The Silent Scream of a Silenced History:
Part One: The Maumere Massacre of 1966

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Abstract
Part One of this paper looks at local Church responses to the massacre in the Maumere district of central Flores, Indonesia, during the months of February to April 1966. Instigated by the Indonesian army, the slaughter of from 800 to 2,000 people was implemented by local Catholics against victims who were also Catholic. Responses of the local clergy, Archbishop and Dean are studied together with an account by one of the perpetrators, and the memoirs of three Dutch missioners written 40 years after the event. In Part Two these responses will be examined in the light of two analyses of the Indonesian Church, one using an ‘integration’ frame, the other a Volkskirche model. When combined these studies allow us to begin to comprehend how the massacre could happen and why the clergy responded as they did. Honesty and transparency would allow us to move forward in mission with ‘bold humility’.

Keywords
Roman Catholic Church in Indonesia, Church and Politics, Ecclesiology, Religion and Violence

We must remember the past, define the future, and challenge the present — wherever and however we can. It will take the rest of our lives even to begin. But then, what else have we to do?
— Jane O’Reilly

The truth is what they never say.
— Kenneth Patchen

Historia est magistra vitae
Memory is just about everything we are. Our ethnic, religious, cultural and political identities are meaningless without it. Memories are very personal, but equally collective. Shared recollections form a common understanding of who
we are. What else is history but a process of remembering? This applies on both
the individual and the wider society. The sessions, the reports, the very exist-
ence of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions are a call for a nation to remem-
ber, recall and reminisce as one; a summons to forgive but never forget.

And yet, our histories are about selective memory and the process of forget-
ting, even of ‘remembering to forget’ those episodes too traumatic to bring
to consciousness. The massacre that took place in Indonesia during the final
months of 1965 has yet to be taught in school. And even books and websites
that recall this, one of the biggest political slaughters of the 20th century apart
from open warfare, mostly neglect to recount the after-shocks that took place
the following year to the east of the archipelago, on Timor and the neighbour-
ing, Catholic island of Flores. The stories we tell, and the omissions we make,
are constitutive of the tapestry we weave, of whom we claim to be, of how we
see our place in the world.

This paper looks at Church responses to the massacre in the Maumere dis-
trict of central Flores during the months of February to April 1966. Instigated
by the army, the slaughter was implemented by locals, some eagerly others
fearfully, Catholic against Catholic. In the clerical Church of the time, where
was the bishop and where were the clergy? How come, this event, perhaps the
most emblematic episode in the 20th century history of the Florenese Church,
has been erased from our collective memory, even today?

National Background

In Jakarta on 1 October 1965 a radio announcement proclaimed the forma-
tion of a Revolutionary Council which had in the early hours of the morning
arrested six members of a ‘Council of Army Generals’ who were purported to
be planning a coup-de-tat before National Armed Forces Day on 5 October.
The Revolutionary Council acted, they said, to protect the founding President
Sukarno, and maintain his leftwing policies. The arrests were bungled, a
seventh target, General Nasution, escaped, while the others were shot and
their bodies dumped in the disused Lubang Buaya well in the Halim Airport
complex. General Suharto counter-attacked and by the end of the day had
defeated the Revolutionary Council which was still ensconced at the airport.
On 5th October, Armed Forces Day, when the generals were buried as national
heroes, the army laid the blame for the killings on the Communist Party, one
of the largest political parties in Indonesia with over three and a half million
members. A pogrom against the Party was instigated, which by the end of
1965 had resulted in the murder of over a million people, most not Party members but local leaders of grassroots movements, many involved in land reform. The largest Communist Party outside China had been obliterated, beginning with the key islands of Java, Sumatra and Bali.¹

Much remains obscure about what happened on 1 October 1965.² While the Communist Party was not organisationally involved, some of its key members were implicated.³ A number of scenarios have been put forward. An early Cornell University study proposed that the killing of the army generals was an internal army affair, that is, a putsch against right wing generals by more progressive younger officers to give greater support to the non-block policies of President Sukarno.⁴ There remains a dispute as to whether the purported Council of Generals actually existed, or was simply a rumour circulated by key figures in the army who aimed to trigger a premature coup by the left which would, in turn, legitimise the move to obliterate the Communist Party. Many claim that General Suharto knew of the plan, kept his head down, and then on 1st October knifed the (fellow?) conspirators in the back as he moved steadily towards the presidency himself in a creeping coup.⁵ While there are no incriminating documents linking the CIA to the 1st October incident itself, the


² This incident is most commonly known in Indonesia as the Gerakan 30 September (30 September Movement) with the acronym G30S. As the kidnapping and killing of the army generals took place in the early hours of 1 October, President Sukarno called the incident ‘Gestok’, acronym for ‘1 October Movement’. This is the term preferred by the victims. See, Hersri Setiawan, Kamus Gestok, Jogjakarta: Galang Press 2003.

³ Inside Indonesia (No. 99, January-March 2010) is devoted to more recent research on ‘The Killings of 1965-66’. In particular see, John Roosa, ‘Dictionary of a Disaster’, website Inside Indonesia, http://insideindonesia.org. John Roosa has written the most definitive study. See, Pretext for Mass Murder: The September 30th Movement and Sukarto’s Coup d’Etat in Indonesia, Madison wi: University of Wisconsin Press 2006. According to Roosa the plan to arrest and then get Sukarno to replace seven army generals was hatched a mere six weeks beforehand at a meeting in Algeria — hence the chaotic debacle that followed and the opening it gave to Generals Suharto and Nasution and their Western backers to reverse the leftward drift of the country and establish their corrupt regime of crony capitalism.


USA Embassy in Jakarta certainly made the most of it and provided lists of names of activists to be eliminated by the Indonesian army and their militias.\textsuperscript{6} The CIA itself places responsibility for G30S squarely on the shoulders of President Sukarno and the Communist Party (PKI).\textsuperscript{7}

President Sukarno's risky political juggling in the late 1950s and early 1960s, balancing the mass membership of the progressive and disciplined Communist Party against the reactionary and corrupt but powerful armed forces, collapsed. General Suharto took over the country in a creeping coup-de-tat, becoming \textit{de facto} President on 11 March 1966, acting President the following year and then constitutional President in 1968.

**Meanwhile in Far-flung Flores…**

The somewhat isolated and overwhelmingly Catholic island of Flores, some 1,500 kilometres to the east of Jakarta, heard little of the political intrigue and drama that was playing out in the capital. Before the incident news was sparse enough,\textsuperscript{8} afterwards they heard only what they were allowed to hear. All newspapers, except those published by the army, were banned on 2 October, although a few were allowed later under strict censorship.\textsuperscript{9} The army controlled the radio and the movements of people. And then, when the mass murder had ended on Java and everything was settling down and the army was ensconced in power with President Sukarno little more than a figurehead, the army triggered a massacre on this economically insignificant and politically unimportant isle of Flores.\textsuperscript{10}


\textsuperscript{7} See, Helen-Louise Hunter, \textit{Sukarno and the Indonesian Coup: The Untold Story}, Santa Barbara: Praeger 2007. Hunter was a long-time CIA political analyst; this book can be seen as the 'official' CIA position.

