

**AN UNEXPLORED HISTORY:  
NATIONALISM AMONG MOLUCCANS IN THE  
NETHERLANDS, 1951-1990**

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On April 25, 1990 several thousand Moluccans gathered in The Hague to "celebrate" the fortieth anniversary of the South Moluccan Republic, the Republik Maluku Selatan or RMS. After a church ceremony, a protest march was held through the city. When the demonstration entered the neighborhood of the Indonesian embassy, a group of 600 youngsters spontaneously went to the embassy. Here they were stopped by a small police force. Before long, Moluccan youngsters were fighting with the police. In the meantime, most of the demonstrating Moluccans went to the "Houtrusthallen," where a celebration was to be held. While prominent leaders gave speeches between cultural performances inside, many Moluccans wandered around to meet relatives and friends outside. They talked, laughed, flew kites, or took walks. I observed some 10-year-old kids going for a walk in the city, while writing the abbreviation R.M.S. or slogans like "RMS Merdeka" ('Free RMS') on benches.

Every year Moluccans come to The Hague to celebrate the anniversary of the RMS. Every year, the TV news services show part of the speech by RMS President Manusama, as well as some shots of cultural performances. This year was different. Dutch society, or at least the journalists, were shocked by the events at the Indonesian embassy. They wondered why and how they could have happened. The relationship between the Dutch and the Moluccans had improved, they thought, especially after the historic 1986 agreement between the Moluccan political leaders and the Dutch government, concerning past Moluccan claims and future Moluccan welfare. Above all, for several years little had been heard about the RMS. The events at the embassy revived memories of the 1970s, when Moluccan youngsters hijacked trains and took hostages. A TV journalist even asked a Moluccan spokeswoman if Dutch society should prepare for new hijackings. Other journalists interviewed some of the youngsters involved in

the fight and wrote a sensational article about radicalizing youth (*Elsevier*, 16 June 1990).

The incident described above, and reactions to it, give a lot to think about. Moluccans came to the Netherlands 39 years ago and their history here has been marked by events and discussions concerning the RMS. So: What happened in The Hague? Does it show that nationalism never diminished or is it a signal of nationalist revivalism? Was it an outburst of social unrest in which nationalist symbols acted as catalyzer? Why was Dutch society surprised by the events? What do the Dutch know and think about Moluccan nationalism; do they understand it? To answer all these questions would take intensive research and go beyond the limits of this article. A more manageable question is: What is the history of Moluccan nationalism in the Netherlands and how is it explained by researchers? This article will describe Moluccan nationalism in some detail, its emergence and developments in the Netherlands. It will then review the main trends in analyzing Moluccan nationalism. Finally it will question whether these analyses provide sufficient understanding of Moluccan nationalism in the Netherlands.

### THE PRECEDING HISTORY

In the Netherlands Indies many Moluccans, especially Christian Ambonese,<sup>1</sup> found employment in the colonial administration as teachers, clerks, lower officials, soldiers, and so forth. They occupied a special position in the colonial hierarchy, between the Dutch (and Europeans) and the indigenous population. In Ambonese society, the Christian Ambonese working for the colonial power formed a specific "middle class."<sup>2</sup>

After the Pacific War, Moluccan soldiers fought beside the Dutch against Indonesian Republicans in an attempt to restore colonial rule; without success. The Dutch had to negotiate with the Indonesian Republicans on decolonization. In this postwar period, three main political orientations existed (or emerged) in the Moluccas. First, there was a movement striving for an unitary Indonesian state. Most of its leaders were Christians, its followers mainly Moslem. The second movement—with leaders and followers mainly Christians—favoured a federal structure for Indonesia. Their ideas coincided with the Dutch policy at that time. And the third movement (also mainly Christians) sought to remain in one way or another inside the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

In 1949, in a compromise between Indonesian Republicans and the Dutch, sovereignty was transferred to a Federation of Indonesian States (*Republik Indonesia Serikat*, RIS). Shortly after independence, several federal states decided, with or without pressure, to join the Republic of

