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Article

Resisting Return to Dutch Colonial Rule: Political Upheaval after Japanese Surrender during the Independence Movement in Sulawesi, Indonesia

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Abstract: Central Sulawesi is a part of Indonesia with a fascinating history during the revolutionary period (1945–1950), owing to several important events related to Indonesian sovereignty. This study uses historical methods to examine the involvement of the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration and its effort to recolonize the area. The Malino Conference, which led to the formation of the State of East Indonesia, was intended to legitimize the federated state under Dutch control and reduce the territory of the Republic of Indonesia. The Central Sulawesi Indonesian People's Struggle Party is a unification of political parties that consistently maintained Central Sulawesi as part of the Republic of Indonesia, strengthening its bargaining position with the Dutch. This situation brought strong pressure to bear upon the Netherlands to immediately recognize the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia.

Keywords: Netherlands Indies Civil Administration; Negara Indonesia Timur; Republic of Indonesia; Indonesian sovereignty recognition



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1. Introduction

On 14 August 1945, Emperor Hirohito of the Imperial Court in Tokyo officially announced the cessation of the Pacific War. Three days later, on 17 August 1945, Indonesia proclaimed its independence. This event gave rise to two new structures, namely, the status quo, following the wishes of the Allies as the victors of the war, and the system of government of the independent Republic of Indonesia (Goto 2003, p. 190). The status quo had to be maintained by the Japanese military until the Allies claimed power. The competition among Indonesia, Japan, and the Allies led to political upheaval (Arleen 2006, p. 89). Power struggles resulted in conflict and collective violence (Bourchier 2016, p. 81). The situation was exacerbated by inequality in the transfer of power as a result of the status quo. Indonesia under Japanese occupation was ruled by the army (known as “Rikugun”) in Java and Sumatra, and by the navy (“Kaigun” in Japanese) headquartered in Makassar for the Great East (Sulawesi and Borneo) and other islands (Arleen 2006, p. 89). This mapping was continued by the Allies, who handed over the authority to transfer the institutions to two different organizations, namely, the Southeast Asia Command (SAC) in Java and Sumatra and the Southwest Pacific Command (SPC) on the other islands. Sulawesi was under the authority of the SPC, which included Australian units (Hess 1975, p. 172).

The Japanese surrender to the Allies marked the end of World War II in the Pacific. However, it did not necessarily end political polarization. The Allies, consisting of US and Australian troops, intended to restore the power structure in the Netherlands Indies as it was before 1942. The duties were meant to be shared between British troops and

US–Australian troops. The arrival of the British army responsible for the SAC in Java was delayed, as they had been solving the problems in Malaya and Burma. Australian troops arrived earlier because of their direct involvement with the US troops from 1944 to 1945 in the region. Thus, the Australian army was better prepared to carry out the task of taking over territorial and administrative command. On 17 September 1945, the “Kaigun” commander in Sulawesi, who was in charge of 55,000 troops, surrendered to the commander of the Australian forces in Makassar (Long 1968, p. 638). In addition to the Greater East region, with the exception of Bali, Australian troops were tasked with occupying Kalimantan beginning on 21 September 1945. During the occupation, the Australian forces employed the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA) employees, who were former members of the Netherlands Indies Civil Service and had served in Eastern Indonesia and joined the Australian army (Gde Agung 1985, p. 53; Sairin 2016, pp. 124–25).

The sovereignty of Indonesia received recognition after the Round Table Conference (KMB) at Den Hague, the Netherlands, on 27 December 1949. This recognition did not necessarily ease the tension between the remnants of the Dutch forces and the various Indonesian populations in Central Sulawesi. The KMB succeeded in ending the political power of the Dutch; however, the Dutch still retained their economic power, as various Dutch-owned companies were still operating (Kanumoyoso 2001, pp. 35–64). One of these companies was Coprafonds, which was established in Central Sulawesi in 1940 to control the price and marketing of copra from farmers, and was successfully nationalized in 1954 (Asba 2007, p. 216).

The political upheaval in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, during the revolution of 1945 to 1950 has never been discussed in detail with new facts. The starting point of this study is the emergence of the news of Indonesian independence from the envoys of the Governor of Sulawesi, G.S.S.J. Ratulangi, namely, A.N. Haradjati and Hamzah Ilahude, in 1945. The events of the late 1950s referred to the reading of 6 May 1950 as marking the end of Dutch rule in Central Sulawesi (Nainggolan et al. 1984). This study seeks to investigate the NICA, its efforts to consolidate its rule, and its failure to recognize Indonesian sovereignty during the conflict with Negara Indonesia Timur and the Republic of Indonesia.

