who came to explore the Australian coast. These other explorers seem to have caused the Dutch some anxiety. In 1699, as mentioned above, the Englishman William Dampier visited Kupang and Lifao after touching on the north-west coast of Australia. In Kupang he was greeted with suspicion by the Dutch who suspected that he had come to spy on their ‘Trade and Strength’. At first they refused to even let him replenish his supply of water, but finally relented. Even then Dampier and his men were not allowed to land and the

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\(^{63}\) J. P. Sigmond and L. H. Zuiderbaan, *Dutch discoveries of Australia: Shipwrecks, treasures and early voyages off the west coast*, p.71.
water was sent to them on board. In 1770 Captain James Cook avoided landing at Kupang because he feared shabby treatment as he knew that ‘the Dutch look upon all Europeans with a Jealous Eye’. Instead he landed at nearby Sabu, which unknown to Cook was also occupied by the Dutch. After some interference from the Dutch representative he was allowed to procure supplies.

In the early nineteenth century there was a great number of explorers visiting both north Australia and Timor. In 1801 Frenchman Nicholas Baudin left the north-west coast of Australia for Timor to procure water. From Kupang he sent official letters back to France, but while he was there twelve of his crew died of malaria and dysentery. Another eleven died soon after he left. In 1803 Baudin repeated the same routine. He sent more correspondence to France and had his ships repaired and reprovisioned. While in Kupang Baudin learnt also that Matthew Flinders had visited there just one month beforehand.

Flinders had been exploring the north coast when he met a group of Macassans off Arnhem Land. It was the first recorded meeting of Macassans and Europeans in Australian waters. With supplies running low Flinders then headed for Kupang, where he was also able to despatch mail for England. He was not impressed with the town and thought it an unhealthy place. He was right and several of his crew died of dysentery soon after leaving. Flinders was hospitably received by the Dutch in Kupang, but he could not help but note the small area around Fort Concordia which could truly be said to be under Dutch control. Flinders was convinced that maintenance of the settlement could bring the Dutch no advantage other than to exclude other nations. Flinders stopped at Kupang one more time in October 1803 as he was homeward-bound for England. His ship was in urgent need of repairs, but Kupang lacked the facilities so he pushed on. Finally, he was forced to stop at French controlled Mauritius. With France and England at war he was taken prisoner and spent six years captive on the island.

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65 Dampier, A voyage to New Holland..., pp.156-160.
68 Flinders, A voyage to Terra Australis..., pp.233, 250-257, 348.
It was then the turn of Louis de Freycinet. He had visited Australia and Timor with Baudin and in 1817 revisited some of the same spots. In Kupang the limited supplies available were stowed on board and letters left to be forwarded to Europe. Several of the crew caught dysentery while in port and later died. In Dili he and his wife Rose were presented by the Governor with a young Timorese slave boy as a parting gift. The boy, christened Joseph Antonio, survived to live several years in Paris, but died of tuberculosis at the age of sixteen.\(^{69}\)

In 1818 Philip Parker King set out to complete the survey begun by Flinders. When he ran short of supplies on the Australian north coast he steered for Kupang, where meat and vegetables proved to be readily available. The Governor himself described Kupang as a ‘poor place’ and King opined that the Dutch government intended to keep it so. High port charges and the requirement to obtain permission to trade from Batavia or Ambon were disincentives. Like Flinders before him, King concluded that the Dutch aim in Timor was simply to possess the territory so that no other nation could do so.\(^{70}\) In 1819 King was in Kupang again and picked up some well needed supplies, as well as having letters sent to London. King learnt also of the latest visit by de Freycinet as well as discovering that the crew of the Frederick, whose wreck he had seen at Cape Flinders, had made it into Kupang.\(^{71}\) Kupang may have been a ‘poor place’, but it had a multitude of uses for passing travellers.

The explorers were not the only visitors to Timor. The island was frequented by passing European traders and whalers also. During the British interregnum it seems that this traffic increased in West Timor.\(^{72}\) The local merchants welcomed the trade and government officials were apparently glad to receive visitors in order to break the monotony of service in their isolated post, but there was not much done to encourage mariners to stop at Kupang. The facilities available were poor and provisions were limited. Kupang and Dili were both noted as unhealthy places. There were bureaucratic barriers to trade in West Timor and many visitors left with the

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\(^{69}\) M. Bassett, Realms and islands: The world voyage of Rose de Freycinet in the corvette Uranie 1817-1820, pp.2-3, 83-109; and R. de Freycinet (trans. and ed. M. S. Riviere), A woman of courage: The journal of Rose de Freycinet on her voyage around the world 1817-1820, pp.54, 62.

\(^{70}\) King, Narrative of a survey..., pp.126-129, 133.

\(^{71}\) Ibid., pp.324-329.

\(^{72}\) William Thorn, Memoir of the conquest of Java; with the subsequent operations of the British forces in the oriental archipelago, p.316.
impression that the Dutch would rather that their little settlement was forgotten by the rest of the world. In the 1820s, however, the British became convinced of the need to establish a settlement in northern Australia in order to stake a more permanent claim to the area and Timor was the obvious place for the settlers to seek supplies.

The first settlement was at Fort Dundas on Melville Island in 1824, but it did not live up to expectations, so in 1827 another site was chosen on the mainland at Raffles Bay. As soon as Fort Dundas was established a ship was sent to Kupang to purchase supplies and a regular traffic was maintained for the life of the settlements.73 The British were motivated in building the settlements out of fear that other powers, such as the French or Dutch, may have their eye on north Australia also. The Dutch it seems were just as concerned as the British about the motives of their new neighbours. In 1826 the retiring Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies, Baron van der Capellen, remarked that Timor had been of little importance to the government, but that the island had untouched resources. He went on: ‘Time will shew what influence the establishment of our neighbours on Melville Island will have on our eastern possessions’.74 The Dutch, however, need not have worried as in 1829 both Fort Dundas and Fort Wellington were abandoned.

A matter of some concern for the Dutch in Timor was unauthorised trade. Naturally they wished to collect their port dues and so on, but they desired also to prevent the importation of guns and gunpowder. These items were always in demand with the Timorese. Some shipwrecked English sailors who reached a point not far from Kupang in 1791 found that the locals were most keen to buy cartridges and powder.75 Years later King formed the opinion that although the Timorese seemed to be favourably inclined to Europeans, their ‘thirst for powder’ could induce them to ‘commit any mischievous act to obtain it’.76 To the discomfort of the Dutch there were others who were willing to satisfy this ‘thirst’. Flinders, for example, had noted the presence of an American vessel in Kupang Bay during his visit. It had been

74 ‘Speech of the Baron van der Capellen, on resigning the government of Netherland’s India’, in J. H. Moor (ed.), *Notices of the Indian Archipelago and adjacent countries*, p.142.
75 George Hamilton, *A voyage around the world in His Majesty’s frigate Pandora*, p.134.
trading for sandalwood and bees wax which it bartered for with a variety of goods, including muskets.\textsuperscript{77} The British from the first settlements in north Australia travelled to Timor to buy goods only and there was no official trade. There were, however, instances when the settlements’ supply vessels were known to be trading in Timor unofficially.\textsuperscript{78} Moreover, members of the crew of some of the British survey ships operating in the region suggested that the best method of conducting trade with the Netherlands Indies was smuggling.\textsuperscript{79} Such trade or smuggling would likely have involved guns and powder. In 1837 Lieutenant Lushington was sent to Timor on the \textit{Lynher} to purchase horses for an exploratory expedition in the Kimberley region of north-west Western Australia led by George Grey. Lushington concluded his bargains by ‘exchanging muskets for horse flesh’\textsuperscript{80}

The British in the meantime had not got over their fears that the French or Dutch might have designs on north Australia. Accordingly, in 1838, a new settlement was established at Port Essington and like its predecessors it turned to Timor for supplies. The founder and first commander of the settlement, Gordon Bremer, reported that the Dutch seemed well disposed to the British, but his private intelligence was that the Dutch were in fact extremely jealous of the new settlement.\textsuperscript{81} Supply ships for the settlement and visitors to Port Essington, such as the British survey vessels, regularly travelled to Timor to purchase their wants, but in 1849 the north coast was left abandoned yet again. Buffaloes and ponies were left behind and still live where the settlement was located on the Cobourg Peninsula. They are a living legacy of Port Essington’s trade with Timor.

\textsuperscript{77} Flinders, \textit{A voyage to Terra Australis...}, p.256.
\textsuperscript{78} Watson, \textit{Historical records of Australia}, Series III. Vol.VI, pp.659, 711.
\textsuperscript{80} Hugh Edwards, \textit{Kimberley: Dreaming to diamonds}, p.18. After spending some time in Kupang, Lushington was informed that he could more easily obtain ponies in Rote. There he found that the people were keen to trade for muskets and gunpowder. The trade was officially sanctioned, but with a very high duty on each musket imported. Grey recorded that ‘Arms and gunpowder are no longer considered contraband’, but it is unclear whether this was true for Timor as well as Rote; see George Grey, \textit{Journals of two expeditions of discovery in North-West and Western Australia, during the years 1837, 38 and 39}, Vol.1, pp.68, 91, 117-119. Smiths in Rote became famed for their skill in gun manufacture and home-made guns from Rote remain a source of (illegal) guns in West Timor in the modern-day; see Pos Kupang, 16 July 2001.
\textsuperscript{81} Peter Spillett, \textit{Forsaken settlement: An illustrated history of Victoria, Port Essington, North Australia, 1838-1849}, pp.35-37.
Despite the failed settlements the north still attracted interest and in 1855 the North Australian Expedition under Augustus Gregory left Sydney by ship for the Victoria River, in what is now the Northern Territory. After Gregory began the long land journey eastwards a ship left for Kupang under the command of Thomas Baines to purchase more supplies. The North Australia Expedition opened up much new land and was considered a success. More expeditions followed. South Australia then successfully lobbied to have the Northern Territory transferred to itself and in 1864 a new settlement in the north was begun at Escape Cliffs. It was a failure and was abandoned in 1866, but during its short life the settlement was in regular contact with Kupang, from where it gained supplies and received and sent its mail.

It was imperative that South Australia’s occupation of the Northern Territory proceed as the land had already been sold, so in 1869 a new survey team arrived at the present site of Darwin and a permanent settlement on the north Australian coast was finally achieved. As with all the previous settlements Darwin looked to Timor, and Kupang in particular, to help augment its supplies, but the new town developed quickly, especially after the completion of the Overland Telegraph line in 1872, and Timor soon ceased to be of vital importance. Apart from the use in north Australia of pearl divers recruited from Kupang, there was essentially little further contact between the two areas until the beginning of the Second World War.

The small trade brought to Timor by passing explorers, whalers, and settlers in north Australia was welcomed by the merchants of Dili and Kupang. In William Dampier’s time, however, visitors were not welcome in Dutch West Timor and James Cook had reservations about visiting the place in the 1770s. In the early nineteenth century, on the other hand, the many visitors to Kupang expressed great satisfaction with the reception they received from government officials. Nevertheless, there was a lurking

83 After various misadventures in the Netherlands Indies, Baines returned to Australia too late to link up with the main party, which completed the expedition without the help of Kupang supplies; see Braddon, *Thomas Baines...*, pp.131-145. In 1862 John McDouall Stuart succeeded in reaching Van Diemen Gulf from Adelaide. This expedition made no recourse to Timor; see Powell, *Far country...*, p.71. Both of these expeditions help to show that while contact with Timor may have been useful for explorers of north Australia, it was not essential.
suspicion that they were not really welcomed from the highest levels. The Portuguese and the Dutch were rightly suspicious of each other in Timor, but they both feared that other powers may have had their eyes on the island also.\textsuperscript{85} Apart from any strategic value the island may have been perceived as possessing, there was a long-held belief that the island was rich in gold and other minerals. Such beliefs have proved to be unfounded.\textsuperscript{86} Another concern was that the European colonists’ lack of control of the hinterland made it easy for foreign traders to import guns and powder. The Dutch in particular were worried that this would only make it more difficult for them to have influence in the interior. These matters were an undoubted stimulus to a growing feeling on Timor that it was time for the two European claimants to do something about formalising their claims on the island. One of the first concerns was to establish mutually agreed borders.

\textit{The partition of the island by the Dutch and Portuguese}

The Dutch and the Portuguese first clashed in the Timor region in 1613, but the initial attempt to formalise their possessions on the island was not made until a treaty was agreed to in 1859. A final settlement was not reached until 1916, but the present borders are the same ones agreed to at that time. West Timor, as outlined above, is now part of the province of Nusa Tenggara Timur. The province’s capital, Kupang, is the major city in the Indonesian half of the island. Dili is the capital of East Timor, which consists of the whole eastern half of the island. Atauro island, off the coast near Dili, and the small uninhabited island of Jaco, at the extreme eastern end of

\textsuperscript{85} This was one of the motivations for the first treaty between the Dutch and the Portuguese to settle the border question in 1859. When the treaty was being negotiated a certain Mr. Baud (probably J. C. Baud, a former Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies and Minister of Colonies) commented that ‘If this treaty is disapproved, then doubts will resurface, and we are likely then to see enacted the fable of the two dogs and the bone’. In 1893 a new treaty was signed by the two parties which included a declaration whereby they offered first preference to the other side if they should ever consider parting with their Timor possessions; see Heyman, \textit{De Timor Tractaten...}, pp.41-42, 72. Despite repeated denials rumours persisted that the Portuguese were considering selling their half of the island.

\textsuperscript{86} The presence of gold in Timor was mentioned by Pigafetta in 1522. Rumours of great gold and copper deposits persisted in Timor for centuries. King mentioned it in 1818 and concluded that the Dutch were keen to keep ‘the world in ignorance of the importance and riches of Timor’. The naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace reported that the mining engineer Mr. Geach had been employed by the Portuguese to discover copper in their territory. Although Geach did discover some copper and gold, he reported in 1861 that neither were present in payable quantity. The Portuguese refused to believe him. Nevertheless, neither mineral has been found in the great quantities which myth had stated existed; see Pigafetta, \textit{Magellan’s voyage...}, p.141; King, \textit{Narrative of a survey...}, pp.131-133; A. R. Wallace, \textit{The Malay archipelago: The land of the orang-utan and the bird of paradise}, pp.144-149. See also Ormeling, \textit{The Timor problem...}, p.4.
Timor, are parts of East Timor. The Ambeno-Oecusse enclave, on West Timor’s north coast, is administered from Dili also.  

East Timor and West Timor are very different places in many respects, but many of the differences are a result of the influence of the former colonial powers. Traces of Dutch language and culture are readily identifiable in West Timor and similar evidence of Portuguese influence can be found in the East. One difference between the two halves of the island is religion. East Timor is a largely Catholic state: a direct legacy of its colonisation by the Catholic Portuguese. West Timor is mostly Protestant, just as were its former rulers, the Dutch. The differences between East Timor and West Timor, however, are not delimited by the borders. For example, to see Timor as Catholic in the East and Protestant in the West is too simplistic. While East Timor is an acknowledged stronghold of the Catholic church, 36% of West Timorese embrace the same faith. This is especially true in the central and eastern parts of West Timor, where adherence to Catholicism is 90% or higher. Thus, in the parts of West Timor closest to East Timor, the religious affiliation of the majority is the same as those of the people over the border.

Furthermore, the people who live near the borders between East Timor and West Timor are usually members of the same ethnic groups. The majority Atoni of West Timor are not found in the east, but most of the inhabitants of Ambeno-Oecusse are Atoni, just like their neighbours in the surrounding West Timor districts. And, as mentioned earlier, the Tetun, Kemak and Marae peoples live on both sides of the central border that divides the island from north to south. Despite the political division of the island, family and other connections have persisted across the borders.

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87 For a more comprehensive treatment of the partition of Timor than can be provided here, see Steven Farram, ‘The Two Timors: The partitioning of Timor by the Portuguese and the Dutch’, Studies in languages and cultures of East Timor, Vol.2, 1999.
88 Nusa Tenggara Timur dalam angka.
89 The independent state of East Timor is now officially known as Timor Lorosae. But even this name does not really differentiate East and West, as it is applicable on both sides of the border. ‘Lorosae’ means ‘the place where the sun rises’ and is used by the Tetun speaking people of both East Timor and eastern West Timor to refer to the part of the island where they live, while the rest of the island is ‘Loromonu’: ‘the place where the sun sets’. The terms used by the Dawan speaking Atoni of West Timor are more prosaic: they refer to their part of the island as ‘Mansan Tes’, ‘this place’, while the part occupied by the Tetun is ‘Mansan Saen’, ‘that place’.
The existence of these different groups on both sides of the borders is proof that Timor was not divided according to ethnic lines. The borders do to some extent rely on geographical boundaries, such as mountains and rivers, but they were chosen in a somewhat arbitrary fashion. There was certainly nothing inherently Dutch or Portuguese about the land, or the people, on either side of the border. Both parties proved this by their readiness to bargain, swapping one parcel of land, and its inhabitants, for another. The fact was that the border regions were among the areas where the colonial powers exercised the least control on Timor. It was only after the borders were settled that they began to have real influence there.

There would appear to be nothing natural, or inevitable, about the borders which came to describe East Timor and West Timor. Once they were defined, however, the borders took on a solidity which they have retained until today. In the words of one political geographer: ‘The passing of time tends to give borders, like accumulated wealth, respectability, regardless of their shabby or bloody origins’.90 After the borders were defined the two colonial powers began to assert their influence on their respective sides of the borders.

Both the Portuguese and the Dutch had been attracted to Timor by the sandalwood trade, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century reserves of the wood had been so severely depleted that the main reason for the Europeans being in Timor had ceased to be. Ever since they had arrived in Timor, however, the Dutch had competed with the Portuguese for control of territory. This eventually became an end in itself. The Portuguese were just as keen to hold on to Timor as the Dutch. They had been a mighty power, but had gradually lost all their possessions in the Indonesian archipelago, except Timor. For the sake of honour and prestige they had to hold on to this last vestige of their authority in the region.

The Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies, G. A. G. Ph. van der Capellen, realised that disputes between the two powers in Timor were bound to occur as long as they had no formal agreement which explicitly defined their areas of sovereignty. Van der Capellen concluded that the best result would be achieved if the Portuguese

90 J. R. Short, An introduction to political geography, p.127.
left the area altogether and in 1817 he proposed to them that they sell their Timor possessions to the Dutch. The Portuguese were not interested.91

Various disputes did occur in the early nineteenth century, such as the already-mentioned Portuguese occupation of Atapupu during the British interregnum and its re-occupation by the Dutch in 1818. The matter that really brought the issue to a head, however, occurred in 1847, when fighting broke out on the islands of Pantar and Alor, two long-standing claims of the Netherlands. Help was sought by the local rulers from the ruler of Oecusse, who came in force and soon restored order, but declared that from then on the islands were to fly the Portuguese flag. When the Dutch found out they sent a protest to Dili, where the Governor fully agreed on Dutch rights in the matter, but was powerless to act against his vassal, the ruler of Oecusse. A Dutch warship was then sent to the islands and the Dutch flag returned to its former place.92 The complexity of the situation on Timor is well demonstrated by this case. Alor and Pantar were vassals of the Dutch. Yet, when the rulers of those islands felt they needed assistance they turned to the ruler of Oecusse, with whom they had an adat relationship. The fact that Oecusse was a vassal of the Portuguese was of no concern to them. The Portuguese and Dutch had hitherto exercised virtually no authority in the area, which makes the actions of the indigenous players quite understandable, but it was an unsatisfactory state of affairs for the Europeans.

Following this incident the Dutch again offered to buy the Portuguese territories, but this was dismissed out of hand. The Portuguese were, however, willing to form a joint commission to settle the borders between Dutch and Portuguese territory in the region. The commission met for the first time in Dili on 1 August 1851. The Dutch then renewed their offer to buy out the Portuguese. Specifically, they offered 200,000 guilders (80,000 to be paid immediately in cash), and the cession of the Dutch claim on the area of Maubara (in present day East Timor), in return for all the Portuguese claims in Flores and the Solor archipelago. The only exception was to be the island Atauro which, because of its location, was seen as the key to Dili. The Dutch would drop all claims to the island. The island of Jaco stayed with the Portuguese also, probably because it was so close to the mainland and too small to concern the Dutch.

91 M. van Geuns, ‘Is de aankoop van Portugeesch Timor wenschelijk?’, p.5.
92 Heyman, De Timor Tractaten..., pp.19-20.
Portuguese Timor was so short of funds at the time that Governor Jose Joaquim Lopes de Lima was apparently only too pleased to take the offer.  

Batavia accepted the results of these negotiations immediately and moved quickly to occupy Larantuka and Solor. When the news reached Lisbon there was an outcry. Lopes de Lima was dismissed from his post and ordered to return to Portugal in disgrace. Negotiations continued and Lopes de Lima’s cession of territory to the Dutch was later formally acknowledged in the treaty of 1859. The Dutch tried to get the Portuguese to hand over the enclave Ambeno-Oecusse also, but they refused. Instead, it was actually increased in size as the Dutch agreed to drop their claim on Soetrana (Citrania). This part of Ambeno-Oecusse had been claimed by the Dutch since 1817, when Resident Hazaart had induced the ruler there to give up his agreement with the Portuguese and to acknowledge the Dutch instead.

The Dutch failed to get control of Ambeno-Oecusse, but there was no agreement made either on the Dutch enclave, Maukatar, inside Portuguese territory near the present central border. The borders of these enclaves were defined with reference to the native states which surrounded them. The same was done with the border that divided the island in two. Thus, along the borders, were a series of native states. For each one claimed by the Dutch was a corresponding one facing it claimed by the Portuguese. Apart from the enclaves, it was agreed that all territory to the west of the border was Dutch, and all that to the east of the border was Portuguese.

The negotiations were somewhat farcical as neither the Dutch nor the Portuguese exercised real authority in the lands which were being defined as ‘Portuguese’ or ‘Dutch’ territory. In 1860 the Governor of Portuguese Timor even admitted that ‘Our

93 Ibid., pp.34-35; Peter J. van Wiechen and Lambert J. Giebels, ‘Portugal, een lastige buur in Indie’, Spiegel Historiael, Vol.3, 1996, pp.271-272. See also Boxer, ‘Portuguese Timor...’, p.355. Maubara was considered an ally of the Dutch East India Company as it was a dependency of Waiwiku-Wehale, but it signed a separate contract in 1759 also. The territory was claimed by the Portuguese as well, but it seems that neither side did much to make good their claims. In 1837 two ‘English nationals’ were killed there and when a British naval officer complained about this to the Netherlands Indies government there was uncertainty over whether the territory was Dutch or Portuguese; see Heyman, De Timor Tractaten..., p.33.

94 Boxer, ‘Portuguese Timor...’, p.355.
95 Heyman, De Timor Tractaten..., p.34.
empire on this island is nothing but a fiction’.\textsuperscript{97} The Dutch had led numerous expeditions to the interior to pacify various kingdoms, but they were destined to lead many more before they could claim to have succeeded. On the Portuguese side, there were up to sixty expeditions mounted against the Timorese between 1847 and 1913.\textsuperscript{98} The borders did not define areas of authority, but rather defined the areas where each side could try to exercise authority, without interference from the other party.

The 1859 treaty did not bring an end to disputes between Portugal and the Netherlands. The main problem was that the borders had been poorly defined, being delimited by the borders of the native states. As these borders were not defined disputes soon arose in the border states over territory and they often descended into bloody feuds. Neither the Dutch nor the Portuguese had any real influence with the border states and were powerless to stop the fighting. Despite this both parties made protests to the other side.\textsuperscript{99}

In 1893 the Europeans signed a new treaty wherein the two parties expressed their desire to achieve a clear and accurate definition of the borders on Timor and to make the enclaves ‘disappear’. The treaty covered other matters also, such as a ban by both sides on the importation of firearms into Timor, except as needed by their own armies. This was aimed at preventing the Timorese getting hold of modern weapons and was justified on the basis that the Timorese were incessantly at war with each other and this measure would reduce the bloodshed. There can be no doubt, however, that the two colonial powers were making sure that the Timorese were in no position to question their own supremacy on the island.\textsuperscript{100}

Five years elapsed between the signing of the treaty and the beginning of the border survey, but in July 1898 the Dutch contingent arrived in Dili. Where the parties could not agree it was decided that two sets of boundaries would be measured and it would

\textsuperscript{98} Fox, ‘The paradox of powerlessness…’, p.9.
\textsuperscript{100} Heyman, \textit{De Timor Tractaten…}, pp.48, 62-63.
then be left up to their governments in Europe to decide where the real border was. The survey began on the north coast with double borders being marked through the disputed districts of Maubesi and Maubusa. The survey was then halted as the Dutch had ordered celebrations to be held in Atapupu to mark the coronation of Queen Wilhelmina. All the rulers from the Dutch border districts were invited and the opportunity was taken to impress on them the might of their overlords by taking them onboard a Dutch warship to see its guns in action. The display left the rulers ‘crawling in fear’, according to the Dutch.101

The survey was recommenced on the south coast where no European official had ever been. Double borders were again surveyed. The surveyors then considered the Maukatar enclave. Although Maukatar was described as an enclave in the 1859 treaty, the Dutch claimed it was in fact a ‘pre-enclave’ as it was a part of the Dutch state Lakmaras and was joined by that state to other Dutch territory. The Portuguese, however, claimed that since 1859 Lakmaras had been taken over by the Portuguese state of Lamakhitu. In a similar case, the nearby state of Tahakay had been declared Portuguese under the 1859 treaty, but since 1859 the area had been taken over by the Dutch state of Lamaknen. Double borders were measured in all these areas.102 The curious element of these events is that the borders of areas which were to be considered henceforth as either Dutch or Portuguese territory were being determined by the independent actions of the native states themselves. Following the final agreement on the borders such independent action would no longer be tolerated.

In Ambeno-Oecusse, in early 1899, the surveyors experienced many hindrances. The western part of the border was surveyed without difficulty, but in the east they struck a snag at Tunbaba, which had been the site of conflict for more than twenty years. Both Ambeno and Amakono (Dutch territory) claimed the area and were strongly opposed to the survey. Armed men from both sides persuaded the surveyors to desist from their work. The surveyors had agreed that the border should begin on the coast at the river Noel Meto, but they could merely mark on a map where they believed the border should be. There were difficulties also in concluding the survey for the

102 Ibid., pp.616-621.
enclave Noemuti and it was decided that the work would have to wait for another
day.\textsuperscript{103}

The deliberations in Europe took several years. Much horse trading was involved in
trying to reach a settlement. In 1904 the two parties signed a new treaty to settle
several points. Maukatar was to become Portuguese, but the disputed territory,
Lakmaras, which joined the enclave to other Dutch territory was to stay with the
Dutch. Noemuti was to become Dutch and the disputed territory, Bikomi, which
joined the enclave to Ambeno was to stay Dutch also. However, under the terms of
the treaty the enclaves were not to be handed over until the Ambeno-Oecusse survey
had been completed. In the meantime, Portuguese and Dutch forces had clashed in
Bikomi and Lakmaras. A few soldiers were killed and others taken captive. Peace
was reached after diplomatic negotiations. Until the survey was completed, however,
the possibility for further disputes remained.\textsuperscript{104}

It was not until June 1909 that a joint party was returned to Ambeno-Oecusse to
complete the survey. Once again the two sides could not agree, so double borders
were surveyed. Lisbon and The Hague then began a long series of correspondence on
the matter, without result. Finally, in 1913, the two sides agreed to submit the case to
the Permanent Court of Arbitration and to abide by the decision of that court.\textsuperscript{105}

In June 1914 the court found in favour of the Dutch and the border question was
finally settled. The area disputed in Ambeno had not amounted to more than fifty-
seven square kilometres.\textsuperscript{106} Why had this land been so important? It could have been
that both sides were determined to get as much as they could out of this last piece of
disputed territory. It has, however, been claimed that Portugal had hoped to retain
certain stands of sandalwood that existed in the area.\textsuperscript{107} The Dutch may have had an
eye on these sandalwood reserves also. During a joint Dutch-Portuguese
reconnaissance of the border in 1915 the Dutch paid careful attention to the existing

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., pp.622-624.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., pp.633-634, 638-640.
\textsuperscript{105} ‘Judicial decisions involving questions of international law’, \textit{American journal of international
law}, Vol.9, 1915, pp.242-244.
\textsuperscript{106} J. R. V. Prescott, H. J. Collier and D. F. Prescott, \textit{Frontiers of Asia and Southeast Asia}, p.82.
\textsuperscript{107} W. B. Sowash, ‘Colonial rivalries in Timor’, \textit{Far Eastern Quarterly}, Vol.VII, No.3, May 1948,
p.234.
stands of sandalwood and later systematically cut all sandalwood in the border districts for fear that it would be stolen by interlopers from across the border.\footnote{Ormeling, \textit{The Timor problem}..., p.99.}

Sandalwood had first lured the Europeans to Timor several centuries before. It had fed the ambitions of the Portuguese, the Topasses and the Dutch. It was the desire to control the sandalwood market that had led the Europeans to make alliances with the native states, to join them in battle and to conquer their lands and claim them as their own. Sandalwood had long ago ceased to be of any economic importance, but that it should have played some part in the final partition of Timor is ironic, yet somehow appropriate.

The final settlement of the border question in Timor was reached only in 1916. The two parties were then in possession of all the territories they claimed as their own and there were no real uncertainties about the sovereign rights of the Dutch and Portuguese in their respective territories. By the time the borders were settled, however, the reality of colonial control in Timor had changed also. In 1894, when Governor Celestino da Silva arrived to take up his appointment, many parts of Portuguese Timor were in open revolt. With the help of troops provided by a number of loyal rulers he was able to quell the rebellion. Further uprisings broke out in 1911, possibly linked to an increase in taxes. These revolts were only subdued after two years of fighting. After 1913 the position of the Portuguese as the supreme ruling power in East Timor went virtually unchallenged.\footnote{James Dunn, \textit{Timor, a people betrayed}, pp.19-20; and A. B. Lapian and Paramita Abdurachman, ‘Sejarah Timor Timur’, \textit{Berita antropologi}, January-March 1982, p.27.}

In West Timor it was the same. When the Dutch travelled to central Timor in 1898 to survey the border, many of the areas they were claiming as Dutch territory they were in fact visiting for the first time. The indigenous states in that area, and much of the rest of West Timor, had been almost completely free of Dutch interference. In 1904, however, Joannes Benedictus van Heutsz, the hero of the Aceh Wars, became Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies and the policy of non-interference with the native states came to an end. Under van Heutsz, West Timor was brought under comprehensive Dutch control. People who had rarely seen Europeans were now
forced to pay taxes and perform corvee labour. There was strong resistance and some states remained defiant up until the 1920s, but by the time the treaty dividing Timor had been concluded the Dutch were effectively in control in West Timor.

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Timor is a rugged, arid island with limited food producing capabilities. Yet the island was a source of great wealth through the sandalwood trade. The various ethnic groups and kingdoms which existed in Timor had evolved a system of political alliances centred around the Tetun kingdom of Waiwiku-Wehale. However, any political hegemony that had existed was destroyed by the actions of the Dutch and the Portuguese who came to the island seeking to exploit the sandalwood trade. Gradually most of the sandalwood reserves on the island disappeared, but the Europeans did not. They brought great changes to the island, including introducing Christianity, which eventually became a very powerful force in Timor. Spurred on by fear of other colonial powers the Dutch and Portuguese formally partitioned the island and the scene was then set for them to exercise their authority over the many areas which they had previously claimed in name only.
Figure 2.
VOC era grave in the courtyard of the old Protestant Church, Kupang.
Figure 3.
Part of the old town of Kupang along the Kupang river. Fort Concordia on the left.

Figure 4.
Part of the old town of Kupang along the Kupang river.
Figure 5.
Don Antonius Willibrodus da Costa and Don Yoseph S. da Costa. Mr. da Costa is holding the baton of authority given to his ancestor, Raja da Costa, by the Portuguese. Noemuti, June 2000.

Figure 6.
Portuguese religious relics in the safekeeping of the da Costa family, Noemuti.
Chapter Two
Chapter Two

‘Pax Neerlandica’: The Dutch take control of the interior

This chapter looks at the situation in West Timor from the turn of the century until the early 1920s. It was a period of colonial expansion around the globe. The claim that Dutch imperialism was different because of their Ethical Policy is examined. A number of the notable clashes at the time between the Dutch and Timorese are described, as are other developments, such as roads, disarmament, the relationship with the Portuguese and the impact of the First World War. The chapter closes with a description of the penetration of the Church into the interior and the growth and impact of education in the territory.

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In the early twentieth century the Dutch in West Timor began the pacificatie, or ‘pacification’ campaigns, to confirm their authority and bring an end to headhunting and warfare between the indigenous states. The Dutch effort to impose rust en orde (peace and order) in their territory was not confined to Timor. Military campaigns to impose formal Dutch control occurred in various parts of the archipelago, including Jambi (1901-1907) and Kerinci (1902-1903) on Sumatra, Seram in Maluku (1904), Banjarmasin in Kalimantan (1904-1906), Bone and elsewhere in Sulawesi (1905-1907), and Bali (1906 [and 1908]). Other European powers at the time were similarly keen to extend the territory under their control and the years 1870 to 1914 have often been designated as the period of ‘new imperialism’. While the Dutch were consolidating their position in West Timor the Portuguese were doing the same in East Timor and expanding their control in Africa also. In the same period the long-standing imperial powers Britain and France were extending their territories and new players appeared on the scene, such as Belgium, Germany and Italy.

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Historian D. K. Fieldhouse noted that this extension of territory was aimed at: providing strategic military bases; preventing rival powers from gaining access to territory which could threaten the ‘national interest’; obtaining territory for use as bargaining chips in international diplomacy; and satisfying national pride. Fieldhouse said that comprehensive control of territories was not essential to satisfy these aims and they could in many cases have been met by mere agreement between the colonial powers, yet this hardly ever occurred. Fieldhouse noted four main reasons for the establishment of more comprehensive control: a. The need to raise taxes. Even the most basic administration needed to be funded and this was invariably done through local taxes. When subject people resisted this, as was common, they had to be ‘pacified’. b. Security. The need to safeguard frontiers and suppress dissidents encouraged establishment of greater control. c. The ambitions of soldiers and administrators. Almost invariably these people expanded their areas of effective authority, regardless of instructions from their parent state. d. The civilising mission. Acceptance of the argument that Christians were obliged to bring the benefits of civilisation to the ‘backward’ peoples of the world often involved the extension of formal control in order to create a ‘modern’ society.

Fieldhouse’s model can be applied to the situation in West Timor and elsewhere in the Netherlands Indies where the Dutch were extending their control in the early twentieth century. Yet the Dutch claimed that their actions could not be compared to those of other Europeans as the Dutch were motivated by the so-called Ethical Policy, linked to the need to repay ‘a debt of honour’ to the Indonesians. According to this argument it was necessary for the Dutch to take greater control in the Indies so that they could provide better services to the people. While the Dutch did provide greater educational opportunities and health services in the Netherlands Indies, such

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3 Fieldhouse, Colonialism..., pp.20-22.
4 Ibid., pp.22-23.
5 ‘A debt of honour’ was a term used by Conrad van Deventer in an influential 1899 article. Van Deventer argued that the Netherlands had extracted great wealth from the Indies and should repay the debt by providing for the welfare needs of the Indonesians. In 1901 Queen Wilhelmina declared that the Netherlands had a moral duty towards the people of the Indies. This is generally accepted as the beginning of the Ethical Policy; see Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., p.143; and Graham Saunders, The Liberal-Ethical Policy in Indonesia, p.18. The argument that Dutch imperialism was different because of the Ethical Policy has been rejected by many historians; for example, see Locher-Scholten, ‘Dutch expansion...’. An argument in favour of the proposal can be found in I. Schoffler, ‘Dutch “expansion” and Indonesian reactions: Some dilemmas of modern colonial rule (1900-1942)’,
changes took place within other colonial jurisdictions also, such as Malaya and the
Philippines. It can be argued that these measures were not truly altruistic as the
expanding colonial states were in need of educated, skilled labour. A healthy
workforce was beneficial also and decreased the health risks to Europeans who lived
among the subject peoples. While there were no doubt sincere Dutch proponents of
the need to repay the ‘debt of honour’ to the Indies, it is only fair to say that the
Ethical Policy fulfilled many Dutch needs also.6

The policy of ‘abstention’ or ‘non-interference’ in the Netherlands Indies in the
second half of the nineteenth century was aimed at curtailing administrative costs.
The policy rankled many government employees on the ground who felt that the
Indonesians were allowed to take too many liberties and the prestige of the
Netherlands would suffer. In the Timor region the Dutch had experienced a number
of ‘humiliations’. On Sumba the Controleur of Melolo abandoned his post after being
driven away by the people. This was particularly galling as French, English and
American horse-traders in Sumba all came to hear of the episode. Two Timor
residents fell victim to the ‘abstention’ policy also. Resident Humme was dismissed
in 1878 for using ‘native troops’ against unrest on the island of Lomblen. In 1881
Resident Sikman was fined by fettors in Molo for climbing a small hill without
permission. The fine was paid, but Sikman’s belligerent attitude was enough to see
him dismissed also.7 These two residents had been out of step with government
policy, but by the late nineteenth century there was change in the air.

Dutch policy on territorial expansion was affected by the conduct of the Aceh War.
Pepper-rich Aceh in northern Sumatra had had reason to fear Dutch expansion, but
the Dutch in turn had feared that Aceh would pre-empt Dutch action by seeking the
intervention of other powers, such as Turkey, France or America. Such intervention
did not occur and in the early 1870s the Dutch attacked Aceh and occupied the
capital ‘Kota Radja’ (Banda Aceh). The Acehnese, however, would not surrender

in H. L. Wesseling (ed.), Expansion and reaction: Essays on European expansion and reaction in
Asia and Africa.
6 Saunders, The Liberal-Ethical Policy..., pp.24, 36.
7 C. Lulofs, ‘Toepassing en resultaten van de nieuwere beginselen van politiek beleid in de residentie
Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, Tijdschrift voor het Binnenlands Bestuur, Vol.40, No.5, 1911, pp.282-
283. See also ‘Memorie van het eiland Timor c.1912’, in Indonesia: memories...
and resistance continued for decades. Military resources destined for other areas were reassigned to Aceh. The monetary and human costs made the Dutch wary of any other imperial venture in case it should turn into ‘a second Aceh’. Such fears began to dissipate in 1894 when a clear victory was achieved on Lombok after a short campaign. This was followed by a successful change in military policy in Aceh itself which allowed the Dutch to claim that they had finally established their authority there also.

In 1898 General van Heutsz, then in charge of affairs in Aceh, joined policy adviser Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje to inaugurate the Korte Verklaring (Short Declaration) as the means of formalising Dutch authority in Aceh. The new-style contract, containing only the minimal detail necessary to establish Dutch suzerainty, was adopted throughout the Indies. The new contracts allowed increased Dutch involvement in administration, but gave indigenous rulers an administrative function also. This obviated the need for vastly increased personnel to administer new territories. In 1904 van Heutsz, the ‘Hero of Aceh’, was appointed Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies. The scene was then set for the imposition of a Pax Neerlandica in the Indies. This necessitated greater expansion in the outer islands, including Timor.

Under the Ethical Policy it became the duty of the Dutch to promote ‘peace, order and modernity’ in the Netherlands Indies. The Ethical Policy supplied the political means to allow the new expansion; steamships, improved weapons and superior military tactics ensured Dutch success. The tactics used, however, would not be considered ‘ethical’ today. The Pax Neerlandica was imposed using the klewang (machete) and the gun. Former Resident of Dutch Timor, F. Fokkens, wrote in 1914 that the Portuguese in Timor had been accused of ‘bestial cruelty’ and ‘atrocities’. With disarming frankness, Fokkens said that similar accusations had

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8 Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., pp.136-137.
9 Locher-Scholten, ‘Dutch expansion...’, p.95.
10 Pieter van Hulstijn, Van Heutsz en de Buitengewesten, p.24.
11 Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., p.127.
12 For discussion of these matters, see J. A. de Moor, ‘Warmakers in the archipelago: Dutch expeditions in nineteenth century Indonesia’, in J. A. de Moor and H. L. Wesseling (eds.), Imperialism and war: Essays on colonial wars in Asia and Africa.
13 Locher-Scholten, ‘Dutch expansion...’, p.95. See also De Moor, ‘Warmakers in the archipelago...’, p.69.
been levelled at the Dutch in various parts of the Indies, but concluded that such acts were understandable when turning ‘pretended claims’ into ‘real claims’.

At the close of the nineteenth century Dutch authority in West Timor was limited to the Government Territories of Kupang Bay and the Atapupu Valley. Communication with the latter was by sea and it could at times be cut off altogether. In April 1899 Resident Fokkens reported that the government steamer Pelikaan had been to Makassar and there was therefore no news from Atapupu. Knowledge of events in the interior was even sketchier and Fokkens realistically began his report with the statement: ‘As far as is known, the peace in the past month was not disturbed...’.

Fokkens and his successor Vyzelaar were active in the states near the government areas, mediated disputes between them and appointed and dismissed fettors and rajas. The Dutch in this period, however, were mainly concerned with maintaining the status quo.

**Resident Heckler and Djetaal Bakikooi**

Vyzelaar’s replacement in 1902, Heckler, is credited with bringing the first change to the area. His activities have been described as ‘sweeping clean the Augean stables in Timor’. At the time, livestock theft, arson and other manifestations of hostility between the border states were common. There was some co-operation between the two colonial administrations, but the problems on the borders could not be dealt with until the Europeans established their authority there. There were disputes also between the indigenous states within West Timor, with headhunting and slave raiding remaining common. The collapse of the Sonbai ‘empire’ in Central Timor after the death of the Keizer in 1885 brought its own problems. Several states strove to assert their independence and no less than seventeen pretenders vied for the

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15 Fokkens, ‘Kort verslag van de toestand en de voornaamste gebeurtenissen in de residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand April 1899’, in Politieke verslagen...
16 For examples, see Fokkens, ‘Kort verslag van de toestand en de voornaamste gebeurtenissen in de residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Juni 1899’, and Vyzelaar, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie den Gouverneur Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie’, 28 October 1900, in Politieke verslagen...
Keizer’s crown.\(^{18}\) Into this chaos stepped Resident Heckler in May 1903 when he tried to negotiate a settlement of hostilities between the kingdom of Manubait and Djeraal Bakikooi, who lived in the Takaip-Taiboko district.\(^{19}\) The Djeraal twice failed to appear when summoned by the Dutch. Furthermore, fighting between the kingdom of Tefnai and the Manubait dependency Benu appeared to have been instigated by Djeraal Bakikooi. Raja Tefnai, Kornel Oteh, accepted the Dutch punishment of a ƒ 850 (850 guilders) fine, although he blamed his absent younger brother, Hati Kornel.\(^{20}\)

When the fine went unpaid it was discovered that Hati Kornel had usurped his brother’s authority and was openly defiant of the Dutch, declaiming that ‘the MaE Bapa Compani talks a lot, but does little’.\(^{21}\) Another local leader, Djeraal Nai Smaut of Kelali, was equally dismissive; spitting on the ground he declared that he did not believe that the ‘Company’ would take any action.\(^{22}\) Such talk dismayed Resident Heckler, who felt that government prestige had sunk to uncharted depths. If speedy, firm action was not taken against ‘rebellious states’ he feared that even the inhabitants of the Government Territory might attempt independent action. This would give rise to a state of ‘perfect anarchy’. Heckler prepared for immediate action and with police, soldiers and local allies he marched against Bakikooi and his associates.\(^{23}\)

Without facing any meaningful resistance Heckler and his group marched into Tefnai. There they met Kornel Oteh standing beneath a Netherlands flag, with his silver-topped tongkat (baton of authority issued by the ‘Company’) and his letter of appointment in his hand. Alongside him stood Hati Kornel. Kornel Oteh gave silent submission to Heckler’s ruling that the original fine be doubled to ƒ 1,700. Hati

\(^{18}\) Hulstijn, *Van Heutsz...*, pp.129-130; see also Johann Christiaan Lamster, *J. B. van Heutsz als gouverneur-generaal, 1904-1909*, p.168. The Sonbai ‘empire’ was called ‘Sonnebait’ by the Dutch, whereas for the Timorese it was the kingdom of OEnam.

\(^{19}\) When the Sonbai ‘empire’ broke up this *djeraal*, a subordinate ‘war-leader’, became independent of his *fettor* and operated more as a war-lord.

\(^{20}\) Heckler, ‘Kort verslag van de toestand en de voornaamste gebeurtenissen in de residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Mei 1903’, in *Politieke verslagen...*

\(^{21}\) Heckler, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie den Gouverneur Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie’, 12 June 1903, in *Politieke verslagen...* ‘MaE Bapa Compani’ (Mother Father Company) was a Timorese name for the Netherlands Indies government, dating back to the days of the Dutch East India Company.

\(^{22}\) Heckler, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie...’, 12 June 1903, in *Politieke verslagen...*

\(^{23}\) *Ibid.*
Kornel, full of indignation, was arrested and sent to Kupang. Heckler proceeded to the land of the Pitais, Bakikooi’s allies. Along the route a number of Pitais were shot and killed (and later beheaded by Heckler’s Timorese allies), but the Pitai settlement Oelnaineno was found abandoned. Against strict orders Timorese auxiliaries from Manubait and Benu, staunch enemies of Bakikooi and the Pitais, burned down sections of the village. As it seemed unlikely that he would make contact with the Pitais in order to impose his punishment, Heckler felt satisfied that this burning of their property would provide sufficient admonition.24

Heckler and his retinue then set out for Bakikooi’s stronghold at Noeltoko, but found the village abandoned. The Djeraal was arrested soon after when he came into Noeltoko to surrender. At Kelali Djeraal Nai Smaut was arrested also. The revolt was over.25 Bakikooi and Nai Smaut were sentenced to twenty years labour in chains.26 The Timorese leaders and Rotenese kampong27 (village) heads who had assisted the Dutch in the campaign were given awards and presents. Some of the money collected as fines was used to provide feasts for the other participants.28

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In the following year, 1904, Pastoor A. Mathijsen accompanied the Controleur of Belu on a visit to Waiwiku-Wehale. The area was still little known to the Dutch and the Maromak Oan seemed indifferent to his visitors. The people in surrounding villages appeared hostile and unco-operative. Despite feelings of uneasiness and fears of attack, nothing untoward happened to the Dutch visitors in the former great power centre.29 It was another two years before the Dutch attempted to enforce their rule in Wehale. It was a different story, however, in the west where the last contender to the Sonbai crown, Sobe Sonbai III, was growing increasingly bold. It became

24 Heckler, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie den Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie’, 15 July 1903, in Politieke verslagen...
25 Ibid.
26 Heckler, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie den Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie’, 22 July 1903, in Politieke verslagen...
27 Kampong can signify either a rural or urban ‘village’. The modern spelling is kampung.
28 De Groot, ‘Extract uit het Register der Besluiten van den Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie’, 19 August 1903, in Politieke verslagen...
29 A. Mathijsen, ‘Een reisje naar de Zuidkust van Timor’, Berichten uit Nederlandsche Oost-Indie voor de leden van de Sint-Claverbond, 1, 1904.
imperative to take action against the Pretendent-Keizer, as he was known to the Dutch, as his activities were a direct threat to Dutch rule.

One aim of Resident Heckler in his campaign against Djeraal Bakikooi was to bolster the authority of rulers who had formal relations with the Dutch, such as the Fettor of Takaip-Taiboko and Raja Tefnai, Kornel Oteh. Many Timorese, however, still recognised the authority of Sonbai and sent harvest tribute to the Pretendent-Keizer, who lived in Kauniki. Djeraal Bakikooi had for a number of years bypassed his fettor and paid tribute to the Pretendent-Keizer directly. Initially the Dutch did not blame Sonbai for the actions of Bakikooi and Heckler tried to arrange a meeting with him. This never eventuated and by late 1904 it became clear that the Pretendent-Keizer was determined to challenge Dutch authority. Nothing happened, however, for nearly a year. In the meantime, in Belu, there was civil war in Naitimu and fighting between Beboki and Insana. The Dutch were powerless to intervene. Closer to Kupang the Raja of Amarasi was fined f 400 for levying unauthorised taxes and imposing cruel punishments on his subjects. The fine was paid, but elsewhere Dutch authority was not much in evidence and reports of beheadings, thefts, fighting and border-crossings were legion.

By 1905 the van Heutsz policy of imposing a Pax Neerlandica was in full swing. The Dutch did not, however, merely march into new areas and assert their authority. Instead, the Dutch progress was more in the way of a response to local actions. It was in response to such action, a ‘revolt’ in Lekleu in Flores, that on 17 August 1905 Heckler’s replacement, Resident de Rooy, left Kupang with a military column. During the hostilities Lekleu suffered eighty-four dead, while the Dutch had no losses. A fine of f 3,000 was paid with elephant tusks and the revolt’s instigators

30 Heckler, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie...’, 15 July 1903, in Politieke verslagen...
31 Heckler, ‘Kort verslag van de toestand en voornaamste gebeurtenissen in de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand September 1904’, in Politieke verslagen...
32 Heckler, ‘Kort verslag van de toestand en voornaamste gebeurtenissen in de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Oktober 1904’, in Politieke verslagen...
33 Acting Resident Hellwig, ‘Kort verslag van de toestand en voornaamste gebeurtenissen in de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Maart 1905’, in Politieke verslagen...
34 The very presence of the Dutch was likely to lead to conflict with local rulers sooner or later. However, Schulte Nordholt records that Resident de Rooy received special instructions in 1905 to introduce colonial rule to Timor ‘by force of arms’; see Schulte Nordholt, The political system of the Atoni..., p.457. The letter instructing de Rooy to end ‘non-intervention’ in West Timor is mentioned also in ‘Memorie van het eiland Timor c.1912’, in Indonesia: memories...
were sent into exile. Further activities, however, were curtailed as de Rooy received news by ‘speed prauw’ that serious events had taken place in Timor.\(^35\)

**Perang Bipolo**

Since the early nineteenth century numbers of mainly Rotenese immigrants had settled around Kupang Bay and alienated much land that had previously been Sonbai territory. The Pretendent-Keizer had been suspected of being behind the troubles in the area in 1903, but there was no doubting his involvement now. On the night of 19 August 1905, two days after the Resident had left with the available military strength for Flores, the Pretendent-Keizer’s forces attacked the settler-villages of Bipolo and Nunkurus in the Government Territory, killing thirty-two of the residents and kidnapping another sixty-two. As soon as de Rooy learnt of this he called a halt to the Flores expedition and made haste back to Kupang. De Rooy was determined not only to punish Sobe Sonbai III for this incursion, but to extinguish his authority completely, send him into exile and take over all his hereditary rights.\(^36\) The Sonbai kingdom had been a challenge to Dutch authority for many years and, although it had been drastically weakened, it was still symbolically important to many Timorese. If the Pretendent-Keizer was able to reunite the old kingdom and openly disobey the Dutch, it augured well for the other kingdoms. On the other hand, a defeated Sonbai would strengthen Dutch authority and be a blow to Timorese morale. De Rooy was determined to achieve the latter outcome and sent his forces into action. The resulting hostilities are remembered in Timor today as Perang Bipolo, the Bipolo War.

According to Timorese sources Sobe Sonbai III established three fortresses in preparation for conflict with the Dutch. These were: Ektob at Benu, Kabun at Noelnoni and Fatusiki at Oelnaineno. The forts were guarded by a number of loyal

\(^{35}\) De Rooy, Telegram to ‘Gouverneur-Generaal, Buitenzorg’, 1 September 1905, and ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie den Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie’, 1 September 1905, in *Politieke verslagen*...

\(^{36}\) De Rooy, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie den Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie’, 7 September 1905, in *Politieke verslagen*... This letter elicited a revealing reply in which the Government Secretary noted that it could not be discovered whether Sobe Sonbai III’s claim had any value and thus it was unknown if he had any ‘rights’ to surrender. Because of the government’s abstinence from Timor affairs, he continued, there was no reliable information available about the rajas, their rights or other matters. This lack of knowledge created many difficulties for the Dutch; see De Gouvernements-Secretaris Hulshoff Pol, ‘Aan den Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, 30 October 1905, in *Politieke verslagen*...
meos (war-leaders), including Labi Kornel, son of the rebellious Hati Kornel of Tefnai, and the most powerful meo of them all, Toto Smau of the Pitais, who, like Sonbai himself, claimed magic powers. A number of le’u musu (practitioners of war-magic) came to help Sonbai also.37

It was well that the Sonbai camp was prepared for Dutch reprisals, as they were not long coming. The force sent to chastise the Pretendent-Keizer was commanded by Lieutenant Rijnders, accompanied by Controleur Hellwig. A separate column from Java was commanded by Captain A. Franssen Herderschee. They first came into contact with the Sonbai forces at Ektob on 18 September. The ‘fortress’ was actually a sheer rocky cliff, around which were built walls and huts at various levels. The Dutch force sustained various injuries from hidden marksmen until these were silenced by a number of salvoes.38 A meo who defiantly revealed himself to denounce the soldiers in Dutch employ as ‘asoe kompenie’ (dogs of the ‘Company’) was killed.39 When the caves of Ektob were penetrated the following day they were found deserted, apart from the bodies of a few fallen Timorese. In the highest cave were found some rifles and the tongkat and letter of appointment of Raja Benu. The Raja had escaped, but the rest of his kingdom appeared to have been abandoned also.40

The force pushed on for Tefnai, but when they reached Kornel Oteh’s village it also was found abandoned. A Netherlands flag, Kornel Oteh’s tongkat and his letter of recognition from the Dutch, which he had displayed with contrition to Resident

37 Sejarah perlawanan terhadap imperialisme dan kolonialisme di daerah Nusa Tenggara Timur, pp.25-33. Similar details were obtained from the present Raja of Kauniki and his spokesmen: Raja Willem Sonbai, Amaf Samuel Bani and Amaf Cornelius Suan, interview Kauniki, 1 July 2000.
38 De Rooy, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie den Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie’, 7 October 1905, in Politieke verslagen...
40 De Rooy, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie...’, 7 October 1905, in Politieke verslagen... According to a different Dutch account the first clash was on 13 September at Belatu, a fortified rocky outcrop from which most of the Timorese defenders escaped; see ‘Kort overzicht...’, Indisch Militair Tijdschrift, Vol.36, No.2, 1905, p.1156. Timorese fortifications were usually natural rocky outcrops strengthened with thorny wooden and bamboo fences. A general feature of these fortifications was their many exit points which allowed an outnumbered or outgunned force to escape. This occurred often during the battles of the ‘pacification’ campaign and the Dutch made many derisive comments about the fortifications and the fighting ability of the Timorese. Nevertheless, they were careful to destroy all fortifications they discovered and it became general policy to encourage the dwellers of fortified mountain-top villages to relocate to the plains and alongside the new roads; see ‘Memorie...c.1912’, and ‘Militaire memorie...1930’, in Indonesia: memories...
Heckler in 1903, were found discarded hanging in a tree. It was assumed that the
Kornel had made his way to Kauniki, where great resistance was expected.41

Kauniki, reached on 3 October, was found deserted. The fleeing Sonbai had,
however, left behind a grisly reminder of the cause of the whole affair. A special
house was found to contain fourteen human heads, still recognisable as belonging to
people killed at Bipolo and Nunkurus. On 2 November 1905 Lieutenant Rijnders and
Controleur Hellwig returned to Kupang with a number of prisoners. The task of
tracking down the remaining principal fugitives, Raja Benu, Raja Tefnai and the
Pretendent-Keizer, was handed over to Captain Franssen Herderschee. The Captain
was also given provisional civil authority in the ‘turbulent’ districts.42

Captain Franssen Herderschee became a Civiel Gezaghebber (Civil Administrator).
He was one of many military officers used to run the civil administration in West
Timor.43 The Captain was ordered to introduce new regulations designed to bring
rust en orde to the district. These included: abolition of headhunting and slave
trading; a prohibition on the possession of firearms; registration of the people;
assignation of fixed dwelling places; a pass system for Chinese and other foreigners
who wished to enter the interior; establishment of pasars (markets) to introduce
competitive trading and end the Chinese-run monopoly barter system; establishment
of regulated ‘native administrations’; the building of connecting roads; and the
assignment of fixed grazing areas for wandering stock, as reprisals for stolen
livestock were seen as being at the root of all the wars, headhunting and kidnapping
in the region.44 This was no small order and implementation of these measures
caused much resentment and occasioned more ‘revolts’, but the measures were

41 De Rooy, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie...’, 7 October 1905, in Politieke verslagen...
42 De Rooy, Telegram to ‘Gouverneur-Generaal, Buitenzorg’, 4 November 1904, in Politieke
verslagen...
43 The use of military officers as civil administrators had a long history in Indonesia, but became
institutionalised during the latter phases of the Aceh War. Van Heutsz as governor-general used
military officers in civil positions throughout the newly ‘pacified’ territories. In Timor a number of
officers became gezaghebbers, but some were placed in higher positions, such as Assistent-Resident
Captain Gramberg and Resident Colonel van Rietschoten. For more, see H. W. van den Doel,
‘Military rule in the Netherlands Indies’, in R. Cribb (ed.), The late colonial state in Indonesia:
Political and economic foundations of the Netherlands Indies, 1880-1942.
1905, in Politieke verslagen... See also De Rooy, ‘Aan den Kapitein Colonne Commandant in
Sonnebait’, 1 November 1905, in Politieke verslagen...
enforced and the pacificatie of West Timor could be said to have truly begun. In the meantime the Pretendent-Keizer was still on the run and although a number of rulers who had not supported his claim were now helping the Dutch, he could not be found.

Throughout November and December 1905 the search continued for Sobe Sonbai III. Various groups of ‘malevolents’ were met with by patrols led by Lieutenant de Vries, sometimes as many as 100 people. Scores of Sonbai supporters were killed and captured. Casualties on the Dutch side were slight, with one ‘native infantryman’ killed and a few riflemen wounded. Many people who had abandoned their villages at the start of the ‘war’ began to return. Life was returning to normal and peace seemed assured when on 6 February 1906 the Pretendent-Keizer was persuaded to surrender to the Civiel Gezaghebber by the Fettor of Besiana, in whose district he was hiding. Kornel Oteh and Hati Kornel, who had been staying with the Pretendent-Keizer, were said to have escaped to the Portuguese enclave of Noemuti.

That same evening Lieutenant de Vries arrived with a mounted patrol at Bonfafi where he arrested the Chinese ‘intellectual leader’ and adviser to the Pretendent-Keizer, Tji A Man. Resident de Rooy, who reported the matter, says little about the ‘notorious’ Tji A Man apart from that he had been a clerk in the Residency Office in Kupang before fleeing on account of debts. De Rooy says that Sobe Sonbai had requested Tji A Man to stay with him, but he is silent on what role he played. Doko, however, explains that Tji A Man had led a band against Dutch forces at Bipolo before withdrawing to Kauniki. One of his main services to the Pretendent-Keizer was to supply him with guns, bullets and powder. According to Doko Tji A Man was imprisoned in Kupang, but a wealthy fellow Chinese, Tjung Fuk Long, arranged for a Batavia lawyer to defend his case. Before the lawyer arrived the Dutch

45 De Rooy, ‘Politiek Verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over November en December 1905’, in Politieke verslagen...
46 De Rooy, ‘Politiek Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maanden Januari en Februari 1906’, in Politieke verslagen... While the Dutch source makes it clear that Sonbai surrendered voluntarily, the Timorese version is that he was tricked or betrayed. Doko has it that Sonbai was invited by the Fettor of Besiana to negotiate with the Gezaghebber at Kauniki. He proceeded there with full ceremony and was shocked on arrival to be encircled and captured. This version has an obvious parallel with the capture of Diponegoro in Java in 1830. In other versions Sonbai’s hiding-place was revealed to the Dutch for material reward; see I. H. Doko, Pahlawan-pahlawan suku Timor, pp.28-29; Sejarah perlawanan..., pp.28-29; and F. H. Fobia, ‘Sonbai’, p.102.
47 De Rooy, ‘Politiek Verslag...Januari en Februari 1906’, in Politieke verslagen...
48 Ibid.
hanged Tji A Man, but claimed that he had hanged himself. While the details of Doko’s story are unverified the role of Tji A Man as gun and powder supplier to Sonbai is plausible. Other Chinese are said to have played a similar role, such as Baa Kapitain, Nie Puk Nan and Ence Kie, who manufactured gunpowder and brought Sonbai rifles from Portuguese Timor. Indeed, this matter was one reason why the Dutch wished to restrict access to the interior for Chinese traders.

In April 1906 one of the last fugitives, Kornel Oteh, surrendered. According to Timorese sources the great meo Toto Smaut avoided capture, but gave himself up after he heard that Sonbai was in custody. Toto Smaut was sent in exile to Aceh, but was eventually allowed back and died in Kauniki in 1936. Another meo, Paut Lopo, tried to keep the war going, but was killed in battle by the Dutch. The Sonbai ‘revolt’ was over.

In the meantime, Sobe Sonbai was sent in exile to Waingapu on Sumba, where he remained for one or two years. Returning to Timor he settled in Camplong. The old Sonbai territory was divided up into other kingdoms, such as Amfoan, Molo, Miomafo and Fatuleu. In 1913 a movement was uncovered which aimed at re-uniting the old kingdom and placing Sobe Sonbai III back on the throne. Blame was placed with Sobe Sonbai’s brother, Besi Keli Sonbai, and Aloep Kono, ex-temukung of Kauniki. Besi Keli Sonbai died soon after and Aloep Kono returned to Kauniki, but Sobe Sonbai remained under surveillance in Camplong. Finally, as an old man in his eighties, Sonbai convinced the Dutch that he had no further ambitions and pleaded to be allowed to return to his birthplace Kauniki. Resident A. Couvreur granted his wish in June 1921. Sonbai was not finished yet, however, and after only a short time in Kauniki reports came in that he was once again preaching revolt against the ‘Company’. Couvreur had the old man taken away to Kupang immediately. He died there in exile in August 1922. He was buried in Fatufeto, not far from Fort

49 Doko, Pahlawan..., p.29.
50 Sejarah perlawanan..., p.30.
51 De Rooy, ‘Politiek Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maanden Maart en April 1906’, in Politieke verslagen...
52 Sejarah perlawanan..., p.29; see also Doko, Pahlawan..., p.29.
53 A. Couvreur, ‘Memorie van overgave van de residentie Timor en onderhoorigheden. 1924, juni’, in Indonesia: memories... See also Resident Maier, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Juni 1913’; and Secretaris Hunger, ‘Politieke
Concordia. The exact site, however, is unknown today.

**Perang Babuin**

The destruction of the Sonbai kingdom was not an auspicious sign for the other states in West Timor, but the actions of the Dutch were not condemned by all Timorese. As already stated Sobe Sonbai III’s claim as Keizer was not supported by all local rulers and many were willing to help the Dutch. Amanuban prided itself in having never been subject to Sonbai and had often been at war with Sonbai. Thus when the son of Raja Amanuban came in September 1905 with a large retinue to the area where the Dutch forces were fighting those of Sonbai it was not to offer assistance to Sonbai, but to pay respect to the representatives of the Dutch government. In March 1906 the crown prince of Amanuban, Koko Sufa Leu, came again to meet the Dutch at Tefnai and told them that thirty-four of his father’s subordinate chiefs had rejected his summons. The Dutch told Koko to return to Amanuban and prepare for the arrival of a Dutch force, as they planned to visit him soon.

The *pacificatie* in West Timor could not proceed in all districts at once, but once Sonbai had been subdued the road to the interior was wide open. After some ‘mopping-up’ operations in the Sonbai territory were completed Civiel Gezaghebber Captain Franssen Herderschee set out with a force of infantry and police for Amanuban. They arrived at the border on 12 June 1906 and were met by a team of fifty packhorses provided for their use by Koko Sufa Leu. On 14 June they arrived in the capital, Niki Niki. They were greeted by the Keizer of Amanuban, Hau Sufa Leu, or Raja Bil Nope as he was also known, and shown the barracks and dwellings built for the troops and officers to use during their stay in Amanuban.

The old and ailing Bil Nope was keen to get Dutch support to prop up his rule. The Dutch too wished to see Bil Nope’s authority enhanced as it would make their task of...
running West Timor through indirect rule all the easier if they had a powerful, sympathetic ruler in Amanuban. The Dutch were willing to punish local leaders who did not obey Bil Nope, but they had their own agenda also and one of their first actions was to arrange a meeting between the Keizer and his chiefs where they ‘investigated’ the setting-up of a ‘native administration’ for the kingdom. Clearly, the model investigated was provided by the Dutch. The Dutch then moved against a number of Chinese who had lived in Amanuban ‘illegally’ (that is, without Dutch permission) for years, including one who ran an ‘important business with gunpowder’. The Chinese were expelled and forced to report to Kupang. What Bil Nope thought of this is unknown, but he had his rewards also as many of his recalcitrant subordinates had been summoned and had already submitted. The Fettor of Babuin, ‘Atoe Soit’ (Atu Sae), had answered a previous summons with a threat to the Keizer and the government, so he was not summoned again. Instead, the Dutch column, accompanied by the Keizer and his followers, marched on Babuin on 22 June 1906. The Sae clan in Babuin were closely related to the Nopes, but in the old Timorese tradition they had wished to establish their own authority.

Babuin is situated between blocks of stone at a height of 900 metres. Despite the apparent defensive advantages held by Babuin its Fettor was not interested in prolonged battle with the Dutch; as soon as the Dutch forces let off their first salvo the Babuin defenders showed a white flag and Atu Sae announced he would submit. He declared, however, that he would submit to the government, but not to the Keizer. This was not accepted and he was forced to submit to both. There was little other resistance and peace settled on Amanuban as all its inhabitants acknowledged the supremacy of Bil Nope. One of the consequences of this was that it called a halt to the plans of the Nabuasa clan of south Amanuban who had sided with the rebels. The Nabuasa, like the Sae, had been trying to break free of the Nopes for some considerable time, but it was not to be.

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59 The ‘native administrations’ established by the Dutch gave the kingdoms the appearance of autonomy. They were responsible for organising the collection of taxes, the performance of corvee, the settling of disputes and the administration of justice at the local level, amongst other matters. They were heavily reliant on the input of Dutch ‘advisers’.

60 De Rooy, ‘Politiek Verslag...Juni en Juli 1906’, in Politieke verslagen...

61 Ibid. See also ‘Kort overzicht...’, Indisch Militair Tijdschrift, Vol.38, No.1, 1907, pp.432-433.

62 Doko, Pahlawan..., p.33.

63 For more about the Nabuasa clan’s struggle for independence, see Andrew McWilliam, ‘Narrating the gate and the path: Place and precedence in South West Timor’; pp.41-44. (This study has since
in West Timor retarded the process of evolution which had until then been continually at work within the Timorese political system.

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In the meantime, the military column moved on to Amanatun. There they experienced little opposition and soon started taking in rifles and registering the people. They were a rumour, however, that the kingdom of Nenometan (Anas), to the east of Amanatun, was preparing for war.65

**Resistance from Waiwiku**

The rumours were true, but the real opposition was coming from Waiwiku. A patrol to Anas led by Lieutenant van Doorn found itself under attack at Fotilo on 15 October 1906. A band of over seventy, whom the Dutch claimed were from Waiwiku, was led by ‘Kolot Foeli’ (Kolo Tafuli).66 They blocked the road and fired on the column from the hills. European Sergeant Smeets was killed and ‘native fusilier’ Pairen later died of his wounds. Fire was returned, resulting in eight Timorese dead, including Kolo Tafuli, and six wounded were captured.67 On 29 October there was a clash at Taberik between a patrol led by Lieutenant de Vries and a group of about 200 armed Timorese. De Vries’ patrol suffered one slightly wounded, while the Timorese left behind three dead.68 The Civiel Gezaghebber had in the meantime held talks with the Controleur of Belu to prepare for action against Waiwiku.69

On 11 November the column left Anas bound for Waiwiku. On 12 November they were marching along the coast through forested terrain as they approached the River
Belima (We Lima). At 11 a.m. the column found itself under fire along a broad front. The shots were coming from a fortification built alongside the river. The Dutch force attacked this fort from three sides and soon had it under their control, but not before a brave fight by the Timorese defenders. Thirty-two of their number were killed, including their leader Raja Nai MaroE.\(^{70}\) The Dutch forces fared much better, but still suffered three deaths: ‘native fusiliers’ Lasso, Taroenoleksono and Saredjo. Soerowirono, Pringgo and Sono died later of their wounds. There were also a number of less seriously injured, including Lieutenant van Doorn, who was struck in the leg with a spear.\(^{71}\) The fighting had not lasted long and by 1 p.m. the earthworks of the fortification had been destroyed and the force continued to march to its destination, Besikama.\(^{72}\) The Dutch later made little mention of their casualties at the Belima, but it was one of the greatest losses of life that they experienced in the West Timor ‘pacification’ campaigns.

Besikama, like other villages, was found deserted. The people had fled to Wehale, the seat of the Maromak Oan. On 14 November 1906 the Maromak Oan himself arrived at Besikama to negotiate with the Dutch. He expressed regret that the resistance had taken place and declared that he had in vain tried to prevent it. Waiwiku, he explained, brought him the yearly *poni* (tribute), but beyond that he had no influence.\(^{73}\)

On 18 November the leaders from Waiwiku came to pay their respects to the Dutch and on 26-27 November a mass meeting of local rulers was held at Besikama. It was then ascertained that Waiwiku had defied the prohibition of the Maromak Oan and was responsible exclusively for the ‘rebellion’. The *kampong* people had joined in mainly out of fear of the powerful Raja Nai MaroE, but he was now dead, as were the principal *meos*. As there had been no resistance since the battle at the Belima the Dutch offered an amnesty to all who had been involved in the fighting, but punished

\(^{71}\) De Rooy, Telegram to ‘Gouverneur-Generaal, Buitenzorg’, 2 December 1906, in *Politieke verslagen...*  
\(^{73}\) De Rooy, ‘Politiek Verslag...November en December 1906’, in *Politieke verslagen...*
Waiwiku with a $5,000 fine, the confiscation of all property owned by Raja MaroE
and the confiscation of all rifles in the kingdom. On 27 December the fine was paid
in full and over 1,000 firearms had been handed in. Patrols were sent in all directions
and a permanent base made on the border with Portuguese Timor. This military
presence was credited with bringing a halt to headhunting and slave raids from
Fohorem across the border. Following these successful actions the majority of the
force was sent back west to continue with the registration, collection of rifles and the
establishment of ‘native administrations’ in the already ‘pacified’ districts.\footnote{74}

Despite the Maromak Oan’s claim, accepted by the Dutch in 1906, that he had
virtually no influence in South Belu he was designated as Raja for the region. In July
1909 it was reported that the Keizer of Wehale (the Maromak Oan) had little
authority over his subordinates and seemed to be more concerned with religious
matters, such as making offerings to water and earth spirits, than in administrative
affairs.\footnote{75} In November 1909 he was being held in custody at Atapupu as punishment
for ‘dereliction of duty and his seldom firm actions’. He was warned that if he did
not look after the interests of his kingdom he would be removed from his post.\footnote{76} In
early 1910 he was allowed to return to Wehale, but it was clear that he was a
reluctant ruler. The treatment meted out to the Maromak Oan is an excellent example
of how the Dutch failed to come to grips with the Timorese political system. From
their early contacts the Dutch knew that the Maromak Oan was a powerful figure, but
they thought that he wielded executive power when he was actually a spiritual leader.
Despite early examples of his limited powers, his own admissions of a lack of
influence and recognition that he was more involved with religious affairs than
administrative matters, the Dutch persisted with the Maromak Oan as a political
leader; a role he could not play. The situation altered in 1915 when Assistent
Resident Gramberg held discussions with local chiefs. There was to be a new united
kingdom of South Belu called Malaka and they were asked to decide who should
become its head. The combined leaders agreed that the Keizer of Wehale had the

\footnote{74}Ibid. See also ‘Kort overzicht...’, *Indisch Militair Tijdschrift*, Vol.38, No.1, 1907, pp.435-436.
\footnote{75}Resident Loriaux, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en
Onderhoorigheden over de maand Juli 1909’, in *Politieke verslagen...*
\footnote{76}Loriaux, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over
de maand November 1909’, in *Politieke verslagen...*
most right to the position, but as he did not want it the job was given to the Liurai of Fatu Aruin, Tai Seran, with the title Nai Bot.  

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Twelve months after the Dutch abandoned the policy of ‘abstention’ they had wrought major changes in West Timor. Sonbai was forced to submit and Dutch forces campaigned from west to east throughout the territory. There had been opposition, but the Dutch actions had been largely successful. A permanent Dutch presence was established in new administrative centres, such as Kapan in Central Timor, but the forces available for the ‘pacification’ were limited and they travelled from one district to another and then back again to enforce the new regulations and to proceed with the registration and surrender of rifles. Road works were commenced using corvee labour and plans were made for a cash head tax to replace the annual tribute to the rajas. The Timorese, however, were not completely subdued and the enforcement of the new regulations was a matter of much resentment. Dutch reports show that they tried to keep abreast of Timorese feelings so as to pre-empt any trouble, but what occurred in Kolbano in late 1907 caught the Dutch completely off guard.

**Perang Kolbano**

The Dutch should have had no trouble in the Amanuban village Kolbano as Raja Amanuban, Bil Nope, had been most willing to accommodate the Europeans. However, Kolbano, like Babuin, was one of the south Amanuban villages which had rejected its Keizer and sought to go it alone.  The revolt in Kolbano was led by Temukung Boi Boimau, also known as Kapitan Boimau, or Boi Kapitan. He was helped by two *meos*, Esa Taneo and Pehe Neolaka.  Boi Boimau was subordinate to the Fettor of Pana, but had long since stopped listening to his instructions.  Five

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77 Gramberg, ‘Tournee rapport van de Civiel en Militaire Assistent Resident’, 6 May 1915, in *Politieke verslagen...* This is confusing as Nai Bot was an alternative title of the Maromak Oan.
78 De Rooy, ‘Politiek-Verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over het tijdvak November tot en met December 1907 en Januari 1908’, in *Politieke verslagen...*
79 *Sejarah perlawan...*, p.49; and Yusof Boimau, interview Niki Niki, 23 June 2000.
80 Engel, ‘Politiek verslag...September tot en met October 1907’, in *Politieke verslagen...*
neighbouring kampongs had similarly decided no longer to listen to the government, or their Keizer, Bil Nope.\textsuperscript{81}

According to Timorese sources the main grievance of Boi Boimau was the new taxes introduced by the Dutch. These were too high to pay and the people of Kolbano fell into debt. After repeated demands the Dutch sent a military force to collect the taxes.\textsuperscript{82} The need to provide corvee labour for road building and the compulsory surrender of weapons are stated as major grievances also.\textsuperscript{83} Dutch sources that quote Boimau himself make no mention of taxes (which in general were not collected in cash in the interior of West Timor until 1909), but say the revolt was caused by the order to hand in rifles, a fine imposed because of slowness in handing in rifles, an order to build a road, and most of all because of enmity and resentment towards the Keizer of Amanuban.\textsuperscript{84}

Sergeant M. Schiphorst, who had been involved in the disarmament elsewhere in Amanuban, commanded a patrol to Kolbano to collect rifles and obtain payment of a fine placed on Boi Boimau for previous recalcitrance in surrendering the weapons. The patrol included one other European, Corporal F. M. Schwung, Javanese Corporal Semeroe and sixteen riflemen. The patrol was accompanied by a Timorese guide-interpreter and at least two convicts, probably porters.\textsuperscript{85}

On 26 October 1907 the patrol stopped at Pana, a few hours march from Kolbano, where the Fettor warned Schiphorst that his patrol was too weak as Boimau was likely to resist. Schiphorst ignored this advice and continued on to Kolbano where he arrived in the early afternoon. The patrol then retired to the bivouac built for them by the local people.\textsuperscript{86} There are a number of versions of what happened next. According to some versions the soldiers were offered a cool drink, but as they imbibed they had

\textsuperscript{81}De Rooy, Telegram, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie den Gouverneur-Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie’, 4 November 1907, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...

