

**JR van Nieuwkerk, *The long road to freedom***

Freedom, peace, independence, these are universal ideals that people and nations strive for. But universal ideals do not mean a shared vision; on the contrary, all too often they are competing and result in conflict. That was also the case when the Japanese invaded the Dutch East Indies in 1942. In many ways it was about freedom, peace and independence, but the visions were vastly different. There was the vision of the Japanese, the Dutch, and naturally of the Indonesians. The philately nicely shows how things developed in the following years.

***Towards a New Order of Prosperity and Independence (1942-1945)***

In 1940 the Japanese first expressed their vision of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, a new order of prosperity and independence for and by Asians. After the Fall of Singapore, the following appeared in the Syonan Times of 21 February 1942: "*The Nipponese Government wishes to give all coloured or Asiatic peoples peace and glory with the capture of Singapore, and hopes that all the coloured races will begin the construction of the New Order of East Asia.*"

Three weeks later, on 8 March 1942, the Dutch East Indies capitulated. Fighting did continue on Sumatra, but the Japanese conquered Medan on 13 March, and on 27 March the last major concentration of Dutch troops surrendered. The first phase had been completed, and one could begin to construct the promised New Order. In 1944 the 27<sup>th</sup> of March was designated as the Day of the Rebirth of Sumatra.



***13 March 1943 – Commemorating One Year Liberation of Medan***

The liberation of Medan and the Rebirth of Sumatra were celebrated every year. This included beautiful commemorative covers and special cancellations. It is interesting to note that these commemorative covers were often franked with Japanese stamps.



***Two Years Rebirth of Sumatra  
Kisaran, 26.3.1944***



***Three Years Rebirth of Sumatra  
Tandjongkarang, 27.3.1945***

But what was happening with the promise of independence? Japanese prime minister Koiso promised Indonesia independence on 7 September 1944; however, a specific date was not set. A month later there appeared a special cancellation with the text “Thank you for the promise of an independent Indonesia”. Curiously, this scarce cancellation is only known from the post office at Boekittinggi, perhaps an omen for an unfulfilled promise. When Japan capitulated on 15 August 1945, there was nothing left of a New Order and Prosperity, nor was there independence.



***Label: Let's get started with effort, industry and thrift.  
Eternal independence.***

***Cancel: Thank you for the promise of an independent Indonesia.  
Boekittinggi, 8.10.1944***



### ***Merdeka! The struggle for independence.***

On 17 August 1945, two days after the Japanese capitulation, Indonesia declared its independence. Merdeka! (Freedom!) was the national cry. This had to be celebrated with new stamps and commemorative cancellations, but that was not so simple. Everything was still in the hands of the Japanese who had been given strict instructions to hand any government institutions, including the postal service, over only to the Allies. Nevertheless, under pressure from the Indonesians, the Japanese did turn the postal service over to the new Republik on 27 September on Java and on 1 October on Sumatra.



***Japanese occupation stamps with and without overprint Rep. Indonesia (1945)***



***The first Indonesian postage stamps (1946)***



***5 sen Bandoeng  
Sea of Fire***



***A free Indonesia,  
a happy people, 17-8-1945***



***10 sen Soerabaja  
Heroic Resistance***

At first Japanese occupation stamps continued to be used without any type of overprint. The first stamps overprinted with *Rep. Indonesia* appeared in November 1945 on Sumatra. A cancel with the text “A free Indonesia, a happy people, 17-8-1945” commemorating the declaration of independence was also put into service. However, designing and printing new stamps took more time, and the first stamps did not appear until 1946. The first two stamps feature a banteng (wild bull) breaking chains and a banteng with the Indonesian flag, symbolising freedom and independence.

Declaring independence is one thing, having your independence recognised is another. This became quickly apparent when the Allies seemed to have different visions for the future. The British were the first allied troops to land on Java and Sumatra and quickly occupied the major cities, such as Djakarta and Soerabaja. That was not an easy task as the Indonesians resisted fiercely, especially in Soerabaja in November 1945 and Bandoeng in March 1946. Although the Brits conquered Soerabaja in three days, the heroic resistance of the people is today still commemorated on 10 November as Heroes Day. There was also much resistance in Bandoeng, where the British gained control only after the Republicans had burned down a large part of the city in what became known as the Bandoeng Sea of Fire. Both events are depicted on stamps issued by the Republik in 1946.