2. Materials and Methods

This research has used the historical method comprising four stages, namely, heuristics, criticism, interpretation, and historiography (Notosusanto 1978, pp. 11–12). Heuristics is an effort to find sources related to research objects in the form of newspapers, archives, books, and research reports. The newspapers and books used in this study were obtained from the Indonesia National Library in Jakarta and the Delpher website, among others, while the archival materials relating to the State of East Indonesia were obtained from the Regional Library and Archives Board of the South Sulawesi Province in Makassar. A critical examination was undertaken to determine the validity of the collected information, which was used for further interpretation and description.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. NICA and Re-Colonization Efforts

News of Indonesia’s independence, which was proclaimed on 17 August 1945, spread to various areas of the country, including Central Sulawesi. However, the atmosphere of independence was not yet fully felt as Japanese troops remained in Indonesia. Indonesians who wanted independence attempted to take power from the hands of Japan. These efforts were resisted by the Japanese, and thus, fighting between the Japanese army and the Indonesian people continued in certain areas. When the Indonesians faced the Japanese, the NICA arrived with the Allies and cooperated with parties from the Netherlands East Indies Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS) (Schouten 2016, pp. 213–14). The aim was to end the Second World War in the Dutch East Indies, which was still occupied by Japan (Touwen-Bouwsma and Groen 1996, p. 10), to record the Japanese population still controlling the Japanese military administration, and to recolonize (Zijlmans 1985, pp. 28–32). Several

battles subsequently sprang up in various regions, such as Surabaya. In the battle in Surabaya on 30 October 1945, the British Occupation Army suffered the death of Mallaby, the commander of the 49th Special Brigade. This event resulted in the outbreak of a battle in Surabaya known as the November 10th event, which was later commemorated as Heroes' Day.

Central Sulawesi was NICA target area, mainly because of essential cities along the Makassar Strait such as Donggala, Palu, and Tolitoli. These three cities were the targets of the Dutch army re-occupation because they provided strategic ports for sea transportation in the Makassar Strait, and were supported by office and warehouse facilities that could be used as centers for the control of freight traffic. Rented barges were available for loading and unloading activities (Isnaeni and Pagesa 2013, p. 14). At the beginning of September 1945, the NICA and its Allied troops, led by Captain L. Barrow, a former Parigi Controller (eastern part of Central Sulawesi), landed and formed a government in Tomini Bay. Beginning in early November 1945, the troops and staff of the NICA government were stationed in colonial government offices. The NICA was charged with restoring the Dutch civil government to its condition before the Japanese occupation (Sairin 2016, p. 125). Strategic installations controlled by Japan were taken over by the Dutch. Despite opposition from pro-republican class groups in the second week of November 1945, the NICA successfully established its position in Palu. It was continuously consolidating and trying to increase military forces and administrative personnel. From 1945 to 1946, the NICA army landed four times to control the interior, which was then controlled by pro-republican forces. The concentration of power was centered in Donggala to facilitate the continuation of communication links with other important cities along the Makassar Strait. In mid-May 1946, post and telegram links were established between Donggala and other urban centers in Sulawesi and outside Sulawesi. The provision facilitated the communication to support Dutch administrative activities and the formation of the State of East Indonesia (NIT), which was designed by Governor H.J. van Mook (Sairin 2016, p. 125; Kahin 2013, p. 498; Gde Agung 1985, p. 53).

In order to fulfill the plan of van Mook, the Government Commissioner for the Borneo and Greater East region, C.J.H.R. de Waal, visited Central Sulawesi in October 1946. De Waal met with local elites and discussed the future status of Central Sulawesi in the framework of the NIT. Later, he reported to Batavia that a special region would be formed in Central Sulawesi under the name Poso-Donggala, whose territory extended from Palu Bay to the Banggai Islands (Anonymous 1946a, p. 2).

De Waal synergized political and cultural approaches to obtain support from local elites by promoting local identity as a separator of pro-republican groups with different cultural backgrounds, mostly from Bugis, Makassarese, and Mandar ethnicities. De Waal claimed that the cultural structure of Central Sulawesi was homogeneous, centered in the interior, but pressed by the culture of South Sulawesi, such that its identity had begun to fade (Anonymous 1946b, p. 2).

The arrival of the NICA produced three polarized responses, namely, cooperation, opposition, and resistance. The local elite tended to be cooperative because they did not realize there was a possibility of reincorporating into the sovereign and independent nation of Indonesia (Mamar et al. 1984, p. 92). They believed the Dutch had vanquished the Japanese and reassumed their role as colonial overseers. It was in their best interest to maintain this view, since the Dutch had given considerable power to the elites of Bugis and Mandar ancestry during the colonial period (Harvey 2010; Nourse 1994, pp. 106–8; 2005, pp. 224–32; 2008, pp. 240–42). The elites included Ruhana Lamarauna (King of Banawa), Djanggola (King of Palu), and Sukuran Aminudin Amir (King of Banggai). The controller Verhagen, who was entrusted as Regeringscommissaris voor Bestuursangelegenheden (Regulatory Commissioners for Administrative Affairs) for the Central Sulawesi region, actively approached the local elite. He then gave a stern warning to Kuti Tombolotutu, the ruler of Moutong, to change his attitude toward the Dutch government, with the promise that family members would be appointed as officials in the government (Van der Wal 1973, p. 178).

