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Asian Civ. IIISE - Lectures, 1973.

Dutch Strategy in the 17th century.

We have already seen the rise of the Jav. state of Mataram, sth. of its organisation and the reaction of its aristocracy to the Dutch presence. In general, the initiative in encounters with the Dutch had come from Mataram (1628/9 attacks, 1674 onwards realization of the " usefulness " of Dutch assistance). What about the Dutch? What was in it for them? I think it fair to say that they were not then primarily interested in Mataram: they were drawn into its affairs, if not actually reluctantly, at least in an unplanned fashion.

Primary aims of V.O.C. in 17th century were defined by J.P. Coen, the founder of Batavia. He envisaged not a territorial, colonial empire (Had he even conceived this??) but a s.o. trade empire based on a network of small strongholds throughout Asia - not only Indonesia - a town here, an island there. He was interested not only in taking spices to Europe, but also in inter-Asian trade: he wanted to obtain for the VOC the role of middleman. Thus the Dutch took Indian textiles to SEA to sell there; they also imported opium ~~to~~ into Indonesia. Looking at the whole picture, we can see that the 17th century was a time of tremendous Dutch activity all over Asia - in the west, established themselves on the Coromandel coast and in Ceylon (taking over from the Portuguese, who however retained a settlement at Goa). In the east, they were active in (divided) Vietnam, and also in Japan.

Later on, however, it became obvious that a policy of holding only small ~~to~~ outposts would not work. One of the major weaknesses of the Portuguese empire was that it involved defending impossibly long lines of communication from one fort to the next. To control the sea, you had to control at the same time fairly large areas of the land. The Dutch may have been able to destroy native shipping because of their superior artillery, etc., but they could not destroy

the shipping of other European nations such as the English. Other Europ. traders could use as a base some native sultanate or city-state which found their presence advantageous. And even native shipping, although unable to stand up to a direct naval battle with the Dutch, could pose a certain problem - the sea was large enough for them to evade the Dutch, and they could make port at a place not under Dutch control. Therefore, as time went on, the Dutch were obliged in the pursuance of their interests to destroy or subjugate the political ~~organization~~ organization of one native state after another. However, their primary interest was in sea-borne trade and their involvement in other arenas such as Mataram politics was only incidental to this.

Steps to attain a trade monopoly:

1. The Moluccas:

1599 - 1605: "honeymoon period" * - Dutch seen as welcome counterbalance to the Portuguese. After about 1605, however, it was borne upon the inhabitants that the Dutch were actually establishing a much more effective stranglehold than the Portuguese had. Should be said that to the islander spices were not simply a "cash crop" to make money for capital or luxuries: they needed them to get rice from Java, upon which they were dependent for food. Therefore they resisted the establishment of the Dutch monopoly, with the help of the English and Portuguese.

1605 - 1620: period of evasion, skirmishes. Faced with Dutch naval might, the Moluccan Sultans would sign treaties giving them a monopoly, but as soon as the Dutch left they would not observe these treaties. After the founding of Batavia, Coen decided upon the complete subjugation of the Bandas, and sent a massive expedition in 1621, in which the native population of these islands was virtually wiped out. Amboin and Ceram were then subjugated without the need for such drastic measures (time of "Massacre of Amboina"). Ternate and Tidore were also subjugated.

The basic conflict between the Dutch and the Moluccan Sultans was an economic one. However, this economic conflict sharpened religious antagonism:

Islam became a rallying point for the Moluccans. The Dutch on their side began to propagate Christianity among the Moluccans for political reasons: hence the creation of so-called "rice Christians". In 1635 there was a general revolt in the Moluccas, and another in 1650 - a reaction against the institution of the hongi-tochten (regular naval patrols to destroy unlicensed spice trees - because the Dutch ~~firmly~~ wanted only a certain amount produced, all of wh. wld be marketed by them - didn't want any to be grown and "smuggled" by their Europ. competitors - would bring the Europ. price down if there was more on the market).