\textsuperscript{8} In the 1950s and 1960s information coming into the Flores Church was generally limited to the Jesuit publication (from Jawa) \textit{Berita Katolik}; after G30S, Joop Beck SJ (1917-1983) issued regular bulletins attacking President Sukarno and urging Catholic mass organisations to support the army and demand Sukarno's replacement. Not a word on the ensuing massacre.

\textsuperscript{9} While other newspapers were immediately banned, the one anomaly is that the communist \textit{Harian Rakyat} (Peoples' Daily) was published on 2 October 1965 with an editorial supporting the Revolutionary Council. A Machiavellian move by the army? The Catholic daily, \textit{Kompas}, received a licence to republish on 6 October 1965 after the official version of events had been announced.

\textsuperscript{10} The very delay of this slaughter demands research beyond the scope of this essay. Politically, the massacre in Flores was unnecessary as the Communist Party, where it mattered, had already
The response of the Church to this delayed slaughter is the subject of this paper. In Part One I examine recollections by veteran missioners, a detail record by one of the perpetrators and the response of the local Archbishop and his Dean in Maumere.

Three Mission Memoirs

Gerbrand Kramer (b. 1920), Adriaan Wetzer (1924-2009) and Jozef Boumans (b. 1921) are three veteran Dutch missioners, who worked on Flores Island from the late 1940s until the early 1990s. This is a fascinating period of national and Church history. As I have written elsewhere,

During the final fifty years of the twentieth century Flores made a rapid transition from an outlying island of little economic or political consequence to become an integral part of a national and regional market through mass migration, a globalising economy and, since the 1960s, the impact of telecommunications. Within this

been annihilated. Quite possibly the delay was due to factional problems in the Udayana Command in Denpasar (Bali), Kupang (Timor) and Maumere (Flores). The pro-Sukarno commander in Maumere, LtCol Suherman, and his superior in Denpasar, the outspoken Sukarnoist Syafuuddin, had first to be pressured into redirecting their loyalty to General Suharto; only then did they implement the order to ‘wipe out those involved in the 1st October incident right down to the very roots’. Soetarmadji, the Sukarnoist army chief in the Provincial capital Kupang, was replaced.

Gerbrand Kramer, from the village of Zuid-Scharwoude, was in continual correspondence over the years with his extended business family. He first taught in Mataloko minor seminary (1947-1958) and from then on in parishes in East Flores (1958-1995). He was a well-known preacher, trainer of catechists and a creative liturgist. He retired first in Larantuka, then in Ledalero Retirement Home near Maumere.

Adriaan Wetzer, born in Den Bosch was one of 14 siblings; he lived and worked for 50 years in Indonesia (1950-2000). The Wetzers formed a close-knit family and his 60 nieces and nephews gave their uncle ongoing support. After parish work (1950-1964) he was appointed svd Rector of Bajawa District and Dean of Ngada Deanery (1964-1973). He left Flores when appointed to Java Province where he was elected Provincial (1978-1981). Lastly he was parish priest in the city of Surabaya (1981-2000). He retired to the Netherlands where he died nine years later.


In 1953 Dutch Catholics came to just 2% of the global Catholic population, yet they provided 11% of all Catholic, full-time, life-long cross-cultural missioners.
fast-moving drama lies the story of the transition from a mission-receiving to a mission-sending church; the transformation of a foreign-run svd mission to a complex local church complete with indigenous clergy, active laity and numerous pastoral institutions of consultation and apostolic outreach…

I continued with the words, ‘…however grand the narrative, there is no single story; there are many streams and they do not all run in the same direction. There are tales of success and its concomitant dangers, of prophecy and of compromise.’ I then concluded, ‘Perhaps the defining narrative is that of the rarely mentioned massacre of February-April 1966.’

Kramer, Wetzer and Boumans have each written a memoir. These personal narratives display the self-image of each of these veteran missioners, the image of the cross-cultural missioner that they wish to convey to the reader. Their recorded reminiscences are not haphazard memories, but rather excerpts from memories that have been shaped and reshaped over the years according to the evolving self image of the authors. They share with us what they wish to share in the evening of their life.

Clearly many aspects of these writings deserve to be examined from their family background, initial formation in Nazi occupied Netherlands during the Second World War, their evolving understanding of cross-cultural mission in Flores, their divergent pastoral approaches, and their individual reactions as the “mission field” of Flores flowered into a dynamic Local Church. However, one horrific incident stands out in this period, the massacre between February and April 1966. When crises of historic proportions occur our daily masks are torn open and our fundamental option in life is laid bare. By study-


17 Oral interviews with some 901 Dutch missioners are in the archives of the Catholic Documentation Centre of Radboud University, Nijmegen. Of these some 230 Sisters, pastors and Brothers worked in Indonesia of whom there are five SSPS Sisters and 12 svd confreres. An annotated index of these interviews has been published. See, Arnulf Camps, Vefie Poels and Jan Willemsen (eds.), Dutch Missionary Activities: An Oral History Project (1976-1988). Nijmegen: Valkhof Pers 2005.

18 I have written on the more personal side of each author, their seminary training and their relationships with the Florenese people they served. See, ‘Apa Kata Mereka?’ Memoar Empat Misionaris Belanda Generasi Akhir’, Jurnal Ledalero 5/1 (2006), 103-118.
ing the attitudes and actions of missioners during these tense months of 1966, we can uncover the mission theology that formed them and how the Church has come to play the role it does in contemporary society. The massacre in Flores during February-April 1966 was the most unnerving socialquake of the past 50 years. The recorded memories of that incident need careful examination.  

Kramer in East Flores

Gerbrand Kramer was on vacation in the Netherlands when the massacre occurred. However, at the end of the previous year of 1965 the atmosphere on the isle of Adonara to the east of Flores where he worked was already heating up. Kramer immediately took an unequivocal stand. He recalls:

Finally reactions to communism appeared in Adonara. After the communists on Java could not do anything anymore, the Catholics of Adonara found courage to pound the communists of Wungusoge vigorously. As I passed through the village I said, ‘This is the communists’ method! We are the followers of Jesus, we never take revenge.’ On the day after Christmas 1965 in Wailbe the villagers murdered two people whom they accused of being communist, and whom they claimed had poisoned the village well. The actual reason was that they were regarded as witchdoctors… On my next visit I tried to convince them that what they did does not conform to the teachings of Jesus Christ. At the beginning of 1966 I took my home leave.