Social and political organizations, such as the Indonesian Islamic Syarikat Party, chose to play the role of the opposition. The youths in this organization were more interested in physical resistance. Various incidents claimed the lives of members of both parties, and the youth heroically ripped down the Dutch flag and hoisted the national flag of Indonesia up the flagpole (Nainggolan et al. 1984, p. 147).

Another faction comprised the nationalists (PNI, Partai Nasional Indonesia) who garnered support and power in Sulawesi owing to their broad-based political appeal. In January 1946, the PNI was formed as a fusion of seven nationalist groups: Serindo, PNI Madiun, the Indonesian Republican Party (founded in Madiun by Dr. Soeradji), PNI-Pati (led by Sarino Mangunpranoto), the People's Sovereignty Party (founded by Sujono Hadinoto in Yogyakarta), the PNI-Sumatra (led by Dr. A.K. Gani), and the PNI-Sulawesi (under the leadership of Manai Sophiaan). Thereby, the presence of the PNI in Central Sulawesi shortly after the proclamation of independence in Java garnered sympathizers and new members because of their publicity campaign and their growing military achievements. In response, in September of 1946, the Dutch sent the administrator for the reconstituted Dutch colonial government, Dr. W. Hoven, to Makassar, South Sulawesi, as a special envoy to monitor PNI involvement in the resistance to Dutch rule in Central Sulawesi. Hoven gave an ultimatum to the PNI leadership that he would arrest them if they promoted armed insurrections in Central Sulawesi (Anonymous 1946a, p. 2).

The revolutionary period in Central Sulawesi intersected with the issue of war, and suffered from a receding economic situation. The shipping and trading in the port of Donggala were not as active as during Dutch rule. The NICA attempted to improve the situation but did not receive support. The smuggling of copra and other products was widespread from 1945 to 1950, and the Dutch found this difficult to control (BPAD Sulawesi Selatan 1950). Even weapons and ammunition were smuggled in to help the revolutionary struggle in Central Sulawesi (Lumangino 2017, p. 120).

The pro-republican combat forces, which were partly affiliated with forces in the border region of South Sulawesi, were active in opposing the presence of the Dutch. Between 1946 and January of 1947, pro-republican armed groups roamed the interior and attacked strategic Dutch locations, such as the South Banawa and the Biromaru Valley and Dolo, which were known as agricultural areas. The Dutch attempted to secure these areas. In March 1947, the NICA's power began to shrink with the announcement of the outcome of the negotiations in Linggarjati between the Republic of Indonesia and the Netherlands (Anonymous 1947a, p. 2).

3.2. *Negara Indonesia Timur versus the Republic of Indonesia*

Political tensions between Indonesia and the Netherlands that took place in early 1947 were reduced through the Linggarjati Agreement signed in April 1947 (Kattenburg 2001, p. 17). However, the settlement was not permanent, given the differences in interests between the two parties. Mutual suspicion continued until an open conflict occurred on 21 July 1947, in the form of the first Dutch military aggression against the territory of the Republic of Indonesia in Java and Sumatra (Muradi 2014). The capital of the country was then moved to Yogyakarta because it was considered the proper stage for the greatness of the republic envisioned by Sukarno (Margana et al. 2017).

Even before the country's capital moved, the period of revolution and military aggression by the Netherlands affected the poor economic situation. Economic conditions began to improve when the "illegal" trade route to the Philippines was opened (Anonymous 1947a, p. 2). From the second half of 1946, H.J. van Mook, who designed the state in Eastern Indonesia, initiated a conference held in Malino (South Sulawesi) from 15 to 26 July 1946 (Ooi 2015, p. 119). Regional representatives were invited to the conference, which was popularly known as the Malino Conference. The gathering sought to formulate a plan to form a Dutch East Indies government in Indonesia after independence. At the conference, they agreed on the formation of a federal state, which was indirectly "led" by the Dutch, and the

Raad van Departementshoofden (Council of Regional Leaders), comprising representatives of the federal states formed by the Netherlands.

In a follow-up conference in early October 1946 in Pangkalpinang, the federal states of the NIT (State of East Indonesia) and Negara Sumatra Timur (State of East Sumatra) were planned (Schiller 1955, p. 35). The formation of the NIT was declared in Denpasar at a follow-up conference on 18 December 1946 to gain legitimacy as a federation and to reduce the territory of the Republic of Indonesia (Haug et al. 2017, p. 8). Members of the Denpasar conference appointed Cokorda Gde Raka Sukawati as the Head of State of East Indonesia, Prime Minister; concurrently, Nadjamoedin Daeng Malewa was appointed Minister of Economic Affairs, and the Chair of the DPRS was entrusted to Tadjoeidin Noer. Dengah was appointed to represent Sulawesi, and Tahya was selected as representative from South Maluku; Dr. Liem Tjæe Le represented Bangka, Belitung, and Riau; Ibrahim Sedar represented South Kalimantan; and Oeray Saleh was for West Kalimantan (Hasyim 2016, pp. 146–48). Its territory covered the entire island of Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, and the Maluku Islands (Robinson 2006, pp. 230–31). Article 14 (Section 1, sub 5e) of the manuscript establishing the state the Central Sulawesi Region consists of parts of Poso and Donggala, including Swapradja Tojo, Poso, Lore, Una-una, Bungku, Mori, Banggai, Banawa, Tawaeli, Palu, the Sigi regions Dolo, Kulawi, Parigi, Moutong, and Tolitoli (Gde Agung 1985, p. 794; Sairin 2016, pp. 126–27).

