

CHAPTER 2: AN OVERVIEW OF WEST PAPUAN POLITICS.

Introduction

This chapter will give an historical overview of the West Papuan struggle for independence, and examine the critical factors driving the current nationalist movement. Indonesian military abuse, political and economic marginalisation as a result of non-Papuan dominance, and a sense of betrayal by the international community, with regard to the UN decolonisation process, are all fundamental issues motivating the West Papuan nationalist movement. The chapter will discuss political moves towards an independent West Papuan state during the Dutch period, and the outcome of the conflict between Indonesia and Holland over the territory, which ignored the wishes of the indigenous people (Eluay and Beanal, 2000:2, Pigay, 2000:28).

The chapter will also look at opposition to Indonesian rule, and will then focus on the period since the recent political changes in Indonesia, which began with the demise of the Suharto regime in May 1998. The open emergence of the West Papuan nationalist movement in the last two years, has seen the creation of a structure, through which people's aspirations and perspectives can be given a voice. Whilst the OPM (*Organisasi Papua Merdeka*, or Free Papua Movement) has operated underground and in exile for decades, the new face of West Papuan nationalism claims to reject armed struggle as an effective strategy. Rather it is based upon open political organisation, and is committed to a process of dialogue to achieve its aims. Central to the movement's strategy is to lobby for a review by the international community, of West Papua's incorporation into Indonesia. According to the Presidium Chairman Theys Eluay, 'We want to succeed through dialogue and negotiation....We are determined not to resort to violence' (cited in Aglionby, 2000:2).

Early Anti-Colonial Movements

Before World War Two, there had been significant West Papuan anti-colonial movements such as *konor* (prophet) movements, which the Dutch colonial authorities regarded as a 'disturbance of peace and order and the deliberate circulation of alarming rumours' (Kamma, cited in Sharp, 1994:48). One of the most famous of these was the Great Korero Movement, led by the woman *konor* Angganitha Menufandu between 1938 and 1943 in the Biak-Numfor region. This poet and prophet preached non-violence and renewal in order to 'bring about the Kingdom of heaven on earth – Korero – where the Korero flag in blue, white and red,

signifying faith, peace and courage, would fly out over all West Irian-Papua Barat' (Kamma cited in Sharp, 1994:49).

This flag, which was first flown in 1942 (Rutherford, 1999:55), holds great significance, and is imbued with spiritual as well as political potency. The Morning Star is connected to Manarmakeri meaning both 'the Old Man of the Star', and 'scabious Old man' (Sharp, 1994:46). A mythical-historical figure, he is believed to have miraculously cured Angganitha and named her *Bin Damai* (Woman of Peace). She then became a *konor* and was received as a great leader (Sharp, 1994:48-49). As with previous uprisings and millenarian movements in West Papua (Pigay, 2000:25), this was in part a response to an increasing burden of forced labour under the Dutch administration, and the suppression of Papuan political organisations (Sharp, 1977:12).

In 1949, when Indonesia finally gained independence from the Dutch, the western half of the island of New Guinea remained under the Dutch, who argued that it was preparing Papuans for self-rule (Rutherford, 1999:41). The aspiration of West Papuans for independence emerged in an explicitly political form in the early 1950s, with initial support from the Dutch administration for a gradual decolonisation process leading to an independent state. Initially some nationalists within the West Papuan elite were pro-Indonesian, for example Silas Papare sat in the Indonesian Parliament from 1950, but leaders such as Eliezer Bonay later became disillusioned with the Indonesians.¹ According to Wim Zonggonau² who gave a presentation at a conference in Sydney on April 19th 2000, in the period between 1957 and 1961, a democratic process of political representation was initiated. He was a member of a committee of 100 members, which not only endorsed a national flag and anthem, but also was involved in local government initiatives, primary schools and health care services.

This early nationalist movement was limited to a relatively small, Dutch-educated mostly male elite, who like the early Indonesian nationalist leaders, had a vision of a post-colonial nation which they would lead and represent. They were motivated by idealism, and a sense of needing to control their own destiny, in a world in which new nations were emerging from European colonial rule. As Justus M. van der Kroef (cited in Sharp, 1977:14) wrote in 1961, '...one senses the momentum of a new Papuan consciousness...it seems probable that the

¹ Personal communication with Herb Feith, scholar of Indonesian affairs.

