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Dayak “Jungle and River Experts” and Dutch West New Guinea Exploration, 1900-1940

Bernard Sellato¹

Abstract

The present essay is based on a non-exhaustive search through a corpus of literature on early expeditions across New Guinea. It first focuses on the images and descriptions of certain Dayak tribes from Dutch Borneo that were conveyed and circulated to the Dutch East Indies and, later, the wider Western world through books, articles, and scientific lectures that stressed the key role these tribes played in the success of the important expeditions of the turn of the twentieth century across Borneo; in a second part, on the role that teams from these same and/or related Dayak tribes, recruited steadily and *en nombre* as “jungle and river experts”, played in ensuring the success of major exploration expeditions across Dutch (western) New Guinea in the first four decades of the twentieth century; in a third part, on the “who, whence, why, etc.” of those Dayak crews, and on the rationale behind their continued appearance in New Guinea expeditions; and in a final part, on the perceptions and relations that developed amongst these expeditions’ various categories of field personnel, particularly the unanticipated affinity and alignment between the Dayak support crews and the Western senior staff.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the nineteenth century a new phase in Southeast Asian colonial history unfolded that was rooted in developments dating to the mid-eighteenth century when, by force or intimidation, Westerners gained a foothold in Borneo. Rapid intensification, after c. 1770, of the trade with China, focusing on tropical forest and marine products, sent Western sea captains scouting archipelagic Southeast Asia for opportunities to gain access to these resources, disrupted autochthonous maritime trade networks, and stirred among the region’s insular and coastal polities a growing privateering and slave-raiding activity (see Map 1). In Borneo, foreign sea merchants and adventurers tried to carve a kingdom for themselves – e.g., Alexander Hare in Banjarmasin (1812), James Erskine Murray in Kutai (1844), James Brooke (1842) and Robert Burns (1848) in Sarawak – some with more luck than others.²

The Englishman James Brooke’s success in Sarawak in the mid-nineteenth century prompted renewed Dutch interest in Borneo’s interior, and exploration started in earnest. The Dutch military confronted rebellious sultans, e.g., in the Banjarmasin War (1859-1863) and the subsequent Wangkang War (after 1870), in the south, as well as pugnacious upriver tribal groups in West Borneo, like the Ot (Uut) Danum and Tebidah (in the 1890s). The Dutch soon managed to control coastal regions and the larger rivers’ trade.

¹ Senior researcher (emeritus), Centre Asie du Sud-Est, CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), EHESS (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales), & INALCO (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales), PSL (Paris Sciences Lettres) Research University, Paris, France.

² See Andrew Smith’s article on Alexander Hare in *Borneo Research Bulletin* 44, 2013.



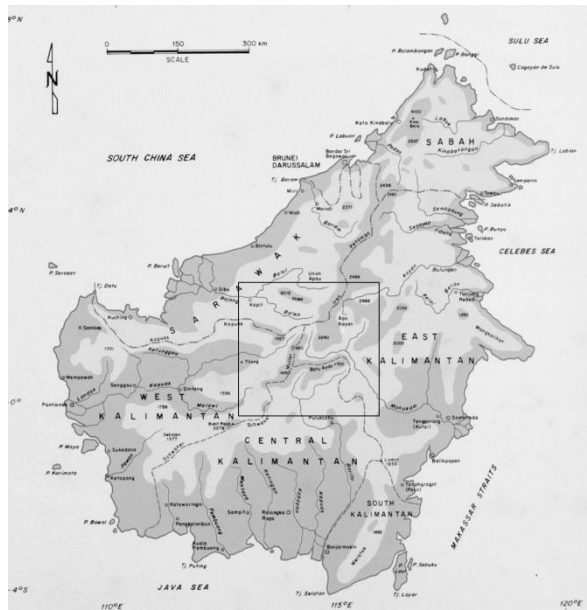
Map 1. Southeast Asia; adapted from mapsland.com, “Large scale political map of Southeast Asia with relief – 2012”.

Meanwhile, in the northwest, the Brooke Raj was expanding at the sultan of Brunei’s expense, conquering its own hinterland, and luring “friendly” Iban groups into fighting bloody wars against the powerful Kayan (e.g., the Great Kayan Expedition of 1863) and even against other, “hostile” Iban groups. In the northeast, the British settled in Labuan in 1846. In the 1850s, Hugh Low and Spencer St. John climbed Mt. Kinabalu (4,095 m), the highest peak between the Himalayas and New Guinea. The British North Borneo Chartered Company, challenged by local parties, took over in Sabah in 1881. The discovery, in the 1880s, of petroleum and coal in Borneo sealed the island’s integration into the wider world.

At some point after the mid-nineteenth century, the Dutch found that the information that had been gathered so far about Borneo – e.g., for the Kapuas, by D.W.C. Van Lijnden & J. Groll 1851, P.J. Veth 1854-1856; for the Mahakam, by H. von Dewall 1846-1849, A.L. Weddik 1849-1850; for the southern regions, by C.A.L.M. Schwaner 1853-1854 (see more in Posewitz 1892: 15-69) – was still inadequate, and they recognized that controlling coastal trade and lower river regions was no longer enough and that actual territorial control was needed, which called for the setting up of administrative and military structures, as well as of international boundaries – and the same held for Borneo’s northern territories (see Map 2).

In this new context, in the final decades of the nineteenth century, great expeditions took place, to hitherto unexplored remote regions: the upper Rajang (Hugh Brooke Low, in the 1880s), interior North Borneo (e.g., D.D. Daly, 1883-1887), the upper Baram (Charles Hose, from 1884 to 1907), the Mahakam and Barito (S.W. Tromp, 1879-1880), and the central mountain ranges dividing the Kapuas, Barito, and Mahakam drainages (G.A.F. Molengraaff and A.W. Nieuwenhuis, from 1893 onwards). By then, the Dutch had explored and occupied most of the Kapuas drainage, in the west, defeated the sultan of Banjarmasin, in the south, and forced trade contracts on the coastal sultans, in the east. This also marked the end of all major armed conflicts. The year 1894 was that of the Dutch-brokered peace-making meeting that brought together about thirty interior Dayak groups to Tumbang Anoi in the upper Kahayan River, in southern Borneo – an earlier peace meeting was held in 1885 in Kapit, Sarawak, between local Iban groups and the upper Mahakam “Kayan” and

Pieng (Aoheng)³.



Map 2. Borneo; source: Sellato 1989: 6; showing, in the center, the Müller Mts. and the upper reaches of the island's major rivers.

More exploration was to follow in the new century's first decade – concerning Dutch Borneo: S.C. Knappert in the Mahakam basin, J.J.K. Enthoven in the Kapuas basin, J.J. Stolk on the Busang River, E.W.F. Van Walchren in the upper Kayan – and more again until, in the 1930s, the whole of Borneo's interior had come under foreign powers' actual territorial control, with the exception of a much reduced sultanate of Brunei.