\textsuperscript{82}Boimau, interview Niki Niki, 23 June 2000.

\textsuperscript{83}Sejarah perlawanan..., pp.42-45.

\textsuperscript{84}De Rooy, ‘Politiek-Verslag...November tot en met December 1907 en Januari 1908’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...

\textsuperscript{85}De Rooy, Telegram, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie...’, 4 November 1907, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...

\textsuperscript{86}Engel, ‘Politiek verslag...September tot en met October 1907’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
ground-up chilli blown into their eyes, while Kolbano’s meos slashed their throats.\textsuperscript{87} In official reports Schiphorst was posthumously accused of ‘extraordinary imprudence’,\textsuperscript{88} of being ‘not suitable for the task’ ‘in every respect’\textsuperscript{89} and the whole patrol was accused of being drunk on sopi (locally distilled liquor) given to them by the Kolbano people.\textsuperscript{90} The patrol’s Timorese guide reported that the soldiers were dozing in their bivouac when he noticed over 600 armed men lurking in the scrub. He warned Schiphorst, who replied off-handedly: ‘Oh, those are the rifles they have come to hand in’. A Timorese then approached Schiphorst with a coin, offered by Boimau as part-payment of the fine. Schiphorst refused the coin and asked to speak with the Temukung himself. The man then produced a knife and ran the blade deep into the chest of the unsuspecting Sergeant. Corporal Schwung got the same treatment and the two Europeans fell down dead. That was the signal for the rest of the Kolbano ‘rebels’ who attacked the soldiers in the bivouac using guns, knives and klewangs. Most of the still-groggy Javanese soldiers were killed immediately, but three managed to grab their rifles and starting firing in all directions, killing a number of their attackers. The soldiers, two of whom were heavily wounded, made off into the scrub to join the two wounded convicts and the guide, whose only injury was a bullet-hole through his sarong.\textsuperscript{91} The group made their way to Pana, where they were given assistance, and then on to Niki Niki.\textsuperscript{92}

The two Europeans and fourteen of the Javanese soldiers of the patrol died in the attack. The dead were decapitated. Apart from the heads, fifteen klewangs, fifteen rifles and about 300 cartridges made up the booty of the victors.\textsuperscript{93} Up to 1,200 men were said to have been involved in the Kolbano resistance movement and women

\textsuperscript{88} ‘Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden. Mailrapport 1906-1908’, No.1524, in Politieke verslagen...
\textsuperscript{89} Engel, ‘Politiek verslag...September tot en met October 1907’, in Politieke verslagen...
\textsuperscript{90} For example, ‘Militaire memorie...1930’, in Indonesia: memories... It was claimed also that the drink must have contained some drug as the soldiers went to sleep straight after taking the ‘refreshments’; see De Rooy, Telegram, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie...’, 4 November 1907, in Politieke verslagen...
\textsuperscript{91} De Rooy, Telegram, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie...’, 4 November 1907, in Politieke verslagen... The guide was later accused of being part of the plot; see De Rooy, ‘Politiek-Verslag...November tot en met December 1907 en Januari 1908’, in Politieke verslagen...
\textsuperscript{92} Engel, ‘Politiek verslag...September tot en met October 1907’, in Politieke verslagen...
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid.
were said to have taken part also, dressed in men’s clothes and fitted out with belts and rifles. Great celebrations were said to have been held in Kolbano after the battle with screaming, beating of gongs and shooting of rifles.94 The celebrations did not last long.

The news was soon heard in Kupang. Resident de Rooy felt that ‘a powerful and exemplary punishment’ was necessary. He contacted the army requesting reinforcements be sent to Central Timor.95 A force of over eighty soldiers left Kapan for Kolbano on 9 November. On 11 November a group led by Lieutenant van Temmen fared badly after clashing with some of the Kolbano resistance. The ‘native fusilier’ Lono was killed and others badly wounded. Van Temmen himself was hit in the thigh and the same bullet then wounded the thigh of his attendant.96 On the Timorese side one meo and his son were wounded, while another meo, who had nothing to do with the battle, was killed by a stray bullet while preparing a meal some distance away.97 Otherwise, the people of Kolbano avoided the Dutch force, and the village itself was deserted.98 A head belonging to one of Schiphorst’s patrol was found on a stake on the beach nearby.99

The people were thought to be hiding in the mountains, but it was considered that Boimau himself was probably still close by. On 16 November Lieutenant de Borst arrived in Kolbano aboard the Pelikaan with two brigades of police and replacements for the soldiers of the Schiphorst patrol. Convicts were sent from Kupang and Kapan to help and there were plans for more to be sent from Java.100 De Borst brought results and after making contact with the people twelve of the stolen rifles, forty-three cartridges, four klewangs, nine packhorses and eight stolen heads were

94 De Rooy, Telegram, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie...’, 4 November 1907, in Politieke verslagen... Women were often indicated as being together with their menfolk as they fought the Dutch forces, but it is usually unclear if they were actively involved. There was at least one case, however, during the hunt for Sonbai in 1905 where a Timorese woman was killed with a rifle in her hands, ‘taken for a man’; see ‘Kort overzicht...’, Indisch Militair Tijdschrift, Vol.37, No.1, 1906, p.86.
95 Ibid.
96 Engel, Telegram to ‘G. G. Buitenzorg’, 13 November 1907, in Politieke verslagen...
97 Engel, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie den Gouverneur-Generaal’, 20 November 1907, in Politieke verslagen...
98 Engel, Telegram to ‘G. G. Buitenzorg’, 13 November 1907, in Politieke verslagen...
99 Engel, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie den Gouverneur-Generaal’, 20 November 1907, in Politieke verslagen...
100 Ibid.
surrendered. On 25 November a hiding place of the fugitives was attacked and six were killed. On 4 December Lieutenant Kunst arrived in Kolbano on the *Pelikaan* with two more brigades of constables and eighty convicts.101 By then most of those implicated in the revolt had already been captured, including Boimau himself who was caught in a surprise night attack led by Sergeant Droog. In the same action the last three stolen rifles were recovered along with four *klewang* s and six cartridges. At Oibubur Schiphorst’s head was discovered and taken back to Kolbano where it was buried in a common grave along with the remains of his men.102 Following these events the Dutch felt they had the upper hand. With the stolen weapons returned and the fugitives captive they could proceed with the work that Schiphorst had originally been sent to do: collect rifles and register the people.103 Nevertheless, it was considered prudent to maintain continuous patrols in the district to ensure the peace.104

According to Timorese sources the Dutch used a terror campaign to achieve their aims in Kolbano. Kolbano was attacked from both land and sea. Scores of houses were torched and livestock was confiscated.105 After being first taken to Kupang Boi Boimau and his *meo* s were sent into exile and never returned. Esa Taneo, ‘who could not be killed with bullets’, was said to have been beaten to death and buried on Flores.106 Such a fate for one involved in the Kolbano revolt is not beyond the realms of possibility as the Dutch were outraged by the whole affair. To commemorate their losses they erected a large monument at Kolbano, which can still be seen.107

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The retribution meted out to Kolbano was not enough to stop other manifestations of Timorese dissent. There was resistance, for example, from the kingdom of Lidak led by *meo* Asanatun of the Tais Mutin clan. This *meo* and his clan were notorious cattle

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101 Engel, Telegram to ‘G. G. Buitenzorg’, 4 December 1907, in *Politieke verslagen*...
102 Engel, Telegram to ‘G. G. Buitenzorg’, 7 December 1907, in *Politieke verslagen*...
103 De Rooy, ‘Politiek-Verslag...November tot en met December 1907 en Januari 1908’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
104 Engel, Telegram to ‘G. G. Buitenzorg’, 7 December 1907, in *Politieke verslagen*...
106 *Sejarah perlawanan*..., p.51.
107 Personal visit, 20 June 2000.
thieves and it was reported that they would resist the forthcoming registration and disarmament in the district. Meo Asa thrice rejected the summons of the Controleur, so in late August 1907 it was decided to march on him at his stronghold in Roebena. The kampong was fortified with blocks of heavy stone, while other stone blocks hung suspended on ropes, ready to be dropped on attackers. With only about thirty soldiers available for the action it was thought impossible to storm the fortress, so a siege was begun instead. On 28 August the defenders indicated a desire to surrender and the following day over twenty men and numerous women and children emerged from the fort. Meo Asa and a number of his sons were not among them. On 3 September three soldiers climbed the fortifications, but the meo and his sons had already escaped. A bounty was placed on Asanatun’s head, but he remained elusive. A patrol sent to Lidak in early 1908 to search for the meo was ambushed with one soldier killed and another heavily wounded. Plans were made for a more comprehensive search, but a few months later he was still in hiding. In early 1910 Lidak was occupied by the military, but Asanatun refused to submit, although two of his sons were caught and brought into Atambua by Raja Harneno. Later the same year Asanatun was still reported as a fugitive and his final fate is unclear as his name was not mentioned in the reports again.

Another figure of concern to the Dutch was Seki Tafuli, son of the slain meo from Fotilo. A patrol was sent to Anas in December 1907 to search for Tafuli, who had been implicated in a plunder and headhunting raid in Amanatun. He fled to Noemuti, but was later apprehended by the Posthouder of Besikama. He managed to escape en route to Atapupu. In early 1908, however, he was discovered in Anas and killed. In July 1909 it was reported that another military patrol had been to Anas,

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108 Engel, ‘Politiek verslag...September tot en met October 1907’, in Politieke verslagen...
109 De Rooy, ‘Politiek-Verslag...November tot en met December 1907 en Januari 1908’, in Politieke verslagen...
110 De Rooy, ‘Politiek verslag...Februari tot en met Mei 1908’, in Politieke verslagen...
111 Loriaux, ‘Politiek-Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maanden Juni en Juli 1908’, in Politieke verslagen...
112 Loriaux, ‘Politiek-Gedeelte van het Korte-Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Januari 1910’, in Politieke verslagen...
113 Loriaux, ‘Politiek-Gedeelte van het Korte-Verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand April 1910’, in Politieke verslagen...
114 De Rooy, ‘Politiek-Verslag...November tot en met December 1907 en Januari 1908’, in Politieke verslagen...
115 De Rooy, ‘Politiek verslag...Februari tot en met Mei 1908’, in Politieke verslagen...
this time in search of Berya Tafuli, who had set himself up as chief of Putain. Along with his rifle-bearing colleagues he conducted plunder raids against the disarmed villages.\textsuperscript{116} He was caught in February 1910.\textsuperscript{117}

There was also the surprise night attack made on the patrol led by Lieutenant Gude. Night attacks were rare in Timor and there had been few surprise attacks on Dutch patrols; the most memorable having occurred at Kolbano. Gude’s patrol, however, did not suffer the fate of Schiphorst’s. Gude was camped at Wonak on the night of 24 February 1909. He was investigating reports of livestock thefts carried out by people from Portuguese Ambeno-Oecusse. It was apparently these people who attacked Gude, but he fought them off and killed several of their number, including Raja Usif Bobo and one of his meos, with only a few slightly wounded on the Dutch side.\textsuperscript{118} The Portuguese were helpful and vowed to punish the culprits, but despite the efforts of a combined Dutch-Portuguese patrol no other participants in the attack were found.\textsuperscript{119}

There were many other disturbances led by meos and other subordinate figures who refused to obey the orders of their rajas or the government. In such instances the Dutch were prone to support the leader whom they saw as the legitimate ruler, in exchange for co-operation and acknowledgement of their own superior position. Such had been the case when the Dutch had acted in the Perang Babuin in 1906 to prop up the rule of Keizer Bil Nope of Amanuban. By 1910, however, Raja Bil had grievous doubts that he had made a good bargain.

\textit{Perang Niki Niki}

Bil Nope was described in Dutch reports as a ruler ‘of the old stamp’. He was a stern and even cruel ruler whose authority was based on fear as much as respect.\textsuperscript{120} One of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[116] Loriaux, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag...Juli 1909’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\item[118] Loriaux, ‘Politiek-Gedeelte van het Kort-Verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maanden Januari en Februari 1909’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\item[119] Loriaux, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Mei 1909’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\item[120] For example, see Gramberg, ‘Koko Soefa Leo, radja moedah van Amanoebang’, 1 October 1913, in \textit{Memories}...
\end{footnotes}
his more notable forms of punishment was to have offenders turned into human *sates* by forcing sharp sticks up their rectums until they came out through their heads. Their bodies were then hung in trees as a warning to others. The Keizer’s very name was a reflection of the fear he inspired in his subjects, Bil being short for *ta’-bil*, meaning ‘closed eyes’, as no-one was allowed to look at his face, even when talking to him.

Bil Nope was born in 1844 and became Keizer of Amanuban in 1870. He was a large, strong man. This, combined with his forceful personality, was enough for him to maintain a tight grip on the reins in Amanuban. By 1906, however, he was a shadow of his former self. Then in his sixties, he had led a somewhat dissolute life. He suffered from syphilis and had recently lost the use of his legs. To get around he had to be carried or pushed in a trolley. Under these circumstances many of his subordinate heads made bids for independence. Bil Nope, however, was proud of his authority and sent his son to the Dutch to seek assistance. As recounted above, the Dutch crushed two major revolts in his realm: Babuin in 1906 and Kolbano in 1907. The Keizer was thankful and offered the Dutch what assistance he could and often sent the troops encamped in his realm presents of fruit and meat. When the Dutch took action against neighbouring Amanatun the Keizer offered them help, sent them refreshments and, despite his bad health, came a number of times to visit the troops as well.

The Dutch established a permanent presence in Amanuban and when Bil Nope signed the *Korte Verklaring* on 1 July 1908 he acknowledged Dutch suzerainty over his kingdom. On the basis of this treaty the Dutch felt secure in Amanuban. It seems that the Keizer sought to strengthen the bond further when he had one of his nieces married off to a sergeant of the Dutch forces and built them a house in Niki Niki. Schulte Nordholt argues convincingly that Bil Nope would have seen this marriage in terms of Timorese *adat* where he, as the bride-giver, was in a

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121 Markus Banamtuan, interview SoE, 26 June 2000.
122 Doko, *Pahlawan...*, p.32.
123 Ibid.
124 Gramberg, ‘Koko...’, in *Memories...*
125 J. Venema, ‘Algemeene memorie betreffende de onderafdeling Zuid-Midden Timor’, 1916, in *Indonesia: memories...*
126 Gramberg, ‘Koko...’, in *Memories...*
superordinate position vis-à-vis the ‘Company’. It is likely that neither the sergeant nor his superiors knew of this implication.\textsuperscript{127} This differing interpretation of the position of the parties seems to have caused no immediate problems and the relationship between the Dutch and the Keizer was reported as very amicable.\textsuperscript{128} This changed towards the end of 1909 when Civiel Gezaghebber Lieutenant Hoff arrived to take over the administration of Amanuban.

Timorese sources state that the Keizer soon became dissatisfied with Dutch demands for the surrender of rifles, the need to perform corvee labour and the requirement to pay taxes. Long term plans were then made for a revolt.\textsuperscript{129} Lieutenant Hoff reported that the revolt in Niki Niki in October 1910 had been led by the crown prince, Koko Sufa Leo, who was tired of the orders of the ‘Company’. The old Keizer had been left with little choice but to participate. A later Dutch investigation, however, made it clear that the revolt was led by the Keizer himself and his motivation was to put a stop to the actions of Lieutenant Hoff.\textsuperscript{130}

Hoff spoke Dawan and must have understood enough of local adat to know that his actions would cause great offence. One of these actions was to marry a daughter of Temukung Niti Bani of Pene. It was from this quarter that the rulers of Amanuban always obtained their brides. Hoff’s marriage meant not only that the Keizer was denied a bride, but implied that Niti Bani thought there was more to be gained from an alliance with Hoff than with the Keizer. The Keizer was furious, but even more so as Hoff proceeded to discriminate against the Keizer and give preferential treatment to his father-in-law. He treated the Keizer with contempt, gave him only short hearings, turned his back on his requests and spat on the ground in his presence - a great insult.\textsuperscript{131}

Hoff interfered in the Keizer’s court life also. About 100 people who lived in the sonaf (palace) were returned to their villages. The mafefa, the Keizer’s spokesman and his most important minister, was refused access to the sonaf, where he had been

\textsuperscript{127} Schulte Nordholt, \textit{The political system of the Atoni...}, p.457.
\textsuperscript{128} Gramberg, ‘Koko...’, in \textit{Memories}...
\textsuperscript{129} Doko, \textit{Pahlawan...}, p.32; and \textit{Sejarah perlawanan...}, pp.54-55.
\textsuperscript{130} Gramberg, ‘Koko...’, in \textit{Memories}...
\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Ibid.}
a daily guest. A number of young women who lived in the sonaf, including some destined to marry the Keizer, were removed. One young woman from the same family as Hoff’s wife fled the sonaf and sought shelter at Hoff’s house. Not only did Hoff take her in, but he refused the Keizer’s request that she be returned. Instead she was married to a Chinese named Oeij Tjoe Oean. This event occurred four or five months before the final revolt.  

All this seems to have happened without the knowledge of Hoff’s superiors. There was no-one available to countermand Hoff’s actions and the local people were probably too cowed to report him to the government in Kupang. That same government was negligent in allowing this state of affairs to develop, but, as pointed out by Schulte Nordholt, they were still largely ignorant of the intricacies of the Timorese social and political systems. At the same time the Keizer and his supporters were in a cultural bind also. Hoff had manipulated the Timorese system for his own ends, but his actions must often have been inexplicable to the Keizer, as well as being humiliating. With little understanding of how the European system operated Keizer Bil opted for a Timorese solution: war.

Initially Bil Nope may have felt a revolt against Hoff would succeed. Help was sought from Noemuti, but Raja da Costa would not participate. His kingdom was virtually independent of the Portuguese and he did not wish to risk the wrath of the Dutch. The Keizer seems then to have come to the conclusion that there could be no general revolt and that to oppose the Dutch otherwise would be suicidal. He proceeded anyway, vowing that he preferred death to the humiliation meted out to him by Lieutenant Hoff.  

The revolt staged by Keizer Bil Nope was unique on two grounds. His decision to die in battle rather than surrender to the Dutch was an unusual action for a Timorese raja; even the great Sonbai had eventually submitted to superior forces. Also, Bil Nope fortified his sonaf, which was not so unusual, but he added a unique underground

132 Ibid. The marriage of the young woman to Oeij Tjoe Oan is mentioned also in Doko, Pahlawan..., p.35.  
134 Gramberg, ‘Koko...’, in Memories...
chamber which he planned to use in his last stand. In the period leading up to the fatal revolt Keizer Bil distanced himself from Lieutenant Hoff. All meetings with the Dutch representative were attended by crown prince Koko instead, who reported directly to his father. 135 There was no mention in the monthly Resident’s reports of irregularities in Niki Niki at the time, although Hoff reported immediately after the revolt that there had been local dissatisfaction with demands for compulsory labour for road-building and farming projects. 136 A much later Dutch report claimed that there had been widespread refusal to pay taxes and perform corvee. 137 Such matters were reported as a matter of course, so it is unusual that nothing was said at the time.

What actually happened at Niki Niki during Keizer Bil’s last days is difficult to say. In his report for October 1910 the Resident noted that the cause of the resistance was unknown, but that it had lasted several days before the Keizer was killed when his sonaf was stormed by Dutch troops. 138 According to a later Dutch report the resistance was in the open at least one week before Keizer Bil himself was killed, as on 3 October the wives of three soldiers from the Dutch force were murdered in their beds. Later a large number of armed horsemen approached Hoff’s house, but were driven away. The Keizer then hid in his sonaf and the Dutch forces were shot at from within. 139 According to Timorese sources there was indeed an attempt made to kill Hoff by a mounted meo named Sufa Selan, but he was shot down. Attacks were then made on the army barracks and the telephone lines to the posts at Kapan and Noeltoko were cut. Raja Bil, his family, servants and a number of meos took refuge inside the sonaf, while other meos took up strategic positions in its environs. 140

Despite the telephone lines being cut the Dutch managed to have extra forces sent from Kapan and the siege of the sonaf began. As the siege progressed Bil Nope’s forces were diminished rapidly. Finally, with only a handful of meos left in the sonaf

135 Doko, Pahlawan..., pp.34-35.
136 Gramberg, ‘Koko…’, in Memories...
138 Loriaux, ‘Politiek-Gedeelte van het Kort-Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand October 1910’, in Politieke verslagen...
139 Reijntjes, ‘Memorie…’.
140 Doko, Pahlawan..., pp.36-37; see also Sejarah perlawanan..., pp.58-60. According to Gramberg there had been no attack on the army barracks, but there had been an attack on the complex where Hoff lived. This, he said, was more proof that the revolt was aimed against Hoff and not the ‘Company’; see Gramberg, ‘Koko…’, in Memories...
the Keizer decided the moment had come to honour his oath to die. He ordered his son Koko and the remaining meos to flee, but to set fire to the sonaf before their retreat. Bil Nope, his wives and loyal servants (ex-slaves) then climbed down into the underground chamber. In this way the old ruler of Amanuban ended his life with honour. He is now remembered as Usi Lan Ai: the raja who died by fire.

The sonaf burnt for days and no bodies were ever found, only some badly burnt bones. A Dutch report put the death toll at fourteen, while a monument to Bil Nope in the royal graveyard at Niki Niki indicates that twenty-two people perished in the blaze. Dutch sources are silent on their own casualties, but Timorese sources mention two or three soldiers of the Dutch force being killed during the siege of the sonaf. Lieutenant Hoff reported Koko Sufa Leu among the killed on the Timorese side and offered as proof a pair of silver leg rings which Koko was known to have worn and which were found by Hoff under the still smouldering rubble. Captain H. Gramberg investigated the incident in 1913 and pointed out that if the fire was of such intensity that it left extant only a few badly damaged bones, how was it possible that the silver rings had suffered no damage at all? He pointed also to the testimony of a Niki Niki woman who saw Koko change into women’s clothing and flee from the scene. Gramberg included in his report the statements of a number of other Timorese who claimed to have met or seen Koko after his supposed death.

Peace returned to Amanuban almost immediately with the death of the old raja. Noni Nope, a younger brother of Bil Nope, was installed as Keizer and the Dutch were satisfied that they would have no further trouble. However, there were rumours for years that Koko Sufa Leu was still living in the vicinity. In 1912 there were a number of arson attacks in Niki Niki. The targets included the school that had recently been established in the former dwelling of Koko himself. There was an attempt also to burn the house of Oeij Tjoe Oean, the Chinese who had married the escapee from the

141 Doko, Pahlawan..., pp.38-39; see also Sejarah perlawanan..., pp.58-60; and Nope, interview Niki Niki, 15 June 2000.
142 Nope, interview Niki Niki, 15 June 2000. See also Doko, Pahlawan..., p.39.
143 Reijntjes, ‘Memorie...’; and personal visit to Niki Niki, 15 June 2000.
144 Doko, Pahlawan..., p.37; see also Sejarah perlawanan..., pp.59-61.
145 Gramberg, ‘Koko...’, in Memories...
In March 1914 the Dutch received reports that Koko was living in Noemuti and had recently had discussions with Raja da Costa of Oecusse about a possible revolt in Dutch territory. The revolt did not occur and Koko Sufa Leo was neither heard of nor seen again.

The fate of Koko Sufa Leu is one of the great mysteries of West Timor. If he did survive the 1910 Niki Niki fire he then effectively disappeared. There is, however, something mysterious about the whole episode. Lieutenant Hoff’s reports were incomplete and inconsistent. This is understandable as he was deeply involved in the case personally and he no doubt sought to protect his own interests. He would appear to have been successful in this as he was promoted to captain when he was transferred out of Amanuban following the abortive revolt. There is a sense though that Hoff was not rewarded, but ‘kicked upstairs’. In the Resident’s monthly reports the revolt was covered only briefly. In his October 1910 report Resident Loriaux refers to a secret letter in which he had outlined his ideas about the matter. This secret letter and other information relating to the case is not included with the collection of monthly reports, although secret letters relating to other matters are. The feeling that there had been a cover-up is strengthened by a 1930 military report of West Timor. In that report it is stated briefly that the Keizer had revolted against the government and that all the occupants of his fortified house were slain. The report writer concludes with: ‘Further particulars about this event cannot be found in the archives’.

There are two reports, however, which throw some light on what happened in Niki Niki in 1910. The first is the 1913 Gramberg report, cited above. Gramberg is scathing in his criticism of Hoff and implicitly blames him for causing the revolt. The second document is the report on South Central Timor written by W. H. G.

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146 De Civiel en Militaire Resident van Rietschoten, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag over de maand October 1912 van der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, and ‘Politieke gedeelte van het Kort Verslag over de maand November 1912 van het Gewest Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, in Politieke verslagen... See also Gramberg, ‘Koko...’, in Memories...
147 Secretaris Ezerman, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Maart 1914’, in Politieke verslagen...
148 Loriaux, ‘Politiek-Gedeelte van het Kort-Verslag...October 1910’, in Politieke verslagen...
149 ‘Militaire memorie...1930’, in Indonesia: memories...
150 Gramberg, ‘Koko...’, in Memories...
Although written decades later the information in the report relating to events in Niki Niki in 1910 is quite detailed. This information may have come from the testimony of local witnesses or the report may have been based on an older document. The report suggests that the Dutch were more responsible for the death of the old Keizer than is otherwise admitted. Bil Nope is considered a hero in Timor today. His determination to resist the Dutch and his willingness to die rather than submit are presented in glowing terms in Indonesian histories. His death is more glorious because it was of his own making, as it was he who had ordered that his *sonaf* be set ablaze. Reijntjes appears to contradict this. In his report he states that ‘the sonaf was encircled and set on fire’. He goes on to say that the Raja then hid in a cave or grotto behind the *sonaf* and refused to heed repeated orders for him to appear. Finally, states Reijntjes, the Keizer and his companions were killed after ‘a mass of burning material was thrown into the cave’. Did the Dutch deliberately kill Bil Nope? Reijntjes seems to be saying so.

It seems that the major Dutch response to Hoff’s actions in Niki Niki was to remove it from outside scrutiny. By 1910 the major work of achieving a *Pax Neerlandica* in Indonesia had already been completed. That some rulers would resent the Dutch attempt to enforce their suzerainty and would revolt against them was to be expected, but it was not accepted that this should result in major casualties. The Dutch became particularly sensitive to this issue after the bloody *puputans* in Bali which had greeted the Dutch attempt to introduce their rule to that island. In 1906 the Dutch had attacked Badung in south Bali in response to the alleged mistreatment of a ship flying the Dutch flag. The Rajas of Badung denied that there had been any wrongdoing and in answer to what they saw as determined efforts to destroy their rule the rajas had staged suicide-attacks, or *puputans*. Dressed in white, the rajas and their families marched from their palaces to face the Dutch guns. Those who survived the first salvoes stopped to finish off the wounded and then continued to march into the blazing guns until nearly all had been massacred. In 1908 in Klungkung the scene was repeated and with the death of this last defiant raja the Dutch could claim to be the supreme ruling power in Bali. The scenes of death and destruction in Bali shocked many Europeans, including Dutch supporters of the

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151 Reijntjes, *Memorie...*
Ethical Policy. The full extent of the tragedy was realised as it became clear that the Rajas of Badung had indeed probably been wrongly accused.\textsuperscript{152} There are parallels between the case of Bil Nope and that of the Bali rajas and it is conceivable that the Dutch tried to minimise the impact of the Nope case. Future research will hopefully reveal more conclusive evidence from the missing Dutch reports and correspondence on the matter.

Other resistance
The death of Bil Nope saw the end of any real resistance to the Dutch in Amanuban. In September 1912, however, a rebel movement was discovered in north Amanuban. Its members intended marching on Niki Niki and demanding the cessation of corvée and taxes. Its leaders were promptly arrested and the movement collapsed. The main leader was a lunatic who had preached revolt and rebellion for years, but no-one had ever taken him seriously.\textsuperscript{153} In July 1914 there was a report from the Gunung Mutis district of Central Timor of a plan to enthrone a new Keizer. After his elevation, it was said, the ‘Company’ would return to Kupang, the telephone lines would be cut, corvée labour would no longer be required and registration passes would become superfluous. These ideas were spread by some old people of the district who actually held the ‘Company’ in high regard. They had considered that the ‘Company’ was only going to stay in Central Timor a short time as its task was to restore order and bring the Timorese states back to their former mutual standing. This had now been largely achieved so it was time for the ‘Company’ to leave, although they would not hesitate to call on the ‘Company’ again if necessary. After it was made abundantly clear that the Dutch had no intention of going away people began to distance themselves from the movement and it became difficult to find its leaders.\textsuperscript{154} In November 1914 a similar movement was discovered in Beboki in north Belu where a pair of minor heads claimed that the time had come to ask the ‘Company’ to leave, to

\textsuperscript{153} Secretaris Uljee, ‘Politieke gedeelte van het kort verslag van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand September 1912’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\textsuperscript{154} Maier, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Juli 1914’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
abolish taxes and corvee, and to return to the ways of their forefathers. The leaders were punished and the movement was over.\textsuperscript{155}

A more serious uprising occurred in Foho Doenoek in north Belu in 1913. Raja Naitimu had summoned the \textit{temukung} of that \textit{kampong} on account of reports of livestock theft. The \textit{temukung} appeared with twenty followers armed with spears and \textit{klewang}s and threatened the Raja in case he should attempt any arrest. The Raja requested assistance, but a subsequent patrol found the \textit{kampong} heavily fortified and the people unwilling to surrender. The people fled, however, when more police arrived and they made a stand on a steep, rocky cliff at Nanait. Police and soldiers attacked the position, but were repulsed and suffered a number of wounded, three serious. The rebels abandoned Nanait overnight and took refuge in the nearby Portuguese territory.\textsuperscript{156}

In a clash with some remaining rebels one of them was killed and a ‘native fusilier’ with the Dutch forces was heavily wounded. Elsewhere in the district the Dutch forces busied themselves gathering in rifles and registering the people.\textsuperscript{157} Various people associated with the rebellion were arrested, including a Chinese who had lived in the interior for years.\textsuperscript{158} The main rebels, however, remained in Portuguese Timor and little was heard of them until 1915 when their leader, Kehi Benani, crossed over to West Timor in pursuit of his wife who would no longer stay with him in the Portuguese territory. After disfiguring his wife with a knife he re-crossed the border.\textsuperscript{159} It was considered that he and his cohorts were receiving protection from a certain Portuguese Lieutenant Dacosta.\textsuperscript{160} The Portuguese refused to extradite

\textsuperscript{155} Maier, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand November 1914’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\textsuperscript{156} Rietschoten, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Januari 1913’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\textsuperscript{157} Rietschoten, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Februari 1913’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\textsuperscript{158} Rietschoten, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Maart 1913’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\textsuperscript{159} Maier, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Juli 1915’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\textsuperscript{160} Maier, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand November 1915’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
Benani, but in March 1916 they forced him over the border where he was arrested immediately by the Gezaghebber of Belu.\textsuperscript{161}

Dutch reports in the last years leading up to 1920 are practically devoid of mention of revolts. There were two notable cases, however. In August 1919 Djoea Alip led a group of followers from Noemuti, Dutch territory since 1916, to the Dutch military encampments at Kefamenanu and Noeltoko. Alip assured his group that when they arrived the ‘Company’ would have already departed, having fled in fear. Alip belonged to one of the families charged with caring for the sacred mortal remains of one of the Sonbai rajas who had died in Noemuti generations beforehand. Alip convinced the people that he was possessed by the souls of the powerful deceased Sonbais and he threatened those who would not help him with thirst, hunger and sickness. The ranks of his followers swelled. In preparation for the great day he ordered that a dog be decapitated: the ancient battle custom whereby the enemy was given notice of its total destruction. Weapons were drenched in the dog’s blood and Djoea Alip made use of herbs to render his followers invulnerable. They then set out for Noeltoko. At Haulasi they met the Temukung of Noeltoko who informed them that the Dutch forces had certainly not left their encampment. On hearing this most of the group abandoned Djoea Alip, but a few pushed on. When they reached Bijela their leader was arrested and the movement came to a complete standstill.\textsuperscript{162}

In January 1920 another movement was uncovered near Waiwiku in South Belu. A woman had made claims of being in touch with heaven and the spirit world and she had come to be ‘regarded as a goddess’. She promised to end taxes and corvee. She furthermore spread the rumour that a warship would come to help the Belunese drive away the ‘Company’. The woman and her female helper were placed in custody and the movement dried up of its own accord.\textsuperscript{163}


\textsuperscript{162} Secretaris Onlusbaar, ‘Politiek gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Augustus 1919’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...

\textsuperscript{163} ‘Politiek gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Februari 1920’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
The relationship with Portuguese Timor

Throughout this period the Dutch-Portuguese relationship was somewhat ambivalent. The two parties agreed to co-operate in surveying and partitioning the island, but this in itself was the cause of much dispute. Ultimately the representatives of the Dutch and Portuguese governments in both Timor and Europe could not agree and, as mentioned in Chapter One, the case was referred to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in 1913. With the 1914 decision of this court accepted by both parties the final partition of the territory began. By 1916 the enclaves of Noemuti and Maukatar had been exchanged and the colonial powers were in possession of all territories which they claimed as their own. It had, however, been a difficult process. There was good-natured co-operation at senior levels, but many incidents undermined this, such as the failure to extradite criminals such as Kehi Benani from Portuguese Timor, or the reported help given to fugitives by individual Portuguese officers such as Lieutenant Dacosta. The Portuguese had their own complaints, such as the unauthorised crossing of the border by Dutch patrols. Both sides seem to have made light of the complaints of the other.

There were other problems which were largely out of the hands of the Europeans. The independent stance taken by the Rajas of Oecusse and Noemuti was a headache for both sides. The Dutch were convinced that numerous fugitives were hiding in Portuguese Timor, but they were particularly concerned about those in the enclaves. Koko Sufa Leo was only one of many fugitives thought to have sought protection in Noemuti over the years and the Dutch must have been relieved when the territory came under their control. Cross-border raiders, from both sides, in search of livestock, heads and slaves remained a serious problem, even after the borders had been settled. Some people were unsure whether they were in fact Dutch or Portuguese subjects. Others crossed the borders repeatedly to avoid paying taxes or performing corvee.

One of the greatest threats to peace between the two neighbours on Timor occurred in 1911. Early that year Portuguese troops began concentrating across the border

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164 For example, see Loriaux, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand December 1909’, in Politieke verslagen...
from the Dutch-claimed district of Lakmaras. The people of the district were subject to attack by bands from Portuguese Timor so the Dutch had established a post there, which was protested by the Portuguese. In June 1911 the Portuguese forced their way into Lakmaras where they established bases and began patrols, apparently with the aim of preventing Dutch forces entering neighbouring Maukatar, which was still under Dutch jurisdiction.

The crunch came the following month when the Portuguese built fortifications along the road into Maukatar from Lakmaras and used African troops and Timorese Moradores (a locally raised militia force accused by the Dutch of many irregularities) to prevent Dutch forces entering the district. The Dutch demanded the Portuguese vacate the area, but they refused. The Dutch then resorted to force and captured members of the Portuguese garrison and sent them to Kupang. In the process three African troops were killed. The Portuguese withdrew their forces shortly afterwards. Cavalry and mountain artillery units were despatched from Java and encamped near the central border. These were removed soon after, but an increased infantry presence remained. While nothing major developed from this dispute it is a good example of the volatility of the border region. If not for the cool heads of senior Portuguese and Dutch officials an international incident could have easily developed.

Disarmament of the Timorese

The disarmament of the population was one of the first acts of the Dutch during the pacificatie. Initially, ‘friendly’ kingdoms and those near the Portuguese borders were allowed to keep their weapons, but this practice was soon discontinued. In general, possession of a rifle became a crime and disarmament continued throughout the ‘pacification’ period. In the first months of the Sonbai campaign over 600 rifles were

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165 Vorstman, ‘Politiek gedeelte van het kort verslag...December 1910’, in Politieke verslagen...
166 Loriaux, ‘Politiek-Gedeelte van het Kort-Verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Januari 1911’; Vorstman, ‘Politiek gedeelte van het kort-verslag...Februari 1911’; and Vorstman, ‘Politiek gedeelte van het kort verslag...Maart 1911’, in Politieke verslagen...
167 Vorstman, ‘Politiek gedeelte van het kort verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Juni 1911’, in Politieke verslagen...
168 Rietschoten, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Juli 1911’, in Politieke verslagen...
taken in, but as late as 1917 nearly 600 rifles could still be taken from one district (Molo). For the Timorese possession of a rifle was symbolic of manhood and many guns that remained hidden from the Dutch were old heirlooms, usually antique muzzle-loaders decorated with silver coins. These were generally considered to be more dangerous to the user than the target. There were numerous battles waged by Timorese who refused to hand in their weapons, but such resistance invariably ended with the guns being seized after several Timorese had been killed. The willingness of the Timorese to engage the Dutch forces, however, contradicts the oft-made Dutch claim that the Timorese were cowardly in battle. Some Dutch officials, such as Resident Schultz, opined that the Timorese should be allowed to keep their old guns as demanding their surrender caused more trouble than they were worth.

The guns had been used in the hunt, but were employed also in the endemic warfare on the island. The Dutch banned headhunting and warfare and tried to solve ongoing disputes over territory by defining the boundaries of the kingdoms. These measures were not always successful. In October 1909 Resident Loriaux reported that disputes had emerged between Molo and Amfoan, Gunung Mutis and Takaip, Takaip and Bipolo and Amanuban and Amanatun, even though all those states had only recently agreed on their mutual borders. Loriaux believed that the government learned about the disputes just in time to prevent great bloodshed. While headhunting and large-scale warfare were repressed by the Dutch, they did not manage to put an end to the

171 Maier, ‘Politiek gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Januari 1917’, in Politieke verslagen...
172 Schultz, ‘Memorie...’, 1927, in Memories... Such sentiments had been heard several years previously from Controleur van Lith. Van Lith had argued that hundreds of old rifles remained hidden and were prized for use in the hunt and in ceremonies. If the people were allowed to openly keep their guns he felt there was little chance of a revolt and that any that did occur could be quickly quashed by a few armed police; see P. C. A. van Lith, ‘Nota van overgave van de onderafdeling Zuid Midden Timor’, 1921, in Indonesia: memories...
173 For example, a 1912 report stated that the Timorese had ‘not shown much courage’ against Dutch troops and in a 1930 report they were characterised as having a ‘shortage of courage’. These are typical comments. These claims are contradicted by the good regard in which Timorese soldiers in the Dutch colonial army were held by their superiors; see ‘Memorie...c.1912’, ‘Militaire memorie...1930’, in Indonesia: memories..., and J. A. de Moor (ed.), Indisch Militair Tijdschrift (1870-1942): A selective and annotated bibliography, pp.69-70, 143. See also J. A. de Moor, ‘Colonial warfare: Theory and Practice. The Dutch experience in Indonesia, 1816-1949’, Journal of the Japan-Netherlands Institute, 2, 1990, p.112.
174 Schultz, ‘Memorie...’, 1927, in Memories...
175 Loriaux, ‘Politiek Gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand October 1909’, in Politieke verslagen...
bitter rivalry and disputes between many of the kingdoms in West Timor; some of which have persisted until the present day.

**Removal of the Chinese from the interior**

As mentioned above the Dutch were keen to limit the influence of the Chinese in Timor. Chinese traders had supplied rifles and ammunition and had worked as advisers to rajas, as well as being intermediaries and interpreters when it was necessary to meet with the Dutch. Many of the Chinese in the interior had married into the leading Timorese families. They were the only outlet for trade and were accused by the Dutch of cheating local producers. To bring an end to this situation all Chinese were forced to leave the interior and relocate to Kupang or the new outpost towns, such as Kapan. Markets were established by the Dutch where the Timorese could sell their produce at a far better price than had previously obtained. Such moves were not universally welcomed. Losing their supply of firearms and powder was not a matter for rejoicing on the part of the rajas. The end of the barter system was not welcomed either as the Chinese traders generally gave some of their profit to the raja. The rajas got no benefit from the new markets. Nevertheless, there was little they could do about the new arrangements and the Chinese seem to have been quick to adapt. Business continued as usual in the towns and must have increased to some extent as it was reported that with the abolition of the barter system many Timorese began visiting the towns to procure their needs instead.¹⁷⁶

**Roads, telephones and other developments**

In preparation for, and during their military campaigns in West Timor, the Dutch paid great attention to the roads and tracks throughout the territory. Bridle-paths were widened and improved and corvee labour was used to build new roads linking the various districts. Special attention was given to the building of a trans-Timor carriageway from Kupang to Atapupu. This was a major task as before the pacificatie there were no roads in the interior at all. The task was made harder by the mountainous terrain and the yearly damage caused during the rainy season, when

¹⁷⁶ Dutch reports make frequent mention of the Chinese and their alleged bad influence. For examples, see De Rooy, *Politiek Verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over tydvak April t/m Augustus 1907*; Engel, *Politiek verslag...September tot en met October 1907*; De Rooy, *Politiek verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maanden Februari tot en met Mei 1908*, in *Politieke verslagen...*; and *Memorie...c.1912*, in *Indonesia: memories...*
many tracks were washed away. The Timorese ordered to build the roads did not always see their benefits. Thus in 1907 two fettors from Molo requested that they not be required to build roads linking their region with Amanuban and Amfoan as they only wished to have connections with the government in Kupang.\(^{177}\) The Dutch attempted to explain the benefits of the roads, which would not only improve security, but allow for greater economic development also. Throughout 1915, 1916 and 1917 the military were kept busy ensuring that corvee labourers turned out to perform their duty.\(^{178}\) This often involved tracking down a handful of Timorese who had avoided their obligation, but in some areas the problem was more common, such as in Beboki in 1916 where it was reported that about 40% of corvee labourers had not reported to work.\(^{179}\) Obviously many Timorese did turn out to do what was asked of them as the military were called on to supervise groups of up to 3,000 workers.\(^{180}\) The work was ongoing as there were always new roads required and old ones needed to be maintained, but it must have been with a sense of achievement that the Resident could report in September 1923 that the central Kupang-Atapupu road was complete.\(^{181}\) While the roads may have been useful there is no doubt that the requirement to help build them was resented and corvee labour was a perennial cause of discontent in West Timor. Taxes were resented also and as outlined above were a major cause of discontent. Freedom from corvee and taxes was the focus of political movements and a number of quasi-religious movements also.

Along with the roads the Dutch built a network of telephone lines on Timor which linked their various posts with Kupang. By 1908 the capital was linked with Atapupu and the new posts at Kapan, Naikliu and Niki Niki.\(^{182}\) By 1912 all government posts in West Timor were connected by telephone, except Besikama in South Belu, where the line was then in the process of being laid.\(^{183}\) The telephone was undoubtedly of

\(^{177}\) Engel, ‘Politiek verslag...September tot en met October 1907’, in Politieke verslagen...

\(^{178}\) See military reports in Politieke verslagen...

\(^{179}\) Maier, ‘Politiek gedeelte van het Kort Verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand September 1916’, in Politieke verslagen...

\(^{180}\) Gewestelijk Militaire Commandant (Regional Military Commander) Beckeringh, ‘Militair Commando van Timor en Onderhoorigheden, XIde Uittreksel 1915’, 27 October 1915, in Politieke verslagen...

\(^{181}\) Couvreur, ‘Politiek gedeelte van het kort verslag der residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand September 1923’, in Politieke verslagen...

\(^{182}\) Loriaux, ‘Politiek-verslag der Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maanden Augustus, September en October 1908’, in Politieke verslagen...

\(^{183}\) ‘Memorie...c.1912’, in Indonesia: memories...
The Timorese are unlikely to have perceived any benefit from the network, but its use as an instrument of control was recognised. During periods of revolt the line was cut and, along with the abolition of corvee and taxes, the removal of telephone lines was a commonly stated aim of insurgents.

Other measures were taken by the Dutch also, such as the registration of the people and the signing of the Korte Verklaring by the territory’s various regents. These measures were designed to maintain peace and security. There was an effort made also to improve the economic viability of Timor with the introduction of cattle by the government in 1912. By the 1920s the animals were the basis of a substantial export market to Java. Exploratory mining expeditions generated a lot of interest throughout the period, but failed to find any sites worth developing. In the meantime Kupang took on an increasingly modern look with many new facilities. There were public markets in Kupang as early as 1908 and an abattoir from 1909. Street lighting was turned on in 1915 and piped water was available from 1910. The ‘Hotel Koepang’ was open for business from 1914, as was the tennis court; while the public swimming pool was available to cool down hot citizens from 1911. In 1913 a wireless telegraph facility was opened in Kupang which linked the territory to the outside world. These facilities would have benefited mainly visitors and the town’s European inhabitants and must have been a source of wonderment to Timorese from the mountains. However, many of the marvels of modern technology, such as the telephone and motor-lorries, became regular features of the inland also.

**The First World War, expatriates and aviators**

Dutch neutrality during the First World War did not mean that the war went unnoticed in the Netherlands Indies. It was reported from West Timor in 1917 that trade in all items was experiencing ‘the harmful influence of the European war’.

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185 For a concise account of mining ventures in West Timor, see Ormeling, *The Timor problem...*, pp.2-4.

186 Assistent Resident C. J. van Kempen, ‘Memorie van overgave der afdeeling Zuid Timor en Eilanden’, February 1917, in *Indonesia: memories...*

187 *Dutch Timor and the Lesser Sunda Islands*, p.23.

188 Kempen, ‘Memorie...’, 1917, in *Indonesia: memories...*
The region was not free of war intrigues either. In 1912 there had been newspaper reports that the Portuguese were considering selling their half of the island to the Germans. An alarmed Australian Prime Minister was reassured that Portugal had no intention of selling. In 1915 a Melbourne academic wrote to Prime Minister Andrew Fisher suggesting that Australia could purchase East Timor itself to use as a hill station for settlers from north Australia. Despite knowing that neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch were likely to sell their territory Fisher asked for the matter to be investigated. His staff quickly scotched the suggestion. There were concerns also about the Japanese, in the First World War on the side of the Allies. In 1917 it was reported that a number of Japanese and one Korean (a Japanese subject) had visited West Timor and travelled on to Portuguese Timor also. Ostensibly on a trading visit, they conducted no actual trade and were viewed with suspicion by the Dutch, who believed they were seeking information about the territory’s oil reserves.

There were a number of British expatriates living in Kupang, including C. M. Pilliet, a general export-import merchant and British consular agent. In 1916 Pilliet warned Australian pearlers who visited Kupang to have nothing to do with a certain Mr. Teffer who worked for the government shipping line. Pilliet explained that Teffer was Indo-Dutch, but of German extraction and under suspicion. In 1917 Pilliet passed on the information that many of the Dutch radio operators in Kupang had learnt their profession in Germany and were sympathetic to the Germans. This was of concern as they could monitor land and sea stations as far away as Fremantle. In the same year Pilliet travelled to Rote to inquire of any strange ships or landing of arms. None had been reported.

Another of the expatriates living in Kupang was Captain F. Hilliard, a pearler from north-west Australia. From 1916 he used information gathered from the new weather station in Kupang to send daily weather advice to Broome, which was transmitted to

189 National Archives of Australia [hereafter NAA]: CP78/22, 1912/108.
190 NAA: A3/1, NT1915/2373.
192 NAA: A3201, TE1647.
Perth and Melbourne for the use of shipping. For this service he received a sum of £12 per annum. Hilliard was in partnership with W. A. Chamberlain, another pearler from Broome, and together they regularly sent pearling vessels from Kupang back into Australian waters. Other expatriate pearlers operated out of Kupang also and the practice of collecting ‘Koepangers’ to use as crew in the Australian pearling fleet continued throughout this period.

A sign of the changing times in West Timor was the aeroplane. In late 1919 an airfield was prepared at Atambua for the visit of Ross Smith, the first ‘aeronaut’ to fly from Europe to Australia. It was thought an air link with Australia might be of benefit to Timor. In Darwin the arrival of Smith and his brother Keith in their Vickers-Vimy bomber was hailed as the most important event in the Northern Territory since the arrival of the submarine telegraph in 1872. Numerous other flights from Europe to Darwin via Timor followed. In Timor there was talk also of an inter-island link being developed between Bima-Makassar-Atapupu, which it was thought would be useful for trade. The aeroplane was then in its infancy and was little applied to Timor for many years to come, yet it was symbolic of the great changes which were occurring in West Timor during the early decades of the twentieth century.

**The establishment of schools and the Church in the interior**

One of the most far-reaching developments was the establishment of the Church and mission schools in the interior. As mentioned in Chapter One, Catholic activity in West Timor had been limited to the eastern area while the Protestant Indische Kerk was active in the west. In 1902 the latter established a school for religious teachers on Rote. There were then few schools outside of Rote, Sabu and Kupang. The Christian religion was still largely unknown to the Timorese, but from 1915 the curate Groothuis began translating the Gospel into Dawan and from 1916 it began to

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195 NAA: MP341/1, 1923/10517.
196 ‘D. H. Stuart, Pearling Inspector, Broome to the Secretary of Fisheries, 3 July 1914’, cited in A. M. Bottril, ‘Some incomplete chronologically arranged notes from newspapers and archives held in the Battye Library Perth’.
198 Staniforth Smith, *Northern Territory of Australia. Annual report of the Acting Administrator for the year ended 30th June 1920*.
199 Meyer, ‘Vervolg-memorie...’, March 1920, in *Indonesia: memories...*
be preached in the interior, starting in Camplong and Kapan. Progress was slow, as in 1920 there were still only 500 members of the Protestant congregation in South Central Timor.\textsuperscript{200} The Catholic mission in the east, on the other hand, was taken over from the Jesuits by the Divine Word Mission (SVD) in 1913; it then had stations in Atapupu and Lahurus. The arrival of the SVD coincided with the ‘Timor-Flores-Sumba contract’ whereby the Netherlands Indies government offered to subsidise the building and running of schools on those islands. It guaranteed as well that it would establish no government school where there was an existing mission school. (It should be noted that while the provision of educational facilities was totally in line with the principles of the Ethical Policy, Muslim schools received from the government either nothing at all or a mere token amount.) Under this regime there was a great increase in Catholic schools in the eastern part of West Timor. The Protestant church was often criticised during this period for its relative lack of dynamism; a condition usually put down to the fact that the Indische Kerk was a state church with its ministers and other workers on the government payroll. However justified that criticism may have been there were many enthusiastic workers in both the Protestant and Catholic churches.\textsuperscript{201}

In 1912 it was reported that there were thirteen ‘native schools’ established in West Timor.\textsuperscript{202} In South Central Timor in 1916 there were schools at Niki Niki, Kolbano, Toi, Nunkolo and Putain, while new schools were due to open in 1917 in Nipol, Ofoe and Manufui.\textsuperscript{203} By 1921 there were fourteen schools in this district.\textsuperscript{204} In the greater Kupang district in 1917 there were twenty-one schools.\textsuperscript{205} In the 1920s many more were built; by 1924 there were 148 schools throughout the territory of Timor and Islands.\textsuperscript{206} Through their experience in the Church, and the education received at the mission or government schools, many Timorese became confident working with Europeans. Some even saw the possibility of working without them. An unforeseen

\textsuperscript{200} Cooley, \textit{Benih yang tumbuh...}, pp.45-48.
\textsuperscript{202} ‘Memorie...c.1912’, in \textit{Indonesia: memories...}
\textsuperscript{203} Venema, ‘Algemeene memorie...Zuid-Midden Timor’, 1916, in \textit{Indonesia: memories...}
\textsuperscript{204} Van Lith, ‘Nota van overgave van de onderafdeling Zuid Midden Timor’, 1921, in \textit{Indonesia: memories...}
\textsuperscript{205} Kempen, ‘Memorie...’, 1917, in \textit{Indonesia: memories...}
\textsuperscript{206} Couvreur, ‘Memorie...1924’, in \textit{Indonesia: memories...} The ‘Islands’ were Rote, Sabu, Alor and Pantar.
consequence of the Ethical Policy was the creation of an educated elite who eventually became the leaders of the Indonesian nationalist movement. The government adviser Snouck Hurgronje had argued that ‘The Indonesians are imploring us to give them instruction: by granting their wish we shall secure their loyalty for an unlimited period’. In fact, within only a few short decades educated Indonesians across the archipelago, including on Timor, were making increasingly strident demands for greater political independence from the Netherlands.

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During the early years of the twentieth century the Dutch extended their control throughout West Timor and elsewhere in the Netherlands Indies. Despite claims to the contrary, there was little difference between Dutch imperialism and that practised by other powers. The Dutch forcibly introduced new regulations to West Timor to 'modernise' the territory. Headhunting and warfare were banned and indigenous rulers were required to ensure that new measures, such as the collection of taxes and the building of roads with compulsory labour, were carried out. These measures caused much resentment, but despite numerous revolts the Dutch held sway. The borders with East Timor were settled, although there were continuing problems, such as cross-border livestock theft. An increased European presence on the borders, however, made it difficult for the people there to continue to ignore their colonial masters. There were a number of other developments which showed that West Timor was entering the modern world, not the least of which was growing access to education. The resistance in West Timor up until this time had been carried out using klewangs and old muzzle-loading rifles. With the development of a local educated elite the focus shifted to political movements, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

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Figure 7.
Sonbai monument, Kupang.
Figure 8.
Dutch monument, Kolbano.

Figure 9.
Plaque on Dutch monument, Kolbano.
Figure 10.
Dutch Officers involved in the siege at Niki Niki. Seated from left to right: First Lieutenant Kuust, Captain Voskuil and First Lieutenant van Krieken. Standing: Dr. Poser (Health Officer) and First Lieutenant Hoff. (From De Prins, 1911. Copy courtesy of Donald Tick.)
Figure 12.
Grave of Bil Nope, Niki Niki.
Chapter Three
Chapter Three

‘Native rule’ and the beginnings of political activity

This chapter looks at the situation in West Timor in the 1920s and 1930s, when the Dutch imposed their version of ‘native rule’ on the Timorese. The consequences of this new system are examined. This was also the era of the first political organisations in the region and a number of these are discussed, as are many of the Malay language newspapers which appeared at this time. Chinese traders living in West Timor continued to be influential and their role is described. The continuing development of education, the impact of the missions and the provision of infrastructure, such as roads and airfields, is discussed. The effects of the Great Depression in the region are touched on and the relationship with the Portuguese is again examined. The chapter closes with a description of the growing fear of Japanese aggression as West Timor prepared itself for the Second World War.

The imposition of ‘native rule’

The Dutch placed great faith in indirect rule and between the years 1900 and 1927 a total of seventy-three rulers in the Residency of Timor and Dependencies signed the Korte Verklaring. The Dutch, however, were convinced that to have effective indirect rule they would have to reduce the number of kingdoms in the territory. Thus it was that the eighty-four states of the Residency noted in 1917 were reduced to forty-eight by 1938.

New kingdoms were formed by uniting the many small states that had been part of the Sonbai domain. The small states around the capital, for example, were united into the new kingdom of Kupang. This area had been part of the Helon kingdom, but had been infiltrated by other groups, including adherents of Sonbai. Although the resulting small states were recognised by the Dutch the area was directly ruled by them as Government Territory. The ruler of Sonbait Ketjil (Little Sonbai), Nicolaas Isoe Nisnoni, a descendant of the Sonbai line, had the respect of other rulers in the Territory and was chosen as the new Raja Kupang in 1919. He became ruler of

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1 Sejarah daerah Nusa Tenggara Timur, p.93.
2 J. J. Bosch, ‘Memorie van overgave. Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, 1938, in Memories...
Fatuleu also after the previous ruler, Kooi Thaiboko, was removed in 1930 because of drunkenness and a failure to achieve the respect of his subjects. Fatuleu consisted of the small states north of Kupang that had been part of the Sonbai stronghold centred on Kauniki. Nisnoni was succeeded as Raja of Kupang and Fatuleu by his sons, Alfonsus and Hans. The Nisnonis were perceived by the Dutch as effective and ‘loyal’ rulers.³

East of Fatuleu a number of fettor districts of the old Sonbai ‘empire’ were united into the kingdom of Molo. There were many difficulties with this kingdom, but a period of peace and order arrived with Toea SonbaE, who was Raja Molo from 1933 until his death in the late 1950s. Toea SonbaE encouraged both the Dutch and Japanese governments to recreate the old Sonbai domain, but without success.⁴

Further east again, in Belu, the twenty kingdoms noted at the turn of the century were reduced to one united kingdom by the mid-1920s.⁵ This meddling with the local political system did not always produce the desired result for the Dutch. For example, after they had subdued South Belu in 1906 they appointed the Maromak Oan as Raja. As recorded in Chapter Two, his rule was conspicuously unsuccessful. In 1915 he was replaced in the new South Belu kingdom Malaka by the Liurai of Fatu Aruin. In 1924, however, the Dutch decided that the whole of Belu should be united into one kingdom and they chose the Maromak Oan to became the Raja of Belu. Considering the problems they had encountered with appointing the essentially spiritual figure of the Maromak Oan to an executive position only a few years previously, it is extraordinary that the Dutch could have made the same mistake twice. No real problems were noticeable, however, until the new Raja Belu came north to Atambua in 1926 to sign the Korte Verklaring. It then became clear to the Dutch that their chosen man was not popular. One local ruler refused to attend the

³ P. J. F. Karthaus, ‘Memorie van overgave van den aftredenden Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, 1931, in Indonesia: memories...
inauguration ceremony and others who met the Raja on his official tour went out of their way to treat him disrespectfully.\textsuperscript{6}

There was opposition to the Maromak Oan having a political function, but he was opposed also on a purely north-south divide in that the people of north Belu did not appreciate having a ruler from the south imposed on them. The Maromak Oan found it impossible to operate as raja under these circumstances and repeatedly requested the government to relieve him of his duties. His resignation was finally accepted in 1930. A Provisional Council then ruled the district for a number of years, but in 1941 the government proposed that Belu be broken into three separate kingdoms: Malaka in the south, Tasifeto in the north and Lamaknen in the north-east. The latter was a predominantly Bunak speaking area, distinct from its Tetun speaking neighbours. The Japanese invaded before the plan could be put into action.\textsuperscript{7}

There were problems in many other kingdoms also. Cunningham has characterised 1920 to 1940 as a period of great upheaval in West Timor as the people came to grips with the new system of ‘native rule’. As there could be only one raja under the system promoted by the Dutch there were many disputes over who should fill this position. The problem was particularly acute in the kingdoms in the eastern parts of the territory. The ritual lord was the only figure with authority over the whole kingdom, yet his position was such that he would be ignored if he endeavoured to be involved in secular governmental matters. The secular lords, on the other hand, had authority in their own sub-districts only and were likely to be disregarded if they attempted to talk for the whole kingdom.\textsuperscript{8}

The Dutch avoided appointing ritual lords (atupas) as rajas as they viewed them as unsuitable on a number of grounds, not least being that atupas were meant to be immobile and confined to the palace. An interesting case is that of Insana where a secular lord from the Taolin lineage was appointed raja in 1913.\textsuperscript{9} Kahalasi Taolin never received the full support of the other secular lords, nor that of the atupas. He

\textsuperscript{6} Francillon, ‘Incursions upon Wehali...’, pp.254-255. See also Therik, ‘Wehali...’, pp.22-23.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} Cunningham, ‘People of the Dry Land...’, Abstract, p.3.
\textsuperscript{9} Schulte Nordholt, \textit{The political system of the Atoni...}, p.204.
was a harsh ruler who ran his own prison. His prisoners were fed only tamarinds and a number died.\textsuperscript{10} In 1933 Taolin was charged with fourteen counts of unlawful detention, twenty-three charges of cruelty and a charge of manslaughter. He was sentenced to twenty years exile. He was replaced by a member of the \textit{atupas} lineage, Tasaib Malafu, but he died in 1936 and was succeeded by his son, Afu Tasaib. The new raja commanded no respect and was challenged by Dominicus Taolin, eldest son of the exiled Kahalasi. In 1938 Dominicus Taolin became acting Raja of Insana, but in December 1939 he was charged with murder by sorcery and subsequently sentenced to eight years exile. A member of the Tasaib lineage was again appointed, but he had not yet reached majority so Insana was ruled by a committee of three \textit{fettors}. This situation persisted until the invasion by the Japanese who insisted that a new raja be appointed; the choice was the Fettor of Oelolok, Laurentius Taolin.\textsuperscript{11} The Taolins remained in power in Insana for the remainder of the period of this study. The Dutch were busy in many parts of West Timor trying to solve succession and border disputes during this period, and while they appeared successful in many cases there were always new cases and old disputes were likely to reappear.\textsuperscript{12}

Elsewhere the Dutch authorities were concerned about the influence of new political unions that had started to appear in the Residency (discussed below). Much of this activity was in the capital Kupang, but the Dutch were assured that Raja Kupang was ‘averse to all nationalistic carryings-on’ and would balance up the ‘modern ways’ with the old \textit{adat} laws.\textsuperscript{13} Raja Amarasi, Hendrik A. Koroh, was of more concern to the Dutch. He had received a European education in Kupang and Java before

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\textsuperscript{10} The court of the \textit{atupas} was known as the tamarind palace. Many of Taolin’s prisoners were supporters of the \textit{atupas}. See Schulte Nordholt, \textit{The political system of the Atoni...}, p.213.

\textsuperscript{11} Cunningham, ‘People of the Dry Land...’, pp.164-166. See also Schulte Nordholt, \textit{The political system of the Atoni...}, p.213. It is reported, however, that Laurentius was already Acting Raja in early 1942; see H. G. Schulte Nordholt, ‘Besturen in een vacuum. Uit het dagboek van een controleur in Timor (20 februari - 2 april 1942)’, p.158. Alexander Taolin, eldest son of Dominicus, claims his father was betrayed by some of his own people who reported that the Raja had killed a Dutch soldier; see Kanis Passar, ‘Alex Taolin: Ilmu saja belum lengkap’, in P. A. Rohi and J. Adam (eds.), \textit{Baktiku untuk Nusa Tenggara Timur, apa yang telah mereka lakukan adalah teladan buat kita! Seri 1}, p.16.

\textsuperscript{12} For example, in 1932 it was reported that ‘The division of Timor is marked by border disputes’. A dispute in Rote had been smouldering since 1913 and had recently flared up again with arson and livestock theft. There was a dispute between Amanatun and its northern neighbours which resulted in one dead and a dispute between Amarasi and Kupang which had not been resolved; see De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag over het eerste halfjaar 1932 van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...

\textsuperscript{13} De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag over het eerste halfjaar 1933 van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\end{flushright}
becoming Raja in 1926, but to the dismay of his Dutch superiors he appeared to have taken up an interest in politics also. By 1933 the Dutch seemed satisfied that he had ‘seen his errors’ and had taken on a more customary role. Raja Amarasi, however, did not remove himself from political life and he was one of the most politically active rajas in West Timor in the immediate pre-Second World War period (discussed further below). Other rajas, such as Toea SonbaE of Molo and Pae Nope of Amanuban, tried to run their kingdoms on more traditional lines, but they were not averse to using the colonial system for their own benefit and recognised that the old days had largely disappeared. Most rajas were realistic on this count and, although many were illiterate and had no schooling themselves, they sensed that education would be important for success in the future and made sure their children (especially their sons) were properly trained to function in the modern world.

The growth of political activity in West Timor

One of the earliest modern organisations established by Indonesians was the Javanese cultural association Boedi Oetomo (Noble Endeavour), formed in 1908. Other groups followed, often based on religious affiliation or ethnic groupings. Trade unions and more overtly political groups started to appear also. Indonesian nationalism was a matter of growing interest to many of these groups. The founders of these organisations were, generally speaking, minor government officials and members of the educated elite. In West Timor the educated elite had few members from the Atoni or Tetun, who were native to the island, and was instead dominated by Rotenese and, to a lesser extent, Sabunese. These two migrant groups had taken active advantage of the western education provided by the Dutch, were mainly Christian, could usually speak Malay and could often speak Dutch also. They were in

14 He replaced his deposed brother Alexander. (See section on Sarekat Rajat.)
15 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1933...’, in Politieke verslagen...
17 Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., pp.155-159. The growth of Indonesian nationalism is covered in a number of other general histories, such as John D. Legge, Indonesia, as well as being part of more focused studies, such as Bob Hering, Moehammad Hoesni Thamrin and his quest for Indonesian nationhood 1917-1941, and George McT. Kahin, Nationalism and revolution in Indonesia. English language works dealing solely with the early nationalist movement include Robert van Niel, The emergence of the modern Indonesian elite, and John Ingleson, Road to exile: The Indonesian nationalist movement, 1927-1934. There have been many Dutch studies, one of the earliest appearing in 1931: J. Th. Petrus Blumberger, De nationalistische beweging in Nederlandsch-Indie. Others include: D. M. G. Koch, Om de vrijheid: De nationalistische beweging in Indonesie, and J. M. Pluvier, Overzicht van de nationalistische beweging in Indonesie in de jaren 1930 tot 1942.
high demand in the Dutch bureaucracy in West Timor. A third, small, but influential group in Kupang was from Kisar in the South-western Islands which, as explained in the Introduction, had been part of the Timor Residency until being transferred to Maluku in the 1920s. At that time some of the people of Kisar, mainly Eurasians (a segment of the population resulting from an eighteenth century Dutch garrison on the island), were given an opportunity to move to Kupang. Those who accepted numbered around 120. The Kisarese in Kupang were generally westernised Christians with remarkable influence considering their numbers.18

The growth of nationalist sentiment amongst the indigenous elite in western Indonesia did not take long to spread to the east. In West Timor political organisations were virtually unknown before the 1920s, but several were established during that decade. The political milieu was altered also by the appearance of a number of Malay language newspapers. The people of West Timor (especially Kupang) seem to have been highly enthusiastic about reading local papers and joining local organisations. Those groups and papers were, however, often short-lived. They often changed their names also, so a casual perusal of the records can give a false impression of the level of political activity. Furthermore, many activists were involved in several organisations at once. Members of opposing political groups often belonged to the same religious or welfare organisations. That many activists were involved in a number of groups is testimony not only to those individuals’ enthusiasm and energy, but also to the fact that there were a limited number of people in West Timor who had the interest or ability to be involved in such activities. Nevertheless, the various groups that operated in West Timor did influence government and thus did have an impact on the wider population.

It is difficult to assess what the masses in West Timor thought of this new political activity. The Dutch routinely characterised the ethnic Timorese as being totally

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18 Allied Geographical Section, Southwest Pacific Area, Terrain study No.70. Area study of Dutch Timor, Netherlands East Indies, p.40. For Resident Bosch the politically active in Kupang had to be either Rotenese, Sabunese or Kisarese; see Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over het jaar 1934’, in Politieke verslagen... A two volume study of the Kisarese by Ernst Rodenwaldt, De Mestiezen op Kisar, was published in the late 1920s.
uninterested in politics. It appears to be true in this period that ethnic Timorese were not involved with the leadership of political organisations, but it is not clear that they were not members of those organisations. Ethnic Timorese were certainly involved in some political actions during this period, such as the refusal to perform corvee labour.

**Timorsch Verbond**

One of the earliest and most influential of the political organisations in West Timor was the Timorsch Verbond (Timorese Alliance) established in 1921 in Makassar by two Rotenese, D. S. Pella, a teacher, and J. W. Amalo, a shipping clerk and member of one of Rote’s royal families. The group’s stated aim was to advance the spiritual development and material prosperity of ‘the Timorese’, by which they meant all the inhabitants of the Residency of Timor and Dependencies. From the beginning, however, the group was dominated by Rotenese and Sabunese; in 1924 these two groups accounted for sixty percent of the organisation’s membership. The Verbond was strongest in Rote, Sabu and Kupang and environs, but as its membership comprised mainly teachers, police and other government officials who were stationed throughout the territory, it was able to establish branches in many district and sub-district capitals also.

The Timorsch Verbond attracted members ranging from the ‘moderate’ to the ‘revolutionary’. The organisation was viewed by some as being ‘red’, that is, communist, but it was recognised by many Dutch officials that its intentions were not necessarily contrary to the desires of the government and it was well disposed to the Netherlands. Based in Makassar, the organisation kept in touch with its far-flung membership through its monthly organ, the *Soeloeh Timor (Timor Torch)*. In 1923 it

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19 For example, Resident Karthaus thought that the majority of the Residency’s inhabitants were indifferent to the activities of the political unions. Gezaghebber Steenstra Toussaint argued that the Atoni did not care about politics, but could get excited by a horse theft, while Resident Schultz claimed that it was ‘unnatural’ for the Timorese to be interested in politics; see Karthaus, ‘Memorie...’, 1931, in *Indonesia: memories...*; and F. W. Steenstra Toussaint, ‘Memorie van overgave. Onderafdeeling Noord-Midden Timor’, and Schultz, ‘Memorie...’, 1927, in *Memories...*

20 Fox, *Harvest of the Palm...,* p.178; and I. H. Doko, *Nusa Tenggara Timur dalam kancah perjuangan kemerdekaan Indonesia: beberapa catatan ungkapan kenang-kenangan pribadi*, p.64.

21 Couvrer, ‘Memorie...1924’, in *Indonesia: memories...*

22 Schultz, ‘Memorie...’, 1927, in *Memories...*

23 Couvrer, ‘Memorie...1924’, in *Indonesia: memories...*
held its first congress in Makassar and attracted hundreds of participants from throughout the archipelago. Around this time the Verbond had two of its greatest successes. Contrôleur Dannenberger of Karuni, Sumba was accused by the local Timorsch Verbond branch head, C. Piry, of ‘maltreating’ hundreds of local residents. Similar accusations were made against Gezaghebber Israil of Sabu by Verbond branch head S. W. Tanya. Both officials were sent for trial to Makassar, were found guilty and removed from their positions. These incidents receive little coverage in the Dutch records, but it appears that the two officials’ misdeeds related to abuses in collecting taxes. This successful prosecution of government officials raised the status of the Timorsch Verbond with the people of the Residency, but had the equal effect of increasing the animosity of many Dutch officials.

An early demand of the Timorsch Verbond was that a representative from the Residency of Timor and Dependencies be sent to Batavia to take a place in the Volksraad (People’s Council). In May 1923 the Timorsch Verbond forwarded a petition to Resident Couvreur with a list of suggested candidates. With the exception of one Sabunese, all the proposed candidates were Rotenese. The Verbond saw itself as the representative body for the whole territory, but Couvreur disagreed. Not only did the organisation have little support outside the immediate Timor district, the Residency as a whole consisted mainly of zelfbesturende landschappen (self-governing regions). If a representative was sent to the Volksraad, argued Couvreur, he would have to come from among the region’s many rajas. Couvreur’s successors held the same view and ultimately no appointment was made to the Volksraad.

24 Ibid.
25 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.65.
26 Ibid.
27 Couvreur, ‘Memorie...1924’, in Indonesia: memories...
28 An advisory body to the government with appointed and elected members who were supposed to represent the various interest groups of the Indies. It first met in 1918.
29 Couvreur, ‘Aan Zyne Excellentie den Gouverneur Generaal van Nederlandsch-Indie’, 5 August 1923, in Politieke verslagen...
30 Couvreur, ‘Memorie...1924’, in Indonesia: memories...
31 Schultz, ‘Memorie...’, 1927, in Memories... While there was some government support for a local Volksraad representative the general view seems to have been that this person could never come from the Timorsch Verbond or other Timor based groups as it would cause too much resentment on the other islands; see Karthaus, ‘Memorie...’, 1931, in Indonesia: memories...
In July 1924 the Timorsch Verbond held its second congress in Kupang. The congress turned into a confrontation between the ‘revolutionaries’, led by the chairman, Amalo, and the ‘moderates’. The cause was a call for the separation of Church and school and a demand that curates and chaplains cease to function as school inspectors and be replaced by non-Church functionaries. The government opposed the move and encouraged Amalo to have the matter dropped from the agenda. However, the issue was raised at the congress and Amalo urged a vote in its favour. The result was a split in the membership and while the congress was still in session a new organisation, the Perserikatan Timor (Timor Union; discussed below), was established by those who wished to disassociate themselves from the Timorsch Verbond.  

The congress ended with the Timorsch Verbond in disarray, but worse was to come, as after chairman Amalo returned to Makassar he was accused of having embezzled the organisation’s funds and had both his position and membership suspended. The government also was not impressed by what had occurred at the congress and active branch officials in government employ found that they were liable for transfer, demotion or even dismissal. By the end of 1924 the Verbond, disunited and broke, seemed to be a spent force.

Following the split the Timorsch Verbond’s headquarters was moved to Kupang. Its branches decreased in membership, many members were reported as being unfinancial and the Soeloeh Timor ceased publication. Under new chairman, M. H. Pello, it continued to decline. Its main achievement at the time was to open its own school in Kupang, a Hollandsch-Inlandsche School (HIS; Dutch Native School), which provided Dutch language primary education for Timorese students. Dutch reports portrayed the school as having poor facilities and inadequate teachers.

