

# Colonising Central Sulawesi

## The 'Ethical Policy' and Imperialist Expansion 1890-1910

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First Published:  
Itinerario Volume 20(3) 1996: 87-10.

### Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate the nature of Dutch colonial policy at the turn of the twentieth century in what was then the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>1</sup> Referred to in the historiography of this period as 'the ethical policy', it is usually characterized as a welfare or developmentalist government. More recent comparisons have drawn attention to similarities between twentieth-century colony policy and the New Order Indonesian policy with a focus on economic growth and the lack of individual 'development'.<sup>2</sup> 'Ethical policy' is not usually a term applied to the politics of other imperialist powers, which begs the question that somehow Dutch colonialism was different. Recent comparative research by M. Kuitenbrouwer, A. Stoler and J. Breman<sup>3</sup> has questioned this assumption.

'Ethical policy' has been largely seen as a humanitarian concern for the colonial subject (such as welfare policy) or in terms of modernisation in Indonesian society. In both cases attention is drawn to economic factors, which tends to ignore the most obvious characteristics of the period such as the military conquest of areas outside the former Dutch spheres of influence in Java, Sumatra, and parts of the eastern archipelago and the subsequent establishment of a modern colonial state, and the capitalisation of European economic interests.

In a recent characterisation of early twentieth-century colonial policy, R. Cribb compares the colonial 'ethical policy' to contemporary Indonesian development policy. Citing Elsbeth Locher-Scholten's 1981 discussion of the colonial policy,<sup>4</sup> he concludes -

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<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented to the Asian Studies Association Conference in Brisbane, 1980.

<sup>2</sup> R. Cribb, 'Development Policy in the Early Twentieth Century' in: J. Dirkse et al. eds, *Indonesia's Experiences Under the New Order* (Leiden 1989).

<sup>3</sup> M. Kuitenbrouwer, *The Netherlands and the Rise of Modern Imperialism: Colonies and Foreign Policy, 1870-1902* (New York and Oxford 1991); A. Stoler, *Capitalism and Confrontation in Sumatra's Plantation Belt, 1870-1979* (New Haven 1985). 'Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities and the Boundaries of Rule', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13 (1989); J. Breman, *Koelies, Planters en Koloniale Politiek* (Leiden 1987); 'Het Beest aan Banden? De Koloniale Geest aan het Begin van de Twintigste Eeuw', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en volkenkunde* 144 (1989).

<sup>4</sup> E.B. Locher-Scholten, *Ethiek in Fragmenten: Vijf Studies over Koloniaal Denken en Doen*

rather oddly - that the 'ethical policy' constituted the direction of government policy for the entire pre-Independence period of the twentieth century. While a comparison between the two periods of Indonesian history is pertinent, the category at issue would seem to be not 'welfare' but rather 'state formation'. In both periods, the move towards state formation is obscured by a discourse of developmentalism intended to overwhelm all others in the public sphere. From this perspective, the 'ethical' of the earlier period can only mean 'modernisation'. Moreover, any use of the term as a blanket description for colonial policy in the first half of the twentieth century in the way that Locher-Scholten states, obscures the significant re-orientation of both policy and discourse after the middle of the second decade of the twentieth century, when a major emphasis of policy was the defence of the colonial state and capitalist enterprise.<sup>5</sup>

A recent more satisfactory article by W. Otterspeer distinguishes more clearly between colonial policy and ideology. Otterspeer argues that:

This ethical policy can be called a Leiden invention but it remains useful to distinguish between this policy (in politics) and the ideology of the Leiden [University] ethical 'school'. And after 1910, when the policy came under growing pressure [...] it was mainly Leiden professors who advocated it, going against the grain of what their opponents saw as the national interests.<sup>6</sup>

It is not the aim of this paper to pursue the intellectual basis of this 'ethical ideology' but to examine two contemporary policy responses to territorial expansion at the turn of the twentieth century within the colonial discourse of the time. While in this paper I suggest that territorial expansion represented a major characteristic of colonial practice and policy of Dutch colonial policy at the turn of the twentieth century, the geo-centricity of much of the literature concerning the 'ethical policy', undoubtedly reinforced by the

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*van Nederlanders in de Indonesische Archipel, 1977-1942* (Utrecht 1981). A similar paradigm is used by Ricklefs. M. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since 1300* (London 1993).

<sup>5</sup> A more recent volume edited by Cribb, *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands Indies 1880-1942* (Leiden 1994), published after this paper was written does draw together recent Dutch scholarship which has effectively returned the balance to an investigation of colonial state formation, as argued here. This paper in focusing on the formation of regional administrative structure fits into the broader colonial-wide focus of the majority of the chapters in that volume. In particular, the chapter by Fasseur points to the ultimate contradiction of a colonial policy claiming to be Indonesian-centric and implicitly establishes the definition of 'ethical' as 'guardianship', a paternalistic and rhetorical turn which justified suppression of emancipatory claims on the one hand and the maintenance of a colonial structure on the other.

<sup>6</sup> W. Otterspeer, 'The Ethical Imperative' in: W. Otterspeer ed., *Leiden Oriental Connections* (Leiden 1991).

obscurity of alternative sources, has tended to perpetuate an assessment of colonial policy in terms of its impact on Java. This situation has begun to change in the last ten years with a new range of studies emanating from Dutch scholars with access to the relevant archives, notably dealing with colonial economic policy, imperialism, and to a lesser extent, on the intellectual bases of Dutch colonial thinking itself.<sup>7</sup> As a recent publication indicates, Indonesian scholars are also increasingly moving beyond the confines of a history of nationalism to investigate the economic and political structures of 'pre-independent' Indonesia.<sup>8</sup>

While the declining welfare of the Javanese farmer concerned and motivated the actions of many Dutch officials and undoubtedly touched the hearts of the metropolitan electorate, in essence, the economic conditions in Java confirmed the political realities which had emerged since the 1880s that continued exploitation of this colonial base were limited and that new resources and a new structure for the colonial economy had to be found. As J.Th. Lindblad and others have clearly demonstrated, the Outer Islands, and particularly the shift towards the exploitation of raw materials required by an emerging industrial economy - rubber, oil, tin - drove policy.<sup>9</sup> The idealism against which the achievements of the 'ethical policy' are usually judged (plans for the improvement of education, irrigation and health in Java) found its expression in policy terms only briefly in the first decade of the century, as the colonial machine shifted gear to encompass a new economic reality which needs to be much more thoroughly investigated. Beyond the sphere of colonial policy, an idealistic humanitarian liberalism continued to characterise a small group of academics and colonial observers, particularly the so-called Leiden orientalist, whose centrality in the manufacture of an academic and public discourse has ensured that their perspective has retained a prominent position.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See in particular the research of J.Th. Lindblad, *Between Dayak and the Dutch: The Economic History of Southeast Kalimantan, 1880-1942* (Dordrecht 1988) and J.Th. Lindblad ed., *New Challenges in the Modern Economic History of Indonesia* (Leiden 1993) and Lindblad and Clemens eds, *Het Belang van de Buitengewesten* (Amsterdam 1989).