As a result of this intensive involvement, the Moluccas were deeply colonised from a very early period, and this had far-reaching consequences for the native society. (It is one thing to say that the Dutch were only one strand in a predominantly Asian pattern, but another to deny that any of their actions had important consequences for the future). It is only here that we find native languages actually superseded by European ones - led to the formation of a distinct " creole " identity: see Sjahrir, Out of Exile, pp. 103-4. The most dramatic results of this cultural assimilation are seen in Ambon. (Dutch army; Christians; Republik Maluku Selatan, etc.)

After the subjugation of the Moluccas, the centre of anti-Dutch trade shifted to Makassar. Makassar is well situated for trade contacts with the Moluccas, Java, Bandjarmassin (pepper) the Lesser Sundas and the southern Philippine area. Its growth was stimulated by Malay emigration after the Portuguese took Malacca, and also from Johore when that state was crippled by Acehnese raids. By 1600, there was a large Malay colony, and its rulers encouraged foreign traders - Chinese, Indians, Arabs, Javanese, Portuguese, English and Danes. In the early 17th century, ~~there~~ 2 developments took place: 1). Islamization 2). the local Makassarese aristocracy started to take a more direct part in trade - first hiring foreign ships, then having their own built in Java. They also used Portuguese pilots. By the 1630s, Makassar had a considerable sphere of

influence - most of (coastal) Celebes, parts of the Moluccas, Lesser Sundas. They used Portuguese fire-arms, and constructed fortifications along European lines. Because of their breach of the Dutch trade monopoly, a clash had to come sooner or later. In 1660 a Dutch expedition was sent to Makassar, and a treaty was signed under which the Sultan promised to expel the Portuguese : he did not. In 1666 a second expedition was sent under Cornelis van Speelman. He was helped by Buginese troops under Aru Palaka of Boni, who had a personal grudge against the Sultan (note: Buginese from the area on the western shores of the gulf of Boni). After a four month siege, the Dutch succeeded in imposing the so-called Bongaya Contract. By this the Sultan acknowledged Dutch overlordship and gave them a trade monopoly. Makassar's forts had to be dismantled, except for the main one, which would be occupied by a Dutch garrison. All non-Dutch Europeans to be expelled; heavy indemnity to be paid. 1668: treaty evasions, renewed fighting, Sultan had to abdicate. From then on, Makassar was under direct Dutch administration - diff. from e.g. Java wh. when subjugated by the Dutch was indirectly ruled ~~ix~~ until v. late: by which the Dutch reinforced Jav. civ. and the " Javanese-ness " of the Javs. - their cultural pretensions came to be resented later by e.g. the Makassarese. The Buginese area also came under Dutch hegemony. The result of this conquest was a tremendous emigration - Makassarese and Buginese came to play a role in the history of Siam, Cambodia, Malaya etc (Makassarese played a part in turbulent 1680s in Siam).

Minangkabau area (around Padang Pandjeng). Dutch had trade interests here too - Minangkabau area = inland but connected to the trading world by virtue of its gold and pepper. Aceh had a monopoly in the trade in these until c. 1640, when the Dutch utilised Minang resentment of the Acehnese ~~resentment~~ ^{monopoly: buyer's market} to oust them: 1663: Painan contract between Dutch and Minang chiefs. From this time on the Dutch were fairly firmly established at Padang, although relns. with the Minang were not always good - now it was the Dutch monopoly that was resented. However, the Dutch presence in Minang did not have such a disastrous effect on native

~~interwar~~ wars of the petty principalities of Bali, they came to form a serious " security problem " in Batavia - ~~and~~ tended to run away, form gangs, run amok. Many of them fled to the uplands above Batavia. It is in this area that we first hear of S., as leader of a band of Balinese. For a time he enlisted in the VOC army, and in this way became involved in the affairs of Banten, being given the task of locating Abulfatah and his party and arranging for their surrender. With Abulfatah were his loyal son, Purbaya, and a certain Makssarese by the name of By this time his homeland had been Sheik Yusuf, a Muslim scholar of some eminence. He was also the son-in-law of conquered by the Dutch: he became one of the Makassarese expatriates who played Abulfatah: an example from better documented times of the sort of alliance wh. various roles in the history of SEA, usually of a more military nature, traditional accounts suggest was important for the Islamization of Indonesia.