Indonesia. The RIS began to transform into a unitary republic. Members of the Special Forces<sup>3</sup> and KNIL soldiers were involved in an attempt to keep troops of the central government out of the State of East Indonesia—of which the Moluccas was a part—and by doing so to stop the incorporation of this State into the Republic of Indonesia. This came to be known after its leader, as the coup of Andi Abdul Azis, who was a Buginese ex-KNIL captain, in Makassar (present-day Ujung Pandang). This coup eventually failed and the government of the State of East Indonesia declared itself willing to join the unitary state. Because of these developments, Moluccan leaders in Ambon, who used to favor federalism, now favored separatism. Although in representative bodies the separatists had no majority, they succeeded in proclaiming an independent Republic of South Moluccas (*Republik Maluku Selatan*, RMS) on April 25, 1950. In the developments which preceded this proclamation ex-KNIL soldiers and Special Forces played a key role.<sup>4</sup>

The RMS leaders did not want to negotiate with the Indonesian Republicans, whereupon the latter invaded the Moluccan Islands. Guerilla resistance by RMS troops continued on the island of Seram until the arrest in 1963 of Dr. Ch. Soumokil, president of the RMS and leader of the resistance.<sup>5</sup> Soumokil was executed in 1966.

When in 1949 the Dutch colonial domination in Indonesia ended, the KNIL had to be dissolved. Indigenous troops were given the options of either demobilizing or transferring to the new Indonesian army. The release of Moluccan soldiers did not run smoothly, due largely to the turbulent political changes that took place.

At the time of the RMS proclamation about 4,000 Moluccan soldiers (formerly KNIL<sup>6</sup>), the last group to be released, were stationed in camps located mainly on Java. After the RMS was proclaimed, they sympathized with the newborn state and refused to demobilize in territory dominated by Indonesian Republicans. They wanted to be demobilized either on the Moluccan island of Seram or in Dutch New Guinea. The Dutch government could not allow them to do so, for that would damage the fragile relationship with the new Indonesian government. The Moluccan soldiers were afraid the Dutch would release them in Indonesian controlled areas, so they filed suit against the Dutch government. As a result, a Dutch judge prohibited the Dutch government from demobilizing Moluccan soldiers against their will on Indonesian dominated territory. In order to escape a stalemate, the Dutch government decided to transfer the soldiers with their families to the Netherlands. In 1951 12,500 Moluccans came to Holland, temporarily they thought—as did the Dutch.

Nowadays the Moluccan community in the Netherlands contains an estimated 42,000 persons, including Moluccans serving in the Dutch Navy at the time of decolonization and a small group of Moluccans that came to the Netherlands in later years.

### MOLUCCAN NATIONALISM IN THE NETHERLANDS

Arriving in the Netherlands, the Moluccan soldiers were discharged from the army and given housing in former monasteries and concentration camps. They lived socially and geographically isolated from the Dutch. Most of the camps were situated at a distance from villages and in the first years there was no stimulus at all to find work. In the mid-fifties this situation changed. Moluccans were encouraged to find jobs and in the sixties the Moluccans were transferred to special wards in small rural towns. There was, however, an exception: Moluccans serving in the Dutch Royal Navy. Because the Navy was not a part of the colonial military forces, the Moluccans were given the options to demobilize, to transfer to the new Indonesian navy, or to stay in service. The Moluccans who decided upon the latter were not discharged. They stayed in service, and some were given housing in special camps or wards near a navy harbor or training center. (Some Moluccan navy men were sent on duty to the Dutch Antilles.) They were not isolated in the same way as the former KNIL soldiers were.