<sup>8</sup> Apart from the exemplary on-going work of Professor Sartono in this regard, this is indicated in the proceedings of the first conference on Indonesia's economic history held in Jakarta in 1991 as reflected in: J.T. Lindblad ed., *New Challenges in the Modern Economic History of Indonesia* (Leiden 1993).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> See the broader discussion in Otterspeer, 'Ethical Imperative'. The apparent conflict within this academic circle between Snouck Hurgronje's 'associationism' and van Vollenhoven's 'traditionalism' was not so great in practice. Both perceived their work as a contribution to colonial policy formation and in particular had an anti-Islamic agenda ('adat' after all allowed a distinction to be drawn between 'traditional' and 'foreign influence') and it had been van Vollenhoven's endeavour to 'rationalise traditional custom' and thus bring 'tradition' into modernity. Snouck wished to avoid this kind of codification since this would obstruct the evolutionary process of change which

Viewed from the perspective of the eastern Outer Islands, the so-called 'ethical policy' can be seen in terms of a cultural transformation of traditional societies of the archipelago, which the dominant reformist discourse regarded as the task and duty of modern civilisation - a task which coincided with the concern to reformulate the economic basis of colonial power. From this perspective, this double task can be seen as an expression of a resurgent Dutch nationalism attempting to come to terms with the realities of its colonial inheritance within the context of European imperialism. Colonialism and this particular phase in colonialist expansion was central in the reconstitution of nationalism in Dutch society in metropolitan Europe as it was in the case of every other colonial power.<sup>11</sup> Dutch imperialist expansion<sup>12</sup> flowed from and formed part of the economic restructuring of industrial capitalism in Europe which brought about massive social and cultural upheavals. The international socialist and feminist movements and movements of liberal humanitarianism and moral idealism, all of which found echoes in Indonesian historiography as the 'ethical policy', were a response to these developments. These forms of cultural reformulation within the political and economic climate of the times were translated into nationalist agendas, and when such sentiment agitated colonial policy and practice, it activated a nationalist response from the colonised subject.<sup>13</sup>

The potential of the Outer Islands both in terms of exploitation by private enterprise and indirectly as a financial base for the colonial treasury, demanded an 'educational' task of great magnitude which called for a Dutch nationalist mission. In the process, 'dynamic forces were realised [... which were] in part by-products of policy [and resulted] in part [...] from causes quite outside the sphere of government aims and intentions'.<sup>14</sup> To conclude, as an earlier generation of historians has done, that the ethical policy failed to achieve its stated aims, is to mistake the rhetoric of the *ethici* (i.e., those who espoused the ideas of a new idealistic European nationalism) for the practice of new imperialism.

## Dutch Nationalism and Imperialism

Disenchantment with laissez-faire liberalism and a renewed call for the state to take

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'association' would inevitably induce.

<sup>11</sup> For a detailed discussion of this connection see Kuitenbrouwer, *Modern Imperialism*, chapter 3.

<sup>12</sup> As Kuitenbrouwer argues, unlike other imperialist powers Dutch territorial expansion took place within the confines of its designated sphere of influence. In all other respects Dutch behaviour is similar to that of the larger imperialist powers.

<sup>13</sup> This is of course a highly condensed summary. The argument turns on the extent to which a radical symbolism in Dutch nationalism and colonial policy reformism was appropriated by Western-educated early Indonesian modernists on the one hand and the extent to which Dutch nationalism expressed in colonial policy excited more fundamental nationalist responses on the part of the colonised on the other.

<sup>14</sup> J. Legge, *Indonesia* (Sydney: 1977) 102-103.

charge emerged in Europe as the interdependence between the metropolitan industrial complex and its colonial appendage became essential to support further industrial growth in order to provide emerging capitalists with a larger and more secure source of raw materials and an enlarged consumer base. These new economic concerns highlighted the limited value of a purely exploitative approach to colonialism. Obtaining a collectivity of interests (if only at the level of gaining a compliant 'free' labour reserve) became the essential ingredient of successful economic and political domination. At a political and cultural level, this move was justified by and coincided with the right to interfere in indigenous societies on humanitarian grounds - a claim ultimately grounded in the conviction of the superiority of western techno-rational culture.<sup>15</sup> Unlike economic rationalisation, this claim could be and was shared by the common man and woman of the metropolitan electorate who shared a common national 'glorious mission'. Consequently, the banners of the forces of the new imperialists carried the slogans of 'the white man's burden', *mission civilisatrice* or the *ethische politiek*.