The great Dutch expeditions of the turn of the twentieth century across Borneo combined political and military goals, especially mapping and pacification (later to be known as *Pax neerlandica*), as well as medical assistance, with scientific and economic goals, especially surveying natural (mineral and vegetal) resources, and reporting on the local population and their languages and cultures, since these were to be administered. While technical personnel, on assignment from museums in Java, were in charge of collecting minerals, fauna, and flora, an "ethnologist" was added to the expeditions' staff.

2. DUTCH BORNEO EXPLORERS AND "THEIR" DAYAK

Nearing the turn of the twentieth century, the Dutch successively organized three important expeditions to traverse the island's central region, with the twin purpose of exploring unknown areas and connecting, across the central water divide, the farthest location under Dutch control (Nanga Bungan) on the upper Kapuas River, in the west, to the last village (Lirung Tika) up the Mahakam River that Dutch officials had by then been able to reach, in the east (Hubrecht 1894: 307), and their planned involvement in the latter region's affairs (*ibid.*: 309). Solco Walle Tromp, the *resident* (a high administrative officer under the Ministry of the Interior) of West Borneo, was well aware of the importance of controlling the narrow corridor between the drainages of the 1,143-km-long Kapuas River, the 980-km Mahakam, and the 890-km Barito (Nieuwenhuis

³ Pieng is the name by which Iban groups refer to the Aoheng of the upper reaches of the Mahakam River. Other exonyms – Penihing and alternative versions (Panihing, Pnihing, Penhing, etc.) – are used by Kayan, Busang, and related groups of the Mahakam, while Piheng is the name used by the Kenyah (see Sellato 1986: 290-293, 1992).

1898; see Map 2), adjacent to the Rajang River (563 km long), in the north, and of holding in check the Brooke Raj's suspected contemplation of a southward expansion of Sarawak's possessions or, at least, its clear inclination to encourage its tribal populations to collect forest products beyond its southern and eastern water divides.

This region of the watershed between Kapuas and Mahakam is one of the most remote areas of Borneo. In the upper Mahakam, a region isolated from the low plains by dangerous rapids, the Kayan-Mahakam, the Busang (Uma' Suling and others sub-groups), and the Long-Gelat (one of the Modang subgroups) occupied the rare and narrow plains, while the Aoheng and Seputan inhabited the mountain range's eastern foothills. In the upper Kapuas, the small market town of Putussibau was surrounded by Senganan (Moslems), Taman, and Kayan villages with, farther upstream, a couple of Aoheng and Semukung hamlets. In-between, the mountains, reaching up to almost 2,000 m a.s.l., were inhabited by nomadic Bukat and Kereho (Punan Keriau) and semi-nomadic Hovongan (Punan Bungan). The first explorer to reach and cross this mountain range, Major Georg Müller (1770-1825), did not live to recount his travels, but his name lives on (see, e.g., Helbig 1941): When Nieuwenhuis crossed it from the Kapuas to the Mahakam, almost seventy years later, he gave it the name of Müller Mts.

While the northern end of the Müller Mts. gives easy access from the sources of both the Kapuas and Mahakam to the upper course of Sarawak's Baleh River and, from there, to the Rajang River, its southern part opens to the upper tributaries of the Barito River, particularly the Busang River, which long remained uncharted territory, until J.J. Stolk traveled up its brutal rapids in 1905 to cross over to the upper Mahakam (Stolk 1907).

2.1. The First Expedition (Van Velthuisen & Molengraaff, 1893-1894)

This first, multidisciplinary expedition included J. Büttikofer, from the National Museum for Natural History in Leiden, for zoology; J.G. Hallier, from the Botanical Gardens in Buitenzorg (Bogor), for botany; G. Molengraaff, for geology; and A.W. Nieuwenhuis, as a medical officer, also in charge of physical anthropology and ethnography. Van Velthuisen, *controleur* (district officer) for the upper Kapuas, was to lead the expedition, which included, besides Nieuwenhuis and Molengraaff, an escort of nineteen East Indies soldiers, as well as 85 Kayan Dayak from the Mendalam River as boatmen and porters. They departed with 24 canoes on 15 June 1894.

The expedition walked into the Mahakam drainage but, hearing that preparations were being made for a hostile reception by the tribes ahead, it turned back the next day. While Molengraaff, making both geologic and ethnographic observations, went to the Melawi River, then south across the Schwaner Mts. to the Katingan River and down to Banjarmasin, Nieuwenhuis settled among the Kayan of the Mendalam River for two months. Since these Kayan were on friendly terms with other Kayan groups on the upper Mahakam, he viewed them as the key to the realization of his endeavors. He made them promise to take him across the watershed, which they agreed to do on the condition that there would be no armed escort. In September, chief Akam Igau of the Kayan Uma' Aging at the village of Tanjung Karang, went to Pontianak to pledge to the *resident* his assistance to Nieuwenhuis' eastbound expedition (Van Goor 1995: 223).

While it should be made clear here that the details of the contractual agreement, not central to this study, for the recruitment of these Kayan have not been thoroughly explored, they must have been negotiated between the administration, based on current official standard wages, rations, and benefits for commandeered labor, and the headmen acting on behalf of their men (more on this, *passim*, below).

2.2. The Kapuas-Mahakam Expeditions (A.W. Nieuwenhuis, 1896-1897 & 1898-1899)

Let me first introduce briefly Nieuwenhuis (Fig. 1), an early and foremost promoter of hinterland Dayak people and their “jungle and river” expertise (on his life and works, see Sellato 1993, 1994a).



Fig. 1. A.W. Nieuwenhuis, 1896; source: Nieuwenhuis 1900, I: Frontispiece.

Anton Willem Nieuwenhuis (1864-1953), born in the Netherlands, took his doctoral degree in medicine in 1890 from Albert-Ludwigs University in Freiburg-im-Breisgau, Germany. In 1891-92, he was stationed in West Borneo, as a medical officer in the service of the Dutch East Indies Army, when S.W. Tromp, an old Borneo hand and the newly appointed West Borneo *resident*, initiated with the relevant committee and funding agency the scientific exploration of central Borneo. Thanks to his experience in the 1893-94 expedition and his acquaintance with the Kayan, Nieuwenhuis was appointed leader of the 1896-97 expedition and its sequel in 1898-99. He finally carried out in 1900 an extra leg of his expedition, visiting the Apo Kayan high plateau, to the north of the Mahakam, and its Kenyah inhabitants.

Nieuwenhuis returned to the Netherlands in 1901, traveled through Europe, made plans to sail again to the East Indies but never did (Vogel 1954: 119b). In 1904 he was appointed professor to a chair in “Geography and ethnology of the Netherlands Indies” at the University of Leiden, a position from which he retired in 1934. Nieuwenhuis died in Leiden in 1953, leaving a number of scientific works. One obituary, focusing on his adventurous pioneer expeditions, dubbed him “a Borneo Livingstone” (Smythies 1955: 493; see also Bertling 1953) and, eventually, the mountain range between the Baleh River of Sarawak and the upper Kapuas was given the name of Nieuwenhuis Mts.