Already in the camps Moluccan nationalism (supporting the RMS) became part of everyday life, and nationalist ideas became intertwined in the Moluccan church. Parades were held, RMS flags raised and special prayer-meetings were held for the guerilla resistance on Seram.<sup>7</sup> The Moluccan church became an important intermediary in the spread and consolidation of the RMS ideal. In the early fifties several delegations were sent to the Netherlands by the RMS government at Seram, to find support for the Moluccan cause. In The Hague, the RMS government had its own representative: the Bureau South Moluccas. In their nationalist orientation, the newly arrived Moluccans were also supported by Dutch right-wing Calvinist organizations. Attempts by the Dutch government to prevent contacts between the Moluccans in the camps and the outside, namely, the Bureau and Dutch sympathizers, were without success. The Moluccan nationalist movement in the Netherlands grew stronger. Several mass demonstrations, attended by Moluccans from camps all over Holland, were held in The Hague.

The strong nationalist orientation among the inhabitants of the camps may be illustrated by what is called the 1952 incident (Wittermans 1955:253 ff., 1962:315-316). In 1952 the Dutch authorities offered 3,000 Moluccans the chance to join a civil guard corps to guard military objects.

According to Wittermans, the Moluccans in the camps were in favour of signing on. Two organizations, to which most of the Moluccans belonged, demands some conditions before they would accept the offer. The demands included explicit recognition and support for the RMS by the Dutch government and the exercise of their demobilization rights by Moluccans. The Dutch government either could not or would not meet those demands, but nevertheless distributed enlistment forms. Only 39 persons signed up, all of them of Southeast Moluccan descent. Wittermans questions why so few Moluccans signed. Possible motives could be fear of repercussions or manipulation by leaders. According to Wittermans, the main motive was nationalist feelings. An inquiry concerning the willingness of Moluccans to return to Indonesia, carried out a few months after the incident, confirmed his analysis. This inquiry covered most male heads of households and was carried out in private, so there could not be any public control as was possible in the case of the conscription lists. Only 5 persons(!) answered that they wanted to return to Indonesia.

The main political goal for the Moluccans in the Netherlands was support for the guerilla resistance on Seram. They tried to provide support by collecting money and seeking recognition of the RMS on the national (Netherlands) and international level. From 1953 on, several splits took place in the nationalist movement. Although divided in different organizations, the majority of the Moluccans in the Netherlands supported the RMS. Most of the nationalist leaders were intellectuals and former subofficers of the colonial army.

A radical change took place about the mid-sixties when Soumokil was arrested and the guerilla war in the Moluccas came to an end. By that time the Dutch policy towards Moluccans had already changed. They were to be transferred to special wards<sup>8</sup> and since 1956 were encouraged to integrate themselves into the Dutch labor market. After Soumokil was executed in 1966, successful attempts were made to unify Moluccan organizations in the Netherlands. At one meeting, a new organization, the Badan Persatuan (body of unity), was founded and a government in exile was established. J. A. Manusama, who came to the Netherlands as a member of one of the delegations in the early fifties and was one of the initiators of the RMS proclamation, became the new RMS president.<sup>9</sup> With the establishment of this government in exile, the perspectives of the RMS changed radically. There was no longer a clear movement in the Moluccas, for which support or recognition could be asked. The nationalist initiative came completely into the hands of the Moluccan exiles in the Netherlands.

At the same time, another important change took place. Until the beginning of the sixties Moluccan youngsters were hardly involved in the

political arena of Moluccan nationalism as political cadres. This was the terrain of the first generation. From 1960 on, youngsters started to organize themselves and participated more prominently in mass demonstrations.<sup>10</sup> In 1966, second-generation Moluccans started to take the initiative in political action. Their actions were more radical than those of their parents. They set fire to the Indonesian embassy in 1966, and in 1970 they attacked the residence of the Indonesian ambassador in Wassenaar and took hostages.<sup>11</sup> During the mid-seventies some trains were hijacked and hostages were taken.<sup>12</sup> Besides taking more radical actions, the second generation also appealed to another ideology. They placed their struggle in the context of anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism, ideologies which were quite popular at that time.