In the Netherlands, reaction against liberal laissez-faire politics found political expression in 1888, with the election to government of the rightwing Christian party, the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij*. This party was based on an appeal to the 'little people' and a return to traditional (Christian) rather than value-less (Liberal-secular) principles. In terms of colonial policy it called for greater support of Christian missions by the State as a sign of Dutch society's essentially Christian nature as the only way to achieve 'the spiritual and cultural development of the [indigenous] population'. Colonial policy was to achieve 'association' by the indigenous population with Euro-Christian culture through education provided in mission schools. In its first party manifesto in 1879, its leader, A. Kuyper, a dynamic personality and a dominant intellectual influence in the Netherlands in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, called for the replacement of 'the profit-seeking urge of our politics to exploit the colonies in the interests of the state or the individual' by 'the politics of moral duty'. The European role was to be one of guardianship which entailed the three-fold responsibility of any guardian towards a child, namely:

- (a) to raise it properly,
- (b) to administer its estates to its best advantage, and
- (c) to enable it in the future [ ... ] to take up a more independent position.<sup>16</sup>

The position of the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij* became a common moral touchstone for colonial politics after 1888 complete with its essential Christian and paternalistic qualities providing a new respectability of the kind Multatuli had ridiculed a generation earlier. This Christian nationalism, on the other hand, genuinely inspired many people. It was opposed, however, by those who, like C. Snouck Hurgronje, shared the goal of 'association' but warned of the dangers of awakening Islamic opposition. For Snouck Hurgronje and the 'Leiden orientalist' the hallmark of Dutch civilisation was science and

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<sup>15</sup> For instance this is the justification provided by Snouck Hurgronje. See W. Otterspeer, 'Ethical Imperative'.

<sup>16</sup> Reference to the A.R.P. policy cited in B.J. Brouwer, *De Houding van Idenburg en Colijn tegenover de Indonesische Beweging* (Amsterdam 1958) 2.

a rational liberalism on 'neutral' territory, where Christian Europeans, Muslims and traditional Indonesians could find common ground. Beyond the exotic strains of such ethereal debate, the simplified administrative axiom, 'civilising the native' provided a new basis for the economic viability of the colony.

By the mid-1890s the notion that 'the establishment of Dutch authority was a blessing for the Indies' was generally accepted across the political spectrum in The Hague. It was a slogan which, while providing a useful yardstick for assessing the lot of the Javanese farmer, took on a special significance in reference to what were to be the colonised territories beyond the Java-Sumatra axis. Moreover, all parties agreed that the ideal of universal elementary education was important in raising the Indonesian population to a more economically dynamic level in order that it might 'progress', materially and spiritually. In implementing such an ideal, major disagreements surfaced between secular liberals such as Conrad van Deventer and Minister of Colonies Foch, who saw education as the key to solving Java's economic problems, and director of education Abendanon and adviser for native affairs Snouck Hurgronje, who on the other hand focused on the cultural development of the higher echelons of indigenous society to provide progressive spiritual leadership and the Christian Parties who saw universal education and conversion to Christianity as the key to moral improvement and the prerequisite to a permanent improvement in material welfare and socialist perspective of Henri van Kol who declared academic learning to be out of place 'in a land without books'.

Whereas in Java new policy directions at the beginning of the twentieth century were to be evidenced in an attention to irrigation works and public health and the establishment of institutions of credit, in the Outer Islands the new direction in colonial policy was heralded by a military conquest and pacification designed to clarify colonial boundaries in the face of imperialist pressure and to efficiently and quickly reorganise the colony's economic base. It was an operation, which after the initial bloody conquests of Aceh and Lombok solved in a few short years that which had dogged Dutch colonial policy since 1695 - the fundamental inability to establish control over the archipelago. With this new expanse of colonial territory which the Dutch briefly held between 1912 and 1942, education and 'voluntary association of interest', material welfare and *rust en orde* (literally: quietness and order) were essential background ingredients for a viable modern colonial state and successful economic exploitation. The history of Indonesian nationalism makes clear how this Dutch vision was achieved, in as far as it was, by surveillance, legal and administrative repression and, ultimately, by a failed recourse to military power.

### **Central Sulawesi and the New Colonial Policy: Two Interpretations**

Central Sulawesi provides an instructive case study of the implementation of the new colonial policy.<sup>17</sup> Initially 'discovered' by Dutch officials in the 1860s, suggestions made

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<sup>17</sup> A detailed discussion of colonial policy in Central Sulawesi between 1895 and 1925

at the time for the annexation of the region were turned down in the context of the then current non-expansionist policy. It was brought into formal relations with Batavia in 1888 as part of a flurry of diplomatic activity designed to secure the region against English political and economic intrusion.<sup>18</sup> New style 'short contracts' were used in these diplomatic contacts between the Dutch colonial government in Batavia and what for all intents and purposes remained independent states. These contracts formally stated that the native ruler recognised the sovereignty of the Dutch queen. More importantly, the contracts guaranteed to the colonial government 'the distribution of mining and agricultural leases within self-ruled area, together with the payment of moneys to lease holders'.<sup>19</sup>

In 1891, a local official reported that 'a stream of entrepreneurs' were already in the Tomini Gulf region which was likely to lead to 'difficulties' with independent rulers, which in turn might require military action.<sup>20</sup> According to rumours of the time, the inland region of Central Sulawesi was rich in iron ore, coal and forest products, which remained inaccessible to European entrepreneurs without a significant colonial presence. The same local official argued that such a colonial presence could be funded from an increase in government revenue derived from the taxation of greater economic activity. Significantly, his report argued in terms of the then emerging 'ethical' rhetoric, that a colonial presence would bring about 'an entirely different situation [...] in which agricultural enterprise and mineral exploitation will be possible', which in turn would 'develop and raise the welfare of the community'.<sup>21</sup> Assumptions about rich mineral deposits as well as large populations (which proved later to be unfounded) continued to inspire interest in the region while it remained essentially an unchartered region and, ironically, long enough for such beliefs to determine colonial policy in the region.

While in the nineties the colonial government was too embroiled in maintaining its prestige in wars against the states of Aceh and Bali, beginnings were made to establish a colonial presence with the appointment in 1894 of the first *controleur* (district officer) in Poso, a trading post on the coast. Poso was to act as a customs office to tax a growing volume of trade between local inhabitants and Chinese merchants. At the same time, the government encouraged and supported the posting of a missionary in the area to undertake 'civilising work' where 'the natives' (Alfurs and later Torajans), who had a reputation of being ferocious head hunters, would be 'gradually made amenable to a

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can be found in J. Coté, 'The Colonisation and Schooling of the To Pamona of Central Sulawesi, 1895-1925' (Unpublished Master's thesis, Monash 1980).

<sup>18</sup> This included sightings of an Australian party searching for gold.

<sup>19</sup> Koloniaal Verslag [Colonial Report], 1894-1895 (Batavia) 27.