News about the formation of a federal state spread in Central Sulawesi, causing a reaction from pro-republican groups. The plan proposed by van Mook provided the momentum for this group to mobilize the masses to oppose the formation of the NIT and commit to supporting the Republic of Indonesia. In October 1946, political forces were formed, namely, the Partai Rakyat Indonesia (Parindo), or Indonesian People's Party, and the Gerakan Indonesia Merdeka (Gerima) or Free Indonesian Movement (Van der Wal 1973, p. 370). The Donggala youth formed two organizations, namely, Pemuda Indonesia Merdeka (PIM) and Laskar Merah Putih (LMP), to oppose the Dutch. As the class organizations contributed to fighting the NICA, their members were targeted for arrest. Alexander Monoarfa, one of the PIM leaders, was captured by the Dutch in early November 1945 (Nadjamuddin et al. 2016, pp. 158–59; Mamar et al. 1984, p. 91; Nainggolan et al. 1984, p. 145).

The arrest of Monoarfa triggered a wave of resistance against the Dutch and encouraged the birth of an institution called the Gerakan Merah Putih (GMP), or the Red and White Movement. The GMP was led by Ahmad Muhammad and Muhammad Amu, with Rohana Lamarauna (King of Banawa) as protector (Abubakar 2013). This institution prioritized diplomacy, as young people were not satisfied with the existing political attitudes. Young people were highly interested in physical resistance, as exemplified by Mihari and Senian, former jumbo (Japanese police), thus fueling the spirit of resistance against the Dutch. Umar Papeo was assisted by Piola Isa along with three of his friends in gathering strength in Donggala. According to Andi Mas Ulun, this organization was the embryo of the Pemuda Indonesia Merdeka (PIM) or the Free Indonesian Youth (Kutoyo and Gonggong 2005, pp. 213–14; Nainggolan et al. 1984, p. 145).

During a meeting at the former Donggala Ken Kanrikan office (Ken Kanrikan was a prefectural administrator at district level, an afdeling) on 7 November 1945, led by Muhammad Amu and Umar Papeo, the decision was made to form a class organization called PIM, which went underground and carried out plans with guerrillas; meanwhile, the Red and White Movement acted as a political organization (Abubakar 2014, pp. 56–57). The composition of the PIM board was as follows: Ahmad Muhammad, a former Schoolopziener (School Superintendent), as Chairperson; TNI Lieutenant Piola Isa from Yogyakarta as Deputy General Staff I and combat leader; Andi Tjella Nurdin as Deputy General Staff II; Andi Baro Lamarauna as Deputy General Staff III; Andi Ngaru Pettalolo as Deputy General Staff IV, and Langama Borahima as Deputy General Staff V. Yusuf Isa and Umar Seno were the Lead Aides, and Djafar and 20 other people were members of the board. This

class organization fostered stable relations with the revolutionary organization in South Sulawesi, KRIS Muda Mandar, led by Abdul Malik (Toana et al. 1990, p. 107).

The NIT Declaration in Denpasar in November 1946 strengthened the resistance and received support from Gorontalo. Intimidation was often carried out by NIT supporters. This resistance spread to Palu and Poso and lasted until January 1947. Efforts to attack each other were difficult to avoid, and even extended into the Afdeling Mandar region (Van der Wal 1973, pp. 462, 488; Anonymous 1947b, p. 2). The military aggression carried out by the Dutch at the end of July 1947 triggered violence in Central Sulawesi (Toana et al. 1990, p. 106; Nainggolan et al. 1984, pp. 146–47).

The frustration of various regional PNI leaders who attended the conference in Denpasar in 1946 to negotiate independence from Dutch colonialism reached a boiling point when the Allies who arranged the conference gave primary decision-making power to two Dutch administrators, Dr. W. Hoven and van Mook, the assistant to the Governor General. The lack of equity and inability to negotiate with these colonial bureaucrats inspired more resistance to Dutch and NIT rule. Intimidation converted Central Sulawesi regions, such as Palu, Poso, and Gorontalo, from NIT supporters into advocates for the PNI nationalist movement (Anonymous 1947b, p. 2). Additionally, the military aggression carried out by the Dutch at the end of July 1947 triggered widespread violence in Central Sulawesi.