In the mid-seventies, other important changes took place. The ideology of the nationalist movement at arrival in the Netherlands was a separatist one. There was hardly any room for other opinions. Camp councils were dominated by members of RMS organizations, in fact they functioned in the structure of those organizations (Wittermans 1955:375). Social control, part of everyday life in the camps and wards, kept dissident thinking under control. This did not mean other ideas did not exist. Already in the first years of their stay in the Netherlands, some groups of Moluccans turned their backs on the RMS. Most of these did not belong to the majority of Christians from the central Moluccas; they originated from the Southeast Moluccas or were Moslems from the central Moluccas.<sup>13</sup> Unlike these "dissident" groups many Moluccans serving the navy stayed loyal to the nationalistic cause of the Moluccans. Whenever clashes occurred between competing RMS groups or between RMS and non-RMS groups, the Dutch authorities responded by transferring one of the factions (or its leaders) to another camp.

At the end of the sixties and early seventies, leftist Moluccan students—most students living outside the wards—started to examine their own and Indonesian history. They started to doubt that the RMS was the best solution for the future of themselves and of their fellow Moluccans in the Moluccas. Inside the wards, a group of youngsters were involved in the same process. There was a big difference between the two groups. The students could easily express their doubts, while the youngsters in the wards had to reckon with the social control that surrounded them.

In the mid-seventies, because of the hijackings and hostage-takings, a lively discussion on the RMS and the future of Moluccans took place inside the Moluccan community. Slowly a process of rethinking the RMS ideology spread among a broad group of Moluccans. Two factors influenced this process. First was a continuous process of social differentiation in the

Moluccan community, which had remained rather homogeneous the first decade and a half.<sup>14</sup> The social differentiation made it easier to get in touch with other ideas or ways to look upon things. A second important factor was the change in Indonesian policy and Moluccan attitude towards visits to the Moluccas during the second half of the seventies. Earlier the Indonesian government had put many restrictions on visits to the Moluccas, and the Moluccans in the Netherlands thought of such visits as treachery because the Moluccas were seen as occupied territory. By visiting the Moluccas, Moluccans could (and had to) reconsider their relationship with their home country, a relationship that used to be dominated by the RMS.

Many Moluccans also started to doubt if they would be able to live in the Moluccas. The social pressure to stick to separatist ideas slowly was replaced by a more tolerant political climate. Although many Moluccans and some organizations abandoned the separatist ideology, this did not mean they were no longer nationalist. RMS and non-RMS groups both agreed on the need for self-determination for the Moluccas.

At the same time social problems in the Moluccan community—like drug-abuse, housing and unemployment—reached a point at which something had to be done to solve them. Because of the inability of Dutch organizations to solve the problems and the existence of their own self-help tradition, Moluccans started to set up their own organizations dealing with those social problems.<sup>15</sup> It was also in this context that in 1986 the historical agreement between Moluccan leaders and the Dutch government was achieved. In a way Moluccans started to realize that they would not return to the Moluccas on short notice and therefore also had to find a way to survive in the Netherlands. Although formed to deal with social problems, many organizations dealt with political issues (such as the RMS and the transfer of Moluccans to the Netherlands) in analyzing problems and in developing methods. Most of the workers in those organizations belong to the younger generation. During the second half of the eighties, many younger Moluccans became active in the so called *kumpulan*—an organization based on and organizing support for the ancestral village. By doing so they were seeking new ways to express their relation with the Moluccas.

## THE LITERATURE

The literature on the RMS in the Netherlands is extensive, although there has hardly been any specific sociological research on this subject. Only Wittermans' research (1955) explicitly covered the terrain of nationalism among Moluccans.<sup>16</sup> Others wrote on the RMS because it is an important

aspect of Moluccan life in the Netherlands.<sup>17</sup> How did various writers explain RMS nationalism among the succeeding generations of Moluccans?

Wittermans, who with regard to the "1952 incident" argued that nationalism permeated the everyday lives of the Moluccans after arriving in the Netherlands, summarizes in the last chapter of his thesis (1955:319):

Ambonese nationalism—a direct protest against a centralized Indonesian government—has been related [by Wittermans] to change in the social and political position of the group subsequent to the transfer of sovereignty. The evacuation of the soldiers who had joined the Ambonese nationalistic movement, resulted in a continuation of the movement in Holland.