2.2.1. The 1896-1897 Expedition

After a brief posting as a medical officer in Lombok in 1894, Nieuwenhuis returned to Batavia in 1895 and to Pontianak in early 1896. A second expedition was organized, with F. von Berchtold, for zoology, and J. Demmeni (1866-1939), as topographer and photographer (see his photo work in Nieuwenhuis’ *In Centraal Borneo*, 1900). Nieuwenhuis stayed another two months with the Kayan

to gain a better command of their language and learn the closely related Busang lingua franca of the upper Mahakam.

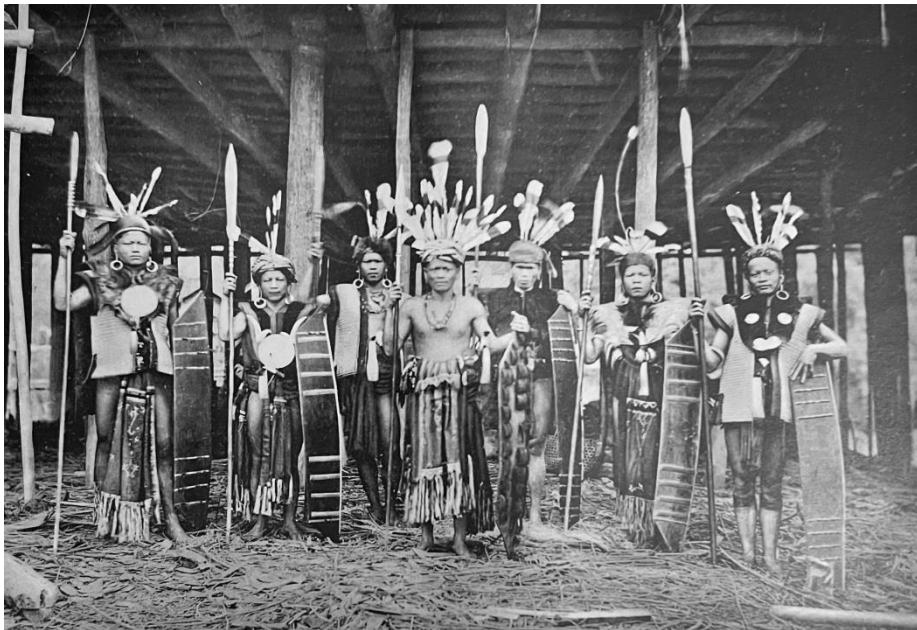


Fig. 2. Kayan warriors, upper Mahakam, with chief Bang Kueng (Kueng Irang's eldest son), center; photo: J. Demmeni; source: Nieuwenhuis 1904-1907, I: plate 23.

The expedition started in July 1896 from Putussibau with twelve canoes and fifty Kayan boatmen. After crossing over into the Mahakam, the party resided first with the Aoheng, then with the Kayan at Long Blu'u (Fig. 2), and spent some eight months on the upper Mahakam, exploring a number of its tributaries. The Kayan from the Mendalam and their chief Akam Igau played an important role in the favorable course of events. In fact, Nieuwenhuis had just landed in the midst of a complex global/local political-economic situation – a vicious struggle for better access to valuable forest products – in which the main stakeholders soon realized how they could use him as a new political tool available to them. Clearly, without Akam's help, Nieuwenhuis would never have succeeded. On the eastern side of the watershed, the part played by Kwing (Kueng) Irang (1840-1901), chief of the upper Mahakam Kayan, coordinating action with Akam, also was instrumental.

Kueng Irang, aware that the powerful Dutch could become his trump card in the local politics (Nieuwenhuis 1904-1907, II: 504), asked Nieuwenhuis, "on behalf of all the Mahakam groups," to petition the Dutch to take direct control of the region. Nieuwenhuis could not have been happier. On his return to Batavia, he convinced government officials to fund a third expedition, to explore ways and means of extending Dutch rule to the upper Mahakam region and, farther north, the Apo Kayan plateau, "to establish peace and security" (see also Lumenta 2017).

2.2.2. The 1898-1899 Expedition

This new expedition, thus, had mainly political aims, while the same ethno-sociological and medical goals were maintained. Again, it was led by Nieuwenhuis and included J. Demmeni and J.P.J. Barth, a *controleur* who had studied the Busang language. Leaving from Putussibau in August 1898, with 25 local canoes, Akam Igau and 110 men, mainly Kayan, and an armed escort of five East Indies soldiers, it reached the first settlement on the Mahakam in late September,

having run short of food in the mountains, when the famous “rice equation” went wrong.⁴

Nieuwenhuis and his team spent eight months in the upper Mahakam area, studying the people, their customs and languages, the animals and plants, and climbing peaks for mapping (Fig. 3). Among other things, they produced a map of the region and composed a Busang-Dutch dictionary (Barth 1910). Collections of material culture were also gathered, now to be found in Leiden.



Fig. 3. The 1898-1900 Expedition personnel at Long Bagun, Upper Mahakam, May 1899; photo: J. Demmeni; source: Nieuwenhuis 1904-1907, I: plate 1.

The expedition left Kueng’s village, Long Blu’u, in April 1899 and went down the Mahakam, to reach Samarinda in early June. Nieuwenhuis set off again very soon for Long Blu’u, accompanied by several team members and five young Malay soldiers. From there, he made a key trip to the sources of the Mahakam, to map the area of the international border with Sarawak.

Nieuwenhuis’ trip to the Apo Kayan plateau, scheduled for 1900, proved a lengthy endeavor. As the representative of the colonial government, he paid a formal visit to the sultan of Kutai, who objected to this trip. From November 1899 till March 1900, he had to wait, mostly at Long Blu’u, for ongoing official talks with Kutai to reach a favorable conclusion. In May 1900, Nieuwenhuis positioned his party in an advanced camp at Long Boh, and in June, at last, he received notice that the upper Mahakam region had been formally placed under direct Dutch rule, with J. Barth to be installed at Long Iram as its first *controleur*.

2.3. The Apo Kayan Expedition (A.W. Nieuwenhuis, 1900)

On August 6th the expedition finally set off from Long Boh with Kueng Irang, entered Apo Kayan in late August, and remained there about two months, before crossing back to the Boh River. Much information was collected on the Kenyah people of the upper Kayan River and their history.

⁴ The “rice equation”, indeed a famous classic among explorers and travelers (including myself in my geologic exploration days), refers to a sophisticated computation of figures, including the number of expedition members, the number of porters assigned to the transport of food supplies, the number of days away from any source of rice procurement, the daily rice ration (750 gr.), and the porters’ average payload (25 kg); when it “goes wrong”, for whatever reason (often a capsized canoe), you run short of food and must keep on walking on gradually reduced rations or starve in the middle of nowhere. The limit of this rice-equation exercise is reached when the number of days is such that, whatever the number of porters, they cannot even carry their own food.