### *A different vision of freedom*

Months before the promise of independence by the Japanese, the Americans were on their way through New Guinea. They liberated Hollandia on 22 April 1944, but it would take nearly 1½ years before the first stamps were available at a civilian post office in Hollandia. This happened on 1 October 1945 when the so-called Liberation series was put into circulation. The stamps were also sold in other areas as they were liberated towards the end of 1945. However, as most of Sumatra and Java was under Republican control, these stamps would probably not have been sold at many post offices outside of the major cities.

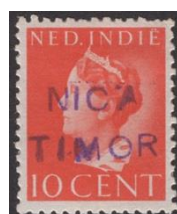


*Stamps from the Liberation series (1945)*



*Letter franked with Liberation stamps sent from Hollandia, 10 OCT. 1945*

The situation was different on Timor, which was liberated by the Australians on 11 September 1945. They had not brought Liberation stamps with them, and hence the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs, (NICA - the new civil administration), decided to



*NICA TIMOR*



*Je Mantiendrai*



*NICA SOEMBA*

overprint stamp supplies at the Koepang post office with NICA Timor. A small supply was also overprinted with *Je Maintiendrai* (I shall maintain) and the Dutch coat of arms. When Soemba was liberated on 25 October, stamp supplies there were overprinted NICA SOEMBA.



### ***The last years of the Netherlands Indies***

In the period from 1946-1948, new stamps were issued for the Netherlands Indies, including a series with Queen Wilhelmina in August 1948, and two stamps for the inauguration of Queen Juliana in September 1948. This would be the last stamp issue with the name *Nederlands Indië*.



***Q. Wilhelmina***

***Inauguration***

***Overprint INDONESIA***

***Inscription INDONESIA***

The name Nederlands Indië was changed to Indonesia in October 1948 just as the name of the Dutch islands in the Caribbean was changed from Curaçao to Netherlands Antilles. As a result, existing stamp supplies were overprinted with the new name INDONESIA. The first stamps with inscription INDONESIA appeared in 1949. The end of the Dutch colonial era in the Far East was near.

### ***The struggle continues: Infamy!***

In the meantime, the fight for independence continued. The Republicans controlled most of Java and Sumatra and had made Djokjakarta their capital. It was only in December 1948, after two major military actions (euphemistically called “police actions”), that the Dutch were able to re-establish their authority in large parts of the islands. Dutch troops occupied Djokjakarta and arrested the Republican government, who they imprisoned on the island of Bangka off the coast of Sumatra.

There was much international criticism of the Dutch actions, and the Republicans took advantage of that by starting a propaganda offensive. In those days there was no Facebook, Twitter or YouTube, so they used ... postage stamps! Not just any postage stamps, but Dutch East Indies stamps they had confiscated during the fighting. These were the older stamps before the name change to Indonesia, and they were sent to J&H Stolow & Co in New York to be overprinted with new values and the message:

*Repeoblic Indonesia Two Days of Infamy! 7 Dec. 1941 - Pearl Harbor, 18 Dec. 1948 - Jogjakarta*. It is quite ironic that among the stamps overprinted were stamps from the Liberation series.



***Repeoblic Indonesia Two days of Infamy!***

***7 Dec. 1941 - Pearl Harbor, 18 Dec. 1948 - Jogjakarta***

The Dutch re-introduced Netherlands Indies stamps in the areas they re-conquered during the military actions of 1947 and 1948. However, at some post offices there were only Republican REP INDONESIA cancels. In such a case the Republican cancels were used to obliterate the stamps, sometimes with REP INDONESIA cut out, but sometimes not. Consequently, there are Netherlands Indies stamps with Republican cancellations, including some intriguing combinations, such as REP INDONESIA on stamps with the Queen, even on inauguration stamps.



