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**“Primitive” Politics:
The Rise and Fall of the Dayak Unity Party
in West Kalimantan, Indonesia”**

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**“Primitive” Politics: The Rise and Fall of the Dayak Unity Party in
West Kalimantan, Indonesia”**

Jamie S. Davidson

Anthropological studies of upriver, indigenous Dayaks have dominated the literature of West Kalimantan, a vast outlying province rich in ethnic diversity and natural resources. Misguided by the notion that heightened social and historical interaction with others dilutes Dayak authenticity, these studies have been wedded to a particular river valley or specific grouping of sub-ethnic minorities. One result of this myopia has been the neglect of the history of political associations and activities of the people actually studied. Most telling is the lack of engagement with the once vibrant Dayak Unity Party [Partai Persatuan Daya(k), commonly abbreviated PD]. This is ironic as the party’s leading personalities hailed from well-studied, upriver sub-ethnic groups, especially the Kayan and Taman. In this way, this anthropological literature unwittingly corroborates New Order constructions of apolitical Dayaks unable to grasp complicated political matters or organize politically.¹

These views stand in stark contrast to the period of Guided Democracy when, as the region’s dominant party, the PD controlled the Governorship (Oevaang Oeray) and four of six district-executive positions (bupati). The party’s key moment, its birth on the provincial stage, however, came during the early stages of the revolution. To be sure, the PD grew out of the logic of colonial rule, which forged a “Dayak” identity out of a diverse, autochthonous, non-Islamic population to be juxtaposed against Islamic “Malays.” Specifically, the Catholic Church was the institution through which the party’s future leadership--missionary-educated, and in large part seminary students--emerged. And in late 1945, amidst the ruins of a crumbled Japanese administration in the region’s headwaters, the first Dayak political organization in West Kalimantan with provincial aspirations was formed.

Apart from its own internal dynamics, PD owed its initial foothold in provincial politics to two external yet critical developments. First was the prior elimination of the local elite at the hands of the Japanese. Known as the Pontianak Affair, from April 1943 to mid-1944, some 2000 party activists, intellectuals, merchants and nobles were arrested and summarily executed. Notably, this nascent Dayak elite was unscathed, in part because of its then upriver location, and in part because the Japanese considered it irrelevant. Still, this tragedy created favorable conditions for PD to gain an unanticipated share in regional politics.

Second was Dutch support. For the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA), cooperation with PD would help ensure law and order. Authorities were cognizant of devastating Dayak raids against Japanese and the storming of Pontianak in October 1945, in which several Indonesian collaborators were slain. Co-opting PD’s elite would also further the Dutch civilizing mission. This move is one reason

¹ This absence is most conspicuous in Victor King’s work, especially his book on the “Maloh,” which, according to some, includes the Kayan, Kalis and/or Taman groups. See *The Maloh of West Kalimantan* (Dordrecht 1985). As for these upriver fascinations, Bernhard Sellato’s latest collection of essays purports to show the Aoheng as “less ‘exotic’” and “more ‘normal.’” Still, on page one he emphasizes that his focus is on groups “living in the most remote nook of the Borneo hinterland...” See *Innermost Borneo: Studies in Dayak Cultures* (Paris 2002) 13-14.

that, despite the region's storied history of violence, the transfer of authority from the Japanese to the Australian and later Dutch authorities was executed somewhat smoothly. In the end, scores of Dayak were placed in civil service, army and police posts, while party leaders, who unambiguously placed themselves in the federal camp, were appointed to the Dutch-created West Kalimantan Council.

Based on secondary sources, newspaper accounts, personal interviews and a collection of private papers of Oevaang Oeray, this paper investigates this emerging Dayak political consciousness, molded in the institutional context of PD, local bureaucracy and politics in the early independence period. In particular, it illuminates the party's struggle to balance its commitment to democratic values and the uplifting of its newly conceived "Dayak" constituency with the imperative of cooperation to gain leverage against its primary adversaries, the Malay principalities who also hitched their political fortunes to the returning Dutch.

Formation of "Dayak" Political Identities

To illustrate how Dutch colonial rule forged a "Dayak" identity out of a diverse, autochthonous, non-Islamic population, I draw on Mamdani's concept of *political* identities, deployed in his penetrating account of the Rwandan genocide.² In short, in contrast to economic or cultural identities, Mamdani sees political identities embedded in and as products of the organization of power and state-formation. Unlike in Rwanda, the generation of "Dayak" and "Malay" as political identities in West Borneo/Kalimantan has yet to instigate massive internecine bloodshed; it has nonetheless precipitated a marked solidification and contentious bi-polarization.³ This account will not settle definitively the issue of origins--who are the Dayak and who are the Malay. Instead, it is more pressing to illustrate how these political identities have evolved and changed over time amidst a complicated matrix of unfolding power relations.

European interference and influence in western Borneo was minimal until the mid nineteenth century. Warfare on Java (1825-30) followed by the intensification of the island's agribusiness, known as the Cultivation System, usurped colonial resources. Its outlying possessions remained a secondary concern.⁴

In the 1840's, however, the Dutch gradually adopted a more forward stance toward the eastern archipelago. In western Borneo in particular, colonial anxiety was piqued by developments north of the border where James Brooke, a British adventurer, was establishing his presence in Sarawak.⁵ Concerned that Brooke (i.e.,

² Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton 2001) esp. 22, 59.

³ James Collins accurately notes that, from ethno-linguistic or cultural standpoints, the two blur and neither comfortably fit within colonial categorizations. See "Contesting Straits-Malayness: The Fact of Borneo," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32, 3 (October 2001) 385-395. At the level of political identities, however, I maintain, distinctions gain greater credence, especially in the region's western lowlands.

⁴ A system that fed off an excess of exploited labor was deemed unsuitable for the under-populated Outer Islands. J.S. Furnivall, *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy* (London 1939) 177.

⁵ In 1841 the Sultan of Brunei had seceded Sarawak to Brooke as a reward for his help in crushing a local rebellion. Brooke rule--from James, his nephew Charles and Charles' son, Vyner--survived until World War II. Although denied official British Crown recognition, the Brookes did enjoy the protection of the British Royal Navy.

the British) might perceive the lack of Dutch territorial control as a sign of weakness and as a convenient excuse to advance southward, the Dutch sought to make a claim on their commitment to the region. This meant confronting the well-rooted and semi-autonomous Chinese gold-mining associations (*kongsi*), which prospered from a brisk trade with Singapore. Marked Dutch belligerency resulted in a series of bloody confrontations against the great Fosjoen Tjoengthang federation of *kongsi* in the Sambas region. Finally, in 1854, Fosjoen capitulated and was forced to recognize Dutch suzerainty.⁶

Thereupon the colonial state extended its administrative and coercive reach into western Borneo's uplands, part driven by territorial ambitions, part seeking to contain Islam's spread. A "state" presence in the formal sense of the word was developing. Only once *rust en orde* (peace and order) had been achieved could colonial civilizing missions be contemplated. True, profit motives were operative, but West Borneo never produced riches for the regime. Heidhues keenly observes that Borneo's "fabled wealth has turned out to be just that—a fable."⁷

European colonial conceptions of race, ethnic categorization and hierarchy seeped into the Borneo highlands as Dutch authorities advanced up the Kapuas River. Writing on the matter, Harwell notes: "(F)or the purposes of Dutch administration, the crucial difference to delimit was that of the non-Muslim 'Dayak' farmers eligible for tribute, corvé labor, taxation and, later, Christian salvation; Muslim 'Malay' elite for indirect rule and control of trade..."⁸ As it happened, the Dutch instituted a system of direct rule whereby riverine Malay princes produced revenue and ensured law and order on behalf of the colonialists. In turn, these principalities further subjugated their non-Muslim subjects through excessive taxation and compulsory labor.