Even before the massacres broke out on Flores, Kramer saw that the national agenda (terror campaign by the army to squash any opposition to their taking power) was quickly being used as a cover for local agendas as labelling an adversary ‘communist’ would legitimise their disappearance. Under the aegis of local army commanders, villagers were galvanized to ‘wipe out the communist party to its very roots’. This opened up an opportunity for local political manoeuvrings and for individuals and groups to settle local scores such as family squabbles, land disputes and inter-ethnic strife. Concomitant with mayhem caused by recrimination and revenge for a host of personal and ethnic reasons, some of the very first victims were key village leaders and members of the

19 Clearly I do not intend, nor have I the right, to pass judgment on the men concerned. I look back in order to learn for the present, lest we forget the past and history repeats itself time and again. *Historia est magistra vitae.*

20 Although Kramer was working to the east and Wetzer to the west of Maumere, I briefly record their reactions as indicative of the main stances taken in Flores at the time.

21 Kramer, 59-60.
bureaucracy who had been pushing for more progressive policies such as land reform and workers’ participation (cooperatives).

When Kramer returned from his home leave at the end of 1966 he does not refer to the massacre or its impact on his Adonara parish. His silence is deafening.22

Wetzer in Central Flores

In 1966 Adriaan Wetzer was the Dean of Bajawa Deanery and the Rector of the svd District of Ngada. He writes a brief note on the massacre as follows:

The saddest time was the revolt of the Communist Party in 1965. Everywhere terrible things happened. Many were murdered without due process, based on suspicion alone, and without any intervention by the local government, as they themselves were terrified. All we could do was give the last sacraments to the detainees awaiting their fate. Everyone was under the authority of the army command in Ende.23

As with virtually everyone else at that time, Wetzer believed the official propaganda that the killing of the generals on 1 October in Jakarta was an attempted coup d’état by the Communist Party. This army version of events was treated as sacred script until the fall of Suharto’s regime in May 1998.24 Wetzer, the Diocesan Dean and svd District Superior in an area with over 80 % of the population Catholic, saw his role as simply administering the sacraments while comforting those about to be slaughtered.

Boumans in Maumere, North-Central Flores

Jozef Boumans, then rector of the Major Seminary of Ledalero nine kilometres south of Maumere town, writes at greater length. The context he gives to his recollections is the ‘Year of Living Dangerously’ proclaimed by President

22 svd archivists at the Provincial Headquarters in Ende, in The Netherlands, and in at the General Administration in Rome, all claim to have no reference to the massacre in correspondence and reports from Flores. This is hardly possible when even the health of a priest’s horse was duly reported year by year? A silent scream?

23 Wetzer, 32-33.

24 One reason why President Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001) was speedily ousted was that he wished the country to re-examine the whole issue of the 1st October 1966 incident and the subsequent nation-wide massacre with the concomitant rise of the army to power. This would have de-legitimised Suharto’s regime (1966-1998).
Sukarno on Independence Day 1964. Boumans recalls three dangers. Firstly, the danger that foreign missioners will no longer be permitted to remain in Indonesia, secondly, danger from the communists, and thirdly, danger resulting from the economic recession. He begins his recollection of the massacre in Maumere with the following sentence:

We began to be frightened by gossip that there was a communist revolution...on 30th September 1965 the government had been overthrown in Jakarta and replaced by a Revolutionary Council; that is what we heard on the radio.

Since the ‘smash Malaysia’ confrontation, which commenced in 1963, the political situation had heated up and issues and rumours were flying about. Today with hand phones and the internet we can only with great difficulty understand how little accurate information got through to outlying districts who were dependent upon a censored radio and newspapers. Five months after the 1st October incident in Jakarta, a massacre was triggered in Maumere. Boumans explains:

At the beginning of February 1966 there was an incident in Maumere. Apparently preparations were underway for a coup-de-tat in Maumere by the Communist and Nationalist Parties (the PKI and PNI) as happened on 30th September 1965 in Jakarta. This information was obtained by a communist who had been arrested. As a consequence, the leaders and members of the Nationalist Party (PNI) and the followers of Jan Djong (district head of Kewapante) were pursued. Many secrets were obtained during interrogations during the night with all kinds of cruel and brutal torture. On 9th February 1966 Jan Djong died as a result of torture. Apparently he requested the help of a priest (Frans Cornelissen, SV, was commendable in this regard). His torturers replied: ‘You are a communist, you don’t need a priest. You will be buried without prayers, you are a communist without God.’


26 The Deanery of Maumere, which reaches from the north to the south coast in central Flores, has an area of 1,771.3 sq. kilometres, 25.8% of the area of the Archdiocese and 10.4% of the area of the island. The Catholic population of the Deanery in 1966 was 179,000 baptised persons.

27 Boumans, 81.

28 Boumans, 81-82.
It is really hard to understand how anyone, whatever the propaganda, could actually believe that someone was planning a ‘coup d’état’ in the small town of Maumere some four to five months after the Revolutionary Council had been summarily defeated by General Suharto in Jakarta. And yet this, apparently, was the story spread by Soemarno, the member of the army staff in Maumere who instigated and directed the massacre. The 1st October 1965 incident was localised in Jakarta. Communist Party (pki) branches — let alone the Nationalist Party (pni) founded by President Sukarno — were not involved. Apart from that, we also know that ‘confessions’ obtained through torture cannot be trusted. Nevertheless, the so-called ‘confessions’ justified summary arrests and the subsequent slaughter.

Soemarno in the army headquarters of Maumere co-opted every local mass organisation to work under the Operational Command for Cleansing and Restoration (komop): the Catholic (Political) Party, but also the small minority parties in Maumere — Parkindo, the Protestant Party, and NU, the Muslim Party. Youth groups attached to the various political parties were co-opted into the secretariat who oversaw the administration of the carnage. In the first place the Pemuda Katolik (Catholic Youth League) which was very active in the public sphere with branches in every parish; the movement trained cadres for the Catholic Political Party. Also, GAMKI the small Protestant Youth Group in town, the Democratic Youth affiliated to the Nationalist Party (pni), and Ansor Youth allied to the Muslim Party (nu). The overwhelming majority of both the butchers and the butchered were Catholic. An estimated 800 to 2,000 victims were murdered (‘diamankan’ = ‘secured’) during the three months of the Maumere komop. Boumans continues:

On 16 February 1966 Major Soemarno, the head of the komop (Operational Command for Cleansing and Restoration) together with the army chief Lieutenant Colonel Suherman gave a talk to the clerical students (at Ledalero major seminary)… The whole ‘cleansing operation’ enveloped many victims… at midnight a number of trucks from Maumere came from the direction of Koting. In the trucks were those who had been arrested and were to be murdered… Due to the pain and torture they had to endure, from my room I was only able to kneel down and pray for the victims! In the place of execution, a large hole was dug by the victims themselves. The leading citizens of the village were forced to kill the victims while crying out “Evil one!” If not, they themselves would be cut down… Even a prominent Catholic eagerly took part in the

