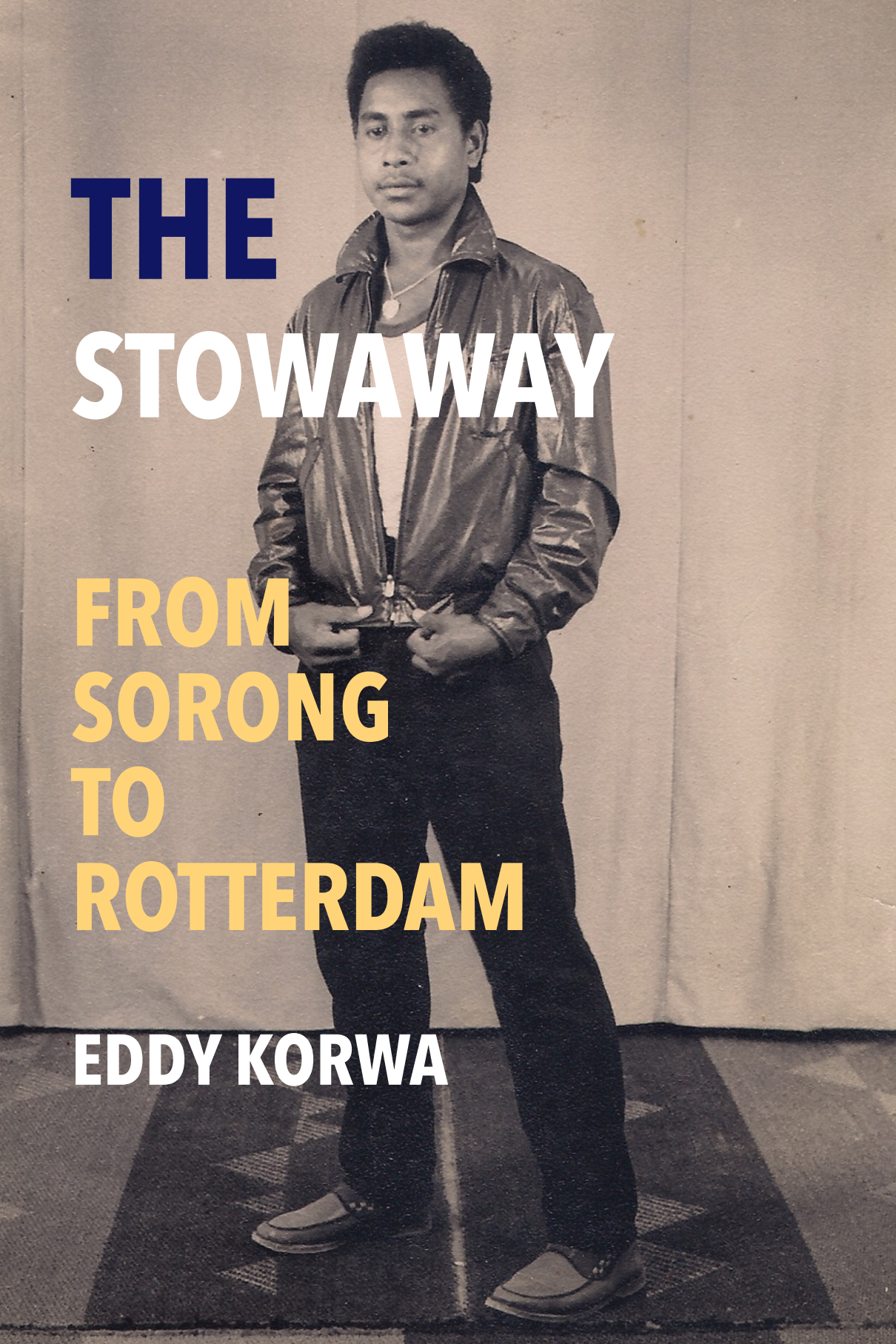


THE STOWAWAY

FROM SORONG TO ROTTERDAM

EDDY KORWA

THE STOWAWAY

FROM SORONG TO ROTTERDAM

EDDY KORWA

The Stowaway, from Sorong to Rotterdam, is the English translation of 'De verstekeling–van Sorong naar Rotterdam' by Eddy Korwa and co-writer Endie van Binsbergen, published in 2020 by Free East Timor Foundation in the Netherlands.

The English translation was published in 2025 by the West Papua Women's Office in Docklands (Australia) in association with the Free East Timor Foundation (The Netherlands).

West Papua Office Women's Office
211/838 Collins St, Docklands 3008 (AUS)
frwpwomensoffice@gmail.com

Stichting Vrij Oost Timor
Free East Timor Foundation (NL)
info@VrijOostTimor.nl

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF

'De verstekeling–van Sorong naar Rotterdam' by Eddy Korwa

Published in 2020 by Free East Timor Foundation, The Netherlands

ISBN 978-1-7642049-0-3

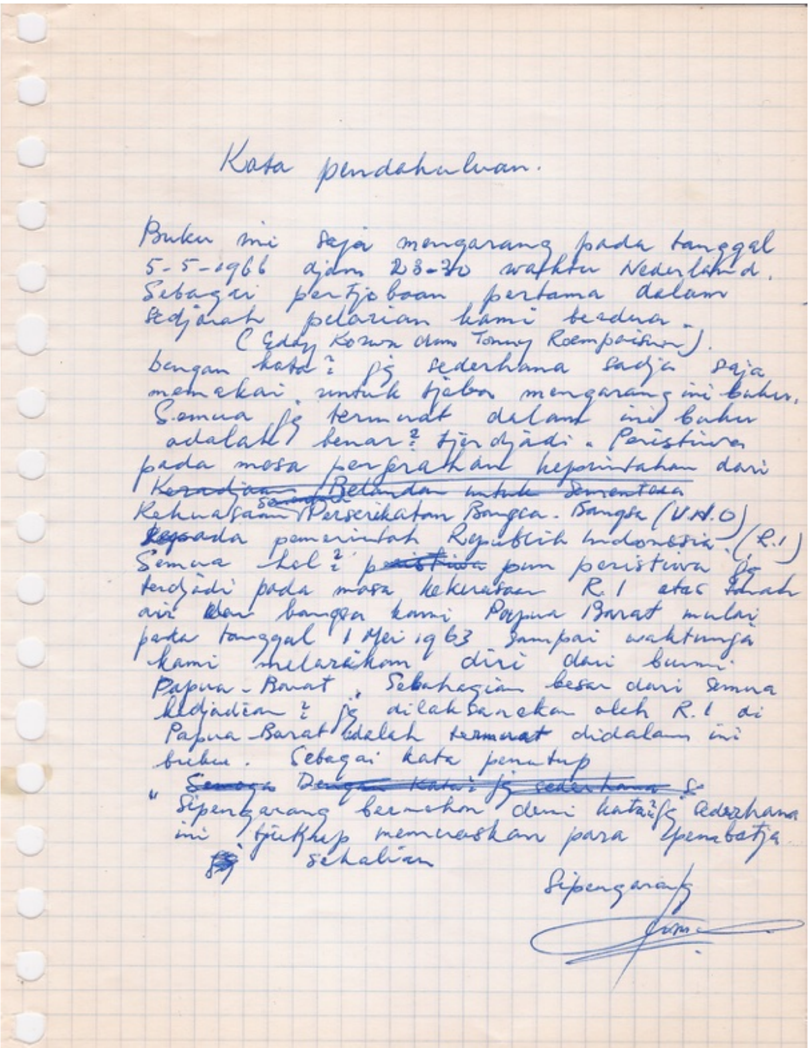
PRINT EXPRESS
Chapel Street, Prahran
(Melbourne, Australia)

The West Papua Women's Office in Docklands is honoured to publish this English translation of Eddy Korwa's moving memoir of history, love, family, politics and realpolitik, music, soccer, tragedy, solidarity and betrayal.

The book is important because Eddy was a protegee of the development in his homeland between 1950 and 1962 when West Papua was a UN Non-Self-Governing Territory (NSGT) administered by The Netherlands. In law, a NSGT change its status via an exercise of self-determination (referendum) where the people choose to be an independent state, or in free association with another state, or integrated with another state. There has never been an act of self-determination in West Papua.

It has been great working with Eddy's co-writer Endie van Binsbergen, an experienced Dutch activist who has worked for years on decolonization issues in East Timor and Indonesia. In 1999 Endie was an official observer of the referendum in East Timor where she met Jacob Rumbiak, who like Eddy, is from Biak Island in West Papua. Jacob had escaped from prison in Jakarta to observe the tiny nation's very bloody liberation moment, and to report to Xanana Gusmão, another political prisoner of the Indonesian state.

Endie van Binsbergen and Jacob Rumbiak after the referendum in East Timor (Baucau Airport, 7 September 1999).



Kata pendahuluan.

Buku ini saja mengarang pada tanggal 5-5-1966 djam 23-30 waktu Nederland. Sebagai pertjobaan pertama dalam sedjarah pelarian kami berdua. (Eddy Korwa dan Tonny Roempaisum).

Dengan kata² jg sederhana sadja saja memakai untuk tjoba mengarang ini buku. Semua jg termuat dalam ini buku adalah benar² terdjadi. Peristiwa pada masa penjerahan kepemerintahan dari ~~Keradjaan~~ Belanda ~~untuk Sementara~~ ~~Sementara~~ Kekuasaan Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa (U.N.O) kepada pemerintah Republik Indonesia (R.I) Semua hal² ~~peristiwa~~ pun peristiwa jg terdjadi pada masa kekuasaan R.I atas tanah air dan bangsa kami Papua Barat mulai pada tanggal 1 Mei 1963 sampai waktunja kami melarikan diri dari bumi Papua-Barat. Sebahagian besar dari semua kedjadian² jg dilaksanakan oleh R.I di Papua-Barat adalah termuat didalam ini buku. Sebagai kata penutup

~~Semoga Dengan kata² jg sederhana~~

" Sipengarang berharap demi kata² jg sederhana ini tjukup memuaskan para pembatja sekalian

Sipengarang

Eddy's original foreword, written in 1966, two years after he left West Papua and docked in The Netherlands.

My name is Eddy Korwa and I am Papuan. In 1964 I left my country for political reasons, and fled as a stowaway on board a Dutch freighter. Shortly after I arrived in Rotterdam, I thought I should write down my story about the boat trip. That did not happen because I had my head and hands full with my new existence as a foreigner in the Netherlands.

Almost two years later the idea came to me again to start writing. I wanted to write a book, but not just about the crossing. I wanted to write about how the Papuans were abandoned, how our country was handed to Indonesia without any say from its own population. At that time I didn't get much further than the title 'Fleeing as a stowaway' and a foreword:

> I started this book on May 5, 1966, at 23:30 Dutch time, to write about me and Tony Rumpaisum's flight from our homeland. Everything written in this book is true: the events during the United Nations transfer of my country to the Republic of Indonesia, all the events after that transfer on 1 May 1963 until the day we escaped, and what Indonesia has done since to the Papuan people and our country.

In January 2013 I picked up the thread of writing again, and you now have the result in your hands. May my book contribute to an increased awareness of the Papuans' history, and enliven our tradition of passing on stories within the Papuan community.

Eddy Korwa, 2020

I dedicate this book to my parents who gave me life, to my friend Leo who saved my life, to my wife Fransien who gave meaning to my life, to our children who filled my life with love, to our grandchildren who filled my life with joy, and in particular to my warrior son Jofrey who encouraged me to write this book and who lost his life so early.

CONTENTS

1 When everything was still good 1

2 When things went bad 15

3 Stowaway 29

4 Exodus 41

5 Stranger in the Netherlands 57

6 True colours 71

7 Sien 87

8 Papuans in Nieuwegein 99

9 Papuans crossing borders 113

10 Leo 137

11 Stranger in Papua 147

Afterword 167

1

when everything was still good

When everything was still good

On the island of Awai, off the coast of Biak city in what was then Dutch New Guinea, I was born on the 5th of August 1940, the second child of the village school teacher Hein Korwa and his wife Paulina Warikar. They gave me the names Adk Auleman Korwa, but Reverend Baransano made a spelling mistake, and my birth certificate reads Adi instead of Adk. My parents had eight children. Three died as babies, so I grew up with two sisters and two brothers: Helena, Lauce, Janaman, and Jafeth.

My father Hein (1911-1975)

My mother Paulina (1909-1971)

World War Two ended in New Guinea in 1945 after the Japanese were defeated by an alliance of American, Australian, New Zealand, and Dutch soldiers under the command of the American general Douglas MacArthur. The administration was returned to the Dutch under a new name, the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA). This was a government in military uniform to further develop the Papua region. A monument was erected for MacArthur in Sentani (in what is now the Ifar Gunung Marine Barracks). Another monument was erected near the harbour in Hollandia to commemorate the landing of the American troops on Hamadi Beach. Both monuments are still a tourist attraction.

In 1946, as NICA gradually transitioned to regular daily governance, with Dutch officials in all positions, celebrating Queen Wilhelmina's

birthday was introduced. This was new, as the birthdays of the Dutch royal family were not usually celebrated in New Guinea. Schools and associations made it a point of honour to be first to wake up the family of the Hoofd Plaatselijk Bestuur/HPB (Head of Local Administration) on the Queen's birthday. Groups of school children would go to the HPB grounds early in colourful dance clothes, armed with orange streamers, flags, decorated palm leaves, tifa drums, and bamboo flutes. The first group to arrive was allowed onto the grounds to wake up the HPB. Latecomers had to stay outside the gate. On the grounds we had to be silent until we reached the house, and then we would burst out shouting. The guards played along and would come running outside. Our noise continued until the HPB and his family appeared on the veranda to wave. Then the gate would open and all the other groups would come in. Only the winning group received a prize, which usually consisted of a Dutch flag, a photo of the queen, and lots of sweets to share.

I didn't start school until I was nine, and went straight into the third grade at the village school on the small island of Mbromsi, one of the Padaido Islands near Biak Island. As the children of the teacher, we were allowed to do almost everything. My father assigned older children to look after us, so we were free to play and ensured of getting home safely.

After village school, I was sent to Biak City with my friends Mesak Roembiak and Onesimus Wakum to take the entrance exam for the General Elementary School (Algemeen Lagere School) in Sorido. This school had just been built. The founder was Mr. Berend Soer, an ex-navy man from the Twente region in the Eastern Netherlands. Children from all over Biak attended, but we three were among the very first students. Children who had the same birthday as a member of the Dutch royal family, would receive gifts from the Orange Association in the Netherlands. As I shared my birthday with Princess Irene, I received gifts every year, such as pens, notebooks, flags, candy... all in orange.

In Sorido I lived with the Parairawai family, along with my school friends Bas Rumainum and Jantje Mofu. Instead of paying board we helped Aunt Rika with chores around the house. We shared the chores with three girls, Wilhelmina Rumainum, Mathilda Rumkorem, and Agu Ap. Uncle and Aunt Parairawai only had one son, Martin Luther. He was a real tough guy, with hair and clothes like Elvis Presley. His mother spoiled him, and he was the only person in Biak with a motorcycle. One day when I was in the third grade, Mr. Soer brought in postcards from boys and girls in the Netherlands. Their names and addresses were written on the back so that we could correspond with them. I received a

Third Grade, 18 September 1952. left-the founder of the school Mr Berenda Soer; right-Moluccan assistant teacher Mr Tenglima. I am in the back row (3rd from left) with my friends Mesag Roembiak (far left) and Josias Lewakabessy (7th from right). Johanna Beda is in the middle (6th from left). Sien and I visited her in Biak in 2016. The building is still there and still serves as a primary school. This photo was taken by the school photographer Jaap Zindler.

card from a boy named Leo Franciscus Flake from Enschede, and he became my pen pal. Leo wrote about the winter and the snow in the Netherlands. I wrote back that we could swim all year round but also had 'eternal snow' on the mountain tops. We also wrote about our dreams for the future. I remember I once wrote "If I ever come to the Netherlands, I will visit you." A few years later, after I went to Hollandia (now Jayapura), we stopped corresponding. I began my future and left my childhood behind, along with the stories that I had shared with Leo.

WORKING AS A CIVIL ENGINEER

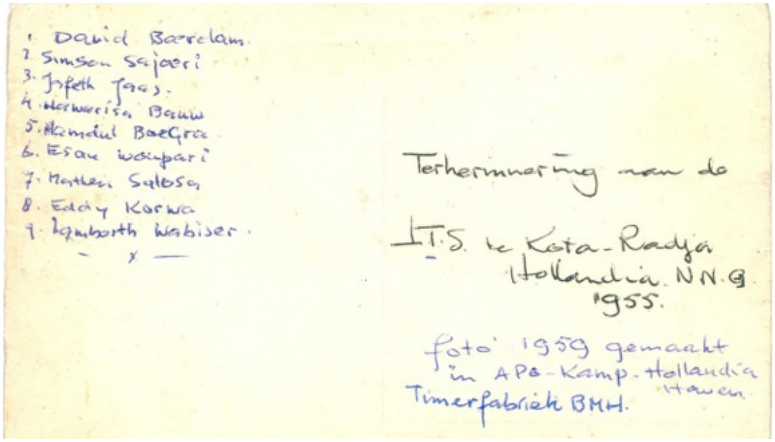
In 1955, after finishing primary school, Mesak Roembiak and I were admitted to the Lower Technical School (LTS Kota Radja) in Hollandia, while Onesimus Wakum went to Serui for training as a village teacher. The LTS was in a huge complex that had a large stone gate and a huge sign 'Lagere Technische School'. The American army was stationed in the complex when they were defending their interests in the Pacific during World War Two. After the Americans left, the entire complex was used for education. The LTS building was at the front, then there

was a football field, and behind that the central kitchen. The Civil Engineering and Metalworking workshops were next to the kitchen. Between the kitchen and the workshops there was a large generator that supplied the entire complex with electricity. Teachers from the mountains installed a water supply. The PMS (a lower secondary school for girls) was behind those structures. We used to tease the PMS students as 'guests' because their school had no sign. Both the LTS and the PMS had their own boarding houses where the Papuan students and Moluccan boys lived. Reverend Kamma and all the other Dutch teacher also lived on the premises. Everything we needed was available on-site, except cigarettes and lemonade (for those we had to walk half an hour to the city).

The director of the LTS was a Dutchman, Mr. Heijnes, who was also a teacher in the Civil Engineering department. I liked him a lot. He was strict but an excellent teacher who explained everything you asked him. I learned a lot from him. The other teachers were Mr Bakker and Mr Van Gennip from Metalworking, and Mr Hofstra for general subjects like arithmetic, geography, history. Mr Heijnes had two children, Sjoerd and Trix. They were the only white children in the complex. When they wandered off, I and my friends, Herman Wambrauw and Stef Ondowavo, would return them to their mother. After this happened several times, we became trusted friends, and when Mr and Mrs Heijnes went to the city, they would call us to babysit. We usually played football with the children, or jump rope, with us older boys turning the rope. I had a great time at the LTS, and especially enjoyed carpentry. After two years of training, I received my diploma in 1957.

I was looking forward to working, and joined the BMH carpentry factory (Bouwmaatschappij Hollandia/Hollandia Construction Company) which was a subsidiary of Bredero Nederland. BMH assigned Roel Scheerhoorn, a professional carpenter, to mentor me. Roel and I didn't just work inside the factory, we also did construction tasks outside. A year after I started work, BMH was commissioned to build the Central Hospital in Dok 2 near Hollandia. The 'Rumah Sakit Pusat' was a very modern hospital, possibly the best in the Pacific at the time. It still stands, but has been neglected. The director, Dr. Professor De Vries, was a surgeon, and had two assistants, Mandosir and Rumaseb, who he taught so much that they were both capable of performing minor surgeries on their own. In those days, this was possible without a diploma. Nowadays, all surgeons have diplomas, but would they be better than Mandosir and Rumaseb? Those two men saved many lives!

In memory of the L.T.S Kota Radja, Hollandia. In 1959 at the APA Camp Hollandia Harbour Carpentry Factory BMH (details below).



After the hospital was built I assisted Roel build the palace for Governor Platteel in Dok 5. During breaks on the construction site, Nel Kaisiëpo, my young cousin, always brought us coffee and lunch. Nel was the daughter of Marcus Kaisiëpo, the future chairman of the New Guinea Council. Whenever Nel arrived, the Dutch construction workers would complaining about having to bring their own coffee. She always responded with a smile, but never with a cup of coffee. The building looks the same now as it did then, and Indonesia still uses it to house their governors. It's called Istana Gubernor.

Roel was my supervisor, but also a good friend, and while we were

building Mrs. Platteel's office, he had a great idea to seal our friendship. We made the door of the office hollow, from two plywood sheets joined with a frame. Roel wrote on the inside of a ply sheet with a thick marker pen "This room was built by Roel Scheerhoorn and Eddy Korwa". We added our signatures and date, then attached the framework and cover.

Outside work, Roel and I spent a lot of time together. I often visited him at his home on the BMH grounds, where there were several blocks of houses for the employees and a central kitchen. We would have a beer in the canteen, or go to the cinema in the barracks. Sometimes we took a taxi to Base G beach for a swim. I remember he had a piggy bank made from a black Pelco van Nelle coffee can and regularly put guilders in it through a slot. You couldn't take any money out because he had soldered the lid. One day, I asked why he had sealed the lid so thoroughly. He told me he was saving the money for his son.

Nederlands Nieuw Guinea 5 gulden note, 1950s.

MARITIME

I enjoyed music, learned to play ukulele, loved showing off my jive moves at parties, and was nicknamed Eddy the Rock. My favourite singer was Engelbert Humperdinck.

In 1949 the Netherlands left the Dutch East Indies but for several reasons kept control of New Guinea. Naturally, the Dutch wanted to retain influence in the region, but they also had something to prove. The Netherlands wanted to demonstrate that it had not failed as a colonial power; that it had focused on developing the Papuans and was preparing them for self-governance. Late in 1959 it began preparing them for an independent state. Papuans were recruited from all the regions to join the Papua Volunteer Corps (PVK), which became a well-trained military unit. I knew a few of the young men who joined.

Education was important. Primary and secondary schools were provided information sessions; posters called young people to enrol in educational programs. Even Radio RONG (Radio Omroep Nieuw-Guinea/ Radio Broadcast New Guinea) encouraged boys and girls to further their education and ensure that all Papuans would contribute to the future of our free country. It was thanks to this campaign that I enrolled in the maritime school in May 1960. I loved sailing. I still do. Moreover, I liked the look of the navy uniform. I obtained my Common Seaman's Declaration in September 1960 after five months at maritime school.

Four friends in 1960: Jimmy Papari, my cousin Aser Korwa, Jimmy Tanawani and myself at the maritime school in Hamadi, Hollandia, NNG.

In the early 1960s many Dutch men and women were recalled to the Netherlands because the preparations for independence were causing political tension with Indonesia. This included my friend Roel. I visited him on his last evening in Hollandia with a heavy heart. I knew I would miss him greatly. I had learned so much from him, and he had become a dear friend. Before saying goodbye, he walked to the cupboard and took out the Pelco coffee can. Holding it with both hands he said "I couldn't give you anything expensive like clothes, but I want to give you this jar as a token of our friendship." With tears in my heart, I accepted the jar, unaware that there was something inside. In a tight embrace, Roel said "I hope everything goes well for you. When the world becomes a better place, I hope to see you in the Netherlands." I did meet Roel again, but I will tell you about that later.

With our lower maritime diploma, I and eleven other boys were transferred to Sorong. Six were assigned to Jefman Air Base meteorological service, including my friend Pitang from Merauke. The rest of us were assigned to the harbour master in Sorong. We flew from Hollandia to Sorong. I was twenty years old, and this was my first time flying. It was magnificent. From above I could see everything clearly. It was difficult not being able to go home during the stop in Biak, but my mother came to the airport to see me, with my brother Jafeth, sister Lauce, my Uncle Petrus Warikar and Aunt Martina, and my nephew and niece. During the short stopover, we had just enough time to take a quick photo.

With my family during the stopover in Biak enroute to Sorong in 1960.
(back, l-r) my uncle Petrus, my sister Lauce with our niece, and myself.
(front, l-r) my aunt Martina, my niece, my brother Jafeth, and my mother.

In Sorong I worked as a common seaman on police patrol boats and the MS Pharus Red Cross ship transporting doctors, nurses, and sometimes malaria control teams to remote villages in the Raja Ampat Islands. The malaria control teams sprayed houses with DDT, not yet knowing how poisonous the chemical was.

As I mentioned, political pressure from Indonesia was increasing. We faced parachute drops and infiltration attempts by boats. If villagers noticed anything suspicious, they reported it or worked with Dutch patrols to apprehend the infiltrators. It was very tense when we were deployed with the navy to patrol coastal areas. If there was a report from a village that the large navy boats couldn't reach, we had to transport the marines on smaller police boats. I experienced such actions a few times. The marines handcuffed and blindfolded the infiltrators. Once on board, we removed the blindfolds, but left the handcuffs on.

One day we took the marines to an island in the Raja Ampat after reports of twenty parachute infiltrators, and sailed back with ten arrestees on board. On the pier in Sorong, their handcuffs were loosened, and then they were ordered to remove their headgear. I was wondering why, until a shock of long hair fell out of one of the infiltrator's cap. She was a woman! I watched as she untied her bun and shook her long hair loose. The marines called their captain, who hurried over. "Okay, okay" he said, and without further comment, ordered the woman to be taken to the warship. Later I was told why the marines checked all the infiltrators' headgear. According to radio reports, Soekarno had promised five kilograms of gold to the first woman who parachuted into our territory, which he called Irian Barat. This female detainee spent some time in prison, but after the UN took over the administration, all the infiltrators were sent back to Indonesia. I've been told that this woman, Herlina, became very wealthy after Dutch New Guinea was handed over to Indonesia. Stories about her on Indonesian websites describe her as a heroine.

The Dutch marines strictly adhered to the laws of war, and only arrested and transported the infiltrators. Even when the prisoners became aggressive, the marines were not allowed to hit or kick them. It helped that the marines didn't understand Malay and the insults hurled at them. The marines were different to the police officers, who were mostly Papuan, and understood the curse words and were eager to take action. Some of them would have preferred to kill the intruders, but the Marines stopped them. If the Marines had not restrained them, I think many of those Indonesian infiltrators would have been killed.

THE NEW GUINEA COUNCIL

Despite the tension with Indonesia, work continued on the ten-year plan for our independence. Prime Minister De Quay's cabinet in the Netherlands wanted a Papuan form of self-government to be established

quickly. After village councils and regional councils were set up, the first political parties were founded. The largest were the Partai Nasional (PARNA), the Democratic People's Party (DVP), and the Partai Nasional Papua (NAPA). These parties were entirely controlled by Papuans, with the aim of representing the interests of all Papuans.

There were also a number of smaller political parties. A party was founded in Manokwari by the Indo-Dutch community who envisioned a new homeland in New Guinea. The Netherlands supported this idea because it didn't know what to with this population group. Papuans questioned the founding of a political party for the purpose of establishing an Indo-Dutch homeland as this whole process was about their self-determination, but in any case, this political party didn't attract many votes in the election.

In May 1960, the Dutch government took on twenty politically active Papuans as Advisers. I don't remember all their names, but the group included Marcus Kaisiëpo, Nicolaas Jouwe, Reverend Mori-Muzendi, Johan Ariks, Lodewijk Ayamiseba, Abdullah Arfan, Theo Messet. The only woman was Dorcas Tokoro-Hanasbei. In January 1961, there were free elections for the New Guinea Council. In other words we were allowed to vote for the representation of the Papuans. I voted for the Partai Nasional Papua.

Three months later, on 5 April 1961, the New Guinea Council was inaugurated by Governor Platteel. Of the 29 members, 16 were democratically elected. The other 13 were appointed by the Dutch government. The administration was under the Dutch government, which appointed a Dutchman, Sollewijn Gelpke, as chair. The two Vice-Chairs were prominent Papuans, Marcus Kaisiëpo and Nicolaas Jouwe.

I was sailing on the Red Cross ship with a medical team from the Sorong Hospital when we heard the inauguration was about to take place. We didn't have to work for the rest of the day, so we all sat in the wheelhouse of the MS Pharus, listening to the live broadcast on Radio RONG. We were quiet as many important people spoke. I remember hearing Queen Juliana speak. "Every person and every ethnicity are entitled to freedom and independence, and all are able to exercise this right if they so choose." Those words stirred a strange feeling in me, a mix of disbelief and pride. Is this real, or are they fooling us? If it was true, then we would finally be able to say "Here I am, standing on my own feet on my own land!"

Members of the New-Guinea Council.

I wish you good fortune and fulfilment with all Your labor for Your country and people.

There is joy in The Netherlands, as You now commence Your work. It is the first step on the road that leads to the exercise of the right to self-determination by Your people. May this road turn out not to be long.

Be Yourself. Stay Yourself, in the form that You will choose Yourself, such as Your own nature will inspire You.

The Netherlands feels, as You know, bonded in friendship and in good conscience to enable You and to guarantee that You will freely decide over Your own destiny. This is indeed our sole aim. As every person and every nation is entitled to freedom and independence, and all should be allowed to exercise this right, if they wish. It is the task of Your council, to now bring this decision near.

The Netherlands wishes to see Your people soon take a worthy and equal position in the community of the modern world and at the forum of the United Nations. The Netherlands also follows with sympathy the similar development that takes place at the eastern half of Your great island.

My very best wishes accompany Your responsible work, and Your major task now, and for the future.

The speech of Her Majesty the Queen, recorded on tape, and presented to the public in Hollandia on the 5th of April 1961.

The world was able to witness the Papuans on their way to self-governance as there were foreign media and delegations present. We didn't know that the American President Kennedy had declined the invitation. He probably didn't want to offend Soekarno, but it was a sign even then that Papuans could expect little support from the United States.

After the broadcast, celebrations could be heard all over the harbour. People were shouting and singing, cars were honking, ships in the harbour blew their deep horns. We wanted to disembark and our captain

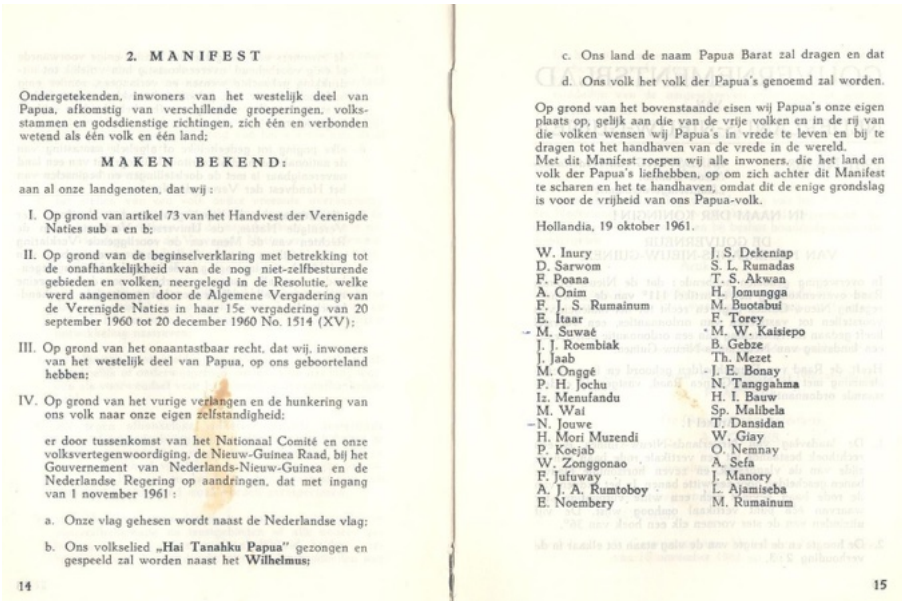
was all for it. "Go ahead boys" he exclaimed joyfully. "Go and celebrate, have the day off!" We sounded our ship's horn, and wasted no time getting ashore. Queen Juliana's speech left a deep impression on me but the next day I had to go back to work on the pilot boat, as if world history hadn't been made. However we remained confident, because developments were taking place which we followed on the radio and discussed.

We heard that after Prime Minister De Quay instructed the New Guinea Council to consider a design for a flag, a national anthem, and a national emblem for a future independent republic, the New Guinea Council set up a committee. During the Council's meeting on 19 October 1961, the committee—Bonay, Jouwe, Tanggahma, Torey—presented a manifesto which stated that from the 1 November 1961 our Papuan flag would fly alongside the Dutch flag, our own national anthem would be sung after the Dutch anthem, our country would be called Papua Barat, and our people would be known as Papuans. The manifesto was unanimously approved by Council members and signed.

I won't elaborate on how the flag and emblem came about because I assume that all Papuans know, or should know. But for readers less familiar with our history: from three designs the Council accepted Nicolaas Jouwe's proposal that the Morning Star become our flag and the Mambruk would be our national emblem. (Mambruk is the crowned pigeon which is only found on our island). Our national anthem was Hai Tanahku Papua ('Oh my land Papua') based on a hymn written in 1925 by the Dutch missionary Reverend Isaak Samuel Kijne. The first line 'Hai Tanah Nieuw-Guinea' was set to the tune of a Dutch hymn 'Aan het vaderland' in praise of a beautiful land. In our version 'Nieuw-Guinea' was replaced by 'Papua', and the suffix 'ku' (my) was added to the word 'tanah' (land), which meant it was not just about a beautiful land, but about our beautiful land.

The Dutch government accepted the New Guinea Council manifesto, but changed the date from 1 November 1961 to 1 December 1961 for the celebration. As a young man, I had confidence in the future despite the Indonesian threat. At work, I was being promoted and I seized every opportunity to grow further.

Nieuw Guinea RAAD Manifest, 19 October 1961



2. MANIFEST

Ondergetekenden, inwoners van het westelijk deel van Papua, afkomstig van verschillende groeperingen, volksstammen en godsdienstige richtingen, zich één en verbonden wetend als één volk en één land;

MAKEN BEKEND:

aan al onze landgenoten, dat wij :

I. Op grond van artikel 73 van het Handvest der Verenigde Naties sub a en b;

II. Op grond van de beginselverklaring met betrekking tot de onafhankelijkheid van de nog niet-zelfbesturende gebieden en volken, neergelegd in de Resolutie, welke werd aangenomen door de Algemene Vergadering van de Verenigde Naties in haar 15e vergadering van 20 september 1960 tot 20 december 1960 No. 1514 (XV);

III. Op grond van het onaantastbaar recht, dat wij, inwoners van het westelijk deel van Papua, op ons geboorteland hebben;

IV. Op grond van het vurige verlangen en de hunkering van ons volk naar onze eigen zelfstandigheid:

er door tussenkomst van het Nationaal Comité en onze volksvertegenwoordiging, de Nieuw-Guinea Raad, bij het Gouvernement van Nederlands-Nieuw-Guinea en de Nederlandse Regering op aandringen, dat met ingang van 1 november 1961 :

a. Onze vlag gehesen wordt naast de Nederlandse vlag;

b. Ons volkslied „Hai Tanahku Papua" gezongen en gespeeld zal worden naast het Wilhelmus;

14

c. Ons land de naam Papua Barat zal dragen en dat

d. Ons volk het volk der Papua's genoemd zal worden.

Op grond van het bovenstaande eisen wij Papua's onze eigen plaats op, gelijk aan die van de vrije volken en in de rij van die volken wensen wij Papua's in vrede te leven en bij te dragen tot het handhaven van de vrede in de wereld.
Met dit Manifest roepen wij alle inwoners, die het land en volk der Papua's liefhebben, op om zich achter dit Manifest te scharen en het te handhaven, omdat dit de enige grondslag is voor de vrijheid van ons Papua-volk.

Hollandia, 19 oktober 1961.

W. Inury
D. Sarwom
F. Poana
A. Onim
F. J. S. Rumainum
E. Itaar
M. Suwaé
J. J. Roembiak
J. Jaab
M. Onggé
P. H. Jochu
Iz. Menufandu
M. Wai
N. Jouwe
H. Mori Muzendi
P. Koejab
W. Zonggonao
F. Jufuway
A. J. A. Rumtoboy
E. Noembery
J. S. Dekeniap
S. L. Rumadas
T. S. Akwan
H. Jomungga
M. Buotabui
F. Torey
M. W. Kaisiepo
B. Gebze
Th. Mezet
J. E. Bonay
N. Tanggahma
H. I. Bauw
Sp. Malibela
T. Dansidan
W. Giay
O. Nemnay
A. Sefa
J. Manory
L. Ajamiseba
M. Rumainum

15

Translation of Nieuw Guinea RAAD Manifest, 19 October 1961

The undersigned, residents of the western part of Papua, originating from different groups, tribes and religious denominations, knowing themselves to be one and united as one people and one country; make known to all our fellow countrymen, that we:

I. On the basis of article 73 of the Charter of the United Nations sub a and b;

II. On the basis of the Declaration of Principles concerning the Independence of Non-Self-Governing Territories and Peoples contained in the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations at its Fifteenth Session from 20 September 1960 to 20 December 1960 No. 1514 (XV);

III. On the basis of the inviolable right that we, the inhabitants of the western part of Papua, have to our native land;

IV. On the basis of the ardent desire and yearning of our people for independence; through the intervention of the National Committee and our people's representative the New Guinea Council, urge the Government of Netherlands New Guinea and the Dutch Government that with effect from 1 November 1961:

a. Our flag will be raised next to the Dutch flag;
b. Our national anthem Hai Tanahku Papua is sung and played alongside the Wilhelmus;
c. Our country will bear the name Papua Barat;
d. Our people will be called the people of Papua.