32 Schultz, ‘Memorie...’, 1927, in Memories...
33 Ibid.
34 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timor..., p.65.
35 Karthaus, ‘Memorie...’, 1931, in Indonesia: memories...
36 Schultz, ‘Politiek overzicht over het jaar 1925 van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, in Politieke verslagen...
The Timorsch Verbond HIS managed to hang on, but the organisation itself appeared moribund. A turning point in its revival appears to have been the arrival in Kupang of customs officer Moehamad Masserie, son-in-law of the nationalist Volksraad member Mohammad Thamrin. Masserie put the Verbond in contact with the Surabaya Studieclub, a progressive nationalist organisation. The Timorsch Verbond headquarters was then shifted to Surabaya, where it published a new journal, the *Pewarta Timor (Timor Reporter)*, edited by Ms. C. A. Belder, a Kisarese schoolteacher who had been taking a political course with the Studieclub. 37 Around the same time events were occurring which once again brought the Timorsch Verbond to the forefront. In 1930 a census undertaken throughout the Residency was opposed by the people of the Delha district in Rote, led by Fettor Jeremias Ndoen. After Ndoen was sent into exile the troubles continued and developed into ‘civil disobedience’. 38 The real source of the trouble, as reported from the Indonesian side, was a certain Controleur (or Gezaghebber) Enkelaar who was said to have ‘maltreated’ 318 Delha residents. The Surabaya and Makassar branches of the Timorsch Verbond lobbied the Office of Justice in Makassar to investigate the matter. 39 The issue was raised also by members of the Volksraad and got extensive coverage in the *Pewarta Timor* and the Surabaya Timorsch Verbond branch organ, *Soeara Timor (Timor Voice)*. 40 Mr. Jonkman duly arrived from Makassar to investigate the affair, and while the fate of Enkelaar is unclear, the campaign against him was held to be a success when Jeremias Ndoen and another local leader, Soleman Hangge, were allowed to return from exile. 41

The *Pewarta Timor* and *Soeara Timor* took full advantage of the Delha affair to publicise their cause. The Timorsch Verbond was again in favour and branches were established or revived in many places, including Atambua in Timor, Ende and Bajawa in Flores and Waikabubak in Sumbawa. New members were signed up in other parts of Sumba and in Sumbawa also. This was perfect publicity for the third

37 Karthaus, ‘Memorie...', 1931, in *Indonesia: memories...
38 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag over het tweede halfjaar 1931 van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, in *Politieke verslagen...
40 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1932’, in *Politieke verslagen...
41 Doko, *Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.67; see also De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag over het jaar 1932 van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, in *Politieke verslagen...
congress of the Timorsch Verbond to be held in Kupang in June 1932. There were plans for Volksraad members to address the congress and the future first president of Indonesia, Soekarno, was scheduled to make an appearance also to encourage incorporation of the Timorsch Verbond in his growing union of nationalistic groups, the Permoeofakatan Perhimpoenan-politik Kebangsaan Indonesia (PPPKI; Consensus of Indonesian People’s Political Associations). The Volksraad members did not appear and Soekarno also was unable to attend, being replaced by Soedjono as PPPKI representative. Apart from Soedjono and a few local delegates the main speakers were the previously suspended chairman, J. W. Amalo, who had taken up a senior position in the Surabaya branch, and his colleague J. J. Bakker, another member of the Timorsch Verbond’s old guard.

Indonesian sources claim the congress was a great success with hundreds attending the various meetings, both from within Timor and from outside the territory. A Dutch report claims that all who attended were Kupang residents, including many ‘idlers’. Nevertheless, the Dutch estimated attendance at 400 people. The Dutch authorities kept a close eye on the congress and employed spies to track the movements of delegates. A jaksa (public prosecutor) openly attended the main meetings where he took notes of the proceedings and urged the chairman to restrain the speakers. On occasion he even demanded that speakers retract some of their more inflammatory statements. Speeches were given in support of joining the PPPKI (which was a foregone conclusion), and in opposition to press censorship, corvee labour and other unpopular government measures. Two delegates, Juffrouw (Miss) Belder and Mevrouw (Mrs.) Sparmen, spoke of the need for good education and the right of women to work alongside their men. Other speakers mentioned also the need for women to work alongside their men folk in the struggle for kemerdekaan (independence). The contest for an independent Indonesia was the main theme of

42 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...tweede halfjaar 1931’, and ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1932’, in Politieke verslagen...
43 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1932’, in Politieke verslagen...
44 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.67.
45 Ibid., p.68.
46 Gezaghebber van der Wolk, ‘Rapport Congress Timoreesch Verbond v/m 18 t/m 20 Juni 1932’, in Politieke verslagen...
47 Ibid. See also Djaksa 1e klasse, ‘Rapport’, in Politieke verslagen...
48 Ibid.
the congress and the nationalist song (later to become the national anthem), *Indonesia Raya*, was sung on numerous occasions.\(^{49}\) Raja Amarasi, Hendrik A. Koroh, and his brother, deposed raja Alexander Koroh, were said to have given full support to the Timorsch Verbond at this time.\(^{50}\) H. A. Koroh was even listed as a member of the Verbond’s Kupang branch executive in 1934.\(^{51}\) Although Alexander Koroh was considered potentially dangerous, Hendrik was consistently reported to be a good and ‘loyal’ ruler.\(^{52}\) This suggests that the Dutch did not find his association with the Timorsch Verbond, nor the activities of the Verbond itself, to be too alarming.

The euphoria caused by the success of the congress was short-lived. The Timorsch Verbond once more found itself in a slump. Executive members in a number of its branches were accused of a variety of indiscretions and many branches became inactive.\(^{53}\) The Timorsch Verbond school in Kupang was faced with competition from 1931 when the Perserikatan Timor opened its own Christelijke Hollandsch-Inlandsche School (Christian Dutch Native School) in the capital.\(^{54}\) A Timorsch Verbond school established in Atambua declined because the students’ parents, mainly members of the military, objected to the singing of *Indonesia Raya*,\(^{55}\) while a school established in Camplong in 1933 was reported to be in a ‘wretched’ condition, with school fees being paid irregularly, resulting in the teachers receiving little or no salary.\(^{56}\)

The Depression of the 1930s did nothing to help the Timorsch Verbond as there was little money available for membership fees or newspaper subscriptions. The effectiveness of the Verbond began to decline as the organisation shrunk; under the leadership of the Sabunese E. R. Here Wila it shifted its headquarters back to Makassar. It was able to achieve little more, although Doko reports that in 1937 the Verbond was active in having an investigation made into the activities of Controleur

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49 Doko, *Nusa Tenggara Timur...,* p.68.
50 Doko, *Pahlawan...,* p.45.
51 ‘Opgave van de vereenigingen te Koepang’, 1934, in *Politieke verslagen*...
52 Bosch, *Memorie...,* 1938, in *Memories*...
53 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...1932’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
54 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...tweede halfjaar 1931’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
55 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1932’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
56 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag over het tweede halfjaar 1933 van de Residentie Timor en Onderhooorigheden’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
Gobius and Gezaghebber Bosch, who were accused of mistreating the people of Adonara island. Both were tried and subsequently dismissed.\textsuperscript{57} By 1939, however, the Timorsch Verbond was reported as existing in name only and no action had been heard from it for a number of years.\textsuperscript{58}

\textbf{Perserikatan Timor}

Parallel to the story of the Timorsch Verbond must be considered that of the Perserikatan Timor, which, as recorded above, was established following a split in the Verbond in 1924. The Perserikatan Timor was pioneered by a government employee, Bestuursassistent (Administrative Assistant) J. S. Kedoh (who later became Raja of the united kingdom of Rote), but it soon came under the leadership of Christian Frans, a clerk in the Residency office. The new organisation was seen by the Dutch authorities as ‘moderate’ and ‘loyal’ and had the support of both government and Church.\textsuperscript{59}

The Perserikatan Timor published its own newspaper, \textit{Oetoesan Timor (Timor Messenger)}, but the newspaper, along with the organisation itself, appears to have been active only in response to the actions of the Timorsch Verbond. Thus, when the Verbond’s \textit{Pewarta Timor} began to criticise the school established by the Perserikatan in Kupang, the \textit{Oetoesan Timor} came out of a period of hibernation to lead the counter-attack.\textsuperscript{60} The \textit{Oetoesan Timor} was active also during the time of the Delha affair when it was critical of the reporting of the \textit{Pewarta Timor} and tried to bring the matter ‘back into proportion’.\textsuperscript{61} At the congress itself Frans was allowed to speak and argued against the Timorsch Verbond joining the PPPKI. He furthermore responded to a speech by J. J. Bakker, who had asserted that ‘Indonesia will become free thanks to rifles, cannons and bayonets’, by stating that ‘Indonesia must not be reached through a valley of tears and flowing blood, but through love’. He got into a debate also with another Verbond executive member, the Kisarese S. Pooroe, wherein Frans remarked that ‘a big mouth will still not make Indonesia free’. At a

\textsuperscript{57} Doko, \textit{Nusa Tenggara Timur...}, p.69.
\textsuperscript{58} F. J. Nieboer, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorighen over het eerste semester 1939’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}.
\textsuperscript{59} Schultz, ‘Politieke-Overzicht over het jaar 1924 van de residentie Timor en onderhoorigheden’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}.
\textsuperscript{60} De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...tweede halfjaar 1931’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}.
\textsuperscript{61} De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1932’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}.
separate meeting, which Frans did not attend, it was decided that the Perserikatan Timor should be boycotted. Following the congress the Oetoesan Timor reported on financial scandals within the Timorsch Verbond, but as the Verbond’s activities began to be wound back so were those of the Perserikatan Timor.

Christian Frans and his organisation have an ambiguous position in modern Indonesian historiography. On the one hand the Perserikatan Timor is discredited for its ‘loyal, co-operative’ stance and it is claimed that the organisation was fully supported and funded by the Dutch colonial government (although the Dutch never admitted this in their reports) in order to counter the Timorsch Verbond. On the other hand it is acknowledged that the Perserikatan Timor gave at least lip-service to nationalist aspirations and its leader Frans is now recognised as a martyr to the nationalist cause after being murdered by Japanese secret police during the Second World War (discussed in Chapter Four). While the Perserikatan Timor was favoured by the government and was clearly more conservative than its rival, the Timorsch Verbond, its nationalist credentials should not be ignored. The Dutch themselves seemed somewhat bemused by the attitude of some of their ‘loyal’ subjects. Resident de Nijs Bik noted in 1933 that prominent local native Christians, who bore European names, professed attachment to the House of Orange and were thankful for Dutch leadership, nevertheless showed quietly that they desired independence for Indonesia, or at least a full measure of autonomy.

*Sarekat Rajat*

There were other, more strident voices that called for changes in the relationship between the Dutch colonialists and their Timorese subjects that captured the full attention of the authorities. One of the more radical movements in West Timor had its beginnings with the arrival in Kupang of the Rotenese, Christian Pandy, who was an early member of the Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI; Indonesian Communist Party).

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62 Van der Wolk, ‘Rapport...1932’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
63 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...1932’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
64 For example, see Doko, *Nusa Tenggara Timur*..., p.65.
65 Ibid., pp.75-77; and Republik Indonesia. Sunda Ketjil, p.219.
66 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1933...’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
Resident C. Schultz noted in 1924 that Pandy had come that year from Makassar where he had worked as a prokrol bamboe (para-professional lawyer).  

He had been in Batavia also and it was while in Java that he had joined the PKI. He came to Kupang with another Rotenese, J. W. Toepoe, and they established an organisation called the Kerapatan Timor Evolutie (Council of Timor’s Evolution) through which they aimed to ‘look after the interests of their brothers in the Timor archipelago’. The organisation failed, in Schultz’s view, because as soon as Pandy was pointed out as a communist people feared to be associated with him.

Pandy and Toepoe parted company and Pandy then set up the Sarekat Timor (Timor League). He claimed the new organisation was to be based on socialistic principles and would aim for ‘a free man and a free state’. His speech at the following meeting of the organisation was described by Schultz as ‘very communist tinged’. It was estimated that Pandy had attracted about forty members, ‘chiefly malcontents and bad elements’ according to Schultz.

At the end of 1925 Schultz reported that Pandy had changed the name of his organisation to Sarekat Rajat (People’s League) and that membership had swelled to 1,200. He published a newspaper, Api (Fire), which carried articles complaining about the behaviour of various rajas. Schultz reported that Pandy’s complaints about Raja Molo’s ‘abominable behaviour and actions with women’ were ‘old ones and true’, but that nothing should be done about it. The complaints about the ‘misbehaviour’ of Raja Amarasi, Alexander Koroh, were also said to be correct and were apparently of such a nature (the details are not revealed in the reports) that it is curious that Christian Pandy is recognised in nearly all Indonesian histories of the Timor region for his contribution as a nationalist and at the same time acknowledged as a communist. For examples, see Sejarah kebangkitan nasional daerah Nusa Tenggara Timur, p.45; Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.66; M. Widiyatmika, Sukendro and Niti Suroto, Sejarah daerah tematis zaman kebangkitan nasional daerah Nusa Tenggara Timur (1900-1942), p.58. There is even a cross erected in Pandy’s memory in the official Taman Makam Pahlawan (Heroes’ Cemetery) in Kupang. (Personal visit, October 2000.) Pandy must be one of the few acknowledged communists to have been so honoured in Indonesia. For an overview of PKI activity in West Timor, see Steven Farram, ‘Revolution, Religion and Magic: The PKI in West Timor, 1924-1966’, Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Vol.158, No.1, 2002.

Prokrol bamboe appear to have been unpopular with Dutch officials. Although without formal legal training they were, and are, often very effective. For more, see D. Lev, Bush lawyers in Indonesia: Stratification, representation and brokerage.

Schultz, ‘Politieke-Overzicht...1924...’, in Politieke verslagen.

Ibid.
was concluded that he would have to be removed, but that this should be postponed for some time so that the Raja’s removal and Pandy’s campaign against him would not be linked in the people’s minds. This was done, but Schultz admitted that Pandy’s ability to take bold action against the government and the rajas, apparently with impunity, had already impressed the people.71

Pandy built up interest in his organisation by promising the abolition of taxes and corvee labour. In April 1925 he publicly incited the people of kampong Solor, a Muslim area of Kupang, to refuse to perform corvee labour. Twelve people answered Pandy’s call and as a result Pandy was punished with two days detention. Soon after, Pandy and some followers went to nearby Semau island and held a number of public meetings ‘where he proclaimed his communist ideas’ and incited the people to refuse to perform corvee labour or pay taxes. Pandy must have been an effective speaker and was said to enthral his audience. At any rate, he was able to enlist 500 new members for the Sarekat Rajat during his visit to Semau.72

Returning to Kupang, Pandy revisited kampong Solor and again incited refusal of corvee labour, and was this time charged and given a three month sentence. Pandy’s message had already got through, however, and while he was in detention no less than seventy-three people refused to perform corvee labour on Semau during the month of July. They were punished with three days detention. One month later the same people were sentenced to three months detention as repeat offenders. Shortly after that another forty unwilling workers from Funai, near Kupang, were given the same punishment. While Pandy was in detention the leadership had been taken over by Mathias MaE, Tae Amtiran and Selkioma, who did their best to fan the flames of opposition. Despite the gaolings morale would appear to have been high and all concerned were looking forward to 24 August, the day Pandy’s term of punishment expired. In the meantime, however, the authorities had been collecting evidence in

71 Schultz, ‘Politiek overzicht...1925...’; Schultz, [Letter to the Governor-General] ‘No.243/Geheim. Onderwerp: Klachten tegen den Radja van Molo’, 9 December 1925; and Hillen, [Letter to the Governor-General] ‘No. Bg.x5/1/7. Zeer Geheim. Onderwerp: Ontheffing van den Zelfbestuurder van Amarasi, Alexander Koroh, van zyn waardigheid wegens wangedrag’, 15 July 1925, in Politieke verslagen... Indonesian sources claim that Alexander Koroh was removed simply because he was regarded as ‘berkepala batu’ (stubborn). See, for example, Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.71. 72 Schultz, ‘Politiek overzicht...1925...’, in Politieke verslagen...; and Schultz, ‘Memorie...’, 1927, in Memories...
relation to the previous meetings held on Semau and instead of Pandy coming out of gaol, MaE went in. The final result was that Pandy was sentenced to a further three years imprisonment for sedition and MaE to two years. Sadu Oematan is said to have been placed under house arrest in relation to the activities of the Sarekat Rajat, and a certain J. Liskodat was convicted also. These convictions appear to have been the death blow for Pandy’s movement and the day after his sentencing 120 corvee labourers on Semau, who had refused to work only the day before, willingly reported to carry out their duties.

After Pandy and MaE were sent to serve their sentences in Cipinang Prison in Batavia little more was heard of the Sarekat Rajat on Timor. Sarekat Rajat had, however, attracted interest from Adonara and some of Raja Lamahala’s retinue became members during his visit to Kupang in July 1925. Not long afterwards a communist soldier, Soeradi, was stationed on the island and held secret meetings, whereby the organisation’s local membership increased to 140. Soeradi left Adonara in November and was dismissed from the army shortly afterwards because of his communist inclination. The Lamahala branch of the Sarekat Rajat managed to survive, however, and even had members on other nearby islands. All the rajas of the Timor area were strongly opposed to the Sarekat Rajat, but Raja Lamahala’s son had attended Soeradi’s meetings and the Raja himself, Ismael Adie, was enrolled as a member under the fictitious name of Joesoef bin Daoed. When this was discovered, wrote Resident Schultz, ‘naturally, he was removed immediately from his function’.

The Adonara branch of the Sarekat Rajat lasted until 1927, but in that year its putative leader, Achmad Chatib gelar Hadji Datoek Batoeah, an Acehnese exiled in Kalabahi on nearby Alor, was removed to the notorious internment camp Boven

73 Ibid.
74 Sejarah kebangkitan..., p.54. Oematan is the name of one of the old Atoni royal families.
75 Schultz, ‘Politiek overzicht...1925...’, in Politieke verslagen...; and Schultz, ‘Memorie...’, 1927, in Memories...
76 According to one source Pandy was sent to Sawahlunto in West Sumatra; see Republik Indonesia. Sunda Ketjil, p.214. This is quite likely as convicts from Batavia were often sent to work in the Ombilin coal mines in Sawahlunto; see Erwiza Erman, ‘Generalized violence: A case study of the Ombilin coal mines, 1892-1996’, in Freek Columbijn and J. Thomas Lindblad (eds.), Roots of violence in Indonesia, p.108.
77 Ibid.
Digul in Dutch New Guinea. The main reason given for the move was his ‘communist leanings’. A fellow Acehnese exile, Natar Zainoedin, also a communist, had been interned at Kefamenanu in Timor, but in 1927 he was sent with Batoeah to Boven Digul, as a house search revealed that he had been carrying out ‘secret propaganda for his dogma’. 78

Batoeah, Zainoedin, Soeradi and others, may have been genuine communists, but Resident Schultz had commented that many of the people ‘associated with Sarekat Rajat called themselves communist without there being any appearance of communism and they having no understanding of the term’. 79 Some of those associated with Sarekat Rajat were not even aware they had joined the organisation, as was revealed in the case of Marcus Amtiran, who began a new action in the Amarasi region in south-west Timor in January 1926.

Amtiran and some helpers began by spreading rumours about a sickness that would devastate Amarasi and of a communist warship which would land on the coast and whose soldiers would massacre the people. Amtiran then let the people know they could guarantee against the coming calamities by buying from him a card for the price of 0.55 which he would show them how to use as a talisman. The matter was handled with great secrecy and those who wanted to participate had to use a secret password. The cards they were sold were membership cards of the Sarekat Rajat. The matter did not stay secret for long and by late January most of the cards had been handed in to the government authorities and Marcus Amtiran was taken in for questioning. About 400 cards had been sold, but those who had bought them were said to have had not the faintest notion that they were joining an organisation and had looked on the cards purely as an amulet to avert the coming disasters. Amtiran was sentenced to two and a half years gaol for his deception. 80

78 Schultz, ‘Memorie...’, 1927, in Memories... For more information on early political parties on Alor, see Syarrifuddin R. Gomang, ‘The people of Alor and their alliances in eastern Indonesia: A study in political sociology’, pp.113-119.
79 Ibid.
80 Schultz, ‘Politiek overzicht over het eerste halfjaar 1926 van de residentie Timor en onderhoorigheden’, in Politieke verslagen...
In the meantime Pandy’s old partner Toepoe had continued on with the Kerapatan Timor Evolutie with about fifty members. He had some supporters on Rote, but his main connections were in kampong Solor in Kupang. While not considered a communist Toepoe was seen as a radical and it was thought that in 1924 he was still working secretly with Pandy. Above all, however, Toepoe was seen as a ‘sly fox’ and an opportunist. In 1925 Toepoe showed his adaptability when he was elected to the executive of the conservative Perserikatan Timor. In 1926 Toepoe was still working with the Perserikatan and the Kerapatan was said to still exist also, although the Dutch considered that by then it existed in his imagination only, with no members and holding no meetings. Toepoe then disappeared from the official reports until the mid-1930s when he was recorded as editor of the ‘Christian-Nationalist’ newspaper Pelita dan Neratja (Lamp and Scales) and as an executive member of a Christian association, Timor Damba (Timor Yearning). Following this report Toepoe’s name was not mentioned again.

An organisation that the Dutch strongly suspected of carrying on the work of the Sarekat Rajat was the Sarekat Oesaha Solor (League of Solor Endeavour) based in kampong Solor, the old stamping ground of both Toepoe and Pandy. This organisation, which first came to light in 1925, was led by the imam (prayer leader) of kampong Solor, Boerang Bait. This new Sarekat, exclusively for Muslims, was watched closely as Boerang Bait was thought to be a communist, but its activities were minimal, being restricted to readings and interpretations of the Koran. By 1926 only three or four members were regularly attending its meetings and it appears to have then ceased operations.

Christian Pandy himself returned to Kupang in 1928 and declared that he would eschew political movements from then on. Instead he found an outlet in religion and was listed in the early 1930s as chairman of a new organisation, the Bentara Masehi (Christian Herald). Its stated aims were to teach the Christian religion and attempt its application in daily life. Pandy was also editor of the organisation’s newspaper,
In 1934 Pandy and about fifty supporters split from the Protestant Church and set up their own church. Pandy signed up new members wherever he could, leading to much conflict. Popular feeling against Pandy grew so strong that many of his followers left him and he abandoned the separation from the established church. Pandy remained restless, however, and he again started holding religious meetings and built up a following with a new group called Masehi Timor (Timor Christian). The group’s meetings did not seem to stray onto political themes, but Pandy’s communist past made him highly suspect and he was subject to close scrutiny. After this episode Pandy kept himself out of the spotlight and his name is absent from the Resident’s reports for the remaining period before the Second World War.

Nearly all the communists mentioned in the early West Timor reports were associated with Sarekat Rajat. One communist who was not explicitly linked to Pandy’s group was Frans Djami, but it is possible that he was a member also. There are otherwise many parallels between the careers of Djami and Pandy and the development of Sarekat Rajat. Frans Djami was from Sabu, but in 1925 he was employed as a teacher on Alor. In the same year he was transferred to South Sulawesi on account of promoting communism. In October 1926 he was dismissed for the same reason. In 1931 he became active in the Timorsch Verbond on Rote and in 1933 he was associated with the same organisation in Surabaya. The Timorsch Verbond, as mentioned above, was considered radical by some members of the government, but was actually fairly conservative, seeking reforms rather than revolution and being generally co-operative with the government. At any rate, Djami’s ‘extreme fanaticism’ was too much for his fellow members and he was expelled.

Djami then moved to Sumba and started working as a prokrol bamboe. The government suspected that during his stay on the island Djami had secretly incited

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85 Schultz, ‘Politiek overzicht...eerste halfjaar 1926...’, in Politieke verslagen...
86 Gewestelijk Secretaris (Regional Secretary) Schumacher, ‘Politiek overzicht over het jaar 1928 van de residentie Timor en onderhoorigheden’; ‘Te Koepang verschijnende periodieken’; and ‘Opgave van de vereenigingen te Koepang’, in Politieke verslagen...
87 Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...1934’; and ‘Politiek verslag van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over het 1e halfjaar 1935’, in Politieke verslagen...
88 Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...1e halfjaar 1935’, in Politieke verslagen...
Sabunese people living on Sumba to refuse to pay their taxes or perform corvee labour. He was suspected also of selling amulets; an example of the curious blend of radical politics and traditional magic which is a recurring theme in the Timor region during the period of this study.\textsuperscript{89}

In 1934 Djami moved to Kupang and was soon implicated in maintaining communist connections. This came about when uncensored letters were found in the possession of a communist prisoner at Boven Digul. The letters had come from his brother, Willa Koij, who lived in Kupang and were said to have been written for him by Frans Djami.\textsuperscript{90} In early 1935 Frans Djami set up a newspaper in Kupang, the \textit{Tjinta Kebenaran} (Devotion to Truth), and was soon being fined for publishing untruthful articles. Many of Djami’s articles were considered insulting to the government and local rajas and bordering on the seditious. Resident J. J. Bosch kept Djami under close observation and waited for a chance to take stronger action. The chance came in late 1937 and Djami was gaoled for three months for press offences.\textsuperscript{91} Djami began publishing again in 1938, but soon gave up, apparently because of a lack of interest.\textsuperscript{92} Frans Djami then all but disappeared from the official reports, but made a lasting impression during the Japanese occupation, although in strange circumstances, as is related in Chapter Four.

\textbf{Other groups}

There were a number of organisations in Timor which seemed to make little impact. One such group was the Persatoean Poetri Timor (Association of Timorese Women), which was connected to the Timorsch Verbond. The sole reference to this group in the Resident’s reports occurred in 1933 when it was noted that it had shown ‘no signs of life’ during the report period.\textsuperscript{93} In a similar fashion a planned branch of the

\textsuperscript{89} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{90} \textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{92} Nieboer, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over het jaar 1938’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\textsuperscript{93} Verheul, ‘Politiek verslag van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over het eerste halfjaar 1934’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
Perserikatan Goeroe-goeroe Desa (Union of Village Teachers) for Sabu was reported in 1934, but was not heard of again.\(^{94}\) Others were more active, such as the Bond van Gepensioneerde Inheemsche Militairen (BGIM; Union of Pensioned Native Soldiers), which held a number of meetings in Belu during 1937, the only group to show any signs of activity that year.\(^{95}\) In 1938 the BGIM was associated with another attempt to have a local representative appointed to the Volksraad, but by late that year it was reported as inactive and remained so throughout 1939.\(^{96}\)

The Kisarese minority in Kupang was very active and established two separate unions in the 1930s. In 1931 the Perkoempoelan Kaoem Kisar (Kisarese Association) was established in Kupang.\(^{97}\) In 1935 it was disbanded and replaced by the Perkoempoelan Selatan Daja (South-west [Islands] Association) under the leadership of S. Pooroe, a long-time Timorsch Verbond activist and then editor of the Verbond organ *Pewarta Timor*. It had branches in Kupang, Kisar and Makassar. Just one month later the Perkoempoelan Kaoem Kisar was re-established by its old chairman, B. J. Selkioma. The Dutch report writers, however, could see little difference between the two groups.\(^{98}\) Nevertheless, the Pooroe faction would seem to have been the more radical. While both unions were soon reported by the Dutch to be inactive the Perkoempoelan Selatan Daja did get a further mention in 1938 as a supporter of the Volksraad representative campaign, mentioned above.\(^{99}\) Furthermore, while the Kisarese Pooroe and Belder worked as editors of the Timorsch Verbond’s *Pewarta Timor* the Perserikatan Timor’s *Oeotoesan Timor* was edited by fellow Kisarese A. A. Caffin. The Dutch considered Caffin to be of ‘good reputation’, while Pooroe was reported as a ‘very unreliable type’.\(^{100}\)

**Muslim organisations**

\(^{94}\) ‘Opgave van de vereenigingen te Koepang’, 1934, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\(^{95}\) Bosch, ‘Politieke verslag...eerste halfjaar 1937’, and Verheul, ‘Politiek Verslag...1937’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\(^{96}\) Nieboer, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorighen over het eerste halfjaar 1938’, ‘Politiek verslag...1938’, and ‘Politiek verslag...eerste semester 1939’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\(^{97}\) ‘Opgave van de vereenigingen te Koepang’, 1934, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\(^{98}\) Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...1935’, and ‘Politiek verslag...1938’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\(^{99}\) Nieboer, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1938’, in *Politieke verslagen*... For the Volksraad campaign, see section on Timorsche Jongeren etc.
\(^{100}\) ‘Opgave van de vereenigingen te Koepang’, 1934, in *Politieke verslagen*...
There were a number of exclusively Muslim groups in West Timor, such as the Sarekat Oesaha Solor, mentioned above. Some groups were short-lived, for example, the Java based Muhammadijah, established in Kupang in 1924, initially attracted about seventy members, but seems to have folded almost immediately and was not heard of again. In 1934 there were a number of Muslim organisations in West Timor, including Bintang Timoer (Eastern Star) which had existed in Kupang since 1918 and was concerned with promoting sport, music, education and mutual assistance. The Vereeniging Sport Alfoerat Koepang (Kupang Alfoerat Sports Union) was a sports group established by Arab Muslims, while the Serikat Boedi Setia (Loyal Noble League) was a burial union. These groups caused the Dutch authorities little worry, but they were concerned about Parsi, which was established in Kupang in early 1934.

Parsi had operated on Alor since 1931 and had established a number of branches in Muslim coastal areas of the Residency. Parsi officials from Alor and Makassar attended the opening of the Kupang branch, as did some interested local Christians. Although it was declared that the organisation had no political ambitions, reports which came back to the Dutch authorities from Parsi’s ‘religious’ meetings told a different story. Mentions of the evils of slavery, colonisation and taxes at the meetings were proof to the Dutch that this group had to be watched.

From a strong beginning Parsi made little headway and then attempted to infiltrate Bintang Timoer to poach its members. Sanoesi Tanof, a member of Bintang Timoer’s executive, played a willing role in this and was subsequently ejected from the organisation. He took with him the group’s books and some of its money and tension between the two organisations grew ever stronger. Bintang Timoer had about 100 members while Parsi, by late 1935, had only nine. Attempts were made

101 Schultz, ‘Politieke-Overzicht...1924...’, in Politieke verslagen... According to Munandjar Widiyatmika, Muhammadijah was so short-lived because it failed to get official approval from the Dutch; see Widiyatmika, Sejarah agama Islam di Nusa Tenggara Timur, p.103.
102 ‘Opgave van de vereenigingen te Koepang’, 1934, in Politieke verslagen...; and Widiyatmika, Sejarah agama Islam..., p.103. Burial unions such as the Serikat Boedi Setia helped their members deal with the costs and other matters relating to funerals and burials.
103 Parsi was a breakaway group from the Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia, based in Batavia; see Widiyatmika, Sejarah agama Islam..., p.106.
104 Verheul, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste halfjaar 1934’, in Politieke verslagen...
105 Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...1e halfjaar 1935’, in Politieke verslagen...
106 Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...1935’, in Politieke verslagen...
to revitalise Parsi, but to no avail and by 1937 it was one of a number of unions in Timor which appeared to exist in name only.\textsuperscript{107} Another Muslim group came onto the scene in Kupang when the secretary of the Surabaya Perkoempoelela Pergerakan Pemoeda Arab (Association of the Arab Youth Movement), Hadi Wakit, arrived to begin a propaganda tour of the Residency. At a Kupang meeting on 24 June 1938 it was decided to establish a branch under the name Perkoempoelela Pergerakan Pemoeda Islam, so that non-Arab Muslims could participate also. The union’s main interests were sport, music and education. A number of its executive members were members also of Parsi. Within a year, however, interest in the union had evaporated and, like Parsi, it virtually ceased to exist.\textsuperscript{108}

Muslims in West Timor did not confine their activities to exclusively Islamic groups and many were active in secular political groups, such as Sarekat Rajat. There were Muslims also in the Timorsch Verbond and Perserikatan Timor. Some Muslims were involved in both secular groups and those with a religious basis; for example, Abdulrachman, an activist in the Timorsch Verbond, was considered to be a driving force in the attempt to establish Muhammadijah in Kupang.\textsuperscript{109} Many politically active Christians had membership in both religious and secular groups also, and even showed an interest in exclusively Muslim groups, as was evidenced by the attendance of some Christians at the founding meeting of Parsi in Kupang.

**Christian organisations**

Christians established a number of organisations in West Timor during this period. One of the most enduring of these was Timor Damba, mentioned above. Established in Kupang in 1921 and led for many years by religious teacher M. H. Ngefak, this group was seen by the Dutch as a ‘purely Protestant union’ which undertook no political actions and was, therefore, not worthy of much attention.\textsuperscript{110} The group was not insignificant, however, with a recorded membership in 1934 of 937.\textsuperscript{111} It was around this time that activist, turned evangelist, Christian Pandy came into conflict

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\textsuperscript{107} Verheul, ‘Politiek Verslag...1937’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\textsuperscript{108} Nieboer, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1938’, and ‘Politiek verslag...eerste semester 1939’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\textsuperscript{109} Schultz, ‘Politieke-Overzicht...1924...’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\textsuperscript{110} Schultz, ‘Politieke-Overzicht...1924...’, ‘Politiek overzicht...1925...’, ‘Politiek overzicht...eerste halfjaar 1926...’ and De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...1932’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\textsuperscript{111} ‘Opgave van de vereenigingen te Koepang’, 1934, in *Politieke verslagen*...
with Ngefak as a result of Pandy’s attempts to expand his own religious organisation.\footnote{Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...1934’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...} Pandy’s old companion Toepoe had by then joined the executive of Timor Damba, which may indicate a falling out between the two. While neither Ngefak’s nor Pandy’s group was considered to be ‘political’ personal politics certainly did play a role and the clash between Ngefak and Pandy was not an unusual event in West Timor; Dutch records of the period give many examples of individuals using their positions in organisations or newspapers to air their personal grievances.

Other Christian groups mentioned in Dutch reports at this time include: Oetoesan Indjil (Gospel Messenger), Pemoeda Koepang (Kupang Youth) and Christelijke Jeugd Vereeniging (Christian Youth Union).\footnote{De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...1932’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...} The latter group was notable for the number of women on its executive.\footnote{‘Opgave van de vereenigingen te Koepang’, 1934, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...} Such groups made their way into Dutch reports simply because they existed rather than for any actions they undertook. The same can be said for many of the Muslim groups. That some people of West Timor sought to identify themselves with religious groups does not necessarily mean that there was any strong enmity between Christians and Muslims. As mentioned above, Muslims and Christians were often members of the same organisation. There were some incidents, however. In 1937 the newspaper \textit{Semangat (Zest, Spirit)} published an article entitled ‘Doenia Islam’ (World of Islam) which unjustly misrepresented the Islamic religion. In response a ‘ma’loemat’ (proclamation) was circulated around Kupang which aimed to ‘set right’ the misrepresentations of the article. It was in fact an attack on Christianity. The potential for religious conflict was disturbing to the Dutch and they were no doubt relieved that the issue soon fizzled out without further consequences.\footnote{Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste halfjaar 1937’; and Verheul, ‘Politiek verslag...1937’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...}
Timor Residency it was not uncommon for students to go to other regions to complete their training. A popular destination was Java. Here the students came into contact with some of the many nationalist and youth groups then operating. In 1933 some Rotenese and Sabunese students in Bandung established the Timorsche Jongeren (Timor Youth) as a means of uniting the youth from the Timor region who were studying away from home. The group put out a newspaper of the same name. Among the founders were H. Johannes and I. H. Doko.116

In 1937 Doko had completed his teacher training and returned to Kupang where he joined with others to establish a new political group, the Perserikatan Kebangsaan Timor (PKT; Union of the Timorese People). The aim of the group, according to Doko, was to re-unite the Timorese people who had become bored with politics because of the continuous fighting between the Timorsch Verbond and the Perserikatan Timor. Doko claims that the Verbond’s chairman, E. R. Here Wila, acknowledged that the youthful PKT was more relevant in the late 1930s than his own long-running organisation. The Perserikatan Timor and the government were said to have welcomed the new group also.117

The establishment of the PKT in Kupang was reported by the Resident in mid-1938. The union had about twenty members and of its seven member executive, four were women. The chairman was Doko and his deputy was Mej. (Miss) D. Toepoe. The PKT’s headquarters was in Batavia, but the union was represented throughout the Indies and kept in touch with its members through its newspaper, published in both Dutch and Malay. In Kupang the PKT formed a Comite Kesedaran Rakjat Timor (Timorese People’s Awareness Committee) with the aim of having a Timorese representative appointed to the Volksraad.118 The committee was chaired by A. Z. Palindih and included as members such well-known names as Alexander Koroh (deposed Raja of Amarasi), Frans Djami (political activist, communist) and I. H. Doko and was said to have the support of all other local organisations.119 Raja Amarasi, Hendrik Koroh, was said to be an enthusiastic supporter of the group.120

116 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.70.
117 Ibid., pp.70-71.
118 Nieboer, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1938’, in Politieke verslagen...
119 Nieboer, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste semester 1939’, in Politieke verslagen...
120 Doko, Pahlawan..., p.46.
Throughout 1938 and 1939 the executive members of the PKT and the Comite tried to keep up the interest of the public, but meetings were moderately attended and the PKT was even forced to cancel meetings due to lack of interest.¹²¹

Although no special animosity to the PKT on the part of the Dutch authorities can be discovered in their reports, Doko claims that they became increasingly dissatisfied with the PKT as it revealed its political program. This included supporting the Gabungan Politik Indonesia (GAPI; Indonesian Political Federation), a union of nationalist organisations, in its demands in 1939 and 1940 for a full parliament in Indonesia (the *Indonesia berparlemen* movement) and equality between Indonesia and the Netherlands.¹²² The PKT is supposed to have upset the Dutch also by proposing Alexander Koroh as Volksraad representative for the region. When this was rejected they proposed the Rotenese, Dr. W. Z. Johannes.¹²³ Johannes also was not considered suitable.

The Dutch put pressure on their employees who were involved with the PKT. When policeman D. Adoe chose to speak publicly at a PKT meeting in support of Johannes being sent to the Volksraad he was transferred to Sumbawa a few days later. Doko, a government schoolteacher, was threatened with police action, as well as the possibility of losing his job.¹²⁴ No action appears to have been taken against Doko, but political activity soon came to a standstill as with the German invasion of the Netherlands in 1940 martial law was declared in the Indies and all public political meetings were banned.¹²⁵

**Newspapers**

The Malay language press has been mentioned several times. Resident Bosch wrote in 1938 that there were several Malay newspapers in the Residency, but that they did not deserve the title ‘press’ as they were merely irregularly appearing scandal-sheets. He considered them harmful because of the propensity of editors to use their positions to attack personal enemies. This often resulted in writers and editors being

¹²¹ Nieboer, ‘Politiek verslag...1938’, in *Politieke verslagen...*
¹²³ Doko, *Pahlawan...*, p.46.
brought before the courts. A good example is the Mimbar Indonesier (Indonesian Rostrum), edited by L. J. Lauwoie in 1936. Lauwoie was a livestock official who had been dismissed for extortion and subsequently convicted. He used his newspaper to argue his innocence and attack the justice system. He also accused Raja Kupang of perjury, for which he found himself charged with libel. Lauwoie published two editions of his newspaper, but both were seized before distribution.

Resident de Nijs Bik in 1933 wondered how the readers in Kupang could be satisfied with the personal gossip and scandal which filled much of the local press. Nevertheless, the editors found plenty to write about. In 1939 M. Augustijn was editor of Seroean Kita (Our Cry), which specialised in ‘personal unkindnesses’. In 1935 Frans Djami used his Tjinta Kebenaran to attack S. Pooroe, then editor of the Timorsch Verbond’s Pewarta Timor. Djami refused to allow Pooroe the right of reply and received a fine for contravening the Press Regulations. In 1937 a new newspaper in Kupang, Semangat, was perceived as competition to Tjinta Kebenaran, but as Djami was on good terms with its editor, Mevr. (Mrs.) C. Hangge, Semangat joined in with Djami’s attacks on Pewarta Timor. Semangat, as mentioned above, had caused the Dutch authorities some anxiety with its anti-Islamic article ‘Doenia Islam’ at around the same time. The basis for Djami’s enmity to the Pewarta Timor is unknown, but it may have had something to do with his own days as a member of the Timorsch Verbond.

Despite the complaints of the Dutch the Malay language press must have been very useful to the local people in keeping up with current events. The Pewarta Timor certainly appears to have done so in its coverage of the 1933 mutiny aboard the Dutch naval vessel De Zeven Provincien in the waters off north Sumatra. The mutiny, led by a core of ten ‘native’ sailors, was quickly joined by the rest of the Indonesian crew (which included a number of Rotenese and Sabunese) and many of the Europeans also. The cause appears to have been the announcement of wage cuts

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126 Bosch, ‘Memorie...’, 1938, in Memories...
127 Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...1936’, in Politieke verslagen...
128 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1933...’, in Politieke verslagen...
129 Nieboer, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste semester 1939’, in Politieke verslagen...
130 Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...1935’, in Politieke verslagen...
131 Bosch, ‘Politieke verslag...eerste halfjaar 1937’, in Politieke verslagen...
for those in government employ, including the services. There is no evidence that the
mutineers had links to any radical or nationalist groups. The Dutch responded with a
heavy hand and, although the mutineers had planned to return the ship to the
authorities when they reached Surabaya, the ship was bombed from the air with
heavy loss of life, which brought an immediate end to the mutiny. The Dutch then
used the mutiny as an excuse to introduce heavy restrictions on political activity.132
There was ‘great interest’ in the issue in West Timor and the ‘disloyal’ local press, in
the shape of the Pewarta Timor, did service in keeping the people informed. There
was a deal of tension over the matter, but nothing untoward happened, for which the
Dutch seemed thankful.133 They were not pleased over the position taken by the
Pewarta Timor, but it was little different to the role it had played in other matters,
such as the Delha affair of 1931.

All the political organisations published their own journals, although the Dutch
considered some of them to be politically irrelevant as they contained only internal
union information.134 Others, such as Sarekat Rajat’s Api, were considered
dangerous and that newspaper’s attack on Alexander Koroh seems to have played an
important part in his eventual removal from his post as Raja of Amarasi. The
Perserikatan Timor’s Oetoesan Timor was initially reported to be ‘well got up with
readable contents’,135 but such praise was rare and the fact that Oetoesan Timor and
virtually all the other periodicals in West Timor appeared only irregularly and were
often out of print for long periods was constantly criticised by the Dutch.

The Dutch considered all the papers published in Kupang to have a nationalist strain,
although this was not ‘over the top’.136 Even the Tjermin Timor (Timor Mirror),
edited by that Kisarese of ‘good reputation’, A. A. Caffin (also editor of the
Oetoesan Timor), was said to be ‘nationalist inclined’.137 It may have been this
pervading nationalist atmosphere which allowed the apparently conservative Caffin

132 For more on the De Zeven Provincien, see J. C. H. Blom, ‘Mutiny on board De Zeven Provincien:
Reactions and repercussions in the Netherlands’, Acta Historiae Neerlandica, 10, 1977; and Hering,
Moehammad Hoesni Thamrin..., pp.156-160.
133 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1933...’, and ‘Politiek Verslag...tweede halfjaar
1933...’, in Politieke verslagen...
134 Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...1936’, in Politieke verslagen...
135 Schultz, ‘Politiek overzicht...1925...’, in Politieke verslagen...
136 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1933...’, in Politieke verslagen...
137 ‘Te Koepang verschijnende periodieken’, 1934, in Politieke verslagen...
to sit on the same editorial board as the notable nationalist, I. H. Doko, for the Protestant Church newspaper *Soeloeh Indjil (Torch of the Gospel)* in 1939. It may also have been that Doko, like many of his contemporaries, could co-operate, in a religious capacity, with a person who appears to have been a political rival.

**The Chinese**

In 1930, out of a total population of over one and a half million people in the Residency of Timor and Dependencies, only 960 were Europeans. An unknown number of these were actually Indonesians who had legal status as ‘European’. In contrast, the Chinese living in the Residency numbered nearly 7,000. In West Timor itself the population was about 350,000, of whom less than 500 were European and about 3,500 were Chinese. After the pacificatie the Chinese living in the interior were forced to move to Kupang or one of the new administrative settlements. Chinese traders wishing to enter the interior had to get a special pass. This situation did not last long, however, and Chinese were soon freely trading and even living in the interior. For centuries there had been close contact between Chinese traders and the Timorese. Many traders married into Timorese royal families and in South Belu in 1940 it was considered that the entire ruling class was part-Chinese. Laij Koen Seong, the son of a Chinese trader and a female slave in the household of the Fettor of Netpala in the kingdom of Molo, actually became the raja of that place with the name Tabelak Oimat qan. He was eventually removed in 1930 for an unrelated matter, but it was later agreed that he should never have been accepted as raja. The Chinese were active in Rote also, as evidenced by the fact that J. W. Amalo, of Timorsch Verbond fame and from the royal family of Termanu, had a Chinese father.

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138 Nieboer, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste semester 1939’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
139 Karthaus, ‘Memorie...’, 1931, in *Indonesia: memories*...
140 Allied Geographical Section, Southwest Pacific Area, *Terrain study No.70...Dutch Timor...*, pp.39-40. See also Ormeling, *The Timor problem...*, p.139. These figures do not include Rote and Sabu which had a combined population of 92,860; see De Nijs Bik, ‘Memorie...’, 1934, in *Indonesia: memories*...
141 Ormeling, *The Timor problem...*, p.133.
143 De Nijs Bik, ‘Memorie...’, 1934, in *Indonesia: memories*...
144 Karthaus, ‘Memorie...’, 1931, in *Indonesia: memories*...
Despite these connections the Chinese in West Timor do not seem to have been politically active. The Dutch report writers make no mention of any Chinese organisations in the period before the Second World War apart from a passing reference to a ‘Chinese Society’, but there is no indication that it was at all political.\textsuperscript{145} The Chinese were involved mainly in business, with shops in every town. One Chinese entrepreneur in Kupang owned ‘the electric power station, the ice-factory, the picture theatre, a motor vehicle establishment, a pawn shop and several private houses’.\textsuperscript{146} In the mid-1930s a number of Chinese owned coconut plantations also, but the effects of the Depression made them unprofitable.\textsuperscript{147} There were some connections with local political life, however. In 1925 the administration of a private Chinese school in Kupang co-operated with the Timorsch Verbond HIS to run a fund-raising night market.\textsuperscript{148} During the 1932 Timorsch Verbond congress local Chinese businesses played a big role. Kong Seong provided two trucks to transport some of the delegates, while the meetings were held in the Chinese Society hall, the hall of Lok Sen Hoek and the Soen Lie cinema.\textsuperscript{149} The same cinema was used for Perserikatan Kebangsaan Timor meetings in the late 1930s.\textsuperscript{150} There is no indication, however, that these were any more than commercial arrangements. Nevertheless, there was one report that implies that some Chinese in West Timor were involved in political activity. In 1930 it was reported that the Kuomintang from Dili had organised a movement in Atambua to weed out local Chinese communists. The Resident did not seem at all concerned at this, perhaps glad to be rid of them himself.\textsuperscript{151} Nothing more was heard of the movement, which may indicate that it had successfully completed its mission, or it might be that there were no Chinese communists in Atambua in the first place.

**Religion and schools**

Resident Karthaus noted in 1931 that the territory was ‘so occupied by missionaries, educators and religious teachers’ that nothing abnormal could take place in the

\textsuperscript{145} Van der Wolk, ‘Rapport...1932’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\textsuperscript{146} Allied Geographical Section, Southwest Pacific Area, *Terrain study No.70...Dutch Timor...*, p.40.
\textsuperscript{147} De Nijs Bik, ‘Memorie...’, 1934, in *Indonesia: memories*...
\textsuperscript{148} Schultz, ‘Politiek overzicht...1925...’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\textsuperscript{149} Van der Wolk, ‘Rapport...1932’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
\textsuperscript{150} Doko, *Nusa Tenggara Timur...*, p.71.
\textsuperscript{151} Karthaus, ‘Politiek overzicht over het eerste halfjaar 1930 van de residentie Timor en onderhoorigheden’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
interior without the authorities being informed. This meant that they could take action quickly and it was unlikely that matters could reach a stage where military intervention would be necessary. The missionaries had certainly been quick to take advantage of the safer conditions in the interior to go and spread ‘the word’. They had been active in the education field also. In the mid-1930s the Roman Catholic mission in West Timor operated thirty-six schools. The Indische Kerk, operating in the more populous western end of the island, had fifty-five schools, with another thirty-seven on Rote and Sabu and a similar number on Alor. In addition, the government operated a handful of public schools in Kupang and Rote. There were also those run by the Timorsch Verbond in Rote, Kupang, Atambua, SoE and Camplong. There were schools associated with the Perserikatan Timor in Kupang and SoE; while private Chinese language schools operated in Atambua, Atapupu, Kefamenanu and Kupang. In Kupang there was also a Dutch-Arabic religious school, the Madrasah Alchaerijah. A school for ‘native teachers’, STOVIL (School tot opleiding van inlandsche leraars), had been established by the Indische Kerk in Rote early in the century. In 1926 it was moved to Kupang, but was closed in 1931 because of a student movement which the Church leaders felt was associated with nationalism. In 1936 the school opened again in SoE. The closure of the Kupang STOVIL may be proof that education really did breed radical political thought, but as details of the student ‘movement’ have not been recorded for posterity, the closure of the school may be proof only of the extreme caution of the Dutch Church leadership.

As well as providing for minds the missions provided for souls. From the meagre number of Christians in West Timor in the early days of the century there was a steady growth. In 1930 there were about 54,000 Protestants in the division of Timor and Islands, and about 24,000 Catholics. By 1933 those figures were, roughly, 65,000 and 33,000 respectively. However, Christians in 1930 still accounted for

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152 Karthaus, ‘Memorie...’, 1931, in *Indonesia: memories...* The Christian churches in colonial Southeast Asia were in general closely linked to the colonial governments. Missionaries from the Protestant Church in Timor, the Indische Kerk, were paid directly by the state, while the Catholic missions received considerable funding also. Both churches co-operated closely with the Dutch authorities; see Webb, *Palms and the cross...*, p.1.

153 De Nijs Bik, ‘Memorie...’; 1934, in *Indonesia: memories...* See also De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1932’, in *Politieke verslagen...* The madrasah was associated with Bintang Timoor; see M. Widiyatmika, *Sejarah pendidikan daerah Nusa Tenggara Timur*, p.69.


155 De Nijs Bik, ‘Memorie...’, 1934, in *Indonesia: memories...*
less than 20% of the total population. The power of the Timorese religion and the role played in it by noted rajas such as Sonbai were demonstrated during the famine caused by the drought of 1930 when the people invoked Sonbai for relief. In Amfoan a woman said to have come from Kauniki, the home of Sonbai, was brought sacrificial gifts in order to bring the rain. She was imprisoned by the government in Kupang as a fraud, but people continued to bring her gifts. A descendant of Sonbai, Neno Sonbai, was at the same time wandering around the Fatuleu district organising sacrificial feasts.\textsuperscript{156} Other examples of the enduring strength of the traditional religion in West Timor are given by Protestant preacher Pieter Middelkoop who arrived in Central Timor in 1922. He noted that the \textit{le’u} or fetishes of the Timorese had great attraction for them and it was a very gradual process to get the people to cease the worship of their \textit{le’us} and come to the Christian religion. There are many types of \textit{le’u}, including \textit{le’u nono} for fertility magic and \textit{le’u musu} for enmity magic. Middelkoop relates the story of a man who surrendered his \textit{le’u nono} to the local minister, but after experiencing a bad harvest asked for it back. A similar case occurred when a man asked for the return of a \textit{le’u musu}, an old headhunting sword. In the late 1950s, according to Middelkoop, more than fifty percent of the Timorese still adhered to their traditional religion and continued to bring sacrifices to their \textit{le’us}.\textsuperscript{157}

\textit{Roads, airfields and the Great Depression}

Following the completion of the road from Kupang to Atapupu in 1923 a number of new towns, such as SoE, Kefamenanu and Atambua, sprang up along its length in the 1920s and 1930s, and earlier towns, like Noeltoko, Kapan and Atapupu, were largely superseded. Missionaries established centres in or near the new towns and Chinese merchants were quick to establish themselves there.\textsuperscript{158} Arab traders and a small number of British Indians settled in the towns also.\textsuperscript{159} Added to this were the Dutch administrators, their non-Timorese helpers and the foreign layout of the towns, which gave the places a definite non-Timorese character. A number of branch roads were constructed in the 1920s and there were plans for more, but because of damage

\textsuperscript{156} Schulte Nordholt, \textit{The political system of the Atoni...}, pp.75-76, 272.
\textsuperscript{157} P. Middelkoop, \textit{Curse-retribution-enmity: As data in natural religion, especially in Timor, confronted with the scripture}, pp.26, 118-120.
\textsuperscript{158} Ormeling, \textit{The Timor problem...}, pp.45-46.
\textsuperscript{159} Allied Geographical Section, Southwest Pacific Area, \textit{Terrain study No.70...Dutch Timor...}, p.22.
caused during the monsoon season the maintenance costs were high. The Great Depression of the 1930s meant that funds were not available, plans for new roads were put on hold, maintenance was decreased and some roads became unusable.\textsuperscript{160} Where the roads could be used there were about eighty motor vehicles available in West Timor in the 1930s. About half of these were trucks, mainly owned by Chinese businesses.\textsuperscript{161}

Building and maintaining the roads required the use of corvee labour. After the disturbances inspired by Sarekat Rajat in the mid-1920s it seems there were no particular problems in enforcing this compulsory labour, but it remained unpopular. Some people of Semau summed up the local feeling when they told a visitor in 1931 that heaven was physically the same as Semau and Timor. Life there was regulated, as on earth, by rajas, fettors and temukungs, but in heaven there were no taxes and no corvee.\textsuperscript{162} There were some problems with taxes during the 1930s. High transport costs affected both the import and export of goods, while the latter was struck by low market prices also. The cattle and copra industries in particular suffered in West Timor. With money scarce many of the people returned to the barter system.\textsuperscript{163} As a result there was little cash to pay taxes and local budgets had to be subsidised by the government.\textsuperscript{164} The Depression did not give rise to any noticeable increase in crime or cause any deep suffering in the territory; a situation largely due to the fact that harvests in most areas had not failed during the period so the people had sufficient food. There was also no attempt by the various political groups to make mileage out of the situation.\textsuperscript{165}

Air transport facilities continued to be developed by the Dutch in West Timor. The Penfui airstrip, not far from Kupang, was the main airfield and was generally considered to be one of the best in the Indies.\textsuperscript{166} Pioneer aviators such as Amy Johnson, Jean Batten, Charles Kingsford Smith, Lores Bonney and Amelia Earhart took advantage of West Timor’s facilities during their record setting flights between

\textsuperscript{160} Ormeling, \textit{The Timor problem...}, p.46.
\textsuperscript{161} \textit{Ibid.}, p.33.
\textsuperscript{162} M. O. W., ‘Koepang, capital of Timor’, \textit{Inter-Ocean}, XII, October 1931, p.447.
\textsuperscript{163} De Nijs Bik, ‘Memorie...’, 1934, in \textit{Indonesia: memories}...
\textsuperscript{164} De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1932’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\textsuperscript{165} Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...1e halfjaar 1935’, in \textit{Politieke verslagen}...
\textsuperscript{166} Karthaus, ‘Memorie...’, 1931, in \textit{Indonesia: memories}...
Kupang became a base for commercial flights also. There were seaplane anchorages in Kupang Bay, Semau Strait and Tenau. Australian Qantas seaplanes used Kupang as a transit port on its Australia-Singapore flights. There was an airfield at Atambua too, but there were new strips being developed in many parts of the island in anticipation of the outbreak of war. A novel facility existed in Kupang at this time, a golf course, but it also was converted into an airfield. Most of these airfields were later used by the Japanese.

The relationship with Portuguese Timor

The settlement of the borders between Portuguese and Dutch Timor did much to remove the tension between the two colonial powers. Resident Couvreur in 1924, however, considered that it had also made the economically backward Dutch territory virtually irrelevant. Couvreur regretted also that there was no personal contact between the two sides. This issue was solved for Couvreur’s successor, Schultz, as the new Portuguese governor stopped in Kupang on his way to Dili to make his acquaintance. This seems to have become a custom and it became usual also for Dutch and Portuguese border commanders to make reciprocal visits to each other’s territories. Co-operation between the two sides was extended further when both a coast road and an inland road were extended from Belu into Portuguese Timor and a telephone link was made also.

Corvee labour and tax avoiders, as well as criminals, continued to cross the borders, but both sides co-operated to return them to the other side. Livestock theft remained the perennial problem and in this matter the two sides were generally co-operative also, although the Dutch reported that some junior Portuguese officers colluded with the local heads who were behind the thefts. After Dutch complaints these officers were usually removed. While many of the thefts could be attributed to continuing vendettas by rival groups across the borders there was the problem that Dutch

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168 Allied Geographical Section, Southwest Pacific Area, *Terrain study No.70...Dutch Timor...*, pp.1-4.
169 Couvreur, ‘Memorie...1924’, in *Indonesia: memories...*
170 Schultz, ‘Politieke-Overzicht...1924...’, in *Politieke verslagen...*
171 Schumacher, ‘Politiek Overzicht over het jaar 1927 van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden’, in *Politieke verslagen...*
172 Karthaus, ‘Memorie...’, 1931, in *Indonesia: memories...*
subjects often stole from their fellows and then took the beasts into Portuguese territory to be sold. Thus tracks leading into the neighbouring territory did not necessarily indicate that the thieves originated there. While livestock theft was common and often involved substantial numbers of animals it did not affect the good relationship between the colonial officers. There were other, more serious matters, such as unauthorised border crossings by military patrols which resulted in illegal detentions and even murder. Complaints made at the highest levels in these cases usually resulted in the culprits being punished.\(^\text{173}\) It was not all bad-blood on the borders, however, as shown when Resident Bosch reported in 1938 that copper and silver coins used in Portuguese Timor were in general circulation in Belu also. He considered this caused no problem and advised against any action against it as it was only the result of the lively cross-border trade that existed in the area. He was in favour of letting the coins remain in circulation as they helped facilitate peaceful economic transactions.\(^\text{174}\)

Some curious events occurred in 1932 when a number of Portuguese political exiles held in Portuguese Timor decided to escape. The first nine escaped in February in a small boat and then commandeered an Australian schooner, the Jewa Sunyi, which had recently left Dili. They later transferred to the Dutch steamer S. S. Van Riebeeck which took them to Java.\(^\text{175}\) The second group of eight crossed the border in mid-July in a stolen government bus. Another six arrived at the end of the month. That the Portuguese authorities did not enquire about the missing bus and the fact that five of the last group had passports issued by the Governor himself made the Dutch Resident suspect that their escape was sanctioned by the Dili authorities. As all the escapees were political exiles with identity papers and sufficient cash there was no thought of returning them to Dili and they were allowed to travel through the Netherlands Indies on their way back to Europe.\(^\text{176}\) Later that year two more exiles crossed the border. One had insufficient papers and returned to Dili, while the other had all the necessary papers and a deal of cash. He was, however, detained in

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\(^{173}\) Bosch, ‘Memorie...’, 1938, in *Memories*...

\(^{174}\) Ibid.

\(^{175}\) De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1932’, in *Politieke verslagen*... See also *Northern Standard*, Darwin, 4 March 1932.

\(^{176}\) De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...eerste halfjaar 1932’, in *Politieke verslagen*...
Kupang and later returned to Dili after it was announced that the Portuguese were to give a general amnesty to the exiles.177

The growing fear of the Japanese

As recorded in Chapter Two there had been fears of Japanese intentions in the Indies as far back as the First World War. A group of Japanese traders who visited Timor in 1917 were believed by the Dutch to be secretly interested in the island’s oil reserves. An Australian naval commander who visited Kupang in 1927 reported that Dutch officials and civilians were obsessed with the idea that they would be attacked by the Japanese. They were certain that if the Netherlands had sided with Germany in the First World War the Japanese (then on the side of the Allies) would have taken the Netherlands Indies.178 There were rumours in the 1920s that the Portuguese were considering selling their part of Timor to the Japanese and newspaper stories in 1932 that the Dutch were considering doing the same.179 The rumours were untrue, but the Netherlands consul-general in Australia felt it necessary to write to the Australian prime minister in 1932 to assure him this was so.180

Australia had shown an increasing interest in Timor and in the 1920s and 1930s there were Australian companies searching for oil in Portuguese Timor.181 The Japanese had been showing interest there too and Resident Bosch in West Timor noted in 1938 that a Japanese company had gained control of the Portuguese Timor trade and agriculture company De Sociedade Agricola Patria e Trabalho (The Homeland and Labour Agricultural Company).182 The Japanese then introduced a shipping service to Dili that used naval personnel and a Kobe-Palau-Dili air link using naval reconnaissance planes. They planned to open a consulate in Dili also. The Portuguese were wary of this increased Japanese attention and invited Australia to send an

177 De Nijs Bik, ‘Politiek Verslag...1932’, in Politieke verslagen... The Dutch themselves had long used exile as a means to silence their political opponents in the Indies. During this period, as well as some Acehnese communists already mentioned, Soekarno, the future first president of Indonesia, was exiled in Ende, Flores, and the Sultan of Dompu from Sumbawa was an exile in Kupang. A less exulted exile was a Balinese named I Die who was exiled to Kupang for ten years in 1924 ‘for lewd actions with a cow’; see Bosch, ‘Politiek verslag...1934’, in Politieke verslagen...
180 NAA: A981/4, TIM D1 Part 1.
182 Bosch, ‘Memorie...’, 1938, in Memories...
unofficial representative and to extend the Qantas link to Dili. In consultation with the British a Darwin-Dili air link was established in early 1941. David Ross, a Department of Civil Aviation officer, became the unofficial Australian representative in Dili and he soon acquired a helper, F. J. A. Whittaker, who was an undercover spy for Naval Intelligence.\textsuperscript{183}

In West Timor Japanese activity was much quieter. The captain of an Australian patrol boat that called into Kupang in the late 1930s found that the shops were full of Japanese goods,\textsuperscript{184} but a British diplomat who visited Timor in late 1941 reported that there were no Japanese living in Kupang itself,\textsuperscript{185} as was common in other parts of the Indies. Indonesian sources, however, state that there was a Japanese spy posing as a shopkeeper in Kupang and Japanese cloth merchants travelling from village to village in the interior also.\textsuperscript{186} At any rate, Australia and the Netherlands were alarmed by Japanese activity in the area and were convinced that a Japanese attack on the Indies was imminent.

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In the 1920s and 1930s the Dutch intensified their control over West Timor. They did this through a system of indirect rule that caused many problems as rival groups and individuals sought to gain a position in the newly arranged kingdoms. At the same time political organisations began to operate in West Timor for the first time. These groups ranged from the ‘revolutionary’ to the ‘loyal and co-operative’, yet they all expressed nationalist aspirations. Members of the region’s royal families were involved in many of these groups which in general were dominated by the educated elite, most of whom were Rotenese, Sabunese and Kisarese; ethnic Timorese played a lesser role. That nationalist activity in West Timor was mainly limited to the educated elite did not differentiate it from developments in other parts of Indonesia, where the educated elite also played a leading role. As elsewhere in Indonesia the political groups established in Timor were often based on religious or ethnic

\textsuperscript{183} Hastings, ‘The Timor problem-II…’, pp.192-196.
\textsuperscript{184} C. T. G. Haultain, \textit{A watch off Arnhemland}, pp.69-79.
\textsuperscript{185} NAA: A981/4, \textit{TIM D1 Part 2}.
\textsuperscript{186} \textit{Sejarah kebangkitan}..., p.76. Other claims of Japanese spies in West Timor are discussed in the following chapter.
affiliations. Many were strictly local groups. Others were part of Indonesia-wide movements, such as Sarekat Rajat, which acted as a local group, but was clearly connected to the PKI in Java where groups of the same name operated also. The Timorsch Verbond was affiliated with the Indonesia-wide PPPKI, while the Perserikatan Kebangsaan Timor allied itself with another nationwide federation of political associations, GAPI. The political groups which operated in West Timor before the Second World War may have been small and are often overlooked in works dealing with Indonesian nationalism in this period, but the people of the Timor region can truly say that they have been involved in the Indonesian nationalist movement from the earliest days. During the same period educational facilities and other infrastructure in West Timor such as roads continued to be extended, although they were hindered by the effects of the Great Depression. The Christian missions continued to be active also, but the majority of Timor’s people remained faithful to their traditional religion. Throughout the period the Dutch in West Timor were uneasy about the intentions of Japan and on the eve of the Second World War feared that the territory would be invaded. Their worst fears were realised in early 1942, as will be related in the following chapter.

187 For more on the Sarekat Rajat outside Timor, see Ruth T. McVey, *The rise of Indonesian communism*. 
Figure 13.
Alexander Koroh.
(From the collection of the Koroh family, Baun. Copy courtesy of Donald Tick.)

Figure 14.
Raja Alexander Koroh with fettors and temukungs of Amarasi.
(From the collection of the Koroh family, Baun. Copy courtesy of Donald Tick.)
Figure 15.
Raja Nicolaas Nisnoni.
(From the collection of Leopold Nisnoni.)
Figure 16.
Certificate of appreciation awarded to Christian Pandy for services to the nation.
(From the collection of the Pandy family, Kupang. Copy courtesy of Ernesta Loude-Jangga Dewa.)
Figure 17.
Monument to Dr. W. Z. Johannes outside the Dr. W. Z. Johannes Hospital, Kupang.
Figure 18.

‘Soerat Perdjandjian’. Contract between the Netherlands Indies government and Raja Toea SonbaE of Molo, October 1933.

(From F.H. Fobia, ‘Sonbai’, Appendix III.)
Chapter Four

The Japanese occupation

This chapter examines the impact of the Second World War in West Timor. The Japanese invasion and occupation is described. The Dutch and their Australian allies were easily defeated by the Japanese, ending forever the myth of European superiority. Although Japanese rule was harsh it encouraged many Timorese to believe in their own abilities and to seek greater independence after the war. As in other parts of Indonesia, and indeed Southeast Asia more generally, the Japanese occupation acted as a catalyst, promoting the subsequent development of the nationalist movement. Under the Japanese a number of Timorese, including nationalists such as I. H. Dokó, were given greater responsibility in government administration. The rajas, although subject to many Japanese demands, retained their authority. Some, such as Raja Amarasi, H. A. Koroh, were able to preserve a great deal of autonomy. Meanwhile, the European missionaries were interned and the running of the Church was left entirely in Timorese hands, although with no Japanese assistance. The question of whether the West Timorese were ‘pro-Japanese’ is examined also and their ‘loyalty’ to their erstwhile European colonial masters and the Allies is compared with that of the East Timorese in Portuguese Timor.

Preparations for the defence of West Timor

During the First World War the Netherlands avoided invasion and occupation by maintaining a policy of strict neutrality. During the Second World War the policy was not successful and the Netherlands was occupied by Germany in May 1940. While a Netherlands government-in-exile was established in Britain the government in the Indies tried to maintain its neutrality. Australia looked at the Indies as a barrier between itself and Japan and pressured the Netherlands Indies government to be more pro-active in preparations against possible Japanese aggression. After much dithering the Dutch agreed to a number of measures, including Australian troops being stationed in Timor and Ambon; in May 1941 military equipment began to be shipped to both places. The Dutch, however, did not favour allowing large numbers of uniformed Australian troops in their territory as they did not want to lose face with the local people by showing they needed outside assistance. The growing Japanese
threat made them change their minds, but it was much too late. It was just a day before the bombing of Pearl Harbour and the beginning of the war in the Pacific that a flight of Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) Hudson bombers was directed to Kupang to be based at the Penfui airfield. The Australian 2/40 Battalion got the order to proceed to West Timor at the same time.¹

Just over two months later Timor was invaded by the Japanese. Australia had feared that if the Japanese captured Timor they could use it as a base to attack and even invade Australia. For the Japanese, however, occupation of Timor was more important in order to isolate Australia and safeguard Japanese possession of the rest of the resource-rich archipelago. The immediate aim was to cut the lines of communication between Australia and Java, where the main Dutch and other Allied forces were based. Timor then had to be held in Japanese hands as part of a line of defence against possible Allied counter-attacks from north Australia, to ensure safety for Japanese shipping in the Indies and to prevent the Allies using Timor as a sea and air base.²

The 2/40 Battalion and associated units destined for Timor were known as Sparrow Force. The 2/40 Battalion’s commander, Lieutenant-Colonel W. W. Leggatt, was appointed only four weeks before the force left Darwin for Timor. His predecessor, Lieutenant-Colonel G. D. Youl, was apparently outspoken about the mission to Timor, describing it as ‘purely suicidal’ as it was expected that the force, whose job would be to defend air bases on the island, would be attacked by vastly superior forces. The air bases had far too few aeroplanes to provide effective air cover.

¹ Herman Bussemaker, ‘Australian-Dutch defence cooperation 1940-1941’, *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, No.29, November 1996, pp.1, 8-9. The story of Australian and Dutch activities in Timor during the Second World War has been told in a number of studies, both Australian and Dutch. Perhaps not surprisingly authors from the two nations have stressed the importance of their compatriots’ contribution in comparison to that of their ally. The Australian studies are often quite critical of the Dutch, but are critical also of Australian military strategists who formulated the ill-conceived defence plans. The relevant literature includes Peter Henning, *Doomed battalion: Mateship and leadership in war and captivity. The Australian 2/40 Battalion 1940-45*; Bernard Callinan, *Independent company: The Australian Army in Portuguese Timor 1941-43*; Christopher C. H. Wray, *Timor 1942: Australian commandos at war with the Japanese*; J. J. Nortier, *De Japanse aanval op Nederlands-Indie*; F. Witkamp et. al., *Gedenkboek van het KNIL*; C. van den Hoogenband and L. Schotborgh, *Nederlands-Indie contra Japan, Deel VI: De strijd op Ambon, Timor en Sumatra*; and *Het Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indische Leger in den strijd tegen Japan*.

Repeated requests from Youl’s superior, Brigadier E. F. Lind, for increased resources fell on deaf ears. Both the Dutch and Australian authorities were very negligent in their preparations for Timor.

Sparrow Force left Darwin on 10 December 1941 with a complement of 1,392 men. Apart from the 766 men of the 2/40 Battalion there were a number of specialist units, including 126 men in the 2/1 Heavy Battery who were to man two six-inch guns which had been placed at Kelapa Lima overlooking Kupang Bay. The ships transporting the men arrived at Timor on 12 December. As they neared the coast a Japanese submarine was spotted, but disappeared after a bomb was dropped from the escort aeroplane. It was a sober reminder to the men that they were entering an area that was soon to be a war zone. The 2/2 Independent Company, with 268 men under Major A. Spence, arrived as part of Sparrow Force at the same time, but it was decided to send them to neutral Portuguese Timor to prevent a Japanese landing in the east of the island. A few days after arriving in Kupang they left for Dili along with a force of about 500 Indonesians and 100 Europeans led by Lieutenant-Colonel N. L. W. van Straten of the Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger (KNIL; Royal Netherlands Indies Army). They travelled on board the Dutch training ship Soerabaja, which was actually the re-built and re-named old cruiser De Zeven Provincien, discussed in Chapter Three.

David Ross, who had since been appointed British consul in Dili, met with the Australians during a flying visit to Kupang and on his return informed the Governor of Portuguese Timor of the imminent arrival of the Dutch and Australian troops. The Portuguese did not approve of the Allied forces landing in Dili as it could provoke a response from the Japanese. It was made clear, however, that the landing would take place regardless. It was then agreed that the Allied forces would withdraw when Portuguese reinforcements arrived to protect the colony, but the Japanese invaded before the changeover of troops could occur.

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3 Henning, *Doomed battalion...*, pp.35-37.
4 Still in position; personal visit, 13 June 2000.
According to one Dutch account the people in West Timor heard of the fall of the Netherlands to Germany in 1940, but it had little effect on their daily lives. When war in the Pacific seemed inevitable they still felt that isolated Timor was a safe place to be. The swift Japanese advance dispelled this relaxed attitude and replaced it with one of growing apprehension. The arrival of the Australian forces may have helped ease the people’s fears. It certainly provided a diversion for some of Kupang’s population who came out to greet the Australian ships in small boats and were soon diving for beer bottles, woollen underwear and other unwanted items thrown overboard. Unloading the ships took several days and Captain Bernard Callinan of the 2/2 Independent Company was amazed at how much the local workers could carry. ‘An immaculately clad native of some East Indian variety’ kept the workers going with indiscriminate blows from a cane. Signalman Arthur Johnston noted in his diary that the Australians helped with the unloading when the local workers began to tire. The workers were ‘amazed’; Johnston believed they had never seen a white man work. A Dutch supervisor told the Australians that they were ‘too friendly with the natives’ and that they should not work with their shirts off because it would lower the ‘white man’s prestige’. This type of advice was ‘rammed down [the] throats’ of the Australians by the Dutch ‘hundreds of times’ in the next two months. Johnston relates also that when the local workers called a halt after several hours continuous work the Dutch considered this to be an ‘open rebellion’ and said that if necessary armed force should be used to make them resume work. Instead Colonel Leggatt gave them an hour’s rest and a meal and they then ‘resumed work with vigour’.

The majority of the Australians moved in to a base near the airfield, although some were camped at Kelapa Lima. Part of the accommodation was built by the Australians themselves, but much of it was contracted out to local builders. Some of those involved remembered many years later that the Australians never took anything

Both Dutch and Australian forces were engaged in a guerilla campaign in Portuguese Timor after the Japanese invasion. Some Portuguese and many Timorese later paid dearly for help given to the Allied forces. The Allied campaign in Portuguese Timor is largely outside the scope of the present study although aspects of it will be discussed below.

9 Het Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indische Leger..., pp.54-55.
10 Callinan, Independent company..., pp.5-6.
11 Australian War Memorial [hereafter AWM]: PR90/017.
12 Henning, Doomed battalion..., p.49.
without paying for it and always paid their workers fairly. In this respect, they said, the Australians were better than the Dutch and the Japanese. Local construction workers had a camp near Penfui and, although it was against orders, some of the Australians spent their nights there gambling, drinking laru (palm beer) and bartering for food and other goods. The men soon knew the sights of Kupang. Captain Callinan thought the narrow streets of the town to be models of Dutch cleanliness, but he found the prices in the shops ‘ridiculously high’. Impromptu restaurants with names like Sydney and Hobart appeared in the town, as did a number of brothels. An Australian report concluded that any attempt to stamp out prostitution would be likely to fail. Some of the men got bored and with ‘spirits and wine from all over the world’ being consumed it is not surprising that many fights broke out among the troops. The fights always attracted a large crowd of curious Timorese.

M. M. KoEhuan has argued that Timorese contacts with the Australians were strictly for business and implies that there was no socialising. Yet the testimony of his respondents shows that they were not indifferent to the Australians and remember them with a measure of fondness. Relationships, however, were limited because of language difficulties. Brigadier W. C. D. Veale, who arrived in Kupang in mid-February 1942, noted that the Australian soldiers ‘could not understand’ their Indonesian counterparts of the local defence force. Communication problems were apparent from the time the Australians first landed in Kupang, although it did not prevent them from drinking and gambling with some of the locals, as recorded above. The Australians were initially wary of the Timorese as they had been told that many of them were headhunters. Timorese men often carry with them a large bush-knife, or parang, which did nothing to dispel the Australians’ fears. When Johnston went to repair a signal cable at Penfui he was ‘warned to beware of hostile natives’ and to make sure he was armed. He met no trouble and on another occasion he

14 Henning, Doomed battalion..., p.52.  
15 Callinan, Independent company..., p.10.  
16 Henning, Doomed battalion..., pp.53-54.  
18 Henning, Doomed battalion..., pp.53-54.  
20 AWM: PR00138.  
21 Henning, Doomed battalion..., p.49.  
22 Callinan, Independent company..., p.3.  
23 Henning, Doomed battalion..., p.58.
stumbled into a Timorese village where he was given some ‘native beer’. The Australians soon forgot what they had been told about the Timorese and saw them instead as ‘a happy-go-lucky people’. Many of the people of West Timor seem to have readily accepted the Australians also. Hein Adi, who as a boy lived in the Oesau district, inland from Kupang, remembered that Australian soldiers there often got bananas and coconuts from the local people and that one tall Australian officer was quite fond of his mother because she gave him some of her home-baked cake.