<sup>20</sup> Assistant resident of Gorontalo to resident of Menado, *Toelichting van het Al of Niet Wenschelijke van het Verlenen van Mijnconcessies in de Tomini Bocht*, 22 March 1891 [Notes on the desirability or otherwise of providing mining licences in the Bay of Tomini], Kruyt Archive, Hendrik Kramer Instituut, Oegstgeest, Netherlands. All further reference to unpublished material relates to this archive and copies of material held by the author.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

European presence<sup>1</sup> and at the same time, create a barrier against the growing influence of Islam in the area.<sup>22</sup>

In 1902 the Poso post was upgraded to the level of assistant resident. The initial appointment was A.J.M. Engelenberg, who, as an administrator, had been involved in 'the pacification of Lombok [where] all his proposals [...] had been accepted by the government'.<sup>23</sup> The appointment of such an experienced administrator reflected an official view of the importance of this Outer Island territory in the new colonial regime. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the mission used its close connections with the colonial bureaucracy to obtain a 'strong' appointment in its new sphere of operations, which a climate where there was a growing concern with the expansion of 'Islamic fanaticism', was readily accepted.<sup>24</sup>

Engelenberg was impressed with the influence that the mission could exert in the region, which he believed was an essential prerequisite for the achievement of a desired material progress of the indigenous people. He accepted mission assurances that the religious basis of Pamona society interfered with the achievement of this goal and that the inhibiting features of the traditional culture could only be removed if the supernatural influences which bound the Pamona people to the *datu* (ruler) of Luwu (formerly a powerful Islamic state in southern Sulawesi) could be broken and the mission be given complete freedom of action.

Bereft of military support for such a policy while Dutch forces were still engaged in the subjugation of Aceh, Jambi and Kalimantan, and while all available warships were involved in the defence of the colony's neutrality during the Russo-Japanese war, Engelenberg with missionary support, pursued a diplomatic mission to convince the *datu* of Luwu to relinquish formal control over the Pamona clans. Engelenberg's plans for the region included large-scale road construction, the creation of an indigenous administrative personnel corps and the encouragement of local industries as the basis for stimulating the indigenous economy. All this was to make the region a show-piece of the new colonialism.<sup>25</sup> The key to the success of his plans was the existence of a large number

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<sup>22</sup> This view was communicated to the Netherlands Missionary Society by its Manado based correspondent, Rev. Wieland in a letter to the NMS of 15 November 1888, Kruyt Archive.

<sup>23</sup> Editor's note to an article by A.J.M. Engelenberg, 'Ons Bestuursbeleid in Nederlandsch Indie' [Our Government Policy in the Netherlands Indies], *Het Vaderland* (5 August 1904).

<sup>24</sup> This is suggested by missionary Albert Kruyt's correspondence at the time and in an official unpublished document by the official for Outer Island administration, H. Colijn in 1906. Kruyt was well known to Snouck Hurgronje who, while against evangelisation in Islamic areas, saw the conversion in 'neutral zones' as politically astute. Engelenberg was known to Snouck Hurgronje since they co-operated in West Java in arranging the education of Achmad Djajdiningrat.

<sup>25</sup> Engelenberg saw his mission as being 'to bring to the people a period of prosperity, of wealthy settlements and of physical strength'. Engelenberg to Kruyt, 20 June 1903, Kruyt Archive.



of 'apostles of civilisation',<sup>26</sup> whose work he argued would not only be of benefit to the progress of the people themselves but to the colony as a whole:

The political advantage accruing to the State if the entire Central Celebes could be added to the pro-government areas of the archipelago because of its religious belief cannot be over-estimated.<sup>27</sup>

To finance the initial capital investment required, the region would have to be brought under direct government control so that a portion of the debt of honour could be channeled into the region. He estimated that he would need 100,000 guilders to finance his vision.

In Batavia where he attempted to argue in support of his scheme, Snouck Hurgronje assured him of the support of the administration, but the plan lacked the means to implement it:

from all corners of the archipelago requests were being received in constantly increasing volume and some already endlessly repeated of which one appears more urgent than the other [...] and the receipts from which all this has to be paid are becoming less rather than more.<sup>28</sup>

Proposals for spending van Deventer's 'debt of honour' were clearly limitless. Engelenberg and his plans for the Poso region perfectly encapsulated the inspirational force of the new colonial philosophy. In the same year the Minister of Colonies suggested spending one-hundred million guilders on the immediate expansion of indigenous education. It seems undeniable that the call for a more 'ethical' colonial policy inspired many colonial and government officials in this transitional period, but the proposals thus inspired did not match the reality of the financial situation. In the end, they did not match the realities of the vision of the more sober-minded colonial architects overseeing the transformation of the colonial possession.

Deflated by his experience in Batavia, Engelenberg went to The Hague where he presented a modified plan, which was published in the daily press as a blue-print for a new colonial policy.<sup>29</sup> The new plans - influenced by his discussions with the Poso missionary and Christian socialist, Albert Kruyt - could be said to epitomise the 'ethical' position. 'Our vocation', he argued, 'was to give the natives an opportunity to [achieve] a high standard of living'. Colonial policy in the past had kept the Javanese in a state of immaturity which 'made him unsuitable for a dogged perseverance in the difficult struggle which life always imposes'. Only when each part of the country, both state and region,

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<sup>26</sup> Engelenberg to Resident of Manado, 27 September 1903, Kruyt Archive, Confidential no. 720/6.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Snouck Hurgronje to Kruyt, 1 May 1903, Kruyt Archive.

<sup>29</sup> Engelenberg, 'Ons Bestuursbeleid in Nederlandsche Indie'.

desires the competence to provide for its own needs and to be allowed to make its own decisions in this matter, can one expect the whole to prosper.<sup>30</sup>

Engelenberg's blue-print for the region now proposed a federation of independent self-governing states supported by colonial government grants in which commerce would exploit the mineral, agricultural and commercial potential of the region. Education would be the key feature in training the inhabitants to participate in this development. Through training for economic and political independence, Engelenberg believed that the indigenous population would be brought closer to the phase of development already achieved by the Dutch.