Based on the above, we Papuans claim our own place, equal to that of the free peoples and in the ranks of those peoples we Papuans wish to live in peace and to contribute to maintaining peace in the world.

With this Manifesto we call upon all inhabitants who love the country and the people of Papua to rally behind this Manifesto and uphold it, because this is the only foundation for the freedom of our Papuan people.

2

when things went bad

When things went Bad

Apparently I was doing well on the patrol boat, because in April 1962 the harbour master summoned me for special training as quartermaster. This meant working with him and a pilot for three months guiding foreign ships into the harbour. It was wonderful! I learned a whole new trade and was back on the boat. I obtained my Certificate of Competence, and started working on the pilot boat MS Anjer (named after the carnation that Prince Bernhard always wore in his buttonhole).

Eddy's Certificate of Competence, 1962.

VERKLARING

No. 82/1962

Het Hoofd van de Afdeling Scheepvaart verklaart hiermede dat Auleman KORWA, geboren de 5e augustus 1940 te Biak, geschikt is bevonden om op te treden als KWARTIERMEESTER aan boord van Landsvaartuigen.

De bewijzen van bekwaamheid kwamen in mijn bezit vide het schrijven van de Havenmeester van Sorong No. Naut/30/521 dd. 23 juni 1962.-

Hollandia, 15 augustus 1962.
Het Hoofd Afdeling Scheepv...
H. Algers.

SCHEEPVAART HOOFDBUREAU - HOLLANDIA -

Origineel : BELANGHEBBENDE.-
Duplicaat : Havenmeester van Sorong.-
Triplicaat : Centrale Pers. Administratie V. en E.-
Quadruplicaat : Archief Nautische Zaken.-

Eddy's Certificate of Competence, English translation

Declaration No. 82/1962

The Head of the Shipping Department hereby declares that Auleman KORWA, born on 5 August 1940 in Biak, has been found suitable to act as QUARTERMASTER on board Landcraft.

The certificates of competence in my possession were forwarded to the Harbour Master of Sorong No. Naut/30/521 on 23 June 1962.

H. Algers, Head of Shipping Department, Hollandia, 15 August 1962

Original: Interested party
Duplicate: Harbour Master of Sorong
Triplicate: Central Pers. Administration V. and E.
Quadruplicate: Nautical Affairs Archives

Pilot boat MS Anjer, Sorong, 1962 (renamed MS Ayamaru by Indonesia).

The MS Anjer transported a pilot and harbour master to and from large ships anchored outside the harbour. A few times I was also assigned to MS Bruinvis, which transported passengers between the airbase on Jefman Island and Sorong Oil on the mainland.

As the Dutch government was preparing Papuan youths for self-government, it was increasingly clear that Indonesia did not agree and regularly threatened us with an 'imminent attack'. Our fears increased when the Dutch mobilized its maritime fleet was to protect New Guinea from invasion. I remember those ships all along the coast from Hollandia to Biak and Merauke and can still recall their names: the aircraft carrier Karel Doorman, the Zeven Provinciën, three submarines including the Dolfijn, and the warships Groningen, Utrecht, Drenthe, Evertsen. Jet fighters were stationed at Biak, and the entire coast of Dutch New Guinea was guarded by Dutch Lua (Anti-Aircraft Artillery).

One day I was assigned to a navy landing craft to pick up Lua personnel. They had been transported on a warship from Biak to the coast off Sorong, and our craft had to pull alongside so that they could be brought on board and taken to shore. It was a special assignment, and I felt very honoured that they chose me. After all, I was just a common seaman.

A few days later the harbour master called me in and told me how well

I was doing. He said "If you continue like this, you'll be a candidate to study in the Netherlands. I would like to send you to the higher maritime school in Rotterdam." He then tested me, asking questions in Dutch. What are the port and starboard sides of a ship called? What is in a wheelhouse? What do we call the thing where we hoist the flag? What is the area called where people steer the ship? What is the device used to determine the course? The test didn't last more than an hour, and the harbour master was satisfied. He said "I will send a request to the Office of Traffic and Energy in Hollandia to promote you from common seaman to seaman. You will hear from me."

Nederlands New Guinea UNTEA postage stamps, 1962-63.

I never heard from him because the situation on the coast and in the cities was increasingly tense. Soekarno's threats against Dutch colonialism were becoming serious, and the outside world was getting involved. His rhetoric had been "Dari Sabang sampai Merauke" (from Sabang-in Aceh to Merauke-in Dutch New Guinea). When he didn't appear to be getting Merauke it became "Dari Sabang sampai Amboina dan Kupang" (from Sabang to Ambon and Kupang). After exacerbating pressure on America and the United Nations with Soviet Union arms deals, the rhetoric was "Sebelum matahari terbit dan ayam berkokok, Irian Barat harus dipangkuan Ibu Pertiwi" (Before the sun rises and the rooster crows, West Irian must be in the mother's lap). Mother? As if the Papuans didn't exist unless as part of Greater Indonesia! Our mother is not Indonesian. Our mother is a Papuan. She is black and she has curly hair.

Everything indicated that Soekarno would get his way. President Kennedy was fearful of a 'red' Asia if Indonesia became communist, and worked to keep Indonesia on side. Neither America nor the United Nations were keen on a war between the Netherlands and Indonesia

Republic of Indonesia banknote in 1961, stamped 'Irian Barat'
(in use well before the UN's New York Agreement (1962-1969).

over New Guinea. As they said at the time “We don’t want a second Vietnam”. Papuans were worried and confused. Where was the Netherlands in all this? And what about all those good wishes in Queen Juliana's speech? Couldn't Foreign Affairs Minister Luns talk to the UN? Would the Netherlands take a stand? Whose side was the UN on?

At the same time we were hearing the Papuan Volunteer Corps (PVK) joining the armed resistance (later OPM) in the interior. Dutch soldiers no longer knew if their mission was to guide us to independence. There were even rumours that some Dutch officers had suggested being taken hostage by the PVK to force support for the Papuans. Earlier that year, Prime Minister De Quay had proposed negotiating with Indonesia without conditions, but it was too late for that. Under pressure from the US, the transfer process in the United Nations had begun.

IT IS OVER

On 15th August 1962, we heard on Radio RONG that the ‘Bunker Plan’ had been sealed. The New York Agreement was signed by Dutch Ambassador Van Roijen and the Indonesian Ambassador Adam Malik at the UN building in New York. The treaty meant that the Netherlands would immediately cease guiding the Papuans towards an independent state. Instead, former Dutch New Guinea would be transferred to Indonesia under the supervision of a temporary UN administration called United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA). It was intended that a referendum would be held in or before 1969 that would allow the Papuans to vote on whether they wished to 'remain part of Indonesia' or 'separate from Indonesia'.

We listened in disbelief to these reports, which were repeatedly broadcast on the radio. On the street we asked each other Can this be true? Why had the Netherlands not stopped this? Where did the New Guinea Council stand now? Why wasn't it involved in this treaty? Could this just happen without asking the Papuans for their opinion? That evening I sat with the men aboard the MS Pharus watching a live broadcast on television. Prime Minister De Quay wished the Papuans all the best for the future. I still remember his closing words "Moge God u bewaren" (May God keep you). All those promises and efforts for our future were over. We knew that Indonesia would not bring us much good.

On 1st October 1962, UNTEA was installed, two days after Governor Platteel was ordered back to the Netherlands. The transfer was done! Ordinary people like us saw that immediately. Even Dutch banknotes and postage stamps were marked 'UNTEA'.

Many Papuans felt abandoned by the Dutch government. We did not understand why it happened. Not until later did we discover there were many reasons—but also many secrets—for the Papuans not being allowed to form an independent state. Even today, new information emerges, requiring the story to be adjusted. America maintained that Papuans were too undeveloped to govern themselves, and saw the economic benefit of good relations with Indonesia. And they smelled gold in the Papuan Sterrengebergte (Star Mountains). Then there was the two faces of the UN, presenting as a global organization for all people, but not for Papuans. The UN is not a neutral body, because it allows political and economic interests to take precedence over human rights. This was evident in 1962, during their mediation of the New York Agreement, and again in 1969 during the Act of Free Choice, which was not an act of free choice at all. But by then, I was in the Netherlands.

There was another factor that we knew nothing about at the time: the role played by Queen Juliana's husband Prince Bernhard. In 1962 the Dutch cabinet was still weighing the pros and cons for the defence and further development of New Guinea, not realizing that the prince, in 1961, had independently held discussions with President Kennedy to secure business interests in the new Indonesia. The more I read, the clearer it became that Bernhard simply sold us Papuans. It was because of him that I had to flee my country. It was because of him that I had to leave my family and friends. That is why on Veterans' Day I won't wear that damn carnation. He abandoned the Papuans, and also those young Dutch soldiers the government sent out to work with us. Their mission was suddenly aborted, and when they returned they were ridiculed. The

government sent each of them a New Guinea Commemorative Cross in the mail, which some of them returned. There is not a word about the former Dutch New Guinea in Dutch school books, and I know that many of the veterans still feel the pain of abandoning the Papuans.

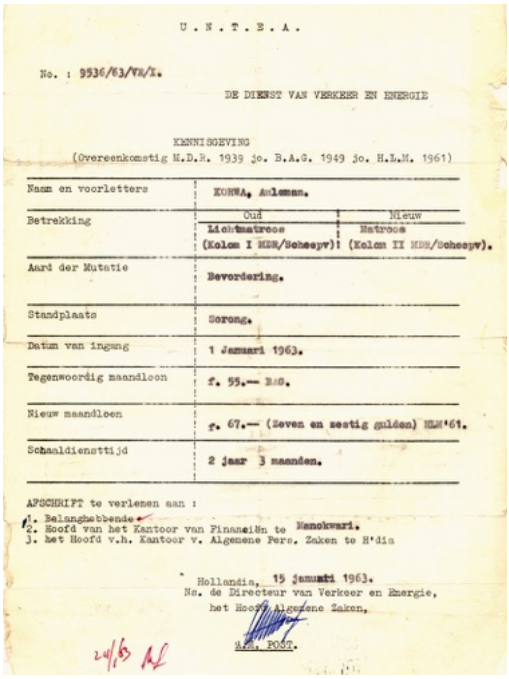
President John F. Kennedy meeting Prince Bernhard in the Whitehouse on 25 April 1962 (JFKlibrary.org, Archive code, AR6539-A).

While more Indonesians took up Dutch administrative positions, my work continued as usual. As a young man, despite all these changes, I tried to make the best of it. In January 1963, just before the last Dutch officials were replaced, I took my final exam and was promoted to sailor. Below is the certificate issued to me by the United Nations Temporary Executive Authority. However, the promise of studying in Rotterdam was now unthinkable. I didn't show my disappointment to the new (Indonesian) harbour master. I didn't think it necessary to show him how angry I was, and I didn't want him to know how powerless I felt.

SOLDIERS

During UNTEA's six-month rule, us ordinary Papuans mainly dealt with the Pakistani troops of the United Nations Security Force (UNSF). These were tough guys, like the Gurkhas in the British army. The Pakistani troops were meant to protect the population, but I didn't trust

Eddy's Sailor Certificate, issued by UNTEA (United Nations Temporary Executive Authority)on 24 January 1963.



U . N . T . E . A .

No. : 9536/63/VE/I.

DE DIENST VAN VERKEER EN ENERGIE

KENNISGEVING
(Overeenkomstig M.D.R. 1939 jo. B.A.G. 1949 jo. H.L.M. 1961)

Naam en voorletters	KORWA, Auleman.	
Betrekking	Oud Lichtmatroos (Kolom I MDR/Scheepv)	Nieuw Matroos (Kolom II MDR/Scheepv).
Aard der Mutatie	Bevordering.	
Standplaats	Sorong.	
Datum van ingang	1 Januari 1963.	
Tegenwoordig maandloon	f. 55.— BAG.	
Nieuw maandloon	f. 67.— (Zeven en zestig gulden) HLM'61.	
Schaaldienstijd	2 jaar 3 maanden.	

APOSCHRIFT te verlenen aan :
1. Belanghebbende
2. Hoofd van het Kantoor van Financiën te Manokwari.
3. het Hoofd v.h. Kantoor v. Algemene Pers. Zaken te H'dia

Hollandia, 15 januari 1963.
Ns. de Directeur van Verkeer en Energie,
het Hoofd Algemene Zaken,

A.M. POST.

24/1/63

English Translation
Eddy's Sailor Certificate (UNTEA)
No: 9536/63/VE/I (24/1/63)

Notification (In accordance with M.D.R. 1939 in conjunction with B.A.G. 1949 in conjunction with H.L.M. 1961)

Name: KORWA, Auleman
Promotion, Sorong, January 1, 1963
Former: Seaman (MDR/Scheepv); Now Sailor (MDR/Scheepv)

Current monthly salary: f 55. BAG; New salary: f 67. HLM'61
Scale service period: 2 years 3 months

Certificate to be issued to:
1. Interested party
2. Head of the Office of Finance in Manokwari
3. Head of the Office of General Press Affairs in Hollandia

A.M. Post (signed), Hollandia, January 15, 1963
Director of Traffic and Energy, Head of General Affairs

them. I heard stories about their passive stance when the Indonesian soldiers misbehaved, and I personally witnessed them just watching Indonesian soldiers beating peaceful Papuans. I soon realized that we could not expect anything from the UN.

Resistance against the Indonesian presence grew in my heart, but I decided to play along through my two great passions: sport and music. When I was asked to join Ekanada, the Indonesian Army's band, I joined and played ukulele at army parties and the Pasar malam (night market). I struggled with the name of the band, Ekanada, which means 'one voice in diversity', somewhat like Indonesia's state motto Bhinneka-TunggalIka means 'unity in diversity'. Nevertheless, I performed with the band because it meant I was less closely monitored, which along with my work in shipping, meant I could move about inconspicuously.

Ekanada, the Indonesian Army band. Eddy (back row, 3rd from left) Joyce Ayal (middle) founded the cultural dance group Cenderawasih in Sorong, which still performs for tourists and local celebrations.

The UNTEA administration remained until 1st May 1963, then Indonesia took over completely. The year before Soekarno had renamed the former Dutch New Guinea 'Irian Barat' (West Irian). Now he changed it again, to 'Irian Jaya' (glorious victorious land) and also renamed our capital Hollandia 'Kota Baru' (new city). One day as I was leaving work I was stopped on the street by Indonesian soldiers. They asked for my passport. I handed it over and watched as they threw it into an oil drum to burn along with many other passports. Everyone who still had a Dutch passport had to surrender it. Even wearing narrow-legged trousers (drainpipes) could get you into trouble, because they were considered 'Dutch' fashion. Some boys had their 'drain pipes' cut open on the spot, and if they resisted they were beaten.

Now that the Indonesians were in charge, Papuans had no say, you just had to do everything they ordered. If you didn't listen, they would say Masih hati belanda ('you still have a heart for the Dutch'). Then you

had a problem because you were seen as the enemy. This was especially true for Biak Islanders, who had always been called Dutch 'errand boys'. (The term was actually much harsher but I'd rather not write it down). As I watched my passport burn, I saw my chance to study in the Netherlands go up in smoke, but at the same time, it did strengthen my resolve not to be enslaved by the Indonesians. I would be free.

Yamewero, yamewero ya be women kakero .....

(Yamewero is a freedom song in the Biak language popularised by the Black Brothers, see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjZD-7tHHHo)

ATTEMPTED ESCAPE

I knew quite a few of the guys working at the port, who were from different regions and involved in the resistance. When things got too hot for them, they asked if I could come up with a plan. Well, I had always been a guy with many ideas and fantasies, so I organized an evening at my place and invited eleven friends. We discussed a plan to flee, and I suggested we sail aboard the MS Pharus to Papua New Guinea (where it was safer even though it was an Australian territory). We could board in the evening and pretend we were visiting the islands on a medical mission. That wouldn't raise suspicions. They thought it was a good plan.

Two weeks later, on a Saturday evening, twelve of us boarded the boat in Sorong and departed for the open sea. We had planned it well, but didn't realize that the ship hadn't been refueled after its last medical trip. About thirty minutes later, we were adrift in the open sea, without fuel, without oil, without food, and without a plan. All we could do was raise the black balloon on the top of the mast as a sign that something was wrong. Just to be safe, I had one of the guys replace a spark plug in the engine with a faulty one. We drifted for about an hour before we were spotted by an Indonesian navy patrol boat. It came alongside and they asked us what was wrong. We said we were returning to Sorong from the islands and had run out of fuel. They asked why we hadn't made an emergency call on the radio. Well, we had disabled the radio ourselves to avoid sending any signals during our escape, so we were not really lying when we told them that the radio was broken.

Their technician climbed aboard our ship, and confirmed that the radio was not working and that our engine wouldn't start either. They called a tugboat to tow us, and of course we acted very relieved to be getting

help. Three hours later, we were back in Sorong where we were met by the harbour master's assistant who was a Papuan. We told him that the boat had come loose while we were asleep on board and we only noticed when we woke up in the open sea with no fuel. We added that we had called for help from a patrol boat and were now grateful to be back home. We never heard anything more about it, but realized that we could not try to flee on the MS Pharus again. For the time being we had to lay low and go back to our daily routines.

CONFRONTATION

I played football, volleyball and badminton. My regular doubles partner for badminton was my girlfriend. I had met her through her brother-in-law, who also worked on the MS Pharus. Sometimes she came on board to cook meals for the crew, and she always saved a bit extra for me. We were really good mates. She had such a lovely smile.

Our culture group was often invited to perform with Ekanada, the army band, in the military barracks at events for mixed gatherings of Indonesians and Papuans. It was a way for the Indonesian military to make Papuans feel as if we belonged. We went along with it to keep the peace, or to protect our community. But it didn't always work out well.

During Indonesia's Independence Day celebration on 17 August 1963, there was a football tournament at the barracks. The winning Papuan team had to play the Indonesian military team. I was a reserve for the Boy Biak team. We won against all the other Papuan teams and had to face the soldiers. It was quite tense because there were many armed soldiers in the audience. We were leading 3-1, but before the match ended a big fight broke out along the sidelines. A few hotheads who couldn't handle losing started firing pistols and rifles into the air. Players and spectators ran off in all directions. Anyone who was not fighting tried to escape. Soon, trucks from the PGT and KKO arrived to break up the brawl. PGT means Pasukan Gerak Tjepat (air borne brigade). KKO is short for Korps Komando Operasi (marine core).

I stayed close to my brother-in-law, who was one of the players. He quickly put a shirt over his football jersey and grabbed his bicycle. I jumped on the back. Just as we were leaving a soldier pulled him off and said "You stay here!" He managed to break free, but tore his shirt in the process, and we jumped back on the bicycle and took off, with shreds of shirt flapping in my face. At home he said he would keep the shirt as a

memento, a reminder that you couldn't trust anyone anymore. Later, we heard from a few KKO lads that they'd been ordered to protect the Papuan players. After all, the tournament was supposed to promote Indonesian goodwill. Unfortunately, hotheads had turned it into the opposite.

Meanwhile life became increasingly difficult. Basic necessities were scarce as Indonesian soldiers took most of the food. Papuans had to stand in long lines at the shops where the soldiers would often harass them. I even saw them tormenting old women who were crying.

Resistance groups started forming everywhere, including in Sorong. I was part of one group. We were all harbour workers and called ourselves Kobe Oser, which in Biak means 'We are one' or 'Unity'. We also named our barracks Kobe Oser so that we would appear to be just a group of colleagues with a special name. Our task was to disable as much military equipment as possible. Heavy military vehicles would suddenly stop because our group had tampered with the engines or had put sugar and salt in the tanks. Some of these resistance groups were quite intense, meaning sometimes Indonesian officers would disappear.

During this same period, candidates from throughout Irian Barat were being selected for enrollment in the Higher Maritime School in Semarang, Java, for training as pandu laut (sea pilot) or syah bandar (harbour master). I and two others were on the candidate list for a long time but were never called up, and we felt that Java was stringing us along. Boys from Manokwari and Soekarnopura (another new name for our capital city) were sent to Semarang, but not us. One friend returned as a certified sea pilot and was immediately stationed at Soekarnopura Harbour. Sadly, he passed away in 2008. Another friend from Manokwari returned with a diploma and was a harbour master until he retired. But I never made it to Semarang; apparently, they didn't want me.

Political tension and arbitrary reprisals by Kopassus, the military's special military force, meant this was a terrible time for resistance groups and ordinary people. The Kopassus guys were mean and tough; real killing squads. They are still in Papua and the Moluccas, and wreaked havoc in East Timor during its occupation of twenty-four years.

One day in August 1963, our group was practicing combat techniques in the forest. To gain the trust of other Papuans, we wore KL uniforms (leftover Dutch outfits). A Timorese friend, who was a KKO officer, walked by and stopped for a chat. He asked what we were up to. We told him we were rehearsing for a drama for the Indonesian Independence

Day celebration on 17 August. He thought that was wonderful and took a photo of me wearing the Dutch uniform. He published the photo with our story in the military newspaper, and soon I was being questioned. Of course, the military didn't believe our story about a drama.

I was aware of the risks I had taken, and it wasn't long before my cousin warned me that he had seen my name on an Indonesian list, that I should leave for my own safety, and for the safety of my family. I knew he was right, but how…?

The photo of me in a Dutch Army uniform in August 1963, published in the Indonesian Army newspaper, which got me into big trouble.

The Hague, 13 October 2000. Veterans standing up for Papuans at the Binnenhof (Parliament House). "Grown old through the ravages of time, but remained loyal."

3

when things went bad

Stowaway

I kept quiet for a few months because I knew I was being watched. It was clear that I should leave, but I had no idea how to go about it. Then, in March 1964, I heard the harbour master talk about a Dutch ship that would be calling at the port of Sorong. It was a freighter from the Koninklijke Rotterdamsche Lloyd coming to unload the last Dutch development goods. That had to be it! This ship was my ticket out!

That evening I called together eleven friends to discuss my plan, that with this ship, we would flee to the Netherlands. I was sure of it. When we gathered in my room, I placed the Morning Star flag on the table, and on top of that the objectives of the New Guinea Council and the Bible. I felt very solemn and told the boys that we were sitting around the table just like the twelve disciples. I placed my hand on the Bible and said, "If all twelve of us lay our hands on this bible, then our plan will proceed. But if one does not participate, there's a good chance we will be betrayed." They all laid their hands on the Bible. We agreed that when the ship arrived, we would climb aboard at night and hide separately. Only when we had reached the open sea would we regroup and report to the captain. It may sound simple, but that was the plan.

On 19 April the lookout reported that a foreign ship was anchored off Sorong. It was the MS Schelde Lloyd waiting for a pilot. As I approached the large Dutch ship with the harbour master and the pilot, I felt that this would be my last chance to escape. After the ship docked, the harbour master handed me the ship's crew list and told me to take it to his office. On the way a voice in my head told me to look at it. I don't know why, but I did, and read the names of the crew. To my surprise, I saw the name Leo Franciscus Flake. The name struck me. Could this be my pen pal from primary school? I hadn't been in contact with him for three years. Could this be the same Leo? It couldn't be true, could it?

That evening I went to the harbour. Access was always guarded at night, but I was an apprentice harbour master and had a pass. I asked the guards if I could board the ship to meet the crew. They said it was forbidden because it was a foreign vessel, and I would need a special permit. I showed him my pass and told him I didn't need permission. They fell for it and let me through.

On board, I made my way to the mess hall. Men were drinking and there was music playing. One of the men at the door introduced himself

as Boatswain Eigenraam and asked what I was doing there. I asked if there was someone on board called Leo Flake. Eigenraam replied "Yes, he's one of the crew members" and he called out "Hey Leo, I've got a Papuan lad here who wants to speak with you." Leo walked over with two bottles of Heineken under his arm and asked me what I wanted to talk about. I replied that it was something personal. Leo turned to the boatswain and said "Can I take this lad to my cabin? He wants to speak with me privately." The boatswain had no objections.

Leo the deckhand was very friendly, and wanted to know what I wanted. I asked him if he had ever corresponded with anyone in New Guinea. He looked surprised and said that he had indeed exchanged letters until three years ago with a Papuan boy in Biak. I couldn't believe what I was hearing, and didn't know what to say. My body was trembling. Leo continued talking. When we reached his cabin, he said he hoped to meet that boy from Biak on this final voyage. I stayed quiet, but Leo carried on. He took a photo album from his locker and showed me his pen pal. I could hardly breathe as I held my own photo in my hand. I couldn't immediately tell him this was me, because the tension was too much. Instead, I asked if he wanted to see a photo of my Dutch pen pal. When I pulled out the photo, Leo exclaimed in surprise "Wow, that's my passport photo! Are you Korwa?" Before I could answer, he hugged me tightly and held me close. "What do you want, what are you planning?" I said "I want to get away from here, I need to flee." Still holding me tight he said "Okay, I'll make sure you get to the Netherlands."

As we stood like that for a moment, my tension slowly turned to trust. I was so grateful. "Sit down" he said. "Let's have a drink, and then we will make a plan." After we finished our beers, Leo took me on a quick tour of the ship to find a good hiding place. We looked at the lifeboats on the deck, but he said he knew a better spot. I followed him below into the engine room. Right at the back, by the propellers, he lifted a hatch and showed me the ship's double bottom. "If you go down there and crawl to the corner under the oil tank, no one will find you. People only come here when the ship is docked. When we are sailing, no one comes here."

In his cabin we went over the plan thoroughly. The ship was scheduled to depart in two days at 10am. Leo said he would wait at the stern of the ship to make sure I got on board. He even offered to bring food and drink to the hiding place, but I declined because I didn't want him to get into trouble. Then we walked back to the mess hall. I thanked the boatswain and said goodbye to the crew. Leo escorted me off the ship as if nothing had happened. I told him that I trusted him with our secret, but

I didn't tell him I was going to bring eleven more people. That might not have been entirely fair, but I was afraid he might back out. Back in my room, I wrote a letter to my parents, stating that on April 22, I fled to the Netherlands aboard a ship. I told my father he could get the keys to my room from my brother-in-law and collect my belongings. I was so sure of my plan that I wrote the letter as if I had already left.

"Dear Mum and Dad, I have fled to the Netherlands. If the Lord protects me and my health, I hope to return one day to see you again. If not, know that I am in the Netherlands. With love, God bless you, Adek."

I read the letter over and over before I sealed it in an envelope and added the stamps, all the while praying to the Lord for His help. Next, I carefully cut the lining of my leather jacket and tucked in all my documents: birth certificate, baptism certificate, village school certificate, vocational school diploma, statement from junior nautical school, shipping employment certificate, notice of my final exam as quartermaster. I included an article about the speech made by State Secretary Bot during the installation of the New Guinea Council in 1961. I also slipped in a Morning Star flag pin (first edition from Dutch New Guinea government) and two packets of chewing gum. This was all I took on my journey. I forgot to take the water bottle and cookies I had prepared. I didn't have the chance to tell my girlfriend I was leaving; I simply left her behind. I posted my letter to my parents as I boarded the MS Schelde Lloyd, at the post office opposite the harbour master's office.

ON BOARD

At 9am I met one of the boys, Tony Rumpaisum, at the harbour. His clothes were wet. He said he'd fallen into the sea after indulging with the others in goods stored under a tarpaulin in the harbour, mostly groceries and drinks temporarily stored for shops in Sorong. So instead of climbing aboard, they were busy eating and drinking under a tarpaulin. Time was running out, so I gave Tony money for a taxi to go home and change so that at least the two of us could board by 9:30am. We couldn't find the other boys. I think they were afraid to board in daylight. Meanwhile, I stood chatting with the guards, who assumed I was going aboard with the harbour master to pilot the ship out of the harbour. Tony returned on a bicycle. Just before boarding, I discreetly said goodbye to two colleagues from the pilot boat. They were good friends and knew about my plan and gave us their blessing. Then Tony and I casually walked up the passenger gangway. No one paid attention, as there

were other Papuans on the quay busily preparing for the ship's departure. At the top of the gangway, we turned around and looked towards the warehouses. The other boys were there, waving. We waved back. We saw two apprentice pilots standing in front of the harbour master's office. They stared at us, then waved us on with a gesture of 'go ahead'. They knew what we were up to, but they said nothing.

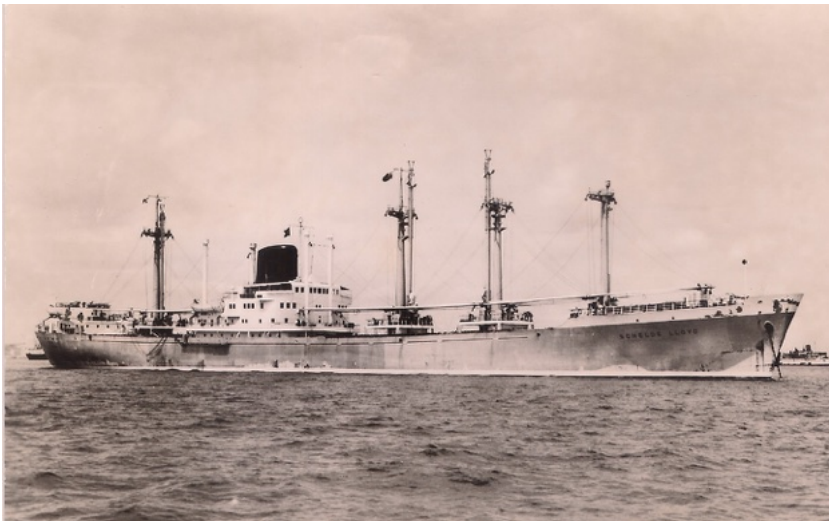
Leo was waiting at the stern. From afar he made the 'all clear' sign with his thumb and forefinger, then headed towards the mess hall. We walked to the engine room as Leo had shown me two days earlier. Tony knew nothing of these preparations. We crept towards the engine room and the hatch of our hiding place. No one was around because it was coffee time and the men were in the mess hall. Leo had planned it well.

I opened the hatch and Tony went down while I kept watch. Then I went down and closed the hatch above me. We crawled above the pipes to the rear of the ship, and got completely covered in oil. Underneath the oil tank we could sit upright. At this level of the double bottom, seawater was pumped in to flush out debris, but where we were the floor sloped up slightly and we were able to keep dry. I crawled around to get a sense of the space. Shortly after the engines started. I glanced through a crack in the floor of the engine room and saw that it was 10:45am.

The ship remained stationary for a long time. Suddenly water started flowing into our space, up to our feet. We heard people shoving back and forth, and through the cracks saw military boots. Suddenly, we smelled gas. We held our breath, terrified! After a few minutes, the water subsided, the gas dissipated, and the ship began to move. Still gasping for air I said "Now we're leaving." Tony nodded silently. I distinctly remember praying "Lord, if our cause is unjust, let us be caught and sent back. If not, bring us safely to the Netherlands."

Much later I heard that when the harbour master reported two missing Papuans, including Korwa, the ship was halted and thoroughly searched by men from Brimob (mobile brigade), Kopassus (military special forces), and naval security. They pumped water and carbide gas into the double bottom, intending to flush us out. We were really fortunate.

Once we were underway, Tony suggested reading from the Bible. I told him I didn't have one. He was surprised and said "How come? You're the son of a teacher, are you not?" I replied "Yes, my father is a teacher but I am not a teacher." It turned out Tony had tucked a small Bible into his pocket. I think that was the only thing he had brought along.



Ms Schelde Lloyd docked in Sorong in April 1964 with The Netherlands final development goods for West Papua. (Royal Rotterdam Lloyd N.V. 1958).

We were hiding underneath the tank of used oil. It wasn't more than two square meters, but it was dry, and we could just about sit upright. About four meters away was the area where seawater was pumped in and out of the ship to discharge waste. That's where we went to relieve ourselves. When our backs started to ache, we took turns standing next to the oil tank to stretch. At times, doubt crept in. Had we done the right thing? What if we wanted to go back home? When would we return? I tried to keep our spirits up and said to Tony, "We're Biak, we're not going to give up, are we?" We both fell silent for a moment. I asked Tony if he had brought any food, but he hadn't. "What about you?" he asked. I only had two packets of chewing gum in my pocket. The best we could do to stave off our hunger was to try and sleep first. We hid under that oil tank without food or drink for three days and three nights, chewing gum to keep our throats moist.

WE SURRENDER

By the third day, our hunger was unbearable and we couldn't sleep. I crawled around under the deck, breathing in the fresh wind that was blowing through the pipes. I found some old rags and stuffed them into a makeshift pillow but was so worried about Tony that I gave it to him and told him to lie under the pipe and get some fresh air. Towards evening we woke and looked at each other in despair. "I'm really hungry" Tony said "Let's go up on deck." We shared the last piece of gum and

tried to sleep again. I woke up when Tony started talking about food again. I didn't want to discuss it. I felt we had to hold out, but when I stood up to think, I saw stars. That's when I realized how weak we were; that we had to go up on deck or possibly perish. We decided that I would do the talking, and Tony would play dumb, because if both of us started talking, we might say different things. We had to avoid that.

I opened the lid and gave Tony a push. Then Tony pulled me up with my collar. It took a lot of effort to get through that hole, and we were completely exhausted. But there we were, standing in an empty engine room. There was no one around. We checked the clock, 10.30, so the men were probably in the mess. We decided to just wait until someone found us. We had no choice. We were too weak to walk to the captain and had to hold onto each other to keep from falling over.

After a while one of the crew came down the stairs, stopped, and stared at us. "Are you ghosts?" he shouted. We said nothing. He took a step forward. "Are you ghosts?" he shouted, louder this time. We stood there silently, covered in black oil, clinging to each other. We probably didn't look human anymore. When the man asked a third time if we were ghosts, I replied "No, we're not ghosts. We're real people, just like yourself." He called back "Where did you come from?" I explained that we had come from the double bottom. His reaction was quite something: "Hooray, we have Papuans on board! Stowaways!" He rang the ship's bell frantically and picked up the phone to call the mess hall. "Everyone come down quickly; we've got two Papuan stowaways in the engine room!" Men came running down the stairs, cheering, and encircled us.

Tony and I stood there with our arms around each other, trembling from exhaustion and fear and hunger and thirst. We had prepared ourselves for the worst, but we never imagined the men would start singing and dancing in a conga line. They turned it into a celebration and openly wondered how it was possible that the Indonesian military hadn't found us when they had so thoroughly searched the ship in port.

Only afterwards did we understand that there was another factor at play. The captain of the ship was not popular among the crew because he was terribly strict, and the men were looking forward to him having to answer to Lloyd's management about carrying stowaways. I heard one man suggest they call the head of the engine room and tell him they had a surprise for him. They chose the man who first saw us for this task. The head asked what the surprise was, but the men shouted back that he should come see for himself. The head's name, if I remember correctly,

was Heimans. He said they shouldn't try to fool with him. He even said the men wouldn't be allowed to go ashore in Melbourne for a whole week if they were playing a prank on him.

After some insistence, Heimans came down. Halfway down the stairs, he stopped and exclaimed shaking his head "No ... this can't be, this can't be." He stood in front of us, but he only spoke to the crew. "What have you guys done? How did you manage this? Where did these boys come from?" The men claimed they had nothing to do with it. Even my friend Leo played dumb. The man who found us explained that he had just discovered us in the engine room "These boys came from between the double bottom. Look, they are covered in oil." The mood in the engine room became even more jovial when the men told the astonished Heimans that they now had to have shore leave in Melbourne. Meanwhile, Tony and I were almost collapsing from exhaustion and still clinging to each other, but we let the story wash and chuckled along.

Heimans had to come up with something, so he ordered the first mate, Briedé, to come down. Halfway down the stairs he too stood in disbelief and wanted to hear how we had evaded the search in the harbour. The men excitedly recounted the story they had just heard from us. We listened quietly and slowly began to feel a bit safer among these men. Briedé took us to the captain's cabin and knocked. Captain Grauenkamp called him in. Tony and I waited outside, nervously squeezing each other's hands. After a brief silence, we could hear the captain boom "What are you trying to tell me, man, just say it because I need to sleep. Tomorrow we'll have a busy day in Melbourne!" We heard Briedé say "I have two packages for you, here by the door."