Routinely harassed by Iban headhunting raids from Sarawak, the Kenyah were quite receptive to Nieuwenhuis' offer of Dutch protection against the sultan of Kutai, but worried that it may annoy the Rajah Brooke. They asked Nieuwenhuis to write to him. Charles Brooke, the second rajah, who had long tried to persuade these Kenyah to migrate into Sarawak, replied that, since Nieuwenhuis was already there, Apo Kayan was no longer a concern of his (Lumenta 2010: 197, 2017:17).

The expedition, starting back down the Boh River in November, reached Batavia on December 31st, 1900. In view of his successful journey to confirm Dutch control over two regions of Borneo's hinterland, Nieuwenhuis was appointed the government's counselor for Borneo affairs.

A few years later (1903), *controleur* E.W.F. van Walchren went from the east coast up to Apo Kayan, where he remained six months. He went again in 1906 to settle an internecine feud among the Kenyah, and was followed there by Capt. L.S. Fischer in 1907 (see Fischer & Gramberg 1910).

2.4. The Nieuwenhuis Expeditions: Output and Significance

Nieuwenhuis' expeditions fulfilled their political goals by making headway toward demarcating an international border with Sarawak and establishing a *Pax neerlandica* in these central regions plagued by tribal wars and headhunting raids (see Nieuwenhuis 1902). Moreover, officers appointed to upper river district posts supervised trade activities. The expeditions produced maps of regions hitherto untraveled, and gathered important zoological, botanical, and geological collections, and scores of scientific publications based on their observations and collections subsequently appeared. Nieuwenhuis' (1906) own medical observations, showing that smallpox and cholera epidemics, diffusing up the rivers from the coasts, were common, often killing over one-fourth of the population of an infected village, and that chronic malaria and syphilis were rampant in all regions visited, caught the government's attention, and it soon established local medical stations with traveling medics. This contributed to the founding in the Netherlands of a Tropical Medicine Institute (see Jaelani 2017).

Despite his lack of formal training in ethnology, Nieuwenhuis' remarkable corpus of ethnographic data from both the Kapuas and Mahakam areas, along with the vast ethnographic collections he gathered, ranks among the most valuable ever concerning the interior of Borneo, and remains a major and reliable source of information on the local Dayak groups' cultures and history, thanks to his two books, *In Centraal Borneo* (ICB, 1900) and *Quer durch Borneo* (QdB, 1904-1907; "a truly monumental work", Smythies 1955: 494). Jean Demmeni's large photographic portfolio, rated among the best of his time and place (Groeneveld *et al.* 1989), stands as an invaluable testimony to the majesty and beauty of the great tropical forest and rivers of Borneo and to the lives and rich traditional cultures of the free Dayak tribes of old.

On a more subjective level, the ways in which Nieuwenhuis reported on his Dayak associates is also revealing of his respectful approach to and genuine empathy with the native population, possibly attendant on both his medical background and his interest in their cultures. Although, as a standard product of his time and education, he held typical notions of "high" and "low" levels of civilization, as well as of the western colonial powers' humanitarian duties toward the primitive tribal peoples they were predestined to administer, Nieuwenhuis developed with certain individuals personal relationships – his close connection with Akam Igau and Kueng Irang, the Kayan chieftains in west and east Borneo, is fairly well documented in his 1900 book – which, beside their converging political interests and purposes, were based on trust and proved to be an essential element in the success of his expeditions. His writings stress that those wild, bloodthirsty headhunters are, at heart, the world's most gentle, peaceful, and considerate people

(Nieuwenhuis 1904-1907, I: 3). As for Demmeni, born an *Indo* boy (an East Indies term for a mixed-blood person) and raised in an Indies home, he clearly had, as a professional photographer, an “Indo sensitivity” toward local people (see Haks & Zach 1987) and certainly also became personally engaged with the Dayak and their culture and daily life, which his job it was to document. Both Nieuwenhuis and he came to highly value those Dayak they worked with.

Back home, with his European lecturing tour, multilingual articles, and the publication of two major books (1900, 1904-1907), Nieuwenhuis had established himself as *the* reference in the Western world on Dutch central Borneo’s peoples and their cultures (see, e.g., Firmino n.d.) – comparable to Charles Hose on eastern Sarawak peoples and for an English readership (Hose 1894, Hose & McDougall 1912). Based on his personal acquaintance and experience with two high Dayak chiefs, who had greatly facilitated his three expeditions, Nieuwenhuis’ explicit high praise for the Kayan and related ethnic groups in central Borneo and for their “jungle and river skills”, efficacy, reliability, and loyalty, contributed strongly, albeit indirectly, to their promotion and reputation among East Indies civil and military parties and agencies engaged in exploration.

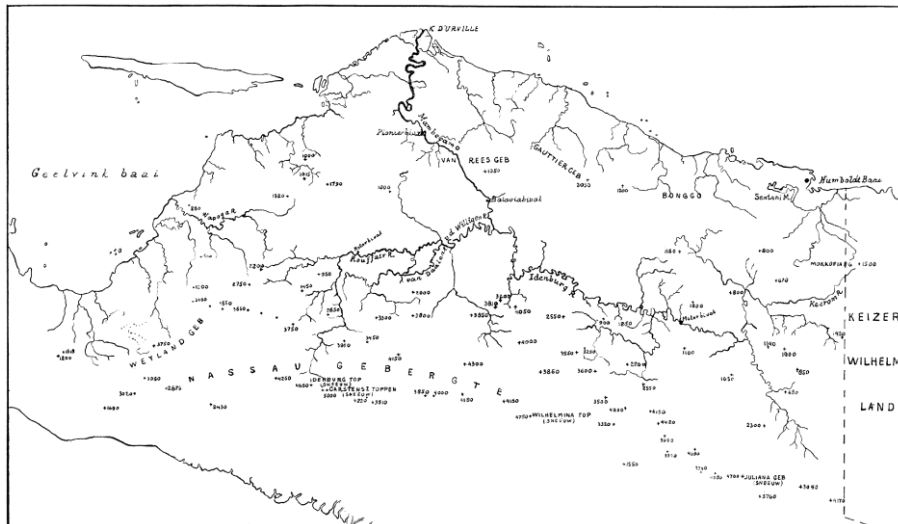
3. BEYOND BORNEO: DAYAK IN NEW GUINEA (1900-1940)

The following pages are not intended to offer a meticulous review of the exploration history of western New Guinea – the Dutch East Indies’ “outermost Outer District” (Ploeg 1995: 22) – which is by no means my area of expertise (see Map 3). As the reader will soon be aware, Papuans – a blanket name for the native inhabitants of this half of the island – are mostly either absent from these pages or referred to as an abstract collective entity. Without much concern for the expeditions’ political, military, or scientific goals, funding arrangements, decision-making processes, and field organization, or for their local social and cultural setting and their findings, attention is rather narrowly focused on the presence and role of Dayak crews recruited from Dutch Borneo’s hinterland to be attached to New Guinea expeditions as “coolies”, but really and specifically for their “jungle and river skills”, an expertise assumed to be an essential asset and a key to success in New Guinea’s rough terrain, dense tropical forests, and treacherous rivers. In an unexpected carryover effect of Nieuwenhuis’ Borneo expeditions and publications, Dayak crews promptly became first-choice field support to many major expeditions over a period of almost four decades. How did this come about?