The continuation of the nationalistic movement in the Netherlands was not just a sequel to its start in Indonesia. Specific circumstances in the Netherlands contributed to this. Firstly the unexpected discharge from the army. This, according to Wittermans and Gist, "deprived them of status in their new environment" (1962:317). Therefore:

Their struggle in the Netherlands, manifestly a struggle for group recognition, would seem to be motivated by a common feeling of status deprivation. Group recognition in terms of achieved national independence would imply a new and respectable status for all and a compensation for individual feelings of deprivation.

A second important factor was the social and geographical isolation of the Moluccans. Because of this segregation "traditional relations do not have to meet the strain of economic competition and there is time and opportunity to concentrate on specific group interests" (Wittermans 1955:313). Nationalism and religion—which was intertwined with nationalism—were two of the most prominent spheres of group interests (1955:313).

Both factors, deprivation and isolation, have since been cited by most writers to explain nationalism among the first generation of Moluccans in the Netherlands. For example Van Amersfoort states that isolation stimulated group cohesion and expectations of the future (RMS) (1971:35). Conversely, the RMS ideal was a stumbling-block to contact with the surrounding Dutch society, because such contact could damage the RMS struggle (1971:36; Regeringsnota 1978:28).

The isolation factor even fostered nationalistic feelings among younger generations. Or in the words of the Dutch government:

Also the social isolation initially stimulated by the Dutch government in the form of camps and special wards helped, by strengthening the traditional Moluccan group-cohesion, to create conditions to transfer the RMS ideal (Regeringsnota 1978:27)

Comparable statements were made by the Krisisgroep (1970:9, 23).<sup>18</sup> The younger generation did not experience a loss of status because of political changes in Indonesia or a discharge from the army as their parents did, so the factor deprivation was not valid for them.<sup>19</sup> Elaborating on this theme, however, the situation of younger generations was interpreted as "relatively deprived." They had little chance for upward mobility (Krisisgroep 1970:22; Regeringsnota 1978:27), they identified themselves with their Dutch peers but were rejected (Mariën 1968:74, Oen Kay Liat 1975:14). According to these writers the Moluccan youngsters had two different reference groups. First, a Dutch one, providing them materialist identification, and second, a Moluccan one providing emotional identification. Because of rejection by the first reference group, the youngsters became "relatively" deprived and clung to the nationalist ideals of their parents and older brothers and sisters (Mariën 1971:73).

One should keep in mind that many—if not most—ideological and nationalistic movements are products of frustration, alienation and the feeling of not having a chance, *especially among young people*. (Ellemers 1979:112; original emphasis)

In their nationalist orientation, these youngsters were influenced by the western world they lived in. They were influenced by the Black Panther movement and Palestinian liberation movement, and therefore were more radical in their methods of action than their parents (Mariën 1971:68; Bartels 1989:224). To some extent, these analyses reduce the nationalist orientation among Moluccan youngsters to a youth problem (Ellemers 1979:113).<sup>20</sup> Ellemers suggested that measures should be taken to improve the socioeconomic position of Moluccans, and that the Dutch government should take a clear stand on the RMS. Unlike others, he doubts if "cultural pluralist" alternatives would be a solution (Ellemers 1979:115–116). Ellemers was served at once: after a Dutch version of his article was published (1978), the Dutch government published a report on the Moluccan community in the Netherlands (Regeringsnota 1978). This "Regeringsnota" analyzed the history and situation of the Moluccans and introduced the measures Ellemers asked for. In a postscript to the English version of his article on this "Regeringsnota," Ellemers pointed out a considerable discrepancy between what was advocated by the government

(supported by the majority of the Dutch population, according to Ellemers) "and the aspirations of a (large?) part of the Moluccans in the Netherlands" (1979:118). The main problem was "the unwillingness of the Moluccan leaders to see the problems of their group in any but a *political* light" (1979:117; original emphasis).