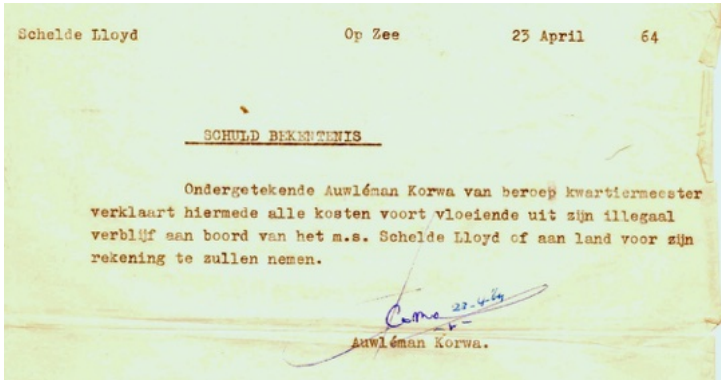
When the captain saw us he jumped back and started shouting and swearing "What is this, what is this?!" Briedé replied "You can see for yourself! What should I do with them?" Captain Grauenkamp ordered Briedé to take us away. "Let them wash up, give them food and drink, find them somewhere to sleep, and we'll see about this tomorrow. I'm going to bed now, alright!" And he slammed the door shut. But he did stop the ship. It turned out we were still sailing along the coast of Papua. The crossing to Melbourne hadn't started. So, we had come up too early, but well, due to hunger we had no other choice.

Briedé took us to the cargo clerk's room and showed us the bathroom. We got a pack of Omo soap to scrub the oil off our bodies and put our clothes in the suds. He also gave us two pieces of bath soap and said he would arrange food for us. He gave us two very large pyjamas. They

were in the Dutch boy style. The trousers reached up to under our armpits. Shortly afterwards someone came in with the food. He introduced himself as Glansdorp, the chief steward of the kitchen. He laid out the entire table with food and drink, even soup and fresh fruit. Although we were terribly hungry, we couldn't eat much. But it was really delicious.

While we were eating, Captain Grauenkamp suddenly entered. "Enjoying the meal?" he asked, pulling up a chair. He placed some papers on the table. "Would you read and sign these, so that I can leave and you can finish eating." They were promissory notes. We had to declare that we would pay for our stay on board. It was a bit strange that the date didn't match. It was April 25th, our third night on board, but at the top of the statement it said April 23rd, as if he had found us on the first morning. We signed them anyway. With full stomachs, we each crawled into a bed with such a lovely mattress. We could hear the door being locked from the outside. We immediately fell asleep.

Eddy's Promissory Note, MS Schelde



Schelde Lloyd Op Zee 23 April 64

SCHULD BEKENTENIS

Ondergetekende Auwléman Korwa van beroep kwartiermeester verklaart hiermede alle kosten voort vloeiende uit zijn illegaal verblijf aan boord van het m.s. Schelde Lloyd of aan land voor zijn rekening te zullen nemen.

Auwléman Korwa.

English Translation: "The undersigned Auwleman Korwa, acting as quartermaster, hereby declares that he will bear all costs arising from his illegal stay on board the M.S. Schelde Lloyd or on land".

THROWN OFF THE SHIP?

The next morning Glansdorp woke us. He had two parcels. I asked him what they were and he shrugged awkwardly "Your packed lunches, as ordered by the captain, and some drink. You'll be put ashore shortly. I wish you both good luck." He left, and locked the door, leaving us shocked and worried. We sat at the table waiting for what was to come.

A chill ran down my spine when I heard the door open. Captain

Grauenkamp entered, walked up to us, placed a pistol on the table, and said "This is my pistol. You'll be put ashore shortly. If you try anything I'll shoot you both dead. Wait for the crew who will escort you to the lifeboat." He put the pistol back in his pocket, walked out of the room, and stood outside the door. Tony and I sat silently staring at each other, and before the captain's words fully sank in, the mate arrived with six crew members. The mate said, "Come on lads, we're going to the lifeboat." It was then that I realized they were going to take us to shore, somewhere along the coast of Papua!

When we reached the lifeboat, the six crew members boarded first. Then the mate gestured for us to get in. We were too scared to resist. After the mate got in the lifeboat was lowered. I kept quiet, wondering what would happen to us in Papua. They started the engine and we set off. Everyone was silent. I was scared and desperate, but as the lifeboat headed towards land I felt my whole body fill with hatred. We had come so far, and now we were being sent back. Where in Papua would they drop us? What waited us there? It seemed the mate had similar thoughts because he suddenly asked, "Are you afraid to go ashore?" I didn't answer him; hatred had sealed my lips shut. The coast drew nearer, and the mate asked us again if we were afraid to go ashore. Once again, we didn't answer. Everyone was silent.

All my hopes for a new life in the Netherlands were shattered. What were we supposed to do now? Where could we go? What would happen if Indonesian soldiers caught us on land? They would punish us for our escape, especially after outsmarting them in Sorong. What would they do to my family? I tried desperately to keep my thoughts clear, but everything swirled in my head. If we were put ashore here, it would mean the end of everything: my life, my family's future, everything. "Oh God, don't let it come to the point where I have to kill these men to save my own life. I don't want to kill, I don't want to die."

The lifeboat was almost at the beach when the helmsman asked for the third time if we were afraid to go ashore. With that white sand so close, I snapped. Looking straight at him I said "I was taught at school that the Dutch are a Christian people. If you still have that Christian love, then set us ashore here and let whatever happens. But if you don't have that love, then take us to the Netherlands." He stared at me, clearly confused. The lifeboat slid onto the beach and stopped. I scanned the surroundings, and noticed there was a traditional cemetery behind the beach, not a village. The men on the boat still hadn't spoken.

The helmsman broke the silence. He said that my answer confused him; that he wasn't responsible for our presence on their ship. He turned away from us and shouted to the men "What do we do with these boys? Are we going to leave them here?" One shouted back “No, they are not dogs. We can’t just leave them here.” I pointed to the buildings. "Do you want to leave us in a cemetery, among the dead?" With a jerk, the helmsman raised his hand and shouted "Turn the boat around, we're taking these boys back to the ship!"

It was as if a wave of cool seawater washed over me and through my entire being, flushing away all those feelings of hate. Tony asked me what was going to happen; all I could do was repeat that we were going back to the ship. As the men continued to debate among themselves, Tony and I remained as silent as mice. The helmsman asked the men how they should handle this. Surely the captain wouldn't agree to bring us back on board. After some back and forth, one of the men said "I think we should just take these boys to the Netherlands and hand them over to the government there." They all agreed on that. But how? The men discussed confronting the captain and involving the rest of the crew. They would threaten to leave the ship in Australia if the captain refused to take us to the Netherlands. I listened to this unexpected turn of events. It gave me a tiny glimmer of hope.

As the lifeboat was returning to the ship, the helmsman told the men again that they had to stand behind the decision, and after they were on the ship they had to go straight to the mess hall and assemble the rest of the crew. He himself would talk to the captain. The helmsman was taking a huge risk, although the men later told us that they had already agreed leave the ship if the captain put us ashore.

It was noon when we reached the ship. As the lifeboat was hoisted up, the crew stood at the rail watching. A few gestured greetings, but most stood silently, waiting to see what would happen. We could see the captain pacing back and forth on the deck, his hands deep in his pockets. He was clearly furious. As soon as we stepped out of the boat, he started swearing and ranting at the helmsman "Who's the boss here? Who's in command, you or me?" The helmsman replied that the captain was in charge, then calmly suggested discussing the issue in the captain's office. The captain, still fuming, ordered someone to lock us up and then followed the helmsman to his office. The helmsman glanced back and winked at the men, encouraging them to head to the mess hall.

Tony and I allowed ourselves to be escorted back to our room, where we quietly lay down and heard the door being locked. Hours passed before we heard the key in the lock again. We sat up as the steward came in smiling and placed sandwiches on the table. He looked at me and said cheerfully "Hooray, 'kamu pigi'. To Amsterdam, the beautiful girls". I replied "We're not looking for girls, we are looking for freedom!" Then the three of us burst out laughing. What a relief! As he left, the steward said that the captain would come by to confirm the new arrangement.

Later, Grauenkamp informed us that he had been in telegraphic contact with the management of Lloyd's in Rotterdam. The message from management was that he should take us to the Netherlands, where we would be handed over to the Dutch government. Without changing his expression he added "You don't need to be afraid, because from now on you are under the protection of Dutch law. So I cannot land you anywhere. You are coming with us to the Netherlands." Without saying goodbye, he left the room and locked the door. Exhausted, Tony and I collapsed on our beds. We didn't even eat the sandwiches.

That night the captain's servant brought us a hot meal. He noticed the sandwiches and asked us why we weren't hungry. We had wanted nothing more than to sleep, but the smell of hot food reminded me how hungry I was. I remember we had potatoes with beetroot, apple sauce, and a large piece of meat.

4

exodus

Exodus

There we were, on our way to the Netherlands aboard the MS Schelde Lloyd. Even though we were locked up, nothing could happen to us now. Three times a day we were brought food. These were the only times we saw anybody, because while we were in Indonesian waters our door was locked from the outside. We didn't leave the room for the first four days. Tony and I passed the time sleeping, listening to the radio, reading Dutch magazines like Panorama and Vrij Nederland. We didn't talk much. We were numb from everything we'd experienced.

After Merauke, the ship headed out into the open sea. We heard an announcement "All crew, man your stations, we are crossing to Australia." The ship began to sway. This was real sailing!

The first mate came to our room, and told us we were free to walk around while we were on the open sea, but had to be careful not to fall overboard. That wasn't an unnecessary warning, because the wild seas of New Guinea made it difficult for us to walk without holding on. We walked across the deck and watched the men at work. We took a look in the engine room, the galley, mess hall, all over the ship. It was wonderful to stretch our legs. With the wind in our face, we felt free on this dancing ship. Most of the men said they were glad to see us. They told us the first mate had pressured the captain by threatening that all the crew would disembark in Australia. "Then you'll have to find other men" he reportedly said. "These boys are victims of politics."

AUSTRALIA

During the brief stop in Sydney, we were locked up in our room again, but on 30th April 1964 the Schelde Lloyd stopped in Melbourne and I set foot on foreign soil for the first time. It was exactly forty-nine years before Willem-Alexander would be crowned King of the Netherlands on his grandmother's birthday.

The ship had just docked in Melbourne when I saw, through the porthole, two formally dressed men come aboard. Shortly after, Captain Grauenkamp entered our cabin and told us the men were from the Australian immigration service and that we had to accompany them. As long as the ship was in port, we would be held on land to prevent us from running away in Australia. As if we had any reason to stay in Australia. We were going to the Netherlands!

We ended up in Geelong prison for a week. We had little contact with the guards but were treated well. We had our meals at a separate table, isolated from the other prisoners. Just as we were settling into our cell, the prison director arrived and spoke with the guards. I could understand a bit of English. He asked if everything was alright and the guards told him that we were good boys. He came again the next day, and while he was talking to the guards I noticed that he had a Dutch accent.

Tony and I were in a cell with a toilet in the corner, with no privacy, which was a bit uncomfortable. We had some magazines but could only look at the pictures as they were all in English. There was a central radio, and we heard the Beatles, the Everly Brothers, Pat Boone; all the stars of the time. We exercised with the other prisoners, walking around a large courtyard where there were toilets with partitions, but positioned so that the guards could keep an eye on us. We had to shower in a large communal area with other prisoners, also under guard. I didn't feel comfortable. Why did it have to be like this? We weren't criminals.

On the third day the prison director with a guard walked into our cell. He gave us two packets of Pall Mall cigarettes and some biscuits and sweets. I remember they were those fruity chewy candies from Lonka. I addressed the director in Dutch "Sir, may I ask you something?" His eyes widened in surprise and his face turned red. With a smile he said "Indeed, I am Dutch. How did you know?" I said it was because of the type of cigarettes and treats he had brought. Only a Dutchman would bring those. But it was mainly his Dutch accent that gave it away.

The prison director was from Amsterdam. He told us that he had talked with his wife about us. He had served in Manokwari as a police commissioner and his wife had been the head nurse at the hospital there. Shortly before the transfer to Indonesia they emigrated to Australia and ended up in Geelong. "We hear a lot about the Papuans and the country" he said. He confirmed that we were under the protection of Dutch law and would soon be taken back to the ship destined for the Netherlands.

The next day, we were allowed out of the cell for a while. Since Tony and I didn't smoke, during exercise time we gave the cigarettes to the other prisoners, and thus made some friends. Later that day the director visited us again. He brought someone with him who I recognized as Moses Weror, a Papuan from Serui Island in West Papua. It turned out that Mozes worked at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra in the Irian Affairs department. "What's that man doing here?" I asked the director. The director explained that Moses had been instructed by the Indone-

sian Embassy to get us out of the cell, likely to send us back to Sorong. Tony and I didn't want to speak to him, and the director didn't allow Moses to approach us, explaining that we were under the protection of Dutch law. With a friendly wave, and a dismissive gesture, the director indicated Moses should leave. From the hallway, Moses waved, and we waved back. All was okay.

Years later, on 17 May 1990, I saw Moses again. It was in Harskamp during the ceremony for my military barracks security diploma. He was visiting family in the Netherlands and had come along with them to the ceremony. In the canteen I approached him in Malay "He Ipar (brother-in-law) do you still remember Geelong prison?" With a slight smile he said "Sudah (all finished) that was politics." Ten years later, I saw him again, in Port Numbay (Jayapura) at the 2nd Papuan Congress.

After a week in Geelong prison, the guard came and said "Come on, you're going home, back to the ship." In the hall we were greeted by two men from the Australian Immigration Service. Outside a large black car waited for us. Truly a diplomat's ride! Even the door was held open for us. We sat in the back, the men sat opposite us, the driver was alone in the front. As we started moving, one of the men talked to us in a friendly tone. We couldn't understand everything he said, but it seemed they wanted to show us their city before taking us back to the ship. So we got an unexpected tour of Geelong! We felt somewhat important, not refugees, but travelling representatives of our people.

We spotted 'our' ship in the harbour. Almost the entire crew was standing by the railing, and as soon as we stepped out of the car they started clapping and cheering. "Here come our Papuan boys. Hee sobat, sobat welcome! Kamipigi Holland" (Welcome friends, we're going to Holland). The two Australians guided us through the applauding crew and Captain Grauenkamp took charge of us again. I don't know if he was happy to see us, but he must have been relieved. After all, the ship couldn't leave without us. He was stuck with us. Grauenkamp himself escorted us back to our cabin without saying a word. The first mate let us in, then locked the door. Silence. Tony and I flopped onto our beds. We couldn't look outside because the porthole was closed. Below us, we heard the bustle of the men working on the deck. An hour later the engines started and the ship began to move. In my diary I noted: 9th May 1964, we leave Geelong, Australia.

The next day the first mate came to tell us we were heading to China. I asked if we could do some chores but he said we weren't allowed

because the captain was responsible, and nothing was to happen to us while we were on board. However, he added, on the open sea we were free to roam. We jumped up immediately and went for a stroll. It was magnificent—the waves, the seagulls flying above, the fresh smell of the sea, the blue sky overhead. For a moment I forgot that I was a refugee. The men on deck were busy, but a few of them took a moment to chat.

Back in our cabin, the stack of magazines had been replenished. In Lloyd's Overseas Weekly, I found an article about Papuans protesting in the Netherlands, during the same week that we boarded in Sorong. It meant a lot to know that our Papuan leaders were still active in the Netherlands. I resolved to join them, if I was allowed to stay.

In another issue of the same magazine, I read about Moluccan families in West New Guinea wanting to come to the Netherlands. They had fled to West New Guinea in the midst of the Dutch police actions against the Indonesians in 1947-48. They had issued their request before West New Guinea was transferred to Indonesia 1962. In the articles the Dutch state was using terms like 'commitment' and 'policy matter.' I tore them out and tucked them into the lining of my jacket with my other papers. It was beginning to dawn on me that this Moluccan issue was going to be a very long story, which I will return to later. (See end of chapter for a short explanation of the Moluccans difficult life in the Netherlands).


overzeese weekeditie 27-4-1964

Zaak van 37 Zuidmolukkers nu in hoger beroep

Was overbrenging al dan niet een beleidskwestie?

Het gerechtshof in Den Haag heeft thans het hoger beroep behandeld, ingesteld door de Staat der Nederlanden tegen een beslissing van de president van de arrondissementsrechtbank in Den Haag in een kort geding dat aanhangig was gemaakt namens vijftien gezinnen van Zuidmolukkers, in totaal 37 personen, die overbrenging naar Nederland hadden gevraagd vóór de souvereiniteitsoverdracht van Nieuw-Guinea aan Indonesië, op 1 mei van het vorig jaar.

Bij dit kort geding, dat op 26 april 1963 werd gevoerd, besliste de president, Jhr. mr. G. Witsen Elias, dat de staat al het mogelijke moest doen om de gevraagde overbrenging te verwezenlijken. De overbrenging is niet doorgegaan. De staat is in beroep gegaan omdat hij het er niet mee eens is dat hij in verband met een beleidskwestie is veroordeeld.

Namens de staat zette mr. E. Droogbroever Fortuyn uiteen dat na 1 oktober 1963 Nieuw-Guinea voor Nederland vreemd territoir was geworden, en dat het dus ook niet meer ging over Nederlanders. Het ging hier niet om een rechtsvorm, maar uitsluitend over een beleidszaak en een politieke kwestie, waarbij de regering niet voor de rechter ter verantwoording kan worden geroepen, waar wel door de Staten-Generaal.

Oordeel over beleid

Beleidszaken kunnen naar het oordeel van pleiter in het algemeen niet door de rechter worden beoordeeld. Hij kan immers niet beoordelen of er een juist beleid is gevoerd en dat heeft de president van de rechtbank wél gedaan.

De Zuidmolukkers waren uit eigen vrije wil op Nieuw-Guinea. De rechter is in deze zaak op de stoel van de overheid gaan zitten, wat ernstige tweespalt heeft gebracht die opgevuld moeten worden geacht.

Mr. A. G. Maris, die voor de Ambonezen optrad, stelde vast dat het in bedoelde aangelegenheid ging over lijf, leven en welzijn van de betrokkenen. De staat had morele en politieke verantwoordelijkheid voor hen aanvaard door eerder mee te delen dat ze naar Nederland overgebracht zouden worden, ongeacht hun nationaliteit.

Dat was een toezegging en geen beleidsaangelegenheid. De maatschappelijke zorgvuldigheid is in dezen door de staat niet nagekomen. Ook na 1 oktober 1962 had de staat nog die verplichting.

Toetsing van behoorlijk bestuur is naar het oordeel van pleiter wel aan de burgerlijke rechter toegestaan. Als het gaat over lijf, leven en vrijheid is een fout vaak onherstelbaar.

Het is onbekend wat er van de vijftien gezinnen is geworden. Bekend is alleen, dat één gezin naar het achterland is uitgeweken en bij Papoea's is ondergedoken. Volgens advies van een Indonesische spion moesten 25 Ambonezen na de overdracht worden gedood. Daaruit blijkt wel hoe gevaarlijk de situatie voor hen, was aldus mr. Maris.

Na replieken bepaalde de president van het hof dat er op donderdag 11 juni arrest zal worden gewezen.

'Case of 37 South Moluccans now on appeal'
Overseas Weekly Edition, 27 April 1964.


overzeese weekeditie 25-4-1964.

ZEESE WEEKEDITIE

Protest van Papoea's in Nederland

Enige in Nederland wonende Papoea's en andere voormalige ingezetenen van westelijk Nieuw-Guinea hebben een telegram gestuurd aan de secretaris-generaal van de Verenigde Naties, de minister van buitenlandse zaken van Indonesië en diens collega van Nederland. Zij delen daarin mee dat zij de proclamatie van trouw aan Indonesië en de integratie van het volk van West-Irian in de republiek Indonesië niet erkennen.

Deze proclamatie is enkele dagen geleden bekendgemaakt door de gouverneur van de Indonesische provincie West-Irian, E. J. Bonay. In het protesttelegram wordt gezegd dat deze proclamatie aan de heer Bonay is opgedrongen. De ondertekenaars bieden hem „namens het gehele Papoeavolk" deelneming aan „in de zeer moeilijke omstandigheden waarin u en het Papoeavolk verkeert."

Het is ondertekend door de heren Kaisiepo, Jouwe, Gosewisch, Womsiwor, Jufuwny, Ongkubuan, Westra, en Tan Seng Thay.

'Protest by Papuans in the Netherlands'
Overseas Weekly Edition, 25 April 1964.

During one of our walks Tony and I went to the laundry below the deck. It was filled with the crew's clothes and sheets. Mr Lamanie, a Javanese man, was ironing, and greeted us warmly. He had heard about us and was pleased to finally meet. We addressed him as 'Tuan' but he immediately said "No, not tuan, not sir, just bapak Lamanie, Mister Lamanie."

Mr Lamanie was a nice guy and cooked for himself because he didn't fancy Dutch food. We also preferred rice to potatoes so we often ate with him. Lamanie didn't ask questions, just chatted on while ironing the stacks of laundry. He had a habit of spitting on the clothes rather than using a spray bottle. I asked him why and he replied in his thick Javanese accent, "Loh, buat apa pakai spruwitnya? Pakaiannya kan punya orang Belanda. Mereka kan tidak lihat sih" (Why use a sprayer? These belong to the Dutch. They won't notice).

Meanwhile we had set course for China. Before we reached Shanghai there was a lifeboat drill so that everyone knew what to do if the ship sank. Tony and I were assigned the first mate's boat, lifeboat-4, on the aft deck. It was a thrilling experience on such a large ship. During my training at maritime school we had practised this drill on small boats.

On 17 May, the day after the lifeboat drill, it was Boatswain Eigenraam's birthday. Tony and I were invited to the party in the canteen. It was a real sailor's party, with much singing, dancing and drinking. They went through at least five boxes of beer. I remember, because I noted it down.

A few days later, the boatswain handed me a small red book. "I was supposed to give this to you, it is from Leo." I asked about Leo who I hadn't seen lately. The boatswain whispered that he and his friend Jan had disappeared in Sydney; had run away. I was shocked. All sorts of thoughts raced through my head. How could my friend leave me on this ship? Now he couldn't help me anymore. Maybe because of me, he had got into trouble and lost his job. Would I ever see him again? I had so many questions but no answers, and I worried about Leo. How would things go for him in Australia? I couldn't sleep.

In hindsight, I realize that Captain Grauenkamp must have had a terrible voyage: forced to pick up two stowaways in Sorong, and then two crew members running off in Sydney. When the ship entered Shanghai a few days later, the door of our cabin was locked again. We weren't allowed to be seen in the harbour.

CHINA

21 May 1964: MS Schelde Lloyd docked in Shanghai harbour. Tony and I were locked in our cabin with the portholes closed. In the afternoon, two armed men from the military port security came on board with an order from their commander. They demanded that our captain unlock the door of our cabin, arguing that we were not prisoners. Remember that political relations between China and Indonesia were very tense at that time, and we had fled from Indonesia. So while we were in Shanghai, our cabin remained open, with two Chinese guards on either side of the door. They were in uniform, with red epaulettes on their shoulders and a red star on their cap. They were friendly, and to our surprise, even spoke some Indonesian. They wanted to talk, although their Indonesian with a Chinese accent was a bit difficult to understand. We didn't stroll around the ship in Shanghai because we preferred sitting and chatting with them. They observed us curiously. One remarked "You don't look like Indonesians, you look very different with your curly hair." I replied immediately "Yes, that's right. We're not Indonesians, we're Papuans."

The guards were very curious about our reason for leaving New Guinea. They reiterated that the relationship between China and Indonesia was not good, and gave me two booklets written in Indonesian. One was about neo-colonialism, and the other was about Indian support for Russian communists against China. I'm not a communist, and never will be, but I read both with interest, firstly, because I had nothing else to do on board for four months, and secondly, because I was curious about what these booklets had to say. I kept them. They were quite fascinating.

After four days in Shanghai, we set sail for Sinkiang, where two more Chinese guards came aboard, and again, on Chinese orders, our door remained unlocked. They were nice guys, and also spoke Indonesian. Looking back, it was remarkable in those times to find Chinese in China speaking Indonesian. I showed them the booklets their colleagues in Shanghai had given me. They were very impressed and told me to read them thoroughly. We only spent a day in Sinkiang. The next destination was Tandjung Manis, near Sarikei in Sarawak, formerly British Borneo.

BORNEO, MALAYSIA

It was only eight months since the formation of the Federation of Malaysia, and the times were turbulent. Sukarno had succeeded in taking over West Papua and was not happy that the British were handing 'his'

portion of Borneo to the Malaysian Federation. Using the slogan 'Ganyang Malaysia' (Crush Malaysia) he confronted Malaysian Borneo and Brunei, a kingdom in the north of the huge island. Rebels supported by Indonesia were on the march, and during our journey to Sarawak there was fighting at the Malaysian-Indonesian border.

There was no harbour at Sarikei, so the Schelde Lloyd anchored offshore. The local police commander soon arrived in a speedboat, and after he spoke with Captain Grauenkamp, we were put on the speedboat and taken to the Sarikel police station. There, without explanation, we were told to undress and put in separate cells. I didn't understand what was happening. I was in my underwear in a bare space, about two by two metres, and spent the night on the concrete floor. I was angry, but mostly scared, and didn't know where Tony was. I tapped on the wall, and when I received three taps back, I knew he was in the adjacent cell. Just to be sure, I tapped again and got another tap in return. Yes, that had to be Tony. That gave me some peace of mind.

The next morning we were taken out of our cells and told to get dressed. While we waited, they pressed coffee into our hands. I remember the coffee wasn't in a cup but in a Friesche Vlag milk carton. They had poured coffee on top of the thick milk, given it a quick shake and then "Ayo, minum" (come on, drink). Then a Malaysian military commander and his British colleague came and sat opposite us and fired off questions in Malay. "Mengapa kamu lari, kamu toh orang Indonesia... kita mau tahu mengapa." Why we had fled? Why we had come to this side of Borneo when we were Indonesians? Tony and I spoke over each other. "We're not Indonesians, we're Papuans ... We want independence, just like you do ... We fled from Indonesia and we want to go to the Netherlands ... We didn't know the ship would sail this route." The men kept staring at us and repeating "You're Indonesians, why are you here?" We told them again that we had fled, that we wanted to go to the Netherlands, that we didn't know the ship would dock in Malaysia. This went back and forth a few times until the Brit shrugged his shoulders and ordered for us to be taken back to our cells.

We stayed in those two small cells for four days. In the morning, we got coffee, and in the afternoon we got rice with salty fish. Just salty fish, without anything to drink with it. And the rice wasn't cooked properly so it was hard to eat. Once I asked for something to drink, and was told to go get it in Jakarta if I didn't like it here. It became clear that we were suspected of being Indonesian spies, which fit the circumstances of the time. We just kept quiet because our future depended on their decision.

Meanwhile outside our cells things were happening. Captain Grauenkamp couldn't leave without us, but the police didn't want to let us go until they had thoroughly questioned us. After three days the captain had enough. He ordered the first mate to go to the police station and tell them that he wouldn't leave without us, and would hold the British government responsible for the damage caused by the long wait.

Apparently that helped because the next day we were taken to a medical post. At the time there was a cholera outbreak in Sarawak and people were lining up for vaccinations. The officers arranged for us to bypass the line. We were ushered inside, given a shot in the arm, driven back to the harbour, and handed to agents in a speedboat who brought us back to the ship. The Schelde Lloyd crew leaned over the railing cheering as we were helped back on board. Even the captain was glad to see us. The next day we left Sarawak and set course for Bangkok.

SUMATRA, INDONESIA!

During the next three days we were able to walk around the ship, and we chatted with the sailors and visited the laundry master. There were so many ships in the port of Bangkok that the Schelde Lloyd had to anchor for a day before we could dock. While the ship was in port, we were locked in our cabin again, so I can say that I've been to Thailand, but didn't see anything of it.

Our next stop was Singapore. We were port for a week, and locked in our cabin. We could do little but sleep, read, and listen to the ship radio. After Singapore, the ship stopped briefly in Port Swettenham, now Port Klang, in western Malaysia, and again we were locked in our cabin. The first mate was the only one allowed into our cabin. He said our next destination was Tandjung Pinang in Sumatra! What? Just when we thought we had escaped, we had another stop in Indonesia.

The ship had barely arrived in Tandjung Pinang when the first mate told us two Indonesian journalists had come to interview us. It didn't sound good. I didn't want to end up in a Sumatran prison. Back in Geelong, the Indonesian embassy had sent someone, and now in Sumatra, two more were trying to remove us. Indonesia had clearly been tracking the ship. Fortunately for us, and unfortunately for Indonesia, Captain Grauenkamp also realized the men were fake. He allowed them to conduct an interview, but on the deck in front of the first mate, and no photos that could implicate his ship in our escape.

As Tony and I agreed at the beginning of our journey, I was our spokesman. The men introduced themselves as journalists and said that they had heard we were heading for the Netherlands. They first asked why we were fleeing (so they already knew we were on the run). I replied that we had left because of the political situation in Irian where we were no longer safe. They asked what the problem was. I said that we Papuans were no longer free. Under the Dutch, we could be Papuans, but under Indonesia we had no say. They didn't pursue that, instead asking how we had come on board and who had helped us. I replied, curtly, that we had climbed on board ourselves and hidden. Then Captain Grauenkamp came and told them to leave because the ship was about to depart. He might not have been easy, but he was protecting us well.

Those two guys might have thought they were dealing with a couple of uneducated Papuans, but after a few questions, I think they realized we weren't fools. Nevertheless, Tony and I were relieved as we leaned over the railing with the first mate and watched them leave the ship. The anchor was lifted and the ship had moved before they had even left the quay. With a bit of pride and a touch of mockery, we waved goodbye from above "Selamat jalan" (farewell) "go back to your kampung."

MY OWN EXODUS

On 29 June 1964, the Schelde Lloyd sailed out of the Sumatran port and we left Indonesia behind. We were heading towards the Middle East, across the Indian Ocean to the Arabian Sea. Near Yemen a severe storm tossed the ship around in enormous waves for three days. It was frightening to be at the mercy of such ferocious waters, but also fascinating to surrender to those natural forces. Everyone had to stay in their cabin except the men on deck checking everything was securely lashed. Tony was so seasick that he just lay in bed and didn't eat for days. I sat by the porthole watching the waves crashing over the ship. I couldn't get enough of it. "Here comes one ... yes ... and another ... bring on those waves, yes, yes, one more time.." For hours each day I watched the sea play with our ship, carried away by the forces of that wild water, that free wild water that raged as fiercely as my desire for freedom.

The journey from Sumatra to Yemen at the mouth of the Red Sea took eleven days, and we stayed in the port city of Aden for three days unloading the cargo. Then the ship made a sharp turn into the Red Sea. The water was calm so the captain let us stand on deck and look around. This was a very special route, and I am very glad to have experienced it:

coastlines on both sides, past Jeddah near Mecca, Egyptian Cairo, then through the Suez Canal to Port Said. The Suez Canal isn't very wide; two large ships can barely pass each other. We could have jumped off onto land if we had wanted to. And so we sailed from Egypt to Israel, past Jerusalem and Haifa to Beirut in Lebanon. On deck, I mused that all of these biblical names that I had learned in school weren't in heaven but here on earth and in the present.

After unloading at Beirut we crossed the Mediterranean Sea. On the port side, we could see the islands of Cyprus and Crete glistening in the sun. In the evening, we saw lighthouses between Sicily and the tip of the Italian boot. Across the Tyrrhenian Sea, we sailed to Genoa, past Naples and Rome. I wrote in my notebook "As seen from the sea the cities of Naples and Rome sit at the foot of a mountain."

We spent a day in Genoa, then Marseille, and then around the Iberian Peninsula. First mate Briedé was a good source for my curiosity. I wanted to know everything, and he enjoyed telling stories. Sometimes I visited him in the wheelhouse. On the way to Barcelona he showed me Toulouse through his binoculars. I had never heard of Toulouse, but I noted the name down in case I ever wrote a book.

According to my 'buku pintar' (notebook) we arrived in Barcelona on 24th July 1964, three months after leaving my 'tanah air' (my land) or 'sup ayedi' in the Biak language.

PASSING ROTTERDAM

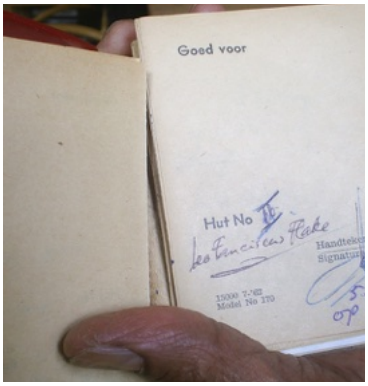
After a day in Barcelona, we sailed through the Strait of Gibraltar, up past Portugal and Spain, then along the Bay of Biscay, and finally the English Channel. Wrapped in a thick sweater, I stood on deck, with a cold wind blowing against my face. First Mate Briedé said "Look, there's Rotterdam." In the distance, I saw the harbour. "Rotterdam, Rotterdam!" My stomach began to churn. But the ship continued at full speed. Why were we sailing past? As the Dutch coastline faded in the mist, I leaned over the railing, arms outstretched. The first mate said we were first going to Hamburg and Bremerhaven. "Where's that?" I shouted. "In Germany." I couldn't believe it. "No" I screamed. "Why Germany? What do I care about Germany? I need to go to the Netherlands. I have nothing to do in Germany!" He calmly replied "We need to unload cargo in Germany, then we go to the Netherlands." What a trial! Three months at sea, so close to my goal, and now we make a detour to Germany.

We anchored for four days in Hamburg. The climate seeped into my bones and the cold settled in my legs. Even under my blanket I was cold. But in Hamburg we finally got to do some work, after not being allowed to for all that time. We were told to wash the dishes in the kitchen. But of course the Dutch do things differently, and after we rinsed them all the went into a machine. Nevertheless, it was good to finally feel useful.

On the third morning in Bremerhaven, Boatswain Eigenraam entered our cabin and stood in front of me with his hands in his pockets. “Do you know what day it is today?” he asked. I didn’t. He crossed his arms. “You really don’t know?” No, I really don’t know. Grinning, he said I had to shout a round of drinks. “Why? Are we are sailing to the Netherlands?” Eigenraam laughed “No. It’s your birthday! It’s the 5th of August.” “Really?” I asked. “Yes, really, and you have to shout a round of drinks. The boys are waiting in the mess.” I didn't have any money and tried to get out of it. “How can it be that I am Papuan and a Dutch subject and have to celebrate my birthday in Germany?” It was clear that I had to buy drinks, but how was I going to pay? I didn’t have any money. Eigenraam said “Didn’t I give you Leo’s credit book? Look, he has already signed, so go ahead and order. They’ll deduct it from his salary.”

In the mess hall the boatswain shouted “Hey guys, drinks on me, Eddy’s paying.” The men cheered when they realized the drinks would be charged to Leo’s credit book. “Hey, drinks to your health!” And drink they did. I didn’t stay long because I’m not much of a drinker. And I didn’t feel like drinking at Leo’s expense when he wasn’t there. I didn’t know where he was or how he was doing. I missed him.

Forty-eight years later, I discovered Leo hadn’t left the book for me. The men had used it to get back at Leo, drinking on his tab through me. Leo had skipped ship in Sydney, and never saw his belongings again, including his credit book, guitar and salary.



Leo's credit book. I kept it and use it on the road as my 'buku pintar' (notebook).

Two days later we were ready to sail again. Locked in our cabin, we heard the crew bustling around, cheerful and noisy. They had been away for seven months and tomorrow would be home again. About two in the afternoon there was an announcement from the bridge: "Course set for Rotterdam!" The words echoed in my mind: "We're heading to Rotterdam!" The engines started and the ship began to tremble. I was so tense that I could hear the clicks of the lever in the engine: click—slowly ahead towards the harbour; click—half speed, enter the lock; click—full speed exiting lock into the open sea, bound for Rotterdam.

We lay in bed, but couldn't sleep, tossing and turning with thoughts and questions. Out of bed, off to the toilet, doing nothing, back to bed, out of bed again. In the evening, the boatswain summoned us and said "You can walk around and enjoy the sea air and the lights in the distance." Then it was back to the cabin for the final stretch of the journey with the door locked.

ROTTERDAM

At six in the morning on Saturday, 8th August 1964, we slowly sailed into the port of Rotterdam. We were locked in our cabin, but the shutters of the portholes were open. It was a clear morning with a deep blue sky. We peered through the thick glass and saw the lighthouse. Large ships were moored, and the piers and quay in the distance bustled with activity. When the ship docked, a cold shiver ran down my spine, and not because of the chilly morning breeze. Thoughts pounded through me: "What is going to happen to us now?" We sat silently on our beds, staring at the floor, then the ceiling, so tense we could barely look at each other. Tension isn't the right word. It was fear, just pure fear.

Suddenly, the key turned in the lock. First Mate Briedé opened the door. He stood there with two police officers and said with a smile on his face "Come outside boys, you're home." The older of the two officers repeated what Briedé had said "Come along, you're home." Between those two officers, we walked down the gang plank and left the ship. We couldn't even say goodbye to the crew, as they were busy with their duties on board. On the quay, I glanced back one last time. What a journey around the world. Farewell Schelde Lloyd, thank you.

