

My experiences as a civil servant in West Papua (New Guinea)

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The involvement of Papuans in the administration

The first School for Public Administration in Kota Nica was founded in 1944 by the Commanding Officer of the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA), Captain Jan van Eechoud. It fell under the responsibility of General Douglas MacArthur and was supervised by Lieutenant General R.A. Wheeler, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander A.L. Moffit of the State Department, and the Senior Officer of NICA (SONICA), Colonel Raden Abdulkadir Widjoatmodjo. At that time, New Guinea was part of the South West Pacific Area; the war zone run by the United States. It explains why so many Americans were around in these parts of the world. Among them were Colonel Lyndon B. Johnson and Air Force Officer Richard Nixon. Lieutenant John Fitzgerald Kennedy had been rescued a year earlier, on 2 August 1943, by the Melanesians of the Solomon Islands. His gun-boat PT 109 was torpedoed during the night by the Japanese destroyer Amagiri.

Marcus and Frans Kaisiepo, Lucas Runkorem, Nicolaas Jouwe, Filemon Jufuway, Frans Djopari and August Matani were among the first students of the School for Public Administration in Kota Nica. They were to replace the Moluccan civil servants. Concerted efforts were made under Resident van Eechoud to develop the territory. Later on, in the 1950s, New Guinea was administratively divided into 6 divisions, 38 sub-divisions and 72 districts, respectively led by residents (divisional commissioners), sub-divisional heads (Hoofd Plaatselijk Bestuur), and district heads. Though the top officials were exclusively Dutch till the end, the lower echelons were increasingly staffed with well trained Papuan civil servants.

The foundation of village communities

These civil servants were responsible for pioneering and implementing vast development projects. The population was persuaded to carry out its share of building villages and constructing roads and airstrips. They did so in cooperation with the village heads, traditional tribal chiefs, preachers, missionaries and teachers. Throughout all this, the civil servants had to take the traditional law, the 'adat' of the local population, into consideration. That was especially so in matters related to the use of tribal lands. These were the traditional sacred lands in Papua and Melanesia that had to be handed down to the next generation. They are the food sheds, the supermarkets, of a rural society.

The link between the democratization process and independence

The decades between 1944 and the transfer of New Guinea to the United Nations in 1962 saw the introduction of the principles of democracy in the administration of New Guinea. In doing so, the Government could link up with traditions already available in Papua and all of Melanesia. Tribal consultation was generally known. The essence was that a tribal chief or matai never decided alone.

In Biak the first trial Regional Council, the Kankain Karkara Biak, was established in 1948. In later years, advisory councils were established in the townships of Hollandia, Biak, Fakfak and Merauke.

The Regional Councils

The first modern Regional Council for Biak and Numfor was established on 24 June 1959. The area was split up into polling districts, which chose their representatives through a system of indirect elections. Both men and women had suffrage. This modern administrative body had its own budget and took care of the development of the region. Soon after, some five other regional centres got their regional councils as well.

The New Guinea Council

The principle of a New Guinea Council was laid down in the Administrative Regulations for New Guinea that acquired force of law on 29 December 1949. Yet, the real preparations only began in 1960, at a time when sufficient administrative potential was available. West Papua was divided into constituencies. Each constituency put forward its own candidates. These were elected through a mixed system of nomination, indirect voting and direct elections. The latter took place in some of the larger cities. Here the "one man one vote" system could be applied, with active and passive suffrage for men and women. In these places, real electoral campaigns were organized, together with horns, banners, flags and posters. It was a grand occasion when on 5 April 1961 the New Guinea Council of 28 members was inaugurated. Vice-Minister Theo Bot and members of the Dutch parliament were present. Among the guests of honour were representatives of the governments and members of parliament of the surrounding Pacific countries. West Papua then possessed a parliament of its own, with more powers than expected. These actually surpassed those of the Legislative Council (LEGCO) in Port Moresby.

In October 1961, in all freedom and on their own initiative, prominent Papuan leaders and tribal chiefs assembled in Hollandia and formed a National Committee. Out of the many different designs that were submitted for a flag, the one by Nicolaas Jouwe was selected. The well known song 'Hai Tanahku Papua' was accepted as the anthem. After approval by the New Guinea Council and the Dutch Parliament, these symbols were al-

lowed to be used per 1 December 1961, alongside the national red, white and blue flag and the Dutch national anthem, the *Wilhelmus*.

Surinam and the Dutch Antilles already had their own flags. Now West Papua had its own flag too. This was not a sign of colonialism but of a mature democracy!

New Guinea in the South Pacific Conference

After slavery in the years preceding the First World War, colonialism too had to be abolished after the Second World War. All colonized countries and peoples were to become independent. The principle was laid down in the Declaration concerning Non Self-Governing Territories, mentioned in the Decolonization Resolution 1514 of December 1960. In it, no distinction was made between countries under Trusteeship and countries under direct colonial rule.

On a more modest level, preparatory work had been done from 1946 onward in the South Pacific Conference. In its regular meetings, representatives of Australia, England, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand and the United States discussed administrative policies in their own territories and the possibilities for cooperation. The governments involved reported to the United Nations annually. The result was a fruitful cooperation in the areas of economics, health care, and social and cultural affairs in the countries under their trust. For the population of West Papua it was a source of confidence and hope for the future.

It was the close cooperation between Australia and the Netherlands in particular that mattered for Papuans from both parts. After all, the population of both territories had much in common, and one might even ask whether a national boundary had ever existed between this one people. The answer is no. As was the case with many other Papuans, I too participated actively in the work of the South Pacific Conference. I was involved in the Youth Policy of the Conference. And as a reporter for the weekly *Pengantara* and the monthly *Triton*, I also attended the annual sports meetings between the secondary schools of Wewak (PNG) and Hollandia. Delegations of Papuan leaders went back and forth between Port Moresby and Hollandia. They discussed a merger of both parts in an independent country and in combination with the other islands in a Melanesian Federation.