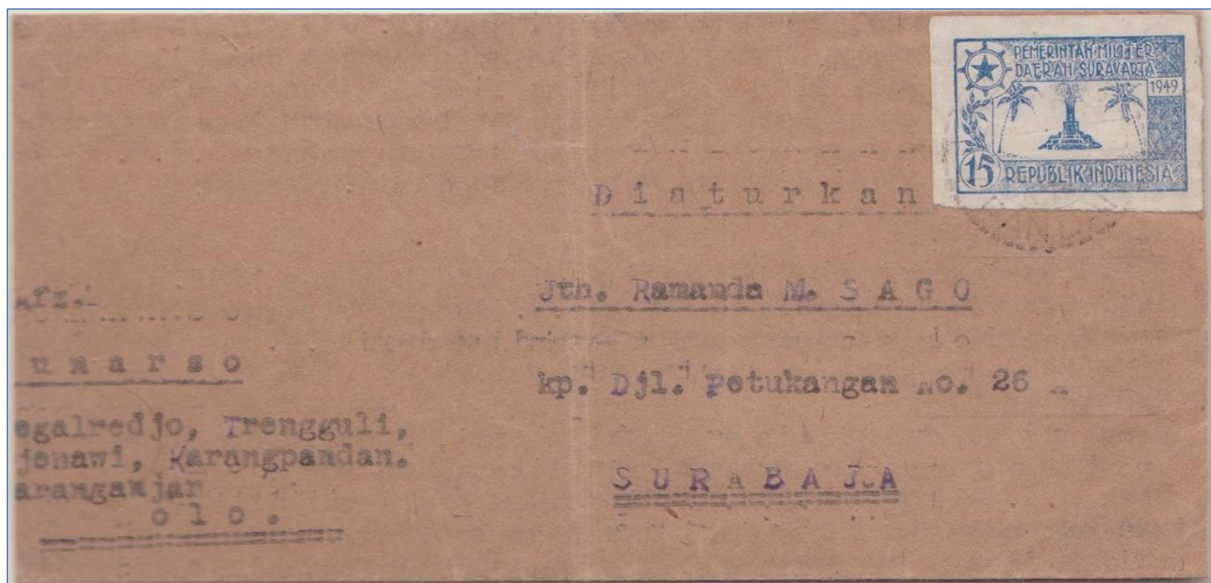
*Pangkalan, 3.6.49*  
**PTT REP INDONESIA**



*Tebingtinggi, 18.6.48*  
**REP INDONESIA cut out**



*Bagansiapiapi, 14.5.49*  
**PTT REP INDONESIA**



*Soerakarta military stamp on letter sent from Karangpandan, 15.9.49*

### ***The inextinguishable fire of the revolution (1949)***

The arrest of the Republican leaders and the forced departure from their capital Djokjakarta did not mean the end of the revolution. Guerrilla fighting continued in the Soerakarta region in 1949, and there was even a provisional regional Republican postal service. This postal service even managed to issue a provisional stamp, the so-called Soerakarta military stamp.

This rare stamp was issued sometime in the middle of 1949 by the *Pemerintah Militer Daerah Surakarta* (Military Government of the Surakarta Region). The stamp depicts a volcano which spews forth the *inextinguishable fire of the revolution*. It is known to have been used in at least 12 towns in the region.



### ***The propaganda war continues***

A few months before the Infamy stamps, the Republican representative in New York had already given Stolorow an order to print propaganda stamps. These were printed at the end of 1948 in Vienna and Philadelphia and are known as the Vienna & Philadelphia printings. One of the first series had as theme running the blockade the Dutch had put up to cut the Republik off from essential supplies. The Republik would use the same tactic only a few years later.

In 1949 the stamps were also sent to Indonesia, where they were available in Djokjakarta. They were valid until 1 August 1951 but are only known cancelled-to-order.

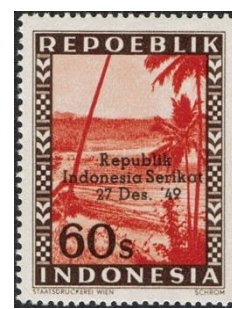
In the meantime, it was becoming clear that Indonesia would become independent. The Republican leaders were released in July 1949 and the treaty granting Indonesia independence was signed in Amsterdam on 27 December 1949. These historical events are commemorated by overprints on Vienna printings. Stamps were overprinted “*Merdeka Djokjakarta 6 Djuli 1949*” (Freedom! Djokjakarta 6 July 1949 – the day that the Republican leaders were released) and “*Republik Indonesia Serikat 27 des, 49*” (Republic of the United States of Indonesia 27 Dec. 49 – the day the treaty was signed).