This probably represented a high point in the idealistic formulation of an 'ethical' colonial policy incorporating all the major elements: education, 'debt of honour' repayments by the Netherlands, economic prosperity and a hint of autonomy. Engelenberg had his finger on the problem but failed to provide a realistic solution. However, the political leaders advocating an 'ethical' program, such as progressive liberals C.Th. van Deventer and E.B. Kielstra (who had both worked on developing an economic blue-print for the salvation of Java), considered the plans, 'futuristic':

given the present conditions of the Gulf of Tomini states it will take years before it can be considered desirable that the native rulers there can be given more independence; these rulers are still too uneducated and moreover lack almost all sense of duty in promoting the interests of their subjects while the people themselves are as yet at too low a level of civilisation [...] Indeed Mr Engelenberg is too optimistic and regards the situation in the states of the gulf of Tomini with their primitive populations through rose-coloured glasses.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless the elements which made up Engelenberg's proposal were drawn from the progressive colonial discourse then being popularised. 'Decentralisation', 'indigenisation' and '(re-)education' were the hallmarks of this discourse and were a precise inversion of those arguments which had been used to justify the colonial policy of the nineteenth-century *onthoudingspolitiek* (the policy of non-involvement outside areas of direct control and influence). The state was now seen as having the primary responsibility for creating the conditions of economic development and material progress in general, and rather than limit itself in concentrating limited resources in a few areas, the state ought to mobilise the population to identify with its (humanitarian, 'welfarist') policies to provide a broad based development. Cohen-Stuart, member of the Batavian establishment, cleverly rewrote old themes into the new formulation. In supporting the

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Engelenberg went to see these 'experts' privately on arrival in the Netherlands. Van Deventer's views were reported in *De Indische Gids* in a report of his speech to the *Indische Genootschap* in 1904. The journal's editor shared Van Deventer's views. In a parallel article, '*De Tomini Bocht*', the resident of Menado, Engelenberg's superior voiced the same scepticism, *De Indische Gids* (1904) 1666.

new expansionist policy and the new emphasis on the welfare of the people, he argued for the necessity of an expanded indigenous education to provide the necessary personnel to administer an extended colony.<sup>32</sup> The extension of education in the indigenous community more generally would, he suggested, not only make the task of these native administrators easier, but would help 'bind the people to us', with the requirement that villagers establish their own schools, which was seen as a further step in self-responsibility and 'decentralisation'.

'Decentralisation' in Cohen-Stuart's formulation was a misnomer as far as political autonomy is concerned. Some local devolution of power was contemplated by the new policy. It would include some transfer of power from the Netherlands to Batavia and, symbolically, to new regional councils dominated by European electors. Both initiatives were a response to European colonial demands for more adequate representation. Only later, in 1918, was the *Volksraad* (an advisory council for the Governor-General) established on highly restrictive principles to reflect something of the rhetoric of this period. For Cohen-Stuart, 'decentralisation' was not so much a change of policy towards a recognition of indigenous autonomy as it was a refinement of the nineteenth-century practice of leaving native states to rule themselves. The difference being that now the colonial government would exercise its moral responsibility in more closely supervising and determining the principles of local government. The 'indigenisation' of the civil service was essential, he argued, in order to finance the expansion of the administration because the native official 'will be paid at a lower rate based on the lower standard of living of the people'. Colonial expansion required indigenisation so that European personnel could be spread more thinly across a greater area. In this way it was argued, 'we can restrict ourselves as much as possible to a supervisory role and leave the task of governing wherever possible to the natives themselves'. Indigenisation in this context represented a more refined division of administrative labour and made the administration of an expanded colonial empire feasible.

The expansion of native education, in practice, was not to encompass the more idealist vision which some of the *ethici* had. Here the choice was between two limited concepts, the limited expansion of high level education for an indigenous elite providing access to European culture (a position held by the director of education, Abendanon and by Snouck Hurgronje for instance) and the provision of universal basic Western education suggested by Cohen-Stuart and as implemented by Governor-General, General van Heutz, the military strategist and civil administrator of the new colonial policy.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> J.W.T. Cohen-Stuart, '*Oprichting van Inlandsche Rechtscholen*' [The Establishment of Native Law Schools], *De Indische Gids* (1907) 1332-1333.

<sup>33</sup> Van Deventer, the advocate of ethical policies in the Dutch parliament stated in a 1902 article '*Indie en de Democratie*' [The Indies and Democracy] that the ordinary people did not need (Western) education. Socialist advocate of a welfare-ist colonial policy, Henry van Kol, argued that any education provided to the Indonesian masses should be practical, an argument also used by progressive educationists in Europe and Australia in reference to the working classes.

## Implementing a Colonial Policy in Central Sulawesi

The Netherlands' 'moral obligation' in Central Sulawesi began with a series of military assaults on the states and population of the area culminating in the 'pacification' of the state of Mori in 1907. In 1905 the Poso region witnessed a relatively 'uneventful' sweep of Dutch forces (largely troops from nearby North Sulawesi and Ambon) southwards from the Gulf of Tomini coast as part of a co-ordinated military campaign through mainland Sulawesi. In the south, a larger Dutch force 'pacified' the kingdoms of Gowa and Luwu. The Dutch version of Pax Romana of which Van Heutz, the 'conqueror of Aceh' was the architect, demanded an extensive military campaign before the foundations of a reorganised administrative structure could be laid. The blessings of Dutch civilisation were unavailable to the inhabitants of the formerly uncolonised areas of the Outer Islands without such intervention. In Sulawesi, as elsewhere, this meant the subjugation of those indigenous states capable of organising an effective resistance and more generally, the destruction of as much of the traditional culture, *adat*, as would hinder the implementation of the new order.<sup>34</sup> In as far as a semblance of 'native state' was maintained, their rulers were obliged to sign contracts which were designed to 'safeguard for us an almost unlimited influence'.

The initial and uneventful military sweep through the Poso region, where missionary activity had to some extent 'prepared the way', needed to be followed almost immediately by a second campaign when, in response to the announcement of the region's military commander that the new colonial subjects were now liable to *herendiensten* (compulsory labour) and the payment of taxes (a per household annual tax of two and a half guilders to be paid in cash), a large section of the region revolted. Peace was finally restored, but at the cost of thirty-eight native lives and fifty wounded.