A SHORT NOTE ON THE MOLUCCANS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Currently in the Netherlands there are about 71,000 descendants of the first generation of Moluccans (who arrived in 1951) and about 24,000 descendants of those who came after 1963.

Moluccans have a special position in The Netherlands, because most did not come as immigrants, but as soldiers of the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL) in the 1950s.

The KNIL was a colonial army established in 1814 that had actively recruited the fierce skilled warriors of the Moluccan archipelago for as long as anyone can remember. The KNIL was disbanded after Indonesia's independence in 1949, its 60,000 native soldiers told to either go home or join the Indonesian National Army.

Both options were impossible for many Moluccan soldiers. President Sukarno had prohibited them from returning to their island homes, believing they would join the South Moluccan Republic (RMS) which he had ordered the Indonesian Army to suppress. The RMS was a revolutionary response to Sukarno's elimination of the state of East Indonesia, one of several states in the national federal structure to which the Netherlands, under UN supervision, had transferred sovereignty. Within six months of the transfer, Sukarno supplanted the federal structure with a unitary system of government that concentrates power in a single central government.

In 1951 the Dutch government ordered the transfer of 12,500 Moluccan soldiers and their families to the Netherlands for a 'temporary stay of 4-6 months'. On arrival they were discharged (so unemployed and stateless) and homed in 90 locations, including monasteries, army barracks, and World War II (Nazi) concentration camps.

Unable to negotiate their return, and not willing to recognize the RMS, the Dutch government changed the Moluccans 'temporary stay' to 'indefinite period', and then in the 1970s to 'involuntary permanent settlement'. This for the communities was an enormous betrayal. Several refused to move to the houses in special neighbourhoods built for them, and forced evictions continued until 1984. In the camps, Moluccan communities revived their traditional culture and social structures and inserted the stories of betrayal into their oral enumerations. As the scars of the first generation became a collective memory for the second generation, Moluccan youths resorted to politically motivated violence to attract attention to their unenviable

circumstances both in the Netherlands and in Indonesia.

In 1966, in response to Indonesia's execution of RMS President Chris Soumokil on 12 April 1966, they set fire to the Indonesian Embassy in the Hague. In 1970, they stormed the Indonesian Ambassador's residence in the The Hague, took 35 hostages and killed a policeman. On 2 December 1975, they hijacked a train near Wijster, and held 50 passengers for 12 days, during which the driver and 2 hostages were killed. On 4 Dec 1975, they raided the Indonesian Consulate in Amsterdam, and held 60 civilians, including 16 children, hostage for 15 days. One of the Indonesians jumped to the ground and died of his injuries. On 23 May 1977, they hijacked a train near De Punt, and took 50 hostages for 20 days. During the rescue operation Dutch Marines fired 15,000 rounds of ammunition into the train, killing 2 hostages and the 6 hijackers. On 23 May 1977, they held 105 children and 5 teachers hostage in a primary school in Bovensmilde. They released the children after five days, but held the teachers for another 19 days. The last hostage-taking, involving 71 civilians, was in the Assen town hall on 13 March 1978. During the rescue operation by Dutch operatives the following day, one hostage was shot, and another fatally wounded.

Faced with inter-generational trauma and the Dutch refusal to remember their historic promises, Moluccans mounted a series of legal cases against the Dutch State. In 2017 the family of two of the De Punt hijackers accused the state of extra-judicial killings, principally of ordering Marines to execute all the Moluccan train hijackers. Although the judge concluded the State had withheld details in the autopsy reports, the Court of The Hague dismissed the case in 2018, concluding that the Dutch State had not taken unlawful action in ending the hostage crisis. An Appeal follows in 2021.

Over the years, Moluccan communities started initiatives to support livelihoods on the Maluku islands as well as addressing the specific social issues of Moluccan children growing up in the Netherlands. Famous football players like Simon Tahamata and Giovanni can Bronkhorst became heroes of the Dutch National league, yet always represented their Moluccan heritage. Nowadays, Moluccan people find their own way in Dutch society while strictly keeping the special Moluccan neighbourhoods for those who wish to live in close community. The RMS Proclamation Day and the train activists at De Punt are yearly commemorated as an internal affair. The bitter sense of betrayal will be passed onto the next generations, again and again. The classic cabin trunks displayed at the Museum are a visual reminder: one trunk per family, packed for a temporary stay of four to six months.

5

stranger in the netherlands

Stranger in the Netherlands

When we arrived in the port of Rotterdam, we were escorted by two officers to the police station on the quay, and to our surprise we were warmly welcomed. Nowadays, it must be quite different when you arrive in the Netherlands as a stranger. But then again, we weren't really strangers as until recently we had been Dutch subjects.

While one officer took our names and origins, the other officer shook our hands and introduced himself as Van Schaik. He told us that he had been a police inspector in New Guinea and had married a Papuan woman, which was why he had been called in for this conversation. Meanwhile, the first officer continued with our registration without asking for our papers; indeed the entire registration took less than ten minutes.

When the first officer took our file away, we were left alone with Van Schaik. He quickly looked around, then leaned over the desk, and in a soft voice told us what to say when we were brought before the commissioner. The ship was set to return to Indonesia in a few days, and we needed to make sure that we weren't put back on board. Van Schaik said "The commissioner will ask you a lot of questions. You must only say one thing: that you want political asylum. You must stick to that, and nothing else." He also said that he would contact two Papuan leaders in the Netherlands. When he asked if we knew the names Kaisiepo and Jouwe, we knew that we had found a friend in Van Schaik.

After the other officer returned, we were taken to the headquarters of the Rotterdam foreign police and handed over to the commissioner, who could decide our fate. The commissioner was an impressive man. We felt intimidated by his uniform and the large desk he sat behind. The two guards left, and the room filled with silence. The commissioner silently examined us from head to toe. I thought he might not have seen a Papuan before. When he finally started talking, he said that he had already been informed of our arrival but that he had no information for us at the moment. We would be taken to a cell to wait and see what happened next. Without having exchanged names or pleasantries with this man, the guards took us away.

Tony and I were back together in a cell, but this time we were allowed to keep our clothes on. That was just as well, as it was quite cold in this country, even in August. Around noon, we were taken from our cell to the canteen, and had lunch with six other detainees. Two were young girls. There was also a Moluccan man who told us he was suspected of

possessing weapons. The girls were curious about us, especially when we told them we were stowaways from the former Dutch New Guinea. "Oooh, you're Papuans" one exclaimed. While we were chatting, the Moluccan man sat silently, nodding, and then spoke in Malay, wanting to know why we had fled, and I was happy to explain. However, when he invited us to stay in touch, I politely declined. It didn't seem wise.

Van Schaik kept his word and the next day we were taken out of our cell and brought to the waiting room. Bapak Markus Kaisiepo was there, with Paulus Obinaru, Ong Kobuang, and Peter Petai. Of course, we recognized Bapak Kaisiepo immediately, even though we had not met in New Guinea. We were impressed that he had come to see us with a delegation from the Front Nasional Papua. After a brief, cordial greeting, he said "Kamu dua rambut besar sekali" which means "You two have a lot of hair!" Something had to be done about that. Peter Petai immediately cut our hair. What fell on the floor would have filled a pillow.

After our tidy up Bapak Kaisiepo got down to business. "You are not going back" he said. "You will stay in the Netherlands, we will make sure of that." He added very firmly "If we hear that you must leave, I will sleep on the steps of Soestdijk Palace demand that you are not to be sent back." He assured us we would soon be released. It was a short visit because we were not allowed out of our cell for more than thirty minutes.

As they left, Peter Petai gave us two jumpers that Viktor Kaisiepo and Demi Prawar had sent for us. Tony took Demi's jumper, and I received Viktor's. They were nice, warm winter jumpers, and I wore mine for years. When it no longer fitted, I put it in the cupboard as a keepsake. It is still there now. I felt strengthened by Bapak Kaisiepo's words. Back in our police cell, I wrote on the wall with the thick black marker the Moluccan man had given me in the canteen: "Sukarno, kalua Papua merdeka saya gantung kau dipohon yang paling tinggi di Papua" which means "Sukarno, if Papua is independent, I will hang you from the tallest tree in Papua." I stepped back and looked with satisfaction at what I had just written on the wall. I also enjoyed looking at it from my bed.

THE COMMISSIONER

We spent a few days in the cell. Tony and I spoke very little as we were each lost in our own thoughts. On the fifth day, we were brought before the commissioner. As Van Schaik had predicted, the commissioner said he intended to put us on the Schelde Lloyd back to Indonesia. He

looked very serious as he told us this and added that he was sorry. Tony and I turned to each other, bewildered. Our eyes said “Apalagi?” (What now?). We had no use for the commissioner’s apology.

With Bapak Kaisiepo's encouraging words still fresh in my mind, I replied that Tony and I would definitely not go back to Indonesia. Definitely not. The commissioner looked surprised. I think he wasn’t used to being contradicted. Clearly irritated, he snapped, "Listen carefully, you cannot, and must not stay here! There's no one to take care of you! No one is responsible for you!" I took a deep breath, folded my arms, and chose my words carefully. “Mr. Commissioner, there are two Papuan leaders here. And even if I can’t reach them right now, I am sure they will take care of us. Someone will be responsible for our stay in the Netherlands." The commissioner retorted: "Who? And who are you?"

Cautiously I stood up, and as politely as possible, told the commissioner that I could prove that we could stay in the Netherlands. He wanted to see that. So I asked him very politely if I could use his desk for a moment. He hesitated but was curious, so I took off my jacket and laid it on the desk. "What are you planning?" he asked. "Well you wanted to see my proof, didn’t you?" I replied. "Here it is."

I tore open the lining of my jacket and took out all the papers I had hidden four months earlier in Sorong. I spread then out on the desk and looked expectantly at the commissioner. His first reaction was "Where is your proof?" I showed him the documents with my full name on them. Then I fished out the newspaper article from the 1961 Nieuw-Guinea Koerier. "This is the speech by State Secretary Bot during the installation of the New Guinea Council." He took it and began reading. Tony and I exchanged glances and then stared silently at the commissioner as he read the article. It was State Secretary Bot's 1961 statement that the Netherlands had an obligation towards the Papuans.

ASKING FOR ASYLUM

After he finished reading the article the commissioner looked at me. He seemed like a different man. With a big smile he said "What do you mean by this?" Very slowly, enunciating each word very clearly, I replied, "We invoke this commitment by Mr. Bot and we are applying for political asylum in the Netherlands." There. The crucial words were out.

Before I boarded the ship in Sorong, I hid all my documents in the lining of my jacket. I knew I would need them in the Netherlands.

The commissioner hissed through his teeth. He nodded a few times and then looked me straight in the eye and said "You're a clever boy." I immediately gained more courage and replied "I learned that cleverness from the Dutch." He smiled, the ice between us was melting.

The commissioner sprang into action. Picked up the phone, called the guard at the harbour, and told him the two officers who had brought us in were to return immediately. While we waited, the commissioner stood by the desk, examining the papers I had spread out: my birth certificate, my parents' marriage certificate, my vocational diplomas ...

Fifteen minutes later, the two officers walked into the office. Without greeting them, the commissioner called them to the table, and in the tone of a schoolmaster said "Do you recognize these two? Yes? Did you search them before delivering them here?" The officers both shook their heads. One said apologetically "They didn't have anything on them. They're stowaways." The commissioner stood up. With both arms in the air, he exclaimed "Oh no? Nothing on them? Have a look at what's on that table!" The officers stared in astonishment. "Where did those come from?" The commissioner said they had all come from the lining of my jacket, and now because we had applied for political asylum he had to act on it. Because of the newspaper article he has to contact Mr. Bot, who was now the Minister of Education, Arts, and Sciences. A big shot.

In front of me and Tony and the officers, the commissioner started making calls. It soon became clear that he had Minister Bot on the line. We heard the commissioner say that he had two Papuan boys with him who had ended up in Rotterdam as stowaways on a Dutch ship and

were now requesting political asylum. Then he started talking about the newspaper report on the installation of the New Guinea Council in 1961. “Minister Bot" he said "you made that statement back then. Now I want to hear from you what I should do. Next week that ship is going back to Indonesia. Should I send these two Papuans back or not?”

For a few minutes the commissioner listened attentively on the phone, occasionally nodding and taking notes. “Hm hm... yes, yes, hm hm... yes, yes, okay, that’s clear. Thank you, I will arrange it.” With pounding hearts we waited. From the look on the commissioner’s face, it wasn’t bad news. He made a few more notes and then turned to the officers. “Listen, as long as I’ve been commissioner, I’ve never received an order for political asylum over the phone, but the minister said he would arrange it immediately.” We could expect confirmation by dispatch that afternoon, and then we would be free.

Tony and I heard the words, but didn’t believe them. The commissioner told us to wait until the afternoon, and then told the officers to take us back to our cell. I had just enough presence of mind to ask if I could take my papers. Back in our cell I carefully arranged them and re-tucked them into the lining of my jacket. It had been a good idea to bring them from Sorong. Tony and I asked each other if we had really been granted asylum. Just like that? Was it true? Now what? We lay down on our beds and waited to see what the afternoon would bring.

A little after four in the afternoon, we were taken back to the commissioner. He received us warmly with a firm handshake and said “Congratulations, boys, you can stay.” We almost fell over. “Really? We can stay? Here, in the Netherlands?” We clasped his hand between ours. We bent over and kept shaking his hand. “Really? Thank you, thank you, thank you...” The commissioner looked at us, laughing, and continued, “Yes, you can stay, and we’ve also arranged some things. This driver will take you to a youth hostel.” He added that we were free but still under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I can still vividly remember being driven in a white Beetle (the nickname for the Volksagen used by the police back then) to the youth hostel in Eendrachtsweg Street. The building was alongside the Westersingel (canal), not far from Rotterdam harbour. The manager had already been informed and was waiting for us in the hall. He welcomed us and asked about our luggage. We had none, only the clothes on our backs, the same clothes we had worn during all those days in the cell. We must have smelled pretty bad. That evening Tony and I washed our clothes

with hand soap and hung them up to dry in the bathroom. The tension fell away, and we began to feel human again.

A FAMILIAR FACE

We had a nice room with two windows, two beds with fresh sheets, a small table with a television, two chairs, and two wardrobes for clothes we didn't have. The floor was covered with a light brown lino that felt pleasantly soft under our bare feet. We felt much better in this room than in the cell, although we couldn't leave it because we had no dry clothes and no money. On the top floor of the building, you could see the harbour over the top of the houses. I liked watching the water and ships. We didn't have much contact with others in the hostel, but from all the languages we heard, we knew they came from various countries.

I don't know how it came about, but there was an article about us in the Rotterdam South neighbourhood newspaper. Even our names were mentioned. Roel Scheerhoorn read the article, and during our second evening in the hostel I was called to reception to meet him. Roel. My friend Roel from Hollandia! For a long moment, we stared at each other. Then Roel exclaimed "Is it really you, Eddy? How on earth did you end up here?" He walked over to me and we hugged. "Yes, it's me," I said. "How come you are here?" Roel mumbled that he had read my name in the newspaper and that his wife was waiting for me at home, but that he first wanted to check if it was really me. It was almost two years since we had seen each other and we had so much to talk about.

The hostel manager stood by listening silently. When we finally let go of our long embrace, Roel asked him "Can I take this boy to my house tonight?" The manager called the owner of the hostel who wanted to know who Roel was and what all the fuss was about. Roel explained "This is my best friend from Hollandia. I trained him to be a carpenter. I'm astonished that he is still alive and standing here in front of me." The owner was amazed. Roel chatted on. "I want to take him home with me tonight if that's alright. I've already discussed it with my wife and I've gathered the family. They're waiting at home to meet him." Roel's words almost made me burst with impatience. Of course I wanted to go! Nodding eagerly, I looked hopefully at the owner. He thought for a moment and then said, "Yes, that's fine, but there's one condition. You must bring him back before midnight tonight because I'm responsible for him. If he doesn't return tonight, you'll have the police on your back." While Roel wrote down his address and phone number, I rushed to tell Tony that I

would be going out with an old friend. I promised to tell him everything when I got back, but for now I was in a hurry to leave.

Outside, I climbed onto the back of Roel's white Vespa, and we rode off into streets lined with brick houses and concrete flats. We stopped at one of the flats. "This is where I live" Roel said. "This is Korhaanstraat, and I live upstairs on the first floor." I looked up. The family was waving from the window. "Look" Roel laughed "they're waiting for you."

Roel led the way up the stairs. The door opened and a friendly woman smiled and said "Come in, you're at home here." She gave me a brief hug and introduced herself as Jannie, Roel's wife. The little boy next to her was their son Bert. The living room was full of Dutch people, all smiling at me. I was a bit overwhelmed and not quite sure what to do. They all came to me, one by one, to shake my hand. They introduced themselves as Roel's brother, another brother, Roel's sister, Jannie's cousin, a nephew of Roel, a friend of the nephew of Roel, a neighbour. It made my head spin a bit, but everyone in the room made sure I felt at ease.

Roel immediately started talking. He told stories about the past, about the things we did together, the places we had been, and how I had helped him back in New Guinea when he had to work overtime. The people in the room listened attentively to his stories about our friendship. They also wanted to know how I had ended up in the Netherlands.

Now it was my turn to talk, as Roel didn't really know the full story. I told them about my penfriend Leo, about the Schelde Lloyd, how Tony and I had hidden on board, and how we had ended up in Rotterdam in a cell at the immigration police. I told a short version of the story, as if we had never been nearly thrown overboard in the first week, as if we had never slept in police cells in so many countries, as if we had never been so terribly frightened. None of that mattered anymore. What mattered was that I was now sitting in Roel and Jannie's living room in Rotterdam. Of course, they also wanted to know why I had left New Guinea and if it really was so bad there. My answer could have been a very long story, but Jannie intervened: "All well and good, but this boy needs to eat first. We'll talk later."

Jannie must have known I was starving because she piled my plate high. Real Dutch cuisine; potatoes, meat, vegetables, and a generous topping of gravy. I was hungry. The potatoes and meat tasted wonderful but I struggled with the purple vegetable. It looked odd, and it smelled strange too. I did my best not to show it and ate everything. When

Jannie asked if I liked it, I told her a polite little lie: "Yes, it's very nice." Jannie had welcomed me so warmly that I didn't want to disappoint her.

Now that I am a father and grandfather, I always tell the children to learn to eat everything. But to be honest, with a wink to Jannie, I still don't like beetroot.

When we sat down for coffee one of the men said "So what happens now? Are you going to live here? Where will you work?" I hadn't really thought about it. I had only just arrived and was still recovering from the journey. Suddenly, ideas and suggestions were pouring in about where I could live, what work I could do, at this company or that, I was a carpenter after all, what else could I do? They mentioned the names of people I had never met and places and companies I had never heard of.

While everyone was talking over each other about what to do with me, I leaned back with my own thoughts. I had left my family in Biak, but I wasn't alone here, because the people in this living room were concerned about my future. Just like in normal families. When it was time to take me back to the hostel, Roel said "Listen, where Eddy will live and work is my concern. Jannie and I will take care of it." I had faith in that.

Back at the hostel, Tony was still awake. I had a lot to tell him, but he also had stories to tell me. He had been visited by Martinus Kiminon, a Papuan from Merauke who worked in Rotterdam as a sailor for an inland shipping company. Martinus had also read that article in the neighbourhood paper and was curious about us. He and Tony had chatted for hours, and Tony had decided to start sailing again (but not on long voyages). Everything had happened so quickly. Roel and Jannie were taking care of me and Martinus was looking after Tony. We talked deep into the night about our new plans, the new opportunities that were being offered to us, and the decisions we now had to make. I think this might have been the longest conversation I ever had with Tony.
A week later the director told us that we were free to live wherever we wanted. Roel and Jannie said that I was welcome to move in with them and they would also help me find a job. Of course I didn't have to think twice about their generous offer. When Roel came to pick me up, I said goodbye to Tony, who had seized his opportunity to work with Martinus on the inland waterways. We had shared a big adventure, but now we were going our separate ways. Full of hope, we wished each other well. It was only later that I found out that it was Tony's birthday.

I moved in with Roel and Jannie with few clothes. Jannie insisted that Roel and I go shopping because if I was going to work I would need

more than one pair of trousers. That night, while Jannie did my laundry, I slept in a too-large pair of Roel's pyjamas in the playroom that Roel had built for little Bert and the model train. For now it was my bedroom, and I hoped Bert wouldn't mind that I had taken his playroom.

The next morning, Roel and I got on the scooter and went to a department store. I had only known small shops, so I was wide-eyed and impressed by such a large space filled with beautiful items. And it smelled so nice, with all sorts of different scents. The stairs that move up-and-down by themselves were fascinating. Roel pulled me into the men's department and pulled out trousers for me to try on in the fitting room. We laughed a lot because they were all so big and so long.

A salesman approached and asked if he could help. Yes, we definitely needed help. He took out a measuring tape and mumbled that I was a boy's size, not a men's size. He went away and returned with a pair of smart trousers and two pairs of jeans. All three fitted perfectly! On the salesman's advice, we went to the boys' department for underwear and shirts. If it had been up to Roel, we would have bought half the store. I felt embarrassed, and kept saying we had enough. Besides, I wanted to show the clothes to Jannie first to see if they were alright.

As we walked to the checkout with my new clothes in plastic bags, Roel stopped at a display of suitcases. "Wait a moment" he said, and a little while later I walked out with all my new clothes in my own suitcase. Later, I also got a smart suit for church—not from the department store but from a proper men's shop where it was tailored for me. And we got new shoes as well because mine were quite worn out. With that pinstripe suit on, I was no longer a stowaway but a proper gentleman.

FINDING A JOB

Meanwhile Roel sprung into action, calling old acquaintances and colleagues from New Guinea about a job. I heard his conversation with a supervisor from Bredero who had worked at Bouwmaatschappij Hollandia. "Hello, it's Roel. How's it going? Busy? You'll never guess who is staying with me. Do you remember that Papuan boy I trained as a carpenter? Yes, that's right... Eddy Korwa... well he's here, at my place. I'm looking for work for him. Any projects available?" I don't know how the rest of the conversation went, but Roel hung up with a satisfied look. "Well, Eddy, you'll need to rise early tomorrow. They'll pick you up at nine to start work." Jannie was surprised as I was. So soon!

Well before nine o'clock, I was ready with the lunchbox that Jannie had packed. It was exciting. I was looking forward to working. The car arrived right on time and Roel walked me downstairs. The two men greeted each other loudly in true construction-worker style. When Roel pointed me out, I went to shake hands, but the man grabbed me firmly by the shoulders. "Hey lad, is it really you? How did you end up here?" I told him it was a long story and he said "We'll get to that later. Come on, let's get to work!" Before I got into the car, Roel said that he would come by later in the day to bring me my coffee money. The man wouldn't hear of it. I was under his wing now. I looked back and Jannie was waving energetically from behind the window. My first day of work had begun.

We drove to the salt factory under construction at the harbour. I was greeted by several men who had worked in New Guinea who already knew that a Papuan was joining them. I was immediately put to work fitting door frames and window frames. We didn't talk much while we were working but during the breaks the men had so many questions that the supervisor occasionally intervened. "Give the lad time to settle in, or he won't be able to work properly." They all laughed and we got back to work. As in Hollandia, I felt comfortable among these rough, open-hearted construction workers, even if I was the smallest midst these big Dutch guys. Sometimes I had to assert myself, but sawing wood and hauling planks kept my mind off my memories of home.

After a week my carpentry work inside was finished, and the supervisor sent me outside to start hauling materials and carry scaffolding parts. I enjoyed the hauling, but the scaffolding posed a problem. I found myself increasingly afraid of falling and couldn't even look down. Later, I found out this was called acrophobia. During the break, I told the supervisor about my problem. I wanted to be honest with him. I couldn't imagine doing carpentry at that height. Fortunately, the conversation went well and the supervisor understood my concerns. He had seen boys on the construction site before with a fear of heights. We agreed I would discuss it with Roel and get back to him the next morning.

That evening I talked to Roel about my problem. I told him I was surprised by how scared I was of heights. I had never felt so uncomfortable that I would consider resigning. I was a bit ashamed, but I had no choice, because I was afraid of falling to my death. I was very grateful that I could do carpentry and that I had been so warmly welcomed, but I couldn't go back up those scaffolds. I had to ask Roel not to send me back. Jannie joined our conversation. She agreed that I couldn't return to construction with acrophobia. She told Roel firmly "He's scared, so

call the supervisor. Tell him the lad won't be coming anymore."

That evening Roel informed them I wouldn't be returning. I felt relieved, yet also burdened. Was I in a position to turn down work? I told Roel and Jannie that I didn't want to take advantage of them. I had travelled to the Netherlands free on the boat, but I didn't want to live rent-free with them. I wanted to give something back. Jannie suggested calling her brother, who might have work for me at his garage in Rhoon, which was not far from the town of Poortugaal. Thinking there would surely be a job for me somewhere, I went to bed feeling reassured.

The next morning, a driver from the construction company delivered an envelope. Roel accepted it and waved it cheerfully when I walked into the kitchen. "I've got some cash for you here!" he exclaimed joyfully. I opened the envelope, and there was a hundred and fifty guilders inside. This was more than we had agreed on but Roel assured me it was fine. I handed the money to Jannie, but she refused to accept it. "No lad, that's for you!" she said, pressing it firmly into my hand. I insisted that I didn't want to live rent-free, but she said, "I won't take board money from you. We are just glad that you arrived safely in the Netherlands."

For three days I just sat at home. I tried to be useful helping Jannie in the kitchen. Jannie kept saying I didn't need to, but Roel assured her that I was used to doing household chores. He understood that I needed something to occupy myself with, or otherwise I'd end up brooding about home. "Alright" Jannie said "here's a tea towel."

While I was drying the dishes, little Bert came in with something to show me. I followed him to my bedroom in the basement, which was actually his playroom, and he pointed to the train tracks running along the shelves. "Look" he said "my dad built these tracks. If you plug it in here, and press this button, the train will start moving. It goes like this, see, and then it stops in the corner. That's Rotterdam station. People can get off there and others can get on." After I had fully admired his train, my little friend continued "If you want, you can play with it too."

In my new suit as Bert shows me the allotment garden.

The next day Roel took me to Rhoon on his scooter to meet Jannie's brother. I liked Jannie's brother. Moreover, he had a job for me at his garage. For the first few days, I shadowed the other lads to learn how things were done, but soon enough I was inspecting radiators myself. During breaks, Jannie's brother asked the lads how I was going. They all chimed that I was doing fine, that I was quite technical, that they had no complaints about me. I worked at the garage for more than a month, and probably would have stayed longer if I hadn't moved to Utrecht.

I heard from Martinus Kiminon that Tony was back from his inland navigation job and was staying on the boat which was moored in Zevenhuizen. When I told Roel, he suggested that I catch a train and bring Tony back. This was my first trip on a train. I found it magnificent, especially watching the landscape whiz past so quickly. I saw fields with cows, people working in the fields, large buildings, tall towers. We passed through forests and along waterways until I heard over the intercom that we were approaching Zevenhuizen station.

Tony stayed with Roel and Jannie for three days. After that he stayed with their friend across the street who had a spare room. We kept in touch with Martinus Kiminon over the phone. He was involved with the Papua National Front, and opened the way for us to meet Papuans

who were active in the Netherlands. Thanks to him, we received our first invitation to meetings and got to know other Papuans living in different cities. That's how we met the Rumbekwan family in Utrecht (who are from the same village in Biak as Tony's family). Uncle Rumbekwan worked as a warehouse assistant at Defensie (Dutch Army) in Kanaleneiland, Utrecht. We hit it off right away, and he suggested that we move in with him. He said there were other Papuans working in his department, with names like Itaar, Lapong, Kinder, Asmuruf, Inggamer, Antoh, and that there would surely be a job for us in the army.

After discussing it with Roel and Jannie, we started preparing to move to Utrecht. Roel and Jannie believed that the Army would be good for us as it would provide us with stability. We agreed, but leaving Roel and Jannie's hospitable home weighed heavily on me. After all, these kind people had provided me with my first accommodation and my first step here in the Netherlands. We agreed that I would call as soon as we arrived in Utrecht. Of course! This was not goodbye…

Jannie and Roel Scheerhoorn and their little son Bert in the allotment garden.

6

true colours

True colours

I had left my country, but my heart continued to beat for Papuan independence, for all those people there who continued the struggle, for all those who continued to believe in freedom and justice. I built a new life in the Netherlands, but always with the one thought in my mind of returning home. How beautiful it would be to rebuild our country for a new generation to grow up in freedom.

I moved from Rotterdam to Utrecht and lived with Tony and the Rumbekwan family in Overvecht. Uncle Rumbekwan worked at Defence, in Warehouse 150 TD, 150 Technical Service. He and Uncle Itaar used their contacts to arrange a meeting for Tony and myself with the captain of Technical Services at Kanaalweg. The captain told us he had good experience with Papuan workers and was eager to make room for us. The following week, we were assessed in The Hague, and two weeks later we started working as warehouse assistants at 150 TD in Utrecht.

We often spent Friday evenings playing card games with the Rumbekwan family and the Inggamer family who lived next door. Naturally, there were tall tales to tell and discussions about the future. It was enjoyable and we felt connected and determined until there was a split between our two leaders, Jouwe and Kaisiëpo, with Jouwe founding a new party, Komite Kemerdekaan Papua Barat (West Papua Independence Committee) and the Kaisiëpo faction continuing as Front Nasional Papua. The impact on our Papuan community in the Netherlands was significant, and the division continues to influence the younger generation. Many no longer want to be involved in the struggle. That's regrettable as it is the young people who have opportunities in the Netherlands to learn and develop for the future.

In December 1964, Tony and I became members of Front Nasional Papua. As young members, we didn't have much say, but in the spring of 1965, Mr Kaisiëpo invited us to a political meeting in a small hall at Hotel Smits on Vredenburg in Utrecht. This was the first time that we were included and we felt that we belonged. More meetings followed, each in a different place. I always enjoyed attending, not only to stay informed but because it made me feel connected to home. I also hoped that even from a great distance, I could still contribute meaningfully.

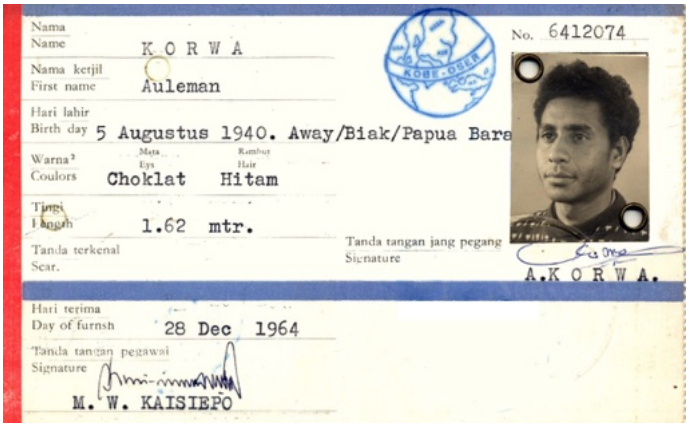
With Tony in Amerongen, 5 September 1964.

KOBE OSER

The situation of Papuan students in the Netherlands was discussed at these meetings. They had been sent to study during Dutch colonial times and had their own organisation, Kobe Oser. After the handover to Indonesia, Kobe Oser was meant to disband as there were no longer any Dutch government subsidies. Half of the students went home to what was now called Irian Barat. The other half remained in the Netherlands, continuing under the name Kobe Oser but without student subsidies. They were affiliated with Front Nasional Papua, which appealed to me because Kobe Oser means 'unity' in the Biak language.

I was particularly inspired by these students who remained motivated even without Dutch subsidies. They wanted to continue their studies and use their knowledge to rebuild our country. I wanted to be part of that, and was very pleased to be asked to participate in a fundraising campaign for them. Their scholarships had been terminated because the Dutch government no longer wanted to be responsible for Papuans. A special committee called 'Hulp aan studerende Papoea' (Support for Papuan Students) was set up by the treasurer of the Raiffeisen Bank,

Mr. Van Schaik, and several other Dutch sympathisers. The chair of the committee was Reverend J.F. de Weger from Delft. My contribution was small, but I was proud to pose for a photo published in De Telegraaf about the campaign. It was a simple but successful campaign, and the proceeds enabled twelve young Papuans to continue their studies.


Nama
Name K O R W A
Nama ketjil
First name Auleman
Hari lahir
Birth day 5 Augustus 1940. Away/Biak/Papua Bara
Warna
Coulors Choklat Hitam
Tinggi
Length 1.62 mtr.
Tanda terkenal
Scar.
No. 6412074
Tanda tangan jang pegang
Signature
A.K O R W A.
Hari terima
Day of furnsh 28 Dec 1964
Tanda tangan pegawai
Signature
M. W. KAISIEPO

Front Nasional Papua card, with the Kober Oser logo I designed.

DINO

Although football isn't politics, or shouldn't be, it has often played a role in our struggle. In the summer of 1965, there was a friendly match between the Netherlands and the Indonesian national football team at Feyenoord Stadium. The Indonesian team was staying at a hotel in The Hague after it had finished its tour of East Germany. One of the players, whom we'll call Dino, was Papuan. He had sent a card from Germany to two football friends in the Netherlands. Though the message was vague, it was clear he needed something. When the Indonesian team arrived in Holland, Van der Werf (who had received the card), went to the stadium to speak with 'Dino' but the guards had been instructed to prevent any contact with the Indonesian players.

That evening, Van der Werf tried again, this time at the hotel in The Hague, and was permitted to meet Dino under the supervision of an Indonesian escort. Naturally, the escort wanted to know why he wanted to meet Dino. Van der Werf told him that he and Dino played football together at HVC, a football club in what was then Hollandia. The escort liked the story, and after Dino and Van der Werf chatted for a while, he left them alone while he used the restroom. In those few minutes, Dino hastily explained his desire to flee. A plan was quickly made. When the

escort returned, Van der Werf asked permission to take Dino out for the day. He replied that Van der Werf could pick Dino up the next morning, on condition that he would bring him back to the hotel in the evening.

The next day Van der Werf came to the hotel and told the escort that he was taking Dino to his home in Boskoop for the day. Everything seemed in order, so the two of them walked to the station and caught a train to Hollands Spoor, one of the smaller stations in The Hague. What the escort didn't know was that two Papuan friends were waiting at Hollands Spoor with a car. Everything had to happen quickly in case they were being followed. The two Papuans got out, Dino got in, and the car sped along the highway towards the Achterhoek. A good distance away we were waiting in a parking lot with another car, into which Dino was transferred. The first car continued its route, while we drove Dino in a different direction. I sat in the back, heart pounding, constantly checking to see if we were being followed. Dino was sitting beside me and wasn't doing well. He said he needed to vomit. I told him we couldn't stop, and handed him my scarf to vomit into. We drove him to an address where he could temporarily hide with a Dutch family who were former New Guinea residents. When we arrived, the police were called and told that the footballer Wawejai (Dino) had gone missing and would report himself after the Indonesian football team had left the Netherlands. The police advised Dino to keep his hiding place secret for the time being. They also said that Dino would need to report in Rotterdam, as he had entered the country through that city.

A few days later, Dino was taken to the immigration police in Rotterdam and detained for two weeks. When I met him later, he told me he saw my message to Soekarno on the cell wall, and laughed "I think they have a special cell reserved for Papuans." After Dino's 'disappearance' the rest of the team was flown back to Jakarta immediately, probably because Indonesia feared the Moluccan players might defect as well. For some time Indonesia tried to reclaim Dino. They even got so-called Indonesian farmer organisations to protest about the Dutch ‘taking’ one of their footballers. The story about 'the angry farmers' was even published in a Dutch newspaper. Van der Werf was accused of harbouring colonial sentiments for not returning Dino to the hotel. Despite the commotion, Dino was granted political asylum in the Netherlands, and a few years later married a lovely Dutch woman.

As I mentioned, football has always played a significant role in our community. In June 1966, there was a friendly match between the Kobe Oser team and a Dutch team from the Achterhoek region. Dino was

our captain, Ben Kaisiëpo was in goal, Jos Maigoda was stopper, and I played right winger. Now that the Dutch government no longer cared about us we aimed to build new contacts and support. We didn't want to be forgotten. We lost the match, but we won many new friends. I heard spectators say things like: Wow, those Papuan boys can play football ... They play technically well too ..... In Papua, they play barefoot but here with those football boots they're really good.

Kobe Oser soccer team in 1966. standing (l-r): Dortheis Wandosa, Gerson Kaigere, Seth Rumbiak, Jos Maigoda, Dino Wawejai, Eddy Korwa, Max Ireeuw. seated (l-r): Sem Kajoi, Fred Korwa, Dirk Kerewai, Ben Kaisiëpo, Fred Ireeuw, Ben Kafier, Viktor Kaisiëpo. absent: Herman Wanbraus, Stef Ondoafo.