29 Almost all Florenese Catholics voted for this party in the 1955 general election. The Party logo (a rosary arranged in the shape of a heart) was placed in churches, ‘to focus on devotion to the rosary during the month of May’. 
'cleansing' and demanded from me during a meeting that Ledalero Major Seminary prepare a mass grave for the evil Communist Party members. I refused, saying, 'That is not possible. This is sacred soil that has been blessed by the Church. That is not possible.' The whole time my heart was overcome by grief while fear followed my every step. What will happen next?30

A Perpetrator's Eyewitness Account

The recollection by Jozef Boumans is in line with that of one of the local co-opted perpetrators in Maumere who wrote an unpublished memoir some seven years later.31 This is a unique document detailing ongoing political manoeuvrings since the late 1940s that lead to the 1966 tragedy, insight into the 1966 massacre itself, and then takes a clear-eyed look at the immediate aftermath until 1970. He records:

During the night of 20th February the first “pacification”32 was launched in Wairita… A day before that cruel day, the parish priest of St. Joseph’s Parish in Maumere had attempted to obtain authorization to see the victims in order to hear their Confessions and give them spiritual comfort. Permission was initially blocked by Soemarno of the komop. However, together with Anton Schöpfer, svd (Dean of Maumere) and Frans Cornelissen, svd (school authority), he was allowed into the prison and they carried out their pastoral duties towards the victims…

On 27th February 1966, in the afternoon, a meeting was held in the meeting room of the local parliament (dprd-gr) of the Sikka Regency between the staff of the komop, the Head of the Investigation Team and the leaders of the local Political Parties, mass organisations and functional representatives33… the meeting continued in the house of Soemarno (the army official who organised the komop). By using the pretext “for the sake of common responsibility”, the political parties and mass

30 Boumans, 82.
31 The author of this untitled manuscript of some 130 pages wishes to remain anonymous (I label it ‘Menjaring Angin’ — Catching the Wind). It is clear from the text that he sides with the Sikkanese establishment. He was co-opted into the secretariat that administered the slaughter. Document accessed in the svd Ende Provincial archives.
32 ‘Pacification’ translates ‘pengamanan’ (make secure) which is nothing less than systematic extra-judicial murder.
33 In the final years of President Sukarno’s ‘Guided Democracy’ (1959-1965) some seats in the ‘Gotong Royong’ parliament (1961-1971) were reserved for ‘functional groups’, i.e. representatives of professional and religious organisations (Muslim, Catholic, Protestant, Hindu-Dharma & Buddhist) and the armed forces. Accordingly an svd lecturer at Ledalero seminary, Stefanus Ozias Fernandez (1961-1964) and a diocesan priest Federikus (Pede) da Lopez (1967-1971) were appointed to the local parliament (dprid) in Maumere.
organisations were forced to take a stand in pacifying (i.e. lynching) those who were arrested and where there were indications that they were involved in the Jakarta plot. The meeting continued. Each name was read out, one by one, the reasons for their arrest and an estimate of their involvement. The atmosphere was hair raising and indeed our hairs stood on end as each of the army personnel present held loaded weapons in their hands. In this situation and in this atmosphere one by one the Political Parties and Mass Organisations were forced to state their position clearly about each of those arrested whose names were read out... ‘We must wipe out the G30S right down to its very roots, not a single person must be pardoned.’

The writer, in the leadership of the Catholic Youth League co-opted into the planned massacre, then reflected:

The night of 27th February 1966, was the moment when the Catholic leadership began to lose its grip and guide, or using stronger language, they abandoned their Catholic principles. Leaders lacked the courage to speak out and strive for justice and truth because they were driven by fear as they faced army weapons, fearful of facing the threat of death if they defended truth and justice. And beginning with this wrong turn in the road, came a whole series of problems of increasing complexity in the future political game of the Sikka Regency.34

If the dates are correct in both the Boumans memoir and the Menjaring Angin document, then the key political opposition figure to the Sikkanese establishment, Jan Djong, was eliminated first (9th February). The following week the only other source of organised opposition was placated through the 16th February meeting at Ledalero seminary. Almost two weeks later on 27th February, only after neutralising potential political and Church opposition, were the co-opted local political and mass organisation leaders made aware of the extent of the army’s planned massacre and their murderous role. With the pre-emptive strike against Jan Djong and the seminary mollified, Soemarno was free to run the massacre on naked fear and intimidation exploiting local political, ethnic and ideological tensions.

A note typed after the massacre by student relatives of some of the victims, claims that,

In general the slaughter by the physical operation was not directed towards communists but was based on sentiment and individual compulsion alone, probably with a political background... Precisely the most important figures in Kanga’e (where the

34 Quote from the ‘Menjaring Angin’ manuscript; explanatory words/notes in brackets in this, and other documents, added by the author.
slaughter largely took place) who struggled since 1951 to break the feudal hold of the Rajadom of Sikka became the object of the terror...in reprisal for their political struggle of 1951.35

Incidents in Indonesia, often read as purely inter-ethnic clashes, can equally be seen as political, for “ethnic” invariably implies a group with access to political power, or the lack thereof, and dominance or subservience in the economic field. One important element in the Maumere massacre was the opportunity it gave to the Sikka establishment to eliminate opposition to their longstanding hegemony. The Sikkannese had been favoured since the 19th century when the colonial regime revived and later extended the Rajadom of Sikka with the full backing of the recently arrived clergy.36 After independence they controlled the local Catholic Party and Youth League and had a commanding presence in the schools and in the bureaucracy. An “anti-feudal” bloc emerged immediately after independence (the kanilima movement) until the first parliament was appointed (1958-1961). Not having gained access to influential positions in the Catholic Party in the early 1960s some key figures left and formed a local branch of President Sukarno’s Nationalist Party (PNI), a few even opening a branch of the Community Party (PKI).37 This seemed the one political option open if they were to continue campaigning on a reform agenda. They sought to escape from the oppressive hierarchy of the raja and the Catholic Party with its various mass organisations by appealing to progressive national institutions such as the PNI and PKI and progressive elements in the local Public Prosecutor’s Office and the armed forces (army and air force). Precisely these prominent personages, and their supporters who formally remained in the Catholic Party such as Jan Djong, were the first target of the...

35 From an eight-page typescript on folio paper entitled, Ulasan Peristiwa dan Tanggapan Masyarakat tentang Operasi Fisik oleh KOMOP (Komando Operasi Penyaluran, Penertiban dan Keamanan) Daerah Kabupaten Sikka. Quite possibly brought to Maumere by the two students, Paulus Weto and Ansel Dado, who demanded the exoneration and rehabilitation of the victims in December 1967. They hailed from the village of Habi and were studying in Jakarta at the time. Accessed in svo Ende Provincial archives.