Map 3. Western New Guinea, Irian Jaya; adapted from John Bartholomew & Son Ltd, “Asia, South-East”, Edinburgh, 1975.

Following the Dutch Navy’s early exploration voyages meant to survey New Guinea’s coastlines and estuaries (see Robidé van der Aa 1879), expeditions to the western part of the island from the late nineteenth century onward strove to penetrate its land mass from all directions, explore and map major river catchment areas and, as soon as possible, reach the legendary “snowy central highlands” (first sighted by Dutch navigator Jan Carstenszoon in 1623), a set of parallel high mountain ranges stretching out roughly east-west, where all rivers were believed to have their sources (Schumacher 1954: 33-36; see Map 4).



Map 4. Dutch New Guinea’s northern coast and the Mamberamo River’s drainage; source: Langelier & Doorman 1918: 143; river and mountain names are mostly period Dutch names and elevations are approximates.

In the north, several, mainly marine, expeditions (1883-1884, 1899-1900, 1906) sailed up the estuaries of large rivers flowing to the north coast, especially the Mamberamo, Dutch New Guinea’s largest river, along which they were only able to reach Havik Island (Schumacher 1954: 48; *Militaire Exploratie* 1920: 12, 63). Heavier, more land-oriented military expeditions were to follow, starting in 1907. In the west, including around the Vogelkop (Bird’s Head)

region, other rivers were explored from 1901 onward. In the south, by the end of 1900, the Merauke River expedition was on its way, and more exploration was carried out in the southwest after 1904. New Guinea, like Borneo, shared outsized island territories with another colonial power, and its large-scale military exploration was prompted by governor-general J.B. Van Heutsz (1904-1909) and his adjutant Hendrikus Colijn (later Prime Minister; see Colijn 1937), to strengthen Dutch colonial rule over the “Outer Areas”.

3.1. The Wichmann Expedition (1903)

The Wichmann Expedition (February-August 1903) set out to explore the island’s northwest coast in search of coal. Its leader, German geologist C.E.A. Wichmann (1851-1927), was assisted by military physician and ethnographer G.A.J. van de Sande, zoologist L.F. de Beaufort, H.A. Lorentz, and J.M. Dumas (*Papua Erfgoed* 2021a). Hendrikus Albertus Lorentz (1871-1944), the son of a tobacco planter in Java, had met Wichmann in the Netherlands, and was about to begin a famous, though brief, explorer’s career in New Guinea (below). The expedition ship *Zeemeeuw* (“Sea Gull”), captain Jan Willem van Nouhuys (1869-1963), served to explore the north coast, especially the Geelvink and Humboldt bay areas. Van Nouhuys later took part in the two South New Guinea Expeditions led by H.A. Lorentz, in 1907 and 1909.

Johannes (or Joannes) Maximiliaan Dumas (1856-1931) was an important, though little-known, bird collector, with an extensive experience in Dutch New Guinea. He was identified as an “Eurasian from the Dutch Indies”, who owned land in North Borneo (now Sabah?) and made use of his Dayak “tenants” as “field assistants” for his travels, mostly in New Guinea. Alfred Hart Everett, a naturalist of Sarawak fame and later Brooke Raj official, mentioned Dumas as his own assistant in southern Celebes in 1895, as well as the three Borneo men accompanying him (LeCroy & Jansen 2011: 172, 174; Versteeg 2020b: *passim* & 319). In 1900, Dumas was on the Mamberamo River on one of his private bird collecting trips with thirty of his own Dayak helpers, when Wichmann met and recruited him to facilitate his 1903 expedition. Dumas reportedly spoke various local languages and could communicate with the indigenous peoples – he eventually published a Mimika vocabulary. He also helped carry out a challenging overland trip to Lake Sentani (LeCroy & Jansen 2011: 178-179, 184). It may be noted that linguist J.S.A. van Dissel carried out in 1902 an official linguistic and ethnographic survey in the Fakfak area, with a military escort and Dayak porters (Van Dissel 1904).

Based on his experience of jungle life in New Guinea, Dumas suggested that Wichmann’s expedition should hire Dayak men from Borneo, to work as canoe crew, porters, field scouts, and handymen (*Papua Erfgoed* 2021a). Unfortunately, the thirty assumed *Dajakkers* who had been recruited from Banjarmasin proved to be a gang of worthless drifters from all over the East Indies, rather than true Dayak, which obviously made Lorentz utterly frustrated (Lorentz 1905: 3-4). Dumas remained attached to the South New Guinea Expeditions from 1908 to 1912 (he even had a river named after him; Schumacher 1954: 54, 62). As a surveyor and naturalist, he was part of the 1910 Otakwa River expedition, led by Capt. J.J. van der Bie, which took along twenty Dayak from North Borneo, certainly Dumas’ own men, but failed, unfortunately, to cross the island. A.F.R. Wollaston, a zoologist with the BOU’s (British Ornithologists’ Union) 1910-1911 scientific expedition that picked up the exhausted Dutch detachment, was particularly impressed by the Dayak’s “fine physical appearance and industriousness” – as well as by the three cassowary eggs brought by Dumas, which hatched aboard the ship (LeCroy & Jansen 2011: 182; see also Ballard 2001). He wrote: “[...] the only people who have hitherto worked successfully as coolies in Dutch New Guinea are the hill-Dayaks of Borneo. [...] it may be said

that an expedition to the mountainous districts [...] can only be properly conducted with Dayaks” (Wollaston 1912: 172).

It appears, therefore, that the initiative to make use of Dayak crew in zoological exploration in Dutch New Guinea may have originated with Dumas, in 1900 or possibly even before, on the rather small scale of his private bird collecting expeditions, before permeating through the major official expeditions of the next phase of Dutch overland exploration, starting in 1907: the so-called “military expeditions”, which involved military squads, known as Detachments South New Guinea, West New Guinea, North New Guinea, and Mamberamo Basin (Schumacher 1954: 42-55). Such expeditions usually relied on Dutch officers and East Indies soldiers and on convicts or forced laborers procured from prisons in Java as porters, in both the north – the Mamberamo Expeditions – and south – the South New Guinea (henceforth SNG) Expeditions. They came to make use of Dayak crews.

3.2. Lorentz’s South New Guinea Expeditions (1907 & 1909-1910)

After his 1903 experience under Arthur Wichmann’s leadership, H.A. Lorentz himself (1913: 2-3) makes clear that, for his second expedition (May-October 1907), starting from the island’s south coast and known as the First SNG Expedition, he intended to recruit Dayak crews. This, once again, proved difficult. Although Dumas desperately tried, in Singapore and Malacca, to recruit sixty Dayak coolies “well versed in forest life” and procure eight good Dayak canoes, the expedition had to make do with a collection of coastal Malays from Sarawak and Banjarmasin and a gang of Javanese from Gresik, and Lorentz’s plan failed miserably, as neither the seventy-odd coolies nor the boats lived up to expectations – not to mention the sixty convicts (Versteeg 2020b: 6, 9, 10, 16, 18, 26, 46). Despite a few “better forest elements” in that poor assortment (Versteeg 2020b: 196), the expedition up the Noord River, due to illness, casualties, and “lack of vivres” (Rouffaer 1908: 143), could only reach the foothills of the central Sneeuwgebergte (Snowy Mts.; see also Schumacher 1954: 62).