Notwithstanding on-the-ground complexities involved, it is important to note that this Malay/non-Malay fissure anticipated colonialism. Colonialism did not create this divide, which was hastened by the arrival of and conversions to Islam. Over time, conversions rose as Islam spread from the coast inland. Significantly, religious conversion also entailed a shift in ethnic affiliation. Non-Muslims natives who adopted Islamic ways of life--often referred to as *singganan*--became "Malay."⁹

⁶ On these battles, see Mary Somers Heidhues, *Gold Diggers, Farmers, and Traders in Pontianak and the "Chinese Districts" of West Kalimantan, Indonesia* (Ithaca 2003) Chs. 2-3; and Yuan Bingling, *Chinese Democracies: A Study of the Kongsis of West Borneo (1776-1884)* (Leiden 2000) Chs. 5 and 6.

⁷ Mary Somers Heidhues, "Kalimantan Barat 1967-1999: Violence on the Periphery," in Ingrid Wessel and Georgia Wimhöffer (eds.), *Violence in Indonesia* (Hamburg 2001) 139-151, esp. 145. Gold-mining productivity diminished rapidly not only because of natural depletion, but also because the Dutch could not organize labor effectively with the *kongsi* dismantled.

⁸ Emily Evans Harwell, "The Un-Natural History of Culture: Ethnicity, Tradition and Territorial Conflicts in West Kalimantan, Indonesia, 1800-1997," (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 2000) 32. For a similar colonial experience in Africa, see René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnocide as discourse and practice* (Washington, D.C. 1994) 5.

⁹ Muslim subjects were not taxed so it behoved Malay rulers to limit conversions of one's subjects. Why Islam more frequently requires "ethnic" re-affiliation (becoming Malay/*masuk Melayu*), it is believed, stems from its stricter requirements and impingements on Dayak ways of life. It entails a cultural as well as religious transformation. The oft-cited example is the

Accordingly, the majority of Malays, especially those upriver, are converted “Dayaks.” All told, colonialism did not generate this differentiation. It did, however, facilitate its hardening and fashion a political polarization by forging a homogenous “Dayak” identity out of a variegated non-Muslim population to be juxtaposed against “Malay.” The seeds for an inexorable but slippery dichotomization were thereby sown.

In addition to indirect rule, there were two further means by which colonialists, including the Brookes, generated this monolithic “Dayak” identity. First was through war making or its converse, peace making. In western Borneo, the imposition of Dutch rule and the fundamental altering of status relations between rulers and the ruled set off a flurry of low-level incidents of violence. In his study of Indonesia’s “border arc” of the late nineteenth century, Tagliacozzo remarks that “the Dutch did not seem to understand that their own state-making project in fact created much of this violence... [P]eople were being asked to live under new sets of rules, and under terms and conditions set by the colonial state. It was only natural that there would be resistance to this evolving matrix of power...”¹⁰ To quash this unrest, the Brooke and Dutch regimes frequently deployed non-Muslim native, “Dayak” auxiliaries.¹¹ In the process, the branding of this subject identity materialized.

For instance, in 1885, the Dutch employed Dayaks to quell a revolt of gold miners from the decaying Lanfang *kongsi* federation in Pontianak district.¹² Yet, nowhere was this dynamic more pronounced than along the Sarawak border, an infamous theater of violence whose lively yet “illegal” trade, coupled with Brooke machinations, continued to arouse Dutch anxiety. In the 1850s and 60s, border officers were posted as the Dutch increasingly intervened among strife-torn Malay principalities.¹³ And in 1886, in a rare act of cooperation, the Dutch joined with Charles Brooke to stage a punitive expedition against a group of Iban Dayak, borderland inhabitants and renowned raiders of British interests and neighboring Dayak populations. For his part, Brooke recruited some 11,000 Dayak auxiliaries.¹⁴ The Dutch, although aghast at the expedition’s excesses--they scrambled to protect longhouses from being razed--put Dayaks (and some Kapuas Malays) in service to fight as well.

prohibition on eating pork, central to Dayak ritual. Nonetheless, why Muslim Dayaks are more prevalent in other parts of Kalimantan remains a mystery.

¹⁰ Eric Tagliacozzo, “Kettle on a Slow Boil: Batavia’s Threat Perceptions in the Indies’ Outer Islands, 1870-1910,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 31, 1 (March 2000) 70-100, esp. 75.

¹¹ Robert Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels: The Ibans of Sarawak under Brooke Rule, 1841-1941* (Ithaca 1970) Chs. 5-7.

¹² Heidhues, *Gold Diggers, Farmers, and Traders*, 104-111. Sometime after the British Interregnum, Lanfang signed a treaty with the Dutch, which thus allowed it to outlast the previously vanquished Fosjoen Federation.

¹³ Reed L. Wadley, “Trouble on the Frontier: Dutch-Brooke Relations and Iban Rebellion in the West Borneo Borderlands (1841-1886),” *Modern Asian Studies*, 35, 3 (2001) 623-644, esp. 627.

¹⁴ The Brookes were infamous for their reliance on Dayak auxiliaries. Charles Brooke based his so-called stabilization policies on the axiom: “only Dayak can kill Dayak.” Cited in *Ibid.*, 636.

Colonial peace making also figured prominently in Dayak identity formation.¹⁵ To achieve stability in the upper Kapuas (and in the larger central Borneo area), apart from crushing unrest, the Dutch negotiated cease-fires, fortified villages and in some cases, moved entire populations to safer locales.¹⁶ The famous peace conference in Anoi (Central Kalimantan) in 1894, whereby warfare, slavery and head-taking were outlawed, exemplified these efforts. Although legacies lingered, colonial efforts were rewarded.¹⁷ Notably, by assembling Borneo-wide “Dayak” representatives, the regime fostered among attendees a growing consciousness of a common fate and, of course, a familiar recognizability.

The above descriptions illustrate how colonialists fashioned a quasi-homogenous identity for non-Muslim indigenes. Still, to take effect and serve as basis of future political mobilization, “Dayak” as a political identity required recognition among those so branded. A key moment in this development was when young student boarders gathered at missionary schools and began to appropriate what the Dutch already believed them to be: “Dayak.” Through the recognition of one another, and, importantly, themselves, as “Dayak,” they no longer were solely wedded referentially to a river valley or language group but part of a broader generalizable category. In this way, a political provincial awareness was made possible.

As noted above, the Dutch sought to curtail Islam’s advance up the Kapuas River, for conversions to Islam had markedly risen from the mid-nineteenth century. One reason stemmed from the buttressing of inland Malay polities by colonial power, which thereby inadvertently solidified Islam’s modern and prestigious symbolic value.¹⁸ Regionally, the archipelagic-wide Pan-Islam movement was also gaining ground.¹⁹

To encumber Islam’s spread, colonial authorities turned to missionary work. Reliance on missionaries, however, required a change in attitude, for during much of the colonial reign, authorities looked askance at efforts to convert “the heathen.” It was thought that proselytising might compromise the regime’s primary objective of full-blown economic exploitation. With the introduction of the humanitarian-inspired Ethical Policy in 1901, however, which strove to morally and materially “uplift” indigenous society, authorities softened their view toward the missionaries.²⁰ On the flip side, viewed critically as an outcome of state-expansion in the Outer Isles backed

¹⁵ Yet Harwell points out the changes wrought by colonial rule in effect created tensions and generated hostilities where none had existed. “The Un-Natural History of Culture,” 48-49.

¹⁶ King, *The Maloh*, 62-70.

¹⁷ KMA M Usop, *Pakat Dayak: Sejarah Integrasi dan Jatidiri Masyarakat Dayak & Daerah Kalimantan Tengah* (Palangkaraya 1994) 12, 17, 35; and Jerome Rousseau, *Central Borneo: Ethnic Identity and Social Life in Stratified Society* (Oxford 1990) 35.

¹⁸ Still, many non-Islamic, upper Kapuas populations remained free of Malay influence. East of Sintang, only a handful of minor principalities (Jongkong, Silat and Bunut) were formed and none east of Putussibau. King, *The Maloh*, 28-34.

¹⁹ These developments concerned colonial officials. Tagliacozzo remarks that the outbreak of the Aceh War (1873) intensified this anxiety. Regional officers were alerted to report suspicious “Islamic” activity and thus statistics on the subject accordingly spiked. Eric Tagliacozzo, “Secret Trades of the Straits: Smuggling and State-Formation Along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1870-1910,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1999) 288-296.