37 Nothing to do with atheistic ideology, everything to do with campaigning for the welfare of small-scale farmers and local market-traders. The few local communists, mostly Catholic with a few Muslims, aligned themselves politically to the local branch of Sukarno’s Nationalist Party (PNI). Activists are found in the Agricultural Department, the Judiciary and the armed forces.
massacre. While the army, who instigated the slaughter, was simply following orders from Jakarta, this national agenda opened up an opportunity for the traditional Sikka establishment to neutralise local opposition to their enduring supremacy. This, in turn, dovetailed into the regressive national agenda of General Suharto. From this tragedy I look at a single issue: the character of Church responses.

**Church Responses**

In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.
— Martin Luther King Jr

How then are we to understand both what the clergy and hierarchy did and what they neglected to do, their attitudes and the role they saw for themselves and for the Church? We saw how the SVD missioner Kramer opposed the murderers with a clear evangelical attitude, how Wetzer administered the sacraments to those arrested in Bajawa, while Frans Cornelissen, Clemens Pareira and Ege Soru did likewise in Maumere jail. We saw also how Boumans prayed with tears in his room at Ledalero seminary. We can surely empathise with virtually everybody at the time, in the words of Jozef Boumans, ‘The whole time my heart was overcome by grief while fear followed my every step.’

Without wishing to pass easy judgment on the past with today’s knowledge nor censuring those caught up in events beyond their control, but rather in order to learn from this “silenced history” (*historia est magistra vitae*) I ask: What type of Church shaped these cross-cultural missioners and their Church authorities, who with one or two exceptions, limited their mission to sacramental ministry and prayer for the victims?

38 The 'Sikka' political establishment escaped the pogrom, while their adversaries were smashed. However, it should be pointed out that two of the three key locals who led the carnage were not from Sikka, but from Nita, namely Nico Bela (b. 1939) and Felix Mea Hekopung (b. 1929). Quite possibly they had personal agendas and, seeing which way the political winds were blowing in Jakarta, threw themselves into managing the massacre. The 'pro-Sikka' and 'anti-Sikka' blocks which had dominated the local political scene since 1950, continued to spar until the 1980s.
Saving Souls, Protecting the Institution

One answer has been given by Lambert Giebels:

The mass slaughter was carried out by the Java military . . . who formed militias . . . The passive attitude of the Catholic pastors in Flores towards this anti-Communist action is clear from what was retold by one of them 32 years later . . . On Good Friday the pastor heard from a parishioner in Ili Parish that a gang of killers was coming their way. Their object was four villages on the slopes of Dobo Mountain whose inhabitants were suspected of being communist sympathisers. The priest decided to visit those villages, not to warn them, nor suggest that they flee to the mountains until the wave of anger had passed, nor to offer sanctuary in the church or presbytery, but . . . to hear the confessions of his parishioners and also — the priest related this with a certain pride — regularise the marriages of 20 couples who requested it. On the Monday the priest was called back to Ili where the commander of the murderous force waited in the presbytery with a list of parishioners’ names suspected of being communist. In the four villages, namely Dobo, Piring, Bao-Datung and Moro, some 143 men were slaughtered. Those who had just confessed their sins and had had their marriages blessed asked the priest to give them baptismal certificates as proof they were not communist. However, as the commander of the murdering force forbade it, the priest did not have the courage to respond positively to their request.

Giebels gives two reasons why the clergy were apparently unmoved by the impending fate of the victims:

Throughout Indonesia clergy and religious . . . faced the slaughter of the communists, and those thought to be communist, with a studied indifference. The clergy and the religious Brothers and Sisters thought that they themselves were the most threatened group as they had stigmatised communists as ‘Godless’. The timidity of the Catholic priests and religious in the face of the angry anti-communist wave was also caused by the lack of any protest by the bishops. When the bishops returned from Rome they

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8 April 1966.

Herman Bolscher svd (1910-2004).

Handing out hundreds of ‘Catholic Party’ membership cards saved many lives; a baptismal certificate may well have done so also. In those days no one normally kept baptismal certificates at home but requested one, in lieu of a birth certificate, when a child was ready to start school.


From the beginning of October 1965 until mid-December, the bishops were in Rome attending the fourth and final session of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).
joined the New Order\textsuperscript{44} and disavowed Sukarno, the man who had rendered so many services for the Catholic community.\textsuperscript{45}

Without necessarily going along with the whole of Giebels’ strident analysis, it is clearly the case that a large majority of clergy were virulently anti-communist.\textsuperscript{46} Many priests were challenged by the political stance of the party which stood for land reform and workers rights and saw the foreign clergy as colonial. The clergy themselves felt threatened by numerous wild rumours. And so the army could rise to power on a wave of blood and terror.\textsuperscript{47} Also, the slaughter began very suddenly, and the mass Catholic organisations were simply not prepared to respond to such an unexpected, horrifying eventuality. Guidelines from the hierarchy were extremely sparse, and when the occasional pastoral letter was circulated it was highly ambivalent. Herman Bolscher, svd, the pastor of Ili Parish, was not the only priest who was proudly “saving souls” through administering the sacraments of confession, communion, marriage and extreme unction with seeming indifference to the fate of the victims’ bodies, the trauma of their surviving relatives or the cruelty of the perpetrators.

One might ask, in no way to mitigate the responsibility of the institutional Church, why the head of the local government, Bupati Samador da Cunha, took no stand against the massacre which was political in nature and instigated by the national army. If the bupati, the head of the local government, had taken a strong stand, his intervention could well have been crucial, and if supported by clergy, the carnage would have been stopped in its tracks.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{44} Orde Baru or New Order is the name General Suharto gave his regime (1967-1998), similar to the name given by Adolf Hitler to his regime in Germany (‘Neues Reich’ 1933-1945) and Juan Perón to his first and second terms in Argentina (1946-1955).

\textsuperscript{45} Giebels, 176.

\textsuperscript{46} A lecturer at Ledalero since the late 1940s, and another more recently arrived (1965), dismissed my suggestion in 1999 that the 1966 victims should be rehabilitated with the words, ‘But they were communists! We were under threat.’ One exception to this right-wing ecclesiastical ethos was Josef Tanus, svd (b. 1924) from Nele, near Maumere, who worked in Betun, Timor, after ordination in 1952. After struggling with left-wing groups for land rights in his Timorese parish but with no backing from the local Church or the svd, he left the priesthood and worked at the East German Embassy in Jakarta. After G30S he was one of tens of thousands of political prisoners. He is now retired in his place of birth.

\textsuperscript{47} Any pastor who questioned the komun brutality, was challenged with, ‘Don’t you know you were on the list of those to be eliminated by the communists?’ See also footnote No. 58 on the threat to clergy.