The immediate task facing the colonial administration in Central Sulawesi was the establishment of an indigenous administration and the development of a viable economic base. A suitable native administration was a prerequisite for legalising and facilitating the downward-flow of colonial directives to the village level. The traditional clan and village decision-making processes were not sufficiently defined, in this essentially nonhierarchical society, for this purpose. Furthermore, the impracticability of recognising the legal existence of fifteen separate clan territories forced the administration to

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<sup>34</sup> This attitude was expressed by missionary and amateur ethnologist Albert Kruyt in an influential article entitled 'The Influence of Western Civilisation on the Inhabitants of Poso' in: B.J. Schrieke ed., *The Effect of Western Influence on Native Civilisation in the Malay Archipelago* (Batavia 1929). Kruyt was an adviser and participant in the process of subjugation and later colonisation although with the change in policy direction after 1915 he was severely critical of government policy towards the Christian mission. He was given an honorary degree for his ethnographical work in recognition of his voluminous writing on the people and culture of this region. For a complete bibliography see J. Cote, 'The Colonisation and Schooling of the To Pamona'.

rationalise the situation, in terms of population density, with the creation of two 'states'. An indigenous hierarchy was formalised consisting of districts chiefs (*mokole bangke*) and village chiefs (*mokole lipu*). The former became nominal autonomous rulers while the latter became the village mouthpiece of colonial directives. In this way, the appearance of 'native control over native affairs' was maintained. The minutiae of the detail of European regulations ensured that power was effectively retained in paternalistic European hands. The politically naive notion of a self-governing federation suggested by Engelenberg was not and could not be tolerated in a colonial context, yet the rhetoric of autonomy on which the moral mission was predicated continued.<sup>35</sup>

With peace and authority established in 1906, a series of edicts, duly translated and communicated by the missionaries, were issued ordering the relocation and unification of villages, abolition of slavery, head-hunting and witch trials, and the adoption of wet-rice (sawah) rice cultivation. The missionary Albert Kruyt, who acted as adviser to the local administration, provided the initiative with both the policy direction and rationale. Arguing in terms readily comprehensible to the colonial government, Kruyt outlined the conditions of indigenous society which worked against economic progress. The key to the lack of development in the region was its low level of population. This was the result of slavery which discouraged child bearing and a child mortality rate of between twenty-two per cent and fifty-seven per cent due to the 'irresponsibility and ignorance' of parents, compounded by features of traditional architecture and family life. Furthermore, traditional agricultural methods promoted the use of temporary dwellings in the fields unsuited to child rearing and the labour intensity of such methods exacerbated the difficulties of child-bearing.<sup>36</sup>

At the same time, long absences of head-hunting expeditions and the collecting of forest products in exchange for decorative articles on the coast, affected male stamina and, it was suggested, added to the insecurity of marriage and the reluctance of women to accept the responsibility of having more children. Impotence, as a result of 'unbridled sexual activity' and the absence of taboos on pre- and extra-marital relations, further contributed to a net decline in population growth according to this missionary and amateur ethnologist. It was population scarcity that created the oversupply of land which in turn deprived the Pamona people of any stimulus to improve their agricultural methods. Religious practices such as funeral feasts to honour the departed and the communalistic nature of society prevented the development of indigenous commercial life, because (other than for ceremonial occasions) there was no impetus for capital accumulation.

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<sup>35</sup> Evidence the discussion of H. Colijn in his '*Nota van de Regeering van het Bestuur enz. in de Afdeeling Midden Celebes*', 22 April 1906 [Comments on the administration of the government of the province of Central Celebes], Kruyt Archive.

<sup>36</sup> Kruyt's views were reproduced in detail in '*Gegevens voor het Bevolkingsvraagstuk van een Gedeelte van Midden Celebes*' [Evidence Relating to the Population Question in a Part of Central Celebes], *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Aardrijkskundig Genootschap* 20 (1903) 190-205. It is fairly evident that this publication in a leading academic journal was designed to influence government policy in the area.

The colonial government policies, which were effected on the basis of such an assessment of traditional society and economy, destroyed the external manifestations of traditional Pamona culture within a decade.<sup>37</sup> The extinction of almost the entire formal cultural life of the To Pamona was achieved by the prohibition of head-hunting, the restriction on ceremonial feasting and the introduction of taxation, none of which raised a protest among the Dutch electorate. Funeral ceremonies, the high point of Pamona cultural life, were held after the annual harvest of *ladang* (dry field) crops such as maize and rice cassava. This was the period when the taboo on story telling, poetry recitation, jokes and riddles was lifted since such activities invoking the magic of the word could no longer offend the spirits thus ensuring the success of the harvest. It was at these periods that the rich heritage of the Pamona oral tradition was given full voice. This was when young men and women were initiated into adult society and partners were selected.

According to the Dutch, this was a period when 'the Torajan was busy doing nothing' and when so much of the harvest and accumulated wealth in the form of buffalo and decorative finery was 'squandered'. With the introduction of taxation, this quiet period in the agricultural cycle had to be used to gather or manufacture goods for sale to collect cash to pay the per family tax. One missionary stated in his annual report to the church congregations at home which supported him:

Many taxpayers will smile when I assert that the payment of taxes works excellently. Previously the Torajan did nothing for several months after the harvest [...] Now after the harvest many go to the forest to cut rattan in order to sell it on the coast. Many go to weed coconut plantations owned by the coastal inhabitants [for money]. In this way the Torajan is coming to life; he pays his taxes and then has something left over to buy a jacket or a pair of trousers.<sup>38</sup>

Besides, with the banning of expeditions for the collection of ceremonial scalps (the basis of so-called head-hunting), and the strict limitation on the elaborateness of and expenditure on funeral ceremonies and the curtailment of the traditional post-harvest festive period with the introduction of sawah cultivation, the period lost its symbolic significance.

The new villages created by the colonial government were to be located along the route of the new roads in order to facilitate the supply of labour for road construction and more effectively control the population. The government favoured the establishment of large villages as more viable economic units which would ultimately profit from the existence of the roads to transport marketable produce. Finally, forced labour on roads

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<sup>37</sup> According to W. Kaudern, a Swedish ethnologist who visited the area a decade later. W. Kaudern, *Ethnological Studies in Celebes: Results of the Author's Expedition to Celebes, 1917-1920 I* (Göteborg 1925) 31-53.