² Presidium member. 'A Conference on the Prospects for Peace and Conflict Resolution in West Papua'.

whole question will be determined primarily by the development of this new spirit of self-awareness’.

Conflicting Claims Over West Papua

For the Indonesian nationalists of the 1950s, the idea that the indigenous population of West Papua could or should have a voice in determining their future political status was not appreciated. For nationalist leaders like Sukarno, the issue was one of ensuring that the Dutch colonial authorities withdrew from all of Indonesia, meaning all the territories they had governed from Batavia or Jakarta. The fact that the Dutch had not withdrawn from what they called Netherlands New Guinea in 1949, was humiliating, and seen in terms of a lingering colonial presence which must be driven out (Legge, 1972:248). There was also a sub-text, namely that talking about the struggle for the liberation of West Irian was an approach to the problem of building unity in the rest of the country. As Herb Feith (1962) points out, Irian

was something on which nearly everyone agreed (indeed, more so than on unification). It enabled issues to be focused in terms of Indonesians versus enemies of Indonesia, thus rallying all-Indonesian solidarity’(p.158).

The nationalism Sukarno and his fellow nationalists espoused was an ideology inspired by a western education, in which the elite, western educated leaders, mostly male, spoke for ‘the nation’, which encompassed everyone who happened to live in the islands of the former Dutch East Indies. Ben Anderson (1991:176) points out that because West New Guinea was a place of exile for nationalist heroes, banished there by the Dutch authorities, it became a ‘sacred site in the national imagining’. Hence the nationalist slogan and famous song was developed: *Dari Sabang sampai Merauke*, From Sabang (on the northwestern tip of Sumatra) to Merauke (on the southeastern coast of West Papua). This notion implied the unification of all of the Dutch East Indies, as Indonesia. In his famous *Trikora*³ speech in December 1961, Sukarno commanded his armed forces to ‘destroy the Dutch-created puppet state of West Papua’ (Chauvel, 2000:7).

The New York Agreement and the Act of Free Choice

In 1962, with the threat of armed conflict from Indonesia, the Dutch government, under pressure from the United States, agreed to withdraw from Netherlands New Guinea. It was to hand the territory over to the UN, who would administer the territory between October 1962

³ Trihora, Tri Komando Rakyat, or Three Commands of the People.

and May 1963, after which Indonesia would formally take control. Under the terms of the New York Agreement of August 1962, an Act of Free Choice (AFC) to be conducted by the end of 1969, would be carried out in accordance with international practice, and would guarantee the eligibility of all adult indigenous inhabitants to participate. Indonesia agreed to guarantee the human rights of West Papuans, including the rights of free speech, freedom of movement and assembly (Blay, 2000:14, Rutherford, 1999:41, Saltford, 2000:74, 77, Whittaker, 1990:29). However, this exercise, known by West Papuans as ‘act of no choice’, did not allow the 800, 000 West Papuans to vote on their future status. Rather, the Indonesian authorities conducted ‘consultations’ with 1025 selected delegates, all of whom voted for integration with Indonesia (Rumakiek, 2000:10).

The Cold War aspect of these dynamics needs to be appreciated in order to understand how it was that the international community betrayed the West Papuans in this period. In 1961, the Kennedy administration was concerned about Jakarta’s enormous Soviet-backed increase in military spending (Saltford, 2000:72). Intent on avoiding an armed conflict between Indonesia and Holland over the issue, US pressure was brought to bear on the Dutch to accept a compromise. According to Saltford, the New York Agreement was in effect a ‘face-saving measure for the Dutch’ (p.72). This is illustrated by a US official’s comments in February 1962.

I can’t blame Dutch for doubting that Indos have any intention of allowing genuine plebiscite five years or so from now. But the important thing is that some such Indo promise is the essential face-saving device Dutch have been seeking. We must get them to take it as best they can accept (cited in Saltford, 2000:72).

In fact, according to Saltford (2000), as early as 1963, senior Dutch and UN officials had agreed with Jakarta that the method used in the Act of Free Choice would ‘not involve any direct voting by the population’ (p.77). He argues that the UN merely provided a ‘vener of respectability’ for the transfer of the territory from the Dutch to the Indonesians (p.79). The UN, in carrying out this dishonest role for the US, allowed the Papuans to be robbed of their right to decide their own future. As Saltford so forcefully states: ‘It was Cold War politics and the rights of the Papuans counted for nothing (p.91).