There were at least eight instances of PIM paramilitary resistance. (1) Agricultural export warehouses at the port were burned, and the Dutch flag flying in front of the Douane Donggala office was torn apart (Anonymous 1947b, p. 2; Nainggolan et al. 1984, p. 147). Andi Mas Ulun explained that the PIM paramilitary became known as the “Merah Putih Sakti Action” because it lowered the Red, White, and Blue flag, ripped off the blue part, and raised the Red and White flag. This incident occurred at midnight on 21 November 1945. The action was led by Piola Isa and received the blessing of Rohana Lamarauna (Abubakar 2013, p. 189). (2) In November 1945, two people, Andi Tjella Nurdin and Andi Baro Lamarauna, carried out an attack on the NICA Post at Km 4 Donggala. (3) In 1946, 10 paramilitary troops led by Datu Aras attacked the NICA post in Lono. (4) In 1946, Andi Baro Lamarauna and Abdul Wahid, along with 12 others, blocked NICA patrols in Limboro Village and damaged the Limboro Bridge with hand grenades and dynamite. (5) In 1947, Andi Baro Lamarauna, with a force of 25 people, attacked the NICA patrol in Surumana. (6) In 1947, Lasiding and five members of the army burned down the copra warehouse owned by Het Coprafonds, an act in which the Netherlands suffered losses. (7) In 1948, Umar, together with 25 PIM paramilitary troops, attacked the NICA patrol in Bambaira. This region is now part of Pasangkayu Regency, West Sulawesi Province. (8) In 1948, Andi Baro Lamarauna and Andi Ngaru Pettalolo confronted the NICA Patrol led by Sergeant Supit and Kapo. Andi Baro Lamarauna was captured and imprisoned in Palu (Kutoyo and Gonggong 2005, p. 214). The resistance continued until 1950, as the NICA was unable to control the Central Sulawesi region.

Lolontomene Lamakarate, grandchild of Lamakarate, King of Sigi (1915–1936) (Sairin 2016, pp. 106–11), became a central figure in the resistance against the NICA in Palu in 1915–1936. He founded an organization called the Laskar Merah Putih or the Army of Red and White. In a meeting in Biromaru after the arrival of Piola Isa, who carried instructions from Ratulangi, the Governor of Sulawesi from Makassar agreed that Lolontomene Lamakarate would be given the mandate to coordinate the formation of youth forces in other areas. The Sigi-Dolo, Palu, and Tavaili regions were led by Hi. Daeng Pawindu, M. Djaruddin Abdullah, Thalib Lasinala, and Daeng Pawara Lahuseni. The Biromaru area was led by Lolontomene Lamakarate, the Dolo region was led by Daeng Mangera Gagaramusu, and the Tavaeli region was headed by D.M. Lamakampali and D.J. Jotolembah (Kutoyo and Gonggong 2005, pp. 215–16; Nainggolan et al. 1984, pp. 148–51).

A meeting between the local elite and the Netherlands was held from 13 to 14 October 1947 in Tentena, where they agreed that Central Sulawesi was part of the NIT. Therefore, a commission was formed to consolidate a Central Sulawesi region that consisted of local elites, including Rohana Lamarauna (King of Banawa), Janggola (King of Palu), and

Tagunu (King of Parigi) for the Donggala region. This commission formed a particular group consisting of members of the Poso elite, including Kabo (King of Lore), Abu Saleh Tanjumbulu (King of Tojo), and Mokole Owolu Marunduh (King of Mori), who were in charge of preparing the establishment of Poso as the capital (Van der Wal 1973, p. 644).

Political tensions and security stability had implications for the economy. Donggala, located in Palu Bay and the Makassar Strait, was known for two things: (1) It was a port for copra export, and a mainstay commodity and distribution center for imported goods (Anonymous 1947c, p. 2). (2) It served as a pirate operation area, with the operations ranging from the north of Sulawesi and the Kalimantan coast to the southern Makassar Strait. Targets included merchant ships and settlements along the coast. Piracy activities were more complex when associated with a trade involving Chinese from the Philippines, whose transactions had a turnover of PHP 2600 in cash. When those pirates were arrested by a Dutch patrol and legally processed, a fine of 5000 florins was imposed, and they were imprisoned for eight months (Anonymous 1948a, p. 2). Local products were bartered for weapons and ammunition from Singapore and the Philippines. The Tolitoli region was renowned as a location for depositing ammunition because it was difficult for Dutch patrol vessels to detect activity there. One important commodity in the illicit trade was copra (BPAD Sulawesi Selatan 1950), and thousands of tons of copra from the West Coast region of Donggala were illegally exported to the Philippines (Anonymous 1948b, p. 2; BPAD Sulse 2003; BPAD Sulawesi Selatan 1950; Anonymous 1947d, p. 2).