²⁰ Rita Kipp, *The Early Years of Dutch Colonial Mission: The Karo Field* (Ann Arbor 1990) Ch. 1.

by military force as a means to secure raw materials to fuel the world's capitalist economies, the Ethical Policy also justified greater interference in indigenous societies. It thereby facilitated significant "cultural transformations of traditional societies."²¹

In West Borneo--as it became known--the Church would form the bedrock of this civilizing mission, focused, although not exclusively, on upper Kapuas non-Muslims. They were, it was believed, least corrupted by Islamic influences and most free of oppressive Malay rule. Paradoxically, of course, indirect rule had bolstered the principalities' repressive capacities in the first place. Still, missionaries seized upon what they saw as an opportunity to civilize and Christianize upper Kapuas populations. In 1890 a tiny station opened in Semitau (Kapuas Hulu district), which was soon followed by a school-church combination built in nearby Sejiram.²² Insufficient institutional support dogged these early efforts. Not until 1905 when the Capuchin Order of the Roman Catholic Church was granted exclusive access to West Borneo did missionary efforts gain an evident momentum.

Missionary success progressed slowly. Incongruously, the very same freedom these populations enjoyed that had attracted missionaries mitigated Church advances. But as more children attended missionary primary schools, conversions invariably rose. And although in absolute numbers growth was glacial, ultimately, Church influence on its few converts was disproportional to actual conversions. Importantly, missionary education was the medium through which western idealism--democracy, egalitarianism and self-empowerment--were inculcated to PD's founders. This expanding school network laid the structural basis for a provincial Dayak elite to coalesce.²³

The impact of the few Dayak who managed to "graduate" was both liberating and contradictory. While furnishing them with the experience of reform and the democratic impulse that serious change was required to bring to an end the plight of the Dayak, it also wedded the movement to the missionaries. This reality fostered dependency and a soon-to-be untenable, political cooperation with the ruling regime. The Church was a conservative, strictly hierarchical body and as it struggled to shed its patronizing outlook in the post-war period, PD leadership similarly struggled to develop an appropriate relationship to the Church.

Missionary education not only laid the foundation for an emerging common identity. It also helped to transform it into a political consciousness. For a handful of elites, a

²¹ Joost Coté, "Colonising Central Sulawesi: The 'Ethical Policy' and Imperialist Expansion 1890-1910," *Itinerario*, 20, 3 (1996) 87-100, esp. 89.

²² China-experienced, Jesuit missionaries settled in Singkawang in the late nineteenth century to concentrate on its large Chinese community. Protestant missionaries arrived in Singkawang shortly thereafter, but did not acquire more permanent stations until the 1920s and did not reach the upper Kapuas until the 1960s. In all, although today many Dayaks are Protestant, Protestant missionaries were less relevant during these formative years. See Sylvia Houlston, *Borneo Breakthrough* (London 1963) 11-13; and Arnold Lee Humble, "Conservative Baptists in Kalimantan Barat," (MA Thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, 1982) 22-23.

²³ It is beyond this study's scope to explore the (in)compatibilities of Dayak world views vis-à-vis Christianity. In its simplest form, an elder Dayak once explained: "Religion (*agama*) honors God; our traditional beliefs (*kepercayaan*) honor our ancestors." For an excellent exposition on these issues, see Fridolin Ukur, *Tantang-Djawab Suku Dayak* (Jakarta 1971).

key institution was located not in the upper Kapuas, but in a small village immediately north of Singkawang called Nyarumkop. In 1917 missionaries opened a tiny school that quickly grew into a five-year program of some fifty-students; a little less than half were full-time boarders. The extent--geographical, educational and ideological--of this missionary instructional circuit was noticeably expanding.²⁴ A teachers course (*Cursus Normaal*) soon opened, which later expanded into a teachers training program (CVO, *Cursus Volksschool Onderwijzer*).²⁵ Graduates staffed inland primary schools or continued their studies at a junior seminary in Pontianak or a Catholic teachers college (*normaalschool*) in North Sulawesi.²⁶ Thus produced was a budding Dayak leadership²⁷ and the skilled labor force necessary to transform PD's future platform into tangible ends: enhanced educational opportunities for Dayak.

In 1941 a Catholic schoolteachers' retreat in Sanggau, an initiative of Oevaang Oeray, the a seminary student, is seen as the genesis of an organized Dayak movement in West Borneo.²⁸ We would need to speculate how this development might have proceeded, for by the end of this year, the Japanese Imperial Army had invaded West Borneo. As we will see shortly, however, this nascent Dayak elite greatly benefited from the war and the political dynamics of the early independence period.

²⁴ These movements are reminiscent of a regional rendition of Anderson's colonial-nationalist pilgrimage. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London 1991, 2nd Edition), 121-137.

²⁵ Apparently, few Dayak attended (or were accepted by) government CVOs. In 1946 CVO's in Pontianak and Sintang, there were perhaps two and three Dayak students, respectively. A memorandum from the Dayak Affairs Office, Pontianak, November 12, 1946 (unpublished document).

²⁶ Prior to the war, some eleven graduates were sent to North Sulawesi, while several non-Dayak Tomohon graduates were sent to West Borneo to teach. Much of this information is culled from *Buku Kenangan: 75 Tahun Persekolahan Katolik Nyarumkop, 1916-1991* (ca. 1991) 3-21.

²⁷ Most notably, Augustinus Djelani (1919-1977), a graduate of Nyarumkop's CVO and Pontianak's junior seminary; J.C. Oevaang Oeray (1922-1986), a graduate of these same institutions; and F.C. Palaunsoeka (1923-1993), a CVO graduate. Palaunsoeka did not complete his studies at the junior seminary.

²⁸ In what are now the provinces of South and Central Kalimantan, Dayak organizations predate PD. In 1919 a Sarekat Dayak (Dayak Union) formed in Banjarmasin to counter the Sarekat Islam's formation, but in 1926 changed its name to Pakat Dayak (Dayak Harmony). The influence of these progenitors on the PD is probable but precise links are unclear. Pan-Dayakism following WW II fizzled under the weight of *realpolitik*. Rather than trying to create a Borneo-wide state (or even a singular Kalimantan Dayak province), energies were focused within pre-existing administrative boundaries. Post-WW II Dutch federal policies created a Great Dayak (Daya Besar) region, which was then placed under the singular province of Kalimantan at the formation of a unitary republic in 1950. As provinces were re-established, the Great Dayak region was subsumed under South Kalimantan province. Eventually, a Dayak militia (Movement of the Cutlass and Shield Pro Pancasila) engaged in a brief yet violent campaign that successfully pressed the central government to establish a Central Kalimantan province in 1956. See Douglas Miles, *Cutlass and Crescent Moon: A Case Study of social and political change in Outer Indonesia* (Sydney 1976), Ch. 9; and Vinson H. Sutlive, Jr., *Tun Jugah of Sarawak: Colonialism and Iban Response* (Kuala Lumpur 1992) 35.

The Japanese Occupation, NICA and Sultan Hamid II

On December 19, 1941, nine Japanese warplanes bombed Pontianak, setting the city's center ablaze. Hundreds perished. Two months later, West Borneo was under Japanese control.²⁹ The Japanese administered the region with a government structure akin to that of the Dutch, save for two notable differences.³⁰ The number of Indonesians employed in the local bureaucracy increased, while *swapraja* authority was diluted, although their structures were left in tact. Political organizations were disbanded and replaced by a single, corporatist body, named *Nissinkai*, designed to control local leadership. A few Japanese-medium educational facilities were opened in Pontianak, while several hundred youths received training as an auxiliary force to the Navy (*Kaigun Heiho*).