While some of the Australians and Timorese managed to build a rapport, some of the Dutch living in the Indies were less welcoming. A month before the Australians arrived in Timor an article appeared in the *Java Bode (Java Messenger)* arguing against the presence of foreign troops in Netherlands Timor. A later commentator claimed that this was based on a fear that the Australians, who had no colonies of their own, may cause unrest among the people, especially if they were too familiar with the local women. Johnston was surely closer to the mark when he suggested that the real reason the Dutch did not like the Australians being ‘too friendly with the natives’ was that they feared losing their own privileged positions.

The KNIL forces in Kupang were under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel W. E. C. Detiger and numbered around 200 ‘native soldiers’, many of whom were reserve troops (pensioned soldiers). The combined Australian-Dutch forces were to defend an area of coastline measuring about twenty kilometres. The Australians were concentrated at Penfui (a few kilometres inland) and along the beach to Oesapa Besar to the east of the town. The KNIL troops were situated along the beach to the west as far as Tenau, a sheltered harbour facing Semau. The aim was to protect the airfield from an attack by sea. These defences were clearly inadequate as the enemy could land at any of the undefended points around Kupang Bay or at any other point on the vast unguarded coastline. There was little preparation outside Kupang.

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24 *AWM: PR90/017.*
26 Hein Adi, interview SoE, 13 November 1997.
28 *AWM: PR90/017.*
29 Nortier, *De Japanse aanval...*, pp.167, 172-173. Australian Army intelligence officer Captain F. G. East gives the figures of 300 soldiers and seven officers; see *AWM: PR89/154.*
30 Henning, *Doomed battalion...*, pp.50-51.
Australians made a small base at Babau, inland from Kupang, and another later at Camplong, while the Dutch had 180 troops to guard the Haliwen airfield at Atambua, near the border with Portuguese Timor, and a further twenty-six at the nearby port of Atapupu. Leggatt lobbied for extra men and equipment, but his existing troops were already being weakened by the effects of gonorrhoea, diarrhoea, tinea, prickly heat and malaria. In the hot, humid conditions in Kupang minor cuts and abrasions soon became infected and tropical ulcers was added to the list of ailments.

On 8 December 1941 (7 December in Hawaii) the Japanese simultaneously attacked Pearl Harbor, Hong Kong and north Malaya. The Netherlands immediately declared war on Japan. In the meantime the Japanese continued down through the Malayan peninsula and soon began their attack on Indonesia itself. On 11 January the Japanese began landing at oil-rich Tarakan in East Kalimantan and the Dutch forces surrendered the following day. The defenders of Kupang were increasingly aware of their vulnerability. On 19 January reinforcements arrived in Kupang, along with some remnants of the 2/40 Battalion who had been on leave when the force left Darwin. Of these extra 200-odd men many were raw recruits with no training. Australian intelligence officer Captain Fred East, who arrived at the same time, had contact with all the senior Dutch officials, including Resident Nieboer, Secretaris Ezerman, the head of the local civil service Mr. Goedhart, Colonel Detiger, the heads of the navy and police, as well as local rajas and the ‘Head of Chinese’, Mr. San. All the Dutch officials maintained a tidur siang (afternoon nap; still very common in Kupang) from 13.30 to 17.00. East reported that the Dutch army and police officials would not co-operate with each other and had to be dealt with separately. One can imagine, given the gravity of the situation, that East was not amused.

Many Australians were unimpressed by other aspects of the Dutch preparations in Kupang. The Dutch consistently neglected to pass on shipping information to the Australians causing anxiety whenever strange ships entered the harbour.

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31 Wray, Timor 1942..., p.34.
32 Henning, Doomed battalion..., pp.55-56.
33 Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., p.184.
34 Poesponegoro and Notosusanto, Sejarah nasional Indonesia, Jilid VI, p.1.
35 Ibid., p.60.
36 AWM: PR89/154.
37 Wray, Timor 1942..., p.35.
Johnston, after being sent to repair a signal cable, noted that the ‘Dutch wiring and military set-up in general was most unsatisfactory’. And Brigadier Veale thought that the ‘native’ soldiers defending the beach towards Tenau were ‘not worth a damn’. He was told by the Dutch commander that they were really ‘bush fighters’ and therefore not much good for defence. Some of the old soldiers claimed much later that they had only come out of retirement because they feared sanctions from the Dutch if they did not participate. Consequently they made only a half-hearted effort and surrendered soon after the Japanese arrived in Timor. Doko recalled that many KNIL soldiers at the time threw away their weapons and uniforms and dressed in local costume to pass themselves off as civilians.

By late January the Japanese invasion of Indonesia was well advanced. On 24 January they occupied the airfield in Kendari, Southeast Sulawesi, which put their planes within reach of Timor. The very next day a lone Japanese reconnaissance aeroplane was seen flying high over Kupang. On 26 January seven Japanese planes attacked Penfui, shooting up the airfield and the camp. They also shot down a Dutch seaplane that had just taken off. All on board, which included Assistent Resident Ch. Weidner and civil service head Goedhart, were killed. A few days later a Qantas seaplane was shot down killing thirteen people. Other planes were destroyed on the ground. Air raids became part of life in Kupang over the following weeks, yet there were surprisingly few casualties among the soldiers on the ground.

On 31 January the Japanese assaulted Ambon and after a few days fighting had control of the island. Attacks on Kupang continued. On 4 February shipping in Kupang Bay was bombed, killing some Timorese. The Japanese were already complete masters of the skies over Timor yet it was felt essential to keep the island in Allied hands as part of the air link between Java and Australia. It was thus decided that Sparrow Force would finally receive the oft-requested reinforcements and in

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38 AWM: PR90/017.
39 AWM: PR00138.
40 KoElhuan, Peranan tokoh masyarakat...1941-1945, pp.33, 51.
41 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.73.
42 Henning, Doomed battalion..., p.62.
43 AWM: PR89/154. East wrongly designates Goedhart as Assistent Resident; see Schulte Nordholt, 'Besturen in een vacuum...', p.156.
44 Wray, Timor 1942..., p.37.
45 Henning, Doomed battalion..., p.64.
preparation on 12 February Brigadier Veale arrived to take over command of the force from Leggatt. Events were by then moving swiftly and on 15 February Singapore, ‘the impregnable fortress’, fell to the Japanese. On the same day a convoy of ships carrying the reinforcements to Kupang left Darwin, but was so harried by enemy air attacks that it was forced to return to Australia. The British 79 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery was, however, successfully transferred to Kupang from Java.46

Around the same time news came through to Kupang that from 18 February Penfui was to cease being an operational air base and become a refuelling station only. If Penfui was no longer an operational base the whole reason for Sparrow Force being in Timor would cease to be. Reports of a Japanese attack on the Denpasar airfield in Bali meant that it would be difficult for planes to make it through to Java, so the use of Kupang as a refuelling station seemed unlikely also. Yet no orders were sent to redefine the role of the force. Brigadier Veale decided to move to Camplong to organise a defensive position there and to arrange for a further fall-back position at SoE. Leggatt was left in charge in Kupang. In the early hours of 19 February all RAAF personnel apart from a few ground crew were evacuated from Kupang. The Kupang defenders now had no air support. Later that day they learnt that the Japanese had carried out a massive attack on Darwin, destroying many aeroplanes and ships. No help from Darwin could be expected in the near future and a Japanese convoy had earlier been reported heading for Timor.47 The Australian and Dutch forces in West Timor knew it was then only a matter of time before the invasion began. They did not know if it would be from air or by sea, nor from which direction, but they knew they did not have long to wait.

**The invasion**

The assault on Timor was carried out by the Japanese 228th Infantry Regiment, the same force which had attacked Ambon. It was commanded by Major General Ito Takeo who split it into two groups so as to attack Dili and Kupang simultaneously. Ito had command of about 5,300 men for the amphibious attack of Timor, two thirds of whom were to be used for Kupang, and over 600 paratroopers. The first clear sign in Kupang that an attack was imminent came in the early evening of 19 February

when an observation post on Semau reported thirteen strange ships approaching Kupang Bay from the north-west. At 10 p.m. it was reported that the ships had disappeared to the south of the island. There then seemed no doubt that Japanese forces would soon begin landing somewhere on the undefended south coast. On 20 February at 2 a.m. the 2/2 Independent Company in Dili reported that the town was being shelled from sea. No more news of Japanese movements was heard in Kupang until 5 a.m. when a Dutch official reported that he had been informed by Raja Amarasi that Japanese troops had landed at Batulesa, a small south coast village near the mouth of the Paha River. With this news Leggatt began the demolition of the Penfui airfield.48

In the meantime Veale had left for new headquarters at Camplong. On the way he was able to see the smoke from the demolition work in Kupang as ammunition and fuel supplies were destroyed, but he could see also hundreds of Japanese paratroopers landing in the Babau-Oesau area. By landing there the Japanese effectively cut Kupang off from the interior. The Australian and Dutch forces were then separated from their reserve supplies stored in Camplong.49 The Australians camped at Babau were heavily bombed as was the artillery position in Kelapa Lima. By avoiding an amphibious assault on Kupang Bay the Japanese had ensured that the six-inch guns there were never fired in anger. After the gun crews lost contact with headquarters they rendered the guns unusable. By then the airfield demolition had been completed so Leggatt abandoned Penfui and established new headquarters at Tarus, about thirteen kilometres from Kupang. Leggatt learned that the Japanese paratroopers had taken control of Babau, so he planned to re-take Babau and then move on to Camplong. After fighting through cornfields, a market place and from house to house the Australians were able to take possession of Babau during the night of 21 February.50 In the early morning light they discovered some of their comrades who had been caught earlier by the Japanese. They were tied to trees with their throats cut.51

48 Wray, _Timor 1942..._, pp.42-44.
49 Henning, _Doomed battalion..._, p.84.
50 Wray, _Timor 1942..._, pp.47-50.
51 AWM: PR89/154.
The Japanese who had landed on the south coast at Batulesa forced some of the locals to act as guides. While one group moved into Kupang, cutting the Australians off from the rear, another group moved towards Oesau to join up with the remaining paratroopers. Travelling in convoy, the Australians continued to fight their way to Camplong, but their situation was becoming desperate. They were short of water, rations and ammunition. They had been constantly on the move and most of the men had had no rest for three days. In the morning of 23 February a Japanese column with tanks and field guns moved into the rear of the Australian convoy. The Japanese commander demanded a surrender and pointed out that there were large numbers of Japanese troops on both flanks. Many of the troops wanted to continue fighting, but Leggatt and his officers considered they had no option and thus agreed to surrender. Some of the troops and a few of the officers then escaped to the hills and eventually made it through to Portuguese Timor to meet up with the 2/2 Independent Company, which continued to fight. For the rest, the war was over.

The Dutch contribution to the fight against the invading Japanese in West Timor has been criticised by a number of Australian commentators. It is true that in all accounts of the fighting the Dutch are conspicuous by their absence. The KNIL troops, for example, took no part in the fighting against the Japanese paratroopers in the Babau-Oesau area. The Dutch later claimed this was because they did not have any suitable means of transport to reach the battle scene. Peter Henning in his book *Doomed battalion* quotes a number of Australian soldiers who believed that the Dutch deliberately avoided action against the enemy. The Dutch themselves admit that many of the KNIL soldiers were operating without any clear instructions as they had lost contact with their commander, Colonel Detiger. A group led by Captain van Mastrigt got in touch with the Australian forces, but Leggatt sent word to van Mastrigt that he did not know where Detiger was either. Van Mastrigt was then instructed to proceed to Babau, but never made it, claiming later that he was delayed because many of his Timorese troops deserted en route. In the meantime Detiger had headed into the interior, marching overland. Several days after the general surrender

55 Henning, *Doomed battalion...*, pp.89-90
Detiger’s exhausted group left the countryside and took to the open road near Niki Niki. Before they reached the town they were met by a Japanese infantry company. Believing that his group was in no condition to fight, the commander of the Dutch forces in West Timor decided to surrender.56

Timorese commentators have been critical of Dutch inaction also. KoEhuan reports that the villagers from Batulesa who were forced to guide the Japanese into Kupang were amazed to find Fort Concordia empty. The main Dutch stronghold in West Timor for 300 years had been abandoned and not a shot had been fired in its defence!57 Doko reported that the KNIL troops in Kupang offered absolutely no opposition to the Japanese and instead ran ‘helter-skelter’ to save their own skins. Meanwhile, the Dutch civilian and military leaders tried to save themselves by retreating into the interior.58 For many Timorese who witnessed or heard of these events it would have been a revelation. The Dutch were not only beatable, they had even avoided the fight. When the Dutch returned after the war they no longer seemed invincible and never again commanded the same level of respect. With the Australians it was somewhat different. Doko portrays the Australians who fought at Oesau as courageous soldiers who were willing to fight to the death. In the end, he wrote, they were only defeated because of the overwhelming odds.59 The Australians fought fiercely against the Japanese paratroopers who landed in the Oesau area, but were eventually hemmed in by the troops who had been landed on the coast. The Australians later learnt that they had almost annihilated the paratroopers, as only seventy-eight of the original 600 survived the fighting.60 Yet it had all been in vain, Timor had fallen to the Japanese and the remaining Dutch, Australian and handful of British troops in West Timor spent the rest of the war in Japanese prisoner of war camps.

57 KoEhuan, Kajian historis..., p.42.
58 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.72.
59 Ibid.
Were Japanese and pro-Japanese spies operating in West Timor before the invasion?

From mid-February 1942 the Japanese began dropping propaganda leaflets as well as bombs during their air attacks on Kupang. Written in Malay, the pamphlets were addressed to the ‘Indonesians’ of Timor. It advised them that the Japanese would protect all women and children, but that anyone who damaged oil or petrol installations would be shot, along with all their families. The Japanese instructed the Timorese to ‘kill all white officers’.61 The Australians were not overly disturbed by the pamphlets as they thought that the majority of the Timorese could not speak Malay and even fewer could read it.62 Although there were many Malay speakers and readers in the main towns, the Australians’ estimation was true for much of the inland. Nevertheless, there were concerns that the Japanese had made some headway with their propaganda in West Timor. As noted in Chapter Three, a British report from late 1941 stated there were no Japanese living in Kupang. Captain East, however, implied in January 1942 that there had been Japanese living there recently when he reported that all Japanese nationals living in West Timor had been sent to Java before his arrival.63 That the Japanese gained intelligence from their nationals living in many parts of Indonesia before the war is well known. If this had not been done in strategically-placed Timor it would be surprising. One Indonesian source claims that a Japanese spy posing as a Chinese medicine seller had his own shop in Kupang since 1932 and a number of others had been working as travelling cloth merchants.64 KoEhuan adds that Japanese spies were even involved in farming, especially in the Oesau and Babau areas. Some of them, such as Fujita, were well known to the local people.65

Before the Japanese attack on West Timor only a few individuals were considered to be potentially dangerous Japanese supporters. With some of these, such as Mr.

61 AWM: PR89/154.
62 Captain East, cited in Henning, Doomed battalion..., p.73.
63 NAA: AWM27, 118/12.
64 Sejarah kebangkitan..., p.76.
65 KoEhuan, Peranan tokoh masyarakat...1941-1945, pp.52. George Kanahele in his ‘The Japanese occupation of Indonesia: Prelude to independence’, p.11, has queried the role played by Japanese spies in pre-war Indonesia. He concurs that there were Japanese businessmen and journalists in Indonesia who passed on intelligence to the Japanese authorities, but cautions that the numbers involved and the extent of their activities were never as great as claimed by the Dutch or post-war Indonesians. Doko, however, claims that many of the soldiers of the Timor invasion force were in fact former workers of large Japanese businesses in Java; see Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.73.
Chohan and Mr. Chidano, little is now known of them other than their names. Mr. Ishag Selam Rafigi and Miss Nora Rafigi of Toko Selam, or Kupang Stores, were considered suspects also and it was suggested that their shop be put out of bounds for Australian troops. The Selams, as they were known, were thought to be Indians who had previously lived in British India. A Japanese named Jostomisang was said to have often been in Toko Selam before the war. He posed as a travelling trader and was well known in the area where the Japanese made the first landing of their invasion. Selam himself is supposed to have been close to the Japanese during their occupation of West Timor as well and was killed by ‘natives’ at the end of the war. It was ‘natives’ also who informed Australian intelligence officers of other ‘native and Chinese agents’ operating in West Timor. This information was received too late to act on in most cases, although a homeopathic doctor in SoE was arrested and placed under police guard in early February. The Japanese invaded soon after and the doctor’s fate is now unknown.

KoEhuan reports that a number of Indonesian traders who frequented Batulesa and the Sumlili district (Abdul, Ahmad and Said) were thought to be spies for the Japanese and provided information which was useful for their invasion of Timor. The accusations, however, have to be regarded with caution as they were made fifty years after the event by Christian Rotenese and all the accused have Muslim, non-Timorese names. It is possible that the claims are as much linked to religious and ethnic tensions as to any genuine espionage activities. Apart from the suspected individual spies already mentioned, the Australians were concerned in a general sense about the presence of local people within the defensive zone around Kupang Bay. Not only did these people have the opportunity to carry out sabotage, they had full knowledge of the Australians’ positions, numbers and so on. From late January civilians were evacuated from the coastal areas of Tenau, Kupang, Kelapa Lima and Oesapa, but

66 AWM: PR89/154.
68 KoEhuan, Kajian historis..., p.33.
69 AWM: PR89/154. Before the war, however, Selam was well regarded by the Dutch and by Australians also; his company acted as agents for an Australian pearling firm and was very helpful to Captain C. T. G. Haultain when he pulled into Kupang needing repairs for the Australian patrol boat Larrakia, but with no funds to pay for them; see Haultain, Watch off Arnhem Land, p.75.
71 Henning, Doomed battalion..., p.61.
72 KoEhuan, Kajian historis..., p.33.
the move was completed only shortly before the Japanese invasion. The intelligence officer Captain East, however, thought that the Japanese bombing of the north side of Kupang Bay and the small, uninhabited Kera island was evidence that the Japanese had no inside information in West Timor as neither location contained any target. After the war the Japanese claimed that they had little information about Timor and had to base their plans for the invasion on estimates of Allied troop numbers and locations. So despite the fears held by the Dutch and Australians, and the many claims of fifth-columnists, there is little evidence that any West Timorese were actively spying for the Japanese before their occupation of the territory. On the other hand it seems likely that there were Japanese nationals involved in espionage in West Timor and there may have been some non-Timorese, such as Ishag Rafigi, who provided them with information also.

After the surrender

As stated above, Brigadier Veale left for Camplong during the early stages of the Japanese invasion. From that elevated position he was able to see the action in the sea and sky around Kupang and Oesau. The overpowering might of the enemy was clearly visible and it was obvious that the Allied forces would not be able to hold on for long. Veale and his staff, along with many of the Australians who had been based at Camplong, then moved on to SoE and finally sought refuge in Atambua. The last leg was something of a mad dash as a convoy of trucks raced through the night. The Australians destroyed the bridges at the river crossings as they went, but most of the rivers were not so deep as to cause the Japanese much difficulty. The exception was the Benain whose bridge spanned a forty metre deep chasm. This seems to have delayed the Japanese for some time.

In his journey east Veale would have passed the junction to Kefamenanu, the administrative centre for North Central Timor, which stood a few kilometres off the main road. The Controleur of the district, H. G. Schulte Nordholt, received news of the attack on Kupang on the morning of 20 February, but it was several weeks before

74 NAA: AWM27, 118/12.
75 Military History Section, Army Forces Far East, Ambon and Timor..., p.12.
76 Schulte Nordholt, ‘Besturen in een vacuum...’, pp.159-161.
the Japanese arrived to take control. In the interim Schulte Nordholt continued to administer the district with the aid of ‘loyal’ Chinese and Timorese assistants. The Resident and the Secretaris came to the area seeking refuge, but the Resident finally decided to surrender and left to meet the Japanese near Kapan on 5 March.\(^\text{77}\) He left behind him \(f\) 200,000 in coins and notes. The coins were distributed as wages to police and other officials and exchanged for banknotes held by local Timorese. The serial numbers of the notes were then recorded in triplicate and the banknotes burnt. Records of the serial numbers were given to three trusted servants of the kompeni, Jozef Daos, the Chinese Tjoen Djoeng Kie, and the clerk Denu. The Japanese got to hear of this money and Denu and Tjoen Djoeng Kie were called in to tell what they knew of it. They handed over their records of the serial numbers and informed the Japanese that the money had been destroyed. This was not believed so Denu was tortured to provide more information. He was to have been executed, but managed to escape and Schulte Nordholt heard later that he finally made his way into Portuguese Timor.\(^\text{78}\) Daos in the meantime had retreated far away to a remote village and avoided the Japanese throughout the period of their occupation of Timor. He was able to hand the record of the serial numbers to Schulte Nordholt on his second day back in Timor after the war.\(^\text{79}\)

Schulte Nordholt received full support from the local rajas during the period before the arrival of the Japanese, but while he was busy elsewhere the former head of Bikomi, Beka Bana, who had been dismissed twenty years previously, took the

\(^{77}\) Ibid., p.167.

\(^{78}\) The author collected two stories of a man named Klerek Denu and a companion named Alex or Simon Bria who escaped to Darwin during the war with a group of Australians. The two are said to have returned to Timor as junior army officers. According to one version the men took with them the Raja of Oecusse (Yusof Issu, interview SoE, 24 June 2000; Don Antonius Willibrodus da Costa and Don Yosef S. da Costa, interview Noemuti, 25 June 2000). These tales appear to be true as A. Baria Seran and a former clerk from Kefamenanu, Denu, were listed in a 1943 military guide to Timor as being members of the Dutch military living in Australia; see Allied Geographical Section, Southwest Pacific Area, Terrain Study No.70...Dutch Timor...., p.59. According to a source who lived in Kefamenanu at the time, Sebastian Denoe escaped from a Japanese gaol and fled Timor aboard an ‘Australian submarine’ (Gus Petrusz, email, 17 January 2003). Liurai Oecusse, Joao Hermenegildo da Costa, is recorded elsewhere as having escaped to Darwin where he stayed throughout the war; see Jean A. Berlie, ‘A concise legal history of East Timor’, Studies in languages and cultures of East Timor, Vol.3, 2000, pp.147-148. The ruling Liurai at the time, however, was not Joao, but his father, Hugo Hermenegildo da Costa (Gloria da Castro Hall, personal communication via Rod Nixon, 15 September 2002).

\(^{79}\) Schulte Nordholt, ‘Besturen in een vacuum...’, pp.165-166.
opportunity to ransack Kefamenanu. Schulte Nordholt had police searching for him, but he was never caught. In Beboki there was an armed revolt against the raja appointed by the Dutch. With the help of soldiers Schulte Nordholt was able to end the revolt and at a trial attended by the *adat* heads and other officials he got the people to agree to accept the raja. There was chaos also in Atambua where an exiled raja from Aceh had incited the looting of the town. Schulte Nordholt had him put in gaol (he was presumably released later by the Japanese).\(^{80}\) The Controleur kept himself busy with other activities, such as transporting all the Dutch women and children of the district into Oecusse, but his time as administrator of the district was running out as the Japanese finally arrived to take control at the beginning of April 1942.\(^{81}\)

Meanwhile, back in the western end of the territory, there was great confusion following the surrender of the Allied forces. The ‘loyalty’ of the Timorese to the Dutch regime was soon put to the test. The Dutch commander, Colonel Detiger, as noted above, had retreated inland, but surrendered a few days later. It is claimed that Detiger’s progress through the countryside was monitored by the local people and his whereabouts betrayed to the Japanese.\(^{82}\) If this is true the Timorese concerned may well have been intimidated into doing so as the Japanese who landed in Timor soon earned a reputation for unwarranted cruelty. For example, on 22 February a group of five or six Timorese, including at least one woman, were forced to act as porters for Japanese soldiers on the road to Penfui. They complained that their burdens were too heavy which made the officer in charge, Lieutenant Yamabe, very angry. According to several witnesses the Timorese were bayoneted to death on the Lieutenant’s order.\(^{83}\) In another case about 100 Indonesians are said to have been murdered in Atambua during the first days of the Japanese occupation of that town. It is understood that this slaughter was carried out in order to intimidate the rest of the population.\(^{84}\)


\(^{83}\) *NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.*

\(^{84}\) *Het Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indische Leger...*, p.70.
The Japanese reputation for cruelty was not enough to intimidate all the West Timorese and there were many cases where they risked their lives to help Allied servicemen. In one case over thirty men were assisted by Timorese to get food and shelter and to avoid the Japanese. These were mainly RAAF ground crew and radio technicians who had stayed at Penfui airbase during the early part of the invasion. They escaped through Babau-Oesau just shortly before the area was completely taken over by the Japanese. After passing through Camplong they headed north and paid local guides to lead them to the coast near the Kapsali river. They were able to obtain plenty of food, but many fell ill and a few of the group later died. Fortunately, they carried with them a radio and were able to make contact with Darwin. Apparently the radio messages were monitored and the men were told by ‘natives’ that the Japanese were looking for them. Although the Japanese came very close, the men’s location was never betrayed by the local Timorese. The Timorese did, however, help four fugitive Australian soldiers meet up with their countrymen. A number of rescue plans made for the group never bore fruit, but an attempt to take them off the island in mid-April using a submarine seemed likely to succeed.85

Almost directly before their rescue the group was joined by two RAAF pilots, Flight Lieutenant Harold Cook and Pilot Officer Viv Leithhead. The two had been flying a Hudson bomber on a raid over Kupang, but had made a forced landing near Pariti after an attack by a Japanese Zero fighter plane. The rest of the crew, Sergeant Hearle and Sergeant Witham, were badly injured and were cared for by local villagers, especially Temukung Jermias Koanfora. The Hudson crew knew of the group awaiting rescue on the coast and decided that Cook and Leithhead would link up with them, while the two wounded men, who could not be moved, would hopefully receive medical treatment from the Japanese. Temukung Koanfora provided guides for the two pilots and cared for the other men, but was later tortured by the Japanese as a result. He was beaten, burnt, forced to drink sea water and trussed and buried in a hole for ten days. He was kept captive for weeks and sorely maltreated for the remainder of the Japanese occupation.86 In 1961 Jermias Koanfora

86 NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.
received a belated official award from the RAAF in recognition of his deeds. The two injured airmen in the meantime had been taken to a Japanese naval hospital in Kupang, but were later killed and buried in the hospital grounds. Oddly, it was said that the Japanese sometimes put flowers on their graves.

The arrival of Cook and Leithhead increased the size of the group hiding on the coast to thirty-three men. The main body of this large group of men had avoided detection by the Japanese from late February until they were finally taken away from Timor by the United States submarine *Searaven* on 18 April 1942. They could not have done this without the help and co-operation of the Timorese people of the district. Lieutenant Alan Bridge of the Royal Australian Navy, who was with the group from the beginning, said that all the Timorese who had helped them were 100% anti-Japanese. This view was confirmed by other members of the escape party who reported that the Timorese were glad to help the Australians and hated the Japanese, not least because they ill-treated their women.

Allied servicemen, fugitives from the Japanese, were helped by many people in West Timor. On Semau the ‘chief’ of Boknoesang village, Boko Bale, had worked with three Australians in charge of a radio installation. After the capitulation to the Japanese they were joined by five Dutchmen and all were hidden in the area for three months. Three of the men later died, but the rest escaped to Rote. There they were captured and returned to Kupang. Boko Bale was later interrogated by the Japanese, but finally set free. Others paid a higher price for helping the fugitives and tales of those times are now part of the family history for many West Timorese. One Kupang resident related to the author that her grandfather, a Protestant preacher, was killed by the Japanese for helping some Australians, while another volunteered that his

88 NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.
89 ‘Lt A B Bridge...’, in NAA: AWM54, 571/4/32.
90 NAA: AWM54, 229/1/7 Part 5. A detailed account of the escape of the ‘Penfoei Pedestrians’, as the grounded RAAF men called themselves, can be found in a book written by one of the survivors, Colin Humphris. Humphris gratefully acknowledges the help given to the group by many Timorese, including the Temukung of Soliu and his family, the Temukung of Tuakau, and a man from the Kapsali river, dubbed ‘George’, who provided food and much other assistance; see Humphris, *Trapped on Timor*.
91 NAA: MP1587/1, 114J. The men’s return to Kupang from Rote is recorded in NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.
uncle often told the story of people in Oesau who were killed for helping fugitive Australian soldiers.\footnote{Discussions with Lena Scott, Oesapa, Kupang, 13 June 2000 and Berty Manu, Kupang, June 2000.}

Many Allied airmen were shot down or crashed on Timor and those who survived were often hidden by locals.\footnote{Andreas Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000.} Airmen who died in the crashes were buried by local rajas or feftors at a number of locations, including Camplong, Baun, SoE and Rote.\footnote{NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.} Sometimes the Japanese ordered Timorese to bury dead Allied servicemen. This happened in Namosain after an Australian aircraft crashed near the beach there on 9 October 1944. A local headman, Frans Johannis, was ordered to arrange the burial after some Japanese had kicked and swore at the body. They were joined in this activity by Rufus Takoe, a Timorese spy for the Kenpeitai (Japanese Military Police). The local temukung instructed the women of the village to put flowers on the grave. Another Allied airman’s body was buried near the Kupang wharf after being dragged there behind a boat.\footnote{NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/973.}

The Allied troops who had surrendered on 23 February 1942 or were captured later were placed in a camp at Oesapa Besar facing Kupang Bay. At first they were merely kept in the open surrounded by barbed wire, but were later able to build some simple huts and a basic hospital with a few medicines. Many men died and were buried in the camp or nearby.\footnote{Thirty-six men died in the Oesapa Besar camp. The bodies of Australian soldiers were recovered where possible after the war and reinterred at the Ambon War Cemetery; see Henning, \textit{Doomed battalion…}, n.24, pp.377-378. In the late 1990s the headstone and remains of an Australian soldier were discovered at the old camp site, which is now a busy Bugis fishing village. The remains were removed to Ambon, but the cross remained on display at a nearby restaurant. Personal visit, Oesapa, Kupang, 13 June 2000. The discovery of the remains was reported in Australian newspapers also; see Tony Wright, ‘Villager unearths 55-year riddle of a digger’, \textit{The Sydney Morning Herald}, 1 July 1997.} Initially there was no clean water and overflowing latrine trenches added to the discomfort and risk to health, but this was gradually improved. The men were given little food and supplemented this with whatever they could steal or scrounge. In May 1942 some of them were sent to grow vegetables at Tarus, but many of them came down with malaria and had to be replaced regularly.\footnote{PoW Camp Diary 25 Feb 42-1 Sep 42’, in AWM: PR89/99.} The Australian doctors had difficulty dealing with unfamiliar tropical ailments and many Australian prisoners preferred the more experienced Dutch Dr. Hekking. Hekking
and the other Dutch medical staff were well regarded, but the Dutch in general were not liked by the Australians who thought that they were no good as soldiers and had put up a poor show by disappearing during the invasion.\(^98\)

Morale remained high at Oesapa Besar despite the privations. The Japanese at the camp, described as ‘mainly decent’ by Colonel Leggatt, did not practice any special cruelties and generally gave their prisoners fair treatment.\(^99\) There was, however, a report that one prisoner, Private E. F. Terry, who was working at SoE, was shot without trial for striking a Japanese sergeant.\(^100\) There were killings also at the time of the paratroop landings at Babau, and the bodies of twenty-four Australian and Dutch soldiers, several decapitated, were found at Buak, near Kupang, after the war. Local witnesses claimed the men were prisoners who were marched to the site and shot. This is said to have occurred sometime in 1942, but it is not clear exactly when.\(^101\) The matter is not mentioned by Leggatt so presumably the men were not prisoners from Oesapa Besar. The men may have been executed at the time of the invasion, unknown to the rest of the force.

Many of the men at Oesapa Besar were able to leave the camp secretly to search for food or gather intelligence. While outside the camp they often received assistance from local Timorese. On one occasion a group of men left at night for Penfui to steal a plane, but it would not start and they had to return. One man who left the camp regularly to gather information was J. H. Armstrong. He departed in July 1942 for Portuguese Timor where he hoped to join up with the 2/2 Independent Company who could pass on the accumulated intelligence to Australia. He was never heard of again and was assumed to have been captured and executed.\(^102\) This was in fact the case. Lieutenant-Colonel Yutani Yujiro of the Kenpeitai was later tried for ordering Armstrong’s execution and that of English gunner Martin of the 79 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery. Yutani was found guilty and sentenced to death.\(^103\)

\(^{98}\) Henning, *Doomed battalion...*, pp.123-143.

\(^{99}\) ‘PoW Camp Diary...’, in *AWM: PR89/99*.

\(^{100}\) Henning, *Doomed battalion...*, p.136.

\(^{101}\) *NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876*.

\(^{102}\) ‘PoW Camp Diary...’, in *AWM: PR89/99*. See also Henning, *Doomed battalion...*, pp.123-143.

\(^{103}\) Rob Gill, ‘The Aftermath of war (Japanese soldiers on trial in Darwin’), *Northern Perspective*, Vol.18, No.2, 1995, p.100. Leggatt designates Armstrong as a private, but Gill states he was a corporal.
Two men who were often outside the camp scrounging for food were Jack West and Bill Fitzallen. They left Oesapa Besar in May 1942 hoping to escape to Australia and hid for some time in the jungle near Sikumana in Kupang. They were helped by many people, including Abdourrachman, A. Karels, E. F. Tokoh, Ketsia Feoh and Herman Wadoe. The hiding place of the Australians was eventually discovered by the Kenpeitai agent Rufus Takoe. Takoe was given twenty-five guilders by the Japanese as a reward. Those who had helped the fugitives were kept in gaol for months and suffered various indignities and tortures, such as being forced to go naked, being made to stand in the sun, having hands tied with barbed wire, and being beaten and stabbed. The Australians were kept in gaol also, but were taken away in a very weak condition in late October 1942. A number of witnesses confirmed that they were taken to Oesapa Kecil, but did not come back as they had been executed.

At an investigation into the deaths of West and Fitzallen, held after the war, Major Harada Haricho, the head of the Kenpeitai in West Timor, claimed that when he arrested the Australians they had ammunition and twelve rifles (some of West’s and Fitzallen’s helpers acknowledge bringing them weapons). They had, he said, encouraged a number of Indonesians, some of them ex-KNIL, to gather weapons to use if there was an Allied counter attack against the Japanese on Timor. This plot was discovered before the Australians were captured and eight Indonesians were sent to Jakarta for trial as a result. After the Australians were captured a further 618 Indonesians were arrested in relation to the case and a report on the matter sent to Jakarta. In return came an order for the Australians’ executions, which were duly carried out. Harada believed his actions had been perfectly legal. The case against the Japanese implicated in the deaths of West and Fitzallen was eventually dropped due to insufficient evidence. Rufus Takoe, however, did not escape justice. At his trial it was said that he had caused the deaths of many of his countrymen and that he was the worst criminal and traitor that Timor had produced in living memory. In a verdict designed to appeal to Timorese religious feelings, Takoe was portrayed as having surpassed Judas Iscariot in his vileness and baseness of character. Takoe, it was

104 NAA: AWM54, 571A/4/3.
105 NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/973.
106 Ibid.
explained, was content to betray the Australian escapees for only twenty-five pieces of silver, whereas Judas Iscariot had received thirty pieces for his own act of betrayal. Rufus Takoe was sentenced to death.\textsuperscript{107}

Takoe claimed that at the time of the capture of Fitzallen and West he and Gabriel Haga were the only Indonesians employed by the Kenpeitai on police duties. Two others, Harta da Costa and Asnawi Koso, were drivers only.\textsuperscript{108} How many other Timorese worked directly for the Japanese as spies is unknown. There were other cases where escapees are known to have been betrayed to the Japanese and in May 1943 three fugitive Australians were attacked and killed by ‘natives’, but the majority of cases that have come to light are of Timorese who helped the Australians. They did this at great risk to their own safety and many suffered as a result.\textsuperscript{109} In July 1942 Leggatt, some other senior officers and thirty-six men of other ranks were transported away from Timor. A group of similar size left at the beginning of September and the rest of the men, about 950 in number, were sent away on 23 September 1942. The men were dispersed to various camps in other parts of Indonesia and elsewhere in Asia. As the last group left to board the vessel that would take them away from Timor for the rest of the war some Japanese paratroopers, who had lost so many of their comrades to the Australians during the invasion, ‘farewelled’ the prisoners by spitting on them as they passed. In contrast, many of the local Timorese were said to have become ‘very emotional’.\textsuperscript{110}

\textit{In Portuguese Timor}

In the meantime Brigadier Veale had arrived in Atambua and was soon joined by Colonel van Straten from Dili. At the end of February it was reported that the Japanese were approaching Atambua so Veale and van Straten decided to abandon the town and break up the troops into small groups to fend for themselves (the report was wrong; the Japanese did not enter Atambua until the end of March). Many of the troops headed for the north coast where they hoped to get a boat to take them to Australia. A few vessels were found, but these either sank or drifted back to shore.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{109} NAA: AWM54, 571A/4/3.
\textsuperscript{110} Henning, \textit{Doomed battalion...}, pp.145, 148.
Many of the men were then either captured by the Japanese or surrendered. Some made their way into Portuguese Timor and met up with the 2/2 Independent Company. One group who made their way to the south coast met up with some friendly Timorese who gave them food, but then turned on them, tied them together and marched them off to the Japanese. Meanwhile, Veale and van Straten found their way into Portuguese Timor also and attempted to gather back together the troops they had so recently dispersed. After radio contact was made with Australia the two leaders were airlifted to Darwin on 24 May 1942.\footnote{Henning, \textit{Doomed battalion}..., pp.110-115; Van den Hoogenband and Schotborgh, \textit{Nederlands-Indie contra Japan}..., pp.44-53. In his report when he returned to Australia Veale shed some light on the continuing strained relations between the Dutch and Portuguese in Timor. He wrote that all the Dutch officers he spoke to told him that the Portuguese were hostile and would surely hand them over to the Japanese. In fact Veale found them to be very friendly and helpful; see ‘Report on Sparrow Force’, in \textit{AWM: PR00684}. Portuguese feelings about the Dutch were apparently no better as an Australian delegation which visited Dili a year before left with the impression that the Portuguese were well disposed to the British and Australians, but not the Dutch; see ‘Report on visit to Portuguese Timor 29 Dec 1940 to 1 Jan 1941, Dept Civil Aviation’, in \textit{NAA: MPI587/1, 114C}.} 

On 8 March the Dutch in Java surrendered to the Japanese on behalf of all the Allied forces. The Allied forces in West Timor, of course, had already surrendered, but the 2/2 Independent Company considered itself to be a special case and kept fighting. The Dutch forces in Portuguese Timor continued to fight also, but the surrender of the main forces in Java was devastating news that left some of the KNIL ‘native troops’ in tears.\footnote{Callinan, \textit{Independent company}..., p.65.} After the evacuation of Colonel van Straten the remaining Dutch officers had hoped to use their troops to make patrols into West Timor, but this had to be limited so as not to bring unwanted attention from the Japanese. Some KNIL soldiers, however, were able to enter Atambua dressed in local attire and information gained about the Japanese strength and positions was passed on to Australia. Identified targets were bombed, which was encouraged by the ‘loyal’ heads of the district. In June and July some retired Timorese soldiers came to join the KNIL forces in Portuguese Timor, but otherwise the Dutch sensed that the West Timorese near the border were turning against them. Frequently the hiding places of the KNIL forces were betrayed to the enemy. It was reported that Timorese in southeast West Timor were being trained as police by the Japanese and placed into groups led by
local Chinese. Meanwhile, some West Timorese reverted to old practices and there were many raids into villages in Portuguese Timor.\textsuperscript{113}

In August 1942 the Japanese started using West Timorese troops to attack the Allied forces in Portuguese Timor. Often the Japanese were right behind the Timorese soldiers, but it gave the impression that a large Timorese force was making an attack.\textsuperscript{114} How often West Timorese were used in this capacity is unclear, but later in 1942 there were said to be 400 to 500 of them living in a school building in Dili.\textsuperscript{115} The West Timorese and ‘natives’ from Alor used by the Japanese in Portuguese Timor were said to be under the command of a certain Paulo from Atambua.\textsuperscript{116} Callinan claims that not only were ‘pro-Japanese natives from Dutch Timor’ used to attack the Australians, they were used to incite the East Timorese to turn against them as well.\textsuperscript{117} These claims were repeated by Christopher Wray in his book \textit{Timor 1942}.\textsuperscript{118} Some of the West Timorese had close relationships with East Timorese people over the border, but there were many long-standing enmities also, so the ability of the ‘pro-Japanese natives from Dutch Timor’ to influence the East Timorese would have been limited. The influence is more likely to have come directly from the Japanese.

It is impossible to know without further information how willing the West Timorese were to come to Portuguese Timor and fight for the Japanese. Those who did may have done so because of the opportunity to kill and plunder their traditional East Timorese enemies. Alternately, they may have been forced to participate or they may have joined in simply to stay alive. There is one case recorded in a Timorese source, however, of an attack by West Timorese on Dutch and Australian troops which had nothing at all to do with the Japanese occupation apart from that it gave the opportunity to seek revenge on the long-hated enemy, the Dutch. The attack is said to have taken place in September 1942 at Orel, Lamaknen Selatan, inside West Timor.


\textsuperscript{115} ‘Historical Division. General HQ SWPA’, in \textit{NAA: MP1587/1, 114C}.

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1724}.

\textsuperscript{117} Callinan, \textit{Independent company...}, pp.144-147.

\textsuperscript{118} Wray, \textit{Timor 1942}, pp.119-122.
near the Portuguese Timor border. The *meos* Mali Tale and Mali Hedak killed one Dutch soldier, one Australian and ‘scores’ of East Timorese. The *meos* did not survive and were killed in turn.\(^{119}\) There certainly were attacks on the Dutch forces in this area and they often had Australians and East Timorese with them, but no other record referring to this attack has been discovered by the author. There is no reason, however, to consider this event, or the acts of ‘disloyalty’ related by Schulte Nordholt which occurred in Kefamenanu and Atambua back in February and March 1942, as signs that the West Timorese were ‘pro-Japanese’. The Dutch had ‘pacified’ the area over twenty years before, but their rule was never totally accepted. The uncertainty caused by the arrival of the Japanese and the retreat of the Dutch was utilised by Timorese warriors of the area to get some revenge for their previous losses. There was some clearly anti-Japanese action undertaken by local warriors also, as was shown in the case of *meo* Nahak Amerika who led an attack against the Japanese in Wewiku in 1943, but was captured and taken to Atambua where he was decapitated.\(^{120}\)

**Whose ‘natives’ were the most loyal?**

In Australian writing about Timor and the Second World War the West Timorese are often portrayed as ‘unreliable’ and ‘disloyal’ in contrast to the ‘loyal’ people of Portuguese Timor. Michele Turner, in *Telling East Timor*, writes of an ‘unsympathetic native population in the west’ who surrendered fugitive Allied servicemen to the Japanese.\(^{121}\) According to Wray the West Timorese were often ‘ready to turn against the Europeans’. They ‘refused to assist the Allied troops and betrayed them to the Japanese’, he claims, which contrasts with the people of Portuguese Timor who co-operated with and assisted the Australians in their campaign against the Japanese.\(^{122}\) The reminiscences of old soldiers who fought against the Japanese in Portuguese Timor tend to support this view and some claim that the West Timor ‘natives’ were hostile and hated whites as a result of the treatment they had received from the Dutch.\(^{123}\) The notion that the West Timorese could not be trusted was put forward at the time of the Allied withdrawal from

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\(^{120}\) Ibid.


\(^{122}\) Wray, *Timor 1942...*, pp.107, 178.

\(^{123}\) Lance Bomford, Bernard Callinan in Turner, *Telling East Timor...*, pp.8, 22.
Timor. In a report by the Australian military’s Chiefs of Staff in December 1942 it was stated that the West Timorese were ‘quite unreliable’ and many were ‘pro-Japanese’. This was contrasted with the East Timorese who were seen as ‘reliable’ and likely to co-operate with any Allied invasion force sent to Timor.  

This assessment of the West Timorese seems most unfair because, as recorded above, there were numerous instances where West Timorese men and women risked their lives to help Allied servicemen. Many West Timorese built a rapport with the Australians in the brief period before the Japanese invasion. After the Japanese attack there were a number of instances recorded of West Timorese who helped Australians on the run from the Japanese. As PoWs the Allied troops received help from the local population also and Allied airmen whose planes were shot down over West Timor were hidden and given assistance by West Timorese. The bodies of those who did not survive were shown respect. Those individuals who managed to escape from West Timor acknowledged the help given them by the local people and invariably noted their strong hatred of the Japanese. So how did the notion develop that the West Timorese were ‘pro-Japanese’?

According to Wray, Brigadier Veale, while still in Atambua, was told by ‘Dutch officers who had served on the island for years’ that the ‘natives’ would betray them to the Japanese.  

Why the Dutch officers assumed that the Timorese would welcome a new colonising power in favour of the old one is unexplained. Veale, however, returned to Australia shortly after and is likely to have passed on the Dutch assessment. Reports would then have reached Australia of the ‘skirmishes’ on the border between Dutch troops and West Timorese. From August 1942 there were reports that the Japanese were using West Timorese troops to attack Australian and Dutch troops in Portuguese Timor and to intimidate the local people to do the same. In the meantime most of the stories about the help given to Allied PoWs and Allied servicemen on the run in West Timor were unknown and remained unknown until the end of the war. The testimonies of those who managed to escape seem to have

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124 NAA: AWM54, 571/1/9.
125 Wray, Timor 1942..., p.80.
been forgotten or overlooked. At the same time there was plenty of information about the help being given to the Australians by the East Timorese.

The story of the Australians and the East Timorese in Portuguese Timor during the Second World War is largely beyond the scope of this thesis and has already been well told in other sources indicated in the text. Suffice it to say that from the earliest days of the Japanese occupation in Portuguese Timor until the general evacuation of Allied troops in late 1942 and early 1943 there were numerous incidents where East Timorese people gave assistance to Australian or Dutch troops. The East Timorese provided food and shelter, acted as guides and porters and provided information. The East Timorese took an extraordinary risk in helping the Allied troops as they faced torture and death from the Japanese if they were caught. Worthy of special mention are the criados (kriadu in modern Tetun), usually boys or youths who acted as personal assistants to the soldiers, carrying their non-essential gear and guiding them through the unmapped interior of Portuguese Timor. The bravery and fidelity of the criados and other East Timorese who helped the Allied forces, the Australians in particular, became well-known to the Australian military hierarchy and, after the evacuation in early 1943, to the Australian public as well. The story was told in newsreels and newspapers and after the war was popularised in the book *Independent company* written by Bernard Callinan, first published in 1953. Other books followed and the East Timorese gained a special place in Australian affections. Following the Indonesian invasion and occupation of East Timor in 1975 a number of former soldiers with war-time experience from the former Portuguese colony joined the campaign demanding East Timor’s independence. That campaign brought the East Timor-Australia connection to the awareness of a whole new generation.

Over the years the role played by the East Timorese in helping Australians in the Second World War has become part of Australian popular mythology. Many East Timorese were tortured and killed by the Japanese for help given to Allied troops and it is no way intended here to deny or denigrate the sacrifices made by the East Timorese people in helping those troops. However, as outlined above, many people of West Timor made similar sacrifices, yet their reward was for their people as a whole to be labelled as ‘disloyal’ and ‘unreliable’. The only basis for this appears to be that some West Timorese were not prepared to risk their lives to help the
Australians or Dutch and in some cases actively opposed them. Similar cases were reported from East Timor also. Callinan records that many East Timorese became ‘hostile’ after coming into contact with the Japanese. The whole Maubisse district rose up in arms; the result of Japanese ‘anti-white-man propaganda’, according to Callinan. The Portuguese (still nominally in control) suppressed the revolt with the help of some of Maubisse’s traditional East Timorese enemies who left behind a trail of bloodshed and mayhem. The brutal methods used, said Callinan, made those of the Japanese seem like ‘child’s play’. Wray states that the Australians killed a number of hostile ‘natives’ and helped ‘pro-Australian natives’ kill many of their ‘pro-Japanese’ brethren also. Furthermore, Australian and Timorese witnesses admit there were cases where individual East Timorese were killed by Australian troops because they were known or suspected to be spies who passed on information to the Japanese. Towards the end of 1942 Callinan noted that the number of actively hostile ‘natives’ in certain areas was of growing concern. Clearly, the East Timorese were not an homogenous group who gave undivided support to the Portuguese or the new arrivals, the Australians.

Nevil Shute, in his introduction to Callinan’s book, repeats some of the commonplace allegations of ‘disloyalty’ on the part of the West Timorese, but makes also a number of interesting observations. The West Timorese and the East Timorese, he says, had no particular reason to be ‘loyal’ to the Dutch or the Portuguese anyway; ‘a conquest by the Japanese meant merely the exchange of one master for another’. This is a very important point. The Dutch had brought a halt to the endless cycle of warfare in West Timor and introduced schools and medical, agricultural and other services which were recognised by some West Timorese as being of benefit to their people. Many others, however, saw it as merely interference in their way of life. The Dutch, therefore, are just as likely to have engendered resentment as ‘loyalty’. The notion of ‘loyalty’, moreover, was something which most West Timorese at the time would have applied at a much more local level by

126 Callinan, *Independent company...,* pp.147-159.
127 Wray, *Timor 1942...,* pp.147-149.
131 Allied Geographical Section, Southwest Pacific Area, *Terrain study No.70...Dutch Timor...,* p.46.
being ‘loyal’ to their raja or their suku (clan). While certain individuals may have been ‘loyal’ to the Dutch or Portuguese there were districts, such as Belu in West Timor and Maubisse in Portuguese Timor, which had a long history of opposition to colonial rule. That people from those districts should have turned against the Europeans is not surprising, but this does not mean they were ‘pro-Japanese’.

Shute goes on to argue that the swift defeat of the Dutch and their allies in West Timor meant it was obvious that the Japanese were the new masters and the West Timorese felt no obligation to help the defeated party. It has been shown above that many West Timorese did continue to give the Allied troops support after their surrender, but Shute’s point is still valid as many West Timorese may have felt obliged to help the Japanese as they were clearly in control and soon made it known that they would deal harshly with whoever disobeyed them. Shute argues that the situation was different in Portuguese Timor because the Australians of the 2/2 Independent Company, trained in guerilla tactics, had resounding success against the Japanese and killed nearly forty of them for every loss on their own side. This impressed the East Timorese who were then most willing to offer their assistance. As the Japanese increased their offensive against the Australians and the Australians’ effectiveness declined, so did the support they received from the local people.

The brutal methods used by the Japanese to prevent the East Timorese giving support to the Australians played a role also. Those who fought on the Australian side, such as Callinan, admit that it was only natural that most of the East Timorese eventually withdrew their active support. The parallels with West Timor are very clear. The question of ‘loyalty’ has been used to paint the West Timorese in the Second World War in a bad light. As Shute suggests there is no reason why the West Timorese should have been ‘loyal’ to the Dutch colonial power, but many people of West Timor still made great sacrifices to help others who were trying to avoid or escape from the Japanese. It is not denied that some West Timorese co-operated closely with the Japanese, but the people in West Timor as a whole suffered under the Japanese

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132 For more information on Maubisse, see Gunn, *Timor Lorosae...*, pp.180-181, 225.
134 Ibid., pp.xxvi-xxvii.
regime, as will be shown below, and the number who could be said to have been ‘pro-Japanese’ must have been small.

Further Allied action in West Timor
Following the withdrawal of the remnants of the 2/40 Battalion into Portuguese Timor the Allied forces had no active presence in West Timor until the end of the war. The exception was the Dutch patrols that operated along the central border, but in February 1943 the last of the Allied troops still fighting in Timor were evacuated to Australia. A number of undercover missions were sent into Portuguese Timor throughout the remainder of the war, but these were largely unsuccessful as one of the earliest parties was captured by the Japanese and forced to relay false information to Australia. Japanese control of the leading agent from that mission meant that they had full knowledge of most subsequent missions. The deception was not detected at the Australian end and many men of the Allied forces and their Timorese helpers were needlessly sacrificed as a result.136 In the meantime, West Timor was largely ignored as a field of intelligence gathering, although there was a group of four Muslims led by Haji Abdul Shukur that was landed by submarine near Kupang on 25 May 1943. The group was never heard of again.137 There was then no more action for nearly two years. A plan for men and stores to be ‘dropped’ for use in Kupang in early 1945 seems to have not proceeded,138 but one mission did go ahead. In April 1945 a small group using a ‘native craft’ landed on Rote, gathered information about the Japanese strength and positions and captured one Rotenese who was brought back to Australia for interrogation.139 The ‘natives’ met on Rote were reportedly friendly, but scared of the Japanese.140

While there may have been little Allied action on the ground in West Timor, there was plenty in the sky. Bombers from the RAAF 2 and 13 Squadrons based in the Northern Territory regularly raided Kupang and Penfui. Other squadrons were often involved also.141 From early 1943 they were joined by 18 Squadron which comprised

136 The full story of this episode is told in Alan Powell’s War by stealth: Australians and the Allied Intelligence Bureau 1942-1945, pp.132-150.
137 Ibid., p.156.
138 NAA: A3269/12/D27/A.
139 NAA: AWM54, 627/16/1.
141 Alan Powell, The shadow’s edge: Australia’s northern war, pp.115-118.
Dutch pilots and mostly Australian gunners. The squadron attacked the airfields of Timor and shipping in its waters, but among other things also dropped 20,000 propaganda pamphlets over Kupang in May 1943, made attacks on Japanese barracks in Atambua in December 1943 and the bridge over the Mina river in February 1944. Many other sites were targeted, but Kupang and Penfui, as the main town and airfield in West Timor, received special attention. An Australian intelligence report from September 1945 described Kupang as a ghost town. Not a single building had escaped bomb damage and the town had been uninhabited for months. Atapupu, which had been used as a staging point for Japanese barges, was ‘destroyed’. SoE also had been completely bombed out. Several hundred Japanese who were based in the town are thought to have been killed during raids in April 1944.

Most of Kupang’s Timorese population had fled at the time of the invasion and settled about five kilometres away. The empty houses were then occupied by Japanese troops and used for storage. Some Timorese families remained in the town and other Timorese who had close contact with the Japanese, such as prostitutes, were often in the town also. Some of these people fell victim to the Allied bombing, but the greatest casualties were among the Japanese. The Japanese had considered using air-raid shelters to be cowardly conduct, but after the continual Allied bombardment were soon building them in Kupang. Shipping and road transport was affected by the bombing also and from April 1944 all travel was conducted at night-time only. As the war situation got more desperate for the Japanese those based in Timor faced increased difficulties. There was a general lack of shipping and only small vessels visited the island. Medicine and fuel were in short supply.

142 Gordon Wallace, *Up in Darwin with the Dutch*, pp.22, 27. The Dutch and Australians of 18 Squadron seem to have had a much higher level of mutual respect than those who become prisoners of the Japanese in Kupang. The pamphlets dropped by 18 Squadron in May 1943 were only a small part of the total of 1,227,925 dropped on Timor by mid-1945. These were in various languages: 580,000 in Malay, 102,000 in Portuguese, 9,000 in Dutch, 23,000 in Chinese, 21,000 in ‘Native dialects’, and 492,925 in Japanese; see *NAA: AWM54, 779/10/8*.

143 *NAA: MP1587/1: 114F.*

144 *NAA: A1838/2, TS400/1/9/1/1.*

145 *NAA: AWM54, 773/4/14.*

146 *NAA: A1838/2, TS400/1/9/1/1.*

147 Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000. See also Henning, *Doomed battalion...*, p.138.


150 *NAA: AWM54, 492/4/46.*
supply and a lack of spare parts meant that vehicles had to be cannibalised to keep at least some of them on the road. Food supplies were affected also and it is reported that in 1944 the Japanese requisitioned 100% of the corn and rice harvests, forcing the people to rely on tapioca, other root crops and forest products. The situation must have improved by the following year as when the Allied forces entered the territory in September 1945 they noted that there were no evident signs of malnutrition and there appeared to have been sufficient food available for both the Japanese and the Timorese. It was, however, noted also that ‘the native population appeared to dislike the Japanese intensely’. In one report the situation was summarised by saying that the ‘natives seemed well fed, but severely disciplined by the Japanese’.

**Life under the Japanese**

An immediate sign of Japanese discipline visible to the Allied troops when they entered West Timor at the end of the war was that whenever a ‘native’ was passed he would stand up and bow or remove his hat. It has been said that the Japanese in West Timor were ‘firm, but not cruel’. While many Japanese appear to have had civil relations with the Timorese they could also be extremely hard task masters who used terror and torture to achieve their aims. Those who did not obey orders or complained were sometimes killed on the spot, but were just as likely to be made to suffer great pain beforehand. This was done as a lesson to others. The punishments meted out varied from place to place and often depended on who was giving the orders. It was a very arbitrary system. In some cases the Japanese soldiers appear to have looked on the punishments they handed out as a form of amusement. It is said, for example, that if ten men were ordered to carry a log and complained that it was too heavy the Japanese would order two men to retire and ask the remaining eight to have a go. If they failed another two would be removed and so on. Finally, the last few, who obviously had no hope of moving the log, would be beaten.

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151 NAA: A3269/12/D27/A.
153 NAA: MP1185/8, 1932/2/204.
154 NAA: MP1049/5, 1968/2/604.
155 NAA: MP1587/1, 114J.
156 Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’, p.31.
Failure to obey orders was always treated severely. In 1944 Hiki Soinbala and his son Sefu failed to respond to a Japanese summons to appear in Niki Niki. As a consequence, when they were found they were shot. Hiki Soinbala was buried at the spot of the shooting, but Sefu, unknown to the Japanese, was not dead, managed to escape and stayed clear of the district for the rest of the war. Sefu Soinbala’s escape was never discovered by the Japanese as two concrete graves with headstones were quickly erected at the site. A common punishment for lesser ‘crimes’ in the Niki Niki district was for people to be forced to drink large amounts of water, twenty litres or more, until they lost consciousness. They would then be hung upside down until they came to.\[158\] Being hung upside down was reported from Batulesa also, while hanging by the hands until dead was reported after the war as a normal punishment for murder and theft. Decapitation was often used in such cases also.\[159\]

One West Timorese man explained to the author that when the Japanese came they said they were like older brothers, but soon showed that they were worse than the Dutch. As happened elsewhere in Indonesia the Japanese in West Timor made the local people become romusha (forced labourers). The work was long and hard and those who resisted were killed.\[160\] People were made to build roads, posts and defensive works.\[161\] Throughout the territory people were forced to grow vegetables and rice for the Japanese. The Japanese took most of the livestock also. The people did not starve, but in many places had to survive on corn and the pith of the gewang palm.\[162\] This traditional food is resorted to only in times of great hardship. It is otherwise used as pig feed.\[163\] On Rote it was a similar story and many people subsisted on gula air (sugar syrup) from the lontar palm. Because of Rote’s lower levels of Japanese activity and less frequent Allied bombing it was considered safer

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158 Ibid. The two graves can still be seen at Niki Niki. Personal visit, 23 June 2000.
159 KoEhuan, *Kajian historis...* p.44; and NAA: MP1587/1, 114C.
161 A number of Japanese defensive works can still be seen in the Kupang area. They include a bunker system at Baumata and gun emplacements at Kelapa Lima and Numbaun Delha, overlooking the harbour. Japanese guns can still be viewed at the latter site. A monument apparently built to commemorate Japanese soldiers who died in West Timor is still standing at Penfui. Personal visits, 13 July and 30 October 2000.
162 Boimau, interview Niki Niki, 23 June 2000; Issu, interview SoE, 24 June 2000; Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000; Benyamin Sahetapy Engel, interview Kupang, 2 November 2000. See also KoEhuan, *Kajian historis...* p.44.
than mainland West Timor. As a result many Timorese of Rotenese background returned to their home island for the duration of the war. 

In the Oesau region Andreas Yohannes was ordered by the Japanese to appropriate all the rice from the predominantly Rotenese rice farmers. He proposed that the farmers be given corn in return, to which the Japanese agreed. At the time the Oesau farmers used broadcast sowing so the Japanese ordered the local heads to provide labour for planting out seedlings as this would give a higher yield. Some resisted and were beaten and Yohannes was ordered to join in. At the end of the war Raja Kupang sent police to Oesau to arrest Yohannes for taking away the farmers’ rice. He was not punished, however, as the head of the Agriculture Department said in Yohannes’s defence that he had been ordered to take the rice and had made sure the farmers received corn so they would have enough to eat.

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West Timor and the rest of eastern Indonesia were under the control of the Japanese Navy. Sumatra and Java, on the other hand, were controlled by the Japanese Army. In Java, and to a lesser extent in Sumatra, local nationalists were utilised to boost support for the Japanese administration. Leading nationalists in Java, such as Hatta and Soekarno, were employed by the Japanese as advisers and many others found themselves in government positions. Vague promises of future autonomy or independence in Java were given as incentives for co-operation with the Japanese. In contrast, the Navy envisaged that resource-rich eastern Indonesia would remain a colony completely dependent on Japan. There were no plans for, or promises of, independence made in West Timor until the last days of the war. It would be wrong, however, to assume, as is implied by George Kanahele, that the nationalists in

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164 Adi, interview SoE, 13 November 1997; Frederika Lani, interviews Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000.
165 Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000.
eastern Indonesia had no role to play in the Japanese administration. The Japanese utilised the existing bureaucracy to administer West Timor. As was shown in the preceding chapter there were many politically active figures employed by the Dutch administration. Under the Japanese the Dutch officials were interned and later removed from the island, but some were executed. Timorese government employees were instructed to continue to do their normal jobs, but some were promoted to more senior positions to replace the banished Europeans.

One of those who became an important figure in the Japanese government service in West Timor was Christian Frans, former leader of the ‘loyal’, ‘pro-Dutch’ Perserikatan Timor. Frans Djami, communist activist and former member of the Timorsch Verbond, was suspicious of Frans and joined forces with the Otori, a Japanese secret intelligence group, who thought that Frans might be a Dutch agent. One night in September 1943 they kidnapped Frans and took him in a boat into Kupang Bay where he was questioned. Finally, Frans was bayoneted and his body weighted and thrown into the harbour. For ten days the Japanese authorities searched for Frans without result until some Naval Police became suspicious of an Otori boat preparing to leave for Ambon. On board they found, among others, Frans Djami. Under torture Djami told the whole story, but his ordeal had been so great that he only got the story out with his dying breath. By becoming victims of the Japanese both Frans Djami, the communist nationalist, and Christian Frans, the man he helped to kill, are now remembered as martyrs to the nationalist cause.

167 Kanahele, ‘The Japanese occupation...’, p.57. It should be noted that while the administration of eastern Indonesia was in the hands of the Japanese Navy a large part of the occupation force was from the Japanese Army. The Army in Timor had a reputation for harshness. In Flores and Rote both the administration and the occupation force were from the Navy and conditions were considered far less severe; see Webb, Palms and the cross..., p.101, n.68. See also Sejarah kebangkitan..., p.82. It is difficult to know how large the Japanese occupation force in West Timor actually was. At the end of the war there were about 17,000-20,000 Japanese in the whole Timor region. About 4,000 of these were from West Timor. Allied estimates during the war varied, but the real figure was probably something similar; see NAA: A816, 101/302/11; NAA: AWMS4, 571A/4/3 and NAA: MP1185/8, 2026/9/439.

168 A Dutch official named Palstra and a Dutch missionary, J. Groot, were executed soon after the invasion. Their widows were made to work as nurses for the Japanese; see NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.

169 Republik Indonesia. Sunda Ketjil, p.219; Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., pp.75-77. According to Pendeta J. J. Arnoldus, who knew Frans well, he was kidnapped on 20 May 1943; see Netti and Ita, Kupang..., pp.82-83.
According to Doko a ‘blacklist’ was drawn up by the Otori of former Dutch government employees then working for the Japanese who it was thought were still ‘loyal’ to their former colonial masters. Frans’s name was number one on the list, but Doko was there as well at number ten. It might be thought that the nationalist Doko would have been offended by the suggestion that he was ‘loyal’ to the Dutch, but he makes no comment and elsewhere he points out that at the time of the Japanese invasion, when the Dutch had already fled, he and some other civil servants were ‘faithfully’ carrying out their duties as members of the Stadwacht (Town Guard) and the Vernielings-dienst (Destruction Service). Doko gives no indication of what those duties were, but one gets the impression that Doko was to some extent still ‘loyal’ to the Dutch administration. Doko of course always claimed to be a nationalist and never a loyalist, so perhaps Doko’s real intention was to dispel the notion that he was a collaborator who had thrown his lot in with the Japanese, as was claimed after the war.

Frans had been head of the Social-Information Department which was responsible for all matters dealing with education, health, religion and information. Following his demise the post was filled by I. H. Doko. He was made head also of the Seinendan, a semi-military youth group. The members of the Seinendan were trained in civil defence and indoctrinated in the virtues of discipline, courage and the ‘spirit of sacrifice’. The military training received by members of the Seinendan was minimal compared to that received by Indonesians in western Indonesia in groups such as Peta or Heiho. Nevertheless, Doko described the existence of the

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170 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., pp.73, 75.
171 Ibid., pp.77-78.
173 Peta was a military force and Heiho an auxiliary military force. Members of the two groups went on to form the nucleus of the Indonesian forces which fought the Dutch during the revolution. Neither group was established in West Timor, although hundreds of Javanese Heiho were found on the island at the end of the war. There are references in the Timorese literature to Heiho being recruited in both Amarasi and Molo, although there is no indication that these people were given any sort of military training. The Heiho in these cases appear to be identical to romusha; see Doko, Pahlawan..., p.47; Fobia, ‘Sonbai’, p.115; NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/973; NAA: MP1587/1, 114J. There are some sources, however, where it is made clear that the Timorese Heiho were soldiers. See, for example, De Protestantsche Kerk in Indonesie tijdens bezetting en terreur, p.22.
Seinendan and the training received by the youth as being a ‘blessing’ for the local people.174

One of the duties of the Seinendan in Kupang was to clear the debris and bury the corpses following the many bombing raids. On one occasion the body of an Australian airman shot down over Kupang Bay was left lying on the beach. This was gathered by the local Seinendan unit and buried with honours in the Christian cemetery. When this became known to the Kenpeitai Doko, as head of the Seinendan, was called in to explain. Doko argued that the airman had indeed been buried with honours, not because he was from the Allies, but as a brave soldier who had died in battle. Following minor censure from the Kenpeitai Doko was released. On another occasion Doko wrote, directed and performed in a play which, while ostensibly pro-Japanese, in fact made fun of the ‘older brother’ role played by the Japanese in relation to Indonesians. Because of their limited Indonesian (especially the Kupang dialect) the many Japanese officials who attended the play had no idea of its subversive nature and laughed along with the locals. The true intentions of the play were reported to the Japanese by the Timorese mistress of a Japanese official and Doko was again asked to explain. On this occasion Doko escaped punishment by feigning anger at the accusation and professing that the play was totally against the Dutch and the Allies. He demanded to know who had made the allegations and suggested that it was that person who was the real enemy of the Japanese. Perhaps because the Japanese were unable to decide the case one way or another Doko was again released, but with a stern warning not to trifle with the Japanese.175 Once more one is left with the impression that Doko has related this tale in order to boost his nationalist credentials and to counter the claims that he was pro-Japanese.

One of the accusations made after the war was that Doko and Raja Amarasi, H. A. Koroh, were given gold medals by the Japanese in recognition of their services. In fact, says Doko, he and Koroh were given gold badges in 1944 to signify that they had been made members of the representative assembly of the new province of the Lesser Sundas (the island chain from Bali to Timor) with its capital at Singaraja,

174 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.78.
175 Ibid., pp.79-80.
Doko and Koroh, however, were unable to travel to Bali to attend the first meeting of the assembly because of Allied air attacks on shipping. Doko claims, however, that he kept in touch with the actions of the nationalists in Java through the *Jawa Shimbun* newspaper. As editor of the government newspaper *Timor Sjuho* Doko was able to promote Indonesian independence also.177 Kanahele, however, states that Japanese in the Navy area had placed a ban on nationalist news from Java and talk of independence was similarly forbidden. Doko may have been talking about the latter stages of the war only as the Navy position on independence and the nationalists became gradually more accommodating. For example, in June 1943 Premier Tojo announced that Indonesians would soon be allowed some degree of ‘political participation’ and the news was greeted with great fanfare in Java. The newspapers in the Navy area, however, did not even report Tojo’s statement. As the war situation worsened the Navy authorities reconsidered their position. Thus, when in September 1944 Premier Koiso declared that Japan would grant Indonesia its independence the story was publicised heavily in the Navy area. This was pure propaganda, however, as eastern Indonesia was still earmarked for ‘permanent possession’. By early 1945 the situation had become progressively worse and the Navy had to agree that it had nothing left to offer the people and thus got right behind the push for independence.178

This was demonstrated on 29 April 1945, the Japanese Emperor’s birthday, when the Japanese made a show of presenting the red and white Indonesian flag to Koroh and Doko at a ceremony in Bakunase, Kupang. The flag was then flown in West Timor ‘for the first time’, although it flew next to the flag of the Japanese coloniser. Despite this Doko reports that the event was a great inspiration to local nationalists.179 As well as Doko and Koroh the ceremony was attended by all the rajas of West Timor as members of the Dewan Raja-raja Timor (Council of Timor Rajas). It has been said that the attendance of the rajas at this ceremony is proof of the co-operation between

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176 ‘Lesser Sundas’ or ‘Lesser Sunda islands’ is a literal translation of the Dutch name for the island group, Kleine Soenda eilanden. In Indonesian the group was similarly known as Sunda Ketjil, and later, Nusatenggara (Southeast Islands).

177 Doko, *Nusa Tenggara Timur...*, pp.78-80.


179 Doko, *Nusa Tenggara Timur...*, pp.81-82. Netti and Ita cite a report by Pendeta Arnoldus in which it is stated that the flag raising ceremony took place on 8 July 1945. In that report there was no mention of Doko’s involvement; see Netti and Ita, *Kupang...*, p.83.
the Timor rajas throughout the struggle for Indonesian independence. The rajas, however, are sure to have been instructed to attend the ceremony by the Japanese; although this in itself does not mean that they were not in favour of independence.

Through the *Jawa Shimbun* Doko learnt of the activities of the Badan Penyelidikan Usaha Persiapan Kemerdekaan (Independence Preparations Investigative Committee). It was at a session of this body on 1 June 1945 that Soekarno first elaborated on the concept of Pancasila (Five Principles) which was to become the guiding philosophy of the Indonesian state and people. By the end of the following month Timor was virtually cut off from the outside world and there was no more official news about the independence preparations being made in Java. As head of the Information Department, however, Doko had many contacts among the Japanese, as did Raja Koroh. From these contacts they learnt of the dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, but did not know of the Japanese surrender. Doko first learnt of this on 24 August when he was called to the house of the Japanese second in command in Kupang, Yano. Yano also informed Doko that the Japanese Army had ‘given’ Indonesia its independence, but he urged him to keep this secret. A few days later the Japanese handed over the government of Kupang to three local men: the Sabunese Doko, the Rotenese Tom Pello, and the Eurasian Dr. A. Gabelar as mayor. This situation persisted until the arrival of the Allied re-occupation force on 11 September 1945. Pendeta Arnoldus, in the meantime, had been ordered by the Japanese to make the surrender known to the public. On 2 September he told the news to the Kupang congregation who rejoiced and gave praise to God.

**The rajas under the Japanese**

Under the Japanese Naval administration in eastern Indonesia the *zelfbesturende landschappen* (self-governing regions) continued to function as under the Dutch.
It is even said that the rajas were given honorary army ranks. The Japanese, like the Dutch, tried to utilise the authority of the rajas in a system of indirect rule. The existence of the Dewan Raja-raja gave the impression that the rajas had some control over policies which affected the Timor region, but there is no evidence that the Dewan exercised any power. Individual rajas retained the right to maintain law and order in their kingdoms and it was reported in mid-1942 that they were responsible for judging all cases except murder and theft. It was claimed also that the rajas were given the responsibility of rounding up stray Allied soldiers operating as guerillas or hiding in their territory. On at least two occasions Allied soldiers hiding in West Timor had letters from the Japanese authorities delivered to them by local Timorese in which it was claimed that the Japanese knew their movements and location ‘through Rajahs’. These letters appear to be form letters and there is no indication that rajas were actually responsible for betraying the location of the soldiers to the Japanese. While certain rajas no doubt did co-operate closely with the Japanese many others were clearly in favour of the Allied cause. In order to lower the morale of fugitive Allied soldiers in West Timor it was favourable to the Japanese for those soldiers to believe that the rajas were likely to betray them.

It is difficult to know to what extent individual rajas did co-operate with the Japanese. The Japanese certainly expected close co-operation from the traditional authorities. In Belu in May 1942 local rajas were directed to supervise their subjects personally as they worked on a road clean-up project for the Japanese. Meanwhile, rajas throughout the territory were given forms to complete showing the amount and types of livestock kept in their kingdoms. In July 1942 these forms for the rajas were accompanied by a note stating that similar forms were delivered ‘a long time ago’, but there had been no response. That the rajas in this case chose not to co-operate is understandable as they probably guessed that the Japanese only required this information in order to requisition the livestock, so it was better that the Japanese were kept ignorant.