The bartering efforts for crops, weapons, and ammunition indicated that the transactions involved the parties in conflict in Central Sulawesi, especially the pro-republican groups who garnered support from the interior to obtain crops, which were then sold to Filipino traders who carried weapons (Anonymous 1948c, p. 2; Anonymous 1947d, p. 2). Illicit business partners were not limited to Filipinos, but were also American traders. The Philippines was known as the center of an international arms trade network that helped spark the political birth of the people of Mindanao. From 1947 to 1950, this arms trade network often supplied weapons and ammunition to Sulawesi, especially for the Perjuangan Rakyat Semesta (Permesta) movement, DI/TII, and Indonesian freedom fighters in Central Sulawesi. Sitangkai was a trade center for copra and other commodities, such as peanuts, salted fish, rattan, and wood from the West Coast and highlands of Central Sulawesi. These commodities were needed by workers in Mindanao (Lumangino 2017, pp. 62–80).

3.3. Dutch Recognition of Indonesian Sovereignty

The fact that the Indonesian nationalists as well as the Dutch colonial government were headquartered in Java resulted in an odd situation in Sulawesi. In the South, where a branch of the Netherlands Indies Colonial Administration was in Makassar, news about negotiations and cease-fire agreements held elsewhere in the islands between the Dutch and Indonesians (e.g., Linggarjati, Renville, and Rum-Royen) readily arrived, as did other pertinent news. Conversely, in Central Sulawesi, where locals were often subject to blockades and delays in information, the nationalists continued to fight the Dutch. Some information was obtained through radio news and sailors on the West Coast of Sulawesi, namely, Ogoamas, Pangalasiang, Soni, and Sabang, who often sailed to Banjarmasin to sell rice and other agricultural products. From Banjarmasin, the news was relayed about Indonesian independence and Dutch military aggression in Java.

Central Sulawesians fighting to make their own political decisions established the Gabungan Partai Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia Sulawesi Tengah (GAPPRIST) or the Central Sulawesi Indonesian People's Struggle Party on 2 January 1947. This event was historic because it united political parties in Central Sulawesi (Nadjamuddin et al. 2011, p. 34). This organization, which was based in Palu, was led by Mohammad Arsyad (leader of the Partai Indonesia, Partindo) or the Indonesian Party, and Muhammad Djaruddin Abdullah, as secretary, represented the PRIMA organization (Perjuangan Rakyat Indonesia Merdeka, or People's Struggle Party for Independence) of the Sigi-Dolo area. The GAPPRIST program aimed to gather the internal strength to build solidarity and create an outward network to

join the struggle in other regions, especially in South Sulawesi (Toana et al. 1990, p. 107; Nainggolan et al. 1984, p. 148).

Seeing the magnitude of the influence of this movement, the leadership of the NIT government viewed the actions of GAPPRIST as a violation of the law, because Central Sulawesi was part of the NIT region. Moreover, GAPPRIST was not entitled to offer a statement of support for the government of the Republic of Indonesia in Yogyakarta. This violation of the law was equivalent to a subversive action because it violated Article 12 of the Linggarjati Agreement. The article stated that the governments of the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia would strive to realize the United States of Indonesia and the Netherlands–Indonesia Alliance before 1 January 1949. Instead, the GAPPRIST leadership consistently maintained that Central Sulawesi was part of the Republic of Indonesia, and rejected the offers of Assistant Resident Donggala, De Mei, and Hoofd Plaatselijk Bestuur Palu, Van Oosten to occupy positions in the NIT government (Abdullah 1975, p. 50).

The formation of Central Sulawesi within the framework of the federal state was difficult to prevent, as revealed at a conference in Parigi on 29 November 1948, which was held after the establishment of North Sulawesi in early 1948. Central Sulawesi was targeted to be an autonomous region by early 1949. The determination of the NIT government was motivated by the desire to lead Central Sulawesi toward prospective autonomy.

After observing the unwavering conviction of the local elites to make Central Sulawesi an autonomous region, the Netherlands immediately drafted an agreement for an autonomous region. The Central Sulawesi region would be regulated and managed as an autonomous region by the local elites under a coordinator responsible to the NIT government (Anonymous 1947e, p. 1). In its implementation, Dutch Resident Dr. Hermanus Hendricus Morison, who served as the NICA Commanding Officer and the Dutch Resident of Manado from June 1946 to March 1949, was authorized to supervise, provide instructions, and advise the local elite. After an agreement on structure and form was reached, the Central Sulawesi Region was officially announced in Poso on 7 February 1949. This government was established on 9 February 1949 (Anonymous 1949a, p. 2; 1949b, p. 2). Structurally, Central Sulawesi was directly responsible to the NIT government led by Prime Minister Ida Anak Agung Gde Agung. However, he had extensive autonomy to manage his territory. Poso was chosen as the capital city based on political policy and stability. As the majority of Poso residents were Protestant Christians, the Dutch were confident that the resistance would be milder compared with Donggala, which was dominated by Bugis and Kaili ethnic groups. Thus, religious factors became the basis for van Mook's considerations regarding federation policies.