Gevluchte Papoea (voetballer) Wawejai ontmoet zijn

Eddy Korwa vlu als verstekeling

„Het was er geen leven meer...!"

door B. Lulofs

DE „gedeserteerde" (Papoea) rechtsbuiten van het Indonesische elftal, Dominggus Wawejai (19) zal dezer dagen ergens in Nederland de hand drukken van zijn „wapenbroeder" Eddy Korwa (24).

Eddy is — óók — uit Westelijk Nieuw-Guinea gevlucht. Vier dagen en vier nachten verborg hij zich in de dubbele bodem van „een schip", dat uit de haven van Sorong op Westelijk Nieuw-Guinea, vertrok. Buiten de Indonesische wateren meldde hij zich bij de kapitein. Na een wilde vaart van vier maanden over de geven ze in beslag de rivierpolitie hem in Rotterdam van boord. Hij vroeg en kreeg politiek asiel. De eerste Papoea.

Terreur

IN een exclusief vraaggesprek heeft Eddy Korwa

De jonge Papoea Eddy Korwa hield zich vier dagen en vier

Eddy Korwa fled as a stowaway. "There was no life there anymore."

MARCHING TOURS

Kobe Oser wanted to register us for various marching tours where we would walk as Papuans in a group with our Morning Star flag. We participated in four-day marches in Stegerda, Delft, Rotterdam, Arnhem, and even in Belgium and France. Often we would only walk for a day because the most important thing was to show our flag. The atmosphere during these walks was always cheerful. We were friends, laughing, singing, with many stories to tell each other.

In 1966, fifteen of us completed the Nijmegen Four-Day March (Walk of the World), the most beautiful of the classic international marching tours. Our caretakers were Mr Westra and his Papuan wife Nel Kaisiëpoe. We stayed overnight in a town called Mook. While you are walking you can have a long conversation with a German, or an American, or a Swiss soldier, and it was nice when these foreigners asked about our flag. We also received a lot of support from veterans: "Hey, there are the Papuans! Hello sobat!" The strongest walker in our group was Demy Prawar, who used to be in the PVK (Papua Volunteers Corps) and was very experienced over long distances. We walked for four days, 55 kilometres a day. After crossing the finish line, I was taken to the military infirmary (with my medal on my chest) where I had to stay overnight.

We could be quite noisy during these marches. I still remember George Kaigere singing Hava Nagila at the top of his lungs with Israeli walkers. Seth Rumbiak was also a real entertainer. As if he was a commentator at a football match, he would suddenly start shouting: "Yeeesss ... look, look, there goes Eusébio ... Eusébio has the ball and he's heading straight for the goal ... he shoots ... and he scoooores!! Goal for Portugal!!"


Papuan Kobe Oser Team, in white shirts and ties, participating in the 1966 Nijmegen Four-day March (13,352 walkers). right: Sixty-six years later, Eddy's sons Jofrey and Demy in the 2012 Nijmegen Four-day March (45,000 walkers, including Australians).

PROTEST IN THE HAGUE

In August 1965, Kobe Oser called all Papuans in the Netherlands to protest in The Hague after the Indonesian Air Force killed a thousand villagers in Manokwari. We were shocked that Indonesia had deployed bombers, fighter jets and thousands of soldiers against hungry Papuans with spears and World War II weapons (dropped by Americans for the Arfakkers' struggle against the Japanese). Clearly Indonesia had no respect for the local population and just wanted our natural resources. Indonesia still couldn't care less about the Papuans. The Dutch word for disregard is maling. 'Maling' in Indonesian means thief.

The call to protest at the Indonesian embassy was heard and hundreds of Papuans from organisations across the Netherlands gathered in The Hague. We had a demonstration permit and intended to present a petition. However, the protest unfolded very differently. Dutch media headlines included 'Indonesians and Papuans clash' and 'Four countries involved in stick fighting' (about a moment of conflict between Papuans and Indonesians, and Dutch police, outside the Australian Residence). The Haagsche Courant even claimed that we were armed with bamboo spears and the police had to prevent the demonstration from turning into a bloody battle. (We carried one symbolic spear).

On the day of the protest on 22nd August 1965 we gathered at the Malieveld, a large field in the center of The Hague. Indonesia's attack on Manokwari had brought us back together, and we greeted and hugged each other like one big family. The atmosphere was good. People passing stopped and talked, and most were genuinely interested. However a group of Indonesians had also come, claiming to be students handing out pamphlets. The pamphlets said things like: "Realise that you have no right to organise this demonstration ... You have been Dutch since 1st October 1962 ... it would be better if you worried about your own fate .... Papuans in the Netherlands have not yet acquired the rights of first-class citizens ... You are victims of colonial divide-and-rule politics." It was clear they'd been sent by the embassy. Before we even started our demonstration they were handing out their pamphlets which contained almost the same words as the embassy's statement issued later. Their presence really annoyed us. They were in the Netherlands to study, not to meddle with us. So we shouted at them in Malay to bugger off. "Go back to your studies, so you can return to your homeland!"

From the Malieveld we walked to the Indonesian Embassy on Tobias Asserlaan. Mounted police were lined up in front of the embassy. We were stopped and told we had to stay two hundred metres from the embassy and that only a delegation of six people could proceed with the petition. This made us angry because we had a valid demonstration permit. Before the six reached the embassy gate with the petition, the police stopped them because our Morning Star flag was not allowed. So three stayed with the flag and three proceeded to the gate with the petition. A mob of toughs, mainly Moluccans, stood in front of the embassy gate.

So now we were being played against each other in the Netherlands. Papuans and Moluccans should stand together, as we had both been deceived by Dutch promises of independence. The embassy claimed that the mob were Indonesians who had come to arrange visas. That was nonsense because you had to go next door to apply for a visa.

From the street corner, we watched the delegation standing at the gate ringing the bell. By now, we were pretty wound up, first by the students with their pamphlets, then by not being allowed to bring the Morning Star, then by the Moluccan mob, and finally when no one would come and accept our petition. Indonesia had killed a thousand Papuans in Manokwari, and here in the Netherlands, Dutch police were shielding them. Frustrated, I grabbed the bamboo spear and gave a police horse a hefty poke. Not a smart move of course. The beast immediately reared up, and the officer struggled to control it. A friend quickly snatched the spear from me, but it was too late. We broke through the police cordon

and stormed towards the embassy. The mob of pro-Indonesian Moluccans was waiting for us, ready to fight. We stopped on the pavement opposite the embassy, venting our frustration in words, shouting slogans, cursing the Moluccan mob and the Indonesians inside the embassy watching and photographing us from behind their windows.

An Indonesian man came around the corner and blithely walked through the noise and chaos. Police stopped him at the embassy gate and wouldn't let him pass. He tried to explain that he needed to go inside but the police wouldn't let him. We continued shouting. The man panicked and ran next door to the Australian residence. The guard there grabbed him by the shoulders and shouted in English "You don't belong here, you should be over there!" By which he meant with us. The man said "No, no, no, I'm Indonesian!" The guard tried to push him towards us, but he resisted, shouting, "I'm Indonesian, I'm Indonesian, I'm not Papuan!"

We started cheering: "Let him come. Push him this way!" When the police realized that he didn't belong with us they tried to protect him, but the guard kept pushing him out. One of us crossed the street with the symbolic spear and told the guard to keep pushing. A policeman tried to confiscate the spear. I was young and reckless, and chaos took over my mind. 'Mata gelap' or as the Dutch say 'matteklap' (blind rage).

Midst the tangle of people pushing and pulling, I reached for an officer's pistol. I didn't intend to do anything with it, but suddenly three officers were on my back. The whole spectacle lasted half an hour. Eventually the spear was confiscated, and the Indonesian was taken away in a police van. I was taken away too, in the back of a white beetle. And that was the end of the demonstration. No one accepted our petition, so we dropped it in the embassy letterbox.

Dutch media printed the Indonesian Embassy's version of the event: that our action was an insignificant protest by misled Papuans who have "fallen victim to anti-Indonesian propaganda that blows a small local incident in West Irian into fantastic proportions". How could anyone believe that the murder of a thousand Papuans in Manokwari was a 'small trivial incident'? Apparently the Dutch government and media did.

Haagse Courant 23-8-1965

Papoea's vochten
- gewapend met bamboe speren -
tegen Indonesiërs

PETITIE WERD GEWEIGERD

(Van onze correspondent)

DEN HAAG, 24 aug. — Haagse agenten hebben gistermorgen moeten voorkomen, dat een Papoea-demonstratie voor de Indonesische ambassade in een bloedige veldslag veranderde. De honderd Papoea's, van wie sommigen met op assegaaien lijkende, scherpgepunte stokken waren bewapend, werden opgewacht door een grote groep Indonesiërs.

De leiders van de demonstratie raakten slaags met enkele andere Papoea's, die — tegen de afspraak — de Indonesiërs te lijf wilden. Enkele jonge Indonesiërs wierpen zich ook in de strijd, maar de agenten maakten met beheerste charges en veel sussende woorden een einde aan de warboel. Daarvoor moesten ze ook een vijftal woedende Papoea's de politiewagens inslepen en een eind wegbrengen.

De Papoea's demonstreerden tegen de gewelddadige onderdrukking door Indonesische troepen van de Papoea-opstand in West-Irian. De Papoea-studentenorganisatie „Kobe Oser" (vrijheid) was er na afloop nogal boos over, dat ze niet ontvangen werden op de ambassade. De ambassadeur wilde niet met hen spreken en een personeelslid weigerde een petitie aan te pakken. Zwijgend wees hij op de brievenbus van de ambassade. „Wij zijn behandeld als

„Ik ben Papoea, geen Indonesiër" stond in veelvoud op de borden te lezen, die de demonstranten met zich voerden langs het gebouw van de Indonesische ambassade. Even later begonnen de (Maleise) scheldpartij en de wanordelijke vechtpartij.

"Papuans fight Indonesians with bamboo spears. Petition denied. 'I am Papuan not Indonesian' on signs outside the Indonesian Embassy. Later there was a disorderly brawl" (Haagsche Courant, 23 August 1965).

below left: "Four countries stick- fighting" at entrance of Australian Ambassador's residence (Hague Courant, 23 August 1965).

below: "Papuans have a hard time" (Eddy being arrested). Telegraaf, 23 August 1965.

It was clear that we Papuans had not handled our action well, but can that be a reason to overlook a thousand deaths? Doesn't the Netherlands uphold freedom of the press, and freedom of speech? Aren't human rights valued in The Netherlands? I would slowly realize that the Netherlands always prioritizes trade relations over human rights. Even if the International Court of Justice stands in the heart of The Hague.

For economic reasons, Indonesia is now a friendly nation, and the lives of the Papuans are even more irrelevant. Former Dutch New Guinea slowly disappeared from history books, and today's youth don't even know where it is. In 1966 Minister Smallenbroek declared "The agree-

ment of 15 August 1962, which guaranteed Papuans freedom of expression, applies only to the territory of West Irian." In other words, here in the Netherlands, we should stop complaining about our responsibility for our own people, while over there, in Indonesia, we have to keep our mouths shut, or get shot, or disappear into a prison.

As long as resistance against the Indonesian occupation continues in West Papua, we Papuans abroad must ensure that our country remains on the map. This is sometimes difficult, but we must not be silenced and we must not dwell on our sorrows. We must instead dare to look forward, and support and appreciate the younger generation's initiatives, even if older generations did things differently.

FREEDOM MARCH

In May 1969, in the run-up to the Act of free choice August, Kobe Oser called for a freedom march from Nijmegen to The Hague in collaboration with Obor Nasional Ideologi Melanesia (National Torch of Melanesian Ideology), a group of Moluccan youths who were born in New Guinea. According to the New York Agreement (1962-1969), all adult Papuans, men and women, had the right to vote 'to stay with Indonesia' or 'sever ties with Indonesia'. It was clear that Indonesia would use force to compel the Papuans to choose integration with Indonesia.

I made a special banner for the freedom march with the words "Minister Luns, don't play the role of Judas." After all, the Netherlands had initiated the development towards independence in New Guinea, but at the crucial moment turned its back on the Papuans. Any politician could see that the Papuans had nowhere to go, nowhere to turn, while the Netherlands deliberately looked the other way. The Netherlands betrayed the Papuans for a few pennies, for trade relations with Indonesia.

We knew it wouldn't be enough to demonstrate at the Indonesian embassy or the Binnenhof (Dutch Parliament in The Hague). If you want to be heard, and don't want Papuans to be forgotten, you need a sympathetic audience that knows who you are.

With thirty young people from various organisations, we gathered at Nijmegen station, where we were addressed by Ben Kaisiëpo, the chairman of Kobe Oser. He emphasised the importance of showing our unity on this day, of raising our voices to support the Papuans in our homeland. The organisation had planned the route meticulously. On the first day, we walked from Nijmegen via Elst to Arnhem and from there through

Oosterbeek, Wageningen, Ede, Maarn, Veenendaal, Hilversum, Duivendrecht, and Hoofddorp to Kaag, where we would spend the night. We started with thirty people, and along the way, more joined us.

We set off towards Waal Bridge singing with our flags and banners and immediately noticed people were keen to take our pamphlets. At that time the Dutch still knew who the Papuans were and why we were protesting. There was little need to explain the Act of free choice and why we were concerned. The mostly positive reactions were encouraging.

Along the route you could easily spot the veterans. They'd shout out "Heee sobat ... well done!!" And if they got strange looks they would shout: "They are the Papuans!!" Some veterans walked with us, singing their songs that we all knew so well: "What do we do with Soekarno when he comes, when he comes ...". The mood was great, and with all the support we felt confident. After the Waalbrug (Water Bridge), we walked along the Rijksweg through Elst towards Arnhem. Police occasionally drove past slowly in their 'white mice' (Porsches, which traffic police used back then) and waved. Sometimes, one would stick his head out of the window to ask the march leaders if everything was okay. We would give them a thumbs-up and they'd drive on.

At Arnhem-Zuid, we crossed the Rijnbrige. Now there are two bridges, but we walked over the old bridge. The march leaders and a delegation of three men went ahead to the town hall to present our statement while the rest of us waited at the bridge. Then the march continued to Oosterbeek and Wageningen. It was a very beautiful walk, alongside the water for a while and then through fields, with the forest on our right. After Wageningen, we continued through Ede, Maarn, Bilthoven and Hilversum, where to our great surprise we were met by the mayor, Dr Pieter Platteel, and his wife and son. The mayor gave a short speech, expressing regret for what happened in 1962. He knew everything about Papua. He was the last governor of Dutch New Guinea, from 1958 until the end in 1962. After his speech, Dr Platteel invited our group to a meal at a nearby restaurant. It was very special to be sitting at a table with the man who had been our big boss in New Guinea just a few years earlier.

Our journey continued through Graveland, Abcoude, Amstelveen. We walked through forests, along waterways, under bridges, on the side of busy roads, on small paths, through villages with well-kept gardens, and fields of wild flowers, and meadows with grazing cows. In this flat land, you can see far, and often a windmill in the distance. I recognized some place names in the Dutch landscape from my geography lessons in Biak.

I was thinking that when our country is free, I would like to work in tourism and show visitors our forests, the wild orchids that grow freely on trees, but are so expensive in Dutch shops. I'd show them birds they have seen in zoos, which fly freely over our forests and mountains. I would take them by boat to our islands with their waving palms and white beaches, where children can swim without a diploma. I would let them taste young 'kelapa', which they call 'klapper', the fresh coconut milk and the soft, sweet flesh from the tallest palm trees. I would let them look out over our clear sea and tell them about the fish and the coral. Maybe I would even catch a fish and roast it for them over a campfire on the beach. But first we have to first be free.

When we arrived in Amstelveen, we were offered food and drinks on the street. We stopped and sat down with these good Dutch people, and a few Indonesians joined us. It turned out they had been in New Guinea and knew very well what we were talking about. Despite the differences between Papuans and Indonesians, we felt connected at that moment, and were encouraged by their support. They waved us off warmly as we moved on to Aalsmeer and its very big windmill.

Towards the end of the first day we walked around the Westeinderplassen and took a ferry to De Kaag. The lodge the leaders had arranged for us there was very special: a long house on stilts above the water, similar to those back home. We were tired and soon organized our sleeping arrangements. From my bed, I looked through the window over water to the horizon. I am always amazed how slowly it gets dark in this country. Where I come from, it gets dark suddenly at six o'clock every night.

The next morning we got up early because we had a long walk ahead of us to the Maliveld in The Hague. During breakfast we all noted how beautiful the place was, and how we would come back to spend more time by the water. Outside, the march leaders had another surprise for us, a large motor launch to carry us across to Warmond. We were delighted. With a Morgenster flag at the front and another at the back, we sailed across the Dieperpoel laughing and singing. The lake was indeed a noisy place with so many Papuans and Moluccans. And the boat was so laden the water nearly came over the edge. It's a wonder we reached the other side without having to swim.

From the little harbour in Warmond, we walked through Oegstgeest to Leiden, and then under the station to Wassenaar. Along the way, we were stopped by a policeman in civilian clothes on a motorcycle. We knew him. He had come to warn us that he'd received a message that In-

donesian students would confront our freedom march just outside The Hague. Our reaction was unanimous. We told the policeman to let those people know that they should wait for us there. He said not to worry because we would have a police escort through the city to the Malieveld.

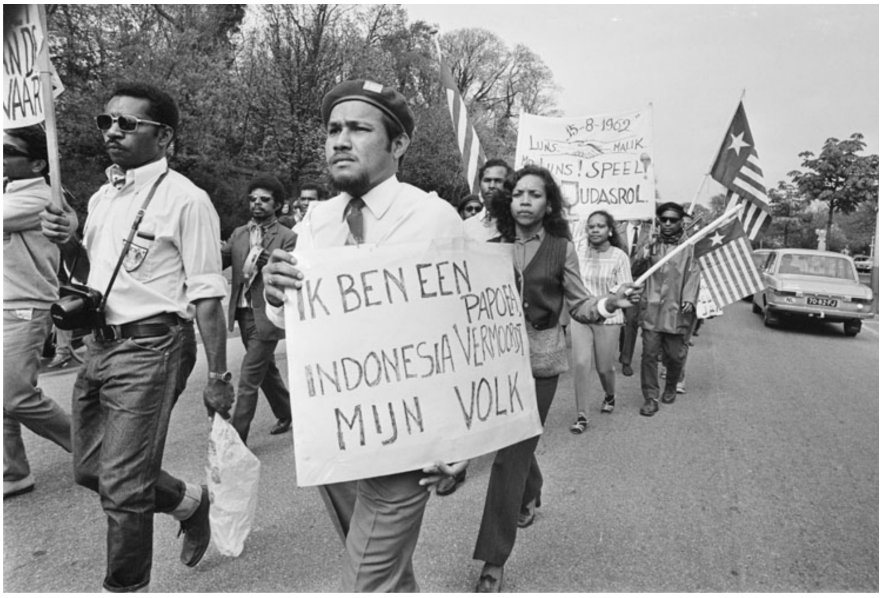
We walked on singing loudly, and didn't encounter any Indonesian students as we headed for the Malieveld. A large crowd cheered us on, all waving Morning Star flags: Papuan communities, friends from Moluccan organizations, and even some former marines. More importantly, the two Papuan leaders, Kaisiëpo and Jouwe, were there together. I felt very proud because our freedom march brought us all back together. Here we were, one big community on the Malieveld in The Hague. People embraced each other with tears and laughter, and plenty of tall tales about everything we'd experienced along the way. The Marines treated us with coffee, soft drinks and sandwiches. Even though we didn't personally know many of the veterans, we stood there eating sandwiches as if we were old comrades. Many veterans still feel connected to the Papuans. Like us they were abandoned by their government. Their story isn't in the Dutch history books either.

Everyone joined the walk to Vredespaleis (Peace Palace). We went via the American Embassy where Ben Kaisiëpo presented a petition to the representative who came outside and had a short conversation with us. The Indonesian Embassy was already closed, but Viktor Kaisiëpo, Ben Kafiar, and Peter Petai dropped the petition in the letterbox. At the Palace we were greeted by more Papuans and dozens of veterans, maybe a hundred people altogether. Even journalists and camera crews were waiting for us. It was somewhat telling that the Dutch national broadcaster NOS only gave brief coverage, while ABC Pacific and BBC World filmed extensively and interviewed the march leaders.

The freedom march was truly successful. Papuan youths associated with both our leaders and our Moluccan brothers walked the entire route from Nijmegen to The Hague. At the Malieveld, we were welcomed by both leaders. We had presented petitions to the American and Indonesian embassies, and Peace Palace. We did it together, and we felt united.

What hurts me is that the strong feelings of togetherness during the march did not last, and the Papuan community remained divided behind the two leaders. Thankfully there are now active young Papuans with their own organisations and a network that reaches way beyond Dutch borders. I hope their efforts will lead to a clear voice for Papua, because while we keep bickering among ourselves here in the Netherlands, the suffering in Papua will continue.

In 1971 I left Kobe Oser. I will come back to that in another chapter. But let it be clear that I am a Papuan and will always be a Papuan. The title of this chapter is 'True Colours'. I will never renounce my true colours.



Peace March 1969. ONIM (Moluccans born in New Guinea).
Banner: "I am a Papuan. Indonesia kills my people."

Eddy with banner behind Ursula Kaisiëpo. Banners: 15-8-1962, Luns shaking hands with Malik “Mr Luns! Do not play Judas”; “We are Melanesians not Indonesians."

7

sien

sien

I knew Sien's father when I was in Dutch New Guinea, and he was the commander of the Mobile Police on Sorong-Doom Island. Back then, I was a sailor on the patrol boats, and I sailed with him around the Raja Ampat islands. I used to see Sien when she was a little girl catching the ferry to school, but I didn't know who she was, and I didn't know that I would eventually marry her in the Netherlands.

In 1965 I was working in Utrecht City as a warehouse assistant at the 150 TD Technical Service on the Kanaalweg (Canal Road). I enjoyed driving the forklift, loading and unloading large crates from the heavy trucks. I was good at it and the drivers said "Why don't you become a driver on the road?" I told them that I didn't have a drivers licence. So they put in a good word for me, and I was soon sent to the Kromhout barracks to train for a military licence. The driving lessons were intense. Almost every day, from morning until late afternoon, I was on the road with a three-tonner. I loved being so high above the traffic, even if the instructor had to put two cushions on my seat so that I could see through the windscreen. Those vehicles were built for tall Dutch lads, not for a Papuan who stood at 1.62m (5' 4").

With a driving certificate in my pocket, I returned to the 150 TD. I had hoped for a small celebration, but after the commander briefly congratulated me, I was sent to the drivers to be assigned a role. I was no longer working in the warehouse. I was on city duty doing mail and orders. Work started in the drivers' canteen, and then as co-driver (with cushion) in a military beast on the main road. I wasn't allowed to drive the large trailer on my own without a special licence, which came later.

I got along well with the drivers and was proud that this small Papuan man now belonged to the big, tough guys. However, I did have to endure some things from these men. One day, I had spent almost an hour thoroughly cleaning my delivery van, but after coffee, when I stepped into it to start work the steering wheel was covered in grease. How could that be? My hands were covered in grease, and so were my work trousers. I was furious and stormed into the chief's office. I told him I had just cleaned my van and now couldn't work because I was covered in grease. I was so angry. I shouted things like "Who did that? Remember, I'm a head-hunter, I'll cut his head off."

"Come with me" said the chief. He took me to the canteen where the drivers were still having coffee, and asked who was responsible. No one.

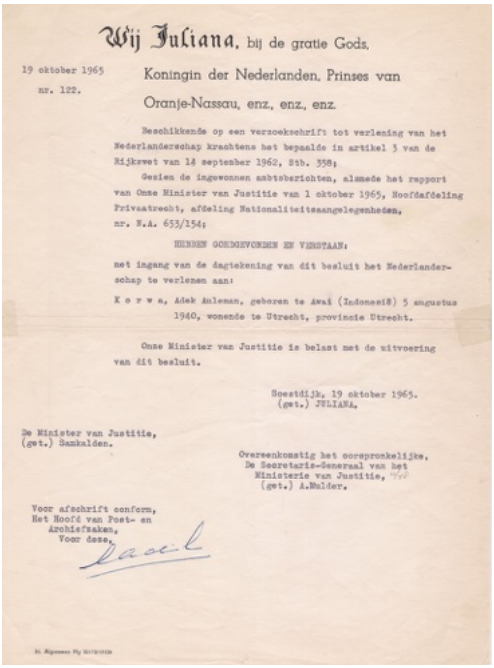
They all had excuses. One had been checking his tyre pressure, another inspecting his load, another had just come in. When I asked who did it they just laughed and offered me a piece of Henk's birthday cake. I shook my head and shouted, "I don't want cake, I don't like cake! I just want to know who did it!" The men laughed harder until the chief said "Okay, lads, this isn't funny. Tell us who did it so we can sort things out."

There was silence, and then Henk's brother, Ko, stood up and walked towards me with open arms. "Sorry" he said, trying to hug me. I pushed him away. "No, I don't want your apology. I don't find this funny, I'm going home." The chief intervened. "No, Ed, you're not going home. Just wait." He told Ko to clean my van and take my soiled trousers to the dry cleaner. "Alright" said Ko "I'll do that, but hey, Ed, give me your hand. It was just a joke, let's bury the hatchet. Can we be friends?" I took his outstretched hand. "Okay, but not again, alright?"

A few days later I got my revenge. Ko always left his work shoes in the cab of his lorry and walked around in sandals, so I filled his shoes with grease, and smeared his steering wheel and gear stick. I was in the canteen enjoying coffee with the other drivers when we heard Ko shouting and swearing. He stormed into the canteen bellowing "Where's that Papuan!!!" Everyone started laughing, realising that I had pranked Ko. The big bloke came at me furiously, and I said "Now we're even. Now we can bury the hatchet." In the end, we became friends.

A DUTCHMAN

Work was going well, but Tony and I still had to report to the Immigration Police every Monday, which sometimes took hours, meaning we couldn't be assigned any duties. To be honest, Tony and I sometimes took advantage of the situation and took a walk, but eventually, the commander ordered the personnel department to apply for our naturalization. Three months later the Ministry of Justice wrote declaring that Queen Juliana had granted us Dutch citizenship on 19 October 1965. Since then, I have been officially Dutch.



Wij Juliana, bij de gratie Gods,

19 oktober 1965
nr. 122.

Koningin der Nederlanden, Prinses van Oranje-Nassau, enz., enz., enz.

Beschikkende op een verzoekschrift tot verlening van het Nederlanderschap krachtens het bepaalde in artikel 3 van de Rijkswet van 14 september 1962, Stb. 358;

Gezien de ingewonnen ambtsberichten, alsmede het rapport van Onze Minister van Justitie van 1 oktober 1965, Hoofdafdeling Privaatrecht, afdeling Nationaliteitsaangelegenheden, nr. N.A. 653/354;

HEBBEN GOEDGEVONDEN EN VERSTAAN:

met ingang van de dagtekening van dit besluit het Nederlanderschap te verlenen aan:

K o r w a, Adek Anleman, geboren te Awai (Indonesië) 5 augustus 1940, wonende te Utrecht, provincie Utrecht.

Onze Minister van Justitie is belast met de uitvoering van dit besluit.

Soestdijk, 19 oktober 1965.
(get.) JULIANA.

De Minister van Justitie,
(get.) Samkalden.

Overeenkomstig het oorspronkelijke.
De Secretaris-Generaal van het Ministerie van Justitie,
(get.) A.Mulder.

Voor afschrift conform,
Het Hoofd van Post- en Archiefzaken,
Voor deze,

I became a Dutch citizen on 19 October 1965.

With my new passport, I felt it was time to stand on my own two feet and move from the security of a family home. It was probably a bit presumptuous, but I wanted to do things with people who were my age. I found a room in a boarding house in De Bilt, where Joop Sahetapy, Seth Aratuaman and Vitalis Katuar lived. So suddenly I was away from all those protective uncles and aunts. It felt a bit strange, but I enjoyed the freedom, not yet realising that I was at the beginning of a long journey.

As new housemates we organized a Tropical Night at the car market in Utrecht. It was meant to be a cultural event for Papuans and Moluccans, with Dutch and Surinamese people also welcome. We were quite bold because we didn't have any money but managed to contract Sandra & Andres, Kilima Hawaiians, Oscar Harris, The Twinkle Stars, and the American Billy Jones. At the time just one Sandra & Andres song cost 500 guilders. Our event sold out and was a huge success. We even had enough money to pay the artists. Later that year, we tried it again in Groningen, but that was less successful and ended in a brawl. We learned a hard lesson and decided not to do anymore.

After a year in De Bilt I moved back to Utrecht to reduce my work-travel time, and rented a room on Wittevrouwensingel, around the corner from the Ozebi indoor pool. Tony also moved there, and shortly after

so did Martinus Kiminon and Peter Petai. We didn't spend much time together. I mostly saw Tony at work. Martinus and Peter worked elsewhere. Eighteen months later, the house in Wittevrouwensingel was sold, so I moved to Zuilenveldlaan, where Jos Dakilwadjir also got a room. We had a great time together. Neither of us cooked so we just ate out. Then that house was sold and we had to find another place. Through a colleague, I got a student room on Catharijnesingel, near the old Academic Hospital. From there I was only in contact with Papuans who also worked at the 150 TD. I rarely spoke with them about home, because it only brought sad feelings.

I missed my parents and siblings in Biak so much that it hurt. The pain I woke with every morning played out every evening as shadows on the ceiling above my bed. It was a longing, guilt really, because I had left without saying goodbye. I wondered whether my parents received the letter I posted on the day I boarded the Schelde Lloyd. Would I ever see them again? Would they forgive me for leaving without saying goodbye? How were they doing? All these questions came up every time I sat alone in my room. The freedom of living alone had turned into a terrible homesickness, and I realized I didn't want to be alone at all. I wanted to be free, but not alone.

At work I increasingly gravitated towards Uncle Itaar, the former police commander who I had taken on patrol through the Raja Ampat islands when I was a sailor. He became a father figure and I enjoyed being around him. One day he invited me to join him at the Pentecostal church, and from then on I spent more time at his family home. I felt secure there. In the winter of 1965, Mrs Itaar (I called her Auntie Itaar) visited me in my room on Catharijnesingel. She looked around and asked where I ate. I told her I usually got chips or ate at work. Auntie didn't like that and said I should come and live with them. I didn't need to think about that for long, although I wanted to make sure that Uncle Itaar was okay with the idea. Within a month, I had moved in.

The Itaar family lived in Overvecht and had three children: Fransien, John, and David. The boys were still young, but Fransien was already in secondary school. After I joined the household she gave up her bedroom and slept with her brothers. The room wasn't big but was comfortable. I mainly spent time with Auntie Itaar. I liked helping her with shopping and household chores in return for the free accommodation. I had a home again, and it wasn't depressing to be alone in my room now. From time to time I even played my guitar.

In Fransien's room, which was now my room.

Tony was still living with the Rumbekwan family, but we saw each other at work and also outside work. One day we decided to buy bicycles. We opted for two ladies bicycles so that Sien and her friend Joke Inggamer, who lived next door, could borrow them. Tony and I enjoyed cycling to the city centre and through the market on weekends. Nowadays, they would call it hanging around. One day I went cycling alone. I still wasn't familiar with Dutch traffic rules and ended up cycling against the traffic on the main road. The police officer who stopped me understood my situation, smiled because I was from New Guinea, escorted me to the cycle path, and gave me a thorough lesson on traffic rules.

SIEN, MY DARLING

Two years passed. I was enjoying my work as a driver at the 150 TD and felt appreciated by my colleagues. I had settled in well with the Itaar family and felt like a part of their family. After school, Joke from next door often came to our house to pick up Sien for a bike ride. I never knew where those girls went cycling. But I did know that Sien had grown into a very nice young lady.

With Fransien, her parents, and her brothers John and David.

In the summer of 1967 Tony and I invited Joke and Sien to the fair in Zuilen. Their parents agreed because they knew us. Right? So finally I could be alone with Sien without her parents. That evening, I gave her a little kiss for the first time. In the following weeks, we went out together more often. Since she was still in school, we only went out on weekends. We enjoyed visiting her relatives in Arnhem. On the train we chatted about life's little things and even talked about a possible future for the two of us. Of course, Father and Mother Itaar saw that something was growing between us, and subtly showed with few words that they had confidence in us. Although the pain of longing for Biak did not diminish, I saw a future with Sien as my sayang (my darling).

When Sien finished school she got a job in administration at the 150 TD. I was very pleased because it meant I could visit her during the day. I had been saving a bit from my salary every month, because I had set my sights on a scooter. Through a colleague, I found a blue second-hand Honda. Helmets weren't mandatory back then, so with Sien riding pillion, we rode through the city with the wind in our hair. That Honda was my pride and joy. I had worked hard for it. On weekends, we rode out of the city to places like Houten or Bunnik to buy eggs and fruit from the farmers. One day rode to Fort Vechten so that I could show here the route that I always took when driving the military truck.

Sien with the Honda outside the flat in Overvecht.

My best memories are of the times we stopped on our journey for a snack. I would take off my service jacket for her to sit on, and we'd eat a croquette or chips with a frikandel (Dutch sausage) and sometimes an ice cream as well. Sitting on the grass we enjoyed the beautiful weather. Of course I enjoyed everything, because I was out with my sayang. We were in love and fantasized about our future. But I had to watch the time because her parents insisted that we were home before dark.

MESSAGE FROM SORONG

One day, I came home from work. As usual, the small table by the stove was set for me, as the family had usually already eaten. But something felt different. Mother Itaar (she was mother now, as in future mother-in-law) was unusually friendly. She was always kind to me, but today she was so friendly that I wondered what was going on. Even during dinner, I couldn't shake the feeling that something was about to happen.

After I finished eating, Mother Itaar made coffee, which was a bit strange because I usually made the coffee after we sat down to watch television. Mother Itaar placed the cup in front of me and said "Drink your coffee, I have something for you". She placed an envelope on the table in front of me. "You have a letter from New Guinea." I saw it had already been opened, but was still surprised when she told me she had already read the letter. "It's a letter from your girl in Sorong. Read it."

I was shocked. The girl I had left in Sorong had sent me a letter! Apparently, she had managed to find my address. Nervously, I opened the envelope and to my surprise there was a photo of a baby. On a single

sheet she had written: “When you left, I was pregnant, but I hadn’t told you. I wanted to surprise you, but unfortunately, you left without saying goodbye. I’m sending you a photo of our son. I named him after your favourite singer. He is now three years old. I hope, if the Lord is willing, that I will see you alive again, so at least he will have a father.”

I was angry. Why was she sending me a photo of a baby? It couldn't be my child, as I had already left Sorong. Mother Itaar stood next to me and asked sternly “Is that baby your child?” I replied that it wasn’t my child. It couldn’t be because I had been gone for a long time. As far as I was concerned, she must have had this child with someone else.

My future mother-in-law took the letter and the photo. She said, “Alright, if this isn’t your child, then I’ll keep the letter. You’re with Sien now. That’s it.” I don’t think she ever discussed it with Sien. Of course, I told Sien about it, and her reaction was proof of her love. She would welcome the child even though we didn’t know if we would ever meet him. Much later, I discovered that my mother-in-law destroyed the letter and the photo. It’s a pity, as I would have included the photo in this book. Of course, that wasn’t the end of it, but I’ll explain further along.

One day there was another surprise from home. A New Guinea veteran called me and said he had a letter for me. He had just returned from a holiday in Biak where he met a brother-in-law of mine. All he was able to tell my brother-in-law was that I worked in Utrecht as a driver for the army. Back in the Netherlands, he got my phone number from 150 TD, because he wanted my address so that he could post the letter. It was from the husband of my youngest sister Lauce:

Dear brother-in-law, we miss you. How are you? Are you married yet? We are doing well. We hope to hear from you.

He included a phone number, and I couldn't wait to call, which I did during my night shift at the Knoop Barracks. It was an emotional moment. We cried, speaking over each other, back and forth. When we calmed down, Lauce told me that we had an older sister in the Netherlands! I couldn't believe it. Weren't we all raised together? Lauce said that our mother had a child from a previous marriage with a Chinese man, and that this girl, Safira, had grown up with her father's family. When she married she moved to the Netherlands with her husband. It was hard to believe. Lauce said that Mum once put a photo of Safira in my Bible. Had I never seen it ? No, I hadn't, because I left my Bible in Sorong with the rest of my things when I left on the Schelde Lloyd.

So if I had a half-sister I had to find her. Luckily, most Papuans in the Netherlands know roughly where everyone is. In any case, during my search I discovered that most of the older generation had long been aware of our family secret, so I was able to easily find Safira. She and her husband ran a Chinese restaurant in Velp. I went there for a meal and when she came to my table, I asked if she was Safira. As we talked, she said she had always known that she was our sister, but because she grew up elsewhere she never reached out to us. And now, here we were in Velp, sitting together in a a restaurant. We hugged each other, a bit awkwardly at first, then she called her husband and suddenly it was lively. We swapped phone numbers and said we would see each other again soon. I had family in the Netherlands after all!