Resistance to Indonesian Rule

Opposition to Indonesian rule, and subsequent political repression by Indonesia began in 1962, with the banning of political parties, and of any expressions of West Papuan nationalism such as the Morning Star flag, and the anthem 'My Land of Papua'. These had both been ceremonially adopted on December 1st 1961, when the name Netherlands Nieuw Guinea was replaced with West Papua, and the Morning Star flag was flown next to the Dutch flag. In April 1961, the New Guinea Council (Volksraad), a partially elected 28 member body, including one woman, was officially inaugurated. This inauguration was attended by representatives from all the colonial governments in the Pacific apart from the USA (Rumakiek, 2000:4-5, Whittaker, 1990:23).

In December 1962, the Regional Council of Biak-Numfor, having circulated a resolution throughout the territory, passed it on to the UN Administrator. It called for a 'Free Plebiscite' to be held in 1964, and concluded that the UN had replaced western colonialism with 'an Eastern Republic which is even more ruthless a colonial power' (Sharp, 1977:39). As it turned out, their statement would be proved correct. Uprisings against Indonesian control began in 1963, and in 1965, the year in which the OPM was established, the Indonesian army launched a counter-insurgency operation in Manokwari against the Arfak people. This was the first of many such military operations which met with sustained resistance, and resulted in heavy loss of life on the part of West Papuans (Whittaker, 1990:32, Saltford, 2000:83-84).

In early 1968, a US Consular official from Jakarta, Reynders, visited the territory, and on his return reported on his visit to British embassy staff. In relation to the Indonesian approach to the OPM, he stated:

The Indonesians have tried everything from bombing them with B-26s, to shelling and mortaring them, but a continuous state of semi-rebellion persists. Brutalities are undoubtedly perpetrated from time to time in a fruitless attempt at repression (cited in Saltford, 2000:73).

Indonesian Cultural Chauvinism

The way in which the Indonesian authorities attempted to 'Indonesianise' West Papuan people, lacked sensitivity, and contained notions of cultural superiority. This resulted in great resentment and resistance. Starting in 1962, in the period officially under UN administration, a program in schools was launched, in which children were taught that the Indonesian

language, anthem and flag were theirs, and that they should support the following points: Indonesia was one country, with one people and one language; the August 1945 Constitution formed the basis of the Indonesian state; the UN must leave by January 1963; and a referendum was unnecessary (van der Veur, cited in Sharp, 1977:39).

According to Djopari (cited in van Klinken 1996:31), attempts ‘to socialise the notion of Indonesian-ness failed dismally in West Papua, because the standard line that Dutch colonialism impoverished the people just did not ring true’. This was because the Dutch had allocated substantial funds to the territory in the late 1950s and early 1960s, whereas the Indonesians ‘stripped the place bare, even taking to Java the aircraft steps from the Biak International Airport’ (p.31).

The attempt by the Indonesian authorities to ‘Indonesianise’ the highland Dani people, illustrates a particular insensitivity towards indigenous Papuan cultures. In 1970, under military supervision, 6000 kits were distributed amongst school students. The kits contained ‘clothing, writing materials, a picture of the President and an Indonesian flag’ (Sharp, 1977:25). Dani men wear penis sheaths, and they did not take kindly to this kind of arrogance. They, like other West Papuans resented the military presence, with its associated destruction of gardens and forests, and enforced labour. Clearly, the notion of being ‘Indonesian’ was rejected, as was the intrusive behaviour of the military.

No one knows how many West Papuans have been killed by the Indonesian military, or have died from disease and starvation, as a direct result of dispossession, and forced removal from their traditional lands. We do know however, that resistance to Indonesian occupation has been ongoing, and that military reprisals have been fierce and brutal (Rumakiek, 2000:11-12). The Swiss pilot, Theodore Fray, who worked with Associated Mission Aviation in West Papua, said in 1988: ‘During my whole stay in West Irian/West Papua, I never met a single family which had not lost at least one member because of torture or other acts of violence by the Indonesians’ (Rumakiek, 2000:12, Whittaker, 1990:78).

Expropriation of Land and Economic Marginalisation

As well as suffering under a brutal military occupation, the fear of becoming an alienated minority in their own land, is a major driving force behind West Papuan nationalism. Elmslie (2000) estimates that the non-Papuan population to be between 750,000 and 1 million, with

Papuans numbering at the most, 1.5 million (p.21). Elmslie asserts that: 'The Papuan fear is that they will be marginalised and dispossessed by the newcomers - and that their future will be in question if this trend continues' (p.21).