\textsuperscript{48} Heinrich Bollen svd (b. 1929), who was on leave in Europe at the time, on returning confronted Bupati Samador. His defence was that the massacre was instigated and run by the army. Bollen responded: ‘No excuse. Your local people eagerly implemented it.’ Some have suggested
The Response of the Archbishop of Ende

What then was the response of the local ordinary?49 In his pastoral letter written in Rome at the close of the Second Vatican Council, Gabriel Manek svd, the Archbishop of Ende, referred to the events in Jakarta on 1 October 1965:

Praise and thanks without end to the Omnipresent, Almighty God who has defeated the cruel aim (of the communists). Abundant praise and thanks for the vigilance of our armed forces who have saved our motherland from such a terrible disaster . . . Praise and thanks that God did not permit our Catholic religion throughout the country to be handed over to the enemies of the country and of religion . . . In whichever Catholic organisation you are involved, we implore you to give as much assistance as possible to our Government, help to the utmost of your ability to cleanse our land from the enemies of the revolution,50 from elements that betray the country with their 30th September Movement (G30S). In requesting such, I urge you to give assistance everywhere with the greatest generosity and in our own Catholic way. In supporting the act of cleansing, let us continue to uphold the principle of humaneness and the Catholic principle of love. Apart from our obligations, let us not defile our person nor lower ourselves to the level of those who oppose us. We should pray that our brothers who have committed errors quickly become aware of their faults (Rome, 6 December 1965).51

Still in Rome at the time, Archbishop Manek may not have been fully aware of the extent of the cruel carnage in Java and Bali before writing this pastoral that the *bupati* accepted that there would have to be ‘a little blood letting’, which, in the event, got out of control. The result? The *bupati*’s political adversaries were eliminated.

49 Gabriel Manek (1913-1989) was from Lahurus, Timor. He was ordained presbyter 1941 and appointed Apostolic Vicar of Larantuka (1951-1961). When the Indonesian hierarchy was erected he was transferred to Ende as its first archbishop (1961-1968).

50 Archbishop Manek, like the army now running the country, still used left-wing terms sacredly by President Sukarno; this gave a semblance of continuity and legitimacy. The wiping out of the Communist Party was to ‘save the nationalist revolution’. Later, in a similar way, the Catholic Church readily employed General Suharto’s slogans such as ‘pembangunan’ / ‘development’ while promoting a ‘theology of development’. After General Suharto’s fall, the Catholic Church swiftly adopted the language of the post-Suharto regime for instance ‘reformasi’ — ‘reform / renewal’.

51 Relevant here is a comment by Andrew Hamilton sj, ‘… one can understand the ambivalence about (pastoral) letters and the inclination to avoid reading them. But letters from bishops to their churches are powerful symbols, particularly when written in response to particular crises. Letters require their writers to take a position. Their signatures require them to stand to the position they have taken. And having letters read to the members of their church is an act of both strength and vulnerability. They associate their readers in what they have written. But they also hand themselves over to their readers for response and judgment and must wait on the unforeseen consequences of their letters (Website Eureka Street 20/13, www.eurekastreet.com.au, accessed 8 July 2010).
letter. In December 1965 the situation on Flores was already tense but still relatively calm. The unanticipated mass murder in Flores began two and a half months later.52 After returning to his residence in Ndona, and having learnt of the situation at first hand, indeed right in the midst of the tsunami of slaughter within his own Archdiocese in the towns of Ende, Maumere and Bajawa,53 Manek sent a circular letter (ad clericum) to the clergy and religious in his diocese. Among other matters he underlined:

from the event of last year we can conclude, with heartfelt thanks, that God’s love for our nation and country is overwhelming — for a second time our motherland has escaped from the cruel claws of the communist bear54…Now our government and leaders need guidance and wisdom so that our nation and country do not sink into another catastrophe. Let us especially ask for God’s help in the knowledge that if it is not God who builds the house, then in vain do the workers labour (Ps 127:1). Apart from that, whether we like it or not, we have to focus our concern on the cleansing action which is presently being carried out and is reaching its climax. We thank God that the serpent’s poison, which had spread widely in the body of society, is now being rooted out and destroyed. This extermination, by a nation that was threatened by dangerous elements, is nothing more than our obligation to make ourselves secure. Nevertheless, here also, we Catholics hold strongly to the principle of Catholicism: love, ‘you must love your neighbour as yourself.’ (Mk 12:31). Throughout the land we have heard of many errors and excesses which are not foreign to human beings, who can be too easily influenced by feelings of anger and hatred while carrying out the act of cleansing (Ndona, 10 March 1966).55

Thus, Archbishop Manek urged clergy and religious to assist in the rooting out the poison of the ‘communists’ and their sympathisers while always basing their actions on love. The Archbishop also gave some spiritual guidelines. Earlier from Rome (6 December 1965) he had already urged Catholics: ‘…more frequently to seek the protection of Mary for our country and religion…that

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52 For the delay in the massacre, see footnote No. 10.
53 The three district capitals within the Archdiocese where most killings took place.
54 There was a local communist-led uprising in Madiun in 1948 during the independence struggle; the events of 1 October 1965 in Jakarta were said to be a ‘second communist uprising’.
55 Ominously, a day after Manek signed his ad clericum, General Suharto forced President Sukarno to sign a mandate ‘to do everything necessary’ to secure peace in the country. This mandate of 11 March 1966 known as Supersemar, gave Suharto the authority he needed to wrest the presidency from Sukarno. The following year he became acting President, and on 27 March 1968 was appointed President of the Republic.
each one of us prays the rosary more often.’ Then, from Ndona, Flores, three months later (10 March 1966) Manek underscored:

…our religious houses and seminaries should organise a weekly Holy Hour with the usual prayers, Stations of the Cross, and rosary…as reparation for the errors and excesses beyond the law of extermination. Alongside this, we ask for compassion and solace for hearts wounded and torn apart by these excesses.

The Lenten Pastoral Letter of the following year (4 February 1967), 12 months after the massacre was instigated, was written in a similar vein:

…request patience so that everything takes place according to the law and is not defiled by the urge for revenge… The Lord, who has extended his almighty hand to let us escape from the grip of the lion’s coup-de-tat, will also direct the same hand to guide and develop our nation. In order to shower down the love and grace of God onto our government, country and nation and on each one of us, we ask that during the Lenten season we follow the various regulations for fasting and abstinence.56

Hence the bishop’s guidelines revolved around the theme of love, of refraining from committing “irregularities” (while submitting to the military government and concurring with its purge of purported communists), of praying the rosary and fasting. The Archbishop acknowledged that there was ‘a law of extermination’ in play while regretting any ‘errors and excesses’ committed.