Surapati actually arranged for the surrender of the party, but the behaviour of a certain Dutch officer who demanded Abulfatah's personal kris be surrendered - a humiliating demand in his terms - caused the Banten party to flee, and a quarrel to arise between S. and the Dutch officer, leading to an irrevocable break between S. and the VOC. The Banten party were eventually rounded up: Jusuf was exiled to the Dutch settlement at the Cape, where he died 1699. His grave, near Makassar, is still a place of pilgrimage. Surapati, however, pursued by VOC forces, escaped into the capital of Mataram. Here he joined forces with the Patih, who was pursuing an anti-Dutch policy.

At this time the ruler of Mataram, Mangkurat II, was feeling the pressure of his debt, from the Trunajaya was, wh. stood at that time at f. 4,600,000. When he heard that the VOC was sending an expedition to Kartasura under the renowned Captain Tack, well known for this part in the fighting against Trunajaya, he feared that the Dutch were coming to extract his money from him one way or another. In fact Tack was empowere to reduce the debt to a mere f. 344,000, providing Mataram renounced all claims to sovereignty over of Cirebon. Tack was also instructed to get Surapati.

To cut a long story short, Mangkurat, though not willing himself to take up arms against the Dutch, allowed Surapati to make an attack wh. took the Dutch by surprise, and in which the Dutch expedition suffered great losses, including Tack himself.

After this encounter, Mangkurat II lost courage in face of the anger / promised that he would "punish those responsible for the outrage" of the VOC, and Surapati left Kartasura for East Java, where he set up ~~an~~ a semi-independent principality at Pasuruan. Here he received anti-Dutch elements from many regions - Javanese, Makassarese, Malays and Chinese - mostly trading peoples who had most to lose from the Dutch monopoly. He also sent embassies to Siam. In 1703, when the so-called "First Javanese War of Succession" broke out, Surapati took the anti-Dutch side, but the Dutch candidate won, and thereafter the Dutch turned their energies towards his domain. In 1706 they sent an expedition to Pasuruan, and Surapati himself was killed in battle. In the following year a 2nd Dutch expedition took Pasuruan, and his sons escaped deeper into eastern Java. Here they and their descendants continued to cause trouble for the Dutch until at least 1778.

From this career can perhaps deduce that there was a certain amount of communication and co-ordination between those elements whose interests led them to oppose the Dutch: mainly Islamic trading communities. (Banten, Makassar, Malays from Borneo etc.) Note on Surapati's own religion: no positive evidence, but it is known that many of the Balinese of Batavia became Muslims (and have now become absorbed into the Batavian population: no surviving Hindu-Balinese community).

~~This is a summary.~~

It should not be thought, however, that with the expansion of Dutch interests in the 2nd half of the 17th century, ~~the~~ both native states and individuals became entirely preoccupied with them as against any other outside contacts. Perhaps the clearest ~~in~~ example of the continuing importance of other civilisations is Aceh. Throughout the 17th century - even in the second half, which was a time of political decline - Aceh had a two-way contact with the Muslim Holy Land which was an important element, perhaps the most important, in forming its own identity, and which also had its influence on the civilisation of other regions of Indonesia. ~~Due to its position as a cross-roads~~ ^{Due to its position as a cross-roads} of Muslim trade, many traders from ^{India} ~~the East~~ (mostly, it seems, Gujeratis) and from Persia also came to Aceh. These contacts introduced into this region many popular Arab literary works,

either directly or via the medium of Persian. See Schrieke, II, pp. 252-3 for list - includes the Amir Hamzah romances, Bayan Budiman, Laila and Majnun, Yusuf and Anbiya tales, "Mirrors for Monarchs" (Taj as-Salatina and Bustan as Salatina). These works were adapted into Malay, and some also into Javanese.