In July 1949, a discussion on the needs of the legislative body was held. In October 1949, the Dewan Sulawesi Tengah (Raad van Midden Celebes) or the Central Sulawesi Council was formed. Thus, all government institutions were established in Central Sulawesi. This autonomous institution had broad authority and responsibility to formulate and implement policies, including military affairs. The charter of establishment stated that the NIT should have a military area similar to the previous Dutch military territory. Therefore, the regional head had authority over the military, which was handed over by the Manado Resident in early October 1949. On this basis, the Badan Keamanan Rakyat Daerah or the Central Sulawesi Regional People's Security Agency (BKR) was formed, which accommodated members of the army (Nainggolan et al. 1984, p. 145; Abdullah 1975, p. 34; Mamar et al. 1984, p. 90; Anonymous 1949c, p. 2).

Ida Anak Agung Gde Agung explained that the formation of the federal government and council was based on Besluit Bewind Indonesia in Overgangstijd Articles 13 and 14 (Decree on the Transition to Indonesian Independence, Article 13, and Regulations, Article 14). Administrative governance of the federation was regulated by three appointees with Federal Board approval. This number could change, but could not be reduced. Federal board members were appointed and dismissed by the federal state government (Gde Agung 1985, p. 420). The Central Sulawesi Council was appointed on 17 October 1949 with the following members: (1) B.A. Laborahima, government assistant at Una-Una; (2)

A.J. Binol, a teacher at the Public Primary School in Tolitoli; and (3) W.L. Talasa, Raja Poso, who acted as chairman, along with two deputy chairmen of the Central Sulawesi Council who functioned as regional representative councilors and accompanied the Council of Kings, 1950. A.J. Binol was appointed Chairman of the Central Sulawesi Regional House of Representatives, which consisted of 33 members representing half a million residents (Mamar et al. 1984, p. 155).

To mediate the dispute between Indonesia and the Netherlands, the United Nations formed a new commission called the [United Nations Commission for Indonesia](#) (UNCI). The UNCI and the Netherlands conducted negotiations. The Indonesian delegation was chaired by Mohammad Roem, and the Dutch team was chaired by Dr. Van Royen. Thus, negotiations were known as the Roem–Royen Negotiations. One of the decisions was to hold the KMB on 23 August 1949 in The Hague, Netherlands. Indonesian representatives at the KMB aimed to fight for Indonesian sovereignty from the Netherlands (Federspiel 2017, p. 190) and force the Netherlands to withdraw all of its military forces still in Indonesia (Gde Agung 2018, p. 100). The Republic of Indonesia delegation was led by Moh. Hatta, and the delegation of *Bijeenkomst voor Federaal Overleg* was led by Sultan Hamid II of Pontianak. The Dutch delegation was led by J.H. van Marseveen and the UN was represented by Kirby D. Chritchev. These negotiations gave birth to an agreement on the transfer of sovereignty on 2 November 1949 (Van Bijsterveld 2018, p. 22). With this agreement, the Dutch officially recognized the sovereignty of the Indonesian people in all their former colonies. The recognition of sovereignty had a significant impact on the continuation of the federal states created in the Netherlands. Similar to what happened in other areas, Central Sulawesi experienced the development of a desire to realize the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Nainggolan et al. 1984, pp. 153–55; Mamar et al. 1984, pp. 93–96).

The political struggle from 1945 to 1950 gave birth to prominent figures who became agents of change, such as P.A. Raming, M.Dj. Abdullah, and I Made Geria. P.A. Raming and M.Dj. Abdullah signed a statement on dissolving the NIT on 2 April 1950, which was sent to members of the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR) or House of Representatives of the NIT through the representatives of Central Sulawesi. In the meeting at the house of Tjatjo Ijazah initiated by I Made Geria and M.Dj. Abdullah, attended by party leaders and mass organizations, the government, and the police, the members of the Central Sulawesi NIT parliament, members of the DPRD, and representatives of women's organizations agreed on the resolution that was sent on 3 April 1950. They concurred, and supported the immediate dissolution of NIT and the formation of the Republic of Indonesia (Abdullah 1975, pp. 53–54).

NIT enthusiasm to break away from the shadows of the Netherlands was palpable. Through the parliament, the Indonesian People's Struggle Association (IPPRI) demanded the dissolution of the NIT and introduced a parliamentary motion to rejoin the Republic of Indonesia. This spirit was strengthened by the support of 29 local parties. All parties agreed to send a wire to the representatives of the Central Sulawesi region, who sat in the NIT DPR, Makassar. In the General Meeting of the Council of Kings and politicians on 6 May 1950, in Palu, a notice containing 12 items was signed by Tjatjo Idjazah, R. Sungkowo, and Lumowa (Figure 1). Among these items was a statement that, starting 6 May 1950, at 07.00, the three kingdoms of Palu, namely, Sigi, Dolo, and Kulawi, and all their people proclaimed separation from the NIT (Nainggolan et al. 1984, p. 154; Abdullah 1975, p. 54; Mamar et al. 1984, p. 94).