On an official journey with Vice-Minister Bot

In January 1962, one of the last visits of our highest-ranking superior from The Hague, Vice-Minister Bot, took place. For the Papuans in general, and for me personally, he was a very amiable and caring father figure. For the civil servants he was a stern man. Governor Platteel asked me to join him as an adviser and interpreter. Together with Bot's official secretary

Degens, we travelled to as many administrative centres as possible. Our task was to explain Dutch policy to the Papuan people.

In the service of the UNTEA administration.

On 15 August 1962, I arrived in Hollandia on board a Cessna plane from Nabire, the capital of my native region. From the onboard radio the message came in that the agreement had been signed in New York. Upon my arrival at Sentani airport, the departure hall was crowded with Dutch families who were preparing to leave. I saw heartbreaking scenes of Papuan families and friends bidding farewell. Arriving at the coast, the same scenes took place on the quay of the harbour of Hollandia.

At the Office of the Resident I was entrusted with handling immigration tasks, such as handing out visas. The first Indonesian civil servants poured into the country. For every Dutchman leaving, five Indonesians entered. They came from an economically weak country and received UNTEA-salaries with valuable New Guinea Guilders.

Goods, household furniture and possessions belonging to the population were removed under threat, mistreatment and manslaughter under the motto: the colonial goods have to go! Beds and medical instruments belonging to the modern hospital in Dock II disappeared into the holds of dozens of rusty ships that were moored on the quays. At protests people were mistreated and killed. During the UNTEA administration meetings and assemblies were forbidden. That applied to the meetings of the Regional Councils and the New Guinea Council as well. There was no freedom of press. The Papuan population, who worked hard and had lived together with the Dutch in peace and harmony, was totally taken by surprise and intimidated by the practices of the "liberators".

During the term of the UNTEA administration the Pakistani troops with their wooden guns proved to be incapable of protecting the population. But this was not mentioned in any of UNTEA's reports to the United Nations. Yet, despite this, Secretary General U Thant seemed to be satisfied with them. Apparently, these reports were drafted as desired. He is also supposed to have wanted the UNTEA administrative period to be shortened per 1 January 1963, instead of 1 May. Up until then we had experienced very capable Dutch residents and the administration and civil services were fully Dutch-speaking. Now things changed, which led to many misunderstandings. The UN-administrators did not know the Dutch language and, except for the Englishman Gordon Carter, no Divisional Commissioner spoke Malay either. Their quality was below par. With some exceptions, such as the New Zealander Johnson in Biak and the British man Cameron in Fakfak, they were simply unfit for a resident function.

The population was supposed to be informed about the New York Agreement and the Act of Free Choice. However, the Divisional Commissioners

had no contact with the population whatsoever. Some checked the food supplies while others filled their refrigerators with whisky. A lot of siestas took place during office hours. It was therefore understandable that the Papuan population was completely sceptical about the UNTEA administration. We witnessed the fact that neither Governor Djalal Abdoh nor the Divisional Commissioners were effectively in charge of West Papua after 1 January 1963. Administratively, UNTEA was a complete failure!

At the UN during the presentation of the Ortiz-Sanz Report in 1969 During the Act of Free Choice, that lasted from 14 July until 2 August 1969, the 1,026 people whom Indonesia had selected all chose for accession to Indonesia. This had taken place in the presence of Mr Ortiz Sanz, the United Nations representative. With the Act of Free Choice accomplished, his only remaining task was to report to the General Assembly in September 1969. For us, Papuans, it was a last chance to have our voices heard. Papuan delegations led by Nicolaas Jouwe and Marcus Kaisiepo went to New York. We hoped for a fair discussion of that dubious event, and even that the Papuan people would get a new chance for an honest plebiscite. We were not the only ones who were dissatisfied with the way in which Indonesia and the UN had handled the matter. Many African, South American, and Scandinavian countries as well as France had their doubts about the process and the result.

However, we were very taken aback and fearful when we observed so many diplomatic mafia practices in the UN. In a resolution during the process of dealing with the Ortiz-Sanz Report on Wednesday 19 November 1969 in the General Assembly, Dr Richard Akwei, a Vice Chairman of the UN and Ambassador of Ghana, asked to give the Papuans the opportunity for a plebiscite in 1975. Unfortunately, the resolution was rejected. With that, the Papuan people were propelled back to the beginning of the 20th century. We, who witnessed the settlement of the Ortiz-Sanz Report, were forced to spend the rest of our life in the diaspora.

Conclusion

At the beginning of my speech I have shown you that in 1944 American leadership was involved in the formation of the Papuan leadership. Yet, in later years it was that same leadership under President Kennedy, that bartered away the American ideals of freedom and democracy as far as the Papuans were concerned. After that, the Netherlands, led by Luns and Udink, shirked out of the essential chapter of an international agreement that had been made without the Papuans. The *conditio sine qua non* of self-determination had obviously lost its relevance.

Finally, the Secretary General of the United Nations U Thant and his administrators were responsible for the administrative failure of UNTEA and for the first wave of inhumane and anti-democratic treatment of the Papuan people.

As civil servants of the Dutch administration we taught a primitive people to end their tribal wars, to trust the amberis and the white men. We encouraged them to take part in the modern world. So they had been used to the democratic system since the 1950s. The only result is that we have caused them prolonged misery.

However, the democratization process in Indonesia offers opportunities for a peaceful dialogue between Papuans and Indonesians. I am convinced that a democratic Indonesia will recognize the human dignity of the Papuans and offer them an opportunity to enter into a new future together with the Papuans.