The occupation devastated the local economy as the allies blockaded shipping lanes. A disrupted flow of goods was perilous, for the region was heavily dependent on imported rice. Widespread starvation ensued. Smuggling rackets that had evolved beforehand kept people from utter depredation. The forced mobilization of laborers compounded the hardship, although the large-scale program of *romushu* found on Java was not formally instituted in West Borneo. In the diamond mines outside Ngabang, scores died under horrendous work conditions.³¹

In fact, repercussions of compulsory labor precipitated the largest, organized raids against the Japanese. Overseers beat a Dayak, one of some one hundred fifty working for a Japanese logging company. This event set off a chain-reaction that culminated in a series of devastating attacks staged by Dayaks--known as the Majang Desa War--from April to August 1945 in the Tayan-Meliau-Batang Tarang area (Sanggau district). Scores on both sides died.³² The memory of these attacks would significantly influence Dutch-Dayak relations in the immediate post-war period.

The greatest killings of Indonesians resulted not from these clashes, but from a series of massive arrests and summary executions. Known as "the Pontianak Affair," these events are shrouded in mystery and wrapped in conflicting interpretations. In brief, the Japanese had discovered a resistance plot of Dutch and Indonesian nationalists in South Kalimantan; similar intrigue was then "found" in

²⁹ Most KNIL troops fled upriver to Sintang only later to surrender. Of Dutch and other European civilians, some left beforehand, while others were either killed or interned in Kuching and in Miri, Sarawak.

³⁰ The Japanese Navy established a civilian government (*minseifu*) for eastern Indonesia centered in Makassar. In Banjarmasin sat the Kalimantan command (*Borneo Minseibu Chokan*).

³¹ Ja' Achmad, "Kalimantan Barat Dibawah Pendudukan Tentara Jepang," (Pontianak 1977/1978) 12-13.

³² Of note were the deaths of famous Dayak war leaders Pangsuma, Pang Apae and Pang Linggan. A local historian notes that the Dayak workers consisted of Iban, Kantu', Bukat and Punan. Marchus Effendy, *Sejarah Perjuangan Kalimantan Barat* (Pontianak 1982) 72-95. Another local source explains that "Majang" is the name lowland Dayak gave to upland Dayaks and that "Desa" is a sub-ethnic group inhabiting Meliau and Tayan areas. Jacobus E. Frans L. *Sejarah Perang Majang Desa Melawan Jepang* (Pontianak 1981), 2. Bernard Sellato refers to the sub-ethnic group Desa as "Ibanic," that is, related to the Iban. *Nomads of the Borneo Rainforest: The Economics, Politics and Ideology of Settling Down* (Honolulu 1994, org. ed. 1989) 11.

operation in Pontianak.³³ It was announced in a Malay language newspaper that the plotters were working to establish a People's Republic of West Borneo (*Negara Rakyat Borneo Barat*). From September 1943 to mid-1944, the Japanese instigated a series of roundups and executions. Victims included the Sultan of Pontianak (Syarif Muhammad Alqadri), close family members and regional nobles--some twenty-five members of the high aristocracy in all.³⁴ Intellectuals, party leaders and merchants from multiple ethnic groups were also murdered and buried in mass graves in Mandor, some sixty kilometres north of Pontianak. The official death toll is reverently cited at 21,037, although a more realistic figure is probably closer to 2000. This massacre crippled the region's future political development. While allowing external state authorities to predominate locally, the elimination of an entire local elite also created favorable conditions for a particular marginalized group to gain an unanticipated share in regional politics, as a discussion below will attest.

Having arrived in the region in late August 1945 and authorized to seize Japanese munitions and restore order, Australian troops a month later surrendered authority to NICA. During this interval and in the aftermath of the Pontianak Affair, a debate had ensued over the future status of a sultan. Some felt the position clashed with republican, democratic ideals and thus should be nullified. Others supported Syarif Thaha Alqadri, Hamid's young nephew who had survived the massacre. In particular, they sought to appease Dayak factions who stormed into Pontianak to demand a sultan be anointed.³⁵ Apparently, no one considered (or wanted) Syarif Hamid, who had spent the better part of his life outside the region. Nonetheless, on October 23, 1945, NICA authorities anointed their staunch supporter, Syarif Hamid Alqadri, the son of the slain Sultan of Pontianak, as Sultan. A graduate of the Royal Military Academy in the Netherlands and a KNIL Colonel, Syarif took the title Sultan Hamid II.³⁶

Meanwhile, the situation on the ground was highly unstable. Upon Japan's surrender, Chinese from an underground anti-Japanese unit formed a civilian security force (PKO).³⁷ Rumors were spread that Kuo Min Tang troops would soon arrive to

³³ Kaori Maekawa, "The Pontianak Incidents and the Ethnic Chinese in Wartime Western Borneo," in Paul Kratoska (ed.), *Southeast Asian Minorities in the Wartime Japanese Empire* (London 2002) 153-169.

³⁴ The Malay language newspaper, *Borneo Shimbun*, published the names of forty-eight individuals sentenced to death. For the most complete list of victims (256), see Syafaruddin Usman, *Peristiwa Mandor: Sebuah Tragedi dan Misteri Sejarah* (Pontianak 2000), 40-47. For the full *Borneo Shimbun* citation, see M. Yanis, *Kapal Terbang Sembilan: Kisah Pendudukan Jepang di Kalimantan Barat* (Pontianak 1983), 172-181.

³⁵ Effendy, *Sejarah Perjuangan Kalimantan Barat*, 106. These Dayak bands could have also been looking for food. Personal Communication, Mary Somers Heidhues, June 26, 2003.

³⁶ Hamid spent the duration of the war jailed in Java, where he had been stationed. During his short reign as Sultan, he was promoted to the rank of Major General, the highest obtainable rank for an Indonesian in the Dutch military. See "Riwayat hidup Sultan Hamid," *Kalimantan Berdjung*, April 11, 1950; and Persadja, *Proses Peristiwa Sultan Hamid II* (Jakarta 1955), 5-7.

³⁷ PKO stood for *Penjagaan Keselamatan* (or *Keamanan*) *Oemoem*. Members of a Chinese youth organization (*Po An Tui*) and local fire brigades (*Lie Tang Kwang* and *Tan Hok Kwang*) also joined the PKO. Ng Ngiap Liang, a leading Chinese figure, headed the PKO. He would also later chair the Chinese Central Association (*Chung Hua Kung Hwee*).

liberate West Borneo in the name of the Republic of China, a victor of WW II and member of the Big 5. Shortly thereafter, fighting broke out between the PKO and the Youth Supporters of the Republic of Indonesia (*Penyongsong Pemuda Republik Indonesia*), many of whom were ex-Heiho forces. Markets were razed and three Chinese were killed. Thousands fled the city's suburbs (Siantan) to Pontianak proper before negotiations abated tensions.³⁸

Despite the presence of Republican organizations and some sporadic fighting, NICA controlled government and elite politics. Days after Hamid's inauguration, local leaders of the Committee for the Supporters of the Republic of Indonesia (*Panitia Penyongsong Republik Indonesia*) were arrested, thus paralyzing the foremost local Republican organization. In the wake of these arrests, Pontianak's Republican movement largely sputtered, although sporadic fighting did occur across the region. Some groups forced underground ran clandestine trading networks.³⁹

In October 1946, NICA instituted a West Kalimantan Council consisting of forty ethnic group representatives, colonial officials and one member each from the newly re-constituted *swapraja*. Lieutenant-Governor van Mook had sought to use the council as a springboard to create a single state of Kalimantan--like he had done for the State of East Indonesia (NIT)--within the framework of a federal Indonesia. But Hamid and Sultan Parikesit of Kutai (East Kalimantan) engaged in a stubborn war of wills. Neither would submit to the other's authority.⁴⁰ In the meantime, months following the signing of the Renville Agreement in January 1948, which halted the first Dutch police action but recognized territorial advances made on Java and Sumatra, NICA furthered its federalist intentions by making West Kalimantan into an autonomous region (*Daerah Istimewa Kalimantan Barat*, DIKB).⁴¹ A single state of Kalimantan never materialized.⁴²

PD and Conflicted Allegiances

For the rising Dayak elite, this early independence period was a propitious time. Most fatefully, the Pontianak Affair left Dayak leaders unscathed, perhaps because of

³⁸ Fighting also broke out in Singkawang. On this episode and this period in general, see M. Yanis, *Djampea: Novel Sejarah Perjuangan Rakyat Kalimantan Barat* (Pontianak 1998); and Heidhues, *Gold Diggers, Farmers, and Traders*, Ch. 6.