Forced removal from their traditional lands has been an ongoing source of resentment and resistance by West Papuans. Whether this is to make way for large projects, or transmigration sites, the end result is that indigenous Papuans feel marginalised (Rutherford, 1999:46). This is also true in the urban sector, where non-Papuans dominate the economy, 'owning everything from the taxis villagers ride to town to the shops where they buy sugar and rice' (Rutherford, 1999:46). Non-Papuans also dominate the civil service, and 'often win jobs and scholarships reserved for the locally born' (Rutherford, 1999:47). Non-Papuans in West Papua comprise various groups including military personnel, civil servants, Indonesian and foreign business people, Javanese farmers and urban poor who were brought in under the government sponsored transmigration program, and spontaneous migrants from Sulawesi, who work mainly as petty traders and laborers (King, 2000:15).

The Nationalist Movement Seeks Dialogue with the Indonesian Government

The West Papuan nationalist movement entered a new phase, with the end of the Suharto regime, and especially after the decision of President Habibie to allow a UN administered referendum in East Timor. With these momentous changes, West Papuans sensed a great new hope that the situation might change, and that their aspirations might be fulfilled (Elmslie, 2000:20). As one West Papuan commentator put it (Sanggenefa, cited in Chauvel, 2000:7), if East Timor could 'free itself from the idea of Unity in Diversity and become a sovereign nation (*bangsa yang berdaulat*) rather than an ethnic group (*suku bangsa*), why not West Papua?'

A significant event which brought West Papuan nationalism out into the open, occurred in February 1999, when a team of one hundred West Papuans went to Jakarta to meet and talk with President Habibie. The team included community and church leaders, for whom the process of 'National Dialogue' with the central government meant discussing independence.⁴ For Habibie and his government however, this was out of the question. After being presented

⁴ The one woman on this team was Beatrix Koibur, whose involvement in the nationalist movement is discussed in detail in chapter 5.

with a signed declaration demanding immediate independence, Habibie broke down in tears, and told the team to return home and reconsider the matter (Elmslie, 2000:21).

In February 2000 (Zonggonau⁵, 2000), at the *Musyawarah* (Consultation) in Jayapura attended by 2000 people, elections were held to form a panel with representatives amongst tribal chiefs, churches, political parties, women, youth, students, *ex-tapols* (ex-political prisoners), prominent leaders, and professionals. From this panel, 200 people were elected to form the *Dewan Papua* (Papuan Council), in which each region, two major towns, as well as exiles in the Pacific and Europe are represented. A Presidium of 22 people was elected from this Council, one of whose roles was to organise the Congress, held between May 29th and June 4th, 2000.

The two women on the Presidium are Beatrix Koibur and Rev. Ketty Yabansabra. Women are considered one of the nine ‘pillars’ or ‘components’ of the Presidium, the others being: the churches, customary or tribal leaders, professionals, students, youth, ex-political prisoners, historical figures (including OPM exiles), and the political dialogue group (which has up until now been FORERI⁶ and the Team 100) (King, 2000:6-9). The purpose of this Congress was to discuss future political strategies. The stated theme was to ‘Re-write⁷ the History of West Papua’, with the sub-theme: ‘The West Papuan People Vow to Uphold Democracy and Human Rights Based on the Principles of Truth and Justice Leading to a New Papua’ (Beanal, Giay, Awom, Joku, 2000).

It is a very recent development that West Papuans have been able to organise politically and demand independence in such an open way. This is a result of the changes of government in Indonesia both in May 1998 when Suharto stepped down, and October 1999 when Abdurrahman Wahid was elected. Prior to October 1999, the act of raising the West Papuan Morning Star flag could be met with bullets, arrests and death, as it did as recently as July 1998 in Biak City on Biak Island (Rutherford, 1999:39).

The Morning Star flag has frequently been raised in ceremonies throughout West Papua, particularly on significant anniversaries related to historical events in the nationalist struggle.

⁵ In 1969, after the Act of Free Choice, Zonggonau and two others attempted to travel to the UN to explain what had actually taken place. They were prevented by Australian officials from leaving Port Moresby (conference presentation, Sydney, April 2000).

⁶ Forum for the Reconciliation of Irian Jaya Society, was formed by the three main churches following the July 1998 Biak massacres.