<sup>38</sup> Ph.H.C. Hofman, 'De Zending in Poso Gedurende 1906' [Mission Work in Poso for the Year 1906], *Mededelingen vanwege het Nederlandsch Zendelinggenootschap* 51 (1907) 345.

and the construction of new villages with the subsequent introduction of different building skills and awareness of European hygiene and ideals such as the 'discipline of hard work', were seen as educative in themselves. At the same time, the colonial administration sought to establish a new economic base for the Central Sulawesi economy. The creation of a road network could stimulate trade. The establishment of large villages, while more efficient to administer, also generated greater efficiency in production because of the availability of a large labour force and the establishment of more consumers. School subsidies (paid to mission schools) could be more effectively employed in larger population centres. Individual family dwellings not only simplified the task of census-taking and tax collection, but were also conducive to more hygienic and more morally appropriate conditions for family life. This in turn could stimulate the forming of large families and the promotion of the concept of private ownership. In general terms, the Dutch implicitly believed that by regulating Pamona village life, they could stimulate economic growth and, at the same time, dismantle what were regarded as the negative influences of traditional culture.

The resettlement program was accompanied by another major innovation, namely the introduction of wet-rice cultivation (sawah). Knowledge of sawah cultivation was limited in this region, and traditionally, it had only been practised by the mountain people in the north-west and the Toraja of South Sulawesi. Sawah cultivation was considered by the colonial government as a more productive farming method than dry rice cultivation (*ladang*) in terms of both the efficient use of labour and land resources and the greater potential for surplus production. In addition, the new circumstances of large villages with the concomitant obligation to maintain these in good order, the need for a regular supply of compulsory labour and the attendance at school of the children demanded the existence in close proximity to the enlarged village of an efficient and sedentary food production area. The semi-nomadic life inherent in traditional slash and burn, dry rice cultivation could not be equated with the new permanent village life-style. Farming techniques also formed a 'reservoir of object lessons' and became the basis of the educational impact of colonisation in this area. It imposed a sedentary life-style, which, it was believed, would promote economic efficiency. It habituated the people to regimentation and order unlike the dry rice fields, which, according to the missionary, encouraged the characteristic of 'doing everything as they please whenever they think fit'.<sup>39</sup> In fact, 'what the school is for the young, the wet rice fields became for the adults'.<sup>39</sup> Sawah cultivation encouraged the formation of desirable attitudes as well as providing schooling in applied mathematics and mental arithmetic. The knowledge obtained from the construction of sawah fields taught the villagers how to calculate the extent of the road for which each was responsible during the *herendiensten*. Long-term cultivation of a particular plot, which was impossible in traditional farming methods, helped develop the

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<sup>39</sup> This discussion of the consequences of the introduction of sawah cultivation is based on a critical reading of Kruyt's article '*De Betekenis van de Natte Rijstbouw voor de Possoers*' [The Significance of Wet Rice Cultivation for the People of Poso], *Koloniale Studien* 8 (1924) 31-53.

notion of private property.

More importantly perhaps than this stimulus to rational behaviour was the impact that new agricultural methods had on religious beliefs. All the rituals traditionally related to the growing of the staple life-giving food had to be abandoned in this new style of farming. Its enforcement was seen by the Pamona as an attack on their very existence and culture. The new methods spurned the commands of the rice spirits, and the traditions of the ancestors. In their place the Europeans sought to introduce the mainstays of their own culture, individualism and acquisitiveness. The introduction of sawah cultivation was only made possible by the threat and force of a military presence and the gentle persuasion of missionaries. Even more than the forced labour regulations, it occasioned the humiliation, punishment and dismissal of village chiefs whose responsibility was now to ensure that their erstwhile equals carried out the letter and the spirit of sawah regulations. According to the diary of the aspirant *controleur* Gobee, it took all the concentration of the Dutch and the Dutch-appointed native officials (commonly from the North Sulawesi region of Minahassa) to force this reform on the reluctant Pamona. The junior and inexperienced Gobee, who later became colonial adviser for native affairs, was rebuked for his sensitivity when he expressed some doubt regarding the methods he was asked to adopt in implementing the program. It was clear to more experienced administrators that there was no room in this task for false sentimentality. Engelenberg himself was severely criticised for 'flying the ethical flag' by H. Colijn, the Governor-General's trouble-shooter and commissioner for decentralisation in the Outer Islands. Colijn, who later became minister of colonies and a major critic of 'ethical' policy along with Engelenberg's subordinate, Mazee, described his superior's views disparagingly as 'ethical' and 'self-seeking'.<sup>40</sup>

The illusion of self-government was coupled with the reality of self-funding. The viability of an extended colonial apparatus depended upon the financial self-sufficiency of each region which in turn necessitated the training of the indigenous population in skills and attitudes required to develop the financial and intellectual resources needed. It required a sense of individual responsibility and initiative which according to the local administrator, Mazee, the people did not yet possess. In the view of Colijn, this was because of the fact that the country was 'so backward in its political development'.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, the myth of self-government became the spur for exacting a heavy financial and psychological commitment to colonisation.

In a report to the Governor-General on proposals to order the financial relationship between the so-called autonomous states represented by the assistant resident and the colonial treasury, Colijn laid out the financial principles upon which the new colonial

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<sup>40</sup> Colijn's comment is in his '*Nota van de Regeerings Commissaris voor Decentralisatie*', 12 September 1907 [Memorandum by the Commissioner for Decentralisation]. The local administrator expressed his remarks directly to missionary Kruyt in an undated note of 1908.

<sup>41</sup> H. Colijn, *De Organisatie van het Bestuur enz. in de Afdeeling Midden Celebes*, 23 April 1906, Kruyt Archive.



policy was to be based.<sup>42</sup> The issue for Colijn was to successfully balance the demands on the colonial treasury for restitution of expenses incurred by the colonial government in Central Celebes and its need for this region to contribute to the public purse on the one hand, with the financial needs of the area itself on the other. The significance of the report lies in the fact that it defined the long term basis of Dutch colonialism as dependent on the taxation of greater indigenous productivity. This principle lay at the centre of the new colonial expansionist policy. By incorporating the Outer Islands, which were as yet largely unexplored or unexploited, it was hoped that a broader economic base would be provided for the administration of colonial authority, which, at the same time, would relieve some of the pressure on Java, the object of growing Dutch public concern in the Netherlands, and allow some contribution to its economic infrastructure. Java, even then, was the island of greatest population, but, more importantly, it was Java's culture which had attracted most scholarly attention and about which most was known.