Gabriel Manek: A More Nuanced View

It is possible that the public written guidelines above were more cautious than those given to clergy in private. Paul Webb, an Australian researcher in the early 1980s, writes, ‘The Archbishop of Ende strictly forbade the participation of Catholics in the act of “sweeping clean” and spoke harshly about the efforts of the military as “arbitrary” and “without compunction”.’57 I myself heard from V.B. da Costa, a prominent Catholic politician in Jakarta who comes from the Maumere district and who met the Archbishop in his Ndona residence, that the Archbishop had decided to go to Maumere during the

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56 Translations of quotes from the pastoral letters, and other unpublished documents, by myself.
massacre after hearing an oral report from Pastor Pede da Lopez. Pede was the diocesan priest who had been sent to Ndona for sanctuary after protesting the mass arrest of around 45 people in Bola. However, V.B. da Costa persuaded the bishop not to go. ‘Think’, he said, ‘what the reaction would be if something happened to you.’ And so the bishop stayed in Ndona.

In a letter dated 28 April 1966, a day before the slaughter came to an end, the Archbishop rejected an invitation from St. Joseph’s Parish to celebrate the silver jubilee of his priestly ordination in Maumere (8 May 1966), as

The letter from the military command (15th March 1966) states that the actions of the Operational Command for Cleansing and Restoration (komop) was in line with public opinion in the district. In my judgement it would be extremely unbecoming and out of place to celebrate my silver jubilee with a Catholic Community which has such a vision and outlook rather than living out the Pancasila.

In the same letter, addressed to the parish priest, Eugenius Soru (1932-2000), Manek defended the action of pastor Pede da Lopez in Bola, and supported
the ministry of Clemens Pareira svd, Frans Cornelissen svd, and Eugenius Soru himself, who were dispensing the last sacraments to those held in prison before their extra-judicial execution. Manek wrote,

... Each pastor, in accordance with his spiritual duty, is obliged to save the souls of everyone in his care, particularly in those last few moments before a person’s fate is to be decided for eternity.

The bishop requested that his letter be read from the pulpit; apparently the letter had not the slightest impact. Two weeks earlier on 15 April 1966, the Archbishop had travelled to Lela in the Maumere district to ordain Bosko Terwinju as a diocesan priest but refused to pass through Maumere town.

The Response of Hendrik Djawa, Dean of Maumere

In July Archbishop Manek appointed Hendrik Djawa, svd (1928-1996) the first Indonesian Dean of Maumere (1966-1969) to restore calm after the carnage. When Paulus Weto and Ansel Dado, two students at university in Jakarta, came to Maumere demanding accountability for the massacre, Hendrik Djawa refused to back them, saying their endeavour would exacerbate wounds not yet healed. Hendrik Djawa was reorganising the Deanery at the time, establishing both a Parish Council in the town parish of St. Joseph and a Deanery Pastoral Council for the whole area. Key people whom he appointed to these Church positions were members of the Catholic Party, the Catholic Youth League and the district government — precisely those co-opted and implicated in the massacre.

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62 Clemens Pareira svd had already made his way to the Archbishop in Ndona to report the massacre — going via Kupang in Timor as the road from Maumere to Ende on Flores was blocked by the army.
64 Lela is only 20 kilometres from Maumere but on the south coast while Maumere is on the north coast.
65 Anton Schöpfer svd (1913-1976), long-time parish priest of Kewapante, was Dean of Maumere at the time of the massacre.
66 From the village of Habi.
68 Hendrik Djawa appointed five members to the Lay Deanery Council in January 1967: Liturgy Committee: Hendrik Laban (former Army Commander in Maumere, then Head of the Harbour Authority); Education Committee: Jan P. Sali (Head of Local Education Authority);
Calm could not be restored through an imposed silence. The following year, the record of the regular clergy meeting at Ledalero major seminary on 8 May 1967 recalls the following:

It is necessary to activate the mass (Catholic) organisations keeping in mind that a general election approaches. At this Pastor Hendrik Hermus svd, of Halehebing parish interrupted and with overwhelming emotion very strongly stressed that there was no point at all in promoting the Catholic Party in the upcoming general election as we clergy and religious had not yet taken a stand on the komop massacre which drank so much innocent blood. Dean Hendrik Djawa, responded that this is not an easy issue and needs a very cautious approach. This does not imply we are afraid but we have to take account of the gains and losses from such a statement. Clemens (Pareira svd, 1926-1970), who witnessed the komop unfold, stated that there was a general feeling of unease among the population at large as no action had been taken against those involved. Nevertheless, nobody had the courage to open their mouth.

Dean Hendrik Djawa then stated,

The difficulty in this case is that a statement of our Christian principles should have been made before when it was already becoming clear that what was happening was against our Catholic principles and against humanity.

On 22 May 1967 a meeting of the Clergy Council of the Deanery was held and once again the position of the Catholic Church on the massacre was broached as they planned for a Conferentia Pastoralis in September that year.

The record states,

One reality that cannot be denied is that recently our social organisations have become completely paralysed. This is because our mass organisations were misused by some figures who were thirsting for blood, hence the social organisations are now seen as enemies of the people... The old stock of leaders, in particular those who misused the

Committee for Organisations: Jakobus da Silva (senior civil servant); Finance Committee: M.K. Parera (Head of Copra Cooperative, the major income earner of the district); Catholic Action Committee: Viator Parera (Farming Authority, later its Director). E.P. da Gomez, chair of the Catholic Youth and co-opted into the komop secretariat, was appointed to St. Joseph's Parish Council.

69 Born in Lage Zwaluwe, Breda, in 1921. After teaching in the high school in Ende Hermus spent many long years in Halehebing Parish until he retired back to the Netherlands in the 1990s. He was of the same generation as the three missioner memoirists.

70 Record dated Maumere, 31 May 1967 signed by Dean Hendrik Djawa (from the private papers of Hendrik Djawa).
organisations and have been implicated in the komop cruelty, must be removed as promptly as possible and the body of the organisations cleansed.71

No such ‘cleansing’ took place; a majority of ‘the old stock’ remained in their key positions, indeed were appointed to the newly formed Deanery and Parochial Pastoral Councils. In the record of the next monthly meeting of the Clergy Deanery Council on 6 June 1967 we read,

Many of our organisations are paralysed and have lost the trust of the people. We need to act to restore them via the Farmers’ Pancasila Organisation (ipp) and the Fisher folks’ Pancasila Organisation (inpr).72

Five months later, pressured by a demonstration in town by the people of Kanga’e district demanding accountability,73 finally the official stance of the local Catholic Church was made plain in two circular letters. In a Pastoral Letter, dated 10 November 1967, to be read from the pulpit on Sunday 19 November, people were invited to pray for those who were victims and assist surviving families. No organisation was established either by the Deanery or the parishes to carry out such practical assistance.

Some of the clergy were not satisfied with the pastoral letter and refused to read it in church. And so Dean Hendrik Djawa circulated a ‘for your eyes only’ ad clerum on 27 November 1967. In this circular he stressed five points,

1) The Church cannot take a principled stand and oppose the komop itself; 2) We can react only to the excesses which occurred during its implementation; 3) We support each and every Catholic movement of struggle, but we do not support the actions of individuals;74 4) Each and every appeal in the struggle of the Catholic community must make use of existing Catholic organs; 5) Departing from the stance of the Pastoral Letter of 19th November implies that one is acting on ones own, which would endanger the one concerned and more generally endanger the work of the Church.