This was able to be done with a degree of government toleration on December 1st 1999, when tens of thousands of people took part in flag raising ceremonies to mark the 38th anniversary of the declaration of independence from the Netherlands (Kilvert, Ondawame, 1999:4). In Jayapura, the Morning Star flag as well as the Indonesian flag were raised outside the building that housed the New Guinea Council, in the same place as the historic 1961 flag raising had occurred (Chauvel, 2000:4). Whilst President Wahid has been prepared to tolerate political debate and the flying of the West Papuan flag, he has made it abundantly clear that breaking away from Indonesia is not acceptable (Garran, 2000:8).

The discourse surrounding the current nationalist movement is dominated by the principles of self-determination and human rights as entrenched in international law. The leaders claim that the 1969 UN supervised ‘Act of Free Choice’ was fraudulent, and, therefore, the West Papuan people have the right to a new and genuine expression of self-determination as did the East Timorese. Their position is clearly stated in the communique released at the conclusion of the ‘2000 Extraordinary Consultative Meeting of West Papuans’ in February, and signed by the then two presidents of the Papuan Council, Theys Eluay and Tom Beanal. It stated:

We condemn outright the illegal transfer of the sovereignty of the Papuan people from the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Republic of Indonesia via the United Nations concluded on 1 May 1963. The transfer is deemed illegal as we, the very people directly affected by the decision, have never been consulted nor given opportunity to have any say whatsoever through our elected national legislature, the Papuan National Council, the mandated body in existence at the time that should have been ultimately responsible for determining the future political destiny of the Papuan people (Eluay and Beanal, 2000:2).

The calling of the Papuan People’s Congress was a momentous occasion, as it was the first time such a large gathering was politically possible, and it was attended by some three thousand delegates from all over West Papua. Also in attendance were delegates from other parts of Indonesia, journalists, as well as international observers, including a diplomat from the US embassy (Erari, 2000:4). The outcome of the six-day Congress was an overwhelming desire that West Papua be recognised as an independent state. As stated in the ‘Report by the Special Envoys of the State Secretary for (West) Papua Problem’ (Erari, 2000), the Congress agreed that the Presidium should report to the Indonesian President that ‘the People of

⁷ The word used is *meluruskan* which implies rectify, so ‘re-write’ could also mean ‘re-right’.

(West) Papua desires to attain the recognition of their right to be independent as a sovereign nation, which they had acquired from the Kingdom of the Netherlands on the 1st of December 1961' (p.4). Peter King (2000) points out however, that there was no actual declaration of independence on that day. What is referred to in the Congress's final resolution, is a Political Manifesto issued by the Papuan National Committee on December 19th 1961, which presages independence (p.10).

International Recognition Sought

A central aspect of the proposed strategy by the West Papuan leadership is to lobby the international community to agree to review the 1969 Act of Free Choice. The Congress rejected this UN - sponsored process, on the grounds that it was 'conducted to the accompaniment of threats, intimidation, sadistic killings, military violence and amoral deeds that gravely violated humanitarian principles' (cited in Aglionby, 2000:2).

The manner in which self-determination was denied to West Papuans is one of the longest standing 'blots' on the United Nations record on decolonisation. In 1985, the Melanesian Council of Churches submitted in their Statement of Concern to the UN Decolonisation Committee, that the West Papua issue 'is a matter of grave international concern [which] if not rectified would throw doubt on the integrity of the United Nations and its Committee on decolonisation especially in its dealings with the remaining list of colonised territories' (cited in Blay, 2000:14).

In assessing the strategy of pushing for this act of self-determination to be rectified, Chauvel (2000) suggests that the 1969 Act of Free Choice 'was such an obvious facade and travesty of justice that it can be the base of a strong moral argument and one in which the UN's own responsibility can be invoked' (p.8). Furthermore, according to Professor of Law, Dr. Sam Blay (2000), under international law, it could be argued that by using the *musyawarah* (consultation) system, Indonesia 'breached one of its obligations under the New York Agreement' (p.16). Blay also argues that by failing to monitor the Act of Free Choice, and ensuring that the terms of the New York Agreement were met, The Netherlands breached its obligations under the United Nations Charter (p.18). Blay is unequivocal in his condemnation of the way in which West Papuans were betrayed. He states: 'The evidence available today indicates that Australia, The Netherlands, United States and the United Nations itself assisted

Indonesia to secure its control over West Papua, even where it was clear that there were serious defects with the procedure for integration (p.17).