185 Het Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indische Leger..., p.70.
186 ‘Report from NEFIS...’, in NAA: MP1587/1, 114C.
187 NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/973.
188 Humphris, Trapped on Timor, p.59; and Henning, Doomed Battalion..., p.111.
189 NAA: AWM54, 797/3/1.
One Timorese informant from Amanuban told the author that the system of governance used by the Japanese was quite different from that used by the Dutch. The Japanese, he said, gave some recognition to the rajas, but it was not really a system of indirect rule as the Japanese were just as likely to issue their own orders and bypass the rajas.\textsuperscript{190} There is far too little information available to judge the veracity of this statement, but it does seem that there was a direct correlation between the amount of independence given to the rajas and their level of support and cooperation with the Japanese. In Amarasi, for example, Raja Koroh is said to have endeavoured to fulfil all the Japanese demands for foodstuffs, livestock and labourers to work as \textit{romusha}. In return he requested that all Japanese demands be put directly to him and that Japanese soldiers be restrained from entering the people’s homes. Because of his co-operative stance Raja Koroh was treated favourably by the Japanese. It was later claimed that Koroh was too weak and easily bowed to the wishes of the Japanese. Koroh’s friend and colleague, Doko, however, claims that because of Koroh’s wise stance his subjects were able to avoid much of the cruelty and oppression experienced elsewhere.\textsuperscript{191} In Molo Raja Toea SonbaE is said to have taken a different tack and actively opposed Japanese attempts to gather foodstuffs. He ordered his subjects to hide their food supplies in a nearby forest so that when the Japanese came to requisition the food all the storehouses were empty. As a result the Japanese ordered the people to open extensive new fields to plant sweet potatoes. When the Japanese instructed Toea SonbaE to provide labourers and prostitutes he again refused to co-operate and ordered his subordinates to do the same. As a result Mafef\textsuperscript{a} Nicodemus Fobia was seriously beaten by the Japanese and Toea SonbaE himself was threatened with violence.\textsuperscript{192} By co-operating with the Japanese Koroh held himself open to later accusations of being a collaborator whereas Toea SonbaE’s stance led to violence against his subjects. It cannot be said that one raja’s stance was correct and the other’s not. Following the war both rajas emerged firmly in control of their kingdoms.\textsuperscript{193}

\textsuperscript{190} Boimau, interview Niki Niki, 23 June 2000.
\textsuperscript{191} Doko, \textit{Pahlawan...}, pp.47-49.
\textsuperscript{192} Fobia, ‘Sonbai’, pp.114-115.
\textsuperscript{193} Both Doko and Fobia (son of SonbaE’s \textit{mafe\textsuperscript{a}}) had some personal interest in painting heroic pictures of their subjects so there is some room to doubt their accounts. Toea SonbaE, for instance, is supposed to have implored the Japanese to recognise him as the Raja of OEnam. SonbaE was a shrewd political operator and would not have expected his request to have been satisfied if he never co-operated with the Japanese. It is interesting, however, how both co-operation and non-co-operation
The Chinese

According to Allied intelligence reports from the early phases of the occupation of West Timor the Chinese were very co-operative with the Japanese. Thus we learn from one account that a ‘number of them proved to be unreliable during and after the Japanese invasion’.\textsuperscript{194} As noted above, there had been unsubstantiated claims that Chinese spies were actively working on behalf of the Japanese before the invasion.\textsuperscript{195} It is said also that after the arrival of the Japanese it was usual for the Chinese to be given honorary army ranks and that Chinese working in the civil administration were left in their posts.\textsuperscript{196} There were reports from Belu early in the occupation that Chinese were being put at the head of military units composed of Timorese soldiers.\textsuperscript{197}

In opposition to these reports there were others, such as that of Controleur Schulte Nordholt mentioned above, wherein he acknowledged that he was only able to keep control in his district following the Japanese invasion because of the faithful service of his ‘loyal’ Timorese and Chinese assistants.\textsuperscript{198} Following the war there seems to have been no attempt to prove any of the allegations against the Chinese in West Timor; in fact the reverse was the case. According to one Allied report ‘the Chinese suffered most’ under the Japanese in West Timor. All their shops had been closed and trading had virtually ceased.\textsuperscript{199} There were also reports of Chinese living in Baun, Amarasi who were beaten, bound and humiliated by members of the Kenpeitai and had their money, valuables, clothing and food loaded on to trucks and taken away.\textsuperscript{200} If it happened in Baun there is every reason to believe it happened elsewhere in West Timor. The Japanese tolerated Chinese entrepreneurs in order to obtain goods and money, but knew that many Chinese were anti-Japanese as Japan had been involved for years in a bloody war in China itself. Elsewhere in Southeast Asia relations between the Chinese and the Japanese occupying forces were

\textsuperscript{194} Allied Geographical Section, Southwest Pacific Area, \textit{Terrain study No.70...Dutch Timor...}, p.40.
\textsuperscript{195} ‘Account of Action’, in \textit{AWM: PR89/99}.
\textsuperscript{196} \textit{Het Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indische Leger...}, p.70.
\textsuperscript{197} ‘Report from NEFIS...’, in \textit{NAA: MP1587/1, 114C}. See also Van den Hoogenband and Schotborgh, \textit{Nederlands-Indie contra Japan...}, p.53.
\textsuperscript{198} Schulte Nordholt, ‘Besturen in een vacuum...’, p.167.
\textsuperscript{199} \textit{NAA: MP1049/5, 1968/2/604}.
\textsuperscript{200} \textit{NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/973}. 
generally characterised by great animosity. There was little incentive for any Chinese to co-operate with the Japanese apart from self-preservation.\footnote{Gunn cites Australian sources that claim that many Chinese in Portuguese Timor were killed by the Japanese and Chinese women forced into ‘concubinage’. There was also a great loss of property. Again, it seems reasonable to suppose that similar treatment was given to the Chinese in West Timor; see Gunn, \textit{Timor Lorosae}..., p.226.}

**Prostitution**

In Allied intelligence gathered from West Timor during the war it was frequently mentioned that the Timorese resented the Japanese because of the way they treated their women. Many young women were taken away and put into brothels for the use of Japanese soldiers. A usual method of obtaining these women was to order the rajas to make them available. Fobia says that Toea SonbaE initially ignored this order, with the consequence that he was threatened with violence. What happened after that is not recorded.\footnote{Fobia, ‘Sonbai’, p.115.} Fettor Don Mattheus da Costa (the unofficial Raja of Noemuti) was given the same order. The \textit{fettors} from the surrounding districts had complied with the order as they felt that they had no choice. Da Costa, however, went to Kefamenanu to meet in secret with the local Noemuti priest, Nicolaas van Ammers, who was being held there by the Japanese. Van Ammers told da Costa that if he continued to resist the demands of the Japanese he would likely be killed. There would then be no-one to run and look after the church. It was a real dilemma, but a compromise decision was finally reached. Instead of young women a number of older women who already had experience with men were handed over to the Japanese and the Fettor was left free to run the affairs of the church in Noemuti.\footnote{Don Antonius Willibrodus da Costa and Don Yoseph S. da Costa, interview Noemuti, 25 June 2000.} In other areas when the news was put about that the Japanese were searching for young single women to work in their brothels anxious parents sought out young men who were willing to pretend that they were married to their daughters. In many cases the women ended up marrying their pretend husbands after the war.\footnote{Boimau, interview Niki Niki, 23 June 2000.}

Not all the rajas seem to have been so reluctant about handing over their community’s young women. A Japanese officer recalled after the war that he had been ordered to organise two brothels: one for officers and one for other ranks. One
raja willingly handed over four women of about twenty-five years of age in exchange for £20 each. Another three women were obtained in Baun (presumably from Raja Koroh). Doko says that the Japanese first began demanding young women about one month after the invasion. Their first approach was to Raja Kupang. Once the news had got abroad Doko was asked to try and do something about it. Together with Pendeta M. Haba he approached the Japanese commander in Kupang from whom they got an understanding that only existing prostitutes would be employed in the Japanese brothels.

Doko claims that Raja Koroh fulfilled the Japanese demand for women by gathering together all the prostitutes of Baun and sending them to Kupang. Before they were removed the women one and all broke down in tears and several pleaded not to be taken away. Yet taken away they were and no more was known of their fate until one month later a number of Japanese officers came to visit Baun. When they alighted from their vehicles the officers were followed by women wearing beautiful clothes and bounteous gold jewellery. These women, the mistresses of the Japanese officers, were the same women who had been crying over their fate only one month before. Doko goes on to say that after that time no prostitutes in Amarasi had to be forced into the Japanese brothels and instead were falling over each other to get in.

Doko’s tale might be amusing if it was not glossing over what was a very tragic situation. Clearly all the women who were taken away could not become mistresses of high-ranking Japanese officials and many had to serve in the brothel for ordinary soldiers. Also, Doko makes it sound as if there was an endless supply of prostitutes in West Timor; so why were so many Timorese complaining about the treatment of their women at the hands of the Japanese? Doko’s claims are an insult to the many women who suffered in the ‘comfort stations’ established by the Japanese. The Japanese obviously needed more women than could be supplied locally as they

205 NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.
206 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.74.
207 Doko, Pahlawan, pp.48-49.
brought women from Taiwan and Korea also to work in the Timor brothels. A woman from Taiwan said that she had been recruited with the understanding that she was going to work as a nurse. She described the life of a ‘comfort woman’ as comparable to that of an animal and said the Japanese could kill them or mistreat them as they wished. After the war over fifty Javanese women were found to have been working in a brothel in Kupang. These women had also been told they were going to Timor to work in a hospital. There were unconfirmed reports that Dutch and Eurasian women had been forced into the brothels as well. Two Dutch women employed by the Japanese in Kupang as nurses were quartered at the rear of one of the brothels, but were moved after they were molested by a drunken Japanese officer. One of the women was injured in the incident. This event was no doubt distressing for the women concerned, but counts for little compared to what the women in the brothels had to endure from Japanese soldiers on a daily basis.

Netti and Ita have queried Doko’s version of events. In interviews with people in Kupang and Amarasi who had experienced the privations of the Japanese occupation they were told that the women who worked in the Japanese brothels were all forced to do so. The respondents claimed that none of the women taken from Amarasi were prostitutes. Netti and Ita cite the eye-witness account of Pendeta J. J. Arnoldus to counter some of Doko’s claims also; in particular the claim that he and Pendeta M. Haba convinced the Japanese commander in Kupang to use only existing prostitutes in the Japanese brothels. According to Arnoldus young women were forced to work in the brothels and many others were raped. Because of this many women were scared to leave their homes.

208 There were brothels in Kupang before the invasion which catered to Australian soldiers, but these were opposed by the military hierarchy. The brothels used by the Japanese were established by the military itself and catered for at least twice the number of men.
210 NAA: AWM54, 773/4/14. In order to conceal their true function the Japanese issued some of the women with Red Cross armbands shortly before they were discovered by the Allied forces. See AWM: Photograph No.120082.
212 NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.
213 Netti and Ita, Kupang..., pp.78-80.
The Church

In western Indonesia the Japanese made special efforts to win over the Muslim majority by establishing Muslim organisations and co-operating with Islamic leaders.\(^{214}\) In West Timor no special attention seems to have been given to the Muslim minority, but surprisingly the Japanese appear to have had no co-ordinated policy when it came to dealing with the Church in eastern Indonesia either. The treatment of the Church varied from island to island and even from district to district. It often seems to have depended on the attitude of the local Japanese commander. The Japanese made no attempt to introduce their own religion in West Timor and Christian Timorese were not made to deny their identity as Christians, but there were many difficulties. On predominantly Catholic Flores the Japanese were relatively lenient. The majority of the island’s many European priests and members of religious orders were interned in Sulawesi in July 1942. Bishop Heinrich Leven was not interned, however, and the Catholic mission was able to continue to function with a staff of thirty European sisters, ten Indonesian sisters, six brothers, six European priests and two Indonesian priests. One of the latter was the recently ordained Timorese Gabriel Manek. Teaching at the mission’s seminary continued and remained in the hands of the Church. The mission was even sent help in the shape of a Japanese bishop and two priests. These Japanese Catholics co-operated closely with their European colleagues and are remembered as having done much to help local Catholics during the occupation.\(^{215}\)

The Catholic clergy in West Timor received very different treatment. When the Japanese arrived in Atambua Bishop Jacobus Pessers was taken with kicks and blows to be interviewed by Japanese officers. The church and rectory were plundered and then occupied by Japanese troops. The work of the mission came to a standstill, but after some time Pessers was told it could start to function again. Pessers was encouraged to call back seven priests who had crossed the border and were hiding in Portuguese Timor. When five of these men returned they were arrested immediately. Pessers saw he had been tricked and was able to warn the remaining two priests to


stay in hiding. Meanwhile the Church’s property was ransacked. Vestments were torn to shreds, chalices were used as ashtrays, statues were smashed and buildings stripped of useful materials.216

In Kefamenanu some of the priests tried to prevent a Japanese soldier from beating one of their fellows. This was too much for the Japanese who put all the priests in close confinement. After a few days they learnt they were to be executed. The local people were gathered together and told of the decision. Fortunately for the seven priests involved one of the local men, Ambrosius Tjung Djung Kie, was emboldened to speak on their behalf. He stated that the people had known the priests for a long time and considered them to be good people. The others present expressed their agreement. The Japanese were not glad to hear this speech, but it saved the lives of the European priests.217 All the European missionaries in West Timor were put in detention soon after and were barred from contact with the local people. Nevertheless, many managed to keep up some contact; for example, the raja from Noemuti, as mentioned above, was able to meet with the local priest being held in Kefamenanu. In Atambua a school teacher, Z. Makolo, was able to help the missionaries by bringing them the occasional head of cattle donated by local Catholics.218 In making these contacts the Indonesians were taking a risk, but in September 1943 contact become impossible as the missionaries were removed one and all to internment in Sulawesi.219

During the occupation there was great destruction of mission property. Much was destroyed by Allied bombing, but much more was systematically demolished by the Japanese. Schools, churches and workshops were all destroyed. It is estimated that four-fifths of the Catholic mission’s property was devastated. Bishop Pessers complained of the plundering and destruction of Church property, but to no avail. After the missionaries were removed from Timor the Japanese continued their

219 Buijs, ‘Het Vicariaat...’, p.29.
pattern of destruction and took no notice of complaints from local Catholics. 220 The Japanese on Flores appear to have believed that the Catholic Church was something valued by the local people, but in Timor they behaved as if it was a strictly Dutch institution.

In Noemuti the Japanese stripped the roofing iron from the local church for use in another project. The church leaders, the da Costas, complained to the Japanese. The Japanese response was to query the Timorese concern: ‘Why are you upset’, they asked, ‘it is only a Dutch building after all?’ As Don Yoseph da Costa recalled, the Japanese were surprised to hear that the Timorese considered that the church belonged to them and that they wished to be consulted on any matters concerning it. 221 After the war the returning European missionaries were equally surprised to learn how the local Catholics’ faith had fared during their absence. They discovered many teachers and rajas had continued to manage the affairs of the mission, held meetings and conducted marriages. Bishop Pessers wrote later that he had never dreamed that the faith of the people had such deep roots. 222 In the post-war euphoria, however, the Bishop may have been overly enthusiastic. In Webb’s estimation the Catholic mission in West Timor before the war had not penetrated deeply into the people’s lives, 223 so it may be that the returning European missionaries were expecting the worst and were pleased to discover that the Church still had a place in the people’s affections.

In the Protestant areas of West Timor the Christian faith of the local people was put to the test also. As with the Catholics the European Protestant missionaries were sent to internment in Sulawesi. The Minahasan Pendeta Alex Rotti was interned also. This was not unexpected and there had been some preparations beforehand. The Dutch ministers thought that if the Timorese congregations were separated from the European leadership the work of the mission could be in peril. Thus in January and February 1942 they held meetings with local *pendetas* and teachers, encouraging them to continue with the work. This was not easy. As explained in preceding

\[223\] Webb, *Palms and the cross...*, p.86.
chapters the Indische Kerk was a state church. The *pendetas* had relied 100% on the state for financial assistance. Under the Japanese they received no funding at all. The Japanese urged the *pendetas* to become teachers, for which they would be paid, but the great majority did not take up the offer. They then had to rely on the generosity of their congregations; a totally new situation for both parties.\(^{224}\) The mainly poor Timorese Protestants managed to provide something to help their *pendetas*, but often they had barely enough for their own needs. Being forced to rely on their own resources was a formative experience for the Timorese Protestants which proved to be a great stimulus to demands for the independence of their church after the war.\(^{225}\)

As in the Catholic areas Church property suffered from both Allied bombing and wanton Japanese looting and destruction. In most parts of West Timor the Protestant Church’s buildings were completely destroyed.\(^{226}\) A number of Protestant ministers were killed by the Japanese also. The first was the Dutch Predikant (Protestant minister) J. Groot, who was executed in the early days of the occupation. He was decapitated while being held in a camp near Kupang.\(^{227}\) The only Timorese *pendeta* killed by the Japanese during the war was Bernardus Sau, who supported himself as a merchant. It is said he was falsely accused of spying as a result of his extensive travelling. Local *pendetas* were killed on Sumba and Alor also.\(^{228}\)

In one instance a local *pendeta* was helped by Japanese soldiers. Of the thirty-one Japanese based in Amfoan fourteen were Christians. These men were regular attendees at services run by Pendeta Sahertian. Sahertian’s church had initially been used as a barracks, but he succeeded in having it returned to him and with the support of the Japanese Christians he was able to function without too many constraints.\(^{229}\) Elsewhere the *pendetas* faced many restrictions. In most cases they had no church building, either because it was being used for other purposes or had been destroyed. Before the war many congregations had met in school buildings, but this was banned under the Japanese, as was the taking of a collection during services. Such measures

\(^{224}\) *De Protestantsche Kerk...*, pp.21-22.
\(^{226}\) *De Protestantsche Kerk...*, pp.21-23.
\(^{227}\) Middelkoop, *Head hunting in Timor...*, Part 3, Plates. See also NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.
\(^{228}\) Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’, p.31; see also *Sejarah daerah...*, pp.123-124.
\(^{229}\) Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’, p.30.
greatly restricted the *pendetas*, but in some places the restrictions were lessened as the war progressed.²³⁰

With the loss of the European missionaries the Church had ceased to have any central co-ordination. To redress this a Badan Gereja Timor Selatan (BGTS; South Timor Church Committee) was formed in August 1943. It was chaired by Raja Nisnoni of Kupang with Pendeta Arnoldus as deputy.²³¹ Nisnoni has been praised for his support of the Church at this time,²³² although it has been said also that many *pendetas* had no confidence in the raja and regarded him as ‘a thorough unconverted heathen’.²³³ Some *pendetas* may have resented the chairmanship of the BGTS going to a lay person and felt that Nisnoni, like many other rajas, considered it a right to be elected to positions of importance in the Church. As the number of Christians and the influence of the Church increased after the war many more rajas sought to bolster their authority and prestige by becoming an elder of the Protestant Church.²³⁴

The BGTS was confined to Amarasi, Amfoan, Fatuleu and Kupang. It appears to have had limited success, but at least attempted to organise regular payment for the *pendetas* and also opened a number of schools.²³⁵ Under the Japanese administration the many Protestant and Catholic mission schools in the Timor region lost their religious function and were taken over by the Japanese. The use and teaching of the Dutch language was banned. The schools then taught the Malay language and Japanese propaganda songs.²³⁶ The students and their teachers were forced to plant large gardens and spent much of their time tilling the soil.²³⁷ The only new schools opened under the Japanese were special intensive schools for training police and farmers.²³⁸ Benyamin Sahetapy Engel was a teacher in the farming school, but his students were involved in a fight with some Japanese. Sahetapy Engel is convinced that if the Japanese had won the fight there would have been no further consequences, but his students, all strong farmers, thrashed their opponents. Not long

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²³¹ Cooley, *Benih yang tumbuh...*, pp.52-53.
²³² *De Protestantse Kerk...*, p.23.
²³⁴ Ibid., p.49.
²³⁵ Cooley, *Benih yang tumbuh...*, pp.54-55.
²³⁶ Widiyatmika, *Sejarah pendidikan...*, pp.72-73.
²³⁷ *De Protestantse Kerk...*, p.22.
²³⁸ Widiyatmika, *Sejarah pendidikan...*, pp.72-73.
after he was dismissed and went to work as a private teacher for the children of Raja Amarasi in Baun.239

A final matter to be considered here is the Nunkolo spirit movement. Periods of stress and tension in West Timor have often been accompanied by religious movements led by charismatic figures. Such movements (although of a more animist nature) occurred during the pacificatie, and after the war during the upheavals of the mid-1960s. In Nunkolo, a small village in southern Amanatun, such a movement broke out in August 1943. There was much tension at the time as one of the local ministers, Pendeta J. Sine, was determined to stand up for ‘Christian values’. He encouraged the people to refuse to hand over their young women to work as prostitutes or work for the Japanese on Sundays. He also discouraged the drinking of alcohol at functions organised by the Japanese. Others in the community were in favour of acquiescing to the Japanese demands and norms. Under these circumstances Juliana Mnao, wife of a schoolteacher, began to hear a voice calling her to become God’s messenger. She was soon busy in the district calling on backsliding Christians to mend their ways and encouraging Timorese who had held on to their animist faith to destroy their le’us (fetishes) and join the Church. In October the voice told Mnao to travel to Alor. The Japanese had greatly restricted travel and it was likely that Mnao and the team of evangelists she had gathered would be arrested if they attempted the journey. Surprisingly, they made it undetected to Kupang, but were unsuccessful in trying to obtain a boat and were finally arrested. Through the good offices of Raja Kupang they were allowed to return to Nunkolo.240

In November Maria Banoenaek, wife of Pendeta Nicolaas Banoenaek, began to hear a voice also. With a team she travelled the district calling on Christians to repent their sins. Her actions in church, such as kicking pulpits and ripping bible readers, did not meet with the approval of the people she was trying to impress. Her group was labelled ‘evil’ and was rejected by many congregations.241 One of Mnao’s original followers, Pendeta Lot Hauoni, broke from her and travelled alone to

239 Sahetapy Engel, interview Kupang, 2 November 2000.
241 Ibid., pp.41-44.
Lelogama where he challenged the Protestant congregation to believe in God and repent their sins. He called specifically on businessmen, ‘including Chinese’, not to make excessive profits or ‘leech the poor’. Far from being impressed the ranks of Chinese businessmen in Lelogama, swollen by evacuees from Kupang, wanted to bash Hauoni. He was saved by intervention from local Pendeta P. Kosapilawan. Despite the animosity of some of his congregation Kosapilawan felt that Hauoni’s visit had generally positive results, including a large number of baptisms soon after.\(^{242}\)

The Nunkolo spirit movement was basically over by the end of 1944, but its effects were felt for many years with a number of individuals continuing to call for confession and repentance. While it lasted the movement does not seem to have attracted much attention from the Japanese, but the participants were perhaps fortunate that this was so. Mnao developed a particular method of ‘tuning in’ to her voice holding a piece of wire up to her ear. Mnao was at Menu, on the south coast, with a group of schoolteachers doing just this when some Japanese soldiers appeared. A Japanese officer questioned Mnao: ‘What are you doing there? Are you speaking with Australia? Are you a spy?’ The officer was unimpressed by the explanation that God was speaking through a wire, but Mnao saved the day when she exclaimed that ‘The Holy Spirit commands that we should bow down to the Japanese. It was the Lord who bade the Japanese come’. With that the soldiers left the evangelist and went on their way.\(^{243}\)

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The Allied forces in West Timor were easily defeated by the Japanese, proving to the West Timorese that the Europeans were not invincible. Yet despite claims to the opposite there is no proof that the West Timorese were ‘pro-Japanese’. There were numerous cases where West Timorese risked their lives to help Allied servicemen on the run from the Japanese. The Japanese occupation of West Timor brought great suffering. Many West Timorese were forced to work as romusha and prostitutes. Foodcrops and livestock were requisitioned by the Japanese, leaving the Timorese

with only the barest requirements. Japanese rule was harsh, but it did have some benefits. In many ways the West Timorese were forced to rely on their own resources. In this respect Juliana Mnamo’s characterisation of the arrival of the Japanese as a blessing was not entirely incorrect. Surprised to discover the depths of their own resourcefulness many Timorese began to question the need for Dutch leadership. This was a formative experience which encouraged many West Timorese to seek greater autonomy in the running of their own affairs after the war. The Dutch had different ideas. On 17 August 1945 Soekarno and Hatta had declared the independence of the Republic of Indonesia in Jakarta. This was rejected by the returning Dutch and four years of bloody revolution was the result. In West Timor there was no physical resistance to the Dutch, but there was great political activity, as will be described in the following chapter.
Figure 19.
Australian gun, relic of the Second World War.
Kelapa Lima, Kupang.

Figure 20.
Japanese gun, relic of the Second World War.
Nunbaun Delha, Kupang.
Figure 21.
Figure 22.
Fettor Baun, Raja H. A. Koroh, Yano San of the Japanese administration, and I. H. Doko outside the Raja’s sonaf, Baun. (From I. H. Doko, *Pahlawan pahlawan suku Timor*, p.49.)
Chapter Five
Chapter Five

The Dutch return, but not for long

This chapter is concerned with the period from the end of the Second World War to the achievement of full Indonesian independence in late 1949. The re-establishment of Dutch authority in West Timor is described and the role of Timorese in the Indonesian revolution is discussed. Although there was no physical opposition to the Dutch in West Timor many Timorese took part in the fighting in Java and other areas. The re-emergence of political life in West Timor and the role played by Timorese politicians in the Dutch ‘puppet state’ of Negara Indonesia Timur are examined also. Figures such as I. H. Doko and H. A. Koroh took advantage of the new political freedoms to promote their nationalist ideas and support for the Republic. The role of the Church, the reconstruction of Kupang, and the provision of information and education services are described as well. As in other chapters, the role of the rajas and the relationship with Portuguese Timor feature also.

Return of the Dutch and Australians

Following the Japanese capitulation Australia was given the responsibility of occupying eastern Indonesia on behalf of the Allied nations. The occupation force consisted of the Australian 12/40 Infantry Battalion and ancillary units, including Dutch troops under Australian command. The force numbered around 3,900 men to deal with an estimated 16,000 to 20,000 Japanese based in the Timor region; about 4,000 were in West Timor itself. Both the Dutch and Portuguese governments argued that their representatives should accept the Japanese surrender in their respective halves of Timor. Australia, however, was adamant that it alone would be responsible. As the Japanese had not established separate military commands in East and West Timor only one surrender was necessary. This took place aboard the Australian ship *Moresby*, moored four hundred metres off the bombed-out ruins of

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2 The figures for the Allied force come from *NAA: AWM54, 41/4/43.* Estimates of Japanese numbers can be found in *Ibid.; NAA: MP742/1, 31/1/117; NAA: MP1587/1, 114F; and NAA: AWM54, 571A/4/3.*
3 *NAA: A5954/69, 564/6.* This was probably because the troops who were to enforce the surrender were mainly Australians and under Australian command. Nevertheless, the decision was much resented by the Europeans.
Kupang, on 11 September 1945. Hundreds of Timorese cheered as a Japanese party of five left the shore on a run-down looking barge.4 The harbour was crowded with Allied warships and eleven RAAF Liberator aircraft flew continuously over Kupang as the surrender negotiations took place.5 The Japanese appeared scared as they were greeted on board the Moresby with ‘hisses and imprecations’ by some of the Australian sailors.6 Colonel Kaida Taitsuchi signed the surrender documents on behalf of the Japanese forces on Timor and surrendered his sword to Australian Brigadier Lewis H. Dyke. Australian and Dutch army, navy and airforce officers crowded the deck to witness the event.7

When they landed in Kupang itself the Australian troops were welcomed by shouting boys with cries of ‘Cigarette!’ and ‘Japan no bloody good!’ The town was in complete ruins with only a handful of inhabitable buildings. Nevertheless, the Australians and Dutch were soon established. The latter occupied a number of temporary buildings in Bakunase, about ten kilometres out of town.8 On 26 September Lieutenant-General Yamada arrived in Kupang from Sumbawa with eight staff officers in two badly damaged Mitsubishi bombers. The planes had no doors or instruments and one’s undercarriage collapsed on landing. No-one was injured, but RAAF personnel were amazed that the planes had survived the flight at all. On 3 October Yamada made a formal surrender for the Japanese Lesser Sundas forces on a newly made parade ground in Kupang.9

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6 NAA: AWM123, 380.
7 ‘Report by Merton Woods...’, in NAA: AWM54, 773/4/14. The Dutch found much to complain about in the matter of the Japanese surrender. Not only were Dutch representatives denied a place at the surrender table, but the Australian troops were deemed to be inexperienced and badly equipped. To the Dutch they made a ‘very amateurish impression’. Dutch sensibilities were not helped by the fact that immediately after the formal surrender a landing was made at Kupang where the Australians’ first action was to plant their own flag; see ‘Lt. gouverneur-generaal (Van Mook) aan ministerie van overheerse gebiedsdelien, 20 sept. 1945’, in S. L. van der Wal (ed.), Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen 1945-1950, Vol.1, pp.145-146.
8 NAA: A1838/2, TS400/1/9/1/1.
9 Ibid. See also NAA: AWM54, 41/4/73.
Following the Japanese surrender the Portuguese authorities soon re-established control in their half of Timor, with little assistance from the Allies. The Australians, however, were committed, as part of general Allied policy, to helping the Dutch re-establish their authority in Indonesia. Accordingly, the Australian occupation force for West Timor was accompanied by ten officers and seventeen other ranks of the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA). All civilian authority was with NICA. The Dutch brought with them also personnel from the Netherlands Forces Intelligence Section (NEFIS), who were soon busy tracking down people suspected of collaborating with the Japanese. The Australians’ main responsibilities were to disarm the Japanese, take action against war criminals, recover PoWs and internees, maintain law and order, and investigate war graves and missing persons.

The returning Dutch got a mixed reception in the Timor region. The news that the Australians were coming to liberate the people from the Japanese spread fast. In some places, such as Maumere in Flores and SoE in Timor, the Australians and the NICA personnel were greeted with Australian and Dutch flags. More generally, however, it was reported that ‘the natives were more than disappointed when they realised the Dutch were coming back to take control’. In Timor the Dutch reported that the NICA received an extremely enthusiastic reception. According to an Australian assessment, however, the NICA personnel were soon established on the island, but were not popular. Nevertheless, there was no organised opposition to the Dutch and the Australians. The Timorese were glad to be freed from Japanese rule and appear to have quietly accepted the return of their European colonial masters. Local nationalist groups and other political organisations did re-appear, but were not active until after the Australians had already left Timor. Despite the calm situation, Australian soldiers in Timor (and elsewhere in eastern Indonesia) were

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10 For more on the re-establishment of Portuguese authority in Timor, see Gunn, *Timor Lorosae*..., pp.230-235.
11 NAA: A1838/2, TS400/1/9/1/1.
12 NAA: A816, 101/302/11.
ordered to have no contact with the ‘natives’ and not to enter their villages except
where required by duty. Only NICA personnel were to have direct contact with the
Timorese.\textsuperscript{17} This order was resented by many Australian soldiers, leading one to
complain that the Timorese were ‘decent, clean and friendly people’, many of whom
were ‘punished for helping our lads during the Japanese occupation’, yet the
Australians were not allowed to trade with them or have any other contact.\textsuperscript{18} The
order, however, seems to have been generally ignored by the Australians throughout
eastern Indonesia and the NICA officers who wished to see it enforced were
considered to be pompous, overbearing colonialists.\textsuperscript{19} As with the period before the
war, there seems to have been little love lost between the Dutch and the straight-
talking Australian soldiers.

As noted in the previous chapter, the Japanese did little to popularise the notion of
Indonesian independence in West Timor. In western Indonesia the Allied occupation
forces were faced with an organised independence movement. There was no such
movement in Timor. The lack of information reaching Timor in the latter stages of
the Japanese occupation meant that most people had no idea of political
developments elsewhere in the archipelago. When the Australians and Dutch arrived
in September 1945 many Timorese were barely aware that independence had already
been declared in Jakarta.\textsuperscript{20} Andreas Yohannes recalled that he first heard the news
from some Australian soldiers who arrived in Oesau soon after the Australian
Army’s return to Timor.\textsuperscript{21} The Dutch were zealous in their attempts to prevent the
notion of independence taking hold and when they discovered that some of their own
soldiers, members of the KNIL 4th Company, were sympathisers of the ‘Free
Indonesia Movement’ they were isolated in detention on Semau.\textsuperscript{22} The Australians,
in the meantime, were accused by Resident C. W. Schuller, recently returned from
internment, of ‘spreading democracy’ and even handing guns over to the Timorese.
The charges were flatly denied by the Australian Army.\textsuperscript{23} Clearly, many Australian

\textsuperscript{17} NAA: AWM54, 571A/2/1.
\textsuperscript{18} NAA: MP742/1, 85/1/789.
\textsuperscript{19} O’Hare and Reid, \textit{Australia...}, p.15.
\textsuperscript{20} The Dutch continued to use the old name Batavia. The Republicans favoured Jakarta and that name
is used throughout this chapter.
\textsuperscript{21} Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000.
\textsuperscript{22} NAA: AWM54, 571A/4/7 Part 2.
\textsuperscript{23} NAA: A1838/2, TS400/1/9/1/1. In Kalimantan and South Sulawesi a number of Australian soldiers
openly supported the Indonesian independence movement and some appear to have been connected to
soldiers did not approve of the Dutch, but the Australian Army was committed to helping the Dutch re-establish their authority in eastern Indonesia and this was accomplished in West Timor without incident.24

Despite the official supportive stance of the Australian Army, the Dutch had many reservations about its wartime ally. The Dutch had formed a Netherlands Indies government-in-exile in Australia during the war and were shocked when their plans to re-occupy their colony began to fall apart as the result of a campaign begun by Australian trade unions. Black bans were placed on Dutch shipping, supplies were left stranded on wharves and Indonesians in Australia who identified with the Republic were given all types of assistance.25 The Dutch were incensed by this behaviour and were highly suspicious of the Australians in the post-war occupation force for Indonesia. In April 1946 the Dutch Cabinet was informed that intensive communist propaganda from Australia was being carried into parts of Indonesia, including Timor. Members of the Australian Army were said to be involved and brochures and other printed material was being brought in on Australian planes. Similar claims were made in 1947.26

There may have been some truth in these allegations, but the strongest communist agitation brought into Indonesia from Australia was probably that brought in by existing PKI members. These people came to be in Australia because when the Dutch evacuated from Indonesia at the beginning of the war they brought with them the ‘dangerous’ political prisoners, including PKI members, held in the Boven Digul detention camp in Dutch New Guinea. After at first being re-interned in Australia, these people were released into the general community following a campaign by trade unionists and others. While in Australia many of the former prisoners made

an arms smuggling network which supplied the Republican activists. The number of soldiers involved, however, was probably small; see O’Hare and Reid, Australia..., pp.14-20.

25 On the eve of the Australians’ departure the KNIL commanding officer in Timor, Lieutenant-Colonel H. W. van Oyen, thanked Brigadier Dyke and his men for the successful surrender of the Japanese. The Australian troops had not once had to use their weapons; see NAA: AWM54, 571A/3/2.

26 ‘Secretaris van de ministerraad (Sanders) aan alle leden van de ministerraad, 10 april 1946’, in S. L. van der Wal (ed.), Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen 1945-1950, Vol.4, p.84; ‘Tijdelijk zaakgelastigde te Canberra (De Ranitz) aan minister van buitenlands zaken (Van Boetzalaer van Oosterhout), 30 juni 1947’, in S. L. van der Wal, P. J. Drooglever and M.
contact with the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). These included some important figures, such as Sardjono, a long standing chairman of the PKI, and Harjono, who in 1946 presided over the first congress of the Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (SOBSI; All Indonesia Central Labour Organisation, a trade union federation with a strong communist representation).27

The Indonesians in Australia supported the Allied war effort and co-operated with the Dutch authorities, but when the news came through that the Japanese had surrendered and independence had been declared in Jakarta, many Indonesians no longer wanted to serve the Dutch. Indonesian seamen went on strike and sought assistance from their Australian colleagues. The result was a general boycott on Dutch shipping to Indonesia and an effort to stop any assistance being given to the anti-Republican forces. These actions were strongly supported by the CPA and communist-controlled trade unions, but also by the great majority of non-communist Australians. The Australian government tried to remain neutral, but wanted to remove the striking seamen and other Indonesians stranded on Australian shores and chartered a vessel, the *Esperance Bay*, to return them to Indonesia. The Dutch authorities and Mountbatten of South East Asia Command (SEAC; the British led force charged with overseeing the Japanese surrender and transfer of power to the Dutch) opposed allowing these ‘revolutionaries’ to land in Java or Sumatra, but they had been given a guarantee that they could disembark in Republican territory. The Australian government eventually reached a compromise with its Dutch and British critics whereby nineteen of the most active leaders were put off at Timor. These included a number of Boven Digul men. The rest disembarked in Java.28

It had been determined that the Indonesians were not to be handed over to the Dutch authorities so eighteen of them were removed to Semau and provided for by the Australian Army, while the nineteenth, accompanied by his wife and seven children,

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was kept in a house in Kupang with ‘an Australian guard to protect him from the Dutch and to protect the Timorese from him’. NICA complained to the Australians that the Indonesians on Semau were having a ‘detrimental effect on the natives’ by flying the Republican red and white flag and flouting Dutch authority. They claimed also that the detainees had sent letters to local rajas saying that those who collaborated with NICA would later be brought before Indonesian courts. The Dutch had wanted to take over responsibility for the ‘bad Indonesian elements’ on Semau, but eventually the group was airlifted out of Kupang in March 1946 to begin a circuitous route to Java via North Borneo and Singapore. By then they had grown to thirty-two persons as some of the men had acquired wives during their stay on Semau. Whether or not these ‘extremely dangerous’ ‘expert agitators’ managed to pass on any of their revolutionary communist ideas to the local Timorese population is unknown. In December 1948, however, one Nisi KoEn was arrested on Semau for inciting the people to ignore the orders of Raja Kupang, not send their children to school and not pay taxes. It was reported that ‘Nisi KoEn was in Australia and that there is some communist strain in his propaganda is not strange’.

Australian support for the Republic, Australian trade union bans on Dutch shipping, and reports of the Australian Army ‘spreading democracy’ and communism made the Dutch suspicious and resentful of the Australians. In Timor the Dutch had needed Australian help to re-establish their authority, but once that had been achieved they no doubt wished them away from the island. Fortunately for the Dutch, the Australian military was keen to remove itself from the volatile situation developing in Indonesia and aimed to leave as soon as possible. In November 1945 it was proposed that once the majority of the Japanese forces found in the Timor region had been moved to Sumbawa, where they were being concentrated, the Australian force would return home. In January 1946 the Australian War Cabinet decided there was

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29 NAA: MP742/1, 115/1/285.
30 NAA: AWM54, 721/32/2.
34 NAA: MP742/1, 31/1/117.
no further need for Australian troops in Timor and ordered an immediate evacuation.\textsuperscript{35} Australian aircraft and personnel continued to pass through Kupang, but the Australian Army in Timor transferred command to the KNIL on 18 March 1946, the day the last of the ‘Semau detainees’ were airlifted out of Timor.\textsuperscript{36}

While the Australians appear to have desired a speedy exit from Timor, there had been some interest in a more permanent presence. The experiences of the Second World War had convinced Australian strategists of the importance of Indonesia to Australia’s future security. Some Australians thought that the islands to Australia’s north (Timor, Dutch New Guinea, and the Aru, Kei, and Tanimbar islands) should come under Australian control.\textsuperscript{37} Political and logistical realities made this an impossibility, but Australia remained interested in the idea of establishing bases in the archipelago. In August 1945, before the Japanese surrender on Timor, an Australian representative met with the Portuguese ambassador in London. The ambassador was asked how his government would react to the suggestion of a one hundred year lease of Portuguese Timor to Australia. The ambassador replied to this extraordinary query that Portugal had to maintain its prestige and could not relinquish sovereignty over any of its remaining territory.\textsuperscript{38} There seems to have been no follow up to this approach. In April 1947 the Secretary of the Australian Department of External Affairs, Dr. J. W. Burton, suggested to Dutch representatives in Canberra that the Netherlands could alleviate its large war debt to Australia by allowing Australia to administer West Timor. The Dutch government instructed its officials to have no further discussions on the matter.\textsuperscript{39} In 1948 the Australian consul to Portuguese Timor, Charles Eaton, visited West Timor as he had been asked by his

\textsuperscript{35} NAA: MP742/1, 115/1/285.
\textsuperscript{37} For more on Australia’s ambitions, see Lockwood, Black armada, pp.246-252. The Dutch were well aware of Australia’s aspirations in the region. For example, see ‘Lt. gouverneur-generaal (Van Mook) aan minister van overzeese gebiedsdelen (Logemann), 26 sept. 1945’, in Van der Wal (ed.), Officiële bescheiden..., Vol.1, p.173; and ‘Legercommandant (Spoor) aan hoge vertegenwoordiger van de kroon (Beel), 22 feb. 1949’, in P. J. Drooglever and M. J. B. Schouten (eds.), Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen 1945-1950, Vol.17, pp.622-623.
\textsuperscript{38} NAA: A5954/69, 564/6.
superiors to investigate the possibility of a long term lease of the Dutch territory.\textsuperscript{40} Again, there seems to have been no result from the enquiries. In a twist to the theme, in 1949 the Australian consul in Dili reported that the Portuguese were interested in purchasing West Timor from the Dutch, but did not have the funds. Later, Raja Kupang made a stopover in Dili en route to Makassar and confused the issue further when he commented that ‘the fate of Portuguese Timor is yet to be determined’.\textsuperscript{41} Despite the many machinations and speculations the Australians gained no foothold in Timor and the Dutch and Portuguese never relinquished control of their half of the island to the other power.

\textit{Prosecution of war criminals and collaborators}

In Portuguese Timor the Australian authorities showed that they were mainly interested in pursuing war crimes cases that involved Australian personnel. Testimonies were collected concerning atrocities committed by the Japanese against local Timorese, Chinese and Portuguese, but no action was taken.\textsuperscript{42} It seems to have been a similar case in West Timor. The Dutch complained that the Australians seemed pre-occupied with searching for Allied PoWs. There were none to be found on Timor.\textsuperscript{43} Information was collected concerning collaborators with the Japanese, and Japanese war crimes against Timorese and Chinese, but no action was taken. The Australians left these matters to be dealt with by the Dutch. More effort was put into investigating the killings of Australian personnel, such as Jack West, Bill Fitzallen and J. H. Armstrong, mentioned in the previous chapter. In the West and Fitzallen case it was considered there was insufficient evidence for a trial to proceed.\textsuperscript{44} Enquiries in a number of other cases also failed to lead to prosecutions.\textsuperscript{45} Australian investigators had complained that it was frequently necessary to rely on the evidence

\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{40}]\textit{NAA: A1838/2, TS400/1/9/1/1. Australia at this time had good relations with the Republic and was well informed of political developments in Indonesia. It is remarkable that Australia could propose leasing ‘Dutch territory’ at a time when the whole archipelago was moving towards full independence. The Dutch Charge d’affaires to Canberra, de Ranitz, reported back to the Netherlands that it would be amusing to see what the Indonesians thought of the Australian proposals. Fortunately for Australia, they were not made public; see ‘Tijdelijk zaakgelastigde te Canberra (De Ranitz)...30 juni 1947’, in Van der Wal, Drooglever and Schouten (eds.), \textit{Officiële bescheiden...}, Vol.9, p.544.}
\item[\textsuperscript{41}]\textit{NAA: A1838/283, 378/15/3.}
\item[\textsuperscript{42}]\textit{Gunn, \textit{Timor Lorosae...}, pp.235-237.}
\item[\textsuperscript{43}]\textit{Lt. gouverneur-generaal (Van Mook) aan ministerie van overzeese gebiedsdelen, 16 sept. 1945’, in Van der Wal (ed.), \textit{Officiële bescheiden...}, Vol.1, pp.108-110.}
\item[\textsuperscript{44}]\textit{NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/973.}
\item[\textsuperscript{45}]\textit{These included the killings of Sergeants Herle and Witham, and the massacre of twenty-four Allied servicemen (found buried at Buak), mentioned in Chapter Four; see \textit{NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.}}
\end{itemize}
of ‘natives’ and this was ‘often unreliable’. Investigations in Timor resulted in only a few war crimes charges being brought against the Japanese by the Australians. The cases that did proceed concerned the maltreatment of Australian PoWs and the killings of two Allied servicemen: the Australian Armstrong and the English gunner Martin. The cases were heard during the only war trials held on Australian soil, convened in Darwin in March and April 1946. The court heard that while the Japanese practised various tortures on the Australian PoWs on Timor, their approach could be considered lenient compared to the atrocities perpetrated in Japanese camps elsewhere. A number of the Japanese accused were acquitted and the remainder received light sentences. In the case concerning the killings, Lieutenant-Colonel Yutani Yujiro was found guilty of ordering the executions of Armstrong and Martin and was shot in August 1946.

Following the withdrawal of the Australians the Dutch continued with investigations into war crimes and cases of collaboration with the enemy. The large number of cases to be investigated meant that they threatened to drag on for some time. In February 1947 there were 127 Japanese being held in Timor for trial, but only nine cases were then ready to proceed. In June 1947 the numbers were added to when a group of Japanese accused were brought to Kupang from Java. The long wait for justice to be carried out must have been telling on the Japanese. In August 1947 five Japanese prisoners working at the Penfui airfield decided to escape. One was recaptured soon after and three others were shot dead while on the run in the Kupang district. The fifth man, Yoshimitu Sato, made it through to Portuguese Timor on a local sailing vessel, but was ship-wrecked, caught by ‘natives’ and placed in custody. While in Dili he unsuccessfully attempted suicide, both by slashing his wrists and hanging himself. He was returned to Kupang by the Portuguese military. Resident Schuller regretted that ‘an unpleasant and painful spectacle’ was witnessed by the

46 NAA: AWM54, 571A/4/3.
50 Schuller, ‘Politieke verslag van den Resident van Timor en onderhoorigheden over de maand Juni 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
Portuguese at the time of the handover as the handcuffed prisoner was given ‘completely superfluous punches and blows’ by the Netherlands Military Police.\(^{51}\)

Early the following year Schuller aided the Portuguese by acting as go-between to bring the Japanese Kato Kazusada from Makassar to Dili, where he was to face trial.\(^{52}\) In the meantime the trials in Kupang proceeded and a number of Japanese were sentenced to death. Others received sentences ranging from one to twenty years imprisonment.\(^{53}\)

The outcomes of a number of high profile collaboration cases were eagerly awaited by the people. On one day in October 1946 the death sentence was announced in two notorious cases: that of Raja Lio, Pius Rasi Wangge, of Flores, who was found guilty of inciting opposition and collaboration in May 1942, and Rufus Takoe, the hated Kenpeitai agent of Kupang. The people of Flores and Kupang were said to be reassured and satisfied by the verdicts.\(^{54}\) Takoe was executed on 6 February 1947 and Raja Lio two months later.\(^{55}\) On 6 March 1947 TaEl TaEk, ‘the notorious war criminal from Atambua’, was sentenced to death in Kupang,\(^{56}\) and in January 1948 a certain Balitoni was sentenced to twenty years detention. Throughout 1948 a number of other collaborators were found guilty and received sentences ranging from a few months to five years. The Portuguese remained helpful also; on 15 May 1948 the


\[^{52}\] Schuller, ‘Politiiek verslag. Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden. Maand: Januari/Maart 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...

\[^{53}\] See Resident’s reports for September 1947, and February and April 1948, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259..., and Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...

\[^{54}\] Schuller, ‘Verslag van der Residentie van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over October 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...

\[^{55}\] Schuller, ‘Verslag...Februari 1947’, and ‘Verslag van de Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand April 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...

\[^{56}\] Schuller, ‘Verslag van der Residentie van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over Maart 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
‘long sought for criminal and collaborator’, Elias Balo, who had been arrested in Portuguese Timor, was handed over to Dutch authorities.57

Those who held high profile positions under the Japanese were bound to come under suspicion and were easy targets for accusations of collaboration. Such was the case with H. A. Koroh and I. H. Doko. In his capacity as Raja of Amarasi, Koroh had many dealings with the Japanese, while Doko, as head of both the Information Department and the Seinendan, was well known in West Timor and was considered to be the Japanese administration’s ‘chief propagandist’.58 The political enemies of Koroh and Doko levelled many accusations against the two, especially after March 1946 when they became leading figures in a new ‘progressive’ political organisation in West Timor, the Persatuan Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI; Indonesian Democratic Union), discussed further below.

**Displaced persons, Javanese soldiers and police, and Timorese revolutionaries**

During the war the Japanese mobilised thousands of Indonesians to work as *romusha* and Heiho. Large numbers of Javanese, Ambonese and Timorese impressed labourers were found spread throughout the Timor region after the war.59 Nearly 400 Javanese Heiho were discovered in Lautem, East Timor and removed to Kupang.60 Another 419 Javanese Heiho were taken from Flores and placed in Baun awaiting removal to Java.61 In October 1946 there were an estimated 1,500 Javanese and Sumatran displaced persons (generally referred to in Dutch reports as ‘dips’) in Kupang, Maumere, Bima and Waingapu.62 One hundred and fifty of the Javanese Heiho were said to have been trained as soldiers, but most were labourers.63 The ex-Heiho were acknowledged as war victims who had been brought to the region against their will. Many of them, however, supported the Republic and were considered to be anti-Dutch. It was regarded as ‘very desirable’ for them to be returned to their places.

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57 See Resident’s reports for January, February, April and May 1948, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260*...
59 *NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.*
60 *...Harding (RAN), 5 November 1945*, in *NAA: MP1049/5, 1968/2/604.*
61 *NAA: A1838/278, 401/3/6/1/7.*
62 Schuller, ‘Verslag...October 1946’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259*...
63 *NAA: A1838/2, TS400/1/9/1/1.*
of origin as soon as possible. Unfortunately, there was no shipping available for the purpose.\footnote{Schuller, ‘Verslag...October 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...}

In Kupang the Javanese ‘dips’ were watched closely by the police. Some were arrested on firearms charges and others were thought to be behind a plan to sabotage vehicles from the government motor pool.\footnote{Schuller, ‘Politieke verslag van de Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de eerste helft van October 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...} Some of the Javanese had worked as government drivers and had been involved in strikes. It was anticipated that with their removal such actions would cease. In December 1946 Resident Schuller reported with great satisfaction that the last of the ‘dips’ had been removed from the Residency and wished them ‘good riddance’.\footnote{J. D. N. Versluys, ‘Politieke verslag van de Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de tweede helft van de maand December 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...} Nevertheless, problems continued to occur in the government motor pool in Kupang. In February 1947 Schuller reported that ‘unmistakable sabotage’ was often undertaken on government vehicles.\footnote{Schuller, ‘Verslag...Februari 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...} If the Javanese ‘dips’ were not responsible there were obviously some local people involved also. Their activities, however, do not appear to have been extensive.

Some Indonesian prisoners being held in Kupang made a modest contribution to the independence struggle. It was reported in early 1948 that the prisoners were placed in work gangs and each day as they passed the dwellings of police personnel they would sing the Republican anthem, Indonesia Raya, at the top of their voices. It was believed that this ‘movement’ was led by some Javanese or Timorese who had recently returned to Kupang from Java. Because of inadequate prison accommodation the prisoners had far greater contact with the outside world than would have been normal. The guards were considered to be of inferior quality also and too lax in controlling their charges. The police did not know how to deal with this ‘provocation’.\footnote{Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag over de eerste helft van de maand Mei 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...} This, however, seems to have been the limit of the prisoners’ activities and there were no reports of more drastic actions undertaken by them in the name of the Republic.
While the Javanese ‘dips’ and some other Javanese in Timor were seen as pro-Republican, there were also many Javanese in Dutch employ in the army and police. Residentie Secretaris Dr. J. D. N. Versluys reported in January 1947 that because of the conflict in Java between the Republic and the Dutch the Javanese in Timor were no longer trusted by their colleagues.  

In the same month twenty-four Javanese soldiers based in Kupang sought discharge from the KNIL. In March it was reported that forty-six Javanese police had requested transfer back to Java. Although the Javanese police had served in the Timor region for years it was said that they were viewed suspiciously by the local population. Versluys believed that many Timorese had a vague fear of Javanese domination. There was a fear also that if the Republic proved a success Islam would take a commanding position in Indonesia. In view of this a number of pastors and pendetas were emboldened to enter the world of politics. On the other hand, nationalists such as Doko give the impression that the Timorese and their rajas gave full support to the Republic and totally opposed the Dutch. This fits in well with the reigning nationalist ideology in Indonesia which idealises the revolution as a period when the whole nation came together to crush the foreign oppressors. Yet Doko and his colleagues always cooperated with the Dutch and the conservative elements in Timor openly expressed their fears of the Republic and the Javanese. There is too little information available to know what the majority of Timorese thought of the Javanese at the time, but it would be naive to think that regional, ethnic and religious differences did not play a role.

Javanese soldiers and police may have been ‘suspect’ to some Timorese, but the ‘loyal’ elements of the KNIL did not always inspire confidence either. A number of Ambonese soldiers in Kupang were reported to have behaved in an arrogant and ‘undisciplined’ manner. On 10 December 1946 the soldiers attacked Inspector de Winter and other police during a football match at Bakunase. As a result they lost the
respect not only of the police, but also that of the ‘generally loyal people of Kupang’. The extent to which the people of Kupang were indeed ‘loyal’ to the Dutch is debatable. The members of the nationalist movement in Timor were mainly civil servants. While many supported the Republic they usually adopted a ‘co-operative’ approach with the Dutch authorities and hoped to achieve a political solution. Among the youth there were some who had a more confrontational attitude.

In June 1946 Resident Schuller reported that he had received ‘a rather rude letter’ from some Rotenese and Sabunese youth associated with the PDI making certain demands and threatening a strike of all government employees. The youths had recently returned from Surabaya where they had been influenced by some ‘radical ideas’. They were soon pulled into line by their elders in the PDI and wrote to the Resident requesting him to ignore the original threat.

The PDI youth were led by Max Rihi. With the support of Tom Pello he organised a group known as Pemuda 17 (Youth 17, named in honour of the 17 August declaration of independence). The members included Jos Sine, Adi Pello, M. Saba, M. M. FoEh, Arif Kiah, Asba Salean and Andreas Yohannes. The Pemuda 17 gathered jerry cans and bottles of petrol with the intention of burning down the NICA camp in Bakunase. Houses, offices and warehouses were set to go up in flames. When Doko heard of the plan he tried to dissuade the youths. He argued that the Dutch were too strong. They were well armed while the youths had no weapons at all. There were bound to be many victims. And if the warehouses were burnt down the people would miss out on the much needed supplies of food and clothing being held there. It would also give the Dutch an excuse to clamp down on the nationalists and end any chance they had to have any input into the independence struggle. Doko’s arguments did not please the youths. Finally, it was Raja Amarasi who convinced the youths and Tom Pello to abandon their revolutionary scheme. The PDI then carried on with its political program.

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74 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag van den Resident van Timor en onderhoorigheden over de eerste helft van de maand December 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...

75 Schuller, ‘Verslag van den Conica Timor over de tweede helft van Juni 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...

76 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., pp.94-96, and Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000. In February 1949 the Dutch had a scare when ‘a great amount of explosives’ was seized from a Namosain, Kupang man, La ‘Adji. An undercover agent bought ‘a manufactured bomb’ from La ‘Adji and it was later discovered that he had a large amount of dynamite, wicks and other material. He claimed the materials were intended for use in fishing. The Dutch apparently believed this story as there were no follow up
The Pemuda 17 may have been dissuaded from extending the physical revolution into Timor, but it did not mean that no Timorese took part in the armed independence struggle. According to a Dutch assessment from 1949 there were two main groups of non-Javanese Indonesians involved in underground independence activities in Java. These groups were: A. Sundanese; and B. Other non-Javanese, with Ambonese, Manadonese and Timorese as important groups. Group B was said to be much smaller than group A, but was ‘much more dangerous because most of them are members of very warlike organisations, such as Kris, Grisk, etc’.77

The peoples of Ambon, Manado and Timor were considered among the most ‘loyal’ of Dutch subjects in Indonesia. Many Timorese were in the KNIL and were based in Java. Other Timorese often travelled to western Indonesia to seek work and education opportunities. Numerous Timorese were stranded in Java and Sumatra because of the Second World War and remained there for the duration of the revolution as well. Many Timorese soldiers remained ‘loyal’ to the Dutch, but others helped establish armed units to fight the colonialists and prevent them re-establishing their authority. At the beginning of the revolution in Java a number of young men from eastern Indonesia combined themselves into the Lasykar Sunda-Ketjil (Soldiers of the Lesser Sundas). The group later became known as Batallyon Paradja (Paradja Battalion)78 of the TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia; Indonesian National Army).

Among those who served with the battalion were Daud Kellah, M. A. Amos Pah, Frans Seda and El Tari.79 Ex-Heihos played an important role also. H. Laban had served as a Heiho in Burma and was returned to north Sumatra at the end of the war. There he became a member of the Republican armed forces and joined with a number of colleagues from the Timor region, such as Soleiman Bessie, Jacob Frans and Jusuf FanggidaE. Together with Indonesians from elsewhere in the archipelago, Laban remained active against the Dutch in north Sumatra throughout the revolution.

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77. Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor Archipel over de maand Maart 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260... ‘Dynamiting’ fish is still a common and destructive practice in much of Indonesia, including Timor.


79. Named in honour of one of the Sabunese mutineers on De Zeven Provincien mentioned in Chapter Three.

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Other Timorese were involved in fighting to defend the Republic in Kalimantan and Sulawesi also.\(^{80}\)

A number of Timorese were involved in non-combatant roles. Mrs. J. B. Tarigah worked in Yogyakarta preparing food, ammunition, clothing and other necessities for the use of revolutionary soldiers at the front line. She worked also in the Komisariat Sunda-Ketjil (Lesser Sundas Headquarters) under the leadership of A. S. Pello. This body attempted to help the people of the Lesser Sundas living in Republican areas of Java in matters such as education, work and caring for widows and orphans.\(^{81}\) Dr. W. Z. Johannes, the first medical doctor from the Timor region, worked in a hospital in Jakarta, but refused to help the Dutch. Instead he was active in organising people from eastern Indonesia to fight for the Republic. After independence the main hospital in Kupang was named after him and later a British battleship purchased by the Indonesian Navy was re-named in his honour.\(^{82}\) Engineer Herman Johannes, a cousin of the doctor, is remembered for helping in the revolution as a soldier and through his skill in making bombs.\(^{83}\) In Yogyakarta he was head of the Gerakan Rakyat Indonesia Sunda-Ketjil (GRISK; Lesser Sundas Indonesian People’s Movement). Although GRISK was described in a Dutch report, quoted above, as a ‘very warlike organisation’, Doko has stressed GRISK’s role in promoting the political message of the Republic.\(^{84}\)

**The re-emergence of political life in West Timor**

When the Dutch returned to take control of Indonesia in late 1945 they naturally enough denied the validity of the Republican government. Nevertheless, the reality of Republican authority, especially in Java and Sumatra, made it impossible for the Dutch to pretend that they could return to the state of affairs that had existed before the war. Instead, they announced that they desired independence for the islands, meaning, however, that Indonesia would become a partner in a reconstructed Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Dutch plan took shape with the notion of a United States of Indonesia. The Republic was unlikely to simply disappear so the Dutch

\(^{80}\) Doko, *Nusa Tenggara Timur*..., pp.61-63.


\(^{82}\) Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000.

\(^{83}\) Yohannes, interviews SoE, 26 June and 7 November 2000.

\(^{84}\) Doko, *Nusa Tenggara Timur*..., p.59.
sought to ‘counter-balance’ it with a number of other states as parts of a federation. While the Republic demanded full independence for all Indonesia, the Dutch hoped that their ‘loyal’ subjects in the less politicised outer islands would opt for a continued relationship with the Netherlands. This would put the Dutch in a stronger position when it became necessary to negotiate with the Republic. West Timor’s part in the plan was as a component of a new state comprising much of eastern Indonesia.\(^85\)

To realise their plans the Dutch needed the co-operation of local political activists. As many of the politically aware individuals of eastern Indonesia had been involved in the Japanese administration, it was necessary to ‘rehabilitate’ them and free them of the stigma of collaboration. Doko, for example, was suspended from government employ for a short time because of his work with the Japanese, but as he was said to have given ‘help to loyalists’ and ‘quietly sabotaged the Japanese youth unions’, he was ‘publicly rehabilitated’ and allowed to continue his activities without further official censure.\(^86\) Resident Schuller seems to have had no dispute with Doko’s ‘rehabilitation’. He described him as a ‘very capable man’, although ‘controversial’. He seems to have accepted Doko’s assertion that he was a nationalist, but had never been ‘pro-Japanese’.\(^87\)

Doko’s group, the Persatuan Demokrasi Indonesia (PDI), was a continuation of the pre-war Perserikatan Kebangsaan Timor. The new name was effective from 9 March 1946.\(^88\) Doko was chosen as chairman, with Tom Pello as deputy chairman and Ch. F. Ndaumanu as secretary. Raja Amarasi acted as adviser. The PDI Kupang branch was led by Raja Kupang, Alfonsus Nisnoni.\(^89\) Branches were opened in other parts of Timor and on Rote, Sabu, Sumba, Sumbawa and Flores. A youth wing, as mentioned

\(^{85}\) For more information on the Dutch federation plans, see the literature listed in the section Negara Indonesia Timur, below.


\(^{87}\) Ibid.

\(^{88}\) ‘Anggaran Dasar. Persatuan Demokrasi Indonesia Timor’, in Algemeen Secretarie Archief No.3259... The group later became known as Partai Demokrasi Indonesia.

\(^{89}\) Nicolaas Nisnoni died in 1952. He had abdicated in 1945 and was replaced as Raja Kupang by his son Alfonsus. Alfonsus’s brother Hans then became Raja Fatuleu.
above, was led by Max Rihi.\textsuperscript{90} An associated labour union, the Serikat Kaoem Boeroeh Indonesia (SKBI; Indonesian Labour Union), was under the ‘radical’ leadership of Sadu Oematan.\textsuperscript{91} While the Dutch were supportive of the creation of groups such as the PDI, political activists still faced close scrutiny. Police continued to attend meetings of political groups and there was a raft of laws which could be used to silence any strident critics of the government.\textsuperscript{92} Under these circumstances, politicians such as Doko had to be careful how they termed their observations and criticisms of the authorities. This resulted in a generally moderate and ‘co-operative’ approach. Schuller characterised the PDI as ‘progressive’, but he noted also that the organisation could be expected to give the government its ‘loyal co-operation’.\textsuperscript{93} The group did have ‘a small, but very active radical wing’ (presumably meaning the SKBI and the pemudas associated with Max Rihi and Tom Pello), but this was ‘kept in check by the executive’.\textsuperscript{94}

The main opposition to the PDI first went under the title Comite Timor (Timor Committee). In March 1946 the eleven member Comite, led by F. W. Macare and A. A. Caffin,\textsuperscript{95} organised a gathering in Kupang to express its members’ thanks for the return of Dutch authority. A telegram containing a declaration of loyalty was sent to Queen Wilhelmina.\textsuperscript{96} By early 1947 the Comite had been replaced by the umbrella group, Lima Serangkai (Five Allies), which consisted of the Democratische Bond van Indonesie (DBI; Democratic Association of Indonesia), the Perkoempoelan Selatan Daja (PSD; South-west [islands] Association),\textsuperscript{97} the Perkoempoelan

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{90} The youth wing appears to have been accommodated in the Persatoean Olah Raga Timor (Timor Sports Union), which the Dutch accepted was ‘exclusively a sports union where anybody can take part’; see ‘Politiek verslag van den Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de eerste helft van November 1946’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...
\item \textsuperscript{91} Doko, \textit{Nusa Tenggara Timur}..., p.91.
\item \textsuperscript{92} For example, it was reported that some trade unionists in eastern Indonesia used strong language and made fierce criticisms of the authorities, leaving them open to prosecution; see ‘Overzicht politiek ontwikkeling Oost-Indonesie over Maart 1948’, in P. J. Drooglever and M. J. B. Schouten (eds.), \textit{Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen 1945-1950}, Vol.13, p.384.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Schuller, ‘Verslag...Maart 1947’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...
\item \textsuperscript{95} R. Romer, ‘CCO-AMACAB. Intelligence & Loyaliteits onderzoek. Batavia Centrum. Onderwerp: Toelichting op het rapport inzake collaborateurs van Koepang’, 10 Mei 1946, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.1366. Stukken betreffende de personele, politionele en politieke situatie op Timor}.
\item \textsuperscript{97} An organisation with the same name had existed in Kupang in 1935. That group had been associated with the Timorsch Verbond, a political predecessor of the PDI.
\end{itemize}
Kebangsaan Maloekoe (PKM; Association of the Maluku Nation), the Persatoean Timoer Besar (PTB; Great East Association), and the Indo-Europees Verbond (IEV; Indo-European Union). The DBI, PSD and PKM were closely linked; N. Loimalitna, A. A. Caffin, W. D. Frans and S. M. Sapija were executive members in the Kupang branches of more than one of these organisations. With the exception of the PSD, the component groups of the Lima Serangkai originated from outside Timor, having their headquarters in either Ambon or Jakarta.98

The Lima Serangkai’s members, like those of the PDI, were ‘loyal’ and ‘co-operative’, but far more conservative. While the PDI aimed to co-operate with the Dutch to achieve eventual Indonesian independence, the Lima Serangkai wanted to see the return of full Dutch authority.99 This was particularly true of the PTB, an organisation of active and retired Manadonese, Ambonese and Timorese KNIL soldiers. Nevertheless, Schuller thought that the PDI and many members of the Lima Serangkai were not so apart politically.100 In common with the PDI, the majority of members were schoolteachers or other government employees. There was, however, strong animosity from the Lima Serangkai for certain figures in the PDI, especially I. H. Doko, Max Rihi and Ch. Pandy.101 Schuller regretted that members of the ‘Lima Serangkai often make the mistake of letting their remarks have too much of a personal tint’. As a result, it was considered necessary to give them an official warning not to ‘cross over the border of political decency’.102

**Negara Indonesia Timur**

Much of the struggle between the PDI and the Lima Serangkai took place on the ground in West Timor, but both parties were also very active in the new federal state for eastern Indonesia, Negara Indonesia Timur (NIT; State of East Indonesia).103 The

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98 ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft van November 1946’, and Schuller, ‘Verslag...Februari 1947’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259*...
100 Schuller, ‘Verslag...Maart 1947’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259*...
101 ‘Politiek verslag....eerste helft van November 1946’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259*...
102 Schuller, ‘Politieke economisch verslag over de maand December 1947’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260*...
103 It is beyond the scope of this study to give a comprehensive account of the NIT, the other federal states created by the Dutch, or the negotiations between the Dutch and the Republic. Some of the
first step in the formation of the federal states was a conference of local leaders from
eastern Indonesia held at Malino, South Sulawesi, in July 1946. According to Doko,
the PDI was asked to nominate the delegate for Timor. Tom Pello, the PDI’s leading
‘non-co-operator’ with the Dutch, opposed sending any representative, as the
Republic would not be taking part. Doko, however, managed to convince his
colleagues that they must nominate somebody from the PDI, otherwise the Dutch
would send a representative from one of the conservative parties, who would be sure
to claim that ‘The Timorese will remain loyal to the Dutch forever’. Finally, Raja
Amarasi, H. A. Koroh, was appointed as delegate and left for Malino accompanied
by Doko as his adviser.104

The thirty-nine Indonesian delegates at the conference agreed in principle to form
two new states; one in Kalimantan and one consisting of all the islands of the
archipelago from Bali eastwards.105 Many of the delegates were perceived as
conservative and pro-Dutch, but in an official publication concerning the conference
it was stated that the Timor delegation belonged to the ‘left-wing’.106 In his
conference address Koroh argued that the Indonesian people had rejected Dutch
proposals for the future of their country. Dutch attempts to re-establish their authority
had resulted in murder and destruction. Timor, he said, recognised Indonesia’s right
to self-determination and this should be given immediately.107 At the close of the
conference the delegates agreed to meet again within a short period of time to
finalise the matters already discussed.

relevant literature includes: Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, Dari Negara Indonesia Timur ke Republik
Indonesia Serikat (also available in translation as From the formation of the State of East Indonesia to
the establishment of the United States of Indonesia); Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur...; Nasution, Sekitar
perang kemerdekaan, Jilid 3 and Jilid 4; Anthony Reid, The Indonesian national revolution 1945-
1950; A. Arthur Schiller, The formation of federal Indonesia: 1945-1949; and Yong Mun Cheong, H.
J. van Mook and Indonesian independence: A study of his role in Dutch-Indonesian relations, 1945-
1948. The issues are also discussed in some detail in more general works, such as Ricklefs, A history
of modern Indonesia..., pp.200-221.
104 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.96.
105 Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., p.212.
106 W. A. van Goudoever, Malino maakt historie: een overzichtelijke bewerking van notulen en
107 “Kort verslag van de vergadering van de Malino-conferentie op 18 Juli 1948”, in S. L. van der Wal
(ed.), Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen 1945-1950, Vol.5,
pp.18-24.
When Koroh returned to Kupang he was asked to attend a meeting of rajas in SoE. He was warned to be careful as the rajas of the interior were totally opposed to what he had said at Malino. With great drama Doko reports that Koroh left for SoE carrying a loaded pistol. The meeting was chaired by Resident Schuller. Koroh made a speech to the rajas explaining what he had said at Malino and finished by saying that in doing so he had tried to express the aspirations of the Timorese people. Schuller then gave the other rajas the right of reply. The first opportunity was given to Raja Molo, Toea SonbaE.\textsuperscript{108} Fobia says that Controleur W. H. G. Reijntjes had for several days before the meeting tried to convince SonbaE to reject Koroh’s position at Malino. As a descendant of Keizer Sonbai, Toea SonbaE had great influence. If he rejected what Koroh had said it was hoped the other rajas would follow suit. However, when Schuller asked SonbaE what he thought of Koroh’s speech he did not receive the answer he expected. In a clear voice Toea SonbaE exclaimed that all the rajas agreed with Raja Amarasi. Schuller’s face turned white. He then asked the other rajas what they thought and with one voice they replied that they agreed with Raja Molo, they all supported Raja Amarasi. For the Dutch the meeting had gone horribly wrong. Looking confused and with a trembling lip Schuller declared the meeting closed. The Resident and controleurs then got into their vehicles and returned to their respective districts. The rajas were left stranded and had to find their own way home.\textsuperscript{109}

This meeting is not mentioned in the Dutch reports, perhaps because of the unfavourable outcome. It is notable, however, that the story, especially in Fobia’s version, paints Toea SonbaE as a great advocate of the Republic and enemy of the Dutch. In the pre-war period, however, SonbaE appears to have been happy enough to work with the Dutch to achieve his political aims. In Doko’s version, Koroh bravely goes to SoE armed with a pistol to face the hostile rajas of the interior. Yet it is implied throughout Doko’s work that the rajas were unanimously opposed to the Dutch. At the very least it would seem fair to say that this tale has been embroidered to some extent by both Doko and Fobia to present the main players in an heroic light and bolster their Republican credentials.

\textsuperscript{108} Doko, \textit{Nusa Tenggara Timur...}, pp.104-105.
\textsuperscript{109} Fobia, ‘Sonbai’, pp.117-119.
Following Malino a second conference was planned to take place in Denpasar, Bali. Timor would provide three representatives. On 21-22 October 1946 the Resident met with the rajas of Timor and Islands at Kefamenanu. A lack of shipping and radio contact meant that no representative from Sabu was in attendance. The rajas were organised into a Raad van Zelfbestuurders or Dewan Raja-raja (Council of Rajas). Raja Amarasi was elected chairman. Koroh, however, declined to act as representative to Denpasar. Pastor Gabriel Manek was chosen instead. Of the other representatives, one was chosen from an elected Timor Eiland Raad or Dewan Ra'jat (Timor Island Council or People’s Council), which acted as an advisory body to the Dewan Raja-raja, and the other was elected by the people of Kupang, ‘where the intellectuals live’. The choices were PDI members Pendeta Alex Rotti and I. H. Doko.

While the Dutch and east Indonesians were getting ready for the Denpasar conference the British were preparing to withdraw all their forces from Java and Sumatra. They insisted, however, that the Dutch make some agreement with the Republic beforehand. After much negotiation this was done at Linggajati, Java in November 1946. With the Linggajati agreement the Dutch recognised the de facto authority of the Republic in Java, Sumatra and Madura. Moreover, the two sides agreed to the creation of a federation consisting of the Republic, Kalimantan and the rest of eastern Indonesia, no later than 1 January 1949.

Tom Pello had considered the Malino conference a device to divide the Indonesian people. Not long after the conference, however, Pello died. The Republic had then begun negotiations with the Dutch which led to the Linggajati agreement. It was under these circumstances that the PDI altered its initial stance of *merdeka sekarang*

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110 Schuller, ‘Verslag...October 1946’, and ‘Politiek verslag....eerste helft van November 1946’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259*.
111 Schuller, ‘Verslag...October 1946’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259*... Those eligible to vote were *adat* heads and those who had completed five years of schooling. It was generally educated people who were chosen to sit in the Raad. In three districts Dutch *pastors* were elected as the people’s representatives; see Versluys, ‘Maatschappelijke vernieuwing...’; pp.136-137. The franchise was clearly quite limited. In May 1948 elections were held for a new NIT parliamentary representative for Kupang. Of the thousands who lived in the town, only about 400 were eligible electors; see Schuller, ‘Politiek veslag...eerste helft...Mei 1948’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260*.
113 Doko, *Nusa Tenggara Timur*..., pp.96, 103.
(independence now) to a more flexible position.\textsuperscript{114} It might have been expected that other nationalists outside the Republican areas would have found conditions more acceptable for negotiations with the Dutch also. Nevertheless, many pro-Republicans in Kalimantan refused to take part in the Denpasar conference. The December 1946 meeting was thus confined to discussing the establishment of a new state in eastern Indonesia.\textsuperscript{115} The delegates were disappointed when informed that Dutch New Guinea would remain under Dutch control and not be part of the new entity. Nevertheless, they agreed to formalise the new state, which they called Negara Indonesia Timur, and elected a president and cabinet. Doko, Manek and Rotti became members of the NIT parliament. The new state’s Indonesian detractors claimed that NIT really stood for \textit{Negara Ikut Tuan}; the Follow the Master State. Some of the Dutch did not have much confidence in the NIT either and stated that its initials stood for \textit{Niets Is Te gek}; Nothing Is Too Insane.\textsuperscript{116}

In January 1947 NIT President Tjokorde Gde Rake Soekawati made a visit to Kupang and met with a number of interest groups. In response to questions from some PDI members Soekawati explained that the transfer of power from the Netherlands Indies government to the NIT would be a gradual affair.\textsuperscript{117} This was a controversial issue. Many people had assumed that with the creation of the NIT Dutch officials would be replaced by Indonesians. This did occur in many minor and mid-ranking positions, but the majority of senior positions, such as resident and department head, remained in Dutch hands. Even though they sometimes changed their titles and were theoretically now under the authority of the NIT government, many Dutch civil servants behaved as if they were still operating under a colonial system and looked at issues from the perspective of Dutch interests, rather than those of the people of the NIT.\textsuperscript{118} According to Doko, this reactionary attitude was reflected in the behaviour of Resident Schuller.\textsuperscript{119} Schuller, however, was in an unenviable position. Under NIT regulations there was a decentralisation of authority.

\textsuperscript{114} Schuller, ‘Politieke verslag...eerste helft van October 1946’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...
\textsuperscript{115} W. A. van Goudoever, \textit{Denpasar bouwt een huis: een overzichtelijke bewerking van notulen en tekstueele redevoeringen ter conferentie van Denpasar, 7-24 December 1946}, p.3.
\textsuperscript{116} Yong Mun Cheong, \textit{H. J. van Mook...}, p.160.
\textsuperscript{117} Versluys, ‘Verslag...Januari 1947’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...
\textsuperscript{118} Anak Agung, \textit{Dari Negara Indonesia Timur...}, p.189.
\textsuperscript{119} Doko, \textit{Nusa Tenggara Timur...}, pp.144-147.
The rajas were given greater powers in their kingdoms and the Dewan Raja-raja for each district had far greater autonomy than had existed with similar bodies before the war. According to an Australian report this extension of power at the local level meant that many Dutch officials became mere advisers. The Australian conclusion was an exaggeration. There is no doubt that the Dutch held considerable power in the NIT, but it is true that they were placed in an ambiguous position. In May 1947 the Australian consul to Dili reported that he had visited West Timor following an invitation from the Resident. Schuller told the consul that he was not happy with the situation where he was the representative of the Dutch government, but also an adviser to the Indonesians. He had to carry out the orders of the NIT government in Makassar and the Netherlands Indies government in Jakarta. He stated that he would be glad when it was time for him to leave. The consul heard similar complaints from other Dutch officials.