***Ships running the Dutch blockade***



***Merdeka  
Djokjakarta  
6 Djuli 1949***



***Repoeblik  
Indonesia  
RIS 27 des, 49***

### ***Recognition! (1949)***

With the signing of the sovereignty agreement, the Dutch finally recognised Indonesia's independence. But this was not a national holiday, there were no special stamps or commemorative cancellations. The national holiday is 17 August, the day that independence was declared. That is not so strange; in the USA they celebrate the Fourth of July, the day they declared independence from England, not the day England finally recognised them. Everybody knows the Fourth of July; does anyone know when England signed the treaty recognising American independence? The treaty of Paris, 3 September 1783.

The new country was named the Republik Indonesia Serikat (RIS – United States of Indonesia). It consisted of 7 states and a number of autonomous regions. It had a federal structure and had Djakarta as its capital. The two largest states were the Republik Indonesia (large parts of Java and Sumatra) and the Negara Indonesia Timur (State of East Indonesia) consisting of Celebes, the Moluccas and Lesser Sunda Islands.

The most powerful state in the RIS was the Republik Indonesia, and other states began to merge with the Republik. The federal structure was quickly being transformed into that of a single unified state with all power in Djakarta. The United States of Indonesia never really functioned and was dissolved on 17 August 1950.

In the meantime, there were two postal services in January 1950, a federal one (the former Netherlands Indies service) which operated in most areas, and a Republican postal service which operated in areas that had not been re-occupied by the Dutch in 1949.

Initially, stamps from both postal services were still valid. This meant that some stamps from the Netherlands Indies continued to be used, which was quite possible because the country name on the stamps had already been changed to Indonesia in 1948. As a matter of fact, some of these stamps were used in no less than three different countries for at least another 6 years!



**Money order with 2x 7½ sen + 2x 30 sen Netherlands Indies stamps, Djakartakota, 10-10-51**

The two postal services were merged into a new PTT RIS on 7 February 1950. Stamps from the Republik were declared invalid, in part because high inflation had led to high postal rates and high stamp values. However, because of a shortage of stamps, Republican stamps were allowed again in certain regions as of 20 February. These stamps had only 10% of the original face value, which has resulted in some interesting mixed frankings.



**Mixed franking 25x 100 sen Republik + 40 sen RIS, Koetaradja, 29-6-50**



The express money order from Koetaradja shown on the previous page is franked with 25x 100 sen Republican stamps for the money order tariff (25x 100 x 0.10 = 250 sen), plus a 40 sen stamp from the 1949 Buildings series with RIS overprint for the fee of the express service.

The first stamp of the RIS was the red-white Indonesian flag issued on 17 January 1950. The stamp was reissued on 21 June in a slightly smaller format. These would be the only two new stamps issued by the RIS. However, Indies stamps from 1949 were overprinted with RIS in May 1950. These are known to have been used until at least 1955 and can be found with some interesting mixed frankings.



*First Day of Issue of RIS stamp, Soerabaja, 17-1-50*



*Mixed franking of RIS and Indonesian stamps on letter to Germany, Tandjung-Karang, 5-7-55*

### ***Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS - Republic of the South Moluccas - 1950-1963)***

The South Moluccas are a group of islands located between Celebes and New Guinea and were a province in the State of East Indonesia. The islands were against the centralisation of power in Djakarta, and when it turned out that East Indonesia was planning to join the Republik Indonesia, they declared their independence on 25 April 1950 as the Republik Maluku Selatan.

The first stamps used by the RMS were Indies stamps from 1949 and the RIS stamp from January 1950, overprinted with Republik Maluku Selatan in red or black. These stamps are known used between 10-6-50 and 1-11-50 primarily on money orders at Amboina and Saparoea. A few Indies stamps without overprint are also known to have been used.



*Amboina, 26.9.50*

*Amboina, 26.9.50*

*Saparoea, 8.9.50*

*Indies stamps with and without overprint Republik Maluku Selatan*

In 1950 there were still thousands of soldiers from the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (Dutch acronym KNIL) in Indonesia waiting to be demobilised. The plan was to repatriate these soldiers and to dissolve the KNIL by 26 July 1950. Amongst these soldiers were several thousand Moluccans waiting to return to the Moluccas. However, in reaction to the declaration of independence by the RMS, the Republik blockaded the islands and the Moluccans soldiers were unable to return. Eventually these Moluccans would come to the Netherlands.