Turning specifically to Central Celebes, Colijn pointed to its size, half that of Java, as making it potentially economically viable in terms of his broad financial principles. The lack of a dense population needed to be countered by a larger geographical area to guarantee a sufficiently large tax-paying population. The economics of administration also suggested a reduction in the number of senior European personnel and a greater dependence on poorly paid indigenous and low level European officials working in the field, as Cohen-Stuart had suggested. Decentralisation was to be more economically based, rather than direct colonial rule as before. At the same time, closer European supervision remained essential to ensure financial viability. Colijn provocatively cited Aceh as an example where, excluding centrally funded military expenditure, a local surplus of more than half a million guilders was already recorded and where, with the further extension of a taxation regime, a surplus of one million guilders could be expected in the near future. The issue was to ensure that 'the expansion of our authority did not lead to the exhaustion of our financial strength'.

Assuming the legalism of an autonomous native state which the Dutch military had created in 1906, a principle of financial accounting could now be invoked based on the principles he had elaborated. On the basis of the contract that such rulers had signed, the colonial government claimed that 'the autonomous ruler has given us the right, among other things, to regulate his state's finances in his and our interests'. On this basis, those services which were inherently the responsibility of the central colonial government, such as the provision of European personnel for administration, taxation and post and telegraph, were to be financed by the colonial treasury. The remaining service, including provision of an indigenous administration, all costs and services related to the improvement of the material welfare of the population and the provision of health and education services, were the responsibility of the self-governments via the regional treasury under the control

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<sup>42</sup> This was the nature of the 1906 memorandum. The 1907 memorandum (see note 40) was aimed at further refining the principles developed in the 1906 working paper. The details and principles of these two documents are discussed in the following section of this paper.

of the (European) assistant-resident. Moreover, the regional treasury was then required to compensate the central government in full for the expenditure it had incurred in the region. In addition, the region had to make a contribution to the general administrative costs of the colony as a whole. On this basis, with an annual head of family tax of an estimated five per cent of income, the region would in 1907 raise 250,000 guilders of which the central government would receive half. While this would not enable the region to make a significant contribution to general revenue, it would, he believed, refund central government expenditure in the region and the situation would be a distinct improvement on the 60,000 guilder deficit of the previous year due to the inefficiency and insufficiency of the administration at that time, in other words, Engelenberg's administration.

Colijn estimated a fixed annual expenditure of 67,000 guilders for the payment of the native administration and the provision of education and health services. He was particularly scathing when commenting on education which he believed should, on no account, serve the needs of the people. Like many of his contemporaries Colijn believed that too much education would lead to the production of a class of 'position hunters' which would dislocate the community and the economy at large. Local financing of education, he asserted, was 'the only guarantee to permanently end the irritating exaggeration of expenditure on education which occurred in the Minahassa [the largely Christian region of North Sulawesi]'. Twenty schools were to be provided at a rate of 500 guilders per school providing for one school per 12,500 population, 'a favourable ratio if one keeps in mind the average for the whole of the Indies'. Subtracting the cost of basic administration and welfare services from the estimated regional income of 250,000 guilders derived from general taxation plus a further 42,000 in additional revenue from export and tax on trade, and a further deduction of a 150,000 guilder contribution to Batavia, Colijn estimated that the region (i.e. the autonomous states) would have 75,000 guilders for expenditure on other programs. This he believed to be rather high but excused it on the grounds that a complete communications network had yet to be established in the region.

The principles enunciated by Colijn had the effect of restricting all government expenditure to the financial capacity of each region so that the entire 'ethical' program would be self-funded. The document crystallises the administrative ethos upon which the colonial expansionist policy of the early twentieth century was based. This was also the principle Van Heutz employed, for instance, for the funding of village schools in Java. It purported to be 'ethical' in its principles: expressing concern not merely with the provisions of those services essential to material welfare, good administration, education and health, but also in evolving an environment designed to train the indigenous population to accept the responsibilities of its membership of the Dutch East Indies colony and to raise the population's standard of living in the best interests of both the region and the state. Colonialism was to be funded by the subjected population and, moreover, all this sacrifice on their part was not only seen as being materially beneficial, but also educationally to their advantage.

## Conclusion

In this case study of the new colonial policy it emerges that what were initially idealistic expressions of humanitarian zeal springing from a belief in a moral and cultural superiority, were quickly submerged in principles of administrative efficiency and financial profit. If, as many have indicated, the rhetoric of autonomy became transmuted into the independence demands of a generation of Indonesian nationalists raised in the education systems which originated at this time, this had little to do with the intentions of the colonial administrators or with the Dutch intellectuals who elaborated such 'ethical' views. Fundamental to both the rhetoric of the orientalist and the policy of the colonial practitioners was an expression of Dutch nationalism based on belief in the moral (and later racial) superiority of European political, economic and cultural formations. It is in response to such assertions of nationalist claims that Indonesians, with a consciousness of the modern, lay claim to their own autonomy and emancipation. At the same time, as post-colonialist writers such as Partha Chatterjee have pointed out, there is a significant degree of interaction and transfusion between the colonial and post-colonial state and its architects.<sup>43</sup> It was the modern colonial state which Hendrikus Colijn was instrumental in shaping at the expense of A.J.M. Engelenberg's vision of a federation of autonomous states, which formed the parameters of nationalist aspirations and the perimeters of the independent state of Indonesia. And, as Robert Cribb has suggested, it was the centrally directed policy of economic development which made the modern colonial state so important to pre-war international capitalism, which governed the last three decades of Indonesian government policy.

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<sup>43</sup> P. Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (1986). Chatterjee here is concerned to show the derivative nature of Indian nationalist discourse and his argument can to an extent be applied to the Indonesian nationalist movement.