Many outsiders were cynical about the NIT and considered it to be a wholly Dutch creation. Dutch representatives in Canberra were not amused when the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Dr. Herbert V. Evatt, and his departmental secretary, Dr. Burton, referred to the NIT as a ‘puppet state’ and Dutch New Guinea as ‘Devil’s Island’. Despite the sarcasm of the Australians, and other Indonesians, Doko and his PDI colleagues seem to have been genuine in their claims that they viewed the NIT as a stepping stone to full Indonesian independence. At Malino Koroh clearly stated that Indonesia should be given the right to self-determination immediately. In an official publication concerning the Denpasar conference Doko was described as ‘a strong advocate of Indonesian unity’. Furthermore, the Timor delegates were said to be part of a ‘radical group’ that wished to abolish the rajas’ contracts with the Dutch Crown. Doko told the conference that the oath of loyalty to the Queen was too restricting and it was precisely because of that oath that Raja Amarasi had declined to attend. Pastor Manek made the same point. Koroh later underlined the fact that he did not wish to have any obligations to the Dutch when he attended a meeting of

120 NAA: A4355/3, 16/1/2.
121 NAA: A1838/2, TS400/1/9/1/1.
123 Van Goudoever, Denpasar..., pp.48, 54.
eighteen NIT traditional rulers in May 1948. At the meeting the majority of rajas stated that they wanted to maintain a relationship with the Crown, but Koroh stood alongside the rajas of Jembrana, Buleleng and Tabukan to assert that he saw no value in maintaining any sort of bond with the Dutch Crown.125

Statements such as these did not endear Koroh or the PDI to the Lima Serangkai, but their disenchantment with the Raja and his colleagues was nothing new. When reporting on the establishment of the PDI, Schuller had opined that the organisation appeared to be ‘on the right track’ as it had the support of some ‘very high standing people’, such as Raja Amarasi and Dr. Gabelar.126 Raja Kupang, Raja Amarasi and Dr. Gabelar were singled out by the Australians soon after the re-occupation of West Timor as examples of local identities who had remained ‘loyal’ during the Japanese occupation.127 The Australians and Schuller might have been impressed with the three community leaders, but the Lima Serangkai were not. They used allegations of wartime collaboration with the enemy to tarnish the reputations of all three men, and those of others associated with the PDI also. In May 1946 PDI members were accused of being hypocritical opportunists who had swapped their wartime slogan of _Banzai Nippon!_ (Long live Japan!) for _Leve de Koningin!_ (Long live the Queen!) upon the return of the Dutch. It was claimed that Doko had been very active in the war inciting hatred against the Allies. Tom Pello, who had worked as an agricultural adviser, was accused of seizing the people’s food stocks to hand over to the Japanese; while others were starving, Pello and his cronies were always well fed. Benyamin Sahetapy Engel, a PDI executive member who had worked as a teacher during the war, was said to have organised schoolchildren to bayonet images of Roosevelt and Churchill at a mass meeting in 1944. And Dr. Gabelar was accused of only tending to the Japanese and leaving sick Timorese to look after themselves.128 After the war, said Gabelar’s accusers, the doctor pressured his patients to join the PDI. Pendeta Rotti was accused of spending more time on PDI business than for his

127 NAA: MP742/1, 336/1/1876.
128 Sahetapy Engel totally rejects the allegations regarding himself and Gabelar. He maintains that Gabelar was always available to give treatment to whoever needed it. In relation to the bayonetting story he claimed to have never heard it before and thought it very funny, but totally untrue. Sahetapy Engel, interview Kupang, 2 November 2000.
congregation. The Dutch Pendeta E. Durkstra, a PDI adviser, was said to behave in a similar fashion. It was demanded that Doko and his colleagues be put on trial and that Gabelar, Rotti and Durkstra be removed from Timor immediately.\textsuperscript{129}

None of these accusations had any effect, but it did not stop the Lima Serangkai. At a public meeting organised by the group in August 1947 Raja Kupang was accused of organising spies for the Japanese during the war. Furthermore, both he and his father were accused of being racists who hated all Chinese, Sabunese and Rotenese.\textsuperscript{130} This last accusation seems ironic as the PDI had many Sabunese and Rotenese members. Throughout 1947 and 1948 the Lima Serangkai held numerous public meetings in Kupang where criticism of the behaviour and statements of the PDI parliamentary members was a regular feature. The Republic was a regular target also. At one meeting a PTB representative claimed that ‘The power holders of the Republic love only themselves and call for 100% independence so that they can retain their rich jobs at the cost of the people who are left in poverty’.\textsuperscript{131}

Linggajati was not well received by the Lima Serangkai, but they drew some hope from Article 3 of the agreement. This article allowed for the member regions of the United States of Indonesia to apply for a ‘special relationship’ with the Netherlands Crown. An Ambonese group similar to the Lima Serangkai, the Gaboengan Sembilan Serangkai (Federation of Nine Allies), had queried if this article meant that South Maluku could withdraw from the NIT and become a region directly under the Dutch Crown. In April 1947 Resident Schuller passed on to his superiors a similar query from the Lima Serangkai in relation to Timor. They received the same answer that had been given to the Ambonese: the region was too small to stand alone; instead it should stay working within the NIT to achieve its ideals. Moreover, the rules drawn up at Denpasar were binding and all the regions of the NIT would remain part of it until such time that the United States of Indonesia was established. If at that time the

\textsuperscript{129} ‘Ministerie van overzeesche gebiedsdeelen...’; Romer, ‘Intelligence...’; ‘Collaborateurs di Koepang’; and ‘Rapport van de heer R. Joostenz’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.1366}. Gabelar, a Dutch-Indonesian, and the Dutchman Durkstra were seen as ‘traitors’ by their pro-Dutch opponents. Rotti, on the other hand, was an Indonesian from the Minahasa region of North Sulawesi, but was seen as a ‘traitor’ also because he had a Dutch wife.

\textsuperscript{130} Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag van den Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de eerste helft van Augustus 1947’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...

\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Ibid.}
Union as a whole rejected a state connection (rijkverband) with the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Article 3 could be applied.\(^{132}\)

The Lima Serangkai appears to have gradually accepted this advice and changed its rhetoric to ‘co-operation with the Netherlands on the basis of Linggajati’.\(^{133}\) The group’s opposition to Timor’s inclusion in the NIT seems to have been mollified once the possibility was raised of it having an appointed member in the parliament. At a Lima Serangkai rally in September 1947, P. Hendriksz urged that all Timorese ‘unanimously support the East Indonesian government’.\(^{134}\) Not long after, Hendriksz himself was appointed a seat in the NIT parliament.\(^{135}\)

Despite the apparent shift in stance of the Lima Serangkai, the PTB stuck to its old position. In May 1947 the PTB wrote to Queen Wilhelmina seeking a separate union with the Netherlands for the people of Maluku, Minahasa and Timor.\(^{136}\) Attempts were made to unite the anti-Republican movements of the three areas, but they apparently had their own agendas and could not co-operate.\(^{137}\) The ‘separatist movement’ in Timor was said not to have the idealistic aims of that in Ambon, but instead had a ‘more materialist tendency’. By January 1949 the movement in the NIT was being described as ‘very weak’.\(^{138}\) By June 1949 the ‘separatist movement’ in Timor was said hardly to exist, while the PTB in its heartland of Ambon was said to get ‘only little response’.\(^{139}\) Dutch General Simon Spoor commented in January 1948 that the failure of the Netherlands to heed the wishes of the PTB meant that the

\(^{132}\) Schuller, ‘Politieke verslag van den Resident van Timor en onderhoorigheden over de eerste helft van April 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...

\(^{133}\) Schuller, ‘Verslag...Juli 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...

\(^{134}\) Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag van den Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand September 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...

\(^{135}\) Schuller, ‘Politiek Economisch verslag over de maand November 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...


soldiers would feel abandoned. This could have serious repercussions and damage the future United States of Indonesia. Spoor’s prediction proved to be correct, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

In the meantime, Rotti left the NIT parliament in mid-1947 to undertake a course of study in America. In his place was elected PDI member, J. S. Amalo. Doko was made political adviser to NIT President Soekawati around the same time and in December 1947 was appointed Junior Minister of Information by Prime Minister Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung. Under NIT regulations Doko’s elevation to the cabinet meant a replacement had to be found for his seat in parliament. After elections held in Kupang in May 1948 Benyamin Sahetapy Engel became the new member. Shortly afterwards he was elected new PDI chairman also. The PDI clearly dominated the seats for Timor in the NIT parliament, but the PDI was not necessarily as united as it appeared. In the parliament, for example, Doko and Rotti were to be found in different factions; Rotti as chairman of the Democrat Coalition and Doko as secretary of the National Faction. When Sahetapy Engel was elected to parliament he had to win votes from another PDI candidate, Mr. Messakh, who had been asked to withdraw his candidature, but refused and thus split the PDI vote. It was probably the same Mr. Messakh who joined E. R. Here Wila to attack Sahetapy Engel’s parliamentary performance at a PDI members’ meeting in April 1949. That there were such internal divisions and rivalries in a political party is nothing unusual, but in his memoirs, Doko makes no mention of internal divisions in the PDI (he claims the Timor delegates in the NIT parliament were all members of the

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141 Schuller, ‘Verslag...Juli 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
142 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.113; and A. J. van Es, ‘Politiek economisch verslag over de maand Januari 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
144 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...Mei 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
145 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor Archipel over de maand April 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
National Faction). It is understandable, however, that he would wish to present a picture of united resistance to the Dutch. The same is true of his treatment of the NIT, as he makes little mention of the accusations that the NIT was a Dutch ‘puppet’, but instead paints it as an effective body through which committed nationalists like himself were able to battle the Dutch in the political arena.

Doko must have been a competent politician because in January 1949 he left behind the junior ministry and became Minister for Information. Doko’s star continued to rise and he was re-appointed Information Minister in December 1949 and became Education Minister in the final days of the NIT in March 1950. By then the NIT parliament had travelled a rocky road. In July 1947 the Dutch launched what they called a ‘police action’ against the Republic. During this military operation the Dutch gained control of many Republican areas in Sumatra and Java. NIT President Soekawati and Prime Minister Nadjamoedin Daeng Malewa, however, expressed approval of the Dutch action. Nadjamoedin’s support of the Dutch was not popular in the parliament, but he was eventually dismissed in relation to a corruption scandal. A new cabinet was formed under S. J. Warrouw, but when he repeated Nadjamoedin’s statement of support for the Dutch ‘police action’ he lost the confidence of parliament. In the aftermath a new NIT cabinet was formed in December 1947, led by Anak Agung, and Doko received his first ministry. In Timor, in the meantime, the Dutch military action appears to have gone virtually unnoticed; at least it received no mention in the Resident’s reports. On the international scene, however, it was vastly different. Under considerable pressure from the UN the Dutch began new talks with the Republic. The result was a new agreement, signed aboard the American warship *Renville* in Jakarta Harbour in January 1948.

Following the *Renville* agreement the Dutch were left in control of many areas recently seized from the Republic. Throughout 1948 the Dutch busied themselves creating new states in Java, Madura, Kalimantan and Sumatra. Including the NIT, there were eventually fifteen states created under Dutch auspices which could be

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used to ‘counter-balance’ the Republic. The relationship between the Dutch, the Republic and the federal states grew increasingly tense. At the same time, however, there was a curious lessening of political activity from the two major political groups in West Timor. In October 1948 it was reported that there had been a general decrease in enthusiasm for political activities in Kupang. The main leaders of the PDI were pre-occupied with parliamentary matters in Makassar and thus unavailable for rallies and meetings. In a fashion reminiscent of the pre-war political scene in West Timor, the Lima Serangkai decreased its activities also.

The PDI and the Lima Serangkai, however, were not the only political voices to be heard in West Timor. In 1948 two other groups came to the fore: Persatoean Islam Timor (Persit; Timor Islamic Association) and Angkatan Pemoeda Indonesia (API; Indonesian Youth Generation). Persit was first noted by the Dutch in November 1946 when it had 180 members, the majority of whom were also members of the PDI. Its chairman was A. S. Sitta, a clerk in government employ. In May 1947 Persit celebrated its first anniversary with an open air meeting outside the mosque at Bikinoi. From the various speeches made Assistent Resident H. J. Koerts got the impression that Persit was a purely religious union that had a particular interest in education. In February 1948 Persit realised one of its aims and opened a madrasah (Islamic school) in Airmata, Kupang with three teachers newly arrived from Bima. In June it was reported that after the arrival of the Bimanese there had been a marked increase in political activity. Red and white trimmings had featured in a Persit religious procession and there were rumours of Islamic youth taking part in military drills on the outskirts of Kupang. In June 1948 the nationalist youth group API was established in Kupang also. Its chairman was I. Tiboeloedji, a Timorese who had recently returned after having gone to school in Java and been stranded by the war. Max Rihi of the PDI was on the API executive, along with some members of Persit. The Resident noted with foreboding that the group’s aim was the complete

152 For more on the creation of federal states in Indonesia, see Yong Mun Cheong, H. J. van Mook..., pp.133-164.
153 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor en onderhoorigheden over het tijdvak 16 t/m 30 October 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
154 ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft van November 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
155 H. J. Koerts, ‘Politiek verslag van de Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de eerste helft van Juni 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
156 Van Es, ‘Politiek Economisch verslag over de maand Februari 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
independence of Indonesia, but it did not state that it would attempt to achieve this with legal means. The acronym of the group (API; Fire) was considered ‘suggestive’. To advertise its arrival an API member working at the information office inserted a pro-Republican poem in the government news-sheet, alongside an illustration of a small fire. Schuller considered API’s members to be ‘extreme left oriented youth’. 157

In July 1948 Resident Schuller was replaced by A. Verhoef. Doko portrays Schuller as a reactionary colonialist who refused to co-operate with either the PDI or the NIT government. In contrast, Doko presents Verhoef as a ‘progressive’, co-operative figure.158 During Verhoef’s term of office, however, the pro-Republican groups in West Timor came under increased scrutiny. The Persit teachers, Mohammad Tajib and Mohammad Iljas, had been involved in a ‘rebellion’ in Sumbawa in 1946, for which both had spent time in prison. Tajib’s wife, Siti Hawa, also a teacher at the Airmata madrasah, was said to have had a ‘politically suspicious reputation’ in Bima. In August 1948 Verhoef reported that Persit and API had held a combined meeting at Airnona where it was proclaimed that ‘At 1 or 2 minutes past 12 o’clock 31 December 1948 the red and white flag will be raised everywhere’. 159 Verhoef ordered greater surveillance by the police and learnt that at the military drills said to be organised by Persit the men and youths wore a completely white uniform, but always with something red in the top left pocket; a red rag, pencil or fountain pen. The Resident heard from an ‘insider’ that the men had been exercising with wooden rifles and were preparing themselves in case merdeka was not achieved by 1 January 1949. The increased interest of the police did not go unnoticed; lookouts were posted whenever the group was conducting its exercises and it was reported that Muslim acquaintances of police personnel no longer greeted or associated with them. 160

At around the same time Amalo and Sahetapy Engel arrived in Kupang and gave talks on the latest developments in parliament. The two told their audiences that

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157 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag over de eerste helft van de maand Juni 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
158 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., pp.144-147.
159 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor en onderhoorigheden over de periode 16 t/m 31 Augustus 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
Indonesia was still scheduled to become an independent nation on 1 January 1949; this position was non-negotiable. Amalo, however, side-stepped the question of whether the NIT would agree to the formation of a United States of Indonesia without the participation of the Republic. That, he said, would be ‘a case for the government’. Verhoef reported growing tension in Kupang as the magic date drew near. It was around this time that Nisi KoEn, mentioned earlier, was arrested on Semau for inciting the people not to co-operate with their Raja or the government as they were now ‘mardeka’ (sic; merdeka, independent). There were many rumours and threats expressed over what would happen if full independence was not achieved by 1 January. Two KNIL soldiers, the Javanese Soekarno and Timorese Boengaradji, were investigated after reports that they had approached civilians about some unspecified events that would occur on that date. Boengaradji had reportedly said that whatever happened on 1 January, he had 4,000 men behind him to help. There were no follow up reports to these allegations. On a bridge in the Kupang Muslim village of Hoenbala a message was found written in chalk: ‘Basmilah pendjadahan B. Kalau ta’ merdeka hantjoerlah. Siapa akoe. T.N.I.’ (Eradicate Dutch colonialism. If there is no independence, smash them. Who am I. TNI). The author could not be traced. Much of the ‘pro-Republican propaganda’ was attributed to the ‘Bimanese’ and it was considered likely they received their instructions from Sumbawa. Verhoef thought that 1 January would be disappointing for many people in Timor as there would be no perceivable difference in the operation of government. Large scale disturbances were considered unlikely, but the police and army were put on ‘extra alert’.

Verhoef had been urged by Jakarta to take action against the Muslim youth associated with Persit. On 26 December Persit executive member Salija and Mohammad Iljas were arrested. Salija was released soon after, but Iljas was charged

161 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...16-30 September 1948’, and ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de periode 1 t/m 15 September 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
162 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...1-15 December 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
163 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...1 t/m 15 September 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
164 Ibid.
165 Ibid.
166 ‘Brief Regerings Secretaris aan de Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden te Koepang, 23 November 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
with incitement. Despite numerous allegations no witnesses were willing to testify against him and he was acquitted at his trial in January 1949. Doko claims that the PDI was to have been targeted also. Secret Dutch plans were discovered later, he says, which showed that the KNIL had proposed that Rajas Kupang and Amarasi be arrested before 31 December 1948, while E. R. Here Wila, head of the information office, and Th. Messakh, head of the Dewan Ra’jat, should be caught and murdered. There is no mention of these matters in the Resident’s reports, but it is understandable that plans to murder members of the civil service would not make their way into official correspondence.

Verhoef was able to report that there had been no disturbances anywhere in the Residency on 1 January. The earlier rumours had been enough, however, for many people in Airmata to move their valuables to the interior as they feared there would be fighting near their kampong. In other parts of Kupang people had made plans to flee the town if necessary. Verhoef, however, thought that for most people the political situation was too confusing for them to take a solid grasp of what was really going on. As a result ‘foolish stories’ were often believed to be true. One such story on Sabu was that the Dutch would leave Indonesia on 1 January and that from then on there would be no Dutch ships or aeroplanes. Verhoef learnt from the mate of a KPM (Koninklijk Paketvaart Maatschapij; Royal Packet Service Company) ship that the people of Sabu were ‘astonished’ when they saw the Dutch ship heading into their harbour after that date.

In the meantime, there were some important developments outside Timor. On 18 December 1948 the Dutch launched a sudden attack on the Republic. They had apparently supposed that with a second ‘police action’ they could crush the Republic once and for all. Republican territory, including the capital Yogyakarta, was seized and occupied. Most of the senior Republican leaders were captured and sent into exile. It was soon realised, however, that this was a hollow victory. The Indonesian

167 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de eerste helft Januari 1949’, and ‘Politieke verslag van de Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de 2de helft van Januari 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
168 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., pp.141-142.
169 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...1-15 December 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
170 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft Januari 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
people in the occupied territories would not co-operate with the Dutch and the TNI waged a guerilla campaign throughout the countryside. The capture of the Republican leaders and the determination showed by the TNI in its unequal war against the Dutch won the Republic a great deal of international sympathy. The UN increased its demands for a peaceful solution and the USA threatened to cut off reconstruction aid to the Netherlands, a move that could have crippled the Dutch domestic economy. A further blow to the Dutch was the resignation in protest by the governments of the federal states of Pasundan (West Java) and the NIT. This proved that it was possible for the federal states to act independently. It showed also that many Indonesians outside the Republic did not necessarily agree with Dutch policy. Pressure from the UN and the USA forced the Dutch to re-open a dialogue with the Republic. In July 1949 the Republican government was returned to Yogyakarta and it was agreed to hold a Round Table Conference in The Hague to finally establish the United States of Indonesia.

Despite the momentous events elsewhere, Resident Verhoef reported that there was a calm and peaceful atmosphere in West Timor throughout 1949. Persit had resolved to steer clear of political activities, but the group seemed to be losing popularity anyway. Verhoef reported that the ‘fanatical zeal’ that had been evident in the Muslim community had started to decline. In June, two of Persit’s main leaders, Mohammad Tajib and Siti Hawa, returned to Bima. API had suffered a similar decline. In July it was reported that there was no action from the group as some of its executive members had left Timor and not been replaced. The restoration of the Republican government to Yogyakarta in July was said to have aroused little interest. As part of the new openness it was advertised that the wearing of red and white at the celebrations for 17 August was totally lawful, yet Verhoef reported that it was striking how few people wore the colours. The celebrations themselves were

171 Yon Mun Cheong, H. J. van Mook..., p.197; and Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., pp.218-219.
172 Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., pp.219-221.
173 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft Januari 1949’, ‘Politiek verslag van de residentie Timor en onderhoorigheden tijdvak 2de helft Februari 1949’, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor Archipel over de maand Mei 1949’, and ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor Archipel over de maand Juni 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
174 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor Archipel over de maand Juli 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
175 Ibid.
said to have been of a ‘frankly sober character’, although they were more ‘animated’ in Kefamenanu, mainly due to the Javanese civil servant Winbadi, his wife, and a few other government employees. In contrast, the Queen’s birthday in April was reported to have been ‘celebrated everywhere with the usual festive receptions and sports festivals’. A number of people were honoured with decorations from the Dutch Crown at the same time.

In many respects life in West Timor seems to have carried on as normal, although there were some signs that change was afoot. In March the Residency took on the new name of Timor Archipel (Timor Archipelago; Flores, Sumba and Sumbawa became autonomous regions) and steps were taken to extend the process of decentralisation; a process that would result in more power residing with the rajas and the elected representatives in the Dewan Ra’jat. The numbers of police and army personnel stationed in Timor were decreased. Many Europeans living in West Timor left the area also.

Verhoef routinely reported that political developments outside Timor were followed by only ‘a limited circle of intellectuals’. These people took great interest in the negotiations taking place between the Republic and the Netherlands and listened closely to the radio speeches of NIT politicians, including one made by Minister Doko in February 1949. The NIT government had resigned following the second Dutch ‘police action’ in December, but a new Anak Agung cabinet, with Doko as Minister of Information, was installed on 12 January 1949. On 18 January Amalo and Sahetapy Engel gave a talk in Kupang about the events in parliament surrounding the ‘police action’. In March the Dewan Raja-raja issued a protest in relation to the efforts of the PTB to have Timor excised from the NIT and in May the rajas joined with the Dewan Ra’jat to issue a joint statement saying they opposed

176 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor Archipel over de maand Augustus 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
177 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...April 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
178 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Maart 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260... For more on the formation of the autonomous regions, see Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., pp.138-141.
179 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Juli 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
180 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor en onderhoorigheden over de 1ste helft Februari 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
181 Verhoef, ‘Politieke verslag...2de helft van Januari 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
PTB attempts to be part of any negotiations with the Dutch. In July and August public meetings organised by the government information office were held in Kupang and elsewhere in Timor to provide information about the latest political developments. The July meetings provided information about political, social and economic matters to about 18,000 people in eleven different locations. In August 1949 Here Wila, Sahetapy Engel and Amalo spoke to a Kupang audience of about 500 mainly young people for about three hours. They discussed the negotiations taking place between the Netherlands and Indonesia and matters to do with the NIT constitution, the budget and freedom of religion. In September it was reported that Doko had given a talk at a meeting organised by the information office and been heard by about 300 people. The size and frequency of these meetings seems to give the lie to the claim that the Timorese were not interested in politics.

In October 1949 Verhoef wrote his last report on Timor, as on 1 October the Residency was abolished. Throughout September authority was handed other to daerah (regional) administrations throughout the territory. On 28 September Verhoef surrendered the administration of Timor and Islands to a College van Gecommitteerden (College of Delegates; consisting of members of the Dewan Raja-raja and Dewan Ra’jat) headed by H. A. Koroh. The proceedings began with the singing of Indonesia Raya, but the Dutch anthem, Wilhelmus, failed to appear, which in Verhoef’s opinion ‘left a disagreeable impression’. The transfer of power was presided over by I. H. Doko as representative of the NIT government. Soon after this Verhoef left the island.

The Round Table Conference in The Hague ran from 23 August to 2 November 1949 and resulted in a transfer of sovereignty from the Dutch to a Republic of the United States of Indonesia (known in Indonesian as the Republik Indonesia Serikat; RIS) on 27 December 1949. The new entity was a federation comprising all of Indonesia with the exception of Dutch New Guinea. Within a short time, however, many of the

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182 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Maart 1949’, and ‘Politiek verslag...Mei 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
183 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Juli 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
184 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Augustus 1949’, and ‘Politiek verslag van de Residentie Timor Archipel over de maand September 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
185 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...September 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260... See also Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., pp.147-151.
smaller states dissolved themselves and merged into the Republic. This was a position favoured by many in the NIT also, but there was a residual countermovement that wanted to distance itself from the Republic and maintain binding ties with the Netherlands. The issue was resolved only after a period of violent conflict, which will be dealt with in the following chapter. Suffice it to say here that all the federal states had merged into the Republic by 17 August 1950. Indonesia then became a unitary state, five years after the original declaration of independence.

Trade unions and other social, religious and political groups

The PDI and the Lima Serangkai were at the forefront of political activities in West Timor during this period, but there were many other groups also, including a number of trade unions. One of the most left-oriented of these unions was the PDI affiliated SKBI led by Sadu Oematan. It seems likely that this was the same Sadu Oematan arrested in relation to the activities of the Sarekat Rajat in the mid-1920s, mentioned in Chapter Three. This seems even more likely in the light of a November 1946 report which lists the SKBI deputy chairman as one Ch. Pandy; a figure much maligned by the more conservative political groups in Kupang. It is probable that this was Christian Pandy, the communist leader of the Sarekat Rajat, who caused such a stir back in 1925. If it was this was his swan song, as the name Pandy did not appear in any further reports. 186 Nevertheless, the SKBI remained one of the more radical elements in the PDI and was instrumental in having a representative from the PDI sent to the second SOBSI congress in Java in 1947. 187

Despite earlier allegations of the Australian Army spreading communism in Timor, there appears to have been little PKI activity there in the late 1940s. In September 1948 the Resident wrote confidently: ‘There does not appear to be any communist activity in this Residency: although there are some old PKI members in Kupang, no activity is known of from their side’. 188 One person noted as being ‘suspected of communist sympathies’ was A. M. Kiah, the PDI representative sent to the 1947 SOBSI congress. In his report about the congress Kiah spoke of the oppression of

186 ‘Politiek verslag....eerste helft van November 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
187 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag van den Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over de maand Augustus 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
188 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...1 t/m 15 September 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
workers in Timor and of the legitimacy of the strike weapon. This type of talk was alarming to the Dutch authorities, but they consoled themselves with the knowledge that most of the PDI leadership were not in favour of any co-operation with SOBSI.\footnote{Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...Augustus 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...; Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...2de helft Februari 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...} In fact the PDI leaders were keen to project a moderate image and at a public meeting in February 1948 chairman Sahetapy Engel went out of his way to counter assertions that the PDI was a left-oriented organisation.\footnote{Van Es, ‘Politiek verslag over de eerste helft Februari 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...} In a 1948 government report on the trade unions of eastern Indonesia, which included Timor, it was noted that there was no obvious socialist or communist tendency.\footnote{Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...April 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260... It is likely there was some political infighting in these unions as both members of the PDI and their opponents were to be found in the PGIT executive.}

One of the most enduring trade unions in West Timor from this era was the Persatoean Goeroe-goeroe Indonesia Timoer (PGIT; East Indonesian Teachers’ Union), which was first reported in 1946 as being affiliated with the PDI, but it later claimed to be independent.\footnote{Van Es, ‘Politiek economisch verslag...Januari 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...} A later rival to the PGIT was the Serikat Goeroe Indonesia (Indonesian Teachers’ Union).\footnote{Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Juli 1949’, and ‘Politiek verslag...Augustus 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...} A general workers’ union, the Ikatan Kaoem Pekerja (Workers’ Union), was formed on 25 January 1948 and attracted several hundred members. Its main activity seems to have been to lobby the government on the issue of low wages.\footnote{Van Es, ‘Politiek verslag over de eerste helft van de maand maart 1948’, and Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft Mei 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...} A branch of a health workers’ union, Persatoean Djoeroe Kesehatan, was established in Kupang in early 1948,\footnote{Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft...Mei 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...} while a union exclusively for government officials, Persatoean Pegawai Indonesia, held its first meeting in Kupang in July 1949. It eventually attracted over a hundred members.\footnote{Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Juli 1949’, and ‘Politiek verslag...Augustus 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...} Budi Daja Serikat Monteurs Chauffeurs, a union which aimed to improve the lot of drivers and mechanics in Kupang, was established in August 1949. This union went out of its way to establish that it was no threat by making an express

\footnote{Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...Augustus 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...; Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...2de helft Februari 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...}
declaration that it was ‘not anti-capitalist’.197 None of these unions appears to have been of particular concern to the government. Despite early fears generated by statements of some members of the SKBI there was little industrial action undertaken by unionists in West Timor during the period 1946-1950. Javanese ‘dips’ working as government drivers had used strike action in 1946, but they were all removed to Java by the end of that year. The only other instance mentioned in the Resident’s reports was a strike over wages by wharf labourers working for the Dutch shipping firm KPM. The strike broke out in September 1948, but KPM rejected a mediated resolution of the dispute from the government wages commission. The strike was finally reported as ended two months later. It was noted that none of the strikers had a political background.198

Among the other social, religious and political groups operating in West Timor in the late 1940s were a number of Muslim groups. The largest concentration of Muslims in Timor was in Kupang where there were around 1,000. The Dutch thought it probable that Muslim groups could be used for political purposes, but initially felt they would pose no threat in Timor because of the small numbers involved.199 In 1949 a Muslim burial union, Rukun Budi Slawat, was established in Kupang, which appears to have catered mainly for Javanese soldiers.200 This group must have been watched closely as it was reported that its adviser, the government veterinarian, Dr. Soedibjo, had been a member of the Republican armed forces.201 The Serikat Boedi Setia, another Muslim burial union, which had been established in 1931, was revived in 1948. Its chairman, D. Abdoelrachman, urged his members to pay heed to their religion and ‘not be caught up in politics’.202 Of more concern to the Dutch was Persit, which they associated with various subversive and revolutionary activities, as noted above.203

197 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Augustus 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
198 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...16-30 September 1948’, and J. Couvreur, ‘Politiek verslag van de Resident van Timor en Ondehoorigheden over de tijdvak 1-15 November 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
199 Koerts, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft van Juni 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259..., and Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft...Juni 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
200 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Juni 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
201 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...April 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
202 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...1 t/m 15 September 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
203 In 1949 the Kepandoean Moeslimin Indonesia (Indonesian Muslim Scouts), a group for Muslim youth based in Gorontalo, North Sulawesi, was established in Timor. Many of its members were members of Persit also, but the group basically disappeared after Persit banned its members from
Christian groups had a presence also. On 23 March 1947 a branch of the Indische Katholieke Volkspartij (IKVP; Indies Catholic People’s Party) was established in Kupang. The IKVP was open to all races and in this differed from other Catholic parties in Indonesia at the time, which established separate organisations for Europeans and Indonesians. F. Louet Feisser of the IKVP, described in a Dutch report as ‘very left-oriented’, had been a founder member of the PDI. Although no longer a member of the PDI, Feisser attended and spoke at public meetings organised by that group. The IKVP and the PDI on occasion worked together in opposition to the Lima Serangkai, which the Dutch thought ‘remarkable’, as the two were considered to have ‘very different principles’. In July 1949 the IKVP was ‘disbanded due to the departure of many Dutch Catholic members for elsewhere’. The Indonesian members of the IKVP in Kupang then joined the Partai Katholik Indonesia di Timor (Parkit; Indonesian Catholic Party in Timor). This party had first been established by Pastor Gabriel Manek in Kefamenanu in February 1948 as the Partai Katholiek Rajat Indonesia (Indonesian People’s Catholic Party). An Atambua branch opened in April 1948 under the name of Serikat Katholiek Timor (Timor Catholic Union). Soon after the Kupang branch was opened a meeting was held to discuss the differences between Parkit and two other Catholic unions; the Perkumpulan Amal Katholiek (Catholic Benevolent Association) and the Perkumpulan Buruh (Workers’ Association). A Catholic social organisation with many sub-branches, the Pergerakan Sociaal Biboki Katholiek (Catholic Biboki Social Movement), was established in Kefamenanu in December 1948. Although some Protestant ministers were involved in the PDI, Timorese Protestants seem to have been less active than their Catholic peers in forming associations at this time. However, a Protestant youth group, the Pemoeda Masehi Injili Kota Koepang (Kupang Town Evangelical Christian Youth), was established in September 1948.

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204 Schuller, ‘Verslag...Maart 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
205 Koerts, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft van Juni 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
206 For more information on IKVP, see Resident’s reports for November 1946, March, June, October, November, December 1947, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...; and March, September 1948, July 1949, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
207 Van Es, ‘Politiek Economisch verslag...Februari 1948’, and ‘Politiek verslag over de eerste helft van de maand April 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
208 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Juli 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
209 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...Mei 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
210 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...16-30 September 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
The Chinese of West Timor established a number of groups also. In November 1946 there were four: Hwa Chauw Tjie Nin Hui (a social work group with 100 members), Kanton Hui Koan (social work, 70 members), Thionghoa Hak Tong (social work, 300 members) and Chung Hwa Siang Hui (a merchants’ union with twenty members). In February 1948 the Chung Hwa Chung Hui was established in Kupang under the chairmanship of Lay Kian Sioe. This group was intended as an umbrella organisation for all the other Chinese groups in Kupang. Its aims must have been gratifying to the Dutch: ‘promotion of the interests of all Chinese inhabitants, co-operation with all layers of society and co-operation with the government in the interest of community prosperity’.

The Dutch report writers appear to have been unconcerned about these groups as they were trade or social groups, not political organisations. While the Chinese in general kept a low profile in West Timor politics, some were actively involved. The Lima Serangkai’s DBI had been established in Jakarta by a group of ‘Chinese, Ambonese, Manadonese and Timorese’. When a branch was opened in Kupang, a certain Tjioeng Soen Liong was on the executive. The conservative groups in Kupang put some effort into courting Chinese support. For example, at a Lima Serangkai rally in Kupang in August 1947 the audience was reminded of Chinese involvement in the foundation of the DBI. At the same rally Raja Kupang of the PDI was maligned as a racist who wanted ‘to drive away the Chinese, Rotenese, [and] Sabunese’. It was further requested by one of the speakers that the Chinese continue to co-operate with the Dutch and keep in mind the fate of Chinese living in Republican areas. There seems to have been less effort on the part of the PDI to attract Chinese support, although two PDI members of parliament, Amalo and Sahetapy Engel, organised a special meeting to answer queries from the Chinese of Naikoten, Kupang in late 1948. To what extent the Chinese in West Timor were involved in the different political groups is unknown. Some Chinese may have been

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211 ‘Politiek verslag....eerste helft van November 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
212 Van Es, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft...maart 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
213 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft van Augustus 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
214 ‘Politiek verslag....eerste helft van November 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
215 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft van Augustus 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
216
involved in Parkit as the foundation meeting of the party was held in the Hollandsche-Chineesche School (Dutch Chinese School) in Kupang in July 1949.\textsuperscript{217}

Chinese interest in politics, however, extended beyond Indonesia. In November 1946 Lay Tzoe Kie, ‘a member of the Nanking government’, made a visit to his birthplace in Atambua. As far as the Dutch knew ‘he had no fixed mission to fulfil’\textsuperscript{218} There was no follow up report to this event so presumably the Dutch were satisfied that the visit was completely innocent. It is recorded, however, that in 1950 branches of the Kuomintang were to be found in SoE and Niki Niki.\textsuperscript{219} The nationalist Kuomintang had been mentioned in Dutch reports back in 1930 when members of that group from Dili became active in an anti-communist movement aimed at Chinese living in West Timor (see Chapter Three). The Dutch had appeared unconcerned about the activities of the Kuomintang at the time, and although the group gets no mention in the Resident’s reports in the post-war period, it is likely that it did exist, but its activities were largely ignored. As an anti-communist group mainly concerned with internal Chinese political problems, the Kuomintang was probably not seen as a threat.

There were other groups that did not please the Dutch authorities. In January 1948 the Ikatan Peladjar Indonesia (Indonesian Students’ Union), a group for secondary students, was established in Kupang. The inaugural meeting heard speeches from two executive members of the PDI, Sahetapy Engel and Ndaumanu. The latter requested the students to ‘stand shoulder to shoulder in reaching independence’. The Resident queried in his report if it was appropriate for students to be involved in such obviously political matters.\textsuperscript{220} In June 1948 the nationalist youth group API was established in Kupang also. As discussed above, its activities were of some concern to the Dutch authorities, but by mid-1949 it was a spent force. The last group to be mentioned here is the Persatuan Indonesia Raja (Greater Indonesia Association). Based in Yogyakarta, the association was aimed at ‘the defence of a national Indonesia’ and opened a branch in Kupang in late 1949 with the help of Herman

\textsuperscript{216} Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...1 t/m 15 September 1948’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260}...
\textsuperscript{217} Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Juli 1949’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260}...
\textsuperscript{218} ‘Politiek verslag,...eerste helft van November 1946’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...
\textsuperscript{219} Anak Agung, \textit{Dari Negara Indonesia Timur}..., pp.835-839.
\textsuperscript{220} Van Es, ‘Politiek economisch verslag...Januari 1948’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260}...
Johannes, mentioned above.\textsuperscript{221} What activities the group carried out in the last months of 1949 is unknown, but its appearance in Kupang is indicative of the close ties forged between some people of West Timor and the Republic during the last days of Dutch sovereignty in the archipelago.

\textit{Reconstruction, rationing and infrastructure}

During the war many of the towns in West Timor were almost completely destroyed. Viewing the damage when they first returned to Kupang, some Dutch officials thought the ruins should be left as a monument and a new town built elsewhere.\textsuperscript{222} Nevertheless, the town was rebuilt on the old site. By December 1946 a number of temporary buildings had been erected in the town, but were far from satisfactory. The work was proceeding so slowly that the Residentie Secretaris thought that the reconstruction of Kupang might not be completed until the year 2000.\textsuperscript{223} By January 1947 a start had been made on clearing away the rubble. Re-usable materials were carefully put aside for future use. One of the first jobs was to build sheds to house the estimated 500 workers who would be involved in the reconstruction. It was planned also to asphalt Kupang’s roads using prison labour.\textsuperscript{224} At the time the majority of government offices were still housed in emergency buildings in Bakunase. Because of their simple construction the buildings were far from secure and a number of thefts were reported. In June 1947 a whole safe-box, containing £ 4,000 cash, was stolen from one of the offices. The culprits were caught, but half the money had already disappeared.\textsuperscript{225} By July a number of offices had re-opened in Kupang, but this created a new problem as most of the workers still lived in Bakunase. Vehicles had to be hired to transport them. The workers lived in simple palm thatch dwellings in Bakunase that were considered unhygienic as most had no floors and leaking roofs.\textsuperscript{226} In November it was reported that a number of new homes had been completed in Kupang and many more were under construction.\textsuperscript{227}

\textsuperscript{221} Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...September 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
\textsuperscript{223} Versluys, ‘Politieke verslag...tweede helft...December 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
\textsuperscript{224} Versluys, ‘Verslag...Januari 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
\textsuperscript{225} Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...Juni 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
\textsuperscript{226} Schuller, ‘Verslag...Juli 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
\textsuperscript{227} Schuller, ‘Politiek Economisch verslag...November 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
From then on building continued apace. However, it was envisaged that some of the old residential areas would not be rebuilt, so as to allow for other projects, such as road-widening and the building of markets and military bases. Not surprisingly, many of the old Kupang residents were not agreeable with this scheme and demanded to re-occupy their old sites. As a result of the many complaints, plans for re-development of the town were modified several times. There was the difficult question of land-ownership also. During the war most of the records in Kupang were destroyed. Land registry records kept in Singaraja, Bali had survived, but only some of the records relating to Kupang were found there.\(^{228}\)

One group who managed to return to their old area were the Kisarese. In March 1948 Schuller noted that *kampong* Kisar would be rebuilt on its old site. Documents relating to the Kisarese occupation of the site were not to be found, but it was well known that they had been granted a right to live there by the government.\(^{229}\) Another group of town dwellers did not regain their old rights so easily. In April 1946 Kupang town was placed under the jurisdiction of Raja Kupang. In the early days in Kupang the many non-Timorese (Rotenese, Sabunese, etc.) who lived near the Dutch fort were not under the jurisdiction of any raja. A number of citizens protested the new move and requested that a town council be established instead. The Resident himself considered the measure unfair and ordered an investigation in November 1947.\(^{230}\) Three months later no solution had been found.\(^{231}\) The matter dragged on for some time, but a compromise seems to have been reached for on 1 October 1949 Th. Messakh began work as mayor of the municipality of Kupang. Messakh was appointed by Raja Kupang.\(^{232}\)

In the meantime, reconstruction continued. Brick and tile kilns were built to help with the project. In May 1948 there was said to be ‘steady progress’ and a start was

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\(^{228}\) See Resident’s reports for March, April, August, October/November and December 1947, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...*; and March 1948, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...*  
\(^{229}\) Schuller, ‘Politiek economisch verslag over de maand Maart 1948’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...*  
\(^{230}\) Schuller, ‘Politiek Economisch verslag...November 1947’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...*  
\(^{231}\) Schuller, ‘Politiek economisch verslag...Maart 1948’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...*  
\(^{232}\) Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...September 1949’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...*
made on providing piped water for the town centre. Gradually, people returned to the once-dead town and brought it back to life. At the same time, the ‘coconut village’ of Bakunase was depopulated, but nobody seems to have minded that.233 Replacing the damaged infrastructure, however, was an ongoing process. In May 1947 the Kupang ice factory was still out of operation and the electricity supply, although reconnected, was still inadequate in many areas.234 Electric light was not taken for granted in West Timor. Schuller reported in June 1946 that there was a shortage of good fuel lamps for use in the interior, but there was no fuel available anyway. In place of lamps people used candles. In Schuller’s words, ‘That is romantic for one night, but not for months’.235 In April 1948 lighting was still a problem in Kupang and Schuller reported that a lack of lamps meant that many schoolchildren had to get up in the dark and could not do their homework at night.236

Timor had relied heavily on goods and services delivered by the government in Jakarta, but devastation of infrastructure and a lack of funds meant that this was greatly disturbed and rationing had to be put in place. Police, soldiers, government workers and ordinary citizens received different amounts of basic foodstuffs, but the latter group often received no assistance and had to purchase their requirements on the open market, where prices were very high.237 Imported foods, such as flour, butter and cooking oil were often unavailable for long periods.238 During the late 1940s there were numerous crop failures in Timor due to drought. In October 1946 it was reported that whole districts were out in search of yams and other bush foods. An increase in livestock thefts noted in February 1947 was blamed on the difficult food situation. Rat plagues in North Central Timor and the Kupang district in 1948 further limited local supplies.239

233 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...Mei 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
234 Schuller, ‘Politiek en economisch verslag van den Resident van Timor en onderhoorigheden over Mei 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
235 Schuller, ‘Verslag...tweede helft van Juni 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
236 Schuller, ‘Politiek economisch verslag over de maand April 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
237 Schuller, ‘Verslag...tweede helft van Juni 1946’, ‘Verslag...Maart 1947’, and ‘Politiek Economisch verslag...November 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...; and Van Es, ‘Politiek economisch verslag...Januari 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
238 Schuller, ‘Verslag...Maart 1947’, ‘Politiek en economisch verslag...Mei 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
239 Schuller, ‘Verslag...tweede helft van Juni 1946’, ‘Verslag...October 1946’, ‘Verslag van de Resident van Timor en Onderhoorigheden over Februari 1947’, and ‘Politiek Economisch verslag...November 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...; Van Es, ‘Politiek economisch...
An attempt was made by the government to alleviate the food problem in Timor by establishing a large mechanised agricultural project on the Sekon plain, between Kefamenanu and Oelolok, in the Insana district.\textsuperscript{240} The plan was to eliminate the most labour intensive aspect of traditional Timorese agriculture, tillage with a digging stick, replacing it with mechanical ploughing. It was envisaged that local farmers would co-operate in planting, weeding and harvesting and thus greatly increase average yields. Over 2,000 hectares of land was made available for the experiment. Resident Schuller in October 1946 was optimistic about the project, believing it was sure to bring an end to Timor’s perennial food shortages.\textsuperscript{241} In early 1947 ploughs, harrows, tractors and other equipment began arriving from Australia and the USA. The local raja and his subjects seemed keen to participate in the project.\textsuperscript{242} By May 1947, however, a more cautious tone could be discerned in the Resident’s reports. Schuller noted that the mechanical tillage meant that four times the normal land mass was available for use by any one farming family. The traditional farmers would have to use new implements and farming methods.\textsuperscript{243} In November 1947 it was reported that only seventy-two hectares had actually been ploughed and the prognosis on the viability of the site became increasingly grim.\textsuperscript{244} In May 1948 it was announced that the site would be vacated after the following harvest and the project moved to ‘more suitable ground’.\textsuperscript{245} In fact the Sekon project was abandoned and not restarted elsewhere. What had gone wrong? Ormeling points to a number of factors that led to the failure of the project. Firstly, most of the land available in Sekon was simply unsuitable for agriculture. Secondly, the amount of land made available to the farmers was too great for them to weed adequately, resulting in many plants being smothered. Rice, insects and wandering livestock ravaged many of the crops that survived. Most importantly, the project was not well received by local farmers. They were loathe to abandon their mountain gardens and many had to be coerced into working on the plain. There were many objections also

\textsuperscript{240} For general information on the Sekon project, see Ormeling, \emph{The Timor problem...}, pp.218-220.
\textsuperscript{241} Schuller, ‘Verslag...October 1946’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...
\textsuperscript{242} Schuller, ‘Verslag...Februari 1947’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...
\textsuperscript{243} Schuller, ‘Politiek en economisch verslag...Mei 1947’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...
\textsuperscript{244} Schuller, ‘Politiek Economisch verslag...November 1947’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...
\textsuperscript{245} Schuller, ‘Politiek economisch verslag...Maart 1948’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260}...
to the alien concepts of joint harvesting and other co-operative farming methods.\footnote{Ormeling, \textit{The Timor problem}..., pp.218-220.} The poorly conceived project was just one more example of a failed attempt to replace a traditional Timorese system with supposedly superior methods from outside the region.

A lack of transport facilities added to Timor’s problems. In June 1946 Schuller reported that the shipping connections with Rote and Sabu were ‘very bad’. In general, the vessels available in Kupang were in such poor condition that the harbour master ordered that two ships must go to sea at the same time, so that if one broke down it could be assisted by the other.\footnote{Schuller, ‘Verslag...tweede helft van Juni 1946’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...} By October 1946 Timor was joined with the rest of Indonesia through the KPM shipping line, but there was no regular service to Java.\footnote{‘Verslagen Timor E. O. 1e helft Oct. en October 1946’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...} More services were added, including cattle transports essential for the export industry, but connections with Java continued to be a problem. The infrequent supply of goods meant that those that did arrive fetched high prices. Prices were further inflated by the fact that up to twenty percent of the cargo was routinely stolen en route.\footnote{Schuller, ‘Verslag...Maart 1947’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...} Road transport in West Timor was beset with difficulties also. When the Dutch first returned to Timor there were few vehicles available and a complete absence of spare parts.\footnote{Schuller, ‘Verslag...tweede helft van Juni 1946’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...} In December 1946 a small number of trucks, jeeps, motorcycles and cars was delivered to Kupang. The arrival of the new vehicles was a relief for Residentie Secretaris Versluys as he had been embarrassed on a previous occasion when he had to ask two Portuguese guests to help push his car.\footnote{Versluys, ‘Politieke verslag...tweede helft...December 1946’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...} Other vehicles were delivered subsequently, but parts remained in short supply. In December 1947 it was reported that there was a shortage of tyres throughout the Residency.\footnote{Versluys, ‘Politieke verslag...tweede helft...December 1946’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...}

The roads were a problem also. Most were in bad condition and it was a challenge to keep them open, especially in the rainy season.\footnote{Schuller, ‘Verslag...Februari 1947’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...} Many bridges throughout the
territory had been destroyed. The bridge over the forty metre deep chasm at the Benain river on the main east-west route was demolished by the Australians in 1942. A new bridge, opened there with great fanfare in April 1948, removed one of the greatest obstacles on the Kupang-Atambua road. The bad state of the roads was held responsible for many traffic accidents, but Resident Schuller opined that the main fault lay with the drivers. In March 1947 he reported that ‘roadhogs’ were making traffic unsafe and strong action needed to be taken against them. As if to underscore the point, the following month there were four automobile accidents in Kupang on the same day. Forty people were injured, eleven seriously. One later died.

Air transport was of increasing importance in the isolated Timor archipelago. In October 1945 it was proposed that Penfui airfield be maintained and kept secure by the Australian military for use as a staging post on the Darwin-Singapore route. The Australian Army, however, did not want the responsibility and the airfield was handed back to the Dutch. Australian planes continued to stop at Penfui, but many made their way to Bacau, in Portuguese Timor, as well. By late 1947 the hill resorts of Portuguese Timor were already well-known to Australian tourists. The tourism industry was facilitated by a fortnightly return flight from Darwin to Dili. This regular service was of great benefit to the Australian consul for Portuguese Timor. Penfui airfield, in the meantime, was regularly visited by ‘emigrants of “Balkan” nationality bound for Australia’. These people were said to travel in ‘all sorts of planes’. People from Kupang travelled to Australia also. In early 1948 it was reported that fifty people from the town had signed contracts to work in the pearl fishery of Broome. Thirty of them travelled to Australia by ship and the remainder by plane.

254 Schuller, ‘Politiek economisch verslag...April 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
255 Schuller, ‘Verslag...Maart 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
256 Schuller, ‘Verslag...April 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
257 NAA: MP742/1, 31/1/117.
258 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag. Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden. Maand: October/November 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
259 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag. Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden. Tijdvak: Juli t/m Januari 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
260 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...Januari/Maart 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
261 Ibid.
Dutch and Portuguese aviation authorities appear to have co-operated amicably, but there was a measure of rivalry as they both wished for their main airfields, Penfui and Bacau, to become ports of call for major international flights. Improvements were made at both airports, but as of January 1949 neither had managed to attract the anticipated large aircraft operating on international routes. They got plenty of local traffic, however. A weekly service between Kupang, Sumba and Flores was always busy with government officials. A connection was made with Makassar also, while a weekly flight linking Kupang, Oecusse, Atambua and Dili received frequent use from government and military officials. Resident Schuller praised the Portuguese for their use of small planes for keeping in touch with all parts of their colony and suggested that inter-island communications in east Indonesia could be greatly improved with the use of such planes. It seems, however, that it was difficult enough to maintain the existing services. At the same time that Schuller was recommending extending an air service to islands such as Rote, Sabu and Alor, which were virtually cut off from the world during the rainy season, existing weekly flights from Kupang to Sumba and Sumbawa were cut back to fortnightly services.

Information, entertainment and propaganda

The poor state of communications facilities in West Timor meant that all information and entertainment that were available were highly valued. Concerts given by violinist Willem Noske in Kupang in January 1947 were reported as a great boost to morale, and the arrival of a piano in the town in June was a major event. In July 1947 Resident Schuller received a circular advising of maximum prices to be charged for beer in ‘hotels and restaurants with and without music’. Beer was such a rare item in Kupang that Schuller had to check what it was in a dictionary. He reported also that ‘hotels with and without music are not to be found in the coconut emergency town of

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262 See Resident’s reports for April, May, June and October/November 1947, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...; and January/March, April/June 1948 and January 1949, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
263 Schuller, ‘Verslag...tweede helft van Juni 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
264 Schuller, ‘Verslag...Maart 1947’; and ‘Politiek verslag. Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden. Maand: September 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
266 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...October/November 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
267 Versluijs, ‘Verslag...Januari 1947’, and Schuller, ‘Politiek en economisch verslag...Mei 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
Kupang’. A few months later he noted that celebrations for the Queen’s birthday were ‘dry’ in many places ‘due to lack of anything to drink’. One outlet for both entertainment and news was film. The Australian Army had left behind a film projector, but there were few films available, let alone newsreels. When films were available the citizens had to travel from Bakunase to the army camp in Kupang as no-one was game to move the projector for screenings elsewhere in case they broke the last available lamp. In mid-1947 it was reported that no films at all had been received for the people that year, but the army had got hold of a few 1925 newsreels.

Some pro-Republican information or propaganda was disseminated via the stage. In September 1948 it was reported that ‘jubilee and coronation festivities’ were celebrated throughout the Residency, in connection with the abdication of Queen Wilhelmina and her replacement by Queen Juliana. The ‘festivities’ should have been an opportunity for expressions of filial loyalty to the Netherlands and the Dutch Crown, but in Atambua a play with a subversive undertone was performed under the direction of the Rotenese schoolteacher, Katipana. One act of the play featured a young woman bound in chains who complained of her long period of captivity. She was then freed by a youth dressed in red and white. Katipana was said to be notorious for his Republican ideas and many KNIL soldiers objected to sending their children to his school. In the same month a theatrical company owned and directed by Ang Song Hok, a Chinese former resident of Timor, arrived in Kupang. The company consisted of ‘Timorese, Makassarese, Javanese, Lombokers, 2 Chinese, 1 Arab and 1 Banjarese’. ‘Red and white propaganda’ appeared in nearly every scene, such as when the lead man appeared ‘dressed completely in white’ to sing alongside ‘a woman dressed wholly in red’. Cleverly disguised political comments and jibes at Dutch authority appeared throughout the performance. The group did not confine itself to Kupang, but undertook a tour of the interior also. Whilst in Kupang, however, the Arab, Amzah Alhasbik, had regular meetings with leading members of...
Persit. In December 1948 the school students’ union, Ikatan Peladjar Indonesia (IPI), staged a play where an actor took two pieces of cloth out of a bundle; one red and one white. The actor proceeded to use the white rag to wipe the mud from the soles of his shoes. The Resident interpreted this as meaning that the Dutch would come under the heel of the Indonesians. Actors were forced to revert to this type of indirect criticism and method of making statements as they could have faced prosecution for ‘inciting hatred’ against the government. IPI had requested that police no longer attend its meetings as it was a social group, not a political union. Verhoef thought otherwise and was sure they were ‘under the bad influence of some Bimanese’, presumably referring to some members of Persit. Persit itself often utilised red and white in its own public displays. At a Persit procession to mark the ascension of Mohammad to heaven the participants wore red and white insignias, a board with red background and white letters was carried in the procession and an associated stall sold red and white coloured bouquets.

In the 1930s there had been a plethora of newspapers in West Timor, but after 1945 the only news available to most people came from government news-sheets, printed by the Regeerings Voorlichtings Dienst (RVD; Government Information Service). In February 1948 the NIT Information Department opened an office in Kupang, headed by E. R. Here Wila, leader of the pre-war Timorsch Verbond. According to Doko, Here Wila’s arrival from Makassar was not welcomed by the Resident, or the Lima Serangkai, and many obstacles were put in his way. In the Dutch reports, however, there is no hint of animosity. Here Wila was responsible for publishing the two existing news-sheets, the Koepang Bode (Kupang Messenger) and Warta Harian (Daily News). It was reported that under Here Wila’s guidance there was a marked improvement. Nevertheless, there does appear to have been a measure of censorship in Timor at the time. In August 1948 a prisoner in Kefamenanu was found in possession of some Republican newspapers (Siasat, Investigation; Merdeka, Independence; Waspada, Vigilance) which had been sent from Sumbawa, implying

272 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...16-30 September 1948’, and ‘Politiek verslag...16-30 November 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
273 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...1-15 December 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
274 Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft...Juni 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
275 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., pp.128-130.
276 Van Es, ‘Politiek Economisch verslag...Februari 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
that they were not available locally. There was a similar occurrence in Kupang gaol in November; a Sumbawan connection was again indicated.\textsuperscript{277} Andreas Yohannes, who worked in the information office, says that on one occasion he put a notice in the \textit{Warta Harian}: ‘Selamat Hari Natal dan Tahun Baru. Merdeka’ (Happy Christmas and New Year. Independence). The Resident demanded to know what he meant by using the word \textit{merdeka}. Yohannes lied and replied that he did not know what the word meant and just thought it a new kind of greeting. He was told that the word was used only by Republicans and was given the sack.\textsuperscript{278} Prior to this event, however, it seems that the government newspapers often had a pro-Republican feeling. In December 1946 it was reported that RVD workers often put their own opinions in government publications. Many PDI members worked for the RVD and Resident Schuller had complained in June of the same year that government news-sheets often appeared as if they were the official PDI organ.\textsuperscript{279}

The PDI might have been able to infiltrate the government press, but the conservative groups in Timor are said to have totally taken over a newspaper printed by the army. The \textit{Pandoe Timor (Timor Guide)} had been published by the military, but it was reported in July 1947 that from then on it would be published twice a month by the Lima Serangkai.\textsuperscript{280} In August 1947 the PDI announced that it would publish its own newspaper also.\textsuperscript{281} Whether either paper lasted any length of time is unknown as they were mentioned only once in the Dutch monthly reports. It would seem, however, that the inhabitants of Kupang were lucky if they could get any news to read as inadequate printing facilities meant the resulting news-sheets were often illegible and there were long periods when there was no labour or paper available to print it at all.\textsuperscript{282}

\textsuperscript{277} Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...16-30 September 1948’; ‘Politiek verslag...16 t/m 31 Augustus 1948’; and Couvreur, ‘Politiek verslag...1-15 November 1948’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260}...

\textsuperscript{278} Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000.

\textsuperscript{279} Schuller, ‘Verslag...tweede helft van Juni 1946’; and Versluys, ‘Politieke verslag...tweede helft...December 1946’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}... An example is the \textit{Warta Harian} of 13 April 1946. Nearly the whole page of this edition is taken up with an article entitled ‘Berita P.D.I. Timor’ (PDI Timor News); see \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.1366}... Versluys opined that even RVD material from Jakarta was ‘difficult to distinguish from that of the Republicans’; see Versluys, \textit{op.cit.}

\textsuperscript{280} Schuller, ‘Verslag...Juli 1947’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...

\textsuperscript{281} Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft van Augustus 1947’, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...

\textsuperscript{282} See Resident’s reports for July, August, October, November and December 1947, in \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259}...; and \textit{Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260}...
Local politicians played a role in spreading information about the workings of parliament and the position of the NIT in relation to the Republic and the Netherlands. As mentioned above, radio broadcasts by NIT parliamentarians were said to have been followed with interest, but very few people owned a wireless. Many sets that were available were useless as the batteries had gone flat and there were no replacements.\(^\text{283}\) The political parties held many rallies and often attracted large crowds in Kupang and other centres in the Residency. While the Dutch officials may not have always agreed with the political messages passed on at such meetings they recognised there was a great need for the people to be informed of political events. Resident Verhoef reported in November 1948 that ‘Information and still more information is urgently needed everywhere in this Residency’.\(^\text{284}\) It was a sentiment repeated time and again in the post-war Resident’s reports.

**The Church and education**

Soon after his return to Timor, Resident Schuller recommended that Catholic missionaries who had been interned in Sulawesi be returned to Timor as soon as possible in order to ‘spread Dutch ideas’.\(^\text{285}\) One can assume he envisaged Protestant missionaries playing a similar role. Dutch authorities were keen to see the development of political participation in West Timor, but they may have been surprised at the extent of involvement of the clergy that eventuated. As noted above, a number of Dutch *pastors* were elected to the Dewan Ra’jat and the Timorese Pastor Manek and Minahasan Pendeta Rotti sat in the NIT parliament. Manek also headed a Catholic political party. Pendeta Rotti, the Dutch Pendeta Durkstra and a number of Timorese *pendetas* were active members of the PDI. While the Resident made little comment on these people’s involvement in politics it was still an unusual situation and remarked on bitterly by members of the Lima Serangkai who saw Dutch proponents of Indonesian independence, such as Durkstra, as traitors.

\(^{283}\) Schuller ‘Politiek verslag...September 1947’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259*...; Van Es, ‘Politiek economisch verslag...Januari 1948’; Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...1ste helft Februari 1949’, and ‘Politiek verslag...2de helft Februari 1949’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260*...

\(^{284}\) Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...16-30 November 1948’, in *Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260*...

\(^{285}\) ‘Overzicht van chief commanding officer Nica te Morotai (De Rooy) betreffende de algemene situatie in Borneo en de Grote Oost over de periode 1 t/m 10 nov. 1945’, in Van der Wal (ed.), *Officiële bescheiden...,* Vol.2, pp.31-37.
Durkstra had been head of the Timor branch of the Protestant Indisch Kerk, which in 1947 became the independent Gereja Masehi Injili di Timor (GMIT; Timor Evangelical Christian Church). Plans for this had been drawn up in 1933, but were delayed by the war. Durkstra became head of the new church also, so that while the GMIT was an independent church, it was still headed by a Dutchman. Other Dutch ministers, such as Pieter Middelkoop, who made translations of the Gospel into Dawan, continued to serve with the GMIT as well.²⁸⁶ It is likely that the Church experienced some growth in membership at this time, but it is interesting to note that in 1946 the Protestant Raja Kupang commented that there were many witches in Kupang and that witchcraft was still very strong in the district as the Gospel had yet to enter the people’s hearts.²⁸⁷

In the meantime, the Catholic Church in West Timor remained under the leadership of Bishop Pessers. As with the pre-war period, many of the priests, brothers and sisters were Europeans. There were a number of Indonesians also, but unlike the GMIT there were few positions held by Timorese. Despite this, the number of Catholics continued to grow. In 1940 there were 50,000 Catholics in West Timor, but by 1950 there were 80,000.²⁸⁸ The Catholic mission also opened a hospital in Halilulik and was busy rebuilding its many schools destroyed during the war. A secondary school was planned to be built also, so that Catholics in eastern West Timor would not have to travel to Kupang to attend the Protestant secondary school that had already been established there.²⁸⁹

There was a great demand for education in Timor after the war, although it has been noted that this came mainly from rajas and fettors, who realised its benefits for their people. Many parents were less enthusiastic as they had had no education themselves and could often not afford to do without the help of their children, especially during weeding or harvest time.²⁹⁰ Nevertheless, many new schools opened in Timor during this period. The madrasah for Muslim students, opened by Persit members in Kupang in 1948, has already been discussed above. The Chinese school which had

²⁸⁶ Cooley, Benih yang tumbuh..., pp.56-59.
²⁸⁷ Middelkoop, Curse-retribution-enmity..., pp.40-41.
²⁸⁹ Ibid., pp.119-124.
²⁹⁰ Versluys, ‘Maatschappelijke vernieuwing...’, pp.141-142.
existed in Kupang before the war was used as a police station and in late 1948 the Chung Hwa Chung Hui society requested that it be returned for use as a boarding school for Chinese students. Presumably the students were being taught in other premises. It appears the school was returned because, as noted above, the foundation meeting of Parkit was held in the Hollandsche-Chineesche School in July 1949. A Protestant Junior High School was opened in Airnona, Kupang in 1946 and a Senior High School in 1949. In 1949 a Protestant Theological School was opened in SoE. The schools throughout the Residency, however, were under-resourced. In mid-1946 it was reported that there was a general lack of writing material and a shortage of good teachers. A year later the situation was little better. At one school in central Timor there was no furniture and the students sat on a concrete floor. They wrote their lessons on this floor with stumps of homemade chalk. School buildings were often inadequate also. It was reported in mid-1947 that a school building in Kupang had collapsed while forty students were within. Miraculously, none were hurt.

The relationship with Portuguese Timor

As noted above, the Portuguese and Dutch on Timor were able to co-operate on many matters, such as the exchange of fugitive Japanese prisoners and war criminals. There was, however, rivalry over matters such as the establishment of Penfui and Baucau airfields as international airports, although this did not prevent general co-operation amongst aviation officials from the two ends of the island. The perennial problems of border crossings and livestock theft continued to be matters of concern. A vendetta by inhabitants on both sides of the border in the Kewar district had resulted in a number of deaths. Resident Schuller reported that in October 1946 a Netherlands-Portuguese commission met to discuss the issue. Although the cause of the problem could not be ascertained, Schuller was convinced that the appropriate measures could be taken to prevent it occurring again. There was some concern also that Portuguese Timor could be used as a base for dissemination of ‘Javanese propaganda’, but Schuller thought this unlikely as no Malay (the language likely to

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291 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...16-30 September 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
292 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Juli 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
293 Widiyatmika, Sejarah pendidikan..., pp.56, 76.
294 Schuller, ‘Verslag...tweede helft van Juni 1946’, and ‘Politiek verslag...Juni 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
295 Schuller, ‘Politieke verslag...eerste helft van October 1946’, and ‘Verslag...October 1946’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
be used for any propaganda) was spoken or understood in the Portuguese territory. He pointed out also that ‘nationalism, democracy and the right of self determination’ were matters completely unknown there.296

The relationship between the two colonial powers was not all sweetness and light, however. In September 1947 it was reported that four Portuguese Timorese prisoners had escaped from Atauro island and made their way to Alor. The men found jobs working as coolies in Kalahabi and said they would rather be killed than be handed back to the Portuguese. The report refers to Atauro as the ‘Timorese Cayenne’ and from its tone one suspects that Portuguese attempts to have the men returned might not have been successful. The matter, however, was not raised in the reports again.297 There was some friction over theft and smuggling also. It was reported that in October 1947 great mobs of cattle were driven into Oecusse from Dutch territory and then shipped to Dili. In June 1948 it was stated that smuggling was rampant and virtually impossible to control. Portuguese subjects fleeing high taxes and corvee labour continued to cross over the border as well. The Portuguese were heavily opposed to this unauthorised immigration and sought to have the ‘offenders’ returned. Frequent requests for the return of Portuguese subjects led the Controleur of Belu formally to notify his Portuguese counterpart that he could do so only in cases where it was clear that the persons involved had committed crimes in the Portuguese territory.298 In one case in September 1948 it was reported that thirty-four Portuguese Timorese who had lived in Dutch Timor for some considerable time had been forced across the border by a group of armed bandits. They took with them a deal of livestock and household items also.299 These border crossings and livestock thefts remained the greatest barrier to peaceful relations between the two sides, although at the official level they appear to have remainedcordial. Despite the many crimes committed along the border there was plenty of peaceful small-scale trade also. This trade, and other bona fide travel, was threatened by a regulation, made in

297 ‘Politiek verslag. Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden. Maand: September 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
299 Verhoef, ‘Politek verslag. Residentie Timor en Onderhoorigheden. Tijdvak: Juli t/m Januari 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
Makassar in December 1948, that all Indonesians wanting to travel to Portuguese Timor must get an exit permit in their passports beforehand and that people wanting to travel from Portuguese Timor into West Timor had to travel via Makassar. This unreasonable and unworkable bureaucratic requirement was opposed from Kupang, but the outcome of the protest was unrecorded.  

The rajas

Rajas such as Hendrik Koroh and Alfonsus Nisnoni played a big role in the political arena of post-war West Timor and the NIT. All the rajas were involved in politics, however, because of their membership in the Dewan Raja-raja. As noted above, Doko claims that the rajas were united in their opposition to the Dutch, yet Versluys argues that the rajas were only able to co-operate in such forums because of their fears of Javanese domination and the Republic. Local loyalties were still of prime importance and Versluys points out that in the immediate post-war years there were five serious border conflicts in West Timor, three resulting in loss of life. If not for the external ‘threat’ of the Republic it would have been hard to get the various rajas to work together at all. In Atambua in September 1948 a number of rajas reportedly walked out of a pro-Republican play which was said to have more or less ridiculed their position. Yet after the NIT had been dissolved and West Timor was absorbed into the Republic the rajas had little choice but to accept that the Republic was the ultimate authority in Indonesia.

The existence of the Dewan Raja-raja gave the impression that the rajas of West Timor had real political power. It was certainly true that figures such as Koroh made a strong impression, but actual power rested with the Resident and other government officials. The Resident’s reports reveal that the Dutch attitude to the rajas was still very paternalistic. The rajas were elected by the fettors and other traditional power holders in the kingdoms, but in effect the Dutch had the final say. The election of the Raja of Jenilu, K. Pareira, in May 1948 was reported by the Resident as favourable,
as was that of Koesa Nope as Raja of Amanuban in July 1949. Although the Dutch considered Nope to be a good choice as Raja, he only received a temporary appointment.\textsuperscript{303} In November 1948 S. O. Manoh was appointed acting Raja of Amfoan, a position he had held before the war. He replaced his nephew who had been given the post by the Japanese, but was considered vexatious and neglectful of his duties.\textsuperscript{304} Why Nope and Manoh were appointed as acting rajas only is not explained in the reports and there is no indication that their subjects had requested the move. It was possible for any raja to be removed from his post, but acting rajas could presumably be removed with even greater ease. Under the NIT constitution the rajas ostensibly had far greater powers than they had enjoyed under the colonial system. Although the Dutch were supposed to be preparing for a genuine transfer of authority, it appears they were loathe to abandon their old practices of limiting the powers of the traditional rulers.

The enhanced powers of the rajas under the NIT system were to some extent negated by the existence of the Dewan Ra’jat. As noted above, those elected to the council were generally members of the educated classes and not the traditional power holders. In August 1948 Verhoef reported that there was a growing divide between young and old in Timor as the former came under the influence of schoolteachers and members of the Dewan Ra’jat and began to demand the abolition of adat laws and practices.\textsuperscript{305} Even where the rajas were considered to be politically progressive there were still demands for reforms in relation to their customary powers. Thus Hendrik Koroh found himself under attack when the Oekabiti branch of the PDI opened on 4 April 1947 under the chairmanship of Pendeta B. Jacob. At the first meeting a motion was carried demanding the abolition of adat servants for rajas and their families.\textsuperscript{306} It was claimed in June 1947 that the widow of former raja, Alexander Koroh, had received adat servants to which she was no longer entitled.

\textsuperscript{303} Schuller, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft...Mei 1948’; and Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Juli 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260... At the request of Amanuban’s fertors Koesa Nope replaced his elder brother, Paulus Leu Nope, who ruled for only a short period. Paulus was reported to be too sick to govern (see Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Mei 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...). According to one of Koesa Nope’s sons, Bill Nope, Paulus suffered from a mental illness. Discussion with Bill Nope, Kupang, 11 December 2002.

\textsuperscript{304} Couvreur, ‘Politiek verslag...1-15 November 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...

\textsuperscript{305} Verhoef, ‘Politiek Verslag over de eerste helft van de maand Augustus 1948’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...

\textsuperscript{306} Schuller, ‘Politieke verslag...eerste helft...April 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
and that the present raja and some of his subordinates were guilty of over-taxation, non-payment of wages and unlawful seizure of goods. The outcome of these claims is unknown, but they are noteworthy considering the senior position that Koroh himself held in the PDI. It was probably cases such as this which led the Dewan Raja-raja in September 1949 to agree in principle to the gradual abolition of adat services for the rajas and their functionaries. The adat, however, was still strong. It was noted that Christianity had only won over a minority of Timorese and the rajas still had a large role to play in animist rituals. Even Christian rajas could not always withdraw themselves from these duties. And in August 1949 it was reported that after many objections Raja Kewar had finally agreed to move into a house in Atambua for part of each month to look after the treasury for the district of Belu. The house was burnt down, apparently by one of the Raja’s subjects in protest over the fact that he would regularly live outside his territory, a situation that would not have been tolerated in the old days.

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The Dutch and their Australian allies returned to West Timor in September 1945. The Australians, however, only stayed long enough to accept the Japanese surrender and to help the Dutch re-establish their authority. The existence of the Republic in western Indonesia inspired the Dutch to organise a number of federal states in the areas they controlled. West Timor became part of the state known as Negara Indonesia Timur. Timorese politicians were found on both sides of the political fence at the time; those in the PDI supported the Republic, while those in the Lima Serangkai favoured an enduring link with the Netherlands. Rajas Hendrik Koroh and Alfonsus Nisnoni were actively involved in the PDI, but all the rajas of West Timor were to some extent politicised by their involvement in the Dewan Raja-raja. There were other important developments at the time, such as the reconstruction of Kupang and the growth of the Church, but the highlight of the period was the granting of full sovereignty to the Republik Indonesia Serikat on 27 December 1949.

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307 Koerts, ‘Politiek verslag...eerste helft van Juni 1947’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3259...
308 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...September 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
310 Verhoef, ‘Politiek verslag...Augustus 1949’, in Algemene Secretarie Archief No.3260...
Figure 23.
Australian troops and NICA personnel unload supplies in front of the bombed out ruins of Kupang. Fort Concordia in the background. Kupang, September 1945. (From a series of photographs in the collection of Leopold Nisnoni presented to ‘Rajah Koepang’ by the Netherlands Indies Government Information Service.)

Figure 24.
Japanese PoWs working under Australian supervision. Kupang, September 1945. (From a series of photographs in the collection of Leopold Nisnoni presented to ‘Rajah Koepang’ by the Netherlands Indies Government Information Service.)
Figure 27.
A monument dedicated to Sparrow Force at Oesau.

Figure 28.
Plaque on the monument at Oesau.
Figure 30. President Soekawati of the NIT with rajas and government officials at Kupang. (From the collection of Leopold Nisnoni.)
Figure 31.
Benyamin Sahetapy Engel.
Kupang, November 2000.
Figure 25.
A lieutenant of the NICA interrogates Japanese officers at Kupang, September 1945.
(From a series of photographs in the collection of Leopold Nisnoni presented to ‘Rajah Koepang’ by the Netherlands Indies Government Information Service.)

Figure 26.
A Japanese monument, relic of the Second World War, Penfui, Kupang.
Chapter Six
Chapter Six

Independence, rebellion and the defeat of the PKI

This final chapter covers the period from when West Timor became a part of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia in 1950 until the overthrow of Indonesia’s first president, Soekarno, and his replacement by General Soeharto and his New Order government in the mid-1960s. The early years of the unitary state were far from harmonious. Rebellious movements arose in many parts of the archipelago and although there was little support for such movements in West Timor they did affect the political climate there also. For example, the Darul Islam movement that began in West Java in 1948, and later influenced similar movements in other areas, did not gain any evident following in West Timor, but did cause some concern over the possibility of Indonesia becoming an Islamic state. ¹ In the late 1950s the Sulawesi based Permesta movement did gain some adherents in West Timor. Events which occurred in West Timor connected with Permesta are discussed in this chapter. In 1955 general elections were held throughout Indonesia, including West Timor. The elections did much to heighten the political awareness of the region’s people. Political parties and associated factions and fronts were increasingly active in West Timor. One of the most successful parties nationally was the PKI. The growth of the PKI in West Timor in the 1950s and 1960s is examined, and also its demise following the so-called communist coup attempt of 1965. The consolidation of the Church in West Timor is discussed also, as are the effects of the ‘Revival movement’ that began in 1965. Other matters covered in this chapter are the relationship with Portuguese Timor and the continuing role played by West Timor’s rajas, even after their powers were officially abolished in the early 1960s.