*R.M.S.-Ceram, Malilia, 10.5.51*

*Typiscal RMS stamps of flora and fauna*



On 28 September 1950 Indonesia began the invasion of the island Ambon. When the capital Amboina fell on 3 November, the Moluccan government withdrew to the nearby rugged island of Ceram, from where they waged a guerrilla war. There are a few RMS stamps known cancelled to order from May 1951 from Ahiolo, Malilia and Roemberoe.

After the Moluccan leader Chris Soumokil was arrested in 1963, the RMS continued as a government-in-exile in the Netherlands. Soumokil was executed in 1966. In the 1970s RMS propaganda stamps started to appear, often with beautiful images of flora and fauna. Some of these were later overprinted by another independence movement, the OPM on New Guinea.

### ***Negara Islam Indonesia (1942-1962)***

The Islam has been an important religion in Indonesia for hundreds of years. This has led to attempts to establish an Islamic state, including by the Darul Islam movement which was founded in 1942.

In 1953 they proclaimed the Negara Islam Indonesia (Islamic State of Indonesia) with the sharia as law. They issued two stamps featuring a waning moon and star, symbols of the Islam. In 1957 the government in Djakarta decided to take on the local militias which supported the movement, and in 1962 its leader, Kartosuwirjo, was arrested on Java. He was executed in October 1962.



***Negara Islam Indonesia***

### ***PERMESTA and PRRI (1957-1961)***

In parts of Indonesia there was much dissatisfaction with the central government in Djakarta. On North Sulawesi people were dissatisfied with the economic situation and demanded improvement. This led to a rebellion of officers in the armed forces in late 1956 and on 2 February 1957 PERMESTA (Piagam **PER**juangan Se**MESTA** = Charter of the universal fight) was founded at Manado.

There was also an increasing influence of communism in Indonesia and there was a sense that the central government was doing little against it. Hence, PERMESTA found it had an ally in the USA, which supplied it with weapons and other war material, even aircraft.

At the same time there was also dissatisfaction on West Sumatra with the central government, which demanded that income from plantations outside Java be sent to Djakarta.



***PRRI PERMESTA, Inobonto (North Sulawesi), 14-4-1959***

This also resulted in a separatist movement and on 15 February 1958 the P.R.R.I. (Pemerintah Revolusioner Republik Indonesia = Revolutionary Government of the Republic of Indonesia) was founded.

In 1958 PRRI and PERMESTA decided to join forces. The government in Djakarta reacted with military actions on Sumatra and Sulawesi and finally succeeded in defeating both movements in 1961.

The partnership between PRRI and PERMESTA also led to the issuing of four postage stamps. These depict a map of Indonesia with soldiers, aircraft, and war ships in the surrounding waters. A second series of stamps featuring PRRI Minister-President Sjafruddin Prawiranegara was never issued.



*Sjafruddin Prawiranegara*

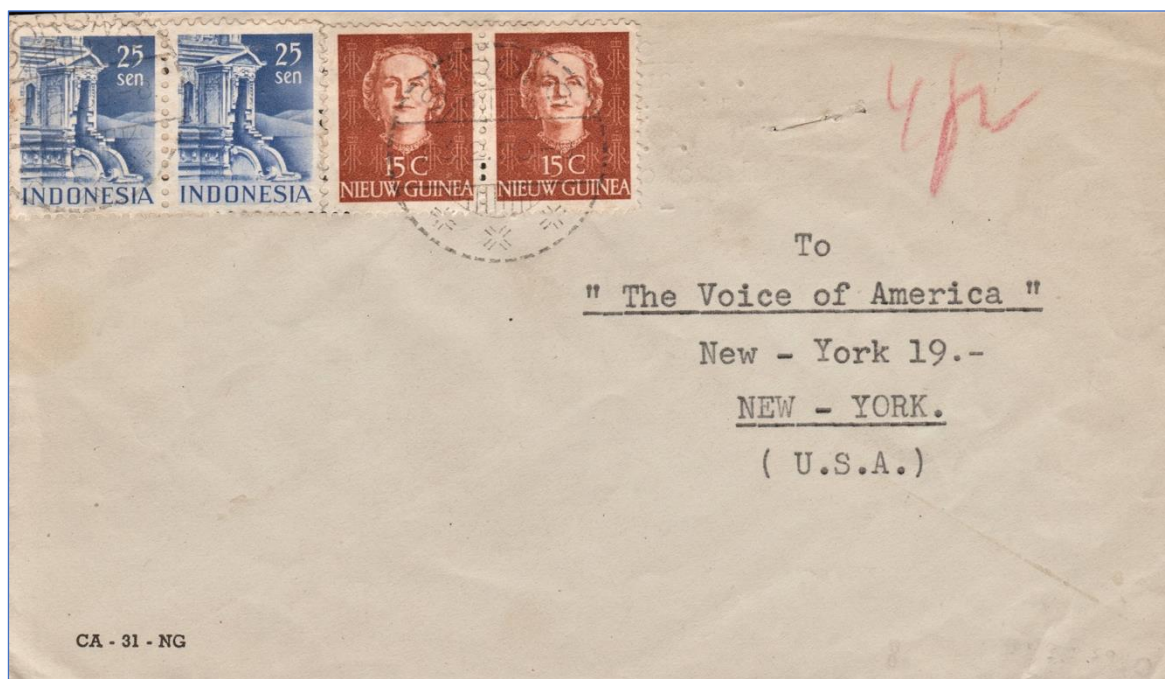
### *A piece of Holland in the Far East (1950-1962)*