Accordingly, both the Archbishop of Ende and his Dean in Maumere continued to distinguish between the aim of ‘cleansing’ the country of communists

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71 Record dated Maumere, 7 June 1967, signed by Dean Hendrik Djawa.
72 Record dated Maumere, 30 June 1967, signed by Dean Hendrik Djawa.
73 The area to the east of the district where most of the slaughter took place.
74 This referred to the move of Paulus Weto and Ansel Dado, the two university students from Jakarta, who demanded a thorough investigation and accountability of those implicated; they organised a demonstration in front of the military barracks to make their demands. They were detained, flown to Kupang and then allowed to return to Jakarta.
(with which they concurred), and its execution in practice (mass slaughter which they regretted). The pretext for not taking action was that districts must await guidelines from the centre, that is, from Catholic Party in Jakarta.\footnote{75} The final sentence of this letter reads:

> Our priestly duty is to bring the people to serenity and security in both soul and body, both now and for eternity.

Unity and harmony, to put it brutally, were to be attained through repressing the truth, ignoring the pain, disregarding the stigmatisation, overlooking the guilt, neglecting the fear, discounting the bewilderment. The clergy were to act as unifiers and pacifiers but not as ‘a voice of the voiceless’. The cultural value of harmony was to be elevated above all other considerations. Or was it simply that the horror, so recently perpetrated, could not be faced?

At the end of December 1969 when Hendrik Djawa finished his three-year term as Dean and handed over to his successor.\footnote{76} As he prepared to leave Maumere for Ende he wrote his successor, Jan Mbenu, a memorandum:

> The beginning of my term of office came at the end of the physical purge of G30S in this district... the people lived in uncertainty, there was an atmosphere of suspicion towards the excesses carried out in the implementation of the physical purge; Catholic political and social organisations were depressed, and the Church leadership at that time did not play their expected role, except for one or two pastors who acted individually... As the new leader of the Church in that district, I tried to restore calm carefully.

\footnote{75} In local politics the clergy in Flores were never shy of taking a central role. As for national policies, such as taking a stand on the komop massacre, the Dean hid behind the pretext that they must await for guidance from Jakarta. Accountability only went upwards. This ambivalence brings out the contrast between being a powerful local majority while remaining a small, cautious minority nationally. As it actively helped to bring down the Sukarno era, the Catholic Party and the Catholic Youth League felt unable to criticise the carnage that ensued. Catholic and Protestant support nationally was rewarded with up to seven cabinet posts in the early years of the Suharto regime.

\footnote{76} Hendrik Djawa served only one three-year term as Dean. Gossip about his being too familiar with a woman friend was used to oust him by clergy uncomfortable with his empowering the laity through Parish and Deanery Councils and Deanery pastoral strategies. Archbishop Gabriel Manek was forced to retire the previous year (1968), officially for health reasons. He also was engulfed by gossip circulated by clergy who felt threatened by his ‘Indonesianisation’ policies following Vatican II. See footnote No. 73 in Aritonang and Steenbrink, 272.
Regarding the two ‘Mapelma’\textsuperscript{77} students, Paulus Weto and Ansel Dado, who came seeking accountability after the installation of the new District Head, Bupati Laurens Say (1924-2007), at the end of 1967, Dean Djawa wrote:

The Church came forward and stressed that it does not officially support them (the students), as their campaign is not a Catholic struggle, but the endeavour of just one group of Catholics. This stand was made as those involved did not possess a written mandate from the Central Committee of the Catholic Party nor from any other social organisation, so that such support could endanger the future of the Church . . . Regarding the excesses in the implementation of the комоп, the Church trusts that at some time in the future, those implicated will receive an appropriate reward in accord with their actions . . .

He then continued,

Collaboration and communication with the government have been quite satisfactory. We have now reached the stage of common planning and implementation together . . . Efforts to this end need to be nurtured continually for we need the conviction that between ourselves and the government we have the same object, namely, the citizens who are our parishioners too.\textsuperscript{78}

Hendrik Djawa’s cultural values and his ecclesiastical priorities, exemplified in his speedily realigning the institutional Catholic Church with the local government at the expense of the numerous victims, speak for themselves.

Meanwhile the Indonesian Bishops’ Conference was deafeningly silent. They finally raised their voice 13 months after the massacre in Java, Bali and Sumatra in a joint Pastoral Letter in November 1966 where they threw the full support of the Indonesian Catholic Church behind General Suharto where it remained for over 30 years until the final years of the regime.

Towards an Overall Analysis

Forty-five years later it is difficult to comprehend how Catholics could be encouraged by their bishop to support the aim of the Operational Command (комоп) without also being drawn into the massacre which was the very

\textsuperscript{77} mapelma = \textit{Perhatuan Mahasiswa Peladjar Maumere} (Maumere Students’ Organisation [in Jakarta]).

\textsuperscript{78} Notes made by Hendrik Djawa svd, on handing over his position as Dean to the diocesan priest, Jan Mbenu, 31 December 1969. Accessed in svd Ende Provincial archives.
modus operandi of the purge itself. Inevitably questions arise: How was it thought possible to ‘annihilate’ (menghabisi) alleged communists and their sympathisers outside provisions of the law without employing torture and extra-judicial executions? How was it possible to continue to support in principle the ‘cleansing operation’ (pembersihan) of the KOMOP months after it ended, limiting criticism after the event to castigating possible ‘errors and excesses’ (i.e. the slaughter)? Did virulent communist-phobia manage to shut the eyes of church leaders to the political motive behind the carnage, that is, the wiping out all potential resistance to the newly installed military regime, in particular key figures previously involved in popular movements among the farmers (land reform) and workers (wages and cooperatives)? How come local Catholic Church authorities did not see that a local agenda in Maumere (purging anti-feudal campaigners) had hi-jacked the national agenda from Jakarta (purging opposition to the newly installed military regime)? Did concern for the institutional Catholic Church and its activities close the hearts of clergy to practical acts of compassion for the victims, who in Flores were none other than fellow Catholics?

Perhaps these questions are too blunt. The overriding reason may well have been simply fear. The clergy were frightened for themselves naturally enough, but equally alarmed for the ecclesial institution. In the midst of a messy and violent political about turn in Jakarta, at a time when most clergy were still expatriates whose continuing presence was problematic, and while the Catholic Church was all powerful on the island of Flores it remained a vulnerable minority within a Muslim-majority land, and with inflation running wild and the economy spiralling downwards, and in Flores there was hunger with bad harvests in 1964 and 1965, then the first and ‘safest’ reaction was to keep one’s head down and pray in fear and trembling.

But was more than primordial panic involved?

To be continued in Exchange 40/4.
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