In the 1980s this immovable attitude of the leaders seems to have changed. In 1986 an agreement between Moluccan leaders and the Dutch government was reached, concerning the past claims and future welfare of the Moluccans.<sup>21</sup> The younger generation played a key role in the negotiations preceding the agreement (Bartels 1989:461). "They were willing to exclude 'tabooed' issues like the RMS question," so "by abandoning the hard line of the first generation leadership, they made it possible that an agreement could be reached" (Bartels 1989:461). According to Bartels, the RMS ideal "has been put on the back burner by many of the middle generation (ca. 25-45 years of age) and is definitely secondary for most of the youngest generation" (1986:37). He considers the hijackings in the seventies as a turning of tide:

The hijackings clearly shocked many Moluccans into a realization of the hopelessness of attaining the RMS and the small prospects of a collective return to the Moluccas in the near future (1986:36).

They also started to realize the possible consequences of a return: would they be accepted by their fellow Moluccans and would they be able to cope with the living conditions in the Moluccas?

Bartels therefore concludes that:

The RMS issue is largely dormant now and possibly may be allowed to expire over time but only if Moluccans find a new direction in their lives, one which makes it meaningful to participate in Dutch society. Increasing numbers are embarking in that direction, but for this they need encouragement and assurances of welcome and belonging from both the Dutch public and authorities (1989:488)

In a sense, the same statement—that the RMS will fade into the background but, depending on future developments, can revive again—is given by earlier writers (For example Wittermans & Gist 1962:317).

#### SUFFICIENTLY EXPLAINED?

Do the analyses cited above sufficiently explain Moluccan nationalism in The Netherlands? In other words, do they help us understand the

developments of Moluccan nationalism, as described in the first paragraphs of this article.

Central issues or factors in the analyses turned out to be: "deprivation," "frustration," "isolation," and "impediments to social mobility in Dutch society." Surely all these factors influenced the emergence and orientation toward nationalism among Moluccans to a greater or lesser extent, but again are they conclusive? Let us reconsider some points and see if the analyses provide us with adequate answers.

The first point concerns the link between nationalist orientation and "deprivation and isolation." Earlier we mentioned the Moluccans serving in the Royal Navy, who were not discharged and did not live in the same isolated conditions as the majority of the Moluccans. Nevertheless many of them cherished the nationalist ideals of the RMS. This is in contrast with the Southeast Moluccans who were discharged and lived under the same conditions as the majority, and some of whom rejected the RMS ideals. This could mean that (relative) "deprivation" and "isolation" cannot be interpreted as simple causal factors or even as the most important factors (as seems the case in some analyses). The socioeconomic factors are more complex and do not answer the question why some subcategories of Moluccans were attracted by nationalist ideals while others were not. Other influences might be of more importance in this matter. To stay with the already mentioned subcategories, we may suggest that belonging to a specific culture group and religion could have played a crucial role. Southeast Moluccans belong to a separate culture group from the majority (Bartels 1989:20) and about 23% of them have a different religion (Catholic).<sup>22</sup> Not all Southeast Moluccans turned their backs upon the RMS. During research visits among Moluccans, I on several occasions got to know Southeast Moluccans who were loyal to the nationalist goals, and all of them Protestant.<sup>23</sup> Also there were Protestant Moluccans serving the Navy who do not belong to the major culture group (from the central Moluccas)—but for example originated from a group of Islands in the Southwest Moluccas (the so-called TNS islands: Teun, Nila, and Serua)—who were strongly committed to the RMS ideal.<sup>24</sup>

A second point we may question is the connection between decline of nationalism and possible improvement of the socioeconomic position of Moluccans in the Netherlands, as the Dutch government argued. When we look upon the developments in the late 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, we see that it was the Moluccan students who started to redefine the RMS ideology and policy and were looking for nationalist alternatives. It was also the better educated Moluccans who achieved the historical agreement in 1986 and who are working in many group-specific organizations, of which many integrate nationalist ideas in their work. This by no means indicates

that further integration in, for example, the Dutch educational system would lead to a decline in nationalism. We have to consider the possibility that social mobility by Moluccans in a way contributed to changes in ideology and strategy. In addition, many leaders of nationalist organizations already live outside the wards and therefore are to some extent integrated in Dutch society