The Dutch part of the island of New-Guinea was excluded from the 1949 sovereignty agreement; it was to be discussed the following year.

Although the Netherlands Indies ceased to exist on 27 December 1949, its stamps remained valid in Dutch New Guinea for another three months until the currency reform of March 1950. Hence, Netherlands Indies stamps can be found used on New Guinea, sometimes in interesting mixed frankings of Indies stamps with Netherlands New Guinea stamps which had been issued in January 1950.



*Monokwari 11.3.50*



*Mixed franking of Indies and New Guinea stamps on letter from Sorong to New York, 23.2.50*



The first New Guinea postage stamps were the Numeral and Queen Juliana common design types also issued in the Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles and Surinam. The first stamps depicting local fauna appeared In 1954. There was also a less than subtle change in the country name which now clearly stated *Nederlands* Nieuw-Guinea.



*Nieuw Guinea*



*Nederlands Nieuw-Guinea*



*2x 10c Indies postage due  
+ 5c New Guinea stamp  
Sorong, 10.12.50*



*4x 5c + 1x 20c Netherlands postage due  
on fragment of a customs form  
Sorong, 6.9.51*

For some reason there were no postage due stamps printed for New Guinea in 1950. Hence postage due stamps from the Netherlands Indies were used until at least December 1950. Normal New Guinea stamps were sometimes also used as a postage due stamp. Postage dues were not just used for collecting fees on insufficiently franked correspondence. They were more often used for collecting customs duties on incoming parcels.

At some point the supply of Indies postage dues had run out or perhaps it was considered too much to continue using stamps from a country that had not existed for more than a year. Whatever the case, the Indies postage dues were finally replaced in 1951, but not by New Guinea postage dues, they were replaced by postage dues from the Netherlands! These were used for some six years until New Guinea finally got its own postage due stamps in 1957.

In the meantime, there was little progress in the discussions between the Netherlands and Indonesia and 10 years after the sovereignty agreement there was still a piece of Holland in the Far East.

### ***From Sabang to Merauke (UNTEA 1962-1963)***

There was no doubt in Indonesia's mind, Netherlands New Guinea would be theirs. The slogan was *Dari Sabang sampai Merauke* (from Sabang to Merauke, where Sabang is situated off the northern tip of Sumatra and Merauke is the most eastern town in Dutch New Guinea). The Netherlands, on the other hand, felt more for independence of the Papuans, and there were some who held on to the nostalgic idea of a piece of Holland in the Far East.

Because after 10 years there was still no agreement, tensions between the Netherlands and Indonesia grew and nearly resulted in war. After consultations with the US, the United Nations took over administration of Dutch New Guinea on 1 October 1962. Under this United Nations Temporary Executive Authority (UNTEA), stamps of Netherlands New Guinea were overprinted UNTEA, and on 1 May 1963, sovereignty over the territory was transferred to Indonesia. Dutch names were immediately changed, so that Nederlands Nieuw-Guinea became Irian Barat (West Irian) and Hollandia became Kotabaruirian (irian to distinguish it from Kotabaru Kalimantan).



***Letter with mixed franking from Kotabaruirian to the Netherlands, 3.5.63.***

The letter shown above was sent from Kotabaruirian to the Netherlands on 3 May 1963. The 55-cent franking consists of 3 Netherlands New Guinea stamps overprinted with UNTEA, and an Indonesian stamp overprinted Irian Barat and a new value of 30 sen. This is probably one of the last letters franked with stamps from the Dutch Far East.