³⁹ See Yanis, *Djumpea*; and Agustiah, "Kalimantan Barat Menuju ke Negara Kesatuan, 1945-1950," (BA Thesis, University of Indonesia [Jakarta] 1989).

⁴⁰ One cause of disagreement was the capital's location. On this antagonism, see Anak Ide Agung Gde Agung (trans. Linda Owens), *From the Formation of the State of East Indonesia Towards the Establishment of the United States of Indonesia* (Jakarta 1996, orig. ed. 1985) 82.

⁴¹ In territories they controlled, the Dutch established six states (*negara*) and fifteen autonomous regions (*daerah istimewa*). The latter were smaller in population and less economically developed than the former. According to Kahin, regardless of designation, they both "rested on Dutch bayonets" and were "by no means the spontaneous creations of Indonesians." George Mc T. Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca 1952) 351, 354.

⁴² Strong Republican support among Malays in South Kalimantan also impeded the formation of a singular Kalimantan state, although a republican source from the early 1950s apports blame on Hamid's intransigence. Hamid threatened to form his own West Kalimantan state (*negara*) if his way was not heeded. Djawatan Penerangan Propinsi Kalimantan, *Republik Indonesia: Kalimantan* (Banjarmasin 1953) 51-52, 56.

their scant presence in the lowlands, or perhaps the Japanese figured them inconsequential. In the end, the loss of a local elite cleared the way for new ones to emerge and capitalize on an unforeseen opportunity. This first step occurred on October 30, 1945 amidst the ruins of a crumbled Japanese administration in Putussibau (Kapuas Hulu district). With the help of a Javanese pastor named A. Adikardjana, leading Dayak personalities, principally schoolteachers, formed the Daya in Action (DIA).⁴³ Headed by F.C. Palaunsoeka, the DIA a year later was transformed into Daya Unity [Party?] (PD). Its center of operations was moved some 450 miles downriver to the region's administrative and political center, Pontianak, to become a provincial player.⁴⁴

With regard to PD's unfolding, however, a problem of chronology, nomenclature and politics exists. The acrimonious split between Palaunsoeka and Oeray--to be discussed below-- has affected the collective memory of these events. On the one hand, Palaunsoeka supporters insist that DIA became the Daya Unity Party in Putussibau on October 1, 1946 and that Oeray was absent during these formative stages.⁴⁵ Another source (less explicitly pro-Palaunsoeka) does not list Oeray as an original DIA or PD board member.⁴⁶ On the other hand, Oeray loyalists adamantly insist on his involvement in Putussibau. Moreover, in Pontianak on New Year's Eve of 1947, Oeray gave a speech officially proclaiming the PD's founding, date corroborated by a NICA report. This uncertainty reflects the dynamics of PD's eventual demise: who controlled the PD? Here, the Palaunsoeka side seems more plausible. As Oeray headed the Dayak Affairs Office in Pontianak at the time, his substantial presence in Putussibau is questionable. Also, in a collection of Oeray's private correspondence, for letters dated 1946, he uses the spelling "Dayak." If he were a DIA principal, we would expect him to use "Daya." In letters dated 1947, after the PD moved to Pontianak, Oeray switches to "Daya."

It is likewise unclear when the United Daya became the Daya Unity *Party*. PD's literature overwhelmingly uses the PD abbreviation and the word "party" does not appear in the text of Oeray's aforementioned speech. Balunus, the eldest surviving former PD official, maintains that it was a party from its inception, but was always abbreviated PD (rather than PPD). At the same time, I have a letter (dated June 15, 1950) from I. Kaping, the Sanggau PD head, addressed to Oeray and Djelani inquiring whether PD was merely an "association" (*persatuan*) or should become a "*Party [sic] Politiék*" (political party). It is possible that PD became an official party in July 1950 at its first congress.⁴⁷

NICA and PD sought each other's support. For NICA, aware of raids against Japanese garrisons and the storming of Pontianak in October 1945, in which

⁴³ According to an elder Dayak, English was chosen to obtain the international recognition DIA leaders desired. Its name was later changed to Indonesian. Palaunsoeka, then a schoolteacher, had been the first Taman (an upper Kapuas sub-ethnic group) to be accepted in Putussibau's civil service (in 1940). See H.M. Baroamas J. Balunus, "Kedatangan dan penyebaran Agama Katolik di Tanah Kalimantan" (Pontianak n.d.) 38.

⁴⁵ For instance, see *Ibid.*, 36-37.

⁴⁶ L.H. Kadir, "Indonesia Merdeka," paper presented at the Lokakarya Dalam Rangka Memperingati 50 Tahun Indonesia Merdeka yang diselenggarakan oleh Keuskupan Sintang, October 3-6, 1995, 12-13.

⁴⁷ I.A. Kaping, Penasihat P.D. Sanggau, "Saudara Uvaang Uray and Djelani di Pontianak," Sanggau, June 15, 1950 (unpublished document).

Indonesian collaborators were slain, cooperation with the PD would ensure law and order. In particular, brokered by PD elites, NICA negotiated with war leaders (*panglima*) from the Majang Desa militia to secure their loyalty.⁴⁸ Not to be discounted is the factor that NICA, through negotiations, sought to diminish the likelihood it would be targeted too. Furthering Dutch civilizing missions would also be enhanced by co-opting the nascent Dayak elite. Scores of Dayak were placed in civil service, army and police posts and a Dayak Affairs Office (*Kantor Urusan Dayak*), headed by Oeray, once described as “very pro-Dutch,” was also opened.⁴⁹ PD leaders were then appointed to the West Kalimantan Council.⁵⁰ In all, PD enjoyed the ardent support of NICA.⁵¹ An emerging Dayak political consciousness would continue to be molded in the institutional context of PD and the DIKB bureaucracy.⁵²

Although it placed itself in the federal camp, PD did exploit Dayak victimhood at Dutch hands. The party’s attack on Dutch colonialism was scathing; it held it responsible for the suffering experienced under the oppressive weight of the Malay principalities. Dutch and Malay elites were accused of working together like “husband and wife” to suppress Dayak rights and freedoms.⁵³ Here is a part of a bombast written by Oeray in 1947 addressed to West Kalimantan’s Dutch Resident echoing these sentiments:

Daya are Kalimantan’s indigenous people but in everyday life are treated as if they are foreigners, newcomers...[.] *Daya*...have become the water buffalo that has had to work and sacrifice for King (*Radja*) and Government...[.] For hundreds of years *Daya* fulfilled their obligations to King and Government by paying taxes on produce and travel, performing corvée labor (*kerdja rodi*), but of what good for themselves?...[.] Obviously, the abomination and backwardness of *Daya* is not only the result of their own ignorance, but is also

⁴⁸ Besides resentment, another reason behind the raid was to demand that a Sultan be anointed. Effendy, *Sejarah Perjuangan Kalimantan Barat*, 122. On the negotiations, see Frans L., *Sejarah Perang Majang Desa Melawan Jepang*, 55-58.

⁴⁹ Having worked in the Putussibau *controleur* office, in mid-May 1946, Oeray was sent to study in Makassar at the Civil Service School (MOSVIA). There, he met Sultan Hamid II who invited him to be the Dayak representative at the federal Malino Conference (July 16-22, 1946). Hamid then asked Oeray to return to West Kalimantan to serve in this capacity. For Oeray’s Dutch fealties, see Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of His Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945-48* (The Hague 1982) 88.

⁵⁰ Perhaps as many as eight (out of forty) Council members were Dayaks. Moreover, in 1948, two Dayaks, A.F. Korak and Oeray, were elected to the DIKB’s six-member Regional Executive Board (BPD). PD’s newspaper lauds their selection and lavishes praise on the DIKB. “Kalimantan Barat Menempoeh Sedjarah Baroe,” *Keadilan*, May 15, 1948.