WEDDING PLANS

My courtship with Sien was now a serious relationship, and I was convinced that I would grow old with her. One thing led to another, and a child came along. It was a bit of a surprise for us, but a child born of our love was welcome, and we looked forward to holding it in our arms. However Father Itaar said he wanted to adopt the child. This is our custom. After all, I would be taking his daughter when we got married. I know that I am Papuan and will always be a Papuan, but I do struggle with some of our traditions. It was with heavy hearts that we handed our baby to my future in-laws who raised her as their own daughter. I truly respect my in-laws and our culture, but we are in the Netherlands, and the girl would grow up between two cultures. It's complicated, and a sensitive topic. I just hope she knows that I want her to be happy.

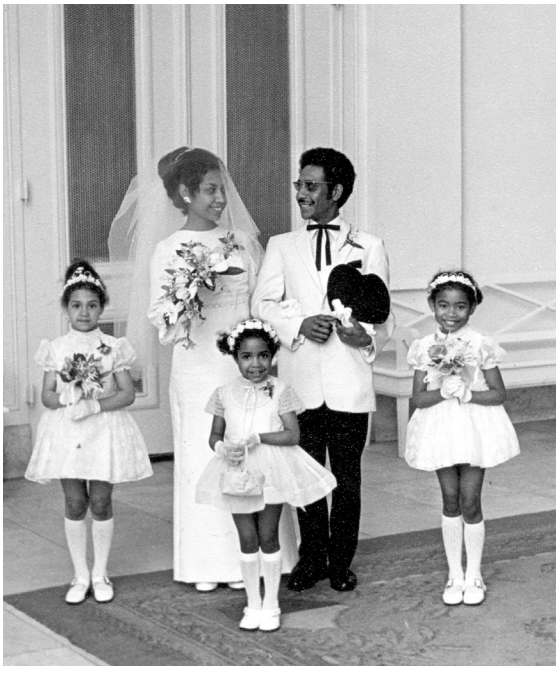
I was a bit cautious in my dealings with Father Itaar. He was not only the head of the family but also a police commander back when I was a young sailor. Therefore, I didn't dare oppose him, especially when it came to discussing my desire to marry his daughter. One evening, while Sien was studying in the side room, I made coffee and asked Mother Itaar if we could have a chat. I explained that Sien and I wanted to marry, but I didn't know how to discuss the proposal with Father. She completely understood and gave me some good tips.

When I asked Father Itaar for permission to marry his daughter he indicated his support but said that I should seek Sien's hand from the Mano family in Leiden. They were, after all, her only direct family in the Netherlands. So we did that, and on 24th April 1971, I married my 'sayang' at Utrecht City Hall and then at the Pentecostal Church in Overvecht.

The reception was in the 150 TD canteen. We were both sent home early the day before the wedding with instructions not to worry about the reception. When we arrived at the canteen from the church the next day, my fellow drivers had decorated the entire space. TD even provided the drinks. What a nice surprise that was! However, I didn't understand why the commander was wearing his uniform at our reception. Later, when I asked him about it, he took me aside and said that he was on duty because it was rumoured that during our reception the Moluccan boys might break in looking for weapons. I was surprised and assured him that disrupting a wedding isn't part of our culture.

However, there had been an incident. I had a disagreement with Kobe Oser about how and with whom we would celebrate our wedding. In essence, the board wanted to see our guest list. That was too much for me. I did everything for the cause, but they should leave my girl alone. For that reason I broke ties with Kobe Oser. Marriage was my choice for my future. Breaking with Kobe Oser didn't mean that I opposed its actions or abandoned the struggle. Being Papuan is my blood.

With Sien by my side, I could face life. I wouldn't know how to have the strength without Sien.



On 24 April 1971 I married my sayang. Our lovely bridesmaids were Moni, Dea, and Meike.

8

papuans in nieuwegin

papuans in nieuwegein

After I married my sayang we lived with my in-laws. We both had jobs, and were blessed with the birth of a son. In the summer of 1972, we moved into our own flat on the 13th floor of a dwelling in Nieuwegein. A daughter came. With two healthy children we were doing well together.

I became active in the trade union movement as a member of the Nederlands Christelijke Bond voor Overheidspersoneel (Dutch Christian Union for Civil Servants/NCBO), and more particularly the NCBO's special department for Defence. In May 1971, at the request of the NCBO board, I became deputy of the works council, representing Papuans working for Dutch Defence. My role involved monthly meetings to ensure that the complaints and concerns of working Papuans were properly addressed. I was quite impressed that they asked me to do this. What I had failed to achieve in New Guinea advocating for the rights of Papuans was now offered to me on a smaller scale.

My tasks in the works council involved requests for training courses, transfers, promotions, and dismissal complaints. These weren't major political decisions or matters of life and death, but we were being heard, and that was what mattered. Especially considering that for Papuans back home, it was life-threatening to form a trade union—which remains true today. I learned a lot from my time on the works council, and applied the principles outside work as well. For instance, how to articulate my points in meetings, how to influence the agenda, how to present myself, how to build a network. In short, I had my life on track, and despite longing for home, I finally felt I could settle here. With my 'sayang' and the valuable trade union experience, I felt empowered to make a difference for our people in the Netherlands.

In the autumn of 1972, I received a letter from my cousin in Sorong that had been posted in the Netherlands by a veteran. It included a photo of my cousin with his Javanese wife and their child. I was a bit annoyed, wondering why he was telling me about his Indonesian wife. But then I read the news that I had feared since the day I fled on the ship.

Dear Uncle, when you left Sorong, our dear aunt became very ill from sorrow. She kept saying she would never see her son again. I want to inform you that she has passed away and is no longer with us. Uncle, I am sending you this photo to let you know that I have married a Javanese woman, and this is our child. I hope you can accept this."

I cried until I had no tears left. Sien tried to console me, but I knew this

was the consequence of my leaving without saying goodbye. I knew that I had broken my mother's heart, and now I had to bear the burden. All I could do was be a caring father to her grandchildren. Sien and I always told our children never to leave without saying goodbye. Even now, we tell our grandchildren 'Never leave without saying goodbye'.

JUTPHAAS

Our son was still a toddler when Sien called me at work one day. "We really need to move from here, otherwise we'll have an accident!" Our little boy had used a step stool to climb onto the balcony railing and shout out to the children below to come up and play. It was extremely dangerous, as he could have easily toppled over. For Sien, that was it, enough was enough. We needed to find a house on the ground floor. At that time, the village of Jutphaas was still under construction and hadn't been absorbed into the municipality of Nieuwegein.

We had been members of the housing association for some time, so we had priority in choosing a house. We had seen a spacious corner house in Zuilenstein, in the quiet Componistenbuurt (Composers Neighbourhood) and were determined to get it. When I applied, the secretary of the housing association said "Sir, is this house, with so many rooms, not too big for you?" She was right, but I was thinking about the future. I replied, a bit cheekily, "Yes, that's true, but we are young and we are going to fill all those rooms with children." She blushed and looked back at the chairman sitting at his desk and told him what I had just said. He laughed. "Just register him" he said "and let the board decide." So in December 1974, we moved to that corner house in the Componistenbuurt where we still live. As for my declaration to the secretary of the housing association, I kept my word. We filled the house with three sons and three daughters, who now have children of their own. As I write this chapter, I have fifteen grandchildren, and one of them lives in Papua.

A number of Papuan families were now living in Nieuwegein and Jutphaas, and we wanted to do more together. Of course we visited each other, but we needed a space where we could develop activities and where our musicians could practice. We had been a fairly closed community so we had little contact with other people in the village and didn't know how to navigate the municipal institutions. That is, until we heard, through our children's school, about Roel Rasker and Social Cultural Work Nieuwegein/SKWN.

The municipality had written to 'kakak' Lapong, who was one of the first Papuans to settle in Nieuwegein, and asked him how many Papuan families were living in Jutphaas.

'Kakak' is a Malay word meaning older brother or older sister. It's a respectful way to address someone who is older but of the same generation.

This was a significant question, because nowadays a municipal official wouldn't even know where Papua is, because we have been written out of the history books. Back then the Dutch still knew who we were.

To discuss our response to the council's inquiry, Asmuruf, Kinder, and Antoh joined Vitalis Katuar and me at kakak Lapong's house. We wanted the council to understand that it didn't know how many Papuans were living in Jutphaas because we were registered as Dutch not Papuan, and Papua is not a recognized nationality. We also wanted to discuss our need for our own space. We decided to call and arrange a meeting rather than send a letter. When Vitalis and I got in touch with Roel Rasker, we found a warm and helpful man, who was keen for all the groups in his municipality to be represented. This led us to Buurthuis Jutphaas (Jutphaas Community Centre) on Hildo Kropstraat, an emergency building with three small rooms. It was there in 1978 that we established the Papuan social club 'De Tifa'. (A tifa is a traditional Papuan drum).

We met at the club every month to socialise and exchange ideas. The smallest room became a practice space for the musicians: two Papuans, an Indo-Dutch boy, and a Moluccan boy in a group called Colorado (not a reference to the American city but to its literal meaning 'colourful'). Their music was primarily beat music, but they also sang Papuan and Moluccan songs. Colorado was a pretty good band and even participated in a music competition organized by the Dutch national television broadcaster (NCRV) at the Van der Valk Hotel in Vianen. Our boys didn't win, that honour went to a Moluccan group from Maarssen, but we were incredibly proud that they gained the recognition.

After a year in the emergency building, Roel informed us that we could relocate to the new Kerkveld Community Centre, a public place for all kinds of initiatives by people living in Nieuwegein, and only a short walk from the emergency building. The SKWN office was also located there, and Carla Curvers was the community development worker. She became our main contact at the centre, where you could seek advice on matters like municipal services and complicated forms. If Carla was absent we could turn to Sylvia Rehorst. I had more contact with Sylvia,

even outside of the community centre, because she was always interested in the Papuan families. She wrote to me in February 2013 about my story as a stowaway. She was very impressed, and called it 'living history'. The Dutch role in the fate of the Papuans was completely new to her, as was the way Papuans in Nieuwegein 'organized a big celebration within two days, from conception to execution'. Sylvia's letter meant a lot to me and I cherish warm memories of her. I often spoke with her about my longing for home and my family there. My mother had already passed away, and I didn't know if my father was still alive. I didn't have his address and I didn't know how to contact him.

Nowadays you could send an email or letter, but back then that wasn't possible. All I knew about my father was that he was a teacher on the Padaido Islands, and lived in the village of Sowek near Supiori. I tried to locate him through a cousin who never replied; perhaps it was too risky for him to search on my behalf. Years later, I received news that my father passed away after falling ill in Sowek. So I no longer had parents, and I didn't even know the date of my father's death. I had left them without saying goodbye, and now they were both gone.

CULTURE AND SPORTS

Moving our club to the Kerkveld Community Centre stimulated us to come up with more activities. Besides the musicians who rehearsed there every week we started dance classes for the children. We named our dance group Korwari, after an image we venerate of our ancestors. Our group of fifteen boys and girls couldn't match the professional level of the Sampari Dance Group in The Hague, but the children enjoyed it, and the parents believed it was essential to pass on our traditions to the next generation. Julian Nunaki was a great teacher. He was a good conductor, and knew all the songs and how to convey the stories in dance. It's not just about memorizing steps; it's about knowing the story, and feeling the meaning of the dance. Julian also taught the young people how to carve wood at the arts and crafts club, which was another way of keeping the Papuan spirit alive.

We also participated in sport activities with two Papuan teams participating in a local volleyball tournament, and one of them emerging as the winner. I saw potential in sports events, and during an evening in the community centre proposed we expand our sports activities with an indoor football team. The idea was well received, and in December 1980 we started a football club called FC Mambruk with me, Jimmy Bos, and

Korwari Dance Group in Nieuwegein (Eddy, far left).

John Itaar elected as board members. We were a Papuan club but open to others joining, and there were several Moluccans, Surinamese, and Indo-Dutch boys in the club. As chairman, I had to ensure that other football clubs knew about us, so I talked about our team at every political meeting in the country. I also contacted Moluccan friends because they had football teams in their neighbourhoods.

Julius Tahamata (brother of Simon, the famous Moluccan footballer who played for the National League) contacted his old friend Maybe Ireeuw (one of our star Papuan players) and they organized a tournament in Tiel where Simon played as well. That's how FC Mambruk played in a tournament organised by the Tahamata family. We won a few matches that day, but didn't make the finals. But because of the Tahamata tournament, FC Mambruk soon became known as a Papuan team and we registered with the Royal Dutch Football Association (KNVB). We were in the 3rd division, and initially played against Moluccan teams, but over time Dutch clubs also invited us to play. These were always friendly matches, with plenty of chatting time after. Then we set up a women's team called the Talapessy Sisters. They were pioneers, and certainly not without athletic merit. FC Mambruk later played in Vanuatu, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

FC Mambruk Nieuwegein football club logo, featuring the Morning Star flag and Victoria Crowned Pigeon ('mambruk'), the national attributes legislated by the New Guinea RAAD in 1961. right: FC Mambruk Nieuwegein members with the famous Moluccan footballer Simon Tahamata in the middle.

PAPUA PROJECT GROUP NIEUWEGEIN

In the summer of 1981 Roel said "Why don't you organize a cultural event in De Baten?" We thought it was a wonderful idea and knew that we had enough talent for a complete programme. However, we didn't have the funds to organize something so grand. Roel suggested we could get funding if we became an official foundation, with a board, statutes drawn up by a notary, and registered with the Chamber of Commerce.

We already had a board. Sem Asmuruf was the chairman, Wil Hanasbei was treasurer, and I was the secretary. But to become a foundation, we needed to think carefully about our objectives, so Vitalis and I wrote a proposal. Of utmost importance was the unity of the community in Nieuwegein. Even though we were from different political groups and some were more enthusiastic than others, the foundation would be for all of us: families, singles, young people, and non-Papuans originally from Dutch New Guinea. Our objective was to pass on our Papuan culture to our children; to show the residents of Nieuwegein who we were; and encourage our young people to participate in community life.

The board was happy with our proposal, so we called a meeting for the members. Vitalis and I were quite proud of ourselves when our proposal was accepted without any change by a large number of members. I translated the statutes into Malay so that we could present it in two languages. Most of us spoke good Dutch, but we still often thought in Malay. And so it came to pass in January 1982 that Stichting Papua

Projectgroep Nieuwegein (Papua Project Nieuwegein/PPGN) was recognised by the notary, and registered with the Chamber of Commerce.

Besides organizing meetings for our own community, we participated in activities with other users of the community centre, and also made our space available to other Papuan groups. In 1984, PPGN facilitated the establishment of the West Papua People's Front chaired by Viktor Kaisiepo. Organising like this made us a strong community in Nieuwegein. We could rely on each other and also make a difference for others.

In March 1984, four Papuans fled into the Dutch embassy in Jakarta and asked for asylum in the Netherlands. The news made headlines in Indonesia and the Netherlands. Jakarta claimed the Netherlands had no intention of granting them political asylum; the Netherlands said that "discussions were ongoing". As this dragged on, Front Nasional Papua called on all Papuans in the Netherlands to demonstrate. Almost all Papuans responded. Even Moluccan leaders like Ir. Manusama (Moluccan President in exile) expressed support. We knew from past experience that these young men would be in grave danger if they were put outside the embassy gates in Jakarta. A few weeks later, I received word that the young men had arrived in the Netherlands. It only took a few phone calls to arrange for their reception in Nieuwegein.

Overleg over Papoea's in ambassade duurt voort

(van onze buitenlandredactie)

JAKARTA/DEN HAAG Er was gisteravond nog steeds geen duidelijkheid over het lot van de vier Papoea's die tien dagen geleden de Nederlandse ambassade in Jakarta binnenvluchten en de wens te kennen gaven naar Nederland te vertrekken.

Volgens Associated Press heeft de Indonesische minister van buitenlandse zaken Mochtar Kusumaatmadja gisteren verklaard dat de Nederlandse ambassade in Jakarta besloten heeft de vier vluchtelingen geen politiek asiel in Nederland te verlenen. Het ministerie van buitenlandse zaken in Den Haag wilde alleen zeggen dat het overleg nog gaande is.

In Den Haag hielden alle Papoea-organisaties in Nederland donderdag een demonstratie om de vier Papoea's in Jakarta moreel te ondersteunen.

Bij het ministerie van buitenlandse zaken op het Plein werd gevraagd al het mogelijke te doen om de vier, Johannes Rumbiak, Jopy Rumajau, Oty Simopiaref en Lot Sarakan, in Nederland op te nemen. Als ze worden uitgeleverd aan de Indonesiërs, zal hen hetzelfde lot zijn beschoren als vele volksgenoten, die gevangen, gemarteld, gedood of zomaar „verdwenen" zijn, aldus een petitie. Namens de minister werd meegedeeld dat nog steeds wordt onderhandeld met de Indonesische autoriteiten.

Daarna trokken de Papoea's naar de Indonesische ambassade. Hier eisten zij luidkeels dat Indonesië zich terugtrekt uit West-Irian. „Ze hebben er niets te zoeken, behalve onze grondstoffen". In een petitie die aan een vertegenwoordiger van de ambassade werd overhandigd, vragen de Papoea's een vrijgeleide voor hun landgenoten.

NEDERLAND INTIMIDATIE VAN INDONESIE
MET UW MENSEN RECHTEN
NEDERLAND HOE LANG BLUFT U NOG ZWIJGEN

Leden van de Papoea-gemeenschap in Nederland houden in Den Haag een demonstratieve o tocht.

Nederlands Dagblad 10 Maart 1984

De demonstratie door Den Haag was op touw gezet door alle Papoea-organisaties in Nederland. Tussen de demonstranten bevond zich ook ir. Manusama, president in ballingschap van de RMS, d vrije republiek der Zuid-M lukken.

"Discussion about Papuans in embassy continues" (Dutch Daily Newspaper, 10 March 1984). Banner: Netherlands, how long will you remain silent.

That same year, we began working on Roel Rasker's idea to organize a cultural event in De Baten funded by the Nieuwegein municipality. We put together an extensive program for 7 September 1984, featuring our dance group, a talent competition, a musical performance by our young men, a screen showing continuous images of present-day Papua, and

of course, plenty of food from our kitchens. We all worked hard across various political lines: men, women, young, old. The festival had to be postponed when Mr Lapong, one of the organizers, suddenly passed away, which was a terrible shock for our community.

The festival in De Baten eventually took place on 15 April 1985. The hall was packed, not only with our own people, but with members of the city council and other Nieuwegeins. We started with our national anthem 'Hai Tanahku Papua', where everyone stood and many sang along. The children then welcomed the guests, dancing in a circle, led by Jos Dakilwajir on the tifa (drum), while they carried typical Papuan artifacts (bows and arrows, spears, nets, baskets). The audience gave them a huge applause, which boosted the children's pride in themselves and their heritage. The highlight was our young men's performance of Black Brothers songs, with an additional and impressive break dance! The performance beautifully demonstrated the youths' awareness of their cultural background and an ability to engage with modern Western youth culture. We looked back on the day with great satisfaction, because we had garnered significant attention and firmly established ourselves as Papuans on the Nieuwegein map. Moreover, we knew that we were capable of organizing something substantial.

In January 1987, PPGN celebrated its fifth anniversary, first with a small party among ourselves and later that month with a larger public event. The small party extended into the early hours, with plenty of drinks, but we still won the volleyball tournament at De Baten the next day. For the public event, we organized a cultural program at Buurthuis Kerkveld that featured two exhibitions co-ordinated by Ben Kafiar. First there were photos and artefacts from independent Papua New Guinea and a display of artwork from our own Papua. The exhibitions attracted a large audience, including visitors who weren't originally in the space for our celebration. Julian Nunaki was in charge of the dance and music groups, while Jos Dakilwadjir supervised security with a few young men. My job was to liaise with the municipality and other organizations in Nieuwegein, which PPGN's substantial membership made possible.

MEANWHILE AT WORK

In December 1989, a party was organized for me at the Kromhout Barracks to celebrate my 25 years of service with Defence. All my colleagues attended, and some gave moving speeches. Of course I could still remember my early days with these men, when they teased me and

My farewell to drivers of 150 TD in 1990 (Eddy, front, 2nd from right).

smeared the cabin of my truck with grease. Over the course of 25 years, those sort of pranks had stopped and been forgotten.

Unfortunately, the civilian drivers' department was disbanded twelve months later, and I had to apply for a new position in Defence. I was transferred to Security, where I was the only Papuan in the team and had to face all the teasing again. They'd call out "Hey headhunter, do this, do that, go make coffee." So I had to prove myself again. However by then, I had learned that getting angry was pointless, and that getting even in a light-hearted way worked best. One day they hung a newspaper photo on a wall in the control room of a Papuan man wearing a penis gourd riding a moped. The photo was pasted on a sheet of paper with the caption "Eddy Korwa on patrol." I looked at it and remarked that it was a beautiful photo, but quietly resolved to get my revenge.

Most of my colleagues wanted time off during the holidays, so they roped me into working on Christmas Day. There was a rule at Knoop Barracks that permitted calls to your family if you were on duty during the holidays. Well, I took advantage of that and called all my friends and family overseas. I worked again on New Year's Eve and spent even more hours on the phone. Eventually someone from Communications asked about the phone bill. Given that it was I who had worked during the holidays, it wasn't hard for them to find the culprit. When confronted I decided to take a bold stand. "Does the rule about calling family apply to everyone?" He didn't respond, so I added "This phone bill is nothing compared to what the Netherlands has taken from me." Shaking his head, he chuckled, "Eddy, Eddy, you truly are a Papuan!" He gave me a playful slap on the face and we never spoke of my silent revenge again.

With my new colleagues at Security in the Knoopkazerne.

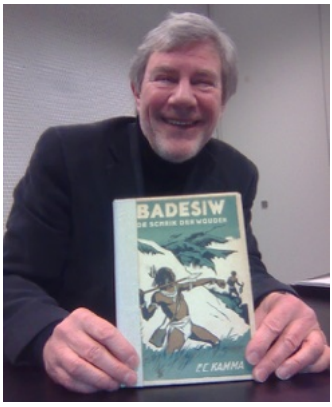
Later on I managed to pull a good prank on the guy who put up the photo of the Papuan wearing a penis gourd. It was during a veterans' reunion. Veterans from New Guinea were attending, so this colleague wanted to know how to greet them in Malay. I convinced him that 'good morning' in Malay was 'tentara susu' (milk soldier). So when the veterans walked in, he greeted them with tentara susu, tentara susu. Some replied that he himself was a 'tentara susu'. Eventually an Indian captain asked him if he knew what he was saying. Of course he pointed me out as the culprit, but by then I was already hiding in the toilet.

In 1992, we celebrated PPGN's tenth anniversary in De Baten with performances by our dance group Korwari and the youth with their songs and break dancing. The program wasn't much different from our first lustrum (5th anniversary) at the Kerkveld Community Centre, but the five years of experience since showed. The young people were very enthusiastic and showed on stage that they had developed a balance between their two cultures. There was also a greater attendance this time: Papuans and others from outside the municipality, Dutch people from Nieuwegein, and friends from the Moluccan community.

There was a poignant moment during the speech by my good friend Roel Rasker, who back in 1978 had arranged the first space for the Papuan social club and later ensured that we had a place at Buurthuis Kerkveld. Roel left SKWN in 1988 and was the director of De Kom. His contact with PPGN had become less frequent, but we still managed to keep in touch. As the only 'white' speaker at our anniversary event in 1992, he acknowledged that Papuans and the former Dutch New Guinea were largely ignored in the Netherlands; and that in his youth it was only talked about as an undeveloped area full of head-hunters. He

brought up that image of us through a book called 'Badesiw, the terror of the Forests'. The last line of that book is "Badesiw, the terror of the forests, was overcome by the child in the manger." Roel said this was a dominant image of Papua in the Netherlands in the 1950s and 1960s.

Later, Roel wrote to me: "Highly embarrassed that I told that story, perhaps to explain that due to strange imaging and perhaps also a certain guilt in the Netherlands, the Papuans here and in former Dutch New Guinea have been forgotten. A people entitled to their own free land."



Roel Rasker in 2013 with F.C. Kamma's 'Badesiw, the terror of the forests'. In 1992, at PPGN's 10th anniversary celebration, Roel said that this book in the 1950s and 1960s gave children the idea that Papuans were wild and inferior.

To think that when I first met Roel Rasker he wasn't even aware of the Papuans in Nieuwegein. Over the years, he had worked to create a place for our community and had also delved into stories about the former Dutch New Guinea. I have always greatly appreciated his and Sylvia's support and dedication. They were instrumental in putting Papuans in Nieuwegein on the map. Buurthuis Kerkveld had become a place where everyone felt welcome. Dutch veterans started attending our activities more often. Even activists from the Utrecht Squatting Movement and East Timor started coming to our 1 December celebrations.

In December 2017, the Kerkveld Community Centre was closed and the building demolished, but by then PPGN had moved to the Multicultural Centre in Fort Vreeswijk. As a foundation, we were expected to become members of the international platform governing the Multicultural Centre, and I was asked to serve as manager. We sat down with the other MCC groups: Surinamese, Surinamese-Hindustani, Antilleans, Moroccan youth, Travellers. It's odd really. I was born Papuan, and when I left Sorong I was a Dutch subject, but in order to find my identity as a Papuan here in the Netherlands, I had to behave like an immigrant.

We had only just joined the international platform when we received a letter from the municipality. Its study on the composition of Nieuwegein's population found the Papuan community was an 'ethnic minority'. You read that right: ethnic minority! On behalf of PPGN, I was required to report to the Naturalization Department at the Town Hall and register for retraining! I took the letter to the department and the bureaucrat said "Yes, retraining, because Papuans are refugees. You need to learn Dutch so that you can adapt to Dutch society." I politely told him that we weren't going to do that and advised him to contact The Hague if he wanted to know more about the background of the Papuans. We never heard from them again. Come on now, I am a Papuan and I will remain a Papuan. I am not an immigrant. I was born under the Dutch flag.

In 1993 our friends from the Utrecht Squatters' movement covered the Van Heutsz monument in Amsterdam with a pig's head and banners. The banners read:

'Our colonial past was the breeding ground and source of nourishment for today's dictatorship';

'Stop genocide in East Timor;

'Van Heutsz Monument denial of atrocities'.

The statue is now called Monument Indië-Nederland. (Archive Stichting Vrij Oost Timor/photo NØRB).

Korwari led by the late Julian Nunaki (red shirt) in the Harskamp barracks at the reunion of Dutch New Guinea veterans in 1999. Eddy's son, Andy (centre).

9

papuans crossing borders

papuans crossing borders

The kids often say "Dad, why don't we go on vacation abroad?" And I reply "I'm already abroad." Apart from a romantic week in Paris when Sien and I celebrated our 12th wedding anniversary, and another week in England, I've never thought of going anywhere except home to Biak Island. I have crossed borders in Europe several times, not for a holiday, but because the Dutch had forgotten us and there were still people in Europe who were willing to delve into the fate of the Papuans. I discovered this in Geneva in 1985, where I learned how to lobby and experienced first-hand that Papuans are an Indigenous people.

GENEVA

Thanks in part to the Dutch Indonesia Committee, Viktor Kaisiëpo was asked to represent Papuans at the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (UNWGIP) conference in Geneva in 1985. I was in the small delegation that went with him. Viktor travelled ahead to prepare, and Frank Hubatka arrived early to support our delegation. Dolf Tompoh took the train, and I travelled in a Citroën 2CV with Genja and Dino. We weren't sure what to expect, but were determined that there would be a delegation of Dutch Papuans at the conference.

In the car Genja played music and we sang along to songs from home, which made us feel closer to the people we were representing. Between the music and the jokes, our conversation turned to the first time Dino and I were in a car together, that exciting journey after we'd spirited him away from the Indonesian football team. Now we were on our way to Geneva to give Papuans a voice.

When we arrived in Geneva, we went to the conference accommodation centre. Viktor warmly welcomed us, but told us the accommodation centre was already full. As a speaker, he had a hotel room, but there were no sleeping places left for us. We had come to Geneva at our own expense, and didn't have any money for a hotel. Actually, Dino, Genja, and I agreed that the money we did have was for our cause, not expensive hotel rooms. We decided we would look for another place to sleep.

That evening we drove to the harbour and parked the car. Three people couldn't sleep in the car, so we walked along the harbour to find somewhere else to sleep. We checked out a ship that was securely moored. It was dark, it looked abandoned, the upper deck was empty, inside there were a few benches. We assumed it was moored for repairs and figured it would be okay to sleep there. Why not? After all, I had taken refuge

on a ship before. Genja opted to stay in the car. It was spacious enough for her, and besides, we didn't want to leave the car unattended.

While we were discussing the situation, a policeman approached and asked in English what we were doing in the harbour. Genja replied that we were in town for the UN conference, that there was no place for us to sleep, and that Dino and I wanted to sleep on the abandoned ship. Then she politely asked if that was allowed. The officer didn't fuss. Maybe they are used to it in Geneva with all those conferences. But he did say that we needed to leave before six in the morning when the harbour was cleaned. Without a mattress or a blanket Dino and I weren't that comfortable but Dino reminded me that we were still better off than Papuans at home, because we had a safe place and the police were friendly.

The next day was the first day of the conference and we went to the accommodation centre early in the morning to have breakfast. Viktor had arranged that for us; we just had to show our badges. Several long tables were set up in the dining hall, and also tables for smaller groups. We chose a table for three. I looked around at the other guests because I was eager to discover where they were all from. But we didn't have time to chat, because Viktor told us to eat quickly and come straight to the conference building. "You can meet people later in the corridors" he said.

During the conference, it struck me that we Papuans are not the only people side-lined in our own country. Of course I knew that, but listening to the speeches of all those different delegates really brought it home to me. On the one hand, I realized that we are not alone, and we don't have to do things alone. On the other hand, there was this harsh reality that injustice happens in so many places, and the rest of the world prefers to forget them or look the other way. The Maoris of New Zealand (called Aotearoa), Tibet swallowed by China, Hawaii annexed by the United States, the Aborigines of Australia, and so on.

During his speech, Viktor highlighted that the Papuans are oppressed by Indonesia. He said that we already had our own flag and government when Indonesia took over, so West Papua is an occupied territory. This prompted an immediate response from the Indonesian delegation, who claimed Viktor's story was untrue. Viktor responded that he had the evidence right in front of him and they were welcome to come and collect it. They didn't, and we didn't hear from them again. What we did hear were the reactions of other delegations, who were keen to receive copies of Viktor's speech and the evidence that he mentioned.

In Geneva in 1985 with Genja (left) and Dino (centre) in the conference room of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples.

LOBBYING

Now it was our turn. During the break, Viktor handed Genja his speech along with some newspaper articles and photos. "Here, go copy these and distribute them in the corridors" he said. I asked him how to do that, and he casually replied "Napi, I know you can do it. Just go and distribute that text and talk to people in the corridors." When Viktor saw me hesitating, he added, typically, "Listen, even if you hardly speak English, you can communicate with gestures, or in Biak. It doesn't matter, just be brave. And make sure you collect business cards."

Meanwhile Genja had already started talking to people, so she handed me the papers to photocopy. “Eddy, I trust you with this." With my hands full of papers, I approached a security guard in broken English, "I will this kopiëren. Where? I don't know." The guard laughed and led me to the photocopy machines in the basement. It was bustling with people busy photocopying for their delegates and I felt as if I was in the heart of the action. That gave me more courage. All these people working hard for their forgotten peoples, and I was too, because I am a Papuan. If I had the courage to flee on a ship, then I could handle a bit of photocopying. The guard called a lady to help me with the machines and she asked which delegation I belonged to. "Ah, West Papua, OK come with me." Proud as a peacock—or bird of paradise—I followed her. It was so special that we Papuans were taken seriously here. The lady asked me how many copies I needed, and with my newfound courage, I pointed at two empty boxes. "I need these two doos (boxes) full." No problem; she

copied the documents and handed them to me. "Here, please, take." I arranged everything in order and filled the boxes to the brim. I even got a trolley because they were too heavy to carry.

"Wow," Genja exclaimed when I came upstairs with the trolley. "How did you manage that?" I pretended it was nothing and said "Well, we have to campaign and lobby, right?" We got straight to work. We made four piles on our tables. Dolf had already started networking with the Moluccans, so Dino stayed with the material, and Genja and I went into the corridors to talk to people. For the first few conversations, she did the talking in good English. I watched, but when I saw the warm responses I dared to do it my way. With a stack of papers under my arm, I handed out our material to everyone I could see. If people didn't know what it was about, I pointed to the badge on my chest: "West Papua."

Everyone accepted our material. Some even stopped for a chat. With my limited English and Viktor's advice to communicate with gestures, I managed quite well. I enjoyed it, so it got easier and easier. When I asked people for their cards, I showed them my own card and said, "You have this, please?" That way, I collected quite a few. Before I knew it, the break was over, and all the participants were called back to their seats.

That evening, after dinner in the main hall, Dino and I were approached by an Australian Aborigine. He introduced himself as Jirra Moore and he was the delegation secretary. He wanted to know if we had come directly from Papua or if we lived somewhere in Europe. When we told him we lived in the Netherlands, he asked where we were staying. We explained that our spokesperson Viktor had been given a hotel room, but that we were sleeping on a boat in the harbour. He said that he had already spoken to Viktor, and had heard that we had no place to stay. "How can that be?" he wondered aloud. "The land of the Papuans is so rich, and yet you sleep outside!" He shook his head. "Wait here, I'm going to discuss this with our delegation."

A little later, he returned with an envelope. He said it was a contribution from the Aborigines for a hotel room. He added that they could also arrange for us to have a room in the centre. Then we could decide for ourselves how we wanted to spend the money. Of course, we preferred to sleep in the centre. I hugged the man and said "Thank you brother, and also the other brothers." Jirra laughed at my English but said that he understood my message.

At UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples in Geneva in 1985 with Jirra Moore and the Australia Mission, and a Moluccan delegate standing behind.

LEARNING AND SHARING

Most participants used the evening in the dining hall to meet other delegates. Nowadays, they call it networking. Jirra asked for a photo with his team, which I was happy about. Someone from the Hawaiian delegation also wanted a photo with the Papuans, which was lovely. We exchanged business cards, and they promised to discuss the Papuan cause with their organization. For me, the conference was filled with special moments and extraordinary people. Not only did I learn how to connect without speaking the language, but also how hardship shared can unite people. By listening to the stories of other forgotten peoples, you gain different insights and feelings about your own situation. You're not unique. The Papuans aren't the only people fighting for their identity. If we want the world to look at us, then we must also look at the world and share with others who are fighting for recognition of their existence.

As Papuans, we shouldn't isolate ourselves but should step forward and form friendships in circles that might not seem obvious. For example, with the squatters in Utrecht and East Timorese activists. Such friendships are about learning and sharing. In Viktor's book ('Een perspectief voor Papoea'/A Perspective for Papua) he beautifully describes how he learned that you are not at conferences just to talk about your own independence. It's important to collaborate with others during the process for recognition. That's a wise lesson. It's not just about the Papuans; it's about respect for human rights and self-determination.

At the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples in Geneva in 1985 with Hayden Burgess and his team from Hawai'i.

By distributing our materials in the conference corridors, we showed that we are among the forgotten Indigenous peoples of the world. The conversations brought us closer together. The door to Geneva had been opened, and it was up to the Papuans to walk through it and utilise the opportunities. Viktor spoke there many times, and now it's the young generation's turn. To them I say "Keep learning. Don't just focus on your own struggle. Make sure you're well-informed about the struggles of others too. Support them as well. Sharing enriches oneself."

VANUATU

Out of the blue in the spring of 1986 I had visitors from Vanuatu. Andy Ayamiseba was on the doorstep of my home in Nieuwegein. We knew him from the band The Black Brothers that was hugely popular with Papuans. They had also been a top band in Indonesia, but Jakarta's close surveillance prevented these Papuan musicians from going anywhere. That's why they fled to Papua New Guinea, and then the Netherlands. After that Andy settled in Vanuatu with some but not all of the members. He showed up in Nieuwegein with Barak Sopé, Secretary-General of Vanua'aku Pati, the ruling political party in Vanuatu. Andy explained they had been sent by my cousin Fred, with whom they had been discussing a wonderful plan. Fred was the Vanuatu representative in the Netherlands, and he had already mentioned something about this plan. Over coffee Andy, Barak Sopé and I discussed the idea of FC Mambruk playing football in Vanuatu, alongside musical performances

by the Black Brothers. Barak explained how this would help with the Vanua'aku Pati's election campaign, and would encourage solidarity between Vanuatu and the Papuan people. He wanted to know my thoughts as chairman of FC Mambruk. I thought it was a splendid plan, but was concerned about finances. Barak assured me that our stay would be covered by the Vanuatu government. So, it was just a matter of travel expenses, which he would work out with Fred.