How successful the West Papuan leadership will be in their quest for international support, remains to be seen. In Holland, there is some interest in investigating the 1969 Act of Free Choice. Foreign Minister J.J. Van Aartsen told Parliament on December 10 1999, that he would 'initiate a historical re-examination of the circumstances surrounding the Act' (Saltford, 2000:92), following its proposal by MP Van Middelkoop from the *Gereformeerde Politiek Verbond* Party in November 1999. Van Middelkoop, who was in Netherlands New Guinea as a young man, said the way the Act of Free Choice was carried out, represents 'one of the blackest pages from the history of decolonisation' (cited in 'Dutch Government agrees to review West Papua handover', 1999:3).

Within the region, the governments of Vanuatu and Nauru have expressed their support for West Papuan independence, and plan to formally raise the issue at the UN General Assembly in September 2000. Vanuatu's Prime Minister, Barak Sope, said at a meeting with West Papuan leaders in Port Vila on 30th July 2000, that as Chair of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, Vanuatu would also seek the support of Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Fiji (Worth, 2000:8).

Following Indonesia's humiliating 'loss' of East Timor, letting go of West Papua or Aceh is perceived as a step towards national disintegration (Aglionby, 2000:2-3). In a move to prevent this occurring in West Papua and elsewhere across the archipelago, the Indonesian Parliament passed legislation just prior to the June 1999 elections, which gives greater regional autonomy, and a larger share of resource revenue for the provinces (Chauvel, 2000:5). This legislation is due to be implemented in 2001. However, it is not a proposition widely accepted in West Papua. According to Yohanes Bonay, the Director of the Jayapura office of the Institute for Human Rights Studies and Advocacy:

The basic problem here is not one of money or development. It is all about the sovereignty of the Papuan people over their own land. If the people think they have to separate from Indonesia in order to achieve that, then they will continue their struggle until they do (cited in Aglionby, 2000:3).

Crackdown on Nationalist Movement

In August 2000, the Wahid government came under criticism from the MPR (People's Consultative Assembly) for making too many concessions to 'separatists' (ELS-HAM, 2000, n.p.). In a spirit of compromise, Wahid ordered that the Morning Star flag be flown only in certain places, alongside and lower than, the Indonesian flag (Yates, 2000, n.p.). Yet, despite the President's stated commitment to dialogue, the reality on the ground points to the period of tolerance as having been short-lived. Since August 2000, there has been a huge military build-up in West Papua, with thousands of extra troops deployed, and in October, the launching of Indonesian Air Force operations using British-made Hawk 100 and Hawk 200 fighter-bombers (Rumbiak, 2000, n.p.).

Human rights violations have substantially increased since August 2000, with torture, arrests and imprisonments, disappearances and killings, particularly associated with the flying of the Morning Star flag (Rumbiak, 2000, n.p.). The worst violence to date, occurred in Wamena, the district capital of the Baliem Valley on October 6-7, when police pulled down the flag, and two people were shot dead by security forces. This provoked fury amongst locals who then vented their rage on non-Papuan, resulting in 30 deaths, 45 wounded and 59 arrests (Yates, 2000, n.p.).

Analysts at the Indonesia Update conference on October 6-7 at the ANU, have suggested that these sorts of provocative actions (in Aceh, Maluku, West Timor as well as West Papua) are part of a strategy by elements within the Indonesian military to undermine the Wahid government, and justify their continuing presence (Powell, 2000:6). On October 6th, regional Police Chief Wenas with the backing of the national police chief, banned the flying of the Morning star flag, and vowed to curb this and other separatist activities throughout West Papua (Kapolda Irja, 2000, n.p.).

Conclusion

Nationalism in West Papua has a long history, and in the late 1950s and early 1960s, received active support from the Dutch colonial administration. Largely because of Cold War dynamics, West Papuans were denied their right to self-determination, and the resulting sense of betrayal continues to drive the movement. The current West Papuan leadership is committed both to dialogue with the Indonesian government, and to lobbying the international community, in its quest for a review of the way in which decolonisation

occurred in the 1960s. The recent crackdown against the West Papuan nationalist movement, suggests that President Wahid's commitment to dialogue has been set back by hawkish elements within the Indonesian government.

This historical overview provides a context for the discussion which takes place in the following chapters. These look at the gender dimensions of repression-resistance situations and nationalist movements. Chapter 3 examines theoretical perspectives, whilst chapters 4 and 5 comprise case studies of two West Papuan women.