⁵¹ This sentiment is clearly expressed in the NICA report, “West-Borneo/Kalimantan Barat,” (Pontianak: Uitgave West-Borneo Raad en R.V.D. Pontianak, May 12, 1947) 21-22.

⁵² Like most Indonesian parties, PD had its own youth wing (The New Dayak Youth Movement, *Gerakan Pemuda Daya Baru*), led by HM Baroamas Jabang Balunus. Apparently, few copies of the party’s newspaper, *Keadilan* (later to become *Soeara Keadilan*), have survived.

⁵³ “Feudalism and the Dutch government were like two people, husband and wife.” (“*Feodalisten dan Pemerintah Belanda... adalah sebagai doea orang soeami-isteri...*”) See “Politiek pendjadjahan Feodalisme lebih boeroek daripada pendjadjahan Belanda. Belanda menjokong koeat akan politiek dan kedoedoekan Feodalisten.” (ca. 1947-1950). This unpublished document is signed “*Mandau*” (sword), likely Oeray’s pseudonym.

the result of the wicked politics of Feudalism, which was strongly supported by the Dutch government for their own interests.⁵⁴ [underline in original]

This notion of “multi-layered colonialism” (*penjajahan berlapis-lapis*) pervades PD’s communication. What is more, the Dutch were held accountable for differentiating, reifying and creating hostility between “Daya” and “Malay” whereas, in actuality, they “shared the same origins and blood” (*seasal dan sedarah*) and enjoyed cordial, peaceful relations.⁵⁵ At the same, the party knew little could be accomplished without NICA’s support and, in fact, made its desire to work in tandem clear. Its leadership trusted NICA officials far more than it trusted the Malay elite, targets of PD’s deepest scorn.⁵⁶ Dayak dignity and advancement required nothing less than the curtailment of *swapraja* authority. How this was to be accomplished was never fully articulated, however. PD leaders accepted cushy positions on the West Kalimantan Council, headed by feudalism’s most powerful symbol, Sultan Hamid II.

This ambivalence toward NICA reflected PD’s institutional context, one replete with internal contradictions, just as colonial and missionary policy had been toward Dayaks. Striving to rectify colonial wrongs, PD championed a program (and credo) of self-help and empowerment: “your fate rests on your endeavors” (*di usahamu letak nasibmu*). In so doing, these benefactors of western education rejected “traditional” practices and were bent on modernizing Dayak society--for instance, agriculture rationalization required wet-rice cultivation (*persawahan*) to replace the swidden variety. As such, small, randomly situated (*cerai-berai*) villages would become larger, orderly (*teratur*) establishments predicated on the individual house (*berumah*

⁵⁴ J. Chrys. Oevaang Oeray, “Keadaan Dan Keloehan Daya Sebeloem Perang dan Toentoetannja Dewasa Sekarang” (Pontianak, November 15, 1947, unpublished document). The original reads: “Pendoedoek asli Kalimantan... tetapi didalam perlakoean dan kehidoepan sehari2 adalah mereka seolah2 orang jg asing, orang jg mendatang... bangsa Daya... menjadi kerbau jg haroes bekerdja dan berkoerban bagi Radja dan Pemerintah... Ratoesan tahoen bangsa Daya melakoekan kewadjibannja kepada Radja dan Pemerintah, dengan djalan membajar padja penghasilan, padjak djalan dan kerdja rodi, tetapi apakah hasilnja bagi mereka sendiri?... Njatalah, bahwa keboeroekan dan kebelangan Dayak itoe boekan sahadja disebabkan oleh kebodohan dirinja, tetapi adalah disebabkan oleh politik kedjam Feodalisme, sedangkan Pemerintah Belanda menjokong koeat akan politik ini, goena kepentingan dirinja.” Bear in mind Oeray’s personal views vis-à-vis official PD statements.

⁵⁵ Again, “A strong and firm alienation emerged between Dayaks and Malays, whereas generally both share the same origins and blood (“*timboellah perasingan jang koeat dan tegeh diantara bangsa Daya dan Melajoe, sedangkan pada oemoemnja adalah kedoe2nja ini seasal dan sedarah!*”) See “Mandau,” “Politiek pendjadjahan Feodalisme.”

And: “The majority of the lower officials (Regent, Assistant Regent, etc.) are the hands and feet of Feudalism, whereas the people (Daya and Malays) are harmonious and peaceful.” (*Sebahagian besar dari pegawai2 bawahan seperti (Demang, Ass. Demang dsb) adalah menjadi kaki tangan dari politik Feodalisme, sedangkan rakjat sama rakjat (Daya dan Melajoe) roekoen dan damai*). See Oeray, “Keadaan Dan Keloehan Daya.”

⁵⁶ Again: “Direct colonialism rested with the King, while the Dutch were a level above. Colonization by Feudalism is worse than Dutch colonialism.” (*Pendjadjahan jang langsoeng (direct) ialah oleh Radja dan Belanda adalah pada tingkat jang kedoea. Pendjadjahan oleh Feodalisme itoe adalah lebih boeroek dp pendjadjahan Belanda.*) See “Mandau,” “Politiek pendjadjahan Feodalisme.”

sendiri). The longhouse as the nexus of Dayak society was deemed obsolete, while the extravagance and weight of ritual required thorough reconsideration.⁵⁷

Edgy relations with NICA also extended to the Church. Respect for the Church was sincere for its services rendered, which instilled an *utang budi* (lifelong debt) among its followers. Buoyed by budding confidence, however, critics of the Church launched stinging diatribes. The Church, they noted, was slow to rid itself of colonial thinking and its paternalistic attitude was incongruent in a democratic age. Bitter dispute also stemmed from the preferential treatment of Chinese mission students--beneficiaries of Church-sponsored education in Java and Holland--and the Church's objection to Dayak civil servants interacting with non-Christian colleagues. Such mingling, it was feared, would undermine their Catholic faith.⁵⁸ In the end, the question lingered: where did the Church's ultimate interests lie?⁵⁹

Yet, in the end, political calculations and the scant resources that challenged this self-empowerment message fostered a tenuous dependency on NICA and the Church. Education, (correctly) emphasized as key to Dayak progress, provides a telling example. While PD opened many three-year primary schools,⁶⁰ establishing

⁵⁷ These ideas passed as motions at PD's first congress, convened in Sanggau, July 1950. They are worth quoting: "primitive dry-rice cultivation to be replaced by orderly wet-rice cultivation (*pertanian setjara berladang jg primiteif diganti dengan persawahan jang teratur*); "change the old way of arranging villages with those that are orderly (individual houses); those scattered about are to be grouped to become larger, ordered units (*mengubah tjara berkampung jg kono, dengan jang teratur (berumah sendiri2); jg tjerari-berai dikumpulkan sehingga menjadi dusun2 jang besar dan teratur*); and "abandon ancient customs which no longer fit with the times [such as] the extravagance of holding rituals, buying gongs, and ceramic jars" (*membuang kebiasaan2 jg kono dan jg tidak tjotjok lagi dengan aliran zaman...; sifat jg boros dalam mengadakan pesta2; pembelian gong2; tawak2 dan tempajan-tempajan.*) Culled from *Congres Pertama P.D. Seluruh K. Barat, Ketua Umum, A. Djelanie*," (Sanggau, July 15, 1950) and "Congres Persatuan Daya Seluruh Kalimantan Barat," (Sanggau, July 13, 1950) (unpublished documents). These notions reflected general colonial ideals on how to organize upland, swidden societies. See Coté, "Colonising Central Sulawesi," esp. 99-101.

⁵⁸ Pastors also were urged not differentiate Dayak and Chinese ("*djanganlah kiranja membeda2kan bangsa Dayak dengan T. Hwa.*") V. Undun, "Laporan: Perdjalan dari V. Undun ke-Njarumpkop, bersama P.C.K Poedjwarijana (Kepala Bag. Agama R.K. dikantor Urusan Agama Prop. Bandjarmasin,)" Pontianak, April 7, 1951 (unpublished document).