The propaganda label on the envelope shows a map of the western part of New Guinea with an Indonesian flag. The hand-writing reads: *West Irian territory Republik Indonesia* with the signature of President Sukarno. From Sabang to Merauke was now reality. It was the end of a colonial adventure that had begun some 3 centuries earlier. But was there peace?



### ***Konfrontasi (1964)***

Indonesia considered that North Borneo (the part of Borneo that belonged to Malaysia) really should be part of Indonesia. To force the issue, they embarked on the so-called konfrontasi politik (confrontation politics). This was augmented by guerrilla style attacks from the Indonesian part of the island.



*10 sen Malaysia*



*The United State of North Borneo*



The airmail letter sheet depicted below was sent from Singapore to Kotabaru, Irian Barat, on 21 October 1963. It was franked with 3 10-sen Malaysian stamps depicting a map of Malaysia which clearly showed that North Borneo is Malaysian. Apparently this was found to be provocative by the Indonesians at Kotabaru, as they declared the Malaysian stamps invalid and blackened them out.

The letter sheet had been sent by the Central Commodity Services in Singapore to Father Van der Berk to let him know that the parts for his Vespa scooter had been sent on 15 October.

Because the stamps had been declared invalid, the Catholic mission had to pay  $2 \times 30 = 60$  sen postage due. This was done by affixing three Indonesian postage due stamps with overprint Irian Barat, plus a 5-sen Indonesian stamp, also overprinted Irian Barat, used as a postage due stamp. In this way they made it very clear that all of Borneo belonged to Indonesia.

Perhaps inspired by their success in annexing Dutch New Guinea the year before, 6 stamps were printed in 1964 proclaiming the United State of North Borneo (Negara Kesatuan Kalimantan Utara). This state consisted of Brunei, Sabah and Sarawak, and was to be a part of Indonesia.

The 25-sen stamp depicts an oil refinery, symbolising the oil industry on Borneo. The 1-ringgit stamp shows a map of North Borneo with a flag and broken chains, symbolising freedom. However, the unification did not occur, and the stamps were not issued. Examples of two stamps ended up with philatelists, the other four values were destroyed.



*Letter from Singapore to Kota Baru, Irian Barat.  
The Malaysian stamps were censored, 7.11.63.*

### **Republik Rakjat Indonesia (1965)**

On 30 September 1965, the Indonesian Communist Party attempted a coup, which failed. One of the things that reminds us of this event is postage stamps. The communists were convinced of their victory and had stamps printed to put into circulations as soon as they would be in power.



*Republik Rakjat Indonesia*

*5 stars only*

In this case there are 10 values of the 1964 Sukarno series overprinted with *Republik Indonesia Rakjat* (People's Republic of Indonesia) and five stars through the old name *Republik Indonesia*. The 500-sen also exists with only the 5 stars (without the text *Republik Indonesia Rakjat*). When the coup failed, the stamps ended up with stamp dealers in Hong Kong.

### **Papua Merdeka - Free Papua (1978-1979)**

The "Organisasi Papua Merdeka" (OPM – Organisation for a Free Papua) was founded on 19 April 1965 with as aim the independence of Irian barat (the former Netherlands New Guinea). To give their struggle more publicity they issued postage stamps in 1978. For this they used stamps of the RMS and Papua New Guinea, which they had overprinted in Australia with OPM and Papua Merdeka. There are two types of OPM overprints, one with thin letters, one with heavier letters. The latter is also known inverted.