Third, the changes in strategy and ideology of Moluccan nationalists, like the radicalization from the mid-1960s on, are explained by western influences and "relative deprivation." At the same time, radical changes in the domain of political initiative took place, as initiative passed completely into the hands of the exiles. We might question if Moluccan youngsters would have used the same radical methods of action as long as there was a guerilla war in the Moluccas. Also the growing stream of visits to the Moluccas in the end of the 1970s is not really incorporated in the analyses of nationalism. Bartels (1986:37) argues that those journeys created ambivalence about the possibility of return: Would they be accepted and would they be able to live under less luxurious conditions? Although these points are all valid, the visits to the Moluccas did not necessarily result in rejection of the RMS ideal, but rather in a search for alternatives.

A last issue I want to discuss here concerns the way the orientation toward welfare work is interpreted. It is considered to be a sign of enfeeblement of the nationalist ideal, because it is thought to imply a stronger orientation toward Dutch society and abandonment of the idea of returning to the Moluccas. Not included in the analyses are the already mentioned nationalistic dimension of a part of this welfare work, and the restrictions on social work because of subsidies from the Dutch government.<sup>25</sup> Because of the latter, Moluccan welfare organizations can not openly act as political organizations. In analyzing the developments in the domain of welfare, we have to weigh the possibility that at present Moluccan nationalism continues via welfare organizations in a way similar to the manner in which religion helped spread and consolidate nationalism in the 1950s.

#### FINAL REMARKS

If we examine the four points discussed above, we have to conclude that the available analyses do not give us adequate or sufficient answers to all questions concerning the development of Moluccan nationalism. Surely they all give important insights and explain the conduits or conditions that helped to stimulate Moluccan nationalism. In this way the analyses are very useful. However, they did not focus on the nature of Moluccan nationalism. They seem to consider the RMS ideal as rigid, not as a dynamic ideal and

movement which changes over time. The available analyses therefore do not enable us to understand for example what happened in The Hague on April 25, 1990. Moluccans have been living in the Netherlands for 40 years now, but the history of their nationalism—labeled as the core of their identity—still is "an unexplored history."

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#### NOTES

1. "Ambonese" refers to the island of Ambon or the "Ambonese culture-circle" enclosing the Ambon and Lease islands, in the central Moluccas. Ambonese was also used as the name for people from the other Moluccan islands, because the administrative center was Ambon town. After arriving in the Netherlands the Moluccans initially were called "Ambonese." Later on this changed into "South-Moluccans" or "Moluccans." In this article I will use "Moluccans" with the exception of quotations.
2. Chauvel 1985:240, 1990a:2-3. For further information on the history of the Moluccas and Moluccans, see Chauvel 1990b and van Kaam 1977, among others.
3. The Special Forces (*Depot Speciale Troepen*) was a special commando unit trained for counterinsurgency.
4. For more detailed information see Chauvel 1990b, Penonton 1977, and van Kaam 1977.

5. According to Lapré after the arrest of Soumokil the command of the guerilla resistance was taken over by RMS Colonel E. Sopamena (1989:212).
6. The KNIL was dissolved on July 26, 1950. All KNIL soldiers who were still in service at that moment were given the status of *Koninklijke Landmacht* (KL, Royal Army).
7. Moluccan army chaplains established an independent Moluccan church after arriving. For detailed information on nationalism in camp life, see Wittermans 1955, ch. 6. For the relationship between the Moluccan church and nationalism, see Redactieteam 1989:130-164.
8. The process of transferring Moluccans from camps to special wards began in the sixties and took about 20 years. In 1991 there is still one camp. A group of inhabitants do not want to be removed to a ward. The Dutch government promised to improve the camp.
9. After this peculiar act of unification, other splits took place. In 1969, for example, I. Tamaela set up a competing government. His organization worked mainly in United Nations circles. After his death in 1978, his movement split again. These kinds of splits took place into the eighties. It is not necessary for the purpose of this article to go further into the fragmentation.
10. Partly the young political cadre came from religious youth organizations (Redactieteam 1989:154).
11. Tete Siahaya (1972), one of the activists, describes both actions.
12. See also Schmid et al. 1982.
13. About 23.5% of the male adults in 1951 originated from the Southeast Moluccas and about 76.5% from the central Moluccas. About 23% of the Southeast Moluccans were Catholic, the others Protestant. Just 2.5% of the adult males originating from the central Moluccas were Moslem, the others Protestant (Wittermans 1955:18).
14. Social differentiation in the fields of housing, education, and occupation.