While he was in the Netherlands, Barak wanted to buy football kits for two of his club teams in Vanuatu. So I took them to the sports shop in Utrecht where we always bought equipment for FC Mambruk. Barak looked around and made his choices with casual gestures: "... that ... that ... and those goalkeeper gloves ...". The owner knew me and discreetly asked "Can this gentleman afford all this?" I told him to ask Andy, who replied "Sir, do you know who this is? This is the Secretary-General of the ruling party of Vanuatu." The shop owner was immediately enthusiastic. He had never had a government official in his shop, let alone from such a distant land, and he spontaneously added two large sports bags and two balls. Then while Barak was thanking him profusely he added "Wait a moment, let me also throw in a tracksuit for both of you."

After Barak and Andy had flown back to Vanuatu, four of us gathered at Fred's house to divide the tasks. Fred got fundraising, Dino was the coach, Ben Kafiar the advisor, and I was designated coordinator of the entire operation. I would also be responsible for selecting the players, and we agreed I would only select Papuans for this trip. That would disappoint other players at FC Mambruk like the Moluccans, Surinamese, and the Indo-Dutch boys, but they all understood that this had to be a Papuan mission. However, our goalkeeper was a Dutch boy, Guido, because we didn't have a good Papuan keeper, and in any case we already called Guido a white Papuan. The story of our preparations spread like wildfire. Fred was even approached by the newspaper Brabants Dagblad for an extensive interview. (Nicolaas Jouwe's son was an editor there).

In July 1986, we embarked on our month-long trip to Vanuatu. Wilko Buiter and his wife Sylvia accompanied us to capture everything on video. I knew Wilko when he was a Red Cross driver on Biak Island and I was at Mr. Soer's elementary school. Later, when I flew from Hollandia to Sorong for maritime school, I met him again during the layover at Biak airport. I didn't expect him to remember me, but he recognized my name on a list compiled by veterans trying to organize a dance group from Manokwari to perform in the Netherlands. Wilko was on the veteran's board, which also wanted a Papuan, and Wilko recommended

me. The veterans' project didn't materialize, but now Wilko was traveling with FC Mambruk to Vanuatu. He wouldn't stay with us all the time because he was working for Dutch Evangelical Broadcast and needed to produce other stories. Nevertheless we were thrilled to have our Pacific Tour captured on video.

At Schiphol Airport, we were waved off by a noisy crowd of family and friends who filled half of the departure hall. Lots of 'poloh-poloh' (embrace), laughter and tears. "You'll come back, won't you?!" Strangers took photos as if we were celebrities. "Oh those Papuans are going all the way to Vanuatu to play football!" A whole procession escorted us to customs, where we said more goodbyes. As we walked away, waving, I felt proud. We were representing the Papuan people in Vanuatu. But also, deep down, I wondered what I had gotten myself into.

FC Mambruk Football Team, Schiphol Airport in The Netherlands in July 1986.

During a layover at Sydney Airport, I was pulled aside by security. They wanted to know what we were going to do in Vanuatu and if we were travelling elsewhere afterwards. When Fred arrived, they questioned him too, pressing on about the purpose of our trip. It became quite tense, and we didn't know why. They only let us go after Fred called Barak Sopé, who convinced them that we were going to play football. Later in Vanuatu, we heard rumours that we were planning to travel on to Libya to be trained as terrorists by Gaddafi. Terrorists? Yes, the political aim behind this football tournament was to strengthen ties with our Melanesian brothers in Vanuatu. Maybe we could even pave the way for young Papuans to build a future there. But did that make us terrorists? I knew Papuans had gone to Libya for a conference on nations striving for

sovereignty, which may have been quite radical. But that wasn't us. We were going to play football in the spirit of Melanesian solidarity.

I'm not against taking a hard line, although I prefer being able to talk to everyone, as long as it's clear that we Papuans will always be Melanesians. Internal rivalries, which facilitates such rumours, only frustrate the Papuan cause. We were making progress forming friendships as a football team in Vanuatu, but we had a 'nyamuk' in the 'kelambu' (a mosquito inside the net). For me, the motto of the New Guinea Council still holds: 'Bersatu kita teguh, bercerai kita runtuh' (United we stand, divided we fall).

WANTOK

We were eventually allowed to continue our journey. When we arrived in Vanuatu, I stood on the aeroplane stairs for a moment as the warm tropical air enveloped me like a blanket. It was a familiar feeling, so homely. In the arrival hall we were greeted by Andy and the committee, and guided to the VIP lounge, where there was music, girls in island dress, and a big welcome from the FC Black Bird players. The musicians and families of the Black Brothers embraced us with a banner "Welcome FC Mambruk 2 Ifira" and girls draped us in flower garlands.

Everything had been arranged. We didn't even need to go through passport control. Outside, Andy and the committee were waiting with a bus. Everyone boarded, except Ben Kafiar and myself to collect the luggage. We followed in a taxi to Port Vila, and were then taken by sea taxis to Ifira Island, which belonged to Barak Sope's family. This would be our base, It was just a fifteen-minute boat ride from the capital Port Vila.

It was dark as we approached Ifira. Barak was onshore guiding the water taxis with a flash light. From the beach it was just a few minutes' walk to our accommodation, a community centre complete with a kitchen and two bathrooms. A large space with beds had been set up as a dormitory. Looking back I regret not asking more about the house. Dino and I took the beds near the door so that we could keep an eye on the comings and goings. We didn't have time to freshen up as we were expected in the garden next to the house for a 'barapen' which was a wonderful surprise.

A barapen is an earth oven. Dry branches and layers of stones are placed in a large pit. The wood is burnt, which heats the stones. Meat or fish and sweet potatoes and cassava are placed on the hot stones, then covered with banana tree leaves, then a thick layer of vegetables, then more banana leaves that are kept in place with sand and stones. A few hours later the food is ready to eat and the pit is opened. There are variations of barapen in the different Melanesian cultures, but the principle remains the same. It's about working together and sharing a meal.

We were so grateful and so impressed that they had prepared this for us that we just sat eating quietly under a leafy roof on tall poles. It was just like home and I think we were all momentarily taken back to our birth villages. Women broke the silence with new bowls full of food, loudly asking us if we liked what they'd prepared. It seemed like this was the moment the other residents had been waiting for, because all of a sudden they moved over to chat with us. "Wantok, wantok, hello brother how are you?" 'Wantok' comes from 'one talk', meaning one language. We understand each other because we are brothers.

We went to our dormitory tired but satisfied, and Fred and Barak returned to Port Vila. The next morning, breakfast was waiting for us in the same shelter. It was a true Melanesian start to the day: sweet potatoes, cassava, fruit, and large beer mugs filled with coffee. After eating, Dino called for training to start immediately. After all, we weren't here on vacation, and our players needed to acclimatize. In the afternoon, we went to Port Vila to visit our main sponsor, Studio VanuWespa, the studio built by Barak Sopé and Andy Ayamiseba to record the music of the Black Brothers. Now it's also a space for other musicians.

As a young lad, I was a fan of the Black Brothers. They were a top band in Indonesia, but because of their critical lyrics Jakarta kept a close an eye on them, and eventually they fled to independent Papua New Guinea, and from there to the Netherlands, where they were granted asylum. However, outside Melanesia their spirit for making music diminished. They no longer performed major concerts and only played a few times at small parties. After two years in the Netherlands, most of the band accepted Barak Sopé's invitation to come to Vanuatu and revive their music. Except for two members, they settled there, forming the foundation of Studio VanuWespa. And now, here I stood in this magical place where the Black Brothers had found their spirit again and the Papuan voice boomed throughout Melanesia. We had to take a photo, otherwise no one back home would believe we had been to The Black Brothers' studio. (Most of these wonderful musicians have now passed on, including Andy Ayamiseba, but their music lives on in the next generations).

Visiting the Black Brothers studio in Port Vila (Vanuatu) in July 1986.

When we returned to Ifira, we found the whole house cleaned and tidied up. They had even made our beds and placed flowers on our pillows. We joked about which girl had placed flowers on whose pillow. We were so grateful for such care. After dinner, the FC Mambruk guides were invited to a kava ceremony, an ancient tradition for special occasions. Kava is a strong drink made from the roots of the kava plant, and is imbibed from half a coconut shell. The ceremony was at the back of the garden in a special meeting place called a 'nakamal'. The host sits in front of a large bowl of prepared kava, and each participant sits in front of him. Barak went first, while Andy explained the procedure. The host scooped some kava into the coconut shell and offered it to Barak with both hands. Barak received it with both hands and drank it all in one go. Andy explained that it's an insult not to drink it in one gulp. Since I'm not good with strong drink, I was given a bit less kava in my coconut shell so that I too could drink my share in one go.


Kava ceremony at Ifira Island in Vanuatu in July 1986.

The morning after the kava ceremony, Fred took me to Port Vila to witness the welcome of Walter Lini, who was returning from visiting New Caledonia. He had been there to speak with Kanak leaders about their upcoming referendum on self-governance and independence from France. I was amazed. From the airport to the city centre, people lined the streets with banners to welcome him. I was deeply impressed with the messages on them, not just advocating for an independent Kanaky, but also for the freedom of the Papuans and the East Timorese. You could tell that Walter Lini was truly loved by his people. It's no wonder he was the first Prime Minister of Vanuatu. He said that Vanuatu would only truly be free when all of Melanesia was free.

Welcoming Vanuatu Prime Minister Walter Lini home after his visit to Kanaky (New Caledonia) in July 1986.

I returned alone to Ifira. It was exciting in the water-taxi by myself. The driver called "Hey wantok, going home?" That felt good. When I arrived, the others had finished eating and were singing and chatting with the residents. It really felt like home on Biak.

The next day Fred and I went to Andy's house in Port Vila and met some of Andy's friends from Kanaky. There were four of them and we hit it off immediately. One of them pointed at my Mambruk Pacific Tour t-shirt and said he wanted to swap, which we did, right there on the street. He gave me his Radio Kanaky shirt, which I still have. They asked if I wanted to join them for their rehearsal at Studio VanuWespa. I did, and even played along with some of their tunes on the ukulele. Andy and Fred hadn't come to the studio, but that didn't bother me because I felt comfortable with these new friends form Melanesia.

I had to head back to Ifira to arrange things for our footballers, but I

returned later to talk about the upcoming referendum in Kanaky, which my new friends had little confidence in. Under French colonial rule, the Kanaks had become a minority in their own land, and my new friends knew the French settlers would vote against independence. Under French rule the Kanaks had fewer opportunities for education and economic development. The similarities with Papua were striking. The Papuans had also become a minority in their own land, with fewer opportunities and much less freedom than the Indonesian transmigrants. We agreed that Papua isn't an equal province in Indonesia but a colony of Jakarta, and should be on the UN Decolonization List.

We discussed how colonialism was far from over in the Pacific. American Samoa, French Polynesia, British Solomon Islands, American Hawaii, French Kanaky, Indonesian Papua, Maoris in New Zealand, Aborigines in Australia. Europe looks like it's in the middle of the map, but the world is round, and the area left of America connects with the area to the right of Australia. In between is a realm of islands and states called Oceania which should be considered its own continent. I remember at a conference in Pago Pago in American Samoa during the Dutch time they discussed a united Oceania. That would be feasible given the natural resources in the region. But what if New Zealand and Australia were part of a united Oceania? You can assume they would dominate and we would end up under Western rule again. But how could we exclude Maoris and Aborigines?

Meanwhile, Western countries use Oceanians as guinea pigs. Shortly after World War II, the Americans began their nuclear tests on the Marshall Islands (which until 1986 were considered American territory). The French were also guilty of nuclear testing, with many underground and above-ground nuclear tests in Polynesia, the worst being in Mururoa. Greenpeace took action against these tests. They were the heroes, and the world was shocked when the French Secret Service blew up Greenpeace's Rainbow Warrior in Auckland (New Zealand) in July 1985. I protested outside the French embassy in The Hague. It was a large demonstration with environmental activists, peace activists, young people, the elderly, everyone was on the move. France had wanted to silence Greenpeace, but with this attack it achieved the opposite. Public opinion turned against France, while Greenpeace gained more supporters and donors. However, the situation for the population around Mururoa and the rest of the Pacific is still not resolved.

At the end of a long evening with my brothers from Kanaky, we agreed on the importance of public opinion. That's why you need to

keep telling your story. If nobody knows who you are, nobody can help you. I could have talked with my new Melanesian brothers for days, weeks, months, but it was time to focus on football.

As I write this on 16 May 2019, there's an article on the Al Jazeera website where UN Secretary-General Guterres expressed concern during a visit to Fiji about nuclear waste in the Pacific. He was referring to the radioactive soil and ash from American nuclear tests that were dumped in a crater on Runit Island in the Enewetak Atoll in the late 1970s. The crater was 'temporarily' covered with a 45cm layer of concrete but America never did anything more about it. There are now cracks in the concrete, meaning the radioactive waste can leak into the sea. In the article the UN Sec-General called this storage a coffin. What I was discussing with my Kanaky brothers in 1986, was confirmed by what Guterres said in this article, that "the Pacific was sacrificed".

FOOTBALL

Vanuatu consists of many islands, and we were flown from island to island in a small plane for the matches. We felt like real professionals, escorted by a committee in our own plane rather than a bus. Our first match was on Espiritu Santo island. We arrived early, and the stands were already full, and with everybody singing it was a great atmosphere. The match was scheduled for 6:00pm bu the opposition didn't arrive until 8:00pm. The boys had to come from everywhere, and not everyone had their own transport. The situation unintentionally put us in our place. We had been living in the Netherlands for so long that we were accustomed to being on time. So we just had to be patient and make good use of the time. In any case, it was nice to have time to chat with people, and some of our players kicked the ball around with youngsters along the side-lines. I think we achieved more with this than with the match itself (which, by the way, we lost).

The next match two days later was in the same stadium. The mayor of Santo was present and had a long talk with Fred on the side-lines. Afterwards, he invited all of us to dinner at a restaurant, and Wilko took the opportunity to conduct a few interviews. During his speech the mayor congratulated the way that our boys played. "Beautiful" he said "both technically and sportingly, and an example for the Santo players". He hoped for an opportunity to play again in a free and independent Papua.

We stayed two nights in Santo in a hotel. The rooms were nice, but we found it a bit boring. There was nothing to do during the day and Dino kept a tight rein on us in the evening because we didn't want to leave a bad impression. The boys grumbled and said they preferred being on

Ifira. There were no cafes on Ifira, but you could spend long evenings chatting and making music with the residents. I also felt like going back to the small island that reminded me so much of life in my village Supiori. When we boarded the sea taxi from Port Vila to Ifira the next day, I heard one of the boys say "phew, finally home."

The next match was in the large stadium in Port Vila against Ifira Blackbird, Barak Sopé's team. The stands were packed. All the residents of Ifira had come along. Technically they were Blackbird supporters, but they also cheered for us: "Wantok, wantok, Go Mambruk!" I don't remember if we won or lost. It was just a great day, filled with lots of joy and camaraderie. However, when we subsequently lost against Golden Star, coach Dino had enough. "Now I want to see goals, lads. We're not here on holiday. Show me that you can play football!" Then Ben Kafiar shouted "It might hurt a bit at times, but that's okay. It's part of the game. Let's show them what we're made of!"

The big match, FC Mambruk v Efate Rural, was on 30th July, Vanuatu Independence Day. Before the match, we went to the festivities in the city. There was a parade: security police and their drum band (Vanuatu has no army), followed by schools and many social organizations. It wasn't your usual state parade. Here in Vanuatu it was a lively colourful procession. The only formal moment was the salvo of six shots fired near the stand where the president sat with his special guests. The finale was by a traditional dance group. The girls looked beautiful in their homemade clothing made of raffia and woven palm leaves. Two men played a hollowed-out log horizontally placed on crossed stakes, striking the edges of the open top with thick sticks. The rhythmic sounds were infectious; you couldn't help but dance along. We were picked up by a tourist minibus that took us to President Sukumano's reception. We felt honoured to be among the esteemed guests. We could not eat much of the delicious snacks laid out on a long table, as we were heading to the stadium for the big match against Efate Rural Selection.

The stadium was packed. There were even spectators along the sidelines. Because it was a public holiday, people from other islands were there as well. There were political leaders from Kanaky, and Vanuatu's first president Ati George Sokomano was in the stands. In the dressing room, I had a surprise for our players: "Take off those Mambruk shirts; I've got new kit here." For this match, we would play in Studio Vanu-Wespa's yellow shirts. Our boys liked that, and so did the audience. Dino and Ben's pep talk evidently worked because our players really gave it their all. Almost until the end the score was 1-1. Then, during

the final minute Maybe Ireeuw moved forward, received the ball, stumbled, but still managed to flick it backwards into the net with the tip of his boot. The whistle blew. The whole stand rose; even our opponents applauded. It was a superb goal! FC Mambruk had won! Barak Sopé himself presented the trophy to our proud captain Maybe Ireeuw. We celebrated the victory until the early hours at the Besa Club: going in as FC Mambruk and rolling out as FC 'Mabuk' ('drunk' in Malay).

FC Mambruk Football Team, Port Vila Stadium in Vanuatu, 30 July 1986.

Our final match was on Tanna Island, where the local committee had prepared a true Melanesian experience for us: sleeping in a large traditional wooden house with a roof of bound coconut leaves. The house was near the beach, where we also dined with our bare feet in the warm sand. After dinner, while we were singing with our new friends, they prepared our sleeping place. The entire floor was covered with a thick layer of fresh coconut leaves, with space in the middle for a campfire, as it could get quite chilly at night. The toilet was a pit behind the house. The whole community had gone to great lengths to ensure we felt at home. It was fantastic. When it was time to sleep, I took a spot next to the campfire and used one of the sports bags as a pillow.

During the night I was wakened by shouting: "Fire, fire." The campfire had collapsed, and a burning branch had rolled out. I jumped up and managed to save all our new Studio VanuWespa kits. Daily life in Melanesia isn't without its dangers, but hey, in the Netherlands you have to watch out crossing the street or using kitchen appliances. In Melanesia you have to be careful your bed doesn't catch fire, or a snake doesn't crawl in to sleep with you. In the Netherlands, we live below sea level, whereas in Melanesia there are active volcanoes. Indeed, before we left Tanna, we visited Mount Yasur. Near the rim of the crater you could see that this was an active volcano with a constant spew of rocks and lava.

Back on Ifira, we had a few free days. The boys spent their time hiking and visiting the islanders, but it was my birthday and I preferred to sit under a tree, contemplating life and the country I had left. I spent hours watching the sea, just like I used to as a child in Awai. The waves rolled onto the beach and then dissolved in the receding foam. Each wave left some shells behind, or tiny crabs that scuttled back into the foam. They made me smile, because if I were one of those crabs I wouldn't want to be left behind on the beach either. I'd want to go back with the foam to where I came from. Ifira isn't far from the island where I was born, but would I ever return to Biak? Would I be happy there if my loved ones and children were in the Netherlands? I looked up at the seagulls and listened to their cries, and was sure that I would fly home again one day. Closing my eyes I leaned back against the tree and was almost asleep when I heard "Hey brother, don't sit under the coconut tree." A friendly neighbour smiled and pointed to a large cluster of coconuts hanging above my head. I had been away from Awai for so long I had forgotten that you should never sit under a coconut tree.

We each spent our final evening in Vanuatu with our host family. Before that, as tradition goes, we had a meal with the host community with lots of music and dancing. I was staying with a young couple and their four children and grandfather. After four weeks with the boys, talking football and politics, I found this homely atmosphere comforting. The children were shy at first, giggling behind their mother, but tried to make themselves understood. When the father came home, we enjoyed a pleasant evening discussing the ordinary things that make life so beautiful. When they asked if I was married I pulled out a photo of Sien. The photo was passed around, and although I didn't understand the language, I could tell they thought she was very beautiful. That made me feel good. Later they asked if I would come back to Vanuatu. I couldn't promise of course because I didn't know if there would be another opportunity. But when they suggested I stay a bit longer, I told them it was time to go back to the Netherlands. I wanted to be with my 'sayang'.

Hundreds of ni-Vanuatu send off FC Mambruk at the Bauerfield Airport in Port Vila after the Pacific Tour in July 1986.

Before we left Vanuatu, Barak Sope gave us all a custom-made shirt as a souvenir of our Mambruk Pacific Tour in 1986. Mine still fits (when I suck in my stomach).

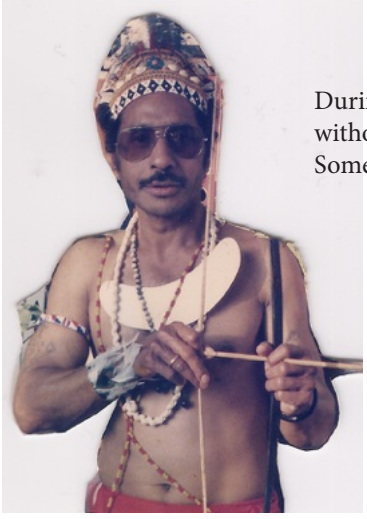
OTHER BOUNDARIES

In the late eighties, the dance group Sampari was invited by Indonesian students to perform in East Berlin. At that time the Wall was still an iron curtain between the capitalist West and communist East, and anyone attempting to climb over it was shot. It was remarkable that there were Indonesian students in communist Germany during the Soeharto regime. Their apparent solidarity with Papuans was also remarkable, given that Sampari had open ties with the Papuan People's Front.

Viktor Kaisiëpo asked me to drive the Transit van to Berlin because it had six wheels and therefore had to be driven by a licenced truck driver. Of course I accepted, and also arranged for ten sleeping bags from Kro-

mhout Barracks. The journey through Germany went smoothly until we reached the Berlin checkpoint, where all our papers were inspected. It was strange to have to stop at a heavily guarded border crossing in the middle of a modern city. It reminded me of the Indonesian military blockades in Sorong. I had fled to the free west, but just a few hours away was confronted with the harsh realities of the Cold War.

When we arrived at the theatre with all our gear, Efi Mamoribo told me they were short of a dancer. She had extra dance gear and asked if I would fill in. I felt a bit duped. She could have asked earlier. "I can't dance" I protested, trying to get out of it. Efi said I wouldn't be doing it for myself but "for your people, for the Papuans." So there I was, with no practice, dancing shirtless on a German stage. That's another way of pushing your boundaries.



During our tour of East Berlin I had to dance without practice and with hardly any clothes. Sometimes activism requires sacrifice

You don't have to travel abroad to push your boundaries. I have mentioned our friends from the Utrecht squatters' movement, who connected us with activists in The Hague. They always presented us with vegetarian meals, which left us perplexed, although I'm sure they quietly joked about the 'papeda' (sago starch) we served them which some say looks and tastes like wallpaper glue. However, the food was incidental; it was through those new friendships that we crossed boundaries, formed new collaborations and warm bonds with many beautiful initiatives.

The Papuan girls from PaVo initiated a collaboration with our new friends from the Utrecht squatters movement, who in turn invited Moluccan friends to join their meetings and share ideas and strategies. All this resulted in the huge Pasar Maling event in Utrecht's Neude square

in June 1995. I was there with my youngest son Jofrey. It was the first time that almost all Papuan and Moluccan groups and organizations in the Netherlands came together. There were political speakers, musicians, food stalls and charities; and also the conscientious objectors to the police actions in the Dutch East Indies in the 1940s. Because these soldiers had refused to go and fight the Indonesians, they spent a long time in prison. I wasn't familiar with the story; indeed very few Papuans or Moluccans are aware of those principled young Dutch men. One of them said they had no regrets.

The Moluccan band 'Pusaka', Pasar Maling event in Utrecht, June 1995.

I also found it remarkable to see Indonesian activists on the Indonesia Committee, and an artist who painted a large political cartoon in the middle of the square. The highlight was two young East Timorese, with Moluccan musicians, getting the whole crowd dancing in the pouring rain to their protest song "Sa'e foho tun foho" ('Uphill, downhill'). That day we were all together, all united, thanks to a few Papuan girls, Dutch squatters, and their Moluccan friends. They set a good example, which I hope will be repeated, for it resulted in lifelong friendships that cut across political currents. True friendship knows no boundaries.

The Pasar Maling event established relations between Papuans and Moluccans. We joined each other's activities, we joined actions for East Timor, and when we needed a space we'd call the squatters. It was through the squatters' movement that Dolf Tompoh and I ended up at Nijmegen University in February 2008, speaking to an Amnesty International student group. This, again, was outside my comfort zone. I had

contact with students before, but I had never spoken at a university. There we were, the experts, among all those highly educated young people. However, we were able to tell them about the history of their own country which they hadn't learned at university! It was wonderful that young Papuans musicians performed at the university, the same young Papuans who are now so active in Geneva.

"No people is free that oppresses another people".

The huge solidarity banner in the Ganzenmarkt behind Utrecht City Hall made by the squat Ubica for the Pasar Maling event in 1995. (Archive: Stichting Vrij Oost Timor).

Some Papuans took their understanding of 'new connections' quite literally; Tony's son Naftali found his great love, Odilia, and years my son Jofrey found his great friend Sisto. Odilia and Sisto are East Timorese. Naftali met the Timorese Odilia met in December 1995 during a training session of the Papuan dance group Sampari at the Baten Centre in Nieuwegein. She had travelled to the Netherlands with her family from Portugal because their Timorese dance group, Tata Mailau, was performing in Amsterdam. The spark ignited during a night of music and food at the Kerkveld Community Centre. The next day, Naftali and his mother Reggie and other family members, went to a performance at the Winston Hotel, and from then on Naftali and Odilia called each other every week. They now have a teenage son and live in England.

Many years later, my son Jofrey moved into a house in Utrecht, where East Timor activists used to gather in the 1990s. The place still hous-

es the activists' archive and it was here that Jofrey got to know Sisto through Facebook. The two were soul mates and would chat for hours. They never met in person, but their bond was so strong that Sisto knew that Jofrey had passed away before he got the phone call. Sisto said that Jofrey appeared to him in a vision. Years later, after Sisto visited our home in Nieuwegein for the first time, we understood a little of the bond. Not only did they share the same creative resilience, but also the same quirks and warm personalities. Moments after Sisto entered our home he fell asleep on the couch. It was comforting that he felt so at ease with us. A Papuan born in the Netherlands can be the soulmate of a Timorese on the other side of the world. Brotherhood (or sisterhood) knows no boundaries.

Speaking of Timor and boundaries: when I went to England with Jofrey in 2012 to visit our Papuan brothers, we also met young East Timorese workers and students. They were not refugees like the first Timorese we got to know in the nineties. These were young people who are free because East Timor is independent. Young people free to choose and seek their happiness beyond the borders of their country. And when they are done searching, they are free to return home.

Geneva in 2017, Young Papua activists in the event "Swimming for West Papua" in support of the petition for a referendum.

10

leo

leo

Before I continue with my story, I want to dedicate a chapter to Leo. We were pen pals in primary school, and as a young man, he helped me escape. But I never saw Leo after the day that Tony and I hid on the ship in Sorong. For forty-seven years, I didn't hear from him. Yet I knew that we were friends for life.

One day in 2010 I received a call from a Mr Kok de Geus. He told me that he had just read an article about me on the internet which had been published in 2000 by the Reformatorisch Dagblad newspaper. The editorial office had given him my number. The call surprised me because I didn't know who Kok de Geus was. He told me that he used to be a sailor on the Schelde Lloyd and still remembered the two stowaways on board. At the time, he was reprimanded by Captain Grauenkamp because he was on watch when Tony and I hid on the ship. My jaw dropped! Then he said "Your friend Leo lives in Enschede and he works for Wijk TV, a local television channel."

Mensen

Papoeastrijder Eddy Korwa: Ik kwam via een spectaculaire tocht in Nederland terecht

„Zolang de morgenster schijnt, houd ik hoop"

"As long as the morning star shines I will keep hoping" (Reformatorisch Dagblad newspaper, 1 December 2000).

Kok promised to send me a printout from the Wijk TV website and said he would also try to get in touch with Leo and arrange a meeting. He gave me Leo's telephone number, and I tried calling a few times, but the number didn't work. Later Kok gave me a mobile number, and I hoped

that would work. I was quite nervous about calling as it had been such a long time. Our first phone call was rather awkward. When he answered, I said "Hello, this is Eddy Korwa. Are you the Leo who helped me escape from Sorong?" Leo said "Yes, that's me. How are you? How did you get my number?" I told him that Kok de Geus had given it to me. I said "I have been searching for you for a long time, and now I have finally found you." Leo asked many questions: "Where do you live? Are you married? To a Dutch woman or a Papuan? Do you have children? Are you working? How long have you been in the Netherlands?" Before I could answer, he said "I live in Enschede, I'll give you my email address. I'm also married; let's arrange to meet soon."

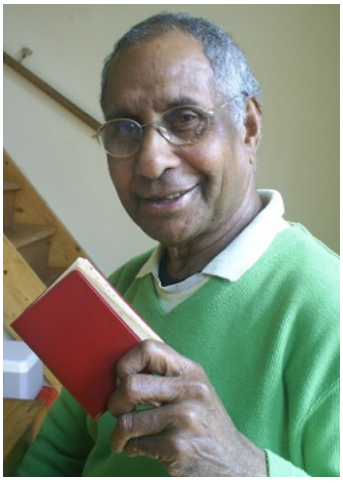
REUNION

Not long after, my children organized a party at Fort Vreeswijk for my seventieth birthday and decided to invite this special friend. Leo came with his wife and a daughter. I knew he would but meeting him was still a surprise. A woman I didn't recognize stood in front of me at the door and said "Are you Eddy? I have a photo for you. Do you recognize him?" She handed me a photo of a young Leo. She continued "I have someone standing behind me" and stepped aside and there stood Leo! Like me, he had aged during the forty-seven years since we last met. Moreover, he had become a lot bigger than the young sailor I knew. Nevertheless I still recognized the face of my friend. We immediately embraced, just as we had during our first meeting on the ship in Sorong. It was as if those forty-seven years didn't exist. Friends are friends.

My birthday was a wonderful celebration with so many dear and cherished people. The only downside was that I had little time with Leo. Subsequently we called each other and always said we would meet up, but somehow never didn't. It was strange that it seemed so difficult to visit a dear friend. After my son Jofrey urged me to start writing this book, Leo's name came up again. It wouldn't leave my mind. I had to see him again. So I called him and two weeks later we met for coffee. It was on Ascension Day in 2013. The first time that I met my pen pal and saviour in his own world, at his home with his wife Sjoukje and their dogs, and photos of their grandchildren on the wall. Leo and Sjoukje are generous spirits, and I immediately felt as if I was stepping into family.

My first visit to Leo's home on Ascension Day in May 2013.

Of course, we immediately began talking about the old days, and agreed on everything until I mentioned eating potatoes, vegetables and a large piece of meat. He suddenly lost his temper. “What? You were eating meat on that ship while I was wandering around Sydney without any food!” “How come you were without food in Sydney?” I asked. Only then, all this time later, did I learn why I hadn’t seen Leo on the ship. He had to flee after getting into trouble for helping me. "But what about that little red book where you record your purchases? Didn’t you give it to me?" His signature was in it, after all. Then I learned that Leo hadn’t left the book for me. The others took it from his gear so that they could drink on his account! So then Leo told me his story.



I still have Leo's little red book.

LEO TELLS HIS STORY

I was born on 28 December 1946 in Enschede and named Leonardus Franciscus Flake, son of Arnold Cisca Flake. I have a brother and two sisters, and I am a true Tukker (slang for native to the region). I ruined a football career because I was too focused on girls and was always late for training. I took up judo, but that ended when my father caught me smoking a cigarette. When I left school, my parents insisted that I go into the textile industry. I didn't want to so I took to sailing.

The young Leonardus Franciscus Flake.

My first voyage was in 1963 on the MS Main Lloyd, a large coastal freighter travelling from Bremerhaven around Belgium and Germany. When I was seventeen I was a deck boy on the MS Schelde Lloyd to New Guinea. The ship docked in Sorong for five days, and we weren't allowed off. We knew very well to watch out for the Indonesian locals, who might shoot us if we disembarked. Nevertheless, we played a game of football against some Papuan boys. The lads were barefoot but we lost the match.

I still clearly remember the evening I first saw Eddy. I was with the men in the mess when a Papuan boy came aboard asking for me. That was quite special. I took my beer with me to prevent it from being stolen. The boy said he wanted to talk to me, and I thought "Ok, I'll listen for a

moment." Maybe it's just being human to listen to someone. But I kept an eye on him because you couldn't just bring anyone aboard. I didn't know what he wanted, so I asked him "Do we know each other?" He said something about a letter exchange, which started to ring a bell. In the sixth year at the Scheepstra School, we could sign up with the headmaster, Mr Smit, if we wanted to correspond with children in New Guinea. Still, I didn't put things together until he showed me a photo, and I realized I had corresponded with this boy, that this was Eddy. It was very strange. I was stunned. And then we were embracing each other. I thought "Gosh, I've come all the way from the Netherlands and you're the Papuan from here." It was very special. As a child, I wondered what it would be like to meet my pen pal, and now to be talking to him. I thought it was great, very special!

Eddy told me he wanted to leave, that he needed to escape. So I helped him. I just did. Later, I was betrayed. I had taken Eddy to the engine room. I don't know if Charles Hanselaar saw that, but later he said "You did that. You hid those Papuan boys." I had trouble with Charles Hanselaar before, so I just said "Shut up, Hagenees!" In the evening, we had another argument about it. There was another Hagenees on board, and the three of us ended up in a fight. Jan Sint Nicolaas joined in and gave the other guy a good smack on the head. Of course Hanselaar reported us to the captain, which resulted in a punishment. After that these Haganees caused all sorts of trouble for Jan and me, and when I heard them whispering that they could throw us overboard, I knew we had to get off that ship.

When the ship was docked in Sydney, Jan and I grabbed our kit bags ready to escape. The watch, Kok de Geus, seemed to know what we were planning. He told us he couldn't let us disembark and that it would be better if we put our kit back. I can still see Hanselaar smirking when de Geus said we had to put our kit bags back. Shortly afterwards, back on deck Kok said "I don't know what you are doing but I need to go upstairs." So we slipped away without taking our belongings. Looking back we were lucky that Kok de Geus was on watch. If it had been someone else, they would have certainly reported us to the captain and we would have been in more trouble.

In Sydney Jan and I spent the first five days living on the street. We slept in a small park, and stole milk, only two bottles, from schools after the milkman dropped off the crates for the children. We went to a different school every day to avoid suspicion. It was a terrible time, an emotional time. I lost everything, including my clothes and guitar, and we

didn't know what to do. I kept thinking about Eddy and the other boy, wondering if someone was taking care of them and if they were getting enough to eat. Now, fifty years later, I hear from Eddy that he was eating meat, while I was in Sydney worrying about him. Can you imagine, he was eating meat while I was surviving on bottles of stolen milk.

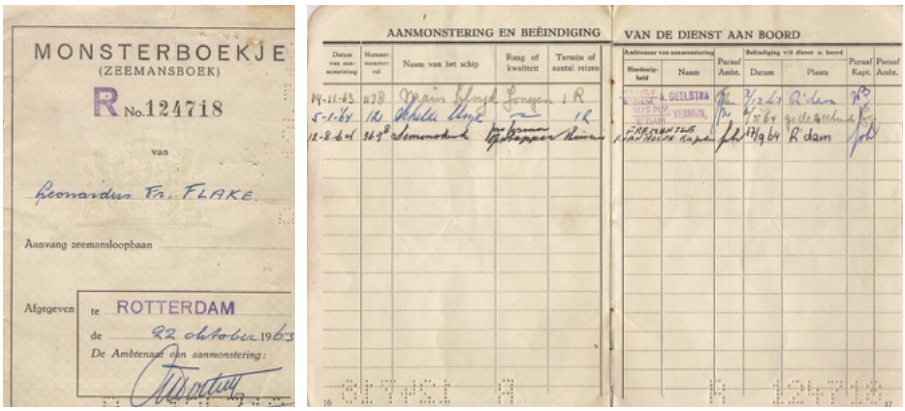
After five days wandering around, we were woken in a park by police and taken to the station. We tried to explain the situation. The police rang the Dutch Consul who immediately arranged a hotel for us. We couldn't stay longer than three or four nights because it was too expensive for them. After that, we went to the consulate in Melbourne who placed us with a priest in a home where children and people worked for their keep. Jan and I shared a small room and were put to work. You had to work before you could get a bed. The priest made sure of that.

I earned ten pounds a week working at a factory. All the money went to the priest. Every morning we had two slices of bread with a fried sausage and two fried eggs. For lunch, we got two slices of bread. After work, we went back to the home and stayed in the room. There was no television, not even a common room. It was just work, eat, sleep. Nothing else. We had one or two pounds a week to spend. Out of that we had to pay for the tram to the factory and sometimes we bought a bottle of lemonade. Meanwhile, we didn't know how to get back to the Netherlands.