For his next expedition, the Second SNG Expedition, in 1909-1910 (see Schumacher 1954: 62-65), in order to better cope with the thick jungle, incessant rains, and testing rivers, and strongly impressed by Dumas’ own men and Nieuwenhuis’ appreciative comments in his books, Lorentz (1913: xii, 2-3) was more resolute than ever about recruiting a large team of Dayak carriers and paddlers. In the developing Dutch-British competition dubbed the “Race to the Snow” (Ballard *et al.* 2001), it was now considered a national objective to pre-empt the BOU expedition (above), which meant to reach these mountains from the south (Schumacher 1954: 49, Mangel 1993: 13).

As he wanted “to negotiate with various Dayak tribes”, he went himself to Borneo, first to Banjarmasin, then to Bulungan, and was lucky, in May 1909 in Tanjung Selor, to meet Lt. Dick Habbema (1880-?), who had just returned from “darkest Borneo”’s hinterland (Habbema 1910: 578). He entrusted Habbema with recruiting Dayak coolies for him in the eastern region, and went himself to West Borneo to recruit some of those Kayan of the upper Kapuas, among whom Nieuwenhuis had lived for some time in the 1890s. He had written to Nieuwenhuis, who replied that he doubted Dayak coolies could be procured for a New Guinea expedition (Habbema 1910: 580). However, while Habbema was finding it difficult to persuade upriver Dayak to undertake travel by sea, Lorentz was fortunate enough to be able to recruit 66 Kayan men (and five Malays) in West Borneo, so Habbema only had to recruit sixteen Kenyah men (Lorentz 1913: 3-4; Habbema 1910: 578-581; also Schumacher 1954: 63). Expedition reports, indeed, mention that Dayak were initially hired from both the Western Division of Borneo and eastern Borneo’s Bulungan region (*Militaire Expeditie* 1920: 104). Furthermore, Lorentz managed to persuade

Habbema to be his expedition's military commander and had him transferred "on account of his knowledge of the Dyaks" (*Cyclopedia* 1950: 209).

So, Lorentz brought in this team of 82 Dayak men, to help him deal with the wild waters and deep forests of the Noord River (later renamed the Lorentz River), in another attempt to reach the Snowy mountain range and its highest peak known then, Mt. Wilhelmina (now, Mt. Trikora, 4,730 m). He also brought two Kayan longboats, purchased in the Mendalam River villages, which he planned to put to immediate use upon arrival in New Guinea (Lorentz 1913: 24). While government officials found it quite hilarious to employ Borneo headhunters to pay a visit to New Guinea headhunters (Souter 1963, cited in Mangen 1993: 15), the expedition was successful and, on November 8th, Lorentz and Van Nouhuys, followed by five Dayak, reached the snow field area, measured at 15,125 feet a.s.l. (4,610 m). The return trip proved to be "a series of misadventures" (*sic*; Lorentz 1911b: 838), delicately thus referring to fatalities: One porter and one soldier died of exhaustion, one Dayak froze to death, and Lorentz himself fell and broke two ribs (Mangen 1993: 15; Van Duuren & Vink 2011: 69). But striking photographs of Dayak on snow-covered slopes could be circulated (Fig. 4) and Habbema had a lake named after him, close to Mt. Trikora and to Lorentz National Park.



Fig. 4. Two Dayak porters at the top of Mt. Wilhelmina (Mt. Trikora); Third South New Guinea Expedition, February 1913; photo: P.F. Hubrecht; source: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen / Tropenmuseum (photo ref. TM-10009311).

Meanwhile, the first British expedition (1910-1911), led by zoologist W. Goodfellow, on the Mimika River, also from the south coast but to the west of Lorentz's own, met with extremely tough conditions, and the losses from accident and illness were high: During the first year, twelve per cent of the total work force perished (Lorentz 1911b: 843). Summing up this expedition's final results, its military commander Capt. Rawling declared: "From experience, and our heavy death-roll will bear me out, I have no hesitation in saying, firstly, that the land is an impossible one to any but a Papuan; and secondly, that, unless most carefully picked, no native of the East Indies, with the exception of the Dayak from Borneo, are of the slightest value as carriers in South Dutch New Guinea" (Lorentz 1911b: 844; see also Rawling 1913). Another British expedition, under Dr. Wollaston's leadership, was carried out in 1912-1913 (see Ballard 2001).

With Lorentz and his 1909-1910 Expedition, "standards" were established for later New Guinea expeditions. As later scholars wrote (Van Duuren & Vink 2011: 48): "The complete expedition team", from then on, was expected to consist of "a handful of researchers, a contingent of Indonesian [*sic*; mainly Ambonese] soldiers, Dayak woodsmen from Borneo and convicted

prison labourers [...] to carry the equipment”. Then, they added, “the expedition members forged further upstream in proas [canoes] that had been hollowed out inside by the Dayak” (*id.*).

3.3. The Mamberamo Expeditions (1909-1915)

While H.A. Lorentz was involved in his Second SNG Expedition and reaching Mt. Wilhelmina’s snow field, another expedition, the first of a new series, was launched on the Mamberamo River, on the north coast, first, in late 1909, by ship under (Navy) Lt. F.L. Rambonnet, followed, in January-May 1910, by an inland military detachment under Capt. Franssen Herderschee (*Militaire Exploratie* 1920: 62-65, 431; see Map 4).

Alphons Franssen Herderschee (1872-1932; Van Duuren & Vink 2011), born in Banjarmasin (Versteeg 2020a, 2: 234; A. Ploeg, pers. comm., October 2021), was a captain in the Army’s Topographic Service. The expedition’s transport was to be provided by 80 forced laborers, 65 Dayak canoe crew, and twenty Batak and/or Toraja porters. An old Borneo hand was part of the adventure: Jean Demmeni, ten years after his assignment to Nieuwenhuis’ Borneo expeditions, was attached, as an adjutant-non-commissioned officer photographer (*Militaire Exploratie* 1920: 12), to this 1910 expedition; another of his responsibilities was to accompany and act as “mentor to the Dayak coolies” (*Nationaal Herbarium* 2021a).

These Dayak, brought over from east Borneo to work as canoe crew and porters, were listed as “free coolies” (as opposed to “forced laborers”). They probably were influential in the decision to give the name Kutai to the first staging camp (*bivak*) the expedition [or they themselves] built on the Mamberamo River (*Militaire Exploratie* 1920: 63). The expedition left Surabaya on 31 October 1909 and returned there on 22 May 1910, but Demmeni spent only a few months (January-April) on the Mamberamo (*Militaire Exploratie* 1920: 12, 62-65).