*Care / Papua Merdeka*

*Overprint O.P.M.*

*Inverted overprint*

*Stamps of the Republik Maluku Selatan overprinted for the OPM*



*O.P.M.*

*O.P.M.*

*Papua Merdeka*

*O.P.M.*

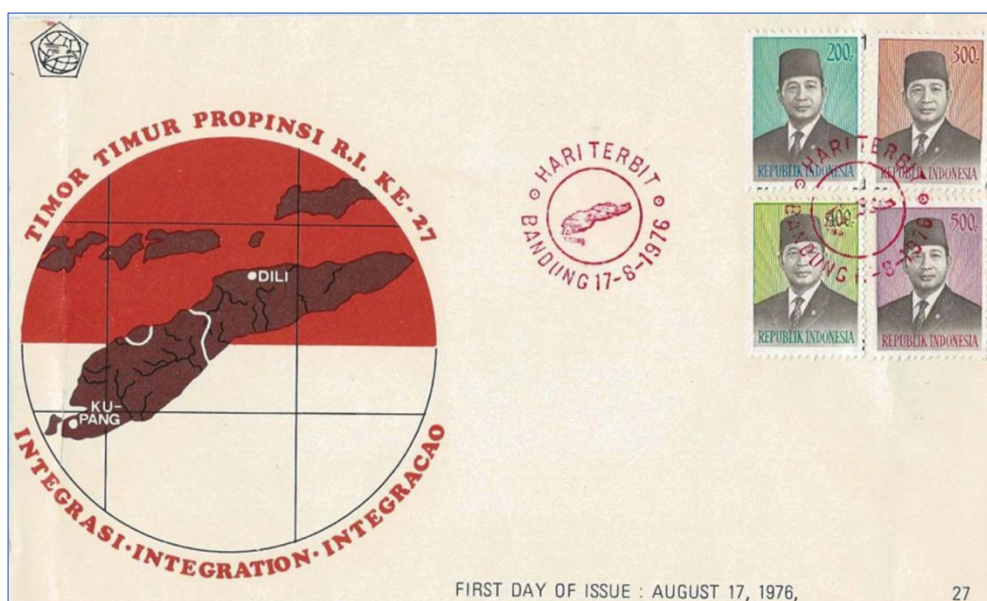
*O.P.M. inverted*

*Stamps of Papua New Guinea overprinted for the OPM*



### ***Timor, where the sun rises (1975-2002)***

In 1974 Portugal announced that Portuguese Timor (the eastern part of the island) would become independent. The transition period quickly became the scene of a power struggle between local groups. Moreover, Indonesia was concerned that the new country would get a leftist government. Because of the tumultuous road to independence, East Timor unilaterally declared itself independent on 28 November 1975. However, nine days later Indonesia invaded the new country, officially to bring order and peace. This “pacification” resulted in East Timor being annexed as Indonesia’s 27<sup>th</sup> province on 17 August 1976 (the day of Indonesia’s independence).



***Timor the 27<sup>th</sup> province of Indonesia, FDC, Bandung 17-8-1976.***



***Timor where the sun comes up, on letter from Dili to England, 27.11.2000.***

After years of international pressure and a severe economic crisis, Indonesia was forced to hold a referendum on independence in East Timor. The referendum was held in August 1999 and an overwhelming majority of Timorese voted for independence. After the United Nations had sent troops to Timor to restore order, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was put in charge to lead East Timor to independence. UNTAET was also responsible for the postal service during this transition period, and two stamps were issued in 2000. These stamps do not have a value inscription, but were inscribed *Timor Lorosae UNTAET* (“Timor where the sun comes up UNTAET”).



*Souvenir sheet for the independence of Timor-Leste, 20 May 2002.*

On 20 May 2002, Timor-Leste finally became an independent country, 28 years after it had been announced by Portugal. This was commemorated with a souvenir sheet of four stamps: 25c traditional crocodile, 50c ceremonial palm leaves, \$1 coffee harvest, and \$2 flag of the new country.

And what has been done with this hard-fought freedom and independence? Power struggles, attempted assassinations and coups, ... Actually, little has changed in the last 350 years.

Many Dai Nippon members and some non-members have collaborated on this article. I would specifically like to thank the following: Jan Arts, Han Dijkstra, Suwito Harsono, Maarten Hartkamp, Joop Hoogenboom, Marc Mellema, Fred Nash, Heiner Ollmann, Alex Schauss, Maarten Severijn, Peter Storm van Leeuwen, Hans van Weeren, Nico de Weijer, and Yan Wiriadi. I would also like to thank Alan Bartlett (Netherlands Philatelic Circle) for the use of his excellent article “*Stamps of the Island of Timor*” (Philatelicdatabase.com, 2012).

There are many interesting examples which have not been included in the article, simply because there were too many. Nevertheless, the following really deserve a place, so I have included them in an appendix.





*RIS stamps on a letter from Djakarta to England, 11-7-50*



*Mixed franking of 80 sen Buildings issue (1949) and 5 sen Indonesian stamp on letter from Tomohon (Sulawesi) to Berlin, 19.1.52*