Eventually I had to leave the factory and I ended up working on a large dairy farm. I was happy with that because anything was better than sitting in that home all day. Jan got a different job. I think the Consul decided to separate us. Every morning at four o'clock I had to take all the cows to a field at the far end of the farm. Miles of walking. Not like in Enschede, where ten cows sit in a twenty-square metre field. No, this field was miles long and the farmer had 1300-1500 cows. All the male calves were killed when they were born. That was so horrible. The farmer held them between his legs and drove a big iron pin into their skull with a hammer. He wanted me to learn to do it, but I said "I'm not doing that, not at all." I thought it was the worst thing ever.

After three months in Australia, I managed to join the MS Simonskerk as a casual worker, meaning working without wages to pay for your passage, but at least we got back to the Netherlands.

Looking back at the Schelde Lloyd, I can only say it was a rotten ship. I had sailed on the Main Lloyd and everything was perfect. And on the


MONSTERBOEKJE
(ZEEMANSBOEK)
R No. 124718
van
Leonardus Fr. FLAKE
Aanvang zeemansloopbaan
Afgegeven te ROTTERDAM
de 22 oktober 1963
De Ambtenaar van aanmonstering:

AANMONSTERING EN BEËINDIGING VAN DE DIENST AAN BOORD

Leo's record shows him deserting MS Schelde Lloyd on 6 May 1964, signing onto the Simonskerk on 12 August, arriving in Rotterdam 17 September 1964.

Simonskerk, things were also great with the crew even though I was just a casual worker. But those people on the Schelde Lloyd were a bunch of rogues. There were a few decent guys, but I have no good memories of the Schelde Lloyd. Especially not of the captain, who wanted to throw Eddy and his mate off the ship. Do you know what kind of ship the Schelde Lloyd was? It was a ship full of young criminals who were given a choice between jail or joining the Schelde Lloyd. A rotten ship, that's what it was! I said I would never ever go sailing again in my life. They say sailing is wonderful, but I'll never go again.

By the time I finally got to Rotterdam I was penniless. Jan's father gave me 25 guilders to get home. Back them, that was a lot of money. I immediately set off for Dordrecht. I didn't know that my father and mother had come to Rotterdam to pick me up. By the time they arrived at the port, I had already left. At home, I expected a warm welcome, but got a thwack with the poker. My mother was furious as she had been waiting at Rotterdam harbour for nothing. I asked my father for 25 guilders to repay Jan's parents, but my mother insisted I pay it myself. "You'd better get to work" she said. I started polishing bicycles in a bike shop in Enschede to repay Jan's father.

In 1965 I was working as a forklift driver, and got dizzy and crashed into another forklift. The doctor found that I was burning my blood sugar too quickly, and had to go to the hospital immediately. At home, my mother cleared out all my things. She threw everything away, including Eddy's letters. I was upset about that. I had wanted to keep everything. In 1967, I started working at the De Jager spinning mill. That year I met Sjoukje, who was working at the checkout at Simon de Wit. My mother

didn't think much of her and made it clear. "You're not involved with that girl from Simon de Wit, are you?" In 1968 I married Sjoukje. We have three daughters, three sons-in-law, and seven grandchildren.

Forty-seven years after that horrible adventure in Australia, I got a phone call from Eddy. Kok de Geus had read an article about him, and contacted him, and gave him my telephone number. A few months later, we met in Nieuwegein, at Eddy's seventieth birthday party, but there were so many people we didn't really get a chance to catch up. On Ascension Day in 2013 he came to our home in Enschede. My friend Eddy and I found each other again.

Sien and I visiting Leo and Sjoukje Flake at their home in August 2015.

Leo was a sports teacher for twenty-four years, teaching judo, jiu-jitsu, and karate. After he stopped due to health reasons, he and Sjoukje ran a brasserie in Buurse for three years. Later, he became involved with 'Wijk TV', which under his tutelage became a recognized training company, and he worked there until he retired. In his last few years, Leo was very ill. He passed away on 28 December 2017, his 71st birthday.

11

stranger in papua

Stranger in Papua

I was a stranger when I arrived in Rotterdam in August 1964. When I returned to my homeland in 1990, I thought I was finally coming home. But it wasn't that simple. Shortly after arriving, I realized I was a stranger. They say that immigrants live between two cultures, but I am not an immigrant. I am a Dutch Papuan, and that means dealing with three cultures because Jakarta's influence also plays a significant role.

'West Irian Liberation Monument' in Jakarta organised by President Sukarno to celebrate reclaiming West Irian.

Water tower, Biak Island, the site of a massacre by the Indonesian military on 6 July 1998.

I returned to West Papua for the first time in 1990 with a ticket given to me by Wilko Buiter. We were both members of a veterans' committee that wanted to bring a West Papuan dance group to the Netherlands. Wilko wanted to travel there to film and make contact with groups, and was looking for someone to travel with. Sien told him that she was planning to send me to Biak so I could celebrate my fiftieth birthday with my family. Within a week, Wilko and his wife Sylvia were on our doorstep with a huge surprise “Listen Eddy, we’re giving you a plane ticket!”

When I set foot on Indonesian soil at Jakarta airport, I let the tropical breeze wash over me. I could still remember those soft warm zephyrs from my youth, but it smelled very different from my memory of roasted fish and durian. Jakarta smells like a mix of petrol, kretek, and satay. On the taxi ride to our hotel, I was amazed by the traffic and honking

horns. “Look at that statue” said Wilko. “That’s from Sukarno, about the liberation of Irian Jaya.” We stopped the taxi so that we could take a better look at the enormous statue of a man breaking chains above his head. I said “Liberation? What liberation? And why is that statue in Jakarta and not in Jayapura?” The taxi driver smiled and shrugged. Even if he did know, he probably wouldn’t have said anything. It was the time of Suharto. Better not to know anything then.

Before we travelled to Biak, we spent a week in Ambon for Wilko to visit his father's grave (he had fallen as a soldier during the Japanese occupation) and to film a water project for a Moluccan foundation in Groningen. We soon proved to be good travel companions, spending entire evenings discussing what had gone wrong with former Dutch New Guinea. It was strange that we could travel so freely with a professional camera. Even at passport control in Jakarta, we passed as two Dutchmen on holiday, although it did become clear that we were being watched. However, we had nothing to hide, and we weren't there to report on the political situation. Wilko was capturing cultural footage, and I had come to visit my family. How innocent can you get?

THE REUNION

The first thing I noticed at the airport in Biak was that the KLM planes and materials were no longer there. All the aircraft and hangars bore the Garuda and Merpati emblems. I found myself yearning for the Dutch era, like most adults looking back on their youth. Realistically, it would have been problematic if in 1990 those Dutch planes were still there. Imagine if everything was the same as it had been in 1961. The Netherlands may not have kept its promise of self-governance. There may have been resistance or even war between the Dutch and the Papuans.

In Biak city, Wilko and I found a hotel, then went to my sister Lauce's home. I wanted to surprise her, but she wasn’t home. My brother-in-law opened the door, and my nephew shouted “Oom, oom dari Belanda! Dengan orang bule!” (Uncle from the Netherlands! With a stranger). He had recognized me immediately because Lauce and I look alike. It was funny but not polite to call Wilko a ‘bule’ which comes from 'bulan' meaning 'moon'. Originally we used it to describe a white boss: a moon face, round white head. We laughed, then my brother-in-law called the other children. They greeted me with big smiles and hugs. We promised to come again, but first I wanted to find my sister.

My brother-in-law said that Lauce was visiting our mother's grave, and he explained how to get to the kampung. Wilko and I drove there the next morning. My brother-in-law was already there, not wanting to miss the reunion. The house stood on high stilts. I was at the bottom of the ladder. My brother-in-law called "Lauce, come down and see what I have here!" She appeared, a bit irritated, but when she saw me she skipped down the ladder and jumped into my arms. She clung to me, crying "Auuuuuh... my brother is back!" Children and women gathered. I heard them talking in Malay and Biak. So there I stood in the kampung, among the palm trees, beside a typical Papuan stilt house, with my sister in my arms, hearing the languages of my youth.

An old woman asked my brother-in-law what was going on. "That's Lauce's brother, he has come from the Netherlands." The old woman clasped her hands "Oh, is that Adèk? He is still alive?" This sweet woman had carried me when I was small and was now 92 years old. She told me, crying, that she thought I had disappeared forever. Then she held me at arm's length and looked me up and down. "Boy, I have always kept you in my heart. Now that you are back, will you stay?" I had to say that it wasn't possible because I was a refugee. She groaned, let go of me, and stepped back. That hurt. Wilko saw and intervened. It was time to leave. We would meet Lauce again in a few days. As we walked away, I looked back and can still recall the image of Lauce bent over, crying, and the grandmother with her arm around Lauce's shoulder.

While I waited for Lauce to return home, I visited her family every evening. Unlike in the kampung where I felt like a stranger, I was immediately at ease with her family. It's a wonderful feeling of being home with family, even though we had never met before. It was a hospitable house. Young people from the neighbourhood gathered in the garden every evening to make music. I enjoyed sitting and listening to their songs in Biak and Indonesian. I noticed they often cut the Biak songs short and switched to an Indonesian song. I asked them to sing a few of the old Biak songs, but they didn't know them by heart. I understand the youth need to keep up with the times, but it pained me to see them replacing the songs of their own culture with Indonesian music.

I wanted to contribute in my own way to what the late Arnold Ap had been so passionate about. He dedicated his life to keeping people connected to their culture and identity through music. So during a couple of quiet moments I taught the young people a Biak song composed by my brother-in-law Gerard Kafiar.

The song is about the ten villages that form the place called Korido:

Inseni, Bonsfori, Warbefondido
Kuyaro Rumpera, Rumaseb, Awak
Ababiadi, Mara, Yambarai, Ramar
Kona Snonsnon oser (together we have one name)
Snonsnon Korido (together we are Korido)

When Lauce returned we started catching up, crying over our father and mother and sister Helena, who had all passed away without seeing me again. We laughed about the niece who had wanted to marry our brother Jafeth. We had so much to tell each other. Suddenly Lauce said "I need to give you something." She left the room and came back with my Bible. I recognized it from the stickers on the cover. "Look" she said "Didn't I tell you mum put a photo of our half-sister Safira in your Bible?" She opened my Bible and gave me the photo. We had never talked about our half-sister. Apparently our mother wanted to confide in me and had placed this photo in my Bible. Perhaps she hoped that if I found the photo I would ask questions, and then she could have told me about her first marriage and our older sister. This photo was a final message from Mum. It was beautiful, and sad. I cried, and Lauce cried with me.

Back in Biak Island in 1990, twenty-six years after I left my homeland.

Wilko's main objective was to film cultural dance groups for the veterans who wanted to bring a performance group to the Netherlands. Through my niece, he got in touch with dancers from Garuda Airlines.

They weren't classical Papuan, but her clever idea was that Garuda had enough money to sponsor a trip to the Netherlands. The recordings on the beach attracted a lot of attention. Even the regent (mayor) came. His bodyguards asked the dance leader what was going on. "Oh, they are from Garuda and might perform in the Netherlands". Without association with a big name like Garuda we would have faced many more questions. Journalists and film crews were not welcome at the time.

At the beach in Biak in 1990 with my sister Lauce on my right and our
who had once wanted to marry my brother Jafeth.

Wilko Buiter filming Garuda dance group in Biak for his documentary.

A few days later we flew to Sorong to film another dance group. I also wanted to visit my brother Janaman, and my son—who I now thought should meet his father. The plane landed on Jefman Island. From there we took a boat to the mainland. To my great surprise the boat was the MS Bruinvis, the one I had worked on as a sailor. I stumbled over my words when I told Wilko. He also could hardly believe it. The boat's name and colours were exactly the same as they were twenty-seven years ago. As I climbed aboard, it felt so familiar, as though with one swing of my leg I was back in time. Even the bench I had built was still on the deck. Only the emergency balloon rope, that we used to call for help, was missing. When I mentioned this to the Papuan workers they just shrugged. "What can we say?" Apparently, the Indonesian owner didn't care how his crew would manage an emergency.

Lauce had arranged for us to stay with our cousin Levi and her husband Nelis in Sorong. They welcomed us with tears and hugs. Nelis and I recalled the time we fled on our bikes during the football match against the Indonesian soldiers in 1963. Not only was his beautiful shirt torn to shreds, but as I learned now, he also ended up being arrested.

Wilko was in luck, as Nelis was able to put him in touch with the renowned dance group Kontiki from Manokwari. The group was on a major tour and currently in Sorong so we had to move quickly. We filmed a performance on the beach the next day. I even played a role in one of the recordings after they wrote a song for me in Biak. It was about a boy who left his land and love behind and returned many years later to see how his child had grown up. The singer didn't know the lyrics by heart so she held the text on paper hidden behind a palm leaf in her hand. I found it touching that they had written this for me, and was so pleased to find Papuans who were still proud of their own language.

I am so disappointed this dance group never got to the Netherlands. It was only because of fighting between Papuans in the Netherlands. They said that because I wasn't a dancer I shouldn't have meddled with the committee, even if the committee had asked me to become a member. Will we ever learn? When will we realise that Papuans squabbling in the Netherlands has negative consequences for the Papuans in Papua?

While we were filming my brother Janaman appeared. He knew I was in Sorong because Lauce had called him, and Levi and Nelis told him I was filming with a Dutch friend on the beach. He had been sitting quietly on a log watching. During a break he walked over with his arms wide open. The only thing he said before hugging me tearfully was "Big brother."

That evening he introduced me to his wife and their four children. I felt very welcome. We had a lot to catch up on. His children were teenagers and asked many questions about the Netherlands, about how we live and work, about my family. Then they asked why I had left, and I cautiously explained that I got involved in politics and had run into trouble. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw my brother signal his children. "Sssst" he hissed through his teeth and slowly shook his head. The youngsters immediately changed the topic. They were happy to see me as long as I didn't talk about why I had left. Like the grandmother in the kampung, they preferred not to discuss it. Some think it was foolish, or wrong of me, others agree with what I did, but the topic is too sensitive to speak about openly. You can't just say "My uncle is a political refugee."

Janaman told me that our brother Jafeth was an itinerant teacher in Wamena, travelling from village to village in the highlands and rarely at home. It would be quite a task to find him in the short time I had. I was very disappointed, but Janaman said Jafeth was about to retire, and I could meet him during my next visit. Neither of us knew that it would be 25 years before I saw Jafeth, and it would be at Janaman's funeral.

My brothers Jafeth and Janaman in the 1970s.

I HAVE A SON IN SORONG

Now to find my son whose existence I had long denied. He was in Papua, I was in the Netherlands, so I could do little for him. I believed that he was the child of an Indonesian soldier, despite the photo his mother had sent. Even Sien couldn't make me accept that I had a son in Papua. I was young, stubborn and had fled to be free, leaving my parents and brothers and sisters. The loss was already so great that I apparently had no room in my heart for more pain. I didn't want to know that I had left my girlfriend with a child. When he was eighteen he sent me a letter:

"You refuse to acknowledge me as your son, but I am Papuan, I am a Biakker, and I am a Korwa. I ask you to respond to my letter. If you do not write back, then I want nothing to do with you. I expect your reply."

I was shocked, especially after Sien pointed out that his way of writing was very similar to mine. "Don't you see Ed? It's like you are the one talking. He must be yours." Sien made me realize that although I couldn't take care of my son, at least I could hold him in my heart. I am grateful to her for that. Of course I replied to him. I sent him a letter with a Morning star flag sticker inside, and wrote "I left for political reasons, not because I wanted to abandon you and your mother. You ask me to acknowledge you as my son, but can you accept me as your father? If I ever get the chance to come to you, I want you to show me that you've dared keep this letter and this sticker."

Now, eight years later, I was standing unannounced at his door. He opened the door and looked at me. Without greeting me, he went back inside and came back with my letter. Standing right in front of me he slowly opened it and showed me the sticker. He looked me straight in the eye and said "Here you are Dad."

Six years later, in 1996, I saw him again. He was now married and had become a father. We had kept in touch since our meeting in 1990 so I knew that his stepfather had passed away. Sien my sayang and I were in Papua because our children had given us plane tickets for our 25th wedding anniversary. I am so proud of Sien because she has so much love in her heart that she can also love this son and his mother.

We spent a month in the land where we both came from. We visited our families, and I kept thinking how beautiful it would be to grow old together here. I fantasized about a piece of land where we would build a little house by the river and watch the fishing boats from the veranda.

We would have a small prau (boat) and I would row with my sayang, listening to the flow of the river, the birds singing, the crickets chirping in the evening. We would roast fish in the garden with our neighbours. Boys would climb palm trees and throw down fresh coconuts. It would be so lovely, but would meaning leaving everyone I love for the second time in my life. Our children and grandchildren were born and live in the Netherlands. So for now I'll just dream, and make short visits.

IRIAN JAYA BECOMES PAPUA AGAIN

In June 2000, the Papua Presidium held a congress in Jayapura, or Port Numbay as we call it. Viktor Kaisiëpo, Mia Rumajauw, and I were chosen to represent Papuans in the Netherlands. A lot happened in Indonesia in the lead-up to the congress. In May 1988 President Soeharto was ousted. His successor, Yusef Habibie, spoke about democratisation, but two months later couldn't prevent a massacre at the water tower in Biak. In January 1999, he talked to the United Nations about a referendum in East Timor. The following month, one hundred Papuan leaders met him in Jakarta and demanded West Papua's independence. East Timorese voted to separate from Indonesia six months later. The Papuan concerns were never addressed. Habibie was succeeded by Abdurrahman Wahid. Gus Dur as he was popularly known was blind but not deaf, and at the end of 1999, in an attempt to promote special autonomy, he changed the name 'Irian Jaya' to 'Papua' and personally advocated for the congress in 2000. (The last congress in Papua was in 1961, during the Dutch times).

During the congress we saw young people riding scooters and bikes with Morning Star flags, with soldiers everywhere, but not beating them or throwing them into prison. I wondered how long it would last. One day I struck a conversation with a soldier drinking coffee in a warung. He realised I was from abroad and asked me what I was doing in Jayapura. I told him I lived in the Netherlands and was visiting family. He was a friendly guy, and we had another coffee. When I asked him why there were so many soldiers on the streets, he told me the province was a Military Operations Area (Daerah Operasi Militer/DOM).

The 2nd Congress lasted a week, with delegates from all the regions of Papua. The entire resolution is online. Here are just the first two points:

* Papua has been a sovereign nation since 1 December 1961.
* The Papua nation rejects the 1962 New York Agreement as illegal and immoral because representatives of Papua were not involved.

For the referendum in East Timor in 1999 (twelve months before the Papuan Congress) all East Timorese aged seventeen and older were free to vote, even those living abroad. The United Nations determined that voters had to have at least one ethnically Timorese grandparent, which meant that transmigrants and temporary personnel working for Indonesia couldn't vote. How different to the 1969 Act of free choice in Papua. If they applied the 1999 formula for a referendum in Kanaky or Papua today, how quickly these issues would be resolved.

A firm hug from Theys Eluay, Chairman of Papua Presidium, after the 2nd Congress in 2000 and (right) with Viktor Kaisëpo and John Mebri at Sentani Airport.

After the 2nd Congress in Jayapura, the Papua Youth Committee asked me to participate in the European Panel of their conference. I felt honoured to speak as a Dutch Papuan, and mainly talked about peacefulness and love for our people. I kept it brief but emphasized that I supported the congress resolutions and applauded their conference. After all, the youth hold the future. During the 1990s, East Timorese students demonstrated that. They spoke in venues around the world putting their cause on the map and ensuring their people were not forgotten. What I also find admirable about the East Timorese is that they see themselves as descendants of their grandfather crocodile. If you look closely at the island, you'll see that it resembles a crocodile sticking its head above the water. I find this remarkable because we also have a region where the locals tell traditional stories about the crocodile as their ancestor.

In the Tobati region, where my sayang comes from, the people believe that something significant will happen when a white crocodile appears. It might be good news, or bad news, but it will be important for everyone. Because of this, many people from Tobati feel connected to crocodiles. There's also a story about crocodiles in a village on the Digoel

River during the Japanese occupation in the 1940s. The soldiers were chasing the villagers and couldn't cross the river because there were so many crocodiles in the water. A Tobati man stepped forward and asked the crocodiles for their help. According to the story, the crocodiles lay side by side, forming a bridge for the villagers. When the Japanese soldiers arrived, the crocodiles disappeared underwater.

I am a Korwa from Biak. In our tradition we descend from a dragon. In our village, Ababiadi, there's a story that this dragon returns once a year at night to play in the sea with a large diamond. He throws the diamond into the air, like a ball, which creates a lot of light. A cousin told me that in the 1980s a team of Japanese researchers heard the story and wanted to investigate the seabed. The villagers strongly advised them not to, but they did and none of them returned.

A week after the congress, my twenty-year-old son Jofrey arrived from the Netherlands. My other two sons visited some years ago, and now Jofrey was here. He had flown alone, had visited family in Jakarta, and was now here in Biak. We embraced and I told him I was proud of him for making the journey on his own. His response was typical Jofrey "Dad, I'm a Papuan." The first thing we did was visit his Aunt Lauce because family is important and he immediately clicked with his cousins. After coffee they wanted to take a taxi to the pasar (market) but Jofrey said "No, we're walking, like everyone else here." I watched from the doorway and called out "Jo, be careful" but he was already walking down the street as if he was at home. And he was, I could see that.

One day as we were walking by the harbour, I heard a couple of boys behind us talking in Biak about Jofrey. Because of his long hair, they mistook him for a Moluccan. I turned to the boys and said, "Kami orang Biak" (we are Biakkers). They immediately turned to Jofrey and asked if he could speak Biak. Jofrey responded, "Apuse kukon dao." The boys burst into laughter, as that is the first line of a very famous song. You never get bored when you are with that boy. While I felt somewhat like a stranger in Biak, I saw that it was the opposite for Jofrey.

Occasionally I caught myself looking at things through Dutch eyes and suggest how things might be done better. I would then get a tap on the wrist "Uncle, this is how we do it here." But it wasn't only my experience in the Netherlands that made me feel like a stranger. Significant Javanese influences on the local cultures played a big role, intertwined as it is with daily life in every detail. I was not part of this development. We were in a taxi one day and a cousin said "Uncle, we're about to drive

over a polisi tidur" (sleeping policeman). I was shocked and they started laughing because 'polisi tidur' in Javanese means speed bump. Jofrey didn't have any problems adjusting. In his few weeks in Biak, he absorbed the life like a sponge, and when he returned to the Netherlands became even more Papuan working on Radio Papua in Nieuwegein.

With my son Jofrey on the beach at Anggopi in East Biak.

Jofrey, Radio Papua, Kerkveld Community Center, The Netherlands.

Jofrey with traditional dance group in Biak Island after the Congress.

I visited Papua again in 2000, in the Papuan People's Front delegation invited to the Morning Star event on 1 December. The day passed without confrontation. Whereas before you were immediately arrested for raising the independence flag, this time Indonesian soldiers just stood and watched. Could it be that I might now travel back and forth freely on a regular basis? It even seemed that a serious effort was being made for a peaceful solution—even if we were permitted to raise just one flag in each city, and not higher than the red-and-white Indonesian flag! However, it was clear that for most Papuans, the proposed special autonomy was not acceptable. It was, and still is, a farce, especially as Papua is still a Military Operations Area. Ab Jansen, the foreign affairs editor of the Reformatorisch Dagblad, interviewed me about my visit and published his article on 1 December 2000:

"As long as the Morning Star shines, I keep hope … At the invitation of the Committee for Flag Raising in Biak, Eddy personally attended this flag ceremony today. However, the tone of the central government in Jakarta has become grimmer, and President Wahid watches helplessly as the military rolls back various promises he made. The question is whether such a flag ceremony can still be meaningful…"

BACK TO SQUARE ONE?

On 23 July 2001, President Wahid was succeeded by Megawati Soekarnoputri, Sukarno's daughter. Three months later, special autonomy was imposed on the Papuans. The Congress in 2000 with all the Morning Star flags had all seemed too good to be true. Three months into

Soekarnoputri's presidency, Theys Eluay, chairman of the Papua Presidium, was murdered. Everything was back to square one. In January 2003 Jakarta unilaterally partitioned Papua into two provinces: Papua Barat and Papua. What is special autonomy if Jakarta alone could made such decisions? What was the point if the profit of the Grasberg mine still flowed directly to Jakarta, leaving only environmental damage for the Papuans? What does autonomy mean as long as Papuans have no say?

Even the names of our cities and our land are decided for us. That process started in 1902, when the Dutch bought the village of Numbai for a handful of guilders, renamed it Hollandia, and established a Marine post. Later, from 1952 until 1962, Hollandia was the capital of colonial Dutch New Guinea. On 1 May 1963, the day the United Nations transferred the administration to Indonesia, Hollandia was renamed Kota Baru (New City). Later President Sukarno renamed it Soekarnopura, after himself. When he was ousted in 1965 and Suharto came to power, Soekarnopura was renamed Jayapura (Glorious City). However, colloquially, our capital is called Port Numbay.

And what about all the names of our country and our people? Spaniards named our land Nova Guinea because they thought the people resembled those in African Guinea. At school, I was taught 'Papua' derived from ‘pa pua-pua’, which the Dutch teacher said meant black with curly hair, although I’ve also read that it might derive from the Biak ‘sup i papwa’, meaning 'land at the sunset'. This would imply that the area was already called Papua before the Spaniards named it Nova Guinea, which the Dutch translated to New Guinea, and which Indonesia called Papua Barat and then Irian Jaya. At the end of 1999, Gus Dur proposed changing the name back to Papua. In 2003 President Megawati partitioned the territory into two provinces called Papua and Papua Barat. Meantime, the entire area remains known internationally as West Papua.

In the summer of 2003, my retirement was celebrated at the Knoopkazerne military station in Utrecht. It was a grand farewell, with a rice table and a performance by a band featuring two members of the Black Brothers. My good friend Roel Scheerhoorn (my mentor in Hollandia) was also there. After the meal, there were speeches from the Head of Security and the Commander of the Utrecht district. I was proud of all the nice words, truly proud. But if I had been able to choose, I would have preferred to have done the harbour master training promised to me in 1962 and then retired as the harbour master of Sorong.

My sayang and me with Roel Scheerhoorn (my carpentry teacher in Hollandia) during my farewell at Knoop Military HQ in 2003.

Two months after my retirement party, I visited Papua again, this time to visit my old haunts, such as the LTS Kota Radja School and the Hamadi Maritime School. As soon as I landed, I noticed that Jayapura was a copy of Jakarta. It even smelled the same, that awful mix of petrol, kretek and satay. I saw more Indonesians than Papuans in the street, and almost all the names on the shops and warungs were in Indonesian. I could find no trace of the freedoms we had experienced in 2000.

The LTS Kota Radja buildings were still there, although the complex had not been used as a technical school for some time. I caught a taxi to the former Hamadi Maritime School and complained about the Indonesian pop music on the radio when I wanted to hear Papuan songs. The driver smiled over his shoulder, showed me a cassette tape of the Black Brothers, and we spent the rest of the ride singing along with our heroes. They are still there, those true Papuans proud of their culture. However, if current developments continue, Papuans will become a minority in their own land, as if the congress in 2000 never happened. No one in the cities talks openly about independence, although there were regular reports of ongoing resistance in the interior.

In 2011, another congress was held, with more than a thousand Papuan leaders from the regions. This time I was not there. We heard reports about the declaration of a federal state. The police broke up the congress. Hundreds were arrested. At least six people were killed. Civil resistance flared up, there were large demonstrations, and the international media—except the media in the Netherlands—began paying attention again. Except for those who worked in Dutch New Guinea, there are few Dutch citizens who now take any interest in West Papua.

Visiting Mansinem Island, off the coast of Manokwari, where the first European Christian missionaries landed in 1855.

In 2012, my brother-in-law David, who was chair of the Hapin Foundation, asked me to accompany him to check on several projects in Papua. We visited a number of schools, a repair workshop, and the market in Jayapura. I was deeply impressed by how diligent and eager the schoolchildren were. In the Netherlands, children sometimes pretend to be ill in order to skip a day of school, but the children I saw in Jayapura seized every opportunity to learn.

In the repair workshop, I complimented one of the young men on how hard he was working, as it was good for his future. He replied "I don't do it for myself" and then whispered "I do it for…", pointing meaningfully at the ground. That moved me deeply.

Then we visited the market where the project was designed to improve working conditions. The Papuan women used to sit on mats on the ground, but now they were selling their goods in a proper market with a clean floor and a water supply. From impoverished market traders to dignified cheerful women vendors. Wonderful. But I also think that support from abroad shouldn't be necessary. Why doesn't Indonesia ensure there are decent schools and clean markets? Why doesn't Jakarta take care of the victims of floods? Why doesn't Indonesia use the profits from the gold mine to build the country together with the Papuans? It probably wouldn't eliminate the desire for independence, but it might mean less resistance, and would provide space for a dignified dialogue.

Meanwhile, Indonesia promotes tourism with pictures of 'primitive' Papuans wearing penis gourds, and the natural beauty of the Raja Ampat islands. You don't read in those enticing holiday brochures about the Javanised towns and cities, or the massive pollution in the hinterlands caused by gold mining.

And what does the Dutch government do for the former Dutch New Guinea? It sells ships and military equipment to the Indonesian army and navy. It doesn't write about Papua in the history books. Not many young Dutch people now know where Papua is. There are few support groups, whereas in other countries the number of support groups for West Papua is growing.

That's why I was so proud when our son Jofrey emerged as an informal representative of the Papuan people. He would walk about with the Morning Star flag, ask people if they knew where Papua was, and if given the chance, would tell his story. He always said that he would return to Biak, and in June 2016, we brought him home. That is, we buried his ashes next to his grandfather's grave in West Papua.

I am proud of the young people who draw attention to Papua in their own way. We don't always agree, but that's okay. When the day comes and West Papua becomes an independent country, we will have all contributed in our own way. May our differences then take the form of political parties, and may the Papuans determine which parties will represent them in a democratic manner through free and fair elections.

CONCLUSION

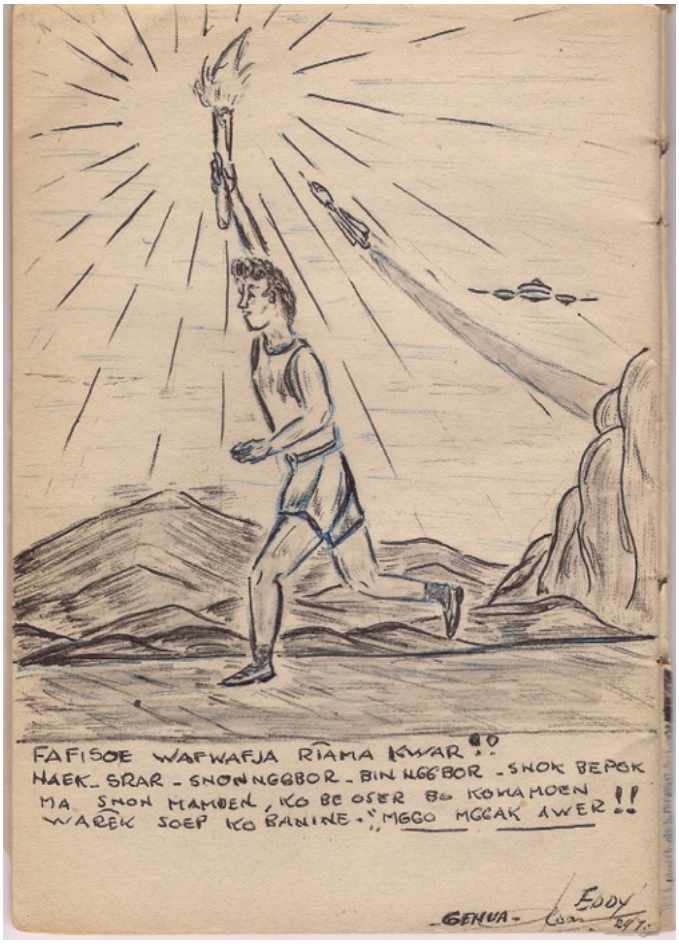
I fear for my people. My country will never again become the pristine land that I left in 1964. The water polluted by gold mining cannot cleanse itself. Vast areas of rain-forest have been cleared for palm oil plantations. The bird of paradise faces extinction. But as long as voices calling for justice are heard in the cities and the interior, as long as international attention is growing, and as long as the Morning Star still rises, there is still hope for a better future for the generations to come. May this future be one of freedom.

Oh, Tanah Papua. Part of me looks at you with the eyes of the twenty-four year old rebel that I was when I fled. Part of me looks at you with the eyes of a grey-haired grandfather who has lived in the Netherlands for so long that he has become a stranger in his homeland. But

the greater part of me sees you with the eyes of a Papuan, who will be Papuan until his last breath.

Yamewero, yamewero
Yamewero yabe woman kakero

I do not want, I do not want
I do not want to be a slave any more



Fafisoe Wafwafja Riama Kwar!!
Naek Srar Snonnggbor bin nggbor snok bepok
ma snon mamoen, ko be oser bg komamoen
warek soep ko banine mggak awer!! (Biak)

The time for us is now. Brothers and sisters, young men and women, families, everyone. Come together and fight to protect our homeland.

afterword

Dear Jofrey,

You long urged me to write down my stories, and it has taken me years, but it's done. My book is complete. Here and there, I could not recall the exact dates, and I also could not find all the photos I would have liked to include, but I know you would say "Who cares? Sooo not important!"

I will never forget the time I reproached you for spending more time campaigning than on your future career. You hit the ball straight back, into my heart. "Dad, you are a political refugee. It is because of you that I became an activist."

I am glad I witnessed all your efforts for the Papuan people. I don't know how you made it work, but you always succeeded in getting people to listen to your story. I admired your perseverance, whether it was completing the Four Day March, or the Kennedy March with our Morning Star flag fluttering on your shoulder, or diving into the icy North Sea on 1st January in full traditional Papuan gear to draw attention to the struggle.

It moved me deeply when you asked me to accompany you to Oxford. At that moment, I knew we both understood how alike we are. It was no coincidence that I choose you, out of all my children, to pass the PPGN spear to. I knew you would know what to do with it. You showed us that you did. During the Ride Out, the yearly fundraising event by Moluccan communities in The Netherlands, you knew exactly how to co-ordinate three hundred Moluccan motorcyclists for PPGN in Nieuwegein.

Perhaps your brothers and sisters did not always say it aloud, but we were all proud of your fighting spirit. You could say so clearly "I am a Papuan."

With love,
Dad

My son Jofrey in Oosterbeek, 2011 Airborne Walking Tour in commemoration of fallen soldiers during the Battle of Arnhem in 1944. To draw attention to the West Papua struggle, he always walked with the Morning Star flag.

Jofrey protesting in front of the Indonesian embassy in The Hague.

Jofrey in 2012 practicing for the annual 80km Kennedy March, which was inspired by President John F. Kennedy's emphasis on physical fitness.

Eddy and Jofrey at Oxford in 2012 at event hosted by Free West Papua Campaign UK.

On 26 January 2013, the two Papuan stowaways were guest speakers at the Reunion of the Royal Rotterdam Lloyd, the company that owned the MS Schelde Lloyd on which Eddy and Tony fled from one side of the world to the other in.

The company director introduced them, saying "These two men are the human heritage of our company."

THANK YOU

I want to thank a number of people. Without their selfless dedication, this book would never have come to fruition. First and foremost, Endie van Binsbergen, my co-writer. I owe her a great debt of gratitude for her boundless patience and for the many pots of coffee she provided over the years.

I also wish to thank Free East Timor Foundation, in particular Egbert Wever, for its steadfast trust in this project. Thanks also to Willem Campschreur for his advice, and all those who kindly made donations with no guarantee that the book would ever become a reality.

And, of course, to my dear wife Fransien, for believing in my book and supporting my writing, despite the many times I came home late after losing track of time.

ALSO CREDIT TO

Ronald Boiten who created the cover and design of the Dutch version.
The Free East Timor Foundation which funded the English version.
And Casper Boermans for his translation.

In Australia, Rev. Robert Stringer and Louise Byrne from the West Papua Women's Office who edited and produced this English version of the book in 2025.

Black lives matter
Papuan lives matter
I am not monkey

"For hours, for days, I sat at the porthole watching the sea play with our ship. I no longer thought about the danger, and let myself be carried away by the forces of that wild water, that free wild water that raged just as terribly as my own urge for freedom."

Eddy Korwa is a Papuan, born and raised in Dutch New Guinea. Young, well educated and fully engaged with his young nation's independence movement, he was shocked in 1962 when the United Nations transferred the administration to Indonesia. 'Listed' by the Indonesian military, he escaped with the help of a sailor on the last Dutch cargo ship out of Sorong.

After three months on the high seas, Eddy Korwa and Tony Rumpaisum found themselves in Rotterdam where they had to outwit the Dutch Authority that wanted to send them back to Papua. They built new lives in the Netherlands, and forged a community of Papuans who continue to fight for recognition, justice and independence.

The Stowaway is a page-turner of love, history, family, politics and realpolitik, solidarity and betrayal, death, tragedy, and even soccer.

West Papua Women's Office
(Docklands, Australia)

9 781764 204903