Dissolution of the NIT and the incorporation of West Timor into the Republic

On 27 December 1949 the Dutch surrendered full sovereignty to the Republik Indonesia Serikat (RIS), a federal state comprising the Republic and the many states created by the Dutch, including the NIT (although excluding Dutch New Guinea). It was not long, however, before the federal states began to hand their powers over to the RIS. The first to do so was Pasundan, in West Java, in late January 1950. A few

¹ For more on Darul Islam, see Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., pp.215-216, 257-258.
months later it merged into the Republic. The dissolution of Pasundan was requested by that state’s parliament after a number of its leaders were arrested for suspected complicity in a plot to overthrow the RIS government. In April Sultan Abdul Hamid II of West Kalimantan was arrested in relation to the same plot and his state taken over by the RIS. By that time most of the other states had already merged voluntarily into the Republic. The exceptions were East Sumatra and the NIT.

There were a number of groups and individuals in the NIT who wished to retain it as a separate entity and were even in favour of the NIT declaring its independence from the RIS. Doko claims there was pressure to do this put on the NIT cabinet from ‘reactionary’ pro-Dutch groups such as the Twapro (Twaalfde Provincie) of Minahasa, the Ambon based PTB and the Lima Serangkai from Timor. These groups, he says, were supported and encouraged in their aims by segments of the remaining Dutch administration and the KNIL. President Soekawati made a number of inquiries regarding the viability of an independent NIT, even though many members of the NIT cabinet desired the state to be dissolved and merged into the Republic.

Soekawati was only one of many who lacked confidence in the ability of the RIS government to act in the interests of the people of the NIT. Amongst Christians there were those who feared Muslim domination, but even among the region’s Muslims there was concern that they could become second-class citizens in a state overwhelmingly controlled by Javanese. Ex-members of the KNIL and other

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2 The plot was led by Dutch Captain Raymond ‘Turk’ Westerling. On 23 January 1950 Westerling, with 800 troops, captured several key points in Bandung, but was persuaded by his Dutch superiors to withdraw from the city. He then moved to Jakarta where he planned to assassinate several RIS ministers. Westerling’s troops, however, were driven out of Jakarta and in February Westerling himself fled the country in disguise. See Herbert Feith, *The decline of constitutional democracy in Indonesia*, pp.61-63. Shortly before his troops occupied Bandung Westerling was interviewed by an Australian journalist, Osmar White, who asked him who would provide political leadership in Indonesia if he succeeded in overthrowing the government. Westerling replied that there were two men capable of playing this role, ‘Soumokil and Doko’, but that both had already been ‘betrayed’. Chr. Soumokil was a leading figure in the RMS rebellion, discussed further below. The nationalist Doko, however, prided himself on his support for the Republic; it is unexplained by White why Westerling considered Doko a potential leader in any new government. See White, *Time now, time before*, p.194.


members of the community who may have been perceived as pro-Dutch feared that if the NIT merged into the Republic they could face persecution for having opposed the Revolution.\textsuperscript{7} It was perhaps inevitable that these doubts resulted in concrete steps being taken by those concerned to prevent the Republic from gaining control in their region. On 5 April 1950 Lieutenant Andi Aziz and a group of other soldiers who had recently transferred from the KNIL to the new armed forces of the RIS (APRIS; Angkatan Perang Republik Indonesia Serikat) staged a revolt in Makassar. Aziz and his colleagues detained the local APRIS commander and demanded that the NIT be maintained in its current form and rejected the transfer of any troops from Java or other areas into the NIT. Eventually Aziz agreed to surrender, but the RIS government had already organised a transfer of APRIS (ex-TNI) troops to Makassar to end the revolt.\textsuperscript{8} Soekawati presumably felt that the opportunity to declare an independent state had passed and on 21 April he indicated that the NIT was prepared to become part of a unitary Republic of Indonesia.\textsuperscript{9}

The NIT Justice Minister, the Ambonese Dr. Chr. R. S. Soumokil, was one of the senior NIT politicians who favoured independence for the state. He was in Ambon when the news came that troops had landed in Makassar and Soekawati had signalled the NIT’s merger into the Republic. There thus seemed to be no chance of the federal system surviving or of the NIT becoming an independent state. A number of meetings followed in Ambon attended by Soumokil, other federalists, and Ambonese KNIL and PTB members. On 24 April they declared an independent Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS; Republic of South Maluku). Jakarta would not countenance any such separatist movement and resolved to crush the RMS with its superior military might. The RMS soldiers staged a bitter defence of the islands and the fighting lasted several months, but by December the movement was effectively finished. Several RMS leaders managed to escape to Seram island where they held out until the early 1960s. In 1962 Soumokil was captured on Seram and was executed in 1966.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{7}Ricklefs, \textit{A history of modern Indonesia...}, p.221.
\textsuperscript{8}Doko, \textit{Nusa Tenggara Timur...}, pp.235-239. See also Chauvel, \textit{Nationalists, soldiers and separatists...}, pp.333-346.
\textsuperscript{9}Chauvel, \textit{Nationalists, soldiers and separatists...}, p.345.
\textsuperscript{10}Chauvel, \textit{Nationalists, soldiers and separatists...}, pp.247-257, 373-378, 392. The RMS government hoped that the Netherlands and Australia would recognise the breakaway republic, but neither country ever gave any official encouragement to the separatists. A number of RMS leaders did manage to find
There were many KNIL troops in Timor, as well as in Ambon and Makassar, and although the situation in West Timor was much less volatile, the basis for dissent existed there also. In early 1950 Captain Andi Jusuf came to evaluate the position in West Timor and was able to convince the Kupang KNIL commander, Lieutenant J. D. Faah, and many of his soldiers to transfer to APRIS. Jusuf was followed in early May by three APRIS officers led by Captain C. Kodiowa who arrived in Kupang to pave the way for the two battalions that were to be based in the region. Rumours concerning the intentions of the APRIS force were reportedly circulated in Kupang by unnamed ‘reactionaries’ and it was considered necessary to hold a public meeting to allay the people’s fears. The two battalions landed in Kupang early on the morning of 25 May and were welcomed by the Kepala Daerah Timor (Head of Timor Region), Raja Amarasi, H. A. Koroh, who warned the troops to beware of provocation by those who wished to destroy the unity of the Indonesian people. However, as reported by Doko, the greatest damage to community harmony was caused by the APRIS soldiers themselves. Through their words and actions (not specified by Doko) they caused a deal of resentment amongst the people. Despite attempts by nationalist youth groups and local politicians to make the APRIS soldiers aware of the negative atmosphere they were creating the situation grew worse.

Doko states that the tense atmosphere in Kupang caused by the actions of the APRIS soldiers was utilised in an unspecified way by anti-Republican forces to create even greater divisions in the community. As a result feelings ran high between members of APRIS and the KNIL, but there was no open conflict. There were more difficulties, it seems, the following year when Battalion 706, many of whose members were either ex-KNIL or ex-guerillas from Bali, was stationed in West Timor. Resentment between the two groups resulted in an armed confrontation in Kupang. It appears that there was no local cause for the incident, however, and it

refuge in the Netherlands, however, and they continued the political struggle from there. There was some support from Australia also. In 1952 it was reported that a boat left Darwin loaded with arms for RMS fighters in Maluku. In 1954 a certain John Kennedy was arrested for trying to steal an aircraft from Darwin airport. Kennedy had been seeking arms and an aeroplane to take to Maluku for use by the RMS. See NAA: F423, S6; and NAA: F423, S12.

11 Netti and Itu, Kupang..., pp.95-99. See also Doko, Pahlawan..., p.57.
12 Doko, Pahlawan..., p.61.
13 Ibid., pp.62-63.
must have had little local impact as it is not mentioned by Doko or in other Timor related literature.14

Despite misgivings about APRIS from some members of the community there was general support for the Republic from the main political institutions in West Timor. In mid-May 1950 meetings were held of the Dewan Raja-raja and the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat Daerah (DPRD; Regional People’s Representative Council, successor to the Dewan Ra’jat) which resulted in a joint resolution calling for the dissolution of the NIT and its merger into the Republic. Doko reports that leaders of the PDI had been active in promoting this course of action.15 When the question of the transfer of sovereignty from the NIT to the Republic was discussed, says Doko, there was one group in West Timor who wished for the rajas to maintain a role in government, as they had in the past. Yet under the plans for the liquidation of the NIT the rajas would cease to exercise any executive powers. Despite the apprehensions of a few the plans were still implemented. At a meeting of the DPRD on 5 August 1950 Koroh, as Kepala Daerah Timor and head of the Dewan Raja-raja, told the delegates that the time had come for the transfer of sovereignty to the unitary state. The members of the Dewan Raja-raja, he said, were grateful that they had always been able to work together with their colleagues in the DPRD to achieve their goal of independence for the Indonesian people. Under the new system of government, however, the rajas had to relinquish their powers and hand them over to the representatives of the people.16

The Dewan Raja-raja thus ceased to have an executive function and suggestions that it be maintained as an advisory body were rejected. Instead the Dewan was dissolved and the rajas, fettors and temukungs of Timor were encouraged to abandon their traditional rights and remove all forms of kerja-adat (compulsory labour) that they

15 Doko, Pahlawan..., p.53.
16 Ibid., pp.63-68.
had customarily received from their subjects.\textsuperscript{17} The way was still open, however, for traditional rulers to have a role in government as elected representatives. Thus it was that Koroh was again chosen as Kepala Daerah Timor, but due to ill health he did not wish to accept the honour. As a compromise Koroh remained the nominative Kepala Daerah, but his functions as such were performed by his colleagues in the DPRD.\textsuperscript{18}

On 17 August 1950, five years after the original declaration of independence, the NIT and the only other remaining federal state, East Sumatra, were abolished. The RIS then ceased to be and West Timor became a part of the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia. This must have been a satisfying moment for nationalists such as Doko and Koroh who had struggled for many years to see this ideal realised. Koroh, however, did not survive long to enjoy being a citizen of the new state as he died at his palace in Baun on 30 March 1951. He is buried in the Kupang Taman Makam Pahlawan (Heroes’ Cemetery) alongside many of his comrades from the independence struggle.\textsuperscript{19}

Doko has stressed the heroic aspects of that struggle, but even he could not deny the divisions that existed in Timorese society at the time. Without naming individuals he makes it clear that there were those who opposed the unitary state and clung to the federalist ideal. He notes also that there was some opposition to the decrease in the rajas’ powers, presumably from some of the traditional rulers themselves and others who had benefited from the feudal and colonial systems. Doko, however, implies that his colleagues in the NIT parliament, especially his fellow PDI members, were 100% in favour of the abolition of the NIT and its merger into the Republic. Clearly this was not the case as a West Timor representative in the NIT and RIS parliaments, Benyamin Sahetapy Engel (elected PDI chairman in 1948), was one of only five delegates out of 150 who voted in favour of the retention of the federal system. Sahetapy Engel says one of his main motivations for doing so was his concern that Indonesia could become an Islamic state if there was a strong central government based in Jakarta.\textsuperscript{20}

\textsuperscript{17} As noted in Chapter Five, the Dewan had made a resolution to abolish all adat services a year beforehand. Presumably there had been little progress on the issue.

\textsuperscript{18} Doko, \textit{Pahlawan...}, pp.69-73.

\textsuperscript{19} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.72-75; and personal visit to Taman Makam Pahlawan, Kupang, October 2000.

\textsuperscript{20} Sahetapy Engel, interview Kupang, 2 November 2000.
Soekarno and the campaign to ‘liberate’ West Irian

In the same year that West Timor became part of the unitary Republic of Indonesia it got a visit from the country’s first president, Soekarno. As he stepped off the plane at Penfui airfield Soekarno was greeted by Raja Kupang, Alfonso Nisnoni. Soekarno’s visit was for the purpose of boosting nationalist consciousness in the areas that had recently joined the Republic. He wanted also to gain support for the campaign to have Dutch New Guinea (known to Indonesians as Irian Barat, or West Irian) surrendered to Indonesia. Thousands came to hear their president speak. Soekarno made a great impression in Kupang and after his visit people lost no opportunity to hear his speeches on the radio. As there were very few radios at the time it was common for people to crowd around a single set, often in a public location such as a shop. By the early 1960s, according to one informant, Soekarno had so heightened nationalist sentiment in Kupang that there was a general feeling of wanting to participate in the ‘liberation’ of West Irian. Meetings were held, funds were collected and volunteers undertook military training.

In West Timor there were mass demonstrations demanding ‘freedom’ for West Irian. Many such demonstrations were organised throughout Indonesia by the PKI, which used the issue to increase its influence and membership. Just how popular the West Irian case was in West Timor, however, is hard to say. In December 1960 the Australian consul to Portuguese Timor reported that ten Indonesians who had recently crossed the border had been returned to West Timor. It seems the men had been trying to escape recruitment into the army for service in West Irian. In early 1962 a reporter claimed that the people of Kupang had no enthusiasm for the campaign. Be that as it may, the support of the people of Kupang by itself was never going to have much bearing on the matter. Moreover, the case was essentially settled in late 1962 when the Dutch, under pressure from the USA, agreed to hand the territory over to Indonesia.

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21 Dominggus Ratukore, interviews Kupang, 14-18 November 2002.
22 A photograph of such a demonstration appears in Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.203.
23 Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., pp.257-259.
26 Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., p.259.
**Sunda Ketjil, Nusa Tenggara, Nusa Tenggara Timur**

During the Revolution West Timor was considered to be part of the Republic’s Sunda Ketjil province, but the provincial government was effective for a short period in Bali only. With the dissolution of the NIT West Timor again became part of Sunda Ketjil. The province comprised Bali, Lombok and the islands of the former Residency of Timor and Dependencies. The capital was Singaraja, Bali. In 1954 the province’s name was changed to Nusa Tenggara, but the name change did not affect the administration, which continued to operate from Bali. On 14 August 1958, however, Nusa Tenggara was divided into three provinces: Bali, Nusa Tenggara Barat (NTB; West Nusa Tenggara) and Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT; East Nusa Tenggara). West Timor was included in NTT, with Kupang as capital. Excepting Sumbawa, which went to NTB, NTT comprised all the islands that had been part of the old Residency Timor.27

The move to have Nusa Tenggara divided into three provinces was no sudden decision. In a unitary state most important matters are settled at the centre. Under the Indonesian system of the time the provinces had limited decision making ability, but could influence central government policy. Nusa Tenggara, however, was a large, diverse province. People living in Timor or Sumbawa, for example, had vastly different needs and interests to those living in Bali, the location of the provincial parliament. There were many delegations sent to the central government requesting that new, more representative regional governments be formed.28 Such a move, it was hoped, would give greater autonomy to the regions. There had in fact been plans to create new provinces for several years. That those plans were implemented immediately after the occurrence of rebellions in various regions of the archipelago (discussed below) was no coincidence.

**The growth of political activity**

Following the dissolution of the NIT all the major political parties in Java began to solicit members throughout the region, and were particularly active in Kupang.29 In 1953 there were nine political parties in Timor: Partai Katholik Republik Indonesia

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28 Ibid., p.2.
(Republic of Indonesia Catholic Party), Parkindo (Indonesian Protestant Party), Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI; Indonesian Nationalist Party), Persatuan Indonesia Raya, (Greater Indonesia Association), Masjumi (Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims), Partai Sosialis Indonesia (Indonesian Socialist Party), Partai Syarikat Islam Indonesia (Indonesian Islamic Union Party), Partai Buruh (Labour Party), and Pardafie (a continuation of the Lima Serangkai). 30 Pardafie appears to have been the only locally based party. How successful it was is unknown as the author has been unable to discover any other reference to the group. In the meantime the Lima Serangkai’s great rival in West Timor, the PDI, was disbanded following the creation of a unitary state of Indonesia. With that, says Doko, the PDI, as a regional political party, had lost its rationale for existence. Its members were urged to join one of the existing national parties. 31

Doko, one of the main leaders of the PDI, was at the time the NIT Minister of Education, but he did not go on to have a parliamentary career in the new unitary state. In 1951, following the death of H. A. Koroh, he was nominated as Kepala Daerah Timor, but was not appointed to the post, which went to his former PDI colleague, J. S. Amalo. 32 Doko was, instead, invited to head the new education department in Sunda Ketjil. He held the position until 1959 when he became head of the education department for NTT. He retired in 1971. 33 The other PDI representatives in the NIT parliament remained active in parliamentary politics for a while longer. Pendeta Alex Rotti returned from his study trip to the USA and joined Sahetapy Engel in the RIS parliament. The two also held seats in the DPRD in Kupang, where E. R. Here Wila was chairman. Rotti and Sahetapy Engel, however, both retired from parliament in 1956. 34

The 1955 elections

Benyamin Sahetapy Engel ended his parliamentary career as a member of the Partai Rakyat Nasional (PRN; National People’s Party) led by the Minister of Justice, Djodi

30 Republik Indonesia. Sunda Ketjil, p.231.
31 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.246.
32 Netti and Ita, Kupang..., p.102.
33 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., pp.246-247.
34 Sahetapy Engel, interviews Kupang, 2 November 2000 and 15 November 2002. See also Netti and Ita, Kupang..., pp.93-95.
Gondokusumo. According to Sahetapy Engel, Gondokusumo tried to entice him to join the PRN in 1952 by offering him the chairmanship of the Regional Election Committee for District XIV, which covered the area of the former Timor Residency. Sahetapy Engel, however, had an additional demand. He had been contacted by a number of prisoners held in relation to the RMS affair who claimed to be innocent of all wrong-doing. One of them was a Kupang resident who had been arrested while holidaying in Maluku. Sahetapy Engel asked Gondokusumo to have the prisoners’ claims examined. This was done and eventually sixteen prisoners were released. In the meantime Sahetapy Engel became a member of the PRN and accepted the post of chairman of the Election Committee.35

Elections had been planned to take place in Indonesia in early 1946, just a few months after the declaration of independence in August 1945. Various factors, including the unstable conditions, the inexperience of the government in organising such an event, and the perceived need to deal with more pressing matters first, saw the elections postponed several times. Finally, it was announced that elections for the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR; People’s Representative Council) and the Dewan Konstituante (Constituent Assembly, which was to draft a new constitution) were to be held on 29 September and 15 December 1955, respectively.36 As chairman of the Regional Election Committee for District XIV Sahetapy Engel was responsible for preparing all the requirements for holding a general election in the Timor region. This was no minor task. The vote was open to all citizens over the age of eighteen, whereas in previous elections held in Timor the franchise had been very limited. Most electors thus had no experience in direct elections and a great many were illiterate. Another difficulty was the number of candidates: over forty for the Timor region. Despite the obstacles the elections in West Timor were considered a success and were conducted in an orderly and peaceful fashion.37 The same was said of the elections nationwide.38

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36 Herbert Feith, The Indonesian elections of 1955, pp.1-5; see also Komisi Pemilihan Umum, ‘Pemilu 1955’.
38 Komisi Pemilihan Umum, ‘Pemilu 1955’.
The 1955 elections did much to educate the people of Timor about the political process. There were many meetings and rallies, and campaign banners and placards were displayed in the major towns, especially in Kupang. The parties involved were both local and national. The election results which appear in Herbert Feith’s *The Indonesian elections of 1955* show that eight of the nine parties that existed in West Timor in 1953 contested the 1955 election for District XIV. The exception was Pardafie. It may have participated also, but does not appear because Feith only listed those that received 10,000 votes or more.\(^{39}\) The most successful party in the DPR elections nationwide was the PNI. In District XIV, however, it received less than 6% of the vote. The PNI in the region had a vote pooling arrangement with the Front Rakyat (People’s Front), but still failed to perform.\(^{40}\) The Governor of Nusa Tenggara reported that the bad result led other PNI members to chastise their Kupang colleagues.\(^{41}\) The PKI also polled badly. Although it was the fourth most popular party nationally, it received less than half a percent of the District XIV votes. Sahetapy Engel’s party, the PRN, also performed disappointingly. The most popular party for the District was the Partai Katholik with over 40%. Most of its votes were registered in Flores. Next came Parkindo with 18%, and then Masjumi with around 14%.\(^{42}\) The Parkindo vote, presumably, came from the predominantly Protestant areas of West Timor and Sumba island, while the Masjumi vote was concentrated on the mainly Islamic island of Sumbawa, other Muslim strongholds, such as Alor, and in Kupang and the other urban centres.

The 1955 elections may have given the people an opportunity to participate in the political process, but did not produce the results that many had hoped for. No single party won enough votes to govern in its own right. A coalition was formed of the three most successful parties: PNI, Masjumi and the Nahdlatul Ulama (Resurgence of Islamic Scholars). The PKI, whose strong showing in the elections had dismayed the other parties, was intentionally denied a role in government. There were so many divisions within the coalition government, however, that it could not rule effectively. President Soekarno was increasingly frustrated with the parties and suggested the

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\(^{39}\) Feith, *The Indonesian elections...,* p.71.


\(^{41}\) Reksodihardjo, *Report on Lesser Sundas...,* Vol.1, p.36.

\(^{42}\) Feith, *The Indonesian elections...,* pp.78-79.
possibility of curtailing the powers of parliament. The army was in favour of ending parliamentary democracy altogether. The PKI in the meantime was under sustained pressure from the army and the other parties and sided with Soekarno in order to gain his protection. Soekarno reciprocated as he could use the PKI to balance the demands for power made by the parliament and the army and in so doing ensure that he occupied the central position in the running of the country. In 1957 provincial elections were held and the PKI made more gains. The anti-PKI forces were more determined than ever to see the party forced off the scene. Intrigues and machinations of this nature abounded in Jakarta. In the outer islands, West Timor included, the people were far from satisfied. The economy was in a shambles, corruption was rife and there was a general feeling of being neglected by the central government. This feeling was added to in December 1957 when, with encouragement from Soekarno, a number of Dutch owned enterprises were taken over by nationalist trade unions. One of the first was the KPM shipping line. Many of its ships escaped to sea and the services so relied on in the outer islands were dealt a severe blow. At about the same time 46,000 Dutch citizens were virtually forced to leave Indonesia.

There was already widespread dissatisfaction with the number of Javanese posted to the regions by the government, but with the expulsion of the Dutch, many of whom had worked in the recently seized Dutch enterprises, even more Javanese arrived in the outer islands.

**Departure of the Dutch and the arrival of non-Timorese Indonesians**

As discussed in the preceding chapter, many Dutch nationals left Timor during the last months of the NIT. After sovereignty was passed to the RIS, and then the Republic, even more Dutch citizens left the region. Only a few Dutch people remained in Timor after December 1957 when the majority of Dutch citizens left Indonesia. Under the Dutch there had not been much development in West Timor compared to other areas, such as Java and Bali. There were few roads and even fewer vehicles to use them. Some old Kupang residents related to the author that when most of the Dutch left in 1950 there were not many cars in the town and only a small

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44 Feith, *The decline of constitutional democracy*..., pp.583-585; see also Ricklefs, *A history of modern Indonesia*..., p.249.
number of buses. Even bicycles were rare.\textsuperscript{45} On the other hand, the Dutch were not particularly cruel to the people, they provided educational opportunities, and there was usually sufficient food available at reasonable prices, at least in Kupang. The Dutch had brought supplies from Java, but after the Dutch left no new supplies arrived.\textsuperscript{46} For these reasons many people were sad to see the Dutch leave. The greatest emotional link to the Dutch, however, was through the Church. A Timorese man from central Timor told the author that when the Dutch left there was much crying and many farewell feasts. The Dutch were loved, he said, because they had brought the Timorese Christianity. It was not possible to hate the people who had brought them salvation. If not for the Dutch, he said, Timor would have become Muslim, and if there had been no guarantee of freedom of religion then West Timor could never have joined the Republic.\textsuperscript{47}

Many of the Dutch who stayed in West Timor after it became part of the Republic were leaders in the Church. There were some who accused them of remaining only because they wanted to maintain Dutch colonialism; for instance, by opposing the ‘liberation’ of West Irian. There was, however, no tangible basis for these claims and it seems that the Dutch Church leaders’ presence was otherwise generally well regarded. In contrast, the arrival of many Javanese to replace the Dutch who had worked in West Timor’s government offices was not well received.\textsuperscript{48} The new arrivals were rejected on both ethnic and religious grounds. For example, in May 1951 the Ministry of Religious Affairs opened offices at the provincial and regency level throughout Sunda Ketjil. In predominantly Christian Kupang there was great dissatisfaction that all the officials appointed to work in the local office were Muslims. In response to the complaints a Protestant was appointed as Kupang department head in 1952.\textsuperscript{49}

In 1957 the Governor of Nusa Tenggara reported that there existed a ‘Movement of Indigenous Timorese’ who wanted West Timorese to get posts in local government

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{45} Adrie Manafe, interview Kupang, 8 November 2002; and Lani, interview Kupang, 14 November 2002.  
\textsuperscript{46} Lani, interview Kupang, 14 November 2002.  
\textsuperscript{47} Issu, interview SoE, 24 June 2000.  
\textsuperscript{48} Ratukore, interviews Kupang, 14-18 November 2002.  
\textsuperscript{49} Reksodihardjo, \textit{Report on Lesser Sundas...}, Vol.1, p.28.}
and the civil service. The group was in favour of Timorese advancement, but had no ill feelings towards other ethnic groups and was thus not considered a security threat. In the same report, however, it was noted that there had been ‘an affair’ in Timor ‘between some police officers and a Rajah’ leading to conflict with some Javanese and Balinese involved in the matter. ‘Widespread difficulties’ were avoided due to action taken at the regional and provincial levels.\textsuperscript{50} The details in the report relating to this incident are vague to say the least, but they do indicate that there was the potential for ethnic unrest in West Timor at the time.\textsuperscript{51}

Internal migration was another source of potential conflict. Raja Insana, Laurentius Taolin, warned that the Timorese would not accept Balinese migrants to farm the sparsely populated plains of Timor. It would be better, he said, for the plains to be peopled by unemployed Timorese from the mountains and jungle.\textsuperscript{52} Taolin had followed his own advice and encouraged mountain dwellers in his kingdom to relocate to the site of the failed Sekon agricultural project, mentioned in Chapter Five. The government was impressed with Taolin’s efforts in resettling the people, especially as they moved into modern houses along the main road, in line with government policy. The move, of course, also prevented the land from being used by outsiders. Taolin was said to have become anxious over the possibility of Javanese and Balinese resettlement in Timor after visiting densely populated Bali in the early 1950s. He relayed this apprehension to his own people to encourage their relocation to the plains.\textsuperscript{53} Fear of western Indonesian domination appears to have been a real factor in West Timorese thinking in the 1950s.

**Permesta and other regional revolts**

There was dissatisfaction with the central government in many regions of Indonesia in the 1950s caused by corruption, economic mismanagement, Soekarno’s growing alignment with the PKI, and a general belief that Java was unfairly favoured in the

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ibid.}, Vol.2, p.107.
\textsuperscript{51} There was even an attempt to have the Governor, a Javanese, replaced by local man, A. S. Pello (mentioned in Chapter Five for his involvement in the Republican movement). The attempt, however, was party political in nature rather than a result of ethnic tensions. Pello’s failed attempt was supported by a fellow Partai Indonesia Raya member, Minister of the Interior Hazairin. See Magenda, \textit{The surviving aristocracy…}, p.69, n.31; and pp.514-515, n.91.
\textsuperscript{53} Cunningham, ‘People of the Dry Land…’, p.189.
spending of the nation’s development budget. The outer islands, it was felt, were being left behind.\textsuperscript{54} There was concern also in some regions that the central government was not paying proper attention to religion. This issue played a role in the spread of the Darul Islam movement to South Sulawesi and Aceh in the early 1950s. It would also appear to have been a factor in an incident that occurred on Alor in early 1955.

On 13 February 1955 a TNI deserter, Sergeant M. Arsyad Rika, arrived in Alor from Ternate in Maluku. Armed only with a pistol Arsyad Rika led a group of about seventy men wielding swords, machetes and knives in an attack on the police barracks and the local radio station. At the barracks Arsyad Rika’s group managed to seize a number of weapons and ammunition, but was forced to retreat after being fired on by the police. According to an army account of the incident the weapons were to have been handed over to a group called SIAP (Serikat Islam Angkatan Pandu; Islamic Association Scout Force). On 15 February a TNI expedition force arrived from Kupang and captured Arsyad Rika and over one hundred of his followers. The seized weapons were recovered along with those used in the attack on the police barracks. Extra armed forces were then stationed in Alor, but there was no recurrence of unrest and the group SIAP seems to have disappeared.\textsuperscript{55}

Arsyad Rika’s revolt was easily crushed by the armed forces and made little impression in the region. A movement which had far greater impact in Timor and posed a serious threat to the Jakarta government and army headquarters was the Permesta rebellion which began in Makassar in March 1957. Permesta was later linked to another revolt which had begun in December 1956 when army commanders in North and West Sumatra had seized control of the regional governments and demanded changes in both central government policies and personnel. The Sumatran and Sulawesi revolts began as regional affairs with the aim of attaining greater autonomy, but gained covert support from the USA which saw them primarily as convenient tools for toppling the pro-PKI (and therefore, in the American view, pro-

\textsuperscript{54} Dissatisfaction in the regions resulted in a number of revolts. These are dealt with in many works, including Feith, \textit{The decline of constitutional democracy}…; and Ricklefs, \textit{A history of modern Indonesia}…

\textsuperscript{55} ABRI (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia), \textit{42 tahun pengabdian Kodam IX Udayana}, pp.75-76.
communist) Soekarno. Britain, and to a much lesser extent, Australia, gave backing to the movements also. This foreign intervention appears to have had no direct connection with Timor and as the rebellions of the period have been covered in detail elsewhere discussion here will be mainly limited to Permesta insofar as it affected West Timor.56

On 2 March 1957 the regional commander in Makassar, Lieutenant-Colonel H. N. Ventje Sumual, declared martial law for all of eastern Indonesia. A lengthy *Piagam Perdjuangan Semesta Alam* (Permesta; Universal Struggle Charter) that demanded greater autonomy for eastern Indonesia was then read out to Sumual’s officers and a group of prominent civilians.57 A few months later Sumual moved to Manado in North Sulawesi which then became the movement’s stronghold. On 8 March, just days after the Permesta declaration, there was an army coup in South Sumatra as well. Army headquarters in Jakarta responded to these challenges by persuading Soekarno to declare martial law for the whole country on 14 March 1957.58

In the meantime, two days after Sumual’s declaration, a number of soldiers who had been on duty in Makassar returned to Kupang bearing documents relating to Permesta. The local commander, however, was opposed to the movement and it made no headway. Nevertheless, not long afterwards representatives of Permesta arrived in Kupang and received a more positive response from various local leaders.59 It is understandable that some people in West Timor were attracted to a movement that sought to deliver better services to the regions, as those available in Timor were of a low standard compared to much of western Indonesia. The Governor of Nusa Tenggara reported in 1957 that the roads in West Timor were very neglected and needed to be rebuilt, the phone service was dilapidated and in many

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59 ABRI, *42 tahun*..., p.76. Representatives were sent to Kupang to explain Permesta and invite delegates to attend a congress in Makassar to discuss the aims of the movement. A delegate from Flores attended the congress, but there was none from Timor. See Harvey, *Permesta*..., p.58.
places out of service, and inter-island transport was difficult to access with sea connections uncertain and the only air link often booked out a month in advance.  

After the arrival of the Permesta representatives pamphlets and placards began appearing in Kupang expressing intolerance towards government officials and military officers from Jakarta and demanding that those who did not support the Permesta declaration vacate their positions. Youth leaders in Kupang established a Dewan Perwakilan Pemuda Timor (Representative Council of Timor Youth) and held meetings where they spoke of the dangers of the PKI and the need for more development in the region. Many of the youths wore red headbands to show that they were Permesta supporters.  

Gerard Francillon noted that there had been a violent movement in Kupang in 1957 that was known as the Destar Merah, or Red Turbans. The Destar Merah were students, teachers and minor civil servants who wanted to remove all teachers, police and government officials who were either Muslim or Javanese. Permesta had Muslim followers in Sulawesi and was linked to the rebels in Sumatra who were mainly Muslims also. In Kupang, however, support for Permesta was certainly linked to a fear of Muslim domination and was an issue stressed by the youth movement. Many of the soldiers involved in Kupang were ex-KNIL Christians from Manado and Timor. The central army command on the other hand were mainly Muslims who had fought against the Dutch during the Revolution.

Some local schoolteachers who supported Permesta were able to influence their students. There were at the time many Javanese schoolteachers in Kupang. In many cases these teachers were resented because they complained about the limited facilities in Kupang and said the town was backward and boring. The students were encouraged to abuse the Javanese teachers by their pro-Permesta colleagues. Not all the Javanese teachers were targeted, as some were considered to be good people, but a number of them, and one Balinese, were eventually forced to leave Kupang. As they climbed the gangway to board the ship that would take them away from Timor

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61 ABRI, 42 tahun..., p.76.
62 Hendrik Ataupah, interview Kupang, 7 December 2002. Ataupah himself attended the first meeting, but says he took no further part in the movement.
63 Francillon, ‘Some matriarchic aspects...’; p.35.
64 Ratukore, interviews Kupang, 14-18 November 2002.
footprints were visible on the backs of their shirts where they had been kicked by the students. Some of the most militant students were the sons of ex-KNIL soldiers.65

On 4 April the Permesta leaders issued an ultimatum to the Kupang army commander, Major Abdul Latief, to hand over his command to Captain J. D. Faah. Latief’s house and those of other senior officials were encircled by soldiers and youth supporters of the Permesta movement. Latief, however, managed to escape to the jungle. A number of other officers were captured and disarmed and, along with some Javanese officials, were held in the old Dutch fort, Concordia. The youths helped themselves to guns from the fort’s arsenal and began patrols of Kupang’s streets. Apart from a few military vehicles they had the streets to themselves as the town’s people elected to stay indoors.66 On 13 April Sumual himself arrived in Kupang and was given a good reception at a well attended meeting at a local sports field. Many were impressed by his speech.67 At around the same time the military command announced that a local soldier, Major C. J. Kodiowa, was to take over as head of the Kupang garrison.68 Kodiowa reportedly belonged to the small group of military, police and schoolteachers in Kupang who sympathised with and promoted the Permesta cause.69 His appointment did much to calm down the situation in Kupang. According to an official armed forces history of the events, however, the atmosphere in the town was soon tense again as the result of a distribution of weapons and some unspecified religious and racial provocation involving the Dutch Pastor van Wissing.70

There was no blood spilt in Kupang as the result of the Permesta movement, but there existed the potential for ethnic and religious violence. For many months the situation was somewhat uncertain.71 There was some contact between the rebels and the government through trusted intermediaries, such as I. H. Doko and Raja Kupang, Alfonsus Nisnoni.72 On the national level, Soekarno and army headquarters were at

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65 Ataupah, interview Kupang, 7 December 2002; and Manafe, interview Kupang, 8 November 2002.
66 ABRI, 42 tahun..., p.76; and Ataupah, interview Kupang, 7 December 2002.
67 ABRI, 42 tahun..., p.77; and Manafe, interview Kupang, 8 November 2002.
68 ABRI, 42 tahun..., p.77.
69 Manafe, interview Kupang, 8 November 2002.
70 ABRI, 42 tahun..., p.77.
71 Ibid.
72 Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.247; and Leopold Nisnoni, interviews Kupang, 17-19 November 2002.
first willing to be conciliatory to the Permesta rebels and those in Sumatra. Soekarno even visited Kupang in late 1957 and was so relaxed about the situation there that he invited the Governor of Portuguese Timor to attend as well.\textsuperscript{73} In early 1958, however, the situation changed dramatically. On 15 February the Sumatran rebels announced the establishment of an alternative government, the Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia (PRRI; Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia). Two days later they were joined by the Permesta rebels. Soekarno and the army were then determined to crush the rebellion. The airforce bombed major PRRI and Permesta sites in Sumatra and Sulawesi and within weeks of the declaration of PRRI the army began landing in Sumatra. By May they had taken all the major centres. In North Sulawesi the fighting was heavier, but by late June Permesta had been essentially crushed also. Diehard rebels kept up the fight for a further three years, but it was a lost cause.\textsuperscript{74}

With the virtual destruction of Permesta in its heartland the movement was never going to survive in Kupang. Ventje Sumual had warned that West Timor was far too weak to challenge Jakarta.\textsuperscript{75} North Sulawesi was a net exporting region that could fund itself in the battle against the central government, but West Timor relied on subsidies from the centre to maintain basic services and even the supply of food.\textsuperscript{76} Also, in North Sulawesi Permesta had a great deal of support from the general population, but in West Timor it was much more limited. The army estimated that about one hundred of its soldiers in Kupang supported the movement.\textsuperscript{77} There was support also from some members of the police and some schoolteachers and their students. One informant who was himself a student at the time says the number of students involved was probably only twenty or thirty.\textsuperscript{78} There were probably others

\textsuperscript{73} The Governor reported that he found Soekarno charming and related that Soekarno had told him that he had much in common with Portugal’s dictatorial ruler, Salazar; namely, they both believed that democracy should be controlled. See \textit{NAA: A1838/333, 3006/4/3 Part 1}. Soekarno visited Manado around the same time. He made no attempt to denounce Permesta during his stay; see Sulu, \textit{Permesta...pp.15-16}.

\textsuperscript{74} Ricklefs, \textit{A history of modern Indonesia...}, pp.250-251.

\textsuperscript{75} Ataupah, interview Kupang, 7 December 2002

\textsuperscript{76} Permesta in North Sulawesi earned revenue through copra smuggling. West Timor is not a large copra producing area, but in 1957 the Indonesian ambassador to Australia asked the authorities to check if copra from Timor was being smuggled into Darwin. The answer was no. See \textit{NAA: A452/2, 1957/169}.

\textsuperscript{77} ABRI, \textit{42 tahun...}, p.77.

\textsuperscript{78} Manafe, interview Kupang, 8 November 2002.
in Kupang who supported the movement, but in the countryside it is unlikely to have attracted many followers. At the time the majority of rural Timorese had little interest in politics and were more concerned with growing enough food to eat.\textsuperscript{79} Just a few years later the PKI had considerable influence in the countryside through its mass organisation for poor farmers, but Permesta had no comparable vehicle to promote its cause in Timor.

The army had drawn up plans for dismantling Permesta in Nusa Tenggara, but could not put them into effect until after May 1958 because of limited transport.\textsuperscript{80} Well before any troops were landed in Kupang pamphlets were dropped from aeroplanes to tell the people that the movement was finished, but that there was nothing to fear as the government and the army were prepared to forgive those who had been involved.\textsuperscript{81} When the expedition force did land it met no resistance. It detained the soldiers who had been involved in the revolt and disarmed the civilians who had taken weapons from the fort. The leaders of the movement were held for questioning.\textsuperscript{82} It seems that in general there were few consequences for the Kupang Permesta supporters. The schoolteachers continued to be employed and the students were able to complete their studies.\textsuperscript{83} Some who later went to continue their studies in Java, however, found that their names had been placed on a blacklist and they could not graduate.\textsuperscript{84} Most of the military and police Permesta leaders from Kupang were transferred to other areas.\textsuperscript{85} Some of them were pensioned off, but at least one, an airforce lieutenant, is said to have been shot for the prominent role he played in the movement.\textsuperscript{86} In order to limit the possibilities of any further trouble in Nusa

\textsuperscript{79} Sahetapy Engel, interview Kupang, 15 November 2002.
\textsuperscript{80} ABRI, \textit{42 tahun...}, p.77.
\textsuperscript{81} A barber in Kupang delighted for years afterwards in telling the story of how he was halfway through cutting a man’s hair when the first aeroplane circled over Kupang and his client ran away for fear that it would drop a bomb. He only returned to have his haircut finished the following day. Name withheld by request, personal communication, July 2002.
\textsuperscript{82} ABRI, \textit{42 tahun...}, p.77.
\textsuperscript{83} Manafe, interview Kupang, 8 November 2002.
\textsuperscript{84} Ataupah, interview Kupang, 7 December 2002.
\textsuperscript{85} Manafe, interview Kupang, 8 November 2002; Ratukore, interviews Kupang, 14-18 November 2002; and Ataupah, interview Kupang, 7 December 2002.
\textsuperscript{86} Ataupah, interview Kupang, 7 December 2002.
Tenggara there was a general rotation of troops in the areas where there had been appreciable support for the rebellion.\(^{87}\)

According to an official army history eleven armed soldiers involved in the rebellion tried to flee from the expeditionary force in a commandeered truck. Nine later surrendered, but the other two joined up with twelve civilians and escaped into Portuguese Timor.\(^{88}\) In 1959 there were armed uprisings against the Portuguese administration in the districts of Uato Lari and Uato Karbau near Viqueque on the south coast of Portuguese Timor. The rebellion was eventually suppressed with the loss of over 150 lives and about sixty Timorese were exiled for their part in the revolt.\(^{89}\) It is generally reported that the revolt was instigated by fourteen Indonesian military officers who are supposed to have arrived in Portuguese Timor by sea from Sulawesi. They sought asylum from the Portuguese after their involvement in the failed Permesta rebellion and were granted permission to settle, but soon set about inciting the local population to rise up against the colonial government.\(^{90}\) The Indonesian army report does not say what happened to its two officers and the twelve others who crossed over the border into Portuguese Timor, but it is likely that these fourteen people are the same ones who were involved in the 1959 uprisings. In Kupang it seems well known that some soldiers who had been involved in the Permesta movement escaped via Oecusse into Portuguese Timor, were involved in another revolt there and were then exiled to Africa.\(^{91}\)

There are numerous theories as to the aims of the Indonesians in the affair and whether or not they were supported by Jakarta. It is reported that they gained the assistance of the Indonesian consul in Dili, but he is said to have done this on his own initiative without the knowledge of the Indonesian government. He was later recalled and reportedly reprimanded.\(^{92}\) There were also said to be contacts in Kupang who were prepared to supply the rebels with guns.\(^{93}\) Many Portuguese officials

\(^{87}\) ABRI, 42 tahun..., p.78.
\(^{88}\) Ibid., p.77.
\(^{89}\) Xanana Gusmao (ed. Sarah Niner), To resist is to win! The autobiography of Xanana Gusmao, p.16.
\(^{90}\) John G. Taylor, Indonesia’s forgotten war: The hidden history of East Timor, p.21; and Helen Hill, *Fretillen: The origins, ideologies and strategies of a nationalist movement in East Timor*, pp.60-61.
\(^{91}\) Ratukore, interviews Kupang, 14-18 November 2002; and Ataupah, interview Kupang, 7 December 2002.
\(^{92}\) Dunn, *Timor*..., p.33.
\(^{93}\) Taylor, Indonesia’s forgotten war..., p.22.
believed that the Indonesians had been sent to Portuguese Timor specifically to stir up trouble. Jakarta denied any official involvement, saying the fourteen men had deserted from the army in Kupang in mid-1958 and became bandits before fleeing into Portuguese Timor. The Indonesians requested their return, but the Portuguese had accepted them as political refugees. In October 1960 the Australian consul for Portuguese Timor reported that four of the Indonesians were being detained as they were considered the ringleaders of the revolt. One had been killed during the uprisings, but the other nine had just been released. They had been taken to Oecusse and then pushed across the border. The consul reported that they were then placed in gaol in Kupang. According to another account when the Indonesians returned to West Timor they were secretly rewarded.

Consequences of the Permesta rebellion

The Permesta rebellion may have failed, but it had some successes also. Jakarta was forced to concede that the regions had some genuine grievances. The demand for greater regional autonomy was addressed with the creation of new provinces. This seemed to augur well for future regional development. The people of Kupang were proud that their town became the capital of the new province of NTT. It was like the old days of the Residency of Timor and Dependencies. The new province encompassed most of Christian eastern Indonesia. The appointed governor of the new province, W. J. Lalamentik, was not a local man, but a Manadonese. Nevertheless, he was accepted by the majority of the people because he was a

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94 Hill, ‘Freti...’, p.60.
95 A correspondent told the author that his family’s herd of cattle in SoE was stolen at this time by Permesta rebels fleeing Kupang. Name withheld by request, personal communication, July 2002.
97 Ataupah, interview Kupang, 7 December 2002. According to a 1999 report four of the Indonesians involved in the revolt returned to Jakarta in 1966 after being held in Angola, Mozambique and Portugal. They were hailed as war heroes and offered positions in the TNI. One chose not to join the army and was immediately awarded a veteran’s pension and another as a perintis kemerdekaan (pioneer of independence). See Frans Sarong, ‘Jeremias Pello: Pejuang Timtim yang kesepian’, Kompas, 21 May 1999. Whatever their real intentions the Indonesians were remembered fondly in the mid-1970s by those East Timorese who wished to break away from the Portuguese. For members of the independence-seeking UDT and Freti parties the Indonesians were recalled as anti-colonialists who were willing to act in solidarity with the East Timorese against the Portuguese. The Apodeti party members, on the other hand, saw the events of 1959 as an attempt by the East Timorese, with the help of the Indonesian officers, to integrate East Timor into Indonesia. In Uato Lari and Uato Karbau enduring bonds were formed with Indonesia as a result of the revolt and liurai from the area became members of the pro-Indonesian Apodeti. See Gusmao, To resist is to win..., pp. 16, 44; and Hill, ‘Freti...’, p.62.
Christian and an experienced government official. There were few Timorese at the time who had his skills.  

In some respects, however, the Permesta revolt resulted in even less representation for the regions. Many of the military commanders in the outer islands were removed and by the 1960s Javanese formed 60-80% of the officer corps while comprising only about 45% of the population.  

Soekarno gave even greater preference to the PKI and encouraged other parties hostile to the army, especially the PNI. The president and the army, however, were both still unsatisfied with the parliamentary system and pressed the Dewan Konstituante to abandon its task of writing a new constitution and instead endorse a return to the constitution of 1945. That constitution gave a strong role to the president, but also to ‘functional groups’ such as the army. When the Dewan refused to comply Soekarno re-enacted the constitution by decree in July 1959. The Dewan was then dissolved. The following year the parliament elected in 1955 was dissolved also and replaced by a new, appointed parliament. The transition to ‘guided democracy’ was now complete.  

Another result of the PRRI and Permesta rebellions was the reaction to the nations which had supported the rebels. As well as the USA, Britain and Australia there were many indications of support having been given by Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines and South Korea. Taiwan in particular was targeted for retribution. Businesses run by pro-Taiwan Chinese were taken over by the army, and the nationalist party of Taiwan, the Kuomintang, was banned. An unintended result of this last measure was that it gave the PKI a virtual monopoly on the political support of the influential local Chinese community.  

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98 Ratukore, interviews Kupang, 14-18 November 2002. According to Magenda there were at least two local candidates for the position: I. H. Doko and A. S. Pello. As already mentioned, Pello had failed in an earlier attempt to unseat the previous governor. See Magenda, ‘The surviving aristocracy…’, p.524, n.120.  
99 Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., p.252.  
100 Feith, The decline of constitutional democracy..., pp.591-593.  
101 Soekarno had desired an Indonesian style of democracy based on consensus. He derided western democracy as that of ‘50 per cent plus one’. His model called for strong leadership from the top and was labelled by him demokrasi terpimpin, or guided democracy. Soekarno had promoted this idea publicly since 1956. See Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., pp.239, 241, 245-246.  
102 Ibid., pp.251-252. Although there were many Chinese anti-communists.
Rise and fall of the PKI

The PKI was at its zenith in 1965, but was banned in mid-1966. The ban, which is still in effect, came in the aftermath of the so-called communist coup attempt in Jakarta of 30 September-1 October 1965, when six of Indonesia’s top army generals were killed. The role of the PKI in those events is still being debated. It has been suggested that the ‘coup’ was engineered by General Soeharto, who took over as president from Soekarno soon afterwards, and had little to do with the PKI at all. The American CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) has been implicated also.103 The real truth of the matter may ultimately prove impossible to find, but what is not denied is that following the ‘coup’ hundreds of thousands of PKI members, supporters and suspected sympathisers were slaughtered across the archipelago, including on Timor.104 In the meantime the PKI was demonised by the Soeharto regime and it was common practice for his opponents to be branded as ‘communists’. It is only since Soeharto’s demise that many Indonesians have been willing to talk about the PKI, but for many others it remains a taboo subject.105

Throughout the 1950s it seems that there was still little communist activity in the Timor region. Nevertheless, when it was discovered it appears that it was as little welcomed by the Indonesian authorities as it had been by the Dutch. In 1947 the Dutch had uncovered an opposition movement on the island of Adonara. The members of the Kumpulan Indonesia Merdeka (Independent Indonesia Association) were gaoled by the Dutch, but released in 1950. They then formed the Persaudaraan Kaum Tani Indonesia (PKTI; Brotherhood of Indonesian Farmers) and, again based on Adonara, were involved with road building and health programs. The group then staged a revolt and their leaders were back in gaol in the mid-1950s. At their trials they admitted that they were communists and that PKTI really stood for Partai Komunis Tjabang Indonesia (Communist Party, Indonesian Branch).106


104 There are no precise figures for how many people were killed, but the consensus is that 500,000-1,000,000 is not unlikely and the figure could be much higher. For a list of various estimates, see Robert Cribb, ‘Problems in the historiography of the killings in Indonesia’, in Robert Cribb (ed.), The Indonesian killings 1965-1967; Studies from Java and Bali, p.12.

105 For this reason the names of some informants have been withheld.

The growing influence of communists within the Protestant Church in Timor was raised as an issue at the Church’s 1958 general assembly, but not pursued. At the time the PKI was just starting to expand, but by the early 1960s its influence in West Timor had reached unprecedented proportions. The growth of the PKI’s influence on the national scene in the early 1960s had been helped in no small part by President Soekarno who had promoted the concept of Nasakom (Nasionalisme Agama Komunisme; Nationalism Religion Communism) as a guiding principle of the Indonesian nation. One of Soekarno’s aims in doing this was to balance the competing forces in Indonesia and to prevent any one, including the army, from gaining the upper hand. The worsening economic situation of the early 1960s favoured the PKI also as it offered help to poor farmers and campaigned strongly on the need for land reform. In West Timor much of the land was in the hands of the rajas and other traditional leaders. Other parties supported land reform also, but the PKI was most vocal.

While many Church members in the Timor region looked askance on Soekarno’s flirtation with the PKI, many others saw in him the Church’s protector. They recognised that Soekarno had been instrumental in blocking the push for Indonesia to become a Muslim state, especially through his promotion of the state philosophy Pancasila, which guaranteed Christians the right to observe their religion. Some of the region’s most educated people, schoolteachers and lecturers at the regional university in Kupang, are said to have joined the PKI and at the same time remained the Kumpulan Indonesia Merdeka was first formed in Flores in December 1945; see Nasution, Sekitar perang kemerdekaan Indonesia. Jilid 1, p.428. For a detailed account of the PKTI and its leader, Buang Duran, see R.H. Barnes, ‘Fransiskus/Usman Buang Duran: Catholic, Muslim, Communist’, Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Vol.159, No.1, 2003.

107 NAA: A1838/280, 3038/2/2/2.
109 Legge, Indonesia, pp.161-162.
110 Ratukore, interviews Kupang, 14-18 November 2002.
111 There are five components to Pancasila, only one of which concerns religion. It states that all Indonesians must believe in God and belong to one of the major world religions: Islam, Christian Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism or Buddhism (more recently Confucianism has become accepted also). In 1950, when West Timor became subject to Pancasila, Christianity was on the rise in the region, but the majority of the people still adhered to their local animist religion. Initially this caused few problems, but became a matter of great concern towards the end of the period of this study, as explained below.
members of the Gereja Masehi Injili Timor (GMIT; Timor Evangelical Christian Church). They were also some of the most vocal supporters of Nasakom, believing that what they were doing was supported by the president and was therefore the proper course of action in the national interest. Additionally, many pendetas in rural Timor could relate to PKI demands for land reform and social justice as there was great poverty in the countryside and the GMIT itself had a very weak social welfare program. On the other hand, in the Belu region of West Timor near the East Timor border the majority religion is Catholicism and the Church in that area was said to have been less troubled by the PKI. This might have been true in relation to PKI infiltration of the Church, but it seems that the party managed to gain many adherents among the common people. In 1963 it was reported that the PKI affiliated Barisan Tani Indonesia (BTI; Indonesian Farmers’ Front) already had over 16,000 members in the area.

While individual Church members were able to reconcile being active in the Church and the PKI at the same time, the Protestant Church hierarchy was aware that it faced a big problem. The increased influence of the PKI had been noted in 1958, but at the June 1960 GMIT general assembly it was acknowledged as a serious matter because a number of ministers and Church elders had joined the party. A letter was then sent to all members warning against communism and advising them that if they did not leave the party by 31 December 1960 they would lose their place on Church councils. Eventually one minister was dismissed and another was suspended for refusing to disavow communism.

The head of the PKI for Timor and the surrounding islands, Thobias (As) Paulus Rissi, then paid a visit to a senior member of the GMIT synod. At the meeting Rissi became agitated and launched into a series of rhetorical questions: ‘Do you know who is Soekarno? Do you know what is Nasakom? Do you know that all who oppose Nasakom will be ‘run-over’?’ He then demanded that the GMIT should not bother

114 NAA: A1838/280, 3038/2/2/2.
the PKI and then in turn the PKI would not bother the GMIT. Rissi also expressed his anger in a PKI newsletter widely distributed in Kupang in which he attacked the Moderator of the GMIT and various non-communists in the local government. Another of his targets was the Methodist Reverend G. S. Dicker, who had lived in West Timor since 1955. In one of his sermons Dicker had been critical of the PKI so he was now labelled as an ‘imperialist meddler’ who should be expelled.

While the PKI in Timor was critical of senior Church figures on a personal level, it did not discourage Church membership. As far as the PKI was concerned it was perfectly all right to be a member of the party and a member of the Church at the same time. Far from trying to turn the people away from the Church PKI members are reported to have used its popularity to try and entice unsophisticated new members by telling them that PKI stood for Partai Kristen Indonesia (Indonesian Protestant Party). In fact this party used the abbreviation Parkindo.

The PKI became a force to be reckoned with on Timor. In some places PKI members were threatening to take over the congregations and church organisations and in a very few places the anti-PKI elements had been forced out. The PKI and its associated organisations, such as the BTI, were practically in control in many villages, and the means used to sign up illiterate farmers were deceptive to say the least. People were promised the end of taxation, the end of compulsory communal labour and a vehicle for every family. Apart from the modern addition of a vehicle, the promises are basically the same as those made by Christian Pandy and the Sarekat Rajat back in 1925. The parallels go further than that because there was in some places a campaign against the local raja also. Raja Amarasi, Victor Koroh, nephew of the raja Pandy was instrumental in having dismissed in the 1920s, was a particular target. Ironically, this was partly because he was a fairly enlightened ruler who tried to modernise his kingdom in areas such as education and trade. This made him a favourite of the government which liked to use his kingdom as a showplace for

115 Former member GMIT synod, name withheld by request, interview Kupang, 3 November 2000.
116 NAA: A1838/280, 3038/2/2/2.
117 Ibid.
119 Cooley, Benih yang tumbuh..., p.20; and former member GMIT synod, interview Kupang, 3 November 2000.
120 Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’, pp.84-85.
visitors. Koroh’s reforms threatened to breathe new life into the institution of the
kingdoms, so the PKI retaliated with ‘anti-feudal’ propaganda.121

The real extent of support for the PKI in Timor is hard to estimate. As already
indicated many people were enticed to join the party and its associated organisations
because of false promises or on the understanding that they were joining a totally
different organisation (Partai Kristen Indonesia). Webb has suggested the likelihood
that many uneducated peasants joined the PKI simply because their minister or
village teacher told them to. Yet even the ministers and teachers, some of the best
educated people in the community, often had only a vague understanding of Marxist
ideology and the meaning of communism.122 Under these circumstances one must be
wary when faced with statements about the extent of PKI membership in Timor, as it
does not necessarily reflect a total commitment to communist ideology, as generally
understood.123 Infiltration into the Church should not be over-emphasised either, and
it may be, as Webb states, that many of those who were members of both the PKI
and the Church had some belief in the ideas of both institutions, but were not deeply
committed to either.124 On the other hand, there is no reason to believe that PKI
members in Timor were any less sincere in their Christian beliefs than any other
members of the Church. Many had been brought up in religious families, including
PKI head As Rissi, whose own father was a minister.125 Another example is
Francesca Fanggidaej, granddaughter of a Rotenese bible-translator and activist in
the PKI women’s movement.126 Finally, there is the testimony of the wife of the head
of the Nunhila PKI branch in Kupang, whose husband was killed in 1965. She claims
that she came from a very religious family, that her husband sang in the church choir
and that all the PKI members she knew were members of the Church. They were all

123 The main offenders on this score are the many books and articles which appeared after the so-
called ‘Timor Revival’ which was concurrent with the events surrounding the ‘coup’. For example,
see Kurt Koch, Revival in Indonesia, p.159, where he states without qualification that ‘40,000
communists’ converted to Christianity on Timor. The ‘Revival movement’ is covered in greater detail
below.
125 Maria Patty Noach, interview Kupang, 30 June 2000; and J. J. Fox, ‘The “Movement of the Spirit”
in the Timor area: Christian traditions and ethnic identities’, in J. J. Fox (ed.), Indonesia: The making
of a culture, p.285.
126 Fox, Harvest of the palm..., p.195.
Christians before they became communists. She said she did not know where the idea came from that communists did not believe in God.127

There were many reasons why people may have joined communist organisations in West Timor in the 1960s. A good example is the case of the Nabuasa clan of Amanuban in central Timor outlined by McWilliam. At the time of the Dutch conquest the Nabuasas had been struggling to maintain their autonomy from the Nope clan, but when the Dutch recognised the Nopes as the ruling clan in Amanuban the Nabuasas were forced to submit. It seems that some Nabuasa leaders joined the PKI in the early 1960s in an attempt to reassert their clan’s autonomy from the Nopes. Another reason may have been as a reaction to some local Christians who were opposed to the traditional animistic practices still carried out and supported by members of the Nabuasa clan. In both cases the clan leaders’ actions were self-defeating. Following the 1965 ‘coup’ many senior Nabuasa figures were killed and the suspicion attached to the survivors meant that the chances for any political autonomy for the clan were far less than before.128 Meanwhile, the Soeharto regime’s insistence that all citizens belong to one of the recognised major religions made it even more difficult to defend maintaining traditional animist beliefs. The Nabuasa case also highlights another aspect of the PKI in West Timor in the 1960s and that is that the party seemed to be all things to all people. In Amarasi the PKI was anti-feudal, but in Amanuban the Nabuasa clan looked to the PKI to help it re-establish its traditional authority. And the leaders of the Nabuasa clan looked to the PKI to protect their animist beliefs from attack by members of the Church, whilst elsewhere the PKI encouraged the notion that it was a ‘Christian-friendly’ organisation.

Webb relates that on the predominantly Catholic island of Flores the PKI managed to gain a foothold among the poor farmers by promising land reform, but that as on Timor the people’s understanding of the tenets of communism was next to nil. Webb surmises that some of these people may have joined the PKI simply to bring some adventure and excitement into their otherwise dull and weary lives. He relates also the story of the PKI members on the island of Solor, between Flores and Timor, who declared that after the PKI took over it would dig out the mountain behind the town,

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127 Name withheld, interviews Kupang, 7 July 2000 and 4 November 2000.
128 McWilliam, ‘From Lord of the Earth to Village Head...’, p.135.
revealing a waterfall and sacks of rice, which would provide food for all. After that a ship would arrive bringing more sacks of rice. As Webb points out, the poverty and uncertainty on Solor at the time was as great as anywhere in the region and this improvised ‘cargo-cult’ must have brought some comfort to its adherents. That the PKI members of Solor also claimed to be good Catholics indicates that neither Christianity nor politics was capable of providing the necessary answers during those troubled times.

Another type of ‘cargo-cult’ was started in Timor by Balthasar Klau that clearly linked the PKI with traditional magic and witchcraft. Simon Schaper was the local Catholic priest in the area where Klau lived on the south coast of the Belu region. He knew Klau well in the 1950s and 1960s and gives a detailed account of the development of his movement. The picture that Schaper paints is that of an extremely ambitious man who manipulated traditional beliefs to entice gullible people to join the PKI. This may be true, but it is possible that both Klau and his followers had no difficulty in reconciling the indigenous animist religion and the ideology of the PKI. Klau undertook a number of actions to undermine the authority of the local rajas, in line with long-standing PKI practice on Timor, but it seems this may have been done more out of spite due to Klau’s failure to achieve his own ambition to become a raja. That Klau’s association with the PKI may have been little more than opportunistic is suggested also by the fact that he was previously a member of both the Partai Katolik (Catholic Party) and the PNI. Of course, Klau may have been in the PKI all along and membership of the other parties was part of a long-term strategy. Without more information it is impossible to know.

Balthasar Klau was related to Raja Lakekun and claimed that the position was rightly his. He failed to win any support for his cause and was then active in campaigns against the traditional rights of the rajas, such as the right to receive a portion of the harvest. Such rights were part of the local adat, which Klau always claimed to support. Klau’s record in attending local adat ceremonies, however, was poor and he

broke many of the local restrictions. Most of the adat authorities therefore ignored Klau, but he built up a following when he started working as a makdok. A makdok is a traditional healer who claims to have access to the spirits of the ancestors and Klau was helped in his movement as his house at Aubot was not far from Masin Lulik, the spot where it was believed the ancestors’ spirits dwelled. Two female makdoks joined Klau as his concubines and he attracted other followers who retailed amulets and magic formulas. Klau claimed that through a number of ceremonies he would achieve a great feat and unite the spirit world with the world of the living. When this was achieved there would no longer be any need to work and the people would be freed of all the restraints of adat and religion. The adat elders said that this was impossible, but this just made Klau seem even more powerful.131

One of Klau’s great supporters was Willem Asa, a former schoolteacher who in 1962 became PKI secretary for south Belu. Klau also had contact with Edja, PKI secretary of Atambua, and the local leader of the BTI, Fanus Pinai. Schaper views Klau’s role for the PKI as being to undermine all authority: that of the adat elders, the Church and the government. This would then leave an empty shell for ‘atheistic communism’. Schaper noted that in the area where Klau was active there was a marked decline in church attendance. In the meantime, however, Klau pushed on with his program. In October 1964 he sacrificed a red buffalo, three red pigs and a red hen. This would ‘drive away the devil’ and prepare the ground for the final ceremony which would take place in 1965. In that ceremony two large canoes, the Ro Kukun (the Spirit Boat) and the Ro Roman (the People’s Boat), would sail down the river to the sea with Klau on board. They would later return loaded with an abundance of useful goods and luxuries.132

In January 1965 Klau opened a savings bank and loan office and used the entrance fees to pay for the preparations for the great final ceremony. He signed people up also for three co-operative organisations and had no shortage of applicants. Klau collected the fees and the new members were handed a PKI membership card. The Catholic bishop of Atambua became alarmed at the progress of this movement and finding that neither Klau nor his communist supporters would heed his advice he

excommunicated them. The action seems to have had no effect and the people gathered at Aubot to rehearse the final ceremony. There they sang versions of Nasakom songs while they waited for the great day. The ceremony, however, was never carried out. When news broke of the failed ‘coup’ in Jakarta Klau disappeared. It later emerged that he had been executed, as had scores of other PKI members from the area.  

The fantastic promises of people like Balthasar Klau were used to entice some Timorese to become members of the PKI, while vague promises of material goods or land played a role in attracting many of the rural poor, but there were sometimes specific promises made to more sophisticated city people. Such was the case with Andreas Yohannes, who in the mid-1960s was the head of the Department of Social Services in Kupang. Yohannes had a cousin who was a PKI member and says he was approached by this cousin with the offer that if he joined the party he would recommend that Yohannes be made a bupati (regent). Yohannes rebuffed the approach and does not know what happened to his cousin apart from that he was taken to Java after 1965 and never returned. While Yohannes turned down the offer to join the PKI, there were other senior government figures in Kupang who were said to have already joined the party, such as the head of the Information Department. The local army commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Soetarmardji, and the local head of the government radio station, R. Amir Tjiptoprawiro, were also said to be PKI members.

Because of Soekarno’s promotion of Nasakom the PKI established a degree of respectability. From as early as the beginning of 1961 As Rissi was chosen as one of the three members representing the Timor region in the Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat (MPR; People’s Consultative Assembly) and by 1965 there were fifteen members associated with the PKI in the local parliament. Other PKI members were in the army and in senior positions in government, as mentioned, and yet others

134 There are four regencies in mainland West Timor.
135 Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000.
137 NAA: A1838/280, 3038/2/2/2; Tari, Memori..., p.109; and Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.5.
were working as teachers or were associated with the Church. The PKI had a number of affiliated organisations which attracted many members in Timor, including the trade union organisation, SOBSI; the BTI for peasant farmers; the women’s group, Gerwani; a students’ group and others. With so many people from all walks of life, including some very prominent ones, being associated with the PKI, the party seemed quite respectable. In the rural areas the PKI had attracted interest with its demands for land reform. The propaganda of the PKI emboldened a number of landless farmers to take part in aksi sepihak (unilateral actions) where land was taken away from rajas, fettors and temukungs.138 The PKI also gave much immediate practical help. Drought and harvest failures in 1964 and 1965 resulted in widespread famine in West Timor. Food prices soared and on top of the existing economic stagnation it was almost impossible for many families to get enough to eat. In many cases it was the PKI who brought relief in the shape of food and money. Many people then joined the party out of gratitude.139

The PKI was of course not universally loved in Timor and many people were suspicious of it and often openly hostile. It had members, for example, in the army and the Church, but it had many more opponents in those two institutions. The PKI had broad appeal in promoting social and economic equity. This was welcomed by some of Timor’s secular elite and many members of the army and Church, but rejected by others who saw the PKI as a threat to their positions. To them the PKI was opportunistic, atheistic and anti-capitalist. With Nasakom Soekarno had tried to balance the forces competing for power in Indonesia, but by late 1965 his authority was waning and he could not keep those forces under control. As a result, many people on Timor who had allied themselves with the PKI were left in a very vulnerable position.

According to the Soeharto regime version of events the PKI had planned a nationwide slaughter of its opponents to follow the 30 September Jakarta ‘coup’. This was to apply in Timor also and a PKI official was sent to Kupang in mid-

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138 After 1965 most of this land was returned as it had been taken illegally. Ratukore, interviews Kupang, 14-18 November 2002.
139 Patty Noach, interview Kupang, 30 June 2000; and Webb, ‘The sickle and the cross...’, p.100.
September 1965 to pass on the relevant instructions of the PKI Politburo. On 27 September As Rissi convened a meeting to establish a Revolutionary Council and to discuss the removal of government officials and religious leaders. The chairman of the council was to be army commander Soetarmadji. However, the people learnt what had been happening in Jakarta and when they realised that the Revolutionary Council was being manipulated by the PKI their anger could not be contained. The people then gathered in their thousands in Kupang to call for the destruction of the ‘30 September Movement’. A new army chief was then appointed to restore security.  

One of the more remarkable things about this official version of events is that Timor is given so much attention. Many other areas are merely mentioned in passing or not at all. It may have been that PKI activity was more intensive in Timor than some of the other regions, but it is impossible to know due to the dearth of information. For Timor itself there are a few fragmentary press accounts of events there at that time and one or two mentions in other sources, but the main source is oral accounts. Most of these have to be taken at face value, but they can be checked one against the other and with the small amount of documentary evidence.

A useful document in this regard is the report written by Brigadier-General El Tari concerning the period 1968-1972, when he was governor of NTT. Tari outlines also the events that occurred in Timor before he became governor and was still a serving soldier. In the report there is a photograph of General Achmad Yani with Lieutenant-Colonel Soetarmadji taken in Kupang on 28 September 1965; just two days before Yani was killed in Jakarta in relation to the ‘coup’. The text with the photograph states that Yani was to have been killed by the PKI and that Soetarmadji was involved in the plot. This is a revelation! If Yani had been killed in Kupang before the ‘coup’ in Jakarta actually happened it would surely have had a great influence on the course of events. Tari gives no further details, but it is said that during his stay in Kupang General Yani was always followed around by As Rissi and the rumour later circulated that there had been an attempt to kill Yani with a poisoned apple. Concerning Soetarmadji’s involvement a former member of the GMIT synod recalls

140 Gerakan..., pp.115-116.  
141 Tari, Memori..., pp.32-33. A similar story is told in ABRI, 42 tahun..., p.92.
that after the news of the ‘coup’ in Jakarta had reached Kupang a weeping 
Soetarmadji called him and other community leaders into his office where he offered 
his apologies for all that had happened.\textsuperscript{142} The person concerned did not necessarily 
see this as an admission of complicity, but one wonders what else it might have 
meant. On the other hand, it does not sound like the action of a man who had been 
planning ruthlessly to kill all the people he had invited to his office.

El Tari gives a good picture also of the political milieu in Timor around the time of 
the ‘coup’. The PKI had a newspaper, \textit{Pelopor (Pioneer)}, which he says it used to 
stir up the people against the government. The BTI and other PKI organisations 
across Timor were trying to do the same. In 1965 the streets of Kupang were covered 
with PKI propaganda posters concerning Nasakom, the need for ‘revolutionary 
leaders’, and land reform. On the other hand, all the people at the time were 
concerned with national issues and a mass meeting in Kupang in April 1964 drew a 
crowd of 10,000 who all declared their will to destroy the ‘puppet state’ of 
Malaysia.\textsuperscript{143} In 1965 there was another mass meeting in Kupang to support Soekarno 
going to the Asia-Africa Conference, and in the same year there was an all-party 
conference on Nasakom.\textsuperscript{144} The PKI did not have a monopoly on political activity in 
Timor in 1965.

Whether or not the PKI had been planning any action in Timor at the time of the 
‘coup’ remains problematical. There is certainly a widespread belief today that they 
planned many killings. In the forest near the central Timor town of SoE communists 
are supposed to have dug graves in which to bury the \textit{bupati} and other government 
officials. In the event it was the communists themselves who filled the graves. In 
Kupang it is said that ‘black lists’ were found of prominent Church leaders and 
others who had opposed the PKI and who were to have been liquidated. Their bodies 
were to have been disposed of in an open drain leading to the sea. At other sites in 

\textsuperscript{142} Former member GMIT synod, interview Kupang, 3 November 2000.
\textsuperscript{143} Tari, \textit{Memori...}, pp.260-279. A ‘Crush Malaysia’ campaign began in early 1963 following the 
announcement that Malaya, Singapore and the British territories in Borneo (which shared borders with 
Indonesia) would be united into the new state of Malaysia. Because Malaysia would be host to British 
bases and seemed to be an entirely British creation Soekarno condemned it as a neo-colonial plot. He 
proclaimed its existence unacceptable to Indonesia and began the undeclared war, or Konfrontasi 
(Confrontation), which lasted until his downfall following the 1965 ‘coup’. For more, see Ricklefs, \textit{A 
history of modern Indonesia...}, pp.260-264, 266, 268, 274.
\textsuperscript{144} Tari, \textit{Memori...}, p.279.
Kupang the communists had dug graves for their victims, but as in SoE it turned out that they had dug their own graves. And so it goes on. These simple stories sound apocryphal and self-justifying, but there are some more detailed reports of planned PKI action. Dr. Maria Patty Noach recalls that there was an air-raid practice held in Kupang just before the ‘coup’. A number of Christian leaders and non-communist government officials were gathered together and taken out of town. Nothing happened and eventually they all returned home, but the next day they learnt of the ‘coup’ in Jakarta. Patty Noach surmises that they were to have been killed, but for some reason the order never came through and they were released. John Hughes had recorded a similar story where non-communist officials and their spouses were gathered outside Kupang for a ‘special briefing’, but when the local army units refused to align themselves with the communist plotters the people were returned unharmed. The truth in these cases will probably never be known, but it would seem that most PKI members in Timor were as surprised to hear about the ‘coup’ in Jakarta as everybody else. Simon Schaper knew of the events in Jakarta from reports on Radio Australia, but suspected that the local communist leaders in Belu knew nothing of what had been happening. They coolly carried on their daily activities and continued to give him their casual greetings until they were captured by the military, several days after the ‘coup’. The wife of the head of the PKI’s Nunhila branch recalls that her husband and his associates knew nothing about the ‘coup’ and were very surprised.

Tari reports that it took some time for the people of Timor to respond to the news of the ‘coup’, but that on 28 October 1965 there was some ‘spontaneous action’: the houses of As Rissi and other PKI leaders were pelted with stones; some PKI members were captured by local youths, although he does not say what they did with them; and all the signboards in Kupang with the initials PKI were pulled down. All this is said to have occurred ‘without incident’. At mass meetings in Kupang on 20 November 1965 and again on 17 January 1966 ten thousand people are supposed to

145 Nope, interview SoE, 26 June 2000; Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’, pp.85-86; Former member GMIT synod, interview Kupang, 3 November 2000; and Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000.
146 Patty Noach, interview Kupang, 30 June 2000.
147 Hughes, *Indonesian Upheaval*, pp.142-143.
149 Name withheld, interviews Kupang, 7 July 2000 and 4 November 2000.
have declared their loyalty to Soekarno and ‘the revolution’, but demanded that the PKI and all its associated organisations be dissolved. The PKI is declared to have already ‘voluntarily’ disbanded itself on 11 January 1966. Tari admits that further action was taken also and without going into detail says that the PKI was ‘wiped out’, ‘down to the village level’, by the government and army with the help of the people.\textsuperscript{150}

It seems that the army and the police rounded up all the known PKI members and the most prominent ones, such as Rissi and Soetarmadji, were taken away to Jakarta or Denpasar. (Most were never seen again, but Rissi is said by several sources to have returned to Kupang to live in the 1990s.) A handful of PKI activists were formally arrested and gaoled.\textsuperscript{151} Then the killings began. On Timor these were organised by the army, but the leaders of the other political parties and the heads of government departments were ordered to attend, presumably in order to share the guilt.\textsuperscript{152} Many did not want to and Yohannes recalls how he delegated one of his staff to go in his place. When the man returned the interior of the departmental vehicle was covered in blood. Questioned as to what had happened he replied that one of the PKI members being transported to his death had tried to escape so he was shot and then his body loaded back into the car. The vehicle was hastily cleaned up. Yohannes heard that some of those who had been shot were not yet dead when they were buried.\textsuperscript{153} Many of those killed were schoolteachers and low-level government officials.\textsuperscript{154} Some of the latter had no connection with the PKI apart from that they had been ordered by their superiors at some time to wear SOBSI badges or the like and photographs of this were produced as ‘evidence’ of their ‘guilt’.\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{150} Tari, Memo... , pp.281, 284-287.
\textsuperscript{151} Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000; Patty Noach, interview Kupang, 30 June 2000; name withheld, interviews Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000; and Ratukore, interview Kupang, 7 July 2000.
\textsuperscript{152} Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000; Patty Noach, interview Kupang, 30 June 2000. It was reported that an unnamed western visitor to Kupang was invited to witness some of the executions as well, but was told that all who witnessed the killings must take part in them also; see Seth S. King, ‘The great purge in Indonesia’, \textit{New York Times Magazine}, 8 May 1966.
\textsuperscript{153} Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000.
\textsuperscript{154} Patty Noach, interview Kupang, 30 June 2000; Name withheld, interviews Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000.
\textsuperscript{155} Ratukore, interview Kupang, 7 July 2000.
Some GMIT ministers were able to save lives when they stepped in to counter the false claims being made to the army by opportunists who were trying to settle old scores. There were also some ministers and many teachers from GMIT schools who were arrested and interrogated as communist sympathisers. At least one pendeta, a few other Church officials and a number of teachers were killed. Webb was told that some Chinese who were killed as communist sympathisers on Timor were simply money-lenders who were removed in order to clear outstanding debts. The Chinese were clearly targeted, however, as the Pecinaan (Chinese quarter) which had existed in Kupang since the nineteenth century was completely destroyed. The temples and schools were closed, Chinese organisations were disbanded and many of those not killed fled the city never to return. There are said to be a number of mass graves around Kupang and numerous others on Timor where the victims were buried. An Australian businessman who visited Timor a few years after the killings was shown a spot outside Kupang by a government official where hundreds of suspected communists were said to be buried. The official admitted that many innocent people were killed along with the communists; a point generally agreed to in Timor today by those who are willing to discuss the matter. All sources agree that the number who died must be at least in the hundreds, but some put the figure at 2,000 or more.