⁵⁹ Before the war, critics maintained "missionary progress was wanting" (*Missi sangat kurang memajukan*). There were only three medical clinics, one five-year primary school, one teacher's school, one agricultural course, some thirty village schools (*sekolah desa*), and one junior seminary. A mere eleven teachers were sent to the teachers college (*Normaalschool*) in Tomohon. "This was what they accomplished for 40 years (more or less) for 430,000 Dayaks?...Where were the Catholic Missionary Schools before the war? The junior high schools (MULO)? The women's courses (*kepandaian gadis*)? The business schools? The trade schools?" These complaints are from a meeting between PD leaders, Church officials and representatives of the Department of Religion. PD/DPU/KB, "Rapat Gabungan PD, PGK dan PEPPIM: Rapat diketuai oleh: A. Djelanie, Ketua Umum PDKB," (Pontianak, April 30, 1951, unpublished document). Not until the early 1950s were a few Dayak sent to continue secular education on Java. Many attended Sanata Dharma University in Yogyakarta.

⁶⁰ Oeray estimates forty PD schools with some 2400 students. "[T]entang keinginan dan kerindoean jg besar, jang telah timboel dalam hati terhadap Pengadjaran sesoedah peperangan jang baroe laloe ini tahadi," (Unpublished document, ca. 1947-50).

six-year programs, essential to compete with other sectors of society, proved vexing. While the lack of qualified Dayak teachers compounded the problem, PD was also wary of Indonesian teachers--scarce in their own right--who, it was (reasonably) believed, entertained an incorrigible scorn toward Dayaks. PD's elite made it clear Western missionary teachers who better "understood" Dayaks were preferred.

Hamid's Demise and PD's Roller-coaster Ride

In 1949 Hamid was named Minister without Portfolio of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia's (RIS) one and only cabinet. His personal disdain for the beloved and pro-Republican Hamengku Buwono IX, Sultan of Yogyakarta and the then Defense Minister, precipitated Hamid's fall. Hamid, who had once threatened to form an independent West Borneo state, rejected Republican overtures to accept TNI troops in his territory. While he was abroad, a company of TNI troops nevertheless arrived in Pontianak. Upon returning to Indonesia, infuriated, Hamid decided to meet in Jakarta with (former Captain) Raymond "Turk" Westerling, the infamous butcher of revolutionary fighters in South Sulawesi in 1946/47. Meanwhile, other Kalimantan regions had opted to join the Republic.⁶¹

On January 23, 1950, in Bandung (West Java), Westerling launched an abortive putsch.⁶² The failed plans included the assassination of Hamengku Bowono. Immediately, suspicions were raised of Hamid's complicity. At the same time, in Pontianak, TNI's arrival galvanized local opposition--spearheaded by the newly formed National Committee of West Kalimantan (KNKB)--against Hamid and the Dutch-created Special Region of West Kalimantan (DIKB). Demanding the DIKB's dissolution, KNKB organized rallies and later orchestrated a paralyzing general strike from March 7-18.⁶³ With TNI in place and mass opposition mobilized, Hamid was finished. On April 5, he was arrested for his role in the Westerling Affair and two years later sentenced to ten years in prison.⁶⁴

PD's federal stance and its associations with the DIKB nearly eclipsed its political aspirations as Republican factions won out. Oeray, a member of the DIKB's executive governing board, was "banished" to Putussibau to act as Kapuas Hulu's district-executive (*bupati*). Fortunately for the PD, however, the processes of decolonization--in this case, the elections of 1955--rescued the party. Its long-standing ideological commitment to democracy paid off by transforming West

⁶¹ At this point, the joining the Republic was more in spirit than in form. RIS was not dissolved until August 17, 1950. For a discussion of these developments on Kalimantan, see Djawatan Penerangan Propinsi Kalimantan, *Republik Indonesia: Kalimantan*.

⁶² These troops were known as the War Command of the Just King (*Angkatan Perang Ratu Adil*, APRA). Seventy-nine TNI personnel and six civilians were killed in the failed putsch. Persadja, *Proses Peristiwa Sultan Hamid II*, 31.

⁶³ "Giant assemblies" (*rapat raksasa*), chanting "*DIKB Bubar!*" (DIKB Disperse!), were also reported in Singkawang, Mempawah, Pemangkat, Sambas and other sites. "Rapat raksasa di Pontianak dibubarkan polisi?" *Kalimantan Berjuang*, March 9, 1950.

⁶⁴ Hamid testified to his desire for the Defense Minister post. He pleaded guilty to involvement in the abortive assassination, but denied complicity in Westerling's Bandung adventures. Previously, Westerling had offered Hamid to command APRA, an offer Hamid claims to have refused. Hamengku Buwono's assassination was to take place during a ministerial meeting in Jakarta of which Hamid was party. According to plans, Hamid was to be shot in the leg to mask his complicity. Persadja, *Proses Peristiwa Sultan Hamid II*.

Kalimantan's largest (and newly conceived) ethnic group into an electoral constituency. Financially constrained,⁶⁵ PD relied on a strong grass-root network of teachers, the Oeray-Palaunsoeka-Djelani triumvirate and the easily recognizable "Daya" name.

Bolstered by the decisive weight of identity politics, PD placed nine representatives in the transitional Regional Assembly (DPRD Peralihan).⁶⁶ Only the modernist Islamic party, Masyumi, won more with ten.⁶⁷ Then, in the follow-up provincial assembly election of 1958, PD eclipsed Masyumi, twelve seats to nine.⁶⁸ PD gained four district executive posts⁶⁹ and in alliance with the PNI (Indonesian Nationalist Party), the party got Oeray selected governor in 1960.⁷⁰

Yet, as often happens, exogenous, national shocks have the capacity to overwhelm regional politics. Although Oeray served as Governor until 1966, his organized, provincial power base was dealt a serious blow almost as soon as he was appointed.

In the mid-1950s, a rash of regional movements in response to Jakarta's centralizing tendencies developed. In particular, local army officers mutinied in West Sumatra and North Sulawesi, rebellions that the central army easily crushed. These defeats had serious political ramifications for the country--for instance, the emasculation of the party system.⁷¹ President Soekarno and the army's high brass seized this occasion to act on their ingrained aversion to liberal, multi-party democracy. In 1959 under the pretext of martial law, Soekarno--prompted by the army--banned Masyumi for involvement in the rebellions. Regional parties were then

⁶⁵ In 1950, with the help of Lim Bek Meng, a leading Chinese, Christian personality, PD opened a small yet unsuccessful trading company, NV Tjemara. To raise funds for party congresses, beside volunteer contributions (*gotong-royong*), Dayak civil servants contributed three percent of their salaries. It is possible a similar policy was used to raise campaign funds.

⁶⁶ It also placed one representative, Palaunsoeka, in the national parliament (DPR) and three members--Oeray, Djelani and W. Hittam--in the national constituent assembly (Konstituante).

⁶⁷ For the 1955 DPRD elections, Masyumi received 33% of the vote; PD 31%; the PNI 14% (4 seats); and the Nahdlatul Ulama Party, 8% (3 seats). PD, Masyumi and the PNI each gained a DPR seat.

⁶⁸ These results seem to confirm Liddle's conclusions on 1950s party politics in North Sumatra. Ethnically-oriented, or "primordial," parties fared well in areas less economically advanced and where fighting in the revolution was light, the latter suggesting lower degrees of nationalist consciousness. See R. William Liddle, "Ethnicity and Political Organization: Three East Sumatran Cases," in Claire Holt (ed.), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca 1972) 126-178.

⁶⁹ They were: M. Th. Djaman (Sanggau), G.P. Djaoeng (Sintang), J.R. Gielling (Kapuas Hulu), and Djelani (Pontianak District).

⁷⁰ Soekarno's desire to have native sons govern the regions was expedient. Riwut Tjilik, the then Dayak Governor of Central Kalimantan and close associate of Soekarno, recommended Oeray. It should be noted that, at this time, the Governor and Executive Head (*Kepala Daerah*) were separate positions. In March 1959, Oeray was appointed Executive Head. Later this year when the decentralization legislation (Law 1/57) was nullified, the positions were merged. On January 1, 1960, Oeray became Governor/Executive Head.