The announcement provided new energy for pro-republican supporters to oppose the NIT. Finally, the NIT was dissolved, accompanied by the dissolution of the State of RIS on 17 August 1950. Thus, the federal structure that included all union states merged into the RI. The territorial administrative division had just begun to take effect, and the whole of Sulawesi became a province under Governor B.W. Lapian, who resided in Makassar. Sulawesi included the south, southeast, central, and northern provinces.

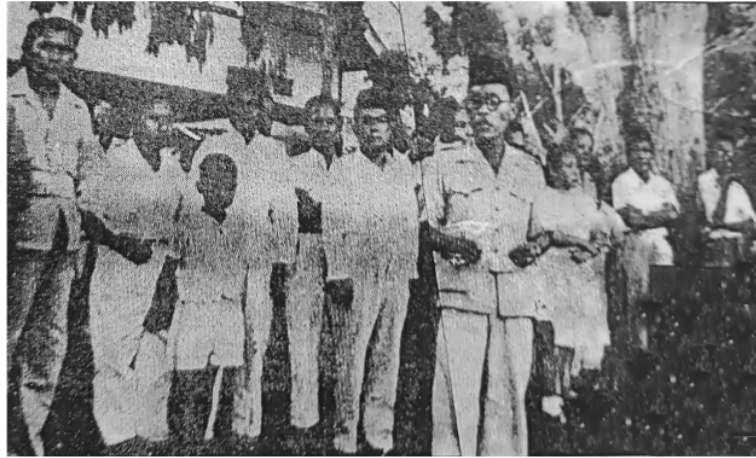


Figure 1. Tjatjo Idjazah (foreground) is shown announcing that Central Sulawesi was separated from the NIT at Nasional Field, Palu (Anonymous 2003, p. 8).

4. Conclusions

The Central Sulawesi region became the target of the NICA because it had strategic ports with various facilities, which were spread along the Makassar Strait, especially Donggala, Palu, and Tolitoli. The NICA seized these port cities and formed a government in November 1945. In accordance with its mission, the NICA carried out a cleansing operation against pro-republican groups that engaged in resistance. It also conducted “*divide et impera*” (divide and rule) by encouraging clashes among ethnic groups. Colonial bureaucrats regarded the cultural structure of Central Sulawesi as homogenous and located in interior highland regions. In fact, there were multiple ethnic groups with distinct languages and cultures, but the colonial authorities had erroneously designated the distinct languages and cultures as dialects with homogenous cultural traits. The colonial government regarded these interior peoples as inferior to the immigrants from South Sulawesi, such as the Bugis and the Mandar. To strengthen its position, the Dutch reinforced a civil government centered in Donggala. A network of posts and telegraphs was then built to connect Donggala to other cities in Sulawesi and other islands. Such infrastructure was vital to facilitate communication, whereby the goal was to form the NIT.

Dutch efforts to remain in the archipelago were carried out in various ways, including dividing the newly independent republic into several federal governments, which would be merged under Dutch control through the NICA. For the eastern region, the NIT was formed in October 1947. The Central Sulawesi region, which was part of the NIT, consisted of Poso and Donggala and included the Swapradja areas, namely, Tojo, Poso, Lore, Una-una, Bungku, Mori, Banggai, Banawa, Tawaeli, Palu, Sigi-Dolo, Kulawi, Parigi, Moutong and Tolitoli.

The formation of the NIT caused a strong reaction from pro-republican groups who had previously resisted the Dutch presence. Various steps were taken, including forming political organizations, namely, Parindo, Gerima, PIM, LMP, and GMP. The fighters took decisive actions, including tearing up the Dutch flag, attacking posts, patrolling, and burning NICA warehouses. Other efforts entailed fostering strong relations with the nationalist organizations in South Sulawesi. Thus, the resistance movement in Central Sulawesi was not isolated from various resistance movements that were involved in Sulawesi and other regions in Indonesia. With this strength, resistance movements suppressed and even intimidated NIT support groups. This power struggle continued until 1950, and the NICA was unable to control the Central Sulawesi region.

Political tensions and low stability had implications in terms of the economic downturn. The port cities, as trade centers, experienced a crisis because of the Dutch occupation. This situation triggered the development of piracy in the waters of northern Sulawesi, from the coast of North Kalimantan to the southern tip of the Makassar Strait. Republican fighters exploited this “illegal” activity by becoming part of free trade to meet the necessities of life and the struggle to maintain independence.

The recognition of Indonesia’s independence from the Netherlands quickly developed into the desire to escape from the shadow of the Netherlands by returning to the unitary state of the Republic of Indonesia. This also happened in Central Sulawesi, which was part of the NIT. The movement was spearheaded by the IPPRI, which had the support of 29 local parties. At the General Meeting of the House of Lords and politicians on 6 May 1950, they decided to disengage from the NIT. The desire for sovereignty was met with the dissolution of the State of RIS on 17 August 1950.

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