Fig. 5. Dayak canoe crew resting at Bandung Camp, on the Mamberamo River, c. 1913; source: Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen/ Tropenmuseum (photo ref. KITLV 174886).

Dayak crews were attached to subsequent expeditions along the Mamberamo (see Fig. 5). In the expedition led by (Navy) Lt. J.T.J. de Wal (1911), the Dayak amounted to thirty men. And that led by Capt. J.V.L. Oppermann (1913-1915) comprised a military force of some 150 with nine

officers, 240 forced laborers, 130 coastal (Biak) Papuans (as canoe paddlers), as well as forty Dayak (as canoe makers, bivouac builders, and river transport crew) under chief Anyi' Ipui. Originally a *protégé* of Dick Habbema's, as it appears, Anyi' Ipui was a Kenyah Uma' Alim from the Pujungan, a tributary of the Bahau (Habbema 1910: 593-594), and had been recruited by the *controleur* of Bulungan (Langelier & Doorman 1918). It was by then common knowledge already that expeditions to New Guinea were well advised to recruit Dayak paddlers in eastern Borneo, as they were both very capable and safe canoe crew in rapid-ridden rivers and quite reliable in all other everyday tasks.

3.4. The Third South New Guinea Expedition (1912-1913)

The Third SNG Expedition (September 1912 to April 1913), led by the same Capt. Franssen Herderschee, previously from the Mamberamo, targeted the summit of Mt. Wilhelmina. It included Lt. Gerard Versteeg (1876-1943), a physician, whose diaries have been recently released by his grandson, Anton Versteeg (Versteeg 2020a; and see *Papua Erfgoed* 2021b). The lines below about the expedition's Dayak crews are *pro parte* excerpted from Dr. Anton Ploeg's excellent review of Versteeg's 2020a publication (Ploeg 2020, 2022).

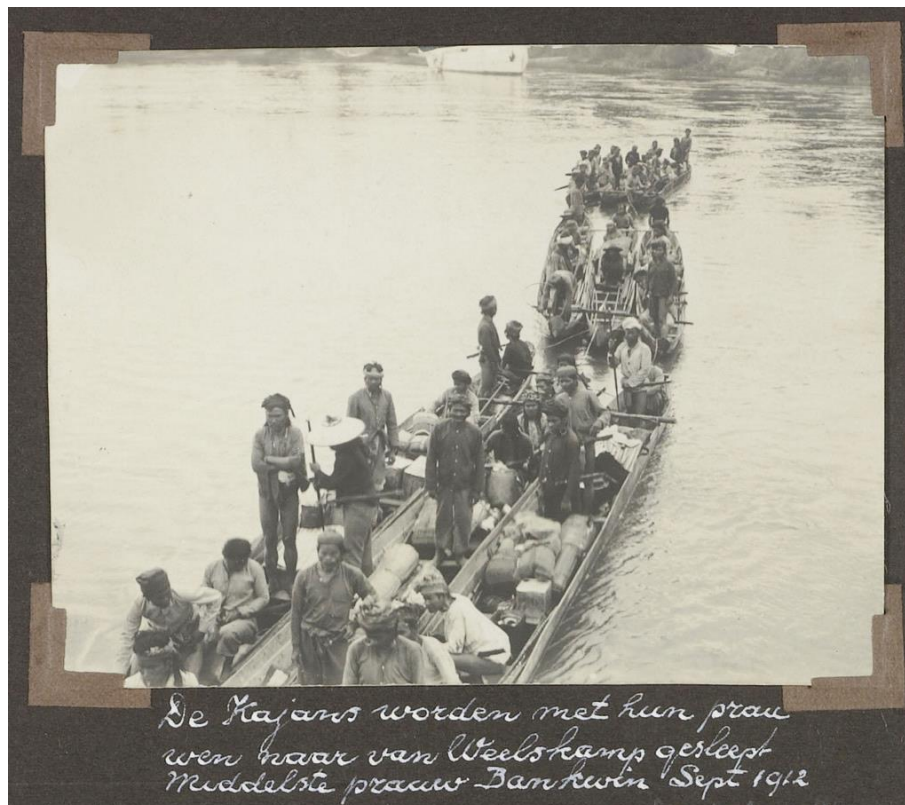


Fig. 6. Third South New Guinea Expedition; Kayan Dayak of the Upper Mahakam and their canoes, September 1912; elderly chief Bang Kueng standing, middle of front canoe; photo: G.M. Versteeg; source: Kerncollectie Fotografie (photo ref. RV-A102-1-387), Museum voor Volkenkunde, Leiden.

Apart from a squad of 26 soldiers and 40 convicts, a total of 149 Dayak were attached to the expedition (Versteeg 2020a, 1: 48-49, 2: 203), and employed as canoe and bridge builders, as well as carriers and handymen. These Kayan and Kenyah Dayak, “experts in jungle crafts”, had been recruited “in two parts of Borneo” (Fig. 6), and some had been part of one of Lorentz's previous expeditions. Botanist August Pulle, a member of the expedition, wrote about the climbers' joy when they finally reached the snow-covered summit, in February 1913, and about “the Dayak going in for a snow ball fight” (Pulle n.d.: 168, cited in Ploeg 2020; Van Duuren &

Vink 2011: 72; Staal 1913). As his diary suggests, Versteeg may have been, at first, rather skeptical about the Dayak's worth; as the expedition progressed, however, his appreciation for the Kayan, these "peculiar" people, increased markedly (Versteeg 2020a, 1: 25; Ploeg 2020: 3-4). (On this expedition, see also Schumacher 1954: 65-66, slightly differing from Versteeg on minor points.)

3.5. Dayak in New Guinea Expeditions in the 1920s and 1930s

The start of the First World War had halted "normal" exploration work in Dutch New Guinea, to make room for specific economic exploration, especially for mineral and hydrocarbon resources (Schumacher 1954: 77), and the year 1915 thus had ushered in a third phase in the history of expeditions to West New Guinea, in which geologists had the lead part. (Information on the presence of Dayak crews in such expeditions may be available in geologic reports, which I have not examined.) In the early 1920s, broader-spectrum scientific exploration resumed, with emphasis on, among other topics and goals, natural history and ethnography. Dayak crews remain popular with New Guinea expeditions till the eve of the Second World War. The pages below only refer to a selected few from among the post-1920 expeditions that made use of them.