⁷¹ See Audrey R. Kahin and George McT. Kahin, *Subversion as Foreign Policy: The Secret Eisenhower and Dulles Debacle in Indonesia* (New York 1995); and Herb Feith and Daniel S. Lev, "End of the Rebellions," *Pacific Affairs*, 36, 1 (Spring 1963), 32-46.

outlawed (Presidential Decree 7/1959).⁷² In rapid succession, West Kalimantan's two political powerhouses, the ethnoregional PD and Islamic Masyumi, were gone.

In the wake of this reversal of fortune, PD's leadership scrambled to stay politically organized. Yet, deep subdivisions that had dogged the party since its inception finally burst forth. Oeray, who was once claimed to be "to the Dayaks what Soekarno was once for the Indonesians,"⁷³ established a provincial chapter of Partindo (*Partai Indonesia*). Meanwhile, Palaunsoeka opted to join forces with the small Catholic Party (*Partai Katolik*). Reasons for this fateful split are numerous.

Oeray chose Partindo because it was regionally weak, thus ensuring the erstwhile PD leadership control. It was also nationalist, which would retain PD's non-Catholic (Dayak and Chinese) support. Furthermore, Partindo was leftist; thereby, Oeray took advantage of the nation's leftist swing, led by Soekarno. In contrast, Palaunsoeka hesitated, unable to reconcile his devout Catholicism with Partindo's communist sympathies.⁷⁴ Although aware he might alienate PD's non-Catholic constituency, Palaunsoeka still chose the Catholic Party. That PD's existence was largely owed to the Catholic Church eased Palaunsoeka's decision.

The personal rivalry of Oeray and Palaunsoeka also exacerbated the split. An extroverted, fiery orator, Oeray was a political opportunist. He appended his political fortunes to whatever regime currently held power, from the Dutch and Soekarno to the soon-to-be New Order. In contrast, Palaunsoeka was more introverted, bookish and less swayed by changing political winds. Personal animosities further stemmed from traditions of intra-Dayak warfare. Oeray and Palaunsoeka hailed from two sub-ethnic groups (Kayan and Taman, respectively) that share an antagonistic history of feuding.⁷⁵

Finally, the split revolved around the question of who epitomized the PD. A party man, Palaunsoeka had founded the DIA and later served as PD's chair, while Oeray disdained the daily grind of party politics. Rather, he saw himself as PD's leading personality and emanating spirit, favoring the role of grand advisor to pursue provincial-level aspirations.⁷⁶ In all, the institutional context and symbolic weight of PD had been able to contain and partly diffuse the antipathy; but, with this framework dismantled, the promising PD fractured into petty, personal grudges.

The division pervaded Dayak society. It implicated the Catholic Church whose pastors used provocative sermons to urge parishioners to avoid Partindo.⁷⁷ As Governor, Oeray exploited his position to corral erstwhile PD bupati and civil servants, including public school teachers. He toured the province denouncing his absentee rival, for as a DPR member, Palaunsoeka resided in Jakarta, which made him less visible locally. In any case, in July 1966, the reactionary New Order regime removed Oeray from the governorship, accusing him of being a Soekarnoist, and

⁷² Party representation was required in at least one-fourth of the provinces. With the army's rise to power, Soekarno's declaration of Guided Democracy and a return to the 1945 Constitution, the national party system was all but finished.

⁷³ Herb Feith, "Dayak Legacy," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 25, 1968, 134.

⁷⁴ Oeray was also devout, but weighed religious beliefs against his political ambitions.

⁷⁵ In the early nineteenth century, Kayan raiders embarked on a war of conquest, burning Taman villages whose inhabitants were forced south and west down the Kapuas River. See Sellato, *Nomads of the Borneo Rainforest*, 23-25; and Rousseau, *Central Borneo*, Ch. 11.

⁷⁶ In interviews, former supporters of Oeray put forth the analogy of Soekarno and the PNI. Soekarno never administratively headed the party, but was there ever any doubt that Soekarno was the PNI?

⁷⁷ Kadir, "Indonesia Merdeka," 17-18.

posted him in the Department of Domestic Affairs in Jakarta. Oeray's regional fealties also hurt his cause.⁷⁸ In its quest to centralize the state, the New Order set about smashing regional power bases. It is doubtful if a unified Dayak elite could have resisted this merciless charge. But the Oeray-Palaunsoeka saga stung, for it facilitated the erosion of regional Dayak political prominence. In fact, the split's bitter legacy has not yet been reconciled.

Conclusion

To be sure, differentiation among indigenous populations of Borneo anticipated colonialism, but the politics of colonial domination solidified these differences and precipitated an evident polarization between "Dayak" and "Malay." The former signified "subjugation," the latter "entitlement." And when the Dutch returned to rule the archipelago after the war, they re-deployed their tactic of divide-and-rule through communal lines, in this case, ethnicity. West Borneo lacked a vigorous nationalist movement driven by idealistic and heroic youth to transcend ethnic divisions. PD's elite, although perhaps internally conflicted, played the colonizer's ethnic game and played it well. Although its origins were rooted in the legacy of vastly unequal political exchange, PD's short-lived success resulted from a marriage of convenience. NICA required stability for a smooth transfer of authority, while PD required a patron powerful enough to supply its elite with prestigious offices and fictitious authority necessary to confront the equally conservative Malay feudal nobility. Of course, many in this latter camp did not survive the Japanese occupation, thus helping to clear the way for the rise of a nascent Dayak political elite.

This is but one story how peripheralized peoples, in the face of overwhelming exogenous forces impinging on their societies, adapt to their rapidly changing environments, and, in fact, turn these new circumstances to their advantage. Significantly, through competitive party politics, "Dayak" as subordinated subject was transformed into a charged political identity of pride. Tens of thousands of inland denizens, perhaps for the first time may have been informed or realized themselves that they "represented" a new broad-based, ethnically-defined identity known as "Dayak." Standard bearers of this new constituency--the urban, Christian and educated elite--fought to better their standing on the political hierarchy of regional ethnic groups. Still, in the end, to what extent PD's experience altered local patterns of authority based on patron-client or personalistic politics to create a modern party predicated on socio-economic interest, policies and impersonal institutions is unclear. No doubt, PD performed exceptionally in the two elections in which it participated. Ultimately, it failed, however, to overcome personal animosities that pervaded its top leadership. The changing winds of national politics also helped to seal its fate.

Presently, we can see how the processes of decolonization, including party politics and electoral competition, reinforced these colonial legacies and entrenched processes of Otherizing along largely fictive yet distinctly political, communal lines. In particular, the region is experiencing a series of ethno-political revitalizations, led by a Dayak charge. Once largely shut out of lucrative bupati positions by the New Order, Dayaks now sit in five bupati posts. Likewise, the newly selected Vice-Governor is a Dayak. Locally, this amalgam of movements--it is hardly unified under a single organization or political party--is conceived as a *re*-awakening. It is the *second* coming of Dayak politics, for its proponents hearken back to the hey day of PD, although conflicting interpretations of what PD was and what it meant persist.

⁷⁸ By 1967, all four Dayak bupati had been replaced as well.

By reading the extant literature on Dayaks, however, one would be hard pressed to situate today's political *re*-awakening. "Ethnographic particularism" has obscured this important regional history.⁷⁹ As Indonesia stumbles into its era of decentralization, one scarred by extensive regional violence, we can only imagine how many likewise untold stories exist and how if uncovered, they could help us better grasp past and future trajectories of Indonesian societies and their nation-state.

⁷⁹ Richard A. O'Connor, "Agricultural Change and Ethnic Succession in Southeast Asian States: A Case for Regional Anthropology," *Journal of Asian Studies*, 54, 4, November 1995, 968-996, esp. 968. Cited in Mary Margaret Steedly, "The State of Culture Theory in the Anthropology of Southeast Asia," *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 28, 1998, 431-454, esp. 434.