15. This was most obvious in the field of aid to drug addicts. Drug abuse was a very serious problem in the late 1970s. For information on the emergence of Moluccan drug abuse and drug aid see Steijlen 1984.
16. In addition to Wittermans thesis, two other writings dealt mainly with the RMS: *Krisisgroep* (1970) and Oen Kay Liat (1975). Both writings can be characterized as pamphlets supporting the RMS cause.
17. Much of the literature deals also with the legitimacy of the RMS proclamation. For a review, see Chauvel 1978.
18. The *Krisisgroep* or *Onderzoeksgroep Krisissituaties* (Crisis Research Team) connected to the sociological institute of the University of Amsterdam was designed to conduct research on short notice in situations of crises or conflict. The purpose of the report on Moluccans was to present more information on the Moluccans preceding the trial of 33 Moluccans involved in the hostage-taking in Wassenaar in 1970.
19. Although it is often stated that the parental experience of deprivation and being betrayed by the Dutch is internalized by younger generation Moluccans, which means that those experiences (in)directly influenced youngsters.
20. Or in the words of Mariën (1971:74): "The conclusion seems justified that in essence the youth movement does not deal with a nationalistic struggle, but is a social emancipation movement of a relatively deprived group, that only can identify itself by a symbol referring to nationalism, the RMS.
21. Among other things, the agreement consisted of a medal of honor for the former KNIL soldiers or their widows, a yearly bonus of 2,000 guilders, special measures to cope with the high unemployment among Moluccans, and agreements on the responsibility for housing and Moluccan church buildings. There has been also a lot of criticism on the agreement between the Dutch government and Moluccan leaders. According to those critics the medal and yearly bonus had to be considered as "blood money" or an attempt of the Dutch government to close the "Moluccan chapter." Critics had very little confidence in the special measures for Moluccan unemployment.
22. For Southeast Moluccans, see Renwarin 1983 and 1986.

23. I wish to emphasize that this observation is not based upon systematic research.
24. For Southeast Moluccans and people from the TNS islands, I use the term culture group instead of ethnic group to emphasize that they have an *adat* different from that of the majority originating from the central Moluccas.
25. Most welfare organizations are financed by government organizations.

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## REVIEW ARTICLE

**J. P. B. DE JOSSELIN DE JONG'S  
WETAN FIELDNOTES:  
AN EXTENDED APPRECIATION**

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J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong. 1987. *Wetan Fieldnotes: Some Eastern Indonesian Texts with Linguistic Notes and a Vocabulary*. Dordrecht and Providence: Foris Publications. xi + 335 pp. Map, linguistic notes, vocabulary, index to the vocabulary. Paperback.

## INTRODUCTION

It is unsettling, sometimes, to ponder the worth of our scholarship to future generations of scholars. Will our work be of any value to them? For field- and data-oriented linguists, the question is more fundamental—do even data endure? After many frustrating hours wasted with reference grammars written in frameworks that make them all but unusable to askers of other kinds of questions, it is reassuring and even inspiring to come upon J. P. B. de Josselin de Jong's *Wetan Fieldnotes*. Written over half a century ago, the linguistic analyses still speak to today's issues, and the texts contain data that truly have endured.

It is hard, when faced with a source of information as rich as *Wetan Fieldnotes*, to restrict oneself to a simple review of the book. There are data there, data that are fascinating, stimulating and tantalizing, about a little-known member of the Austronesian family. For that reason, this piece, which began as a book review, has developed into a case study of how the