As a religious centre, 17th century Aceh was graced by some famous Muslim theologians, including the following: Hamzah Fansuri: floreat during the reign of Sultan Ala'ul-Din Ri'ayat Shah (1588 - 1604). See Syed Muhammad Nguib al-Attas, The Mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri. Hamzah's family seems to have been from Barus, in Sumatra, but he himself may have spent his childhood in Siam. Refers to his much-travelled existence in the following verse:

Hamzah Fansuri didalam Makkah
 Menchari Tuhan di Baytu'l-Ka bah;
 B[ar]i Barus ke Kudus terlalu payah
 Akhirnya dapat didalam ~~rumah~~ rumah.

i.e. Hamzah Fansuri in Mecca
 Searches for God in the House of the Ka'bah;
 From Barus to Kudus he wearily goes:
 At last he Finds [Him] in his own house.

* Hamzah Fansuri was a mystic, who regarded the ritual observances of Islam (the prayers, etc.) as of lesser importance. His pupil Shams al-Din of d. 1630 Pasai carried on his school of thought. Later, however, an orthodox "back-lash" hit Aceh, represented by the Gujarati Nur al-Din al-Raniri, who was in Aceh from 1637 to 1644, when he returned to Gujarat (d. 1658). He fiercely condemned the heterodox mysticism of Hamzah Fansuri and his followers, committing their books and even their disciples mercilessly to the flames. The number of his works is vast, in Arabic as well as in Malay. One of his many works is the Bustan al-salatin ("Garden of Kings"), "a voluminous mirror of princes in 7 vols."

* Source: H.J. de Graaf, "South-East Asian Islam to the 18th century" in the Cambridge History of Islam, vol. II, Cambridge 1970.

The last of the great mystics and the most famous was Abd al-Rauf of Singkel (just north of Barus). He was probably born soon after 1024H / 1615 and died after 1105H / 1693. In 1643 he left for Arabia, where he studied for 19 years in different places. When his teacher died in 1661, his successor gave him permission to do teaching duties himself. He then returned to Aceh where he remained active for many years. At the request of the sultan he wrote a legal work, for the purpose of which he first had to take lessons in Pasai-Malay from the Sultan's private secretary. He wrote altogether 21 works. An orthodox mystic. His fame was not confined to his native country and spread as far as Java. After his death he was venerated as a national hero, so that later he came to be regarded as the first Muslim preacher in Aceh. Thousands still visit his grave, from which he derives his name, Teunku di Kuala.

gn: what was his native lang?

See Snouck Hurgronje, Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century, p. 28⁷, for the Meccan community's opinion of the Acehnese: " one knows that their native land is distinguished from other Jawah lands by the prevalence of paederasty, and further the Achèhnese annoy all Arabs with ~~the~~ whom they come into contact by their silly idea that Achèh is one of the centres of Moslim civilisation."

~~Language~~ Relns. btwen. Acehnese and Malay: Snouck Hurgronje, Mekka, p. 264 says that the only Jawah languages wh. have been raised to the level of being a " speech of Moslim civilisation " are Javanese and Malay, in which there is " a stately row of translations from Arabic, and also compilations, commentaries, and a rich popular-religious literature, independent of the Arabic in wh. the local type of Islam ~~most~~ comes most succesfully to expression." Madurese, Makassarese and Buginese have shown themselves " as suitable garb for Islam in much less degree." p. 265: " While many Sundanese attempt to learn the highest wisdom through the medium of Javanese, others whether Achèhnese, Lampongese, people from Sumbawa etc. use Malay."