156 The ‘old scores’ that were settled would appear to have been mainly personal enmities. There is no evidence that they were political in nature. There is no evidence either that grudge killings by members of the public were used to deflect blame from the military, as the army is said to have carried out most of the killings on Timor, including those based on ‘information received’. It is difficult to make solid conclusions on these matters, however, due to the scant evidence. One case from Timor which has entered the public record is that of Nitenel Ngoek who was in the middle of a land-ownership dispute when the ‘coup’ occurred in Jakarta. In February 1966 he was detained in Kupang by a mob including a policeman (brother of the plaintiff in the land dispute) who falsely accused him of being in the PKI. He was taken away with a group of other PKI suspects who were subsequently executed. Because his name did not appear on the list of those to be killed Ngoek was allowed to escape, but he was too scared to return home and remained a fugitive for over thirty years. See Silvester Keda, ‘Nitenel Ngoek: “Peristiwa itu masih menghantui saya”’, Forum Keadilan, No.27, 7 October 2001, pp.40-41.


158 Webb, ‘The sickle and the cross...’, p.112.


161 Cooley, *Benih yang tumbuh...*, pp.346-347; Yohannes, interview SoE, 26 June 2000; Former member GMIT synod, interview Kupang, 3 November 2000; Sahetapy Engel, interview Kupang, 2 November 2000; Name withheld, interviews Kupang, 7 July and 4 November 2000; Ratukore, interview Kupang, 7 July 2000; and Patty Noach, interview Kupang, 30 June 2000.
The method of dealing with PKI members seems to have varied from place to place. In Delha on Rote scores of people thought to be connected to the PKI were rounded up by the army and taken to the island’s main town of Baa. Many of these were illiterate villagers whose only knowledge of communism was knowing the words of some Nasakom songs. After intervention from the Raja of Delha most of these people were set free, but the local head of the PKI and some others had already been executed. According to a report from a different part of Rote the police provided the army with lists of ‘communists’ who were then captured and shot. Many of those killed were schoolteachers. The army had been given a quota from Jakarta and had to find so many people who were terlibat (involved) in each place. It was said that when they had difficulty in doing this in Rote they assembled some Chinese merchants, killed them and added their names to the list. On Solor island fifteen members of the PKI ‘cargo-cult’ were taken to mainland Flores where they were beaten by soldiers and then handed back to the community for punishment. They were beheaded by local villagers who then sought out fifteen other local ‘trouble-makers’ and removed their heads also. These extra killings led to reprisals by the police and some of the culprits were imprisoned. This seems to have been an exceptional case and it was reported as usual practice on Timor for the entire families of communists to be executed to reduce the possibilities of revenge.

Schaper reports that PKI activists of south Belu were examined by a team of three judges and were then liquidated by the military. A very few were acquitted. Many were held for months before their cases were dealt with and some went mad in the interim. At least one man committed suicide when he received the message that he had to report to the judges. Sometimes the prisoners were allowed to return home without escort to collect provisions, but rarely tried to escape, for if they did one of their fellow prisoners was decapitated and their families were threatened also. Later the military issued a summons for all remaining PKI members of south Belu to come to the district capital Atambua. The wet season was already far advanced and a great caravan of people trudged over sixty kilometres in the rain to reach the town.

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162 Names withheld by request, interviews Nemberala, 28 November 2002.
163 Name withheld, interviewed by Rob Goodfellow, Kupang, June 1997. Thanks to Rob Goodfellow for this information.
Arriving in Atambua they were led to the crossroads in the middle of the town where on top of a great petrol drum sat the decapitated head of Balthasar Klau, the PKI makdok of south Belu. The long procession was ushered around the drum and without further ado allowed to start the long journey home.166

The south Belu PKI members may have been fortunate as the killings in other places seem to have been more extensive. In Kupang it was said to be difficult to repair basic services such as plumbing for years afterwards as the tradesmen were all ‘communists’ who had been killed in 1965.167 The wife of the head of the PKI’s Nunhila branch reports that her husband was held for a short while at the old Dutch gaol in Kupang before being taken to an unknown location, killed and buried. All the members of his branch, thirty to forty people, suffered a similar fate. During the first few days of the killings, she said, an unnatural silence descended on Kupang and everyone avoided going out of their houses. She was heavily pregnant at the time and gave birth on 7 October. The very next day she was taken to the police station and, although interrogated for several days, denied any involvement with the PKI on her own behalf. She was kept at the station for a long time with little food and no shelter. Exposed to the elements, her child got sickly and died soon after she was released. The release from detention was not the end of her ordeal, however, and like probably thousands of others on Timor she was kept under surveillance. She was sacked from her civil service job and told she would never work for the government again. When years later she got work with a foreign company and was given an opportunity to travel abroad she was refused travel documents.168 There were many other cases where relatives of PKI members were made to suffer and were forced out of their jobs or could not get a job. One of the best known cases in Timor concerns the Marcus family. M. Marcus was a teacher and head of the BTI in SoE. His son Octo was also a teacher and communist and both were killed following the ‘coup’. Another of Marcus’ children was a well respected member of staff at the state university in Kupang and a known anti-communist. Nevertheless, when Drs. J. F. Marcus was elected rektor (vice-chancellor) Jakarta would not ratify the appointment

166 Schaper, ‘Het schimmenrijk…’, pp.54-57, 63.
167 Wilson, Travelling through Timor, pp.52-53.
168 Name withheld, interviews Kupang, 7 July 2000 and 4 November 2000.
because of the family PKI connection. Reprisals against those accused of involvement with the PKI continued into the 1970s and 1980s with many civil servants being dismissed from their positions. The matter has remained an issue until recent times; for example, it was reported in mid-2000 that six teachers from central Timor, dismissed in 1983, were trying to have their case reviewed and be re-appointed.

As elsewhere in Indonesia the killings in Timor were not confined to the period immediately after the ‘coup’, but were carried on throughout 1966 and well into 1967. The wife of the PKI leader cited above blamed ‘fanatical Muslims’ for many of the killings and said they only stopped after the repeated complaints by Parkindo that those being killed were not communists, but Christians. Webb reports that the ‘fanatical Muslim’ complaint was heard on Flores also and that the Timorese archbishop of Ende forbade Catholics to participate in the killings even after they had been ordered to do so by the local Javanese army commander. Muslims had actually been involved with the PKI in Timor since the earliest days, but all manner of tensions came to the surface during the days after the ‘coup’. It certainly appears that the killings were often far from ‘spontaneous’ and were carried out in accordance with an agenda arranged far away from the Timor region. This seems to be especially true in relation to the army’s insistence that all those who did not belong to any of the recognised religions were atheists and therefore communists. On Timor in 1965 a great proportion of the population still adhered to their traditional animist religion. Many of those who realised their peril rushed to join the Church, but others were only saved by the Church officials who when questioned by the army as to the names of the local ‘heathens’ answered that there were none. Many areas thus went from being 80% animist to 100% Christian overnight. The details of getting the people formally into the Church were worried about later, but the result was that tens of thousands of people renewed their Church membership or joined the Church for the first time.

169 Sahetapy Engel, interview Kupang, 2 November 2000; Patty Noach, interview Kupang, 30 June 2000; and Former member GMIT synod, interview Kupang, 3 November 2000.
170 Pos Kupang, 23 June 2000.
171 Name withheld, interviews Kupang, 7 July 2000 and 4 November 2000.
173 Cooley, Benih yang tumbuh..., pp.203, 347; and Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’, p.86.
Education

There was an ever-growing demand for educational facilities in West Timor during the 1950s and 1960s. Most of the demand was met by the Church. In the 1950s Raja Banunaek of Amanatun in South Central Timor invited the Catholic Church to build schools in his kingdom. Under the Dutch the area had been the preserve of the Protestant Church and some local Protestants grumbled about Catholic activity in their district. The government, however, had no objections so the Catholics continued with their work and the Catholic religion began to develop in the area also.\(^{174}\) Catholic schools were opened in the main towns as well. Both junior and senior high schools were opened in Kupang in 1951.\(^{175}\) The Catholic Church was also determined to increase the number of local priests so in 1950 Bishop Pessers charged *pastors* Gabriel Manek and Heinrich Yansen with opening a seminary at Lalian in Belu. The Flores seminary had attracted few Timorese; only Manek and Hieronymus Juk Sonbai had completed their studies there. Lessons at the new seminary were given exclusively in Indonesian, and not Dutch as had been the custom in the past.\(^ {176}\)

The GMIT was active in education also. In the early 1950s it endeavoured to improve the quality of its primary schools and opened more high schools also. For the rest of the 1950s and 1960s, however, the GMIT was limited in what it could achieve because of a financial crisis within the Church.\(^ {177}\) When the unitary Republic of Indonesia was declared in 1950 the government gave an undisclosed amount of ‘liquidation money’ to the Indonesian Protestant Church. This money, presumably from the reserves of the old Indische Kerk, was distributed amongst the various Protestant churches of Indonesia, including the GMIT. The Timorese Church elders had little to no experience in financial matters and by the mid-1950s the Church was in difficulties. It was not until the end of the 1960s that the situation started to improve.\(^ {178}\)

\(^{176}\) Lalawar, ‘Sejarah Gereja...’, pp.1316-1319.
\(^{177}\) Cooley, *Benih yang tumbuh...*, pp.61-62.
Nevertheless, the GMIT was determined to do something to improve the lot of the average Timorese and therefore established a Training Centre to provide village youths with knowledge of new techniques in agriculture and animal husbandry. The project was funded from 1957 to 1967 by the American Mennonite Church which sent out eleven young men to demonstrate new methods, agricultural implements, seeds, fertilisers and insecticides. Ultimately, however, the scheme was a failure. The Americans were not prepared for the conditions in Timor and became frustrated with the slow progress. The students who returned to their villages could not convince their elders that they should change the centuries old *adat* methods and once the Americans left there was no money to continue and the centre had to close.  

The GMIT was also concerned with the training of its own ministers. Its training college in SoE re-opened in 1948, but was considered sub-standard and was merged into the Theological School of Eastern Indonesia, which used the SoE premises while new ones were being built in Makassar. Only a few Timorese reached the standards required to attend this school. After the school shifted to Makassar there was the additional problem that after five years away the students became estranged from the conditions in Timor. Many did not want to work in the villages and because of their superior education some found it difficult to relate to the common people. 

More government schools were built during this period as well, but funding to do so was limited. Despite this the presence of the Church schools was not always appreciated. The Governor of Nusa Tenggara reported in 1957 that it was true that the Church provided educational facilities where the government was presently unable to do so, but that the presence of foreign nationals in the missions was ‘inappropriate’ and implied they had an unhealthy influence in culture, social affairs and politics. Jakarta must have agreed with its governor in eastern Indonesia for in 1962 it cut back its subsidies to the Church schools. What was left was barely sufficient to pay the teachers’ salaries. This would have come as a blow to the churches, especially the cash-strapped GMIT.

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As well as those belonging to the Church and the government there were some Muslim schools also. There was as well the Chinese school in Kupang run by the Chung Hwa Chung Hui. This school, however, was closed down in the aftermath of the 1965 ‘coup’ and the building taken over by the government and turned into a teachers’ college.\(^\text{183}\) Higher educational facilities had been available in Kupang since 1962 with the opening of the government university, Universitas Nusa Cendana. It began with three faculties: Government, Business and Education. By 1965 it had twelve lecturers and over 400 students.\(^\text{184}\)

**The Church**

It is difficult to get an accurate picture of religious affiliation in Timor during this period. Most available statistics are for the whole NTT and do not give the figures for individual islands. Figures for GMIT membership are available, however, and show that this more than doubled between 1953 and 1972, the figures being 253,501 and 517,779 respectively.\(^\text{185}\) Comparable figures for Catholic Church membership have not been discovered, but in a 1971 report on the area with the greatest concentration of Catholics in West Timor, the Atambua diocese, there were said to be 210,000 Catholics, 6,000 Protestants and 54,000 ‘heathens’. This last figure seems very high considering it became virtually compulsory to join one of the major religions after 1965. It is explained, however, that nearly all the people in the Atambua region professed to be Catholic, but many had never been baptised and were thus considered ‘heathen’.\(^\text{186}\)

In an official history of the GMIT figures are given that show that in 1966 nearly 15% of the NTT population did not acknowledge belonging to any of the religions recognised under Indonesia law: Islam, Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Buddhism. By 1969 this figure had dropped, but only to 13%.\(^\text{187}\) Again, this seems a high figure as there was a considerable risk for those who did not belong to any

\(^{183}\) The building has recently been returned to the local Chinese community, but will not be reinstated as a school. It will be used for funeral purposes and other cultural matters. Name withheld, interview Kupang, 16 December 2002.

\(^{184}\) Widiyatmika, *Sejarah pendidikan...*, pp.82, 84.

\(^{185}\) Cooley, *Benih yang tumbuh...*, p.61.

\(^{186}\) Theodorus van den Tillaart, ‘Aus der Diozese Atambua (Timor)’, *Steyler Missions Chroniek*, 1971, pp.82-83.

major religion as they could be accused of being atheist and therefore communist. The figures, however, probably reflect the reality that a large percentage of the NTT population, including those in West Timor, still adhered to their indigenous religions. Moreover, it is speculated that in areas where the majority of the population is Catholic, people will claim to be Catholic, and in areas with a majority of Protestants, they will claim to be Protestant. The number of people who still remained faithful to their old religion would thus be much higher than indicated by the statistics.

There had been many efforts to persuade the people to give up their old religion and place their faith instead in the Church. Local Church leaders were always looking for ways to divert ‘heathen’ practices into those they considered more appropriate. In Noemuti, for example, the corpse of a raja from the Sonbai line, Richardus Luis Sonbai, had lain unburied in his palace for centuries. His body was considered to have magic powers and many pilgrims came to the site. Finally, in 1956, it was agreed by the various clans concerned that his burial could take place. The raja’s palace, however, continued to be a place of pilgrimage and worship. The local pastor was not pleased by these activities and took the opportunity after the palace burnt down to suggest that it would be better if visitors came to Noemuti to pray to Mary rather than Sonbai. In 1960 a Gua Maria (grotto with a statue of Mary) and stations of the cross were erected on the site in front of the church. The grave of Rich L. Sonbai was placed discreetly at the rear of the church.

Membership in the Christian churches in West Timor had risen gradually, but steadily, throughout the period of this study. The proselytising efforts of missionaries, education in Church-run schools, peer pressure from Christian neighbours and a perception that being Christian (as opposed to holding on to the indigenous religion) means being civilised and modern, have all helped to increase the number of people who identify themselves as Christian. The greatest increase in Church membership in the period of this study, however, occurred around the time of

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188 Ibid.
the 1965 ‘coup’. Thousands became Christian virtually overnight and it was necessary to build many new schools and chapels to service their needs. Many of the new Christians soon settled into their congregations and adapted to their new religion. Others returned to their old beliefs as soon as they thought it safe to do so.190

As well as the followers of the indigenous religion of Timor, many of the new members of the Christian churches in West Timor were Chinese former Taoists or Confucianists. Although welcomed into the congregation by most pendetas, many Chinese apparently did not feel comfortable and soon established their own Chinese Protestant churches. There were not sufficient numbers for Chinese Catholics to do the same.191 Some of the Chinese temples in Kupang where these people had previously worshipped had been quite prominent, being situated on some of the main streets of the town. The temples were not closed down by the government, but as the religion that had been practised inside them was no longer recognised, they could not function. Most were then sold and turned into commercial premises. One survived by professing to be a Bali-Hindu temple, but only a few old people still attended.192

While both Catholic and Protestant Church members do not seem to have had too much difficulty in accepting newly converted ‘heathens’ or Chinese, they did not necessarily have the same tolerance or respect for each other. Catholic Bishop Theodorus van den Tillaart, who replaced Pessers in 1958, wrote candidly in 1971 that while Catholics and ‘heathens’ in central and eastern West Timor could co-exist in harmony it was not possible for the same to occur between Catholics and Protestants. The Protestant minority in those areas, he said, were mainly government officials from other islands who had arrived in colonial times. They felt themselves superior to the Timorese and local Catholics would have nothing to do with them. Catholics and Protestants, wrote the bishop, were separated not only by their religions, but also by their politics, as evidenced by the existence of the Partai Katolik and Parkindo. Furthermore, van den Tillaart put the blame for PKI activity in

190 Lalawar, ‘Sejarah Gereja...’, p.1342.
192 The government has recently allowed Chinese temples to operate in Indonesia once again and a new one is being built in Kupang. It is expected, however, that it will be more of a cultural centre than
Atambua squarely on the shoulders of local Protestants, claiming that there were more Protestants than Catholics in the communist organisations, all the communist leaders in the district were Protestant, and that poor Catholics were persuaded by Protestant communists to join their organisations, often with fatal results.193

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) had done much to relieve the bigoted and unfriendly relations that had existed between Catholics and Protestants, but van den Tillaart’s comments would appear to be the product of one who held on to the beliefs of the previous period of animosity. It is, of course, possible that the bishop’s claims were entirely true, but in the light of his bitter attack it would be interesting to have an assessment of the Catholics in West Timor from his Protestant counterpart. Unfortunately, such an assessment has not been found.

There may have been divisions between Protestants and Catholics in West Timor, but the GMIT itself was no model of unity. In 1950 most of the Dutch pendetas left Timor. Only Pieter Middelkoop remained in SoE, where he was mainly occupied with bible translation. The Church leadership was then taken over by J. L. Ch. Abineno and the Timorese were forced to learn how to run the Church themselves. As mentioned above, they soon came into difficulties with the Church’s finances. The previous Dutch leadership has been criticised for its paternalistic attitude to the Timorese pendetas. It is said that the Dutch treated them like children, never allowing them to bear responsibility. The Dutch trained pendetas then treated their congregations the same way. This led to some resentment. The situation only began to change when locally trained pendetas began to appear on the scene.194

Under the Indische Kerk Protestants in Indonesia were urged to be well behaved and loyal to the government. Political activity was not encouraged. This all changed in 1950 and many members of the GMIT became members of political parties as well. In the early 1950s the most popular parties were the PNI and Parkindo. There was much friction between the two parties and on a number of occasions the party leaders

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194 Cooley, Benih yang tumbuh..., pp.59, 68-70.
were asked to attend GMIT synod meetings to discuss the role of the parties in the community. The GMIT could not always be an effective mediator, however, because it was common at the time for those who were dissatisfied with the Church or its leaders to simply break away and establish their own church. The most celebrated case of its kind occurred in Camplong in 1954. Raja Fatuleu was the local leader of the Front Nasional (National Front), which was to contest the 1955 elections, and was also a Church elder. The raja often reminded people of his position in the Church and many felt he used his status as an elder to boost his waning authority as raja and to gain support for his political party. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the local *pendeta* was also the leader of Parkindo. There were several clashes between the two and the raja tried unsuccessfully to have the minister removed, leading to a split within the local Church council. With the help of a retired *pendeta* the raja finally took the step of establishing his own church, the Gereja Fatuleu (Fatuleu Church). Eventually both the raja and the GMIT *pendeta* left Camplong and the reason for the split faded into the background. Most people then re-joined the GMIT, although a few diehards maintained the division.

*The ‘Revival movement’*

The GMIT faced another challenge when a ‘Revival movement’ started in SoE in September 1965. Evangelical teams were formed and spread throughout much of West Timor and the surrounding islands. The movement was marked by demands for public confessions of sin, the abolition of magic charms, prayer sessions, visions and the performance of miracles. The movement would seem to have been triggered by the great political and economic tensions in Timor at the time and the areas suffering worst from the crop failures of 1964 and 1965 were also the areas most affected by the ‘Revival’. There had been similar movements during the privations of the Japanese occupation, as mentioned in Chapter Four. Another factor considered probable in sparking the movement was the appearance of a long-tailed comet in the skies above Timor from September to November 1965. For many Timorese it could

197 The movement had little effect on Timorese Catholics. Webb has speculated that Protestants may have been more susceptible to ‘spirit healings and miracles’ due to an inability of the GMIT to provide them with the sort of ‘emotional and spiritual satisfaction’ that Catholics gained from ‘Catholic discipline, the richness of the Liturgy, auricular confession [and] the invocation of the saints’. See Webb, *Palms and the cross...*, p.192.
have signalled imminent bloodshed, or, even more alarmingly, the arrival of ‘the end
times’. A former GMIT synod member has characterised the ‘Revival’ as one of
the three great crises of the Church, the other two being the financial difficulties of
the 1950s and 1960s, and the threat posed by the PKI. The crisis caused by the
‘Revival’ was that it was mainly led by lay people who challenged the authority of
the Church leadership. The revivalists were determined to stamp out all vestiges of
the indigenous religion. This created difficulties as most GMIT members had not
been very critical of the original culture of the island and the Church had never made
a clear statement on its attitude towards traditional Timorese culture and beliefs.
Many of its own ministers believed in and relied on the powers of fetishes and magic
in their daily lives.

One of the curious things about the ‘Timor Revival’ is that it is probably better
known outside Indonesia than inside the country because of the many books and
articles about it written by western evangelists and scholars. The movement
attracted the attention of fundamentalist Christians from the USA and Germany who
came to Timor to witness the healings and other miracles said to be occurring there.
Some of these people left disillusioned when they discovered the ‘miracles’ to be
frauds or gross exaggerations. Others left totally convinced that they had witnessed
proof of the great powers of the Holy Spirit. The westerners who witnessed and
believed in the ‘miracles’ occurring in West Timor would have had to overcome the
general scepticism about such matters common in modern western society. For many
of the Timorese involved it is likely that they could more easily believe in events
such as the raising of the dead and the casting out of spirits because the indigenous
religion, which continued to influence their daily lives, lays a strong emphasis on

199 Former member GMIT synod, interview Kupang, 3 November 2000.
200 Cooley, Benih yang tumbuh..., pp.66-67.
201 Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’, pp.150-151.
202 Ibid., p.195. Some of the works that deal with the movement have already been mentioned: Koch,
The Revival in Timor; Cooley, Benih yang tumbuh..., pp.194-218; Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’
(largely reproduced in Brookes, ‘Spirit movements in Timor’, in G. W. Trompf (ed.), Cargo cults and
millenarian movements: Transoceanic comparisons of new religious movements); and Webb, Palms
and the cross..., pp.192-203. Others include: P. Middelkoop, ‘Een nieuw opwekkingsbeweging op
Timor’, De Heerbaan: Tijdschrift voor zendingswetenschap, No.4, 1967; Mel Tari (as told to Cliff
Dudley), Like a mighty wind; and George W. Peters, Indonesian revival: Focus on Timor. Fox’s ‘The
“Movement of the Spirit”...’ gives some brief details about the movement in Rote.
demons, spirits and magic. Ironically, many of the evangelists who claimed that they wanted to destroy all remnants of the traditional Timorese religion were as strongly influenced by the old beliefs as the people they set out to ‘save’.

There are many dates offered as the beginning of the ‘Revival movement’, including a healing mission began by a young Rotenese, Johanes Ratuwalu, in Timor in mid-1964. Thousands were said to have been cured and miracles were performed, such as the resurrection of a woman dead for four days and whose corpse already stank. The healing movement did not last long, however, as Ratuwalu fell victim to pride and soon became gila uang, gila wanita dan gila hormat (crazy about money, women and honour). Congregations had been striving to get Ratuwalu to attend, but after his reputation soured they turned him away. Another event seen as a precursor to the ‘Revival’ was the arrival in Timor in July 1965 of the Reverend Detmer Scheunemann and some students from the Institut Injil Indonesia (Indonesian Gospel Institute), which was associated with a fundamentalist Christian mission based in Batu near Malang, East Java. The ‘Batu team’ held a number of meetings and in July and August 1965 Scheunemann preached in Kupang and SoE about purity, piety and the need to be free of potions, incantations, charms, amulets and fetishes, or what is known to the Atoni of Timor as le’u.

One of those who attended the Batu team’s meetings was a young SoE schoolteacher, Hennie Tunli’u. Not long after she began to hear voices and had visions of Jesus Christ, who commanded her to become a missionary. She eventually went for training to Batu, but in the meantime motivated the local youth to attend prayer meetings and form bible-study groups, fellowships and evangelistic teams. On 26 September 1965 a service held in SoE inspired many people to declare their renewed Christian faith. The ‘Revival’ was then well under way. Many more teams were formed. In late December there were forty-nine. One month later the figure was

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204 Middelkoop, ‘Een nieuw opwekkingsbeweging...’, pp.214-215. Middelkoop appears to have been mistaken in naming the leader of this mission as ‘Johanna Ratuwalu, daughter of ds. Ratuwalu’. Brookes emphatically states it was Johanes Ratuwalu, son of Pendeta Ratuwalu, and provides many stories about Ratuwalu which confirm his sex; see Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’, pp.96-101.
205 Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’, p.100.
206 Ibid., p.107.
207 Ibid., pp.108-110.
seventy-five. Perhaps up to one hundred teams were formed. Many teams were small, consisting of only three or four people, but there were some with up to twenty members. The teams were led by people who all claimed to have been ‘called’ directly by the Holy Spirit to partake in the movement and all actions of the teams were based on directions from the Lord. These directions were usually received through prayer and teams spent hours praying together daily.

The leaders and members of the teams came from all walks of life and often left their jobs and families for long periods to travel to other areas. The schools in SoE had to close for several months during 1965 and 1966 because so many schoolteachers and students were away with the teams. Many of the team leaders, however, were from simple backgrounds and had little or no formal education. Most were young and many were women. A few leaders were GMIT ministers, but most had no official position in the Church. Some Church leaders thus saw the teams as a threat. Teams were invited to operate in some areas only if they agreed to supervision from the existing Church authorities. In some areas they were forbidden to operate at all. It often depended on which team entered the parish. Some older pendetas rejected the teams because they remembered the troubles caused by the wartime Nunkolo movement. Some Church councils, in the meantime, rejected them because the Church at the time was under close scrutiny following the Jakarta ‘coup’ and the activities of the teams could have brought unwanted attention.

Another issue was sex. Most teams were made up of male and female members. They travelled and lived together in intimate circumstances. This was quite scandalous to many conservative Timorese Christians. One woman in SoE set herself up as a prophet and while lying on the laps of two young male assistants held services in a semi-conscious state. Church members complained when she professed to be Jesus, leading to an investigation by the Church council. The woman was forbidden to continue her activities, but not long after she gave birth to an illegitimate child. There were other cases where team leaders claimed that they had

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208 Ibid., p.111.
209 Cooley, Benih yang tumbuh..., pp.196-198.
210 Ibid., pp.198-199.
212 Cooley, Benih yang tumbuh..., p.199.
been ordered by the Holy Spirit to engage in sexual activity. A number of marriages suffered as a consequence, but some forced marriages resulted also.213

The teams travelled through much of West Timor and to Sabu, Rote, Semau, Sumba and Flores. A few teams even visited Bali, Java, Kalimantan and Irian Jaya.214 The teams often travelled without any provisions, relying on the charity of people they met on the way. There were many stories in Timor, however, of team members who approached individuals to demand money, claiming to have been directed to do so by God.215 Some team leaders caused panic and confusion by prophesying catastrophic events, such as SoE being rained on by boulders, and all first born sons being taken away from their families.216 Others invited derision by announcing their improbable visions. Mrs. Boimau, leader of Team 17, for example, declared that she had had a vision that Indonesia would rule the whole world and General Soeharto would become President of the World. Those who rejected Mrs Boimau’s revelations were told angrily that they would be cursed by God with illnesses or accidents. When Team 17 travelled to Rote it claimed to have healed eighty-eight people in one village. Pendeta J. E. Manoeain decided to check this claim and concluded that no-one had been cured. ‘It soon become clear’, he said, ‘...that all this team could do was to heal illnesses such as sore backs, headaches, joint pains, etc., in other words, complaints felt by the sufferer but invisible to others; whereas the paralysed, blind and deaf were not healed’.217

Many miracles were reported to have occurred such as food miraculously appearing to feed hungry teams, lights appearing to guide them as they travelled on pitch black nights, walking on water over flooded rivers, the raising of the dead and the turning of water into wine.218 Although these claims are presented in published accounts of the movement (such as the books of Kurt Koch and Mel Tari) as having really happened, subsequent inquirers found few people willing to verify them. Graham Brookes, for example, interviewed many of those who were supposed to have

214 Ibid., p.129.
215 Ibid., p.135.
216 Ibid., pp.131-132.
218 Cooley, Benih yang tumbuh..., pp.199-200.
witnessed resurrections and found without exception that the person who ‘came back to life’ had never been dead, but just unconscious as the result of an illness or fit.\(^{219}\) George W. Peters, who visited SoE in 1970 and interviewed both those who were supposed to have raised the dead and those who were revived, made the same conclusions.\(^{220}\) The case of a team walking on water while crossing a flooded river on a dark night received much publicity. However, it transpires that the ‘miracle’ that occurred was not walking on water, but the discovery of a shallow crossing point with the aid of a ‘heavenly light’. Brookes concludes this light to have been the comet mentioned earlier.\(^{221}\) And lastly, the turning of water into wine is reportedly a common trick in Timor that can be achieved with a pinch of colouring agent and a sliver of banana stem to give the desired taste.\(^{222}\) Peters was told quite openly in a meeting with thirty-five team leaders that where water had been turned into wine it had been achieved by these means. In relation to other miracles which are supposed to have occurred Peters was told ‘We do not know about them’.\(^{223}\)

Most of the teams had ceased to exist by the end of 1967. A foreign missionary who visited SoE at the time reported there were only two or three teams still operating, although a number of prayer groups remained active. Some teams continued to operate out of Kupang until 1971, but in that year the first general elections were held following the ‘coup’ of 1965. In the immediate pre-election period all teams ceased to function. Some began again later, but, as Brookes suggests, their activities are better considered to be a result of the movement rather than a continuation of it.\(^{224}\) Fantastic claims have been made for the numbers of people cured of illness and converted to Christianity as a result of the ‘Revival’. Koch states that within the first year of the movement 15,000 people were permanently healed. By 1970, he says, 30,000 had been cured. Over the same period of time 200,000 people converted to Christianity.\(^{225}\)


\(^{220}\) Peters, *Indonesian revival...*, pp.81-83.

\(^{221}\) Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’; p.135. The crossing of the river is mentioned in G. T. Bustin, *Dead;...Yet live!,* p.30, quoted by Brookes; and in Tari, *Like a mighty wind*, pp.43-47. That the crossing was achieved by finding a shallow ford is confirmed by team leader Pendeta Daniel, cited in Brookes.


\(^{224}\) Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’, p.129.

The figures for the healings are impossible to verify. It has been suggested, however, that many healings probably did occur, but that the illnesses cured were mainly psychosomatic. Many people, it is explained, may have felt fear and guilt in the heavy spiritual atmosphere of Timorese society. The confession of their sins and destruction of le’us may have given them a release from their physical and emotional symptoms. It is doubtful, however, whether such healings can be called miracles.\(^{226}\)

The question of the number of people converted to Christianity as a result of the movement is also difficult to answer. Koch’s figures would seem to rely on those produced by the Church itself. As noted above, in 1953 there were said to be 253,501 members of the GMIT. By 1965 that figure had risen to 450,000 and in 1967 jumped to 650,000. By 1972 the numbers had decreased to 517,779.\(^{227}\) The trouble is that the numbers for 1953 and 1972 are considered to be fairly accurate, but the ones for the intervening years are pure estimates and wholly unreliable. Furthermore, if there had been any increase since 1965 it is most likely to have been a result of pressure from the army and the government for all people to belong to a recognised religion.\(^{228}\)

Koch’s claim that there was a large increase due to conversions seems unlikely as the confrontational style of the teams, often described as arrogant, was more designed to elicit a response from existing Protestants, rather than convert Catholics, Muslims or animists.\(^{229}\)

The ‘Revival’ is said to have strengthened the faith of many Timorese Christians. Individuals responded favourably to its message and gave up liquor, gambling and other damaging practices and opened themselves to the Gospel. At least for a time. The effects were not large-scale and permanent. There was probably some increase in Church membership as a result of the movement, but this was gradually increasing anyway. Many sacred items of the indigenous religion were destroyed, but were often replaced after the euphoria of the ‘Revival’ was over. In 1969 the Bupati of South Central Timor, Raja Amanuban, Koesa Nope, made an example by destroying ritual sites and objects in Niki Niki, Tunbesi and other places. In Camplong, a few years after the main activities of the ‘Revival’ had finished, the local pendeta


\(^{227}\) Peters, *Indonesian revival...*, p.93.

\(^{228}\) Cooley, *Benih yang tumbuh...*, pp.206-208.

\(^{229}\) Brookes, ‘Spirit movements...’, p.154.
collected and destroyed a number of items, including five 150 year old gongs and a 300 year old Portuguese gun.\textsuperscript{230} This sort of practice may have been acceptable to people who already professed to be Christian, but the actions of evangelistic teams in destroying or forbidding the use of cultural items such as gongs were considered offensive to Timorese who lived in strong \textit{adat} centres. The Church made no headway in those areas as a result of the ‘Revival’.\textsuperscript{231}

\textit{Relationship with Portuguese Timor}

It seems that good relations existed between West Timor and Portuguese Timor in the 1950s, at least on an official level. In October 1954 the Portuguese Governor accepted an invitation to spend a few days in Kupang with the visiting Indonesian Vice-President Mohammad Hatta. As mentioned above, the Governor also travelled to Kupang to spend time with Soekarno in 1957. Meanwhile, in July 1953 Indonesian army officers travelled to Dili to celebrate Portuguese Army Day, and in October 1955 Indonesian officials from Atambua were invited to a horse racing festival across the border at Maliana. To heighten the festive atmosphere they took with them their own orchestra. In 1956 two sports clubs in Dili accepted invitations to compete in events in Kupang for Indonesian Independence Day.\textsuperscript{232}

In 1957 the Governor of Nusa Tenggara reported that there were no tensions with the Portuguese. People regularly crossed the border and this was usually no problem, although there was some cattle stealing.\textsuperscript{233} It was obviously considered that the potential existed for more serious breaches, however, because in the same report the poor state of the telephone system was lamented and it was warned that this could be a danger to security in the border region.\textsuperscript{234} There had been incidents before. In mid-1953 Indonesian troops opened fire on Portuguese Angolan troops on the border. The latter returned fire, but the episode did not extend from there. The Australian consul to Dili reported his belief that the incident was related to cattle stealing supported by the Indonesian army.\textsuperscript{235}

\textsuperscript{230} \textit{Ibid.}, pp.73, 121.
\textsuperscript{231} \textit{Ibid.}, p.157.
\textsuperscript{232} NAA: A1838/333, 3006/4/3 Part 1.
\textsuperscript{234} \textit{Ibid.}, Vol.1, p.19.
\textsuperscript{235} NAA: A1838/333, 3006/4/3 Part 1.
Cattle stealing may have been behind another event that occurred in August 1957. In that month it was reported that four armed soldiers from Portuguese Timor accompanied by villagers bearing knives and spears invaded the West Timor village of Patimalaka. Some people were interrogated and roughly handled, although not seriously hurt. The interlopers then returned to Portuguese Timor. 236 Throughout the 1960s there were many border incidents. In September 1962 the Australian consul in Dili was shown a protest letter to the Portuguese from his Indonesian counterpart which outlined twenty separate events from the previous three years. 237 El Tari enumerates the border incidents from 1962 to 1966 as follows: 1962, eighteen; 1963, twenty-eight; 1964, thirty-eight; 1965, twenty-nine; and 1966, eleven. In one case from 1961 an Oecusse man who had crossed the border fired his muzzle-loading rifle at two West Timorese men. He was pursued into Portuguese Timor, decapitated and his head carried back to Benain-Nilulat in West Timor, where the villagers danced around it. Not long after the village was attacked by people from Oecusse. In another case from 1962 Portuguese soldiers shot one man dead and wounded another at Laleri, in Kewar, West Timor. The Portuguese claimed this was in response to the ransacking of Atus village in Portuguese Timor by people from Kewar that had left six dead and two wounded. Cases such as these were usually settled by meetings of the traditional leaders and an adat peace ceremony. A potentially more serious case occurred in November 1966 when the Indonesian and Portuguese armies exchanged shots on the Oecusse-West Timor border. The trouble had begun in October when Portuguese soldiers, apparently believing the border to be wrongly indicated, removed border markers and demolished Indonesian houses. The soldiers also shot dead one Indonesian resident and wounded another. Officials from both sides eventually agreed that the border as originally marked was correct, but the matter was referred to Jakarta and Lisbon for a final settlement. 238

There had been growing tension between the two neighbours since 1958 when the Portuguese administration displeased the Indonesians by granting asylum to Indonesian soldiers who had fled West Timor following the failed Permesta rebellion. When those soldiers staged another revolt near Viqueque in 1959 some

236 Ibid.
238 Tari, Memori..., pp.566-570.
Portuguese officials supposed that the Indonesian soldiers had been sent on orders from Jakarta to cause trouble. In late 1960 the Portuguese appeared more co-operative when ten Indonesians, believed to be fugitives from army service, were returned to West Timor.\(^{239}\) The Portuguese, however, may have acted out of fear of a repeat of the Viqueque revolt. At around the same time an Indonesian was reported to have been in the border area with anti-Portuguese propaganda. In March 1961 the Portuguese grudgingly played host to four Indonesian naval vessels and their crews. The Indonesians impressed the locals with their smart, efficient demeanour. The Portuguese were surprised by the quality of the Indonesian navy, but found the visit irksome. There had also been some concern in the early 1960s over a statement issued in Jakarta by the ‘Bureau of the Liberation of the Timorese Republic’ who wanted to remove the Portuguese from East Timor. The Indonesian government denied any knowledge of the group.\(^{240}\)

Ever since Indonesia gained full independence the Portuguese feared that there would be a move to annex their half of Timor. Until the early 1960s the focus in Indonesia had been on ‘liberating’ West Irian, but after that had been achieved it was feared that Portuguese Timor was next.\(^{241}\) Such fears were aired in Australian newspapers with headlines such as ‘Timor threat grows’, from the Darwin based *Northern Territory News* of 28 December 1961, and ‘Indonesians new threat to P. Timor’, from the same paper on 25 June 1963. The first article concerned the possibility that Indonesia would attack Portuguese Timor once the West Irian issue had been settled. It also contained the news that Kupang airport had been improved in order to be used by modern jet aircraft supplied from Russia. There was also said to be an ‘unofficial, but violently anti-Portuguese “Freedom Movement”’ in existence in West Timor. The second article reported the establishment of a rebel government of the ‘Republic of Timor-Dili’ in Batu Gade (inside Portuguese Timor in the border district) which aimed “to destroy the Portuguese Fascist-imperialists”.

The rebel government had the support of a group based in Jakarta. Again, there was no official acknowledgement of these organisations by the Indonesian

\(^{239}\) *NAA: A1838/333, 3006/4/3 Part 1.*  
\(^{240}\) *Ibid.*  
\(^{241}\) Brackman, *Southeast Asia's second front...*, pp.123-127.
government.\textsuperscript{242} The improvements to Penfui airfield were reported elsewhere,\textsuperscript{243} but the other matters cited appear to have been pure propaganda.

The people of the Northern Territory may have been concerned over developments in Timor because, as their local newspaper pointed out, it was ‘only 400 miles north of Darwin’.\textsuperscript{244} But the matter was of far wider interest and correspondence from the Australian Department of External Affairs from the early 1960s shows that Australia, the USA and Portugal were all concerned about the possibility of an Indonesian takeover of Portuguese Timor.\textsuperscript{245} The Portuguese reportedly brought in thousands of new troops in preparation and upgraded its Bacau airport to handle modern fighter jets.\textsuperscript{246} There were reports of troop build-ups in Kupang and Atambua,\textsuperscript{247} and claims of PKI propaganda being spread in border villages to garner support for an Indonesian takeover.\textsuperscript{248} United States intelligence suggested that border clashes in Timor had been inspired by the PKI as well. Australian sources, however, failed to confirm any PKI involvement.\textsuperscript{249}

A Portuguese agent who was in Kupang in 1961 claimed to have been told by Raja Kupang ‘and some Muslim officials’ that Indonesia would not attack Portuguese Timor.\textsuperscript{250} About the same time the Australian consul to Portuguese Timor, James Dunn, was told by travellers through West Timor that Indonesian officials spoke disparagingly of the Portuguese, but there seemed to be no plans to oust them.\textsuperscript{251} And a journalist for a British newspaper claimed early in 1962 that the people of Kupang showed no enthusiasm for an Indonesian takeover of the eastern half of the island.\textsuperscript{252} More surprisingly, or perhaps not considering the history of rumours about

\textsuperscript{242} Northern Territory News, 28 December 1961; and 25 June 1963. The establishment of a government of the ‘United Republic of Timor’ in Jakarta in 1963 is reported in Brackman, \textit{Southeast Asia’s second front...}, p.128. Taylor seems to take seriously the report that an alternative ‘government’ was established inside Portuguese Timor; see Taylor, \textit{Indonesia’s forgotten war...}, pp.21-22.

\textsuperscript{243} Brackman, \textit{Southeast Asia’s second front...}, p.126.

\textsuperscript{244} Northern Territory News, 25 June 1963.

\textsuperscript{245} NAA: A1838/2, 3006/4/3 Part 2.

\textsuperscript{246} Northern Territory News, 25 June 1963; and Taylor, \textit{Indonesia’s forgotten war...}, p.21.

\textsuperscript{247} NAA: A1838/2, 3006/4/3 Part 2.

\textsuperscript{248} NAA: A1838/2, 3006/4/3 Part 3.

\textsuperscript{249} NAA: A1838/2, 3006/4/3 Part 2.


\textsuperscript{251} NAA: A1838/2, 3006/4/3 Part 2.

territorial takeovers in Timor, there were also reports that Portugal planned to invade West Timor. Australian intelligence sources collected this item of gossip some time in 1962 and it was passed on again later in the year by a secretary of the German embassy. An expected Portuguese takeover was common talk during the secretary’s tour of West Timor. Despite the rumours and reports there was no takeover of territory or invasion by either side. Moreover, Timor was effectively taken off the international agenda when Indonesian foreign policy shifted to give priority to the ‘Crush Malaysia’ campaign in early 1963. Portuguese Timor remained a backwater, but was back in the headlines when civil war broke out in the territory in 1975. In December of that year it was invaded by Indonesia and incorporated into the country as its twenty-seventh province the following year. That story, however, is beyond the scope of the present study.

The rajas

When the Dewan Raja-raja was dissolved with the merger of NIT into the Republic of Indonesia the rajas lost their executive function, but still kept many other powers. It was not possible to transfer their functions immediately to the government bureaucracy or elected officials. Nevertheless, the powers they did retain were gradually whittled away. For example, when the district court, the Pengadilan Negeri, assumed full authority in civil and criminal cases in 1954 the rajas’ role in the dispensing of justice was greatly reduced. Many of their traditional rights were taken from them also. In 1959-1960, for instance, the land reform laws came into effect in Indonesia. The rajas and other traditional leaders had controlled considerable land in West Timor, but much of this was appropriated and distributed to other citizens.

In 1962 the kingdoms were abolished, but the implementation of the new system took some time and the remaining powers of the rajas and other traditional rulers

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254 For more on Indonesia’s campaign against Malaysia, see Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., pp.260-264, 266, 268, 274.
255 The civil war in East Timor and the territory’s incorporation into Indonesia is told in several sources, including Dunn, Timor...; Taylor, Indonesia’s forgotten war...; and Gusmao, To resist is to win...
256 Hiorth, Timor past and present, p.20.
257 Ricklefs, A history of modern Indonesia..., p.262.
258 I. H. Doko, Timor pulau gunung Fatuleu ‘Batu Keramat’, p.124
were only reduced slowly. The administrative districts of the kingdoms were replaced by new units. In some cases a number of kingdoms combined to create a kabupaten (regency, or district), headed by a bupati. Most became part of a smaller unit known as a kecamatan (sub-district), headed by a camat. The rajas, fettors and temukungs, however, did not disappear. They continued to be very influential in their communities. For example, villages which had been ruled by an hereditary temukung were taken over by an elected kepala desa (village head). The kepala desa’s powers, however, were often limited by the amount of traditional authority acknowledged to his lineage. Where this was lacking the kepala desa’s powers were confined to matters pertaining to the government, while traditional rulers such as the fettor or temukung were called on to deal with other matters affecting the villagers.

Cunningham remarked in the early 1960s that many Timorese were distressed by the news that the kingdoms were to be abolished. Without the rajas, the people argued, there would be no-one to help them solve their disputes. Even though the rajas’ traditional rights had been abolished along with their powers, many former subjects continued to look to their rajas for guidance. It was still common practice in many districts until the 1970s for people to bring harvest tribute to their former rajas. Given the respect paid to the traditional rulers it is perhaps not surprising that a number of rajas were elected to high office during the last years of this study. Examples are Raja Amanuban, Koesa Nope, who became Bupati of South Central Timor; Victor Koroh, Raja Amarasi, who became Camat of Amarasi; Alfons Andreas Bere Tallo, Raja Lamaknen-Kewar, who became Bupati of Belu; and Willem C. H. Oematan, the son of Raja Molo, who became Bupati of Kupang. Because of their influence and generally high standard of education members of raja families excelled in other fields also. Leopold Nisnoni, the son of Raja Kupang, managed two major enterprises in Kupang, a printery and a canning factory, and later himself following his father’s death in 1992.

\[^{259}\textit{Laporan inventarisasi land use...}, \text{pp.3-4.}\]^ {260} Cunningham, ‘People of the Dry Land...’, p.189.\[^{261}\textit{Laporan inventarisasi land use...}, \text{pp.3-4; and Doko, Timor...}, \text{p.123.}\]^ {262} Cunningham, ‘People of the Dry Land...’, pp.323-324.\[^{263}\textit{Ratukore, interviews Kupang, 14-18 November 2002.}\]^ {264} Doko, \textit{Timor pulau gunung Fataleu...}, pp.51, 77, 79, 102.\[^{265}\textit{Ibid.}, \text{pp.44-45; and Nisnoni, interviews Kupang, 17-19 November 2002.}\]
went into business. Rajas were involved in the Church as well. As mentioned above, Raja Fatuleu caused a split in the GMIT in 1954 by establishing his own Gereja Fatuleu. Like many other rajas he was an elder of the Church and portrayed himself to his people as a *Bapak Agama* (literally, Father of Religion). Members of the raja families have been active in the Church at the highest levels. Three of the four Timorese moderators of the GMIT for the period 1950-1975 came from raja families. Nearly ten percent of all GMIT ministers in the 1970s were from the same class. Many others were descendants of *fettors.*

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The 1950s and 1960s were a period of great change in West Timor. The territory became part of the Republic of Indonesia in 1950 and was thereafter much more influenced by political events happening both in Jakarta and in other parts of the country. In 1955 the Timorese participated in the nation’s first ever general elections. The elections gave many people a better understanding of the political process and increased their awareness of political matters in general. In the late 1950s some people in Timor became involved in the Sulawesi based Permesta rebellion against the central government. The movement in West Timor was never very large, but it demonstrated that some Timorese were dissatisfied with the policies of the Jakarta government. Fear of Javanese and Islamic domination was a feature of the movement in West Timor. In the early 1960s the PKI gained much ground in Timor, as it did in the rest of the country. After the ‘coup’ in Jakarta in 1965 the PKI was ‘wiped out’ in West Timor, with up to 2,000 people being killed across the territory. The Church experienced rapid growth at this time as people either renewed their connection with it or joined it for the first time in order to avoid being classed as atheist, and therefore communist.

The fall of the PKI also signalled the end of the reign of Indonesia’s first president, Soekarno. His position was gradually undermined by General Soeharto who formally replaced him as president in early 1967. The New Order government of Soeharto had

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266 Cooley, *Benih yang tumbuh...*, p.149.
a distinct military flavour. This was displayed in Kupang on 18 March 1967 when former military commander El Tari was appointed governor of NTT.\textsuperscript{268} Furthermore, the local parliament had two appointed members from the armed forces from 1966, but this was increased to eight in 1971.\textsuperscript{269} There were other appointed members in the parliament who represented various ‘functional groups’, such as labourers, intellectuals, youth, women, farmers, entrepreneurs and religious institutions.\textsuperscript{270} Members of the traditional ruling groups, however, were not included. The rajas’ powers were gradually decreased during the 1950s and 1960s and by the time of Soekarno’s downfall they had ceased to have an official function. By then, however, many had already adapted to the new conditions and held important positions that did not formally rely on their status as members of the former ruling class. Rajas and members of their families held high posts in the government, the Church and in private enterprise. Moreover, the rajas and other traditional leaders were still given great respect by many of their former subjects who continued to accord them the traditional honours well into the 1970s.

\textsuperscript{268} El Tari had been deputy governor since July 1965. He became acting governor on 12 July 1966 and was officially appointed the following year. See 35 tahun Nusa Tenggara Timur, pp.24, 28; and Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., pp.7-8.
\textsuperscript{269} Laporan inventarisasi land use..., p.4; and Doko, Nusa Tenggara Timur..., pp.8-9.
\textsuperscript{270} Laporan inventarisasi land use..., p.4.
Figure 32.
Raja Alfonsus Nisnoni greets President Soekarno on his arrival in Kupang, 1950.
(From the collection of Leopold Nisnoni.)
Figure 33.
Raja Koesa Nope, Bupati of South Central Timor.
(From the collection of Bill Nope, Kupang.)
Figure 34.
The old Dutch gaol in Kupang, now a private residence.
Figure 35.
Andreas Yohannes outside his home in SoE, November, 2000.
Figure 36.
A statue of El Tari in SoE.
Conclusion
Conclusion

This study has traced the history of West Timor from the beginning of the twentieth century until the late 1960s. It thus covers the period from when the Dutch first took comprehensive control of the territory up to the end of the rule of Indonesia’s first president, Soekarno. During that time West Timor underwent many changes and political power changed hands a number of times. Although the Dutch had had a presence in West Timor since the seventeenth century, at the beginning of the twentieth century most of the territory was still governed directly by local traditional rulers. The Dutch assumed the superior position throughout West Timor as a result of military actions in the first two decades of the twentieth century, but were forced to relinquish control to the Japanese during the Second World War. After the war the Dutch returned, but not for long, and from 1950 West Timor was part of the independent Republic of Indonesia, ruled from Jakarta.

The thesis presented here has been that the indigenous Timorese political system was never completely destroyed or supplanted by the political systems introduced by the new players. The Dutch, the Japanese and non-Timorese Indonesians have all had to accommodate the local system. While the indigenous rulers were not strong enough to prevent new players from entering Timor and seizing power, their political and religious systems proved resilient and with adaptations have survived under various conditions. Under the Dutch and Japanese many traditional rulers had a role in the formal power structure through a system of indirect rule, but this was gradually decreased once West Timor became part of the Republic. Today the hereditary rulers of West Timor have no formal position within government based on their traditional rights. Nevertheless, they have continued to be active and have maintained a level of influence. This has made them important allies for all who wish to exercise political power in the territory, both during the period of this study and up to the present day, as will be discussed further below.

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Timor first appeared in written history as early as the thirteenth century as a result of the sandalwood trade, but it has been speculated that the international trade in Timor sandalwood had existed since the earliest centuries of the common era. The quality and abundance of Timor sandalwood attracted merchants from China, Melaka, western Indonesia and other areas. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Portuguese and Dutch traders began to visit the island also. When the Europeans arrived in Timor they discovered that it was divided into a number of autonomous kingdoms. Attempts to control resources on the island often resulted in warfare between the kingdoms and the annexation of one kingdom by another. In the meantime, internal power struggles sometimes caused large kingdoms to break up into smaller units. The political balance was, thus, constantly shifting. In this situation it was not too difficult for the Dutch and Portuguese to find allies among the ruling elites and both colonial powers made contracts and treaties with various traditional rulers in order to boost their influence on the island.

There is no indication that the non-European traders ever exercised any political power in Timor, but competition between the Portuguese and the Dutch eventually resulted in a partition of the island into two spheres of influence: the Dutch in the west (where the Portuguese had a small enclave also) and the Portuguese in the east. This process was formally completed in the early twentieth century, but the relationship between the Portuguese and the Dutch, and later, the Indonesians, remained tense throughout the period of this study. At the same time that the partition of the island was being settled the Dutch began a pacificatie campaign in West Timor to stamp their authority on the territory, especially in the interior, where hitherto they had ruled in name only. This campaign was part of a general movement to create a Pax Neerlandica in the Netherlands Indies. There was resistance in West Timor from a number of traditional leaders, but the superior weaponry and military tactics of the Dutch assured them of victory. Following the pacificatie the rulers of all the kingdoms had to sign contracts acknowledging Dutch suzerainty over their realms. This was essential in order to implement the system of governance in West Timor preferred by the Dutch: indirect rule, but it created a number of problems also.

While there had always been strong individuals in Timor who could exert great influence within their kingdoms, authority rested with a single figure only rarely.
Many kingdoms were ruled by ritual lords who relied on the assistance of secular lords to govern on their behalf in the sub-districts. The ritual lord could not speak on purely secular governmental matters, while the authority of the secular lords was accepted only in their own sub-districts. The secular lords relied on the assistance of a number of other petty officials. Furthermore, all the players had to conform to the local *adat*, which resulted in considerable influence going to the *adat* elders. The system thus relied on the co-operation and consensus of a number of traditional leaders within any one kingdom. When the Dutch implemented their concept of 'native rule’ they attempted to bypass many of the stakeholders in the traditional structure by appointing one paramount ruler, whom they styled as ‘raja’. Disputes raged throughout the kingdoms of West Timor during the first half of the twentieth century as the Timorese attempted to adjust themselves to the new arrangements, but as long as the rajas were from the appropriate lineages they were usually accepted. Another consequence of the Dutch contracts was that they attempted to clearly define the borders of the kingdoms. Previously it had been common for kingdoms to merge and for new kingdoms to be created by break-away districts. Such action was not tolerated by the Dutch unless it was a result of their own directives.

The Dutch relied on the rajas to implement their policies in the kingdoms and therefore demanded that all Timorese obey the directions of their raja and his officials. Rajas could gain legitimacy and prestige through their association with the militarily superior Dutch, but some rajas appointed by the Dutch never gained acceptance from their people and had to be replaced. Others proved to be strong rulers who managed to juggle the demands of both the traditional system and the one imposed by the Dutch and were thus able to exercise considerable power within their kingdoms. Minor rulers, such as *fettors* and *temukungs*, continued to exercise authority also, but as salaried officials of the Dutch colonial state. *Adat* authorities, ritual lords and others who had been overlooked by the Dutch when they drew up their plans for the new system of governance did not simply disappear. Many continued to have great influence in their communities and could either help or hinder the figures who had been appointed by the Dutch to run the kingdoms.

The establishment of a *Pax Neerlandica* in West Timor was coupled with the implementation of the Ethical Policy, which saw an extension of services such as
health, education and roads. At the same time the Church increased its activities throughout the territory. Many educated Timorese found employment in the expanded government bureaucracy and became active in Church organisations also. In the 1920s political groups appeared in West Timor for the first time and popularised notions such as communism and nationalism. Members of migrant communities from the nearby islands of Rote, Sabu and Kisar were particularly active in the new political groups, although many ethnic Timorese were involved also. Employment with the government and involvement in Church and political groups gave non-elite Timorese an outlet for expression that would have been denied them within the traditional hereditary power structures. The communist inspired Sarekat Rajat challenged the authority of the traditional rulers directly and led campaigns against Raja Molo and Raja Amarasi, accusing them of various improprieties. Raja Amarasi, Alexander Koroh, was later removed from his post as a result. The rajas themselves, however, were not necessarily opposed to the new political ideas and Alexander Koroh and his brother Hendrik (who had replaced him as raja) were both active figures in the nationalist Timorsch Verbond. Other rajas were active in the Church. Many of the rajas employed by the Dutch were illiterate, yet they recognised the importance of education under the new system and actively sought schooling for their offspring, especially their sons, to ensure their prosperity in the future.

The Dutch were apprehensive of radical groups like the Sarekat Rajat, but were equally wary of more reformist organisations, such as the Timorsch Verbond. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s they kept a close watch on all political groups, newspapers and politically active individuals. There were a number of Dutch educated Christian ‘natives’ in West Timor, however, who appeared to be totally loyal to the Dutch crown and the colonial administration. It caused the Dutch some bemusement when they realised that Indonesian nationalism had taken such strong root in Timor that many of these people were also quietly in favour of independence for the Indies, or at least a full measure of autonomy. Before the issue could come to a head, however, the Netherlands Indies, including West Timor, was invaded and occupied by the Japanese armed forces in 1942.
Australia and the Netherlands had been alarmed by pre-war Japanese activity in the area and were convinced that a Japanese attack on the Indies was imminent. As a result Australia sent forces to bolster the Dutch defences in Timor in late 1941. The Australians had barely settled in, however, when the Japanese attacked and overran the island. The Dutch and their Australian allies were easily defeated by the Japanese, ending forever the myth of European invulnerability. Japanese rule was harsh, but encouraged many Timorese to believe more in their own abilities and acted as a catalyst for the post-war development of the nationalist movement. During the Japanese occupation a number of Timorese, including nationalists such as I. H. Doko, were given greater responsibility in government administration. The rajas, in the meantime, were subjected to many demands, but retained their authority. Some, such as Hendrik Koroh, were able to preserve a great deal of autonomy. Meanwhile, with the internment of European missionaries the running of the Church was left entirely in Timorese hands.

When the Dutch returned to West Timor in late 1945 they found that the attitudes and expectations of many Timorese were vastly different to those that had prevailed in the pre-war period. Nevertheless, the Dutch were able to re-establish their authority in West Timor without any great opposition. Many Timorese in other parts of the archipelago, however, were involved in the physical struggle against the re-imposition of colonial rule and took part in the fighting against the Dutch in Java, Sumatra and elsewhere. The leaders of the Dutch controlled Protestant Church in West Timor, the Indische Kerk, on the other hand, seem to have accepted that it was time to relinquish control and oversaw the establishment of the independent Timorese Protestant Church, the GMIT, in 1947. In the meantime West Timor had become part of the Dutch ‘puppet state’, Negara Indonesia Timur (NIT), which allowed a number of Timorese to play a greater political role. Figures such as Doko and Koroh, and other members of their political party, the PDI, took advantage of the new political freedoms to promote their nationalist ideas and support for the Republic. A pro-Dutch group, the Lima Serangkai, was active in West Timor at the time also, but the tide of nationalist sentiment was against them and they had no choice but to accept the political reality when the Dutch announced that they would grant full independence to Indonesia in late 1949. The Dutch handed over sovereignty to the Republik Indonesia Serikat, a state comprised of the Republic and
the many federal states created by the Dutch, such as the NIT. By 17 August 1950 all the federal states had relinquished control to the Republic and from that date West Timor became a part of the unitary Republic of Indonesia. This move had been supported by the Dewan Raja-raja in Timor, even though it signalled the end of any executive role for the rajas in the governance of the territory.

During the 1950s and 1960s West Timor was drawn more fully into the national political life of Indonesia. In the 1950s there was widespread dissatisfaction with the central government that gave rise to unrest in many regions. In the late 1950s some people in West Timor became involved in the Sulawesi based Permesta movement that sought greater autonomy for eastern Indonesia. The movement was ultimately crushed, but was instrumental in the decision to create a number of new provinces. As a result Kupang in West Timor became the capital of the new province of Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT) in 1958. In 1955 general elections held throughout Indonesia, including West Timor, did much to heighten the political awareness of the region’s people. National political parties, such as the communist PKI, were increasingly active in West Timor. The PKI gained many adherents in the territory, including some in senior positions in government, the army and the Church. A great many ordinary people, such as illiterate farmers, were involved also. Following the failed so-called communist coup attempt in Jakarta in 1965 these people were placed in great peril. Communists and suspected sympathisers were slaughtered throughout the nation, including in Timor. It is estimated that up to 2,000 people may have perished in West Timor.

One result of the anti-communist campaign was a large increase in Church membership. At the time many of West Timor’s inhabitants still adhered to the local animist religion, but this was not accepted by the new regime. According to its view Indonesian citizens had to belong to one of the major world religions: Islam, Christianity, Hinduism or Buddhism. No other beliefs were tolerated and those who did not acknowledge membership of one of the major creeds were considered atheists, and therefore, communists. Of the tens of thousands who joined the Church at the time it is not known how many later returned to their original beliefs. Others may have stayed in the Church, but still maintained their original faith and practices. Be that as it may, it is nonetheless true that by the late 1960s the Church was well
established in West Timor with most people claiming to be practising Christians. The late 1960s was also marked by a ‘Revival movement’ that began in central Timor in 1965. Scores of evangelistic teams wandered throughout the territory calling on Christians to confess their sins and destroy all remnants of the indigenous animist religion. Many miracles and healings were performed by the teams, who at times behaved quite arrogantly. Many commentators have been sceptical of the value of the teams’ works, declaiming the many miracles performed as frauds or gross exaggerations. On the other hand, the ‘Revival’ is said to have strengthened the faith of many Timorese Christians, although it is unlikely that it resulted in any appreciable increase in Church membership.

The 1950s and 1960s was a period of great change for West Timor’s traditional rulers. With the dissolution of the Dewan Raja-raja in 1950 the rajas ceased to have an executive function, but still kept many other powers. These were gradually whittled away and in 1962 the kingdoms themselves were abolished. The administrative districts of the kingdoms were replaced by new units. In some cases several kingdoms were joined together to create a kabupaten, headed by a bupati, or they became part of a smaller unit known as a kecamatan, headed by a camat. Traditional rulers such as rajas, fettors and temukungs remained influential, however, and were often appointed to head the new administrative districts. Many temukungs became village heads (kepala desa), while former rajas became bupatis or camats. Examples include Raja Amanuban, Koesa Nope, who became Bupati of South Central Timor, and Raja Amarasi, Victor Koroh, who became Camat of Amarasi. Many other rajas remained influential in their communities as Church elders and three of the four moderators of the GMIT following the Church’s independence have been from raja families. In many districts rajas were still treated with great honour by their former subjects regardless of whether they held formal government positions or not. It remained common for people to look to their former rajas for guidance and in many areas they continued to bring them harvest tribute well into the 1970s.

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Since the 1970s West Timor’s traditional rulers have continued to be influential and many rajas and members of their families have remained active in politics. The
former Bupati of Belu, Raja Lamaknen-Kewar, A. A. Bere Tallo, for example, served in the central parliament in Jakarta for the period 1971-1977. Following his retirement and return to his native Belu he was frequently called on to mediate local disputes as he was considered to be an authority on adat. He was active also in his local Church council.\(^1\) In South Central Timor, Willem Nope, son of the last official Raja of Amanuban and long-serving bupati, Koesa Nope, was himself bupati of the district for a five year period, ending in 2003. Another son, Nesi Nope, the nominal raja, served in the regional parliament.\(^2\) Members of the noble Koroh, Oematan and Taolin families have been parliamentarians also.\(^3\) Although most rajas are still recognised within their own communities there is no denying that their standing is not as high as in former days. Previously new rajas were installed in elaborate adat ceremonies. Most of the present generation of rajas simply ‘became’ raja following the deaths of their fathers. In order to revitalise the institution of the rajas and highlight the rajas’ legitimacy as part of the local adat, a number of rajas have undergone adat installation ceremonies. These include Raja Oematan of Molo in 2000 and Raja Mano of Amfoan in 2001. Leopold Nisnoni, who became Raja Kupang in 1992, is planning a similar ceremony in 2003 or 2004.\(^4\) There has also been a revival of the Dewan Raja-raja with a number of meetings held in the late 1990s and early 2000s. These meetings, discussed further below, and other activities, have helped the rajas maintain a high profile. Both government and non-government bodies have continued to seek the traditional rulers’ support to help promote their policies.

An example of the continuing importance of West Timor’s traditional rulers is the role they played in the annexation of Portuguese Timor by Indonesia in 1975 and the subsequent attempt to discredit the independence vote in East Timor in 1999.\(^5\)

\(^1\) Kanis Passar, ‘Alfons Andreas Bere Tallo: Membangun kesadaran masyarakat’, in Rohi and Adam (eds.), Baktiku untuk Nusa Tenggara Timur..., p.4.
\(^2\) Nope, interviews Niki Niki and SoE, 15 June and 7 November 2000.
\(^3\) Ibid.; and Nisnoni, interviews Kupang, 17-19 November 2002.
\(^4\) Nisnoni, interviews Kupang, 17-19 November 2002.
\(^5\) There is no space here for a comprehensive account of these matters. The annexation of East Timor is well told in sources already indicated, such as Dunn, Timor...; Taylor, Indonesia’s forgotten war...; and Gusmao, To resist is to win... Events surrounding the independence vote are described in numerous works, including Geoffrey Robinson, ‘The fruitless search for a smoking gun: Tracing the origins of violence in East Timor’, in Columbijn and Lindblad (eds.), Roots of violence in Indonesia; and Richard Tanter, Mark Selden and Stephen R. Shalom (eds.), Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers: East Timor, Indonesia and the world community.
Unlike in West Timor, where the rajas had lost all their official functions, in 1975 the traditional rulers of Portuguese Timor, the *liurai*, retained many of their old powers. Some *liurai* were closely associated with the colonial state and used oppressive measures to rule their domains. As a result, when political associations became legal there in 1974 there were many calls for a more democratic system and a reduction in the powers of the traditional rulers. This was the stated policy position of the two largest parties, the Uniao Democratica Timorense (UDT; Timorese Democratic Union) and the Frente Revolutionaria de Timor-Leste Independente (Fretilin; Revolutionary Front of an Independent East Timor),\(^6\) even though both parties had a number of *liurai* amongst their supporters.\(^7\) *Liurai* and members of their families who wanted to see a continuation of the feudal system joined the smaller Klibur Oan Timor Aswain (KOTA; Association of Timorese Warriors)\(^8\) and the pro-Indonesian Associacao Popular Democratica Timorense (Apodeti; Timorese Popular Democratic Association). Indonesia had by then decided that the best course was for Portuguese Timor to become part of the Republic and through its secret agents sought to reassure the *liurai* that their positions would be secure if Portuguese Timor was ‘integrated’ into Indonesia.\(^9\)

One of the agents used by the Indonesians to win support for the integration cause among the East Timorese *liurai* was Louis Taolin, a son of Raja Insana of northern West Timor.\(^10\) According to James Dunn, Taolin was recruited by Bakin (Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara; State Intelligence Co-ordinating Agency), the Indonesian intelligence agency, precisely because he was a blood relation of the Insana ruler.\(^11\) Taolin helped recruit KOTA leader Jose Martins (himself the son of an Ermera *liurai*) who went on to play an important role in broadcasting propaganda from Kupang, but later abandoned the pro-Indonesian camp. As well as winning over recruits to the integration cause Taolin was said to have visited various parts of East

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\(^6\) Dunn, *Timor...,* p.42.

\(^7\) Taylor, *Indonesia’s forgotten war...,* p.26; and Hill, ‘Fretilin...’, pp.72-78.

\(^8\) This party was previously known as the Associacao Popular Monarquica de Timor (Popular Association of Monarchists of Timor).

\(^9\) Dunn, *Timor...,* p.73.


\(^11\) Dunn, *Timor...,* pp.73-74. A source who wishes to remain anonymous has confided to the author that Taolin was a regular visitor to the dormitory of Timorese studying in a Yogyakarta university in the 1970s. He was suspected at the time of being a Bakin operative. Personal communication, 19 June 2002.
Timor to collect information and made numerous visits to Liurai Guilherme Goncalves, whose district of Atsabe served as Apodeti headquarters.¹²

After the December 1975 invasion of East Timor those liurais who had co-operated with Indonesia, such as Goncalves, were rewarded by being given positions in the civilian government,¹³ but otherwise the liurais had little autonomy and despite earlier promises their traditional rights and privileges were removed, in line with Indonesian law.¹⁴ The liurais, however, continued to be influential in their communities and their support was still welcomed by the Indonesian government. This was shown in the late 1990s when the liurais were sought to promote a vote for continued integration of East Timor into Indonesia at a plebiscite to be held in 1999. The alternative was independence. A number of paramilitary or militia groups were formed with the assistance of the TNI to pressure the people to vote for continued integration. Members of the traditional elites were active in the militias, such as Cancio Lopez de Carvalho, son of Liurai Cassa-Ainaro, who led the Mahidi militia, and Edmundo da Conceicao Silva, the Liurai of Lautem, who was also head of the Tim Alfa militia.¹⁵

The plebiscite held in East Timor on 30 August 1999 resulted in an overwhelming vote for independence. Following the announcement of the result the militias went on a rampage throughout the territory slaughtering pro-independence campaigners and burning and looting property. The militias then retreated into West Timor, but many ordinary East Timorese were forced across the border also and were housed in makeshift refugee camps. The militias then re-organised themselves into a group called Uni Timor Aswain (UNTAS; Union of Timorese Warriors) and received the support of some of the traditional rulers of West Timor. On 16 October 2000 a group of West Timor rajas, including Raja Insana, Theodorus Taolin, and Raja Kupang, Leopold Nisnoni, accompanied by ex-East Timor Governor Abilio Soares, met with the Governor of NTT, Piet Tallo. The following day they addressed the NTT

¹² Dunn, *Timor...*, pp.73-75, 116.
¹³ Goncalves was appointed chairman of the provincial parliament and later became governor.
¹⁴ Dunn, *Timor...*, pp.5, 301.
¹⁵ ETISC (East Timor International Support Center), *Indonesia’s death squads: Getting away with murder. A chronology of Indonesian sponsored paramilitary and militia atrocities in East Timor from November 1998 to May 1999*, pp.7-8. Silva was also said to be head of the Jatih Merah Putih militia. See Togi Simanjuntak (ed.), *Premanisme Politik*, pp.128-129.
parliament. The rajas announced that they had revived an old *adat* body, the Dewan Raja-raja, in order to help solve any conflict that had arisen as a result of the presence of East Timorese refugees in West Timor. Soares told the parliament the Dewan Raja-raja could re-invigorate the traditions and customs of Timor.\(^{16}\)

In June 2000 a group of rajas and *liurai*s from West Timor and East Timor met in Oelolok, the centre of the Insana kingdom. At the meeting ten traditional leaders, five from East Timor and five from West Timor, made a declaration which was forwarded to politicians and government officials to demonstrate to them that the rajas and *liurai*s ‘still have a role in the socio-cultural field’.\(^{17}\) The declaration called for the *adat* region of Waiwiku-Wehale to be maintained within the Republic of Indonesia and was signed by delegates of the three great kingdoms of Timor: Sonbai (Raja Amarasi, Robby Koroh), Likusaen (Liurai Memo, Guilherme dos Santos), and Wehale (Liurai Malaka, Luis Sanaka Tei Seran).\(^{18}\) Representatives at the meeting stressed that Timor had previously been united under the leadership of Waiwiku-Wehale, but had been divided by the Dutch and Portuguese. Following the independence vote in East Timor the island had been divided again. At the end of the meeting the rajas and *liurai*s, led by the example of host Raja Insana, made ‘spontaneous’ donations to UNTAS to help return the ‘Merah Putih’ (Red and White, the Indonesian flag) to East Timor. The meeting received a full page report in a newspaper owned by UNTAS leader Eurico Guterres.\(^{19}\)

Following the Oelolok meeting another was held in Niki Niki, hosted by Raja Amanuban, Nesi Nope. Nope described the traditional leaders’ purpose as being ‘a moral movement’ to provide support for East Timorese refugees in West Timor and to strengthen the *adat*, which had been overlooked in the modern age.\(^{20}\) There were other meetings of the Dewan Raja-raja following this and Sultan Hamengkubuwono X of Yogyakarta was invited to a meeting to be held in late 2000.\(^{21}\) It was considered appropriate to invite the Sultan as a representative of the Majapahit kingdom which,

\(^{16}\) *Pos Kupang*, 18 October 2000; and *Bali Post*, 18 October 2000.

\(^{17}\) Nisnoni, interviews Kupang, 17-19 November 2002.

\(^{18}\) ‘Deklarasi Oelolok’, 4 June 2000; see also *Timor File*, 22 June 2000.

\(^{19}\) *Timor File*, 22 June 2000.

\(^{20}\) *Surya Timor*, 1 August 2000.

\(^{21}\) Nope, interview Niki Niki, 15 June 2000; and Nisnoni, interviews Kupang, 17-19 November 2002.
according to legend, once ruled over all Timor. The Sultan was apparently ready to come, but was persuaded against the idea by the governments in Jakarta and Kupang.22

The meetings held in 2000 saw the rajas closely linked with UNTAS. The militias and UNTAS were disowned by some members of the government in Jakarta, but they had substantial informal support. In many quarters they were hailed as heroes and patriots. Why the rajas sought to assist them is unclear, but it would be wrong to think that the rajas were simply manipulated by other forces. The rajas may have been motivated by patriotic feelings also, but one effect of the revival of the Dewan Raja-raja was to give the rajas a platform to air their views. In April 2003 the rajas met in Oelolok again, but this time used the title Dewan Usif-usif (usif being the Atoni word for raja). There was no obvious connection with UNTAS and it appears no liurai from East Timor attended. There were, however, representatives from throughout West Timor, as well as Rote, Sabu and Alor. One of the main purposes of the meeting was to declare the rights of the people of West Timor in relation to the oil fields of the Timor Gap (presently claimed by East Timor and Australia) and to dispute the ownership of Ashmore Reef. The reef and surrounding islands are part of Australian territory, but have been visited by Indonesian fisherman, especially from Rote, for hundreds of years. The meeting was facilitated by the government sponsored Kelompok Kerja Celah Timor dan Pulau Pasir (Ashmore Reef and Timor Gap Working Group) which consists not only of concerned traditional rulers, but also local government officials, academics and entrepreneurs.23

Through participation in such activities the rajas of West Timor have retained a high profile. The traditional rulers presently have no official powers or positions. Their kingdoms are no longer recognised by law and their old rights and privileges have been abolished. Yet they have remained influential in their communities and retain the respect of many of their former subjects. Traditional rulers have been active in politics and in non-government lobby groups, but also have an important position in the local adat. Because of this they have been sought out by governments and other power players in Timor who have utilised the rajas to give legitimacy to their own

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23 Kompas, 5 March and 14 April 2003.
programs and policies. In doing so the rajas’ positions have been strengthened also. As long as *adat* continues to be respected on the island it is likely that the traditional rulers will continue to be important allies of all who wish to exercise power in Timor.
Figure 37.
Front page of Timor File, 22 June 2000.
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