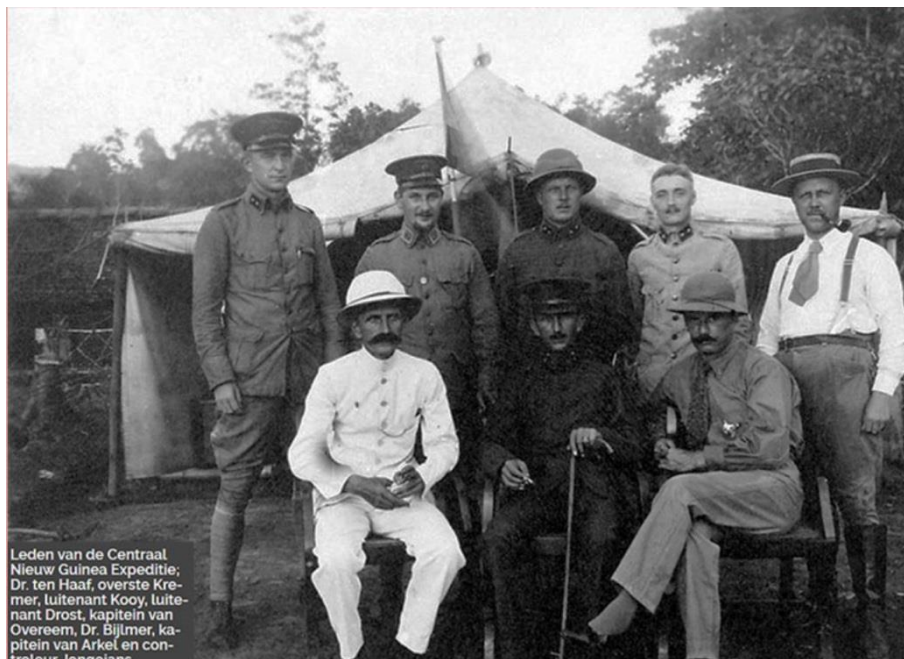


Fig. 7. The Central New Guinea Expedition's (1920-1921) staff: from left to right, seated, Lt.-Col. Kremer, Capt. Van Overeem, Capt. Van Arkel; standing, two lieutenants, controleur Jongejans, Dr. Bijlmer; source: Bijlmer 1922.

The Central New Guinea Expedition (1920-1922) was meant to seek from the Mamberamo River, on the north coast of the island, an access to the central highlands. It split into two parts: A first phase (1920-1921), led by the Captain of the General Staff A.J.A. van Overeem, comprised a military detachment of 116 soldiers with 163 prisoners as porters (Fig. 7). Jan Jongejans (1883-1939), a *controleur* in eastern Borneo with a long acquaintance with Kayan and Kenyah people, had already recruited 116 Dayak crew, "outstanding river men", to build and operate canoes for the expedition's river transport (Bijlmer 1922: 157, 161; Jongejans 1922a), so that it reached over 400 men, and he had himself been assigned to it as an ethnographer and supervisor of the Dayak crews (Schumacher 1954: 68).

As Jongejans (1922b) stressed, "Although these rapids [on the Mamberamo] cannot be compared with those of the Mahakam and the Kayan rivers in Borneo, they can cause great difficulties and

cost human lives at different water levels, and it is therefore solely due to our Dayak crew from Bulungan that we did not lose a single man there in 1920” (alluding to some earlier expeditions, which suffered a high level of casualties). As Hendrik Bijlmer (1890-1959), the expedition’s *medicus*, concurred, these indefatigable Dayak, always spirited and cheerful, proved time and again “an invaluable asset in the wilderness” (Bijlmer 1922: 161, 172; also, Bijlmer n.d.: 97).

In 1921, the initial contract with the Dayak carriers having expired, they had to be returned to Borneo. The expedition’s second phase (1921-1922), led by Capt. J.H.G. Kremer, consisted of a reduced staff, a detachment of 128 soldiers and some 460 prisoners and, with the newly recruited 206 Dayak, assumedly also from Bulungan (see Fig. 8), it reached a total of some 800 men. With this new phase, for the first time, an anthropologist-ethnographer, Paul Wirz, was called in to replace Jongejans, but he went down with malaria (or dysentery) and was sent back (Schumacher 1954: 69; Ploeg 1995: 235; *Nationaal Herbarium* 2021b; see Wirz n.d.). On December 3, 1921, Kremer and three other Dutchmen, with 22 Dayak and four convicts, reached the top of Mt. Wilhelmina (Schumacher 1954: 69-70).



Fig. 8. Kenyah Dayak from middle Bulungan; Central New Guinea Expedition, 1921-1922; source: Collectie Tropenmuseum (photo ref. TMnr 10005567).

Later expeditions are known to also have made use of Dayak crews. The so-called “Stirling Expedition” (1923-1926) from the Mamberamo and Rouffaer rivers to the Nassau Mts., under Prof. Matthew W. Stirling (1896-1975) and, later, Dr. W.M. Docters van Leeuwen (Schumacher 1954: 77), with Capt. R.W. Posthumus as military commander and C.C.F.M. Le Roux as topographer and ethnographer, was co-organized by the Smithsonian Institution, the University of California at Berkeley, and the Dutch East Indies Committee for Scientific Research, though it appears that some degree of cultural misconstruction, organizational disagreement, and authority conflict emerged between the two parties (Van Duuren & Vink 2011: 80 *et sq.*; see also Taylor 2006a1: 7-8, n20; Hedberg 1926). Focusing, in part, on physical anthropology and ethnography, the expedition, with 75 Ambonese soldiers, from 140 to 250 prisoners (*strafgevangenen*), and from 80 to 140 Dayak (extra labor was called in at mid-course; Hedberg 1926; Taylor 2006b; Timmer 2006), succeeded in contacting a tribe of so-called “Pygmies”, also called *dwergeren* or *dwerppapoea*’s (“dwarfs” or “dwarf Papuans”), which it was looking for. Whether or not these people really were Pygmies (or just “Pygmoïds”? Bijlmer 1922: 175), Stirling publicized his expedition’s outputs around their discovery (e.g., *By Aeroplane to Pygmyland*, Taylor 2006b).

Pygmies or dwarf Papuans were the target of a later expedition led in 1935-1936 by Dr. H.J.T. Bijlmer under the auspices of the Society for the Promotion of Natural Science Research in the Dutch Colonies⁵. Bijlmer wanted to study Tapiro (“Pygmy”) communities, which allegedly had been located in the 1910s near the sources of the Mimika River, in the southwest (Bijlmer 1922: 175), but he could not find them. Starting from the north coast, his expedition was transported by ship along the Mamberamo River, then along the Idenburg River by canoes operated by Dayak crew brought specially over from Borneo for that purpose, then walked across the Nassau Mts. to the upper Mimika (Bijlmer 1938: 7, 16).

Meanwhile, the Anglo-Dutch Shell and the American Standard Oil, the world’s two largest hydrocarbon concerns, ended their protracted bitter contest over West New Guinea’s new prospects by establishing in 1931 a joint venture to explore this territory, and set about to survey over 100,000 sq. km of tropical forests. Dr. Horst von Bandat, a Hungarian geologist, spent some two years (1936-37) in western and south-central Dutch New Guinea, accompanied by teams of Dayak, “a dozen Dayaks, warriors, excellent bushmen and experienced hunters”, which seem to have come from different regions, Bahau from Long Iram (middle Mahakam) or Kenyah from the lower Bulungan, and may actually have been working in rotation; he also mentions a British geologist whose Dayak team was “devoted to him” (von Bandat 1992: 14, 20, & Fig. 39, 40).

The latest mention of Dayak found in Schumacher (1954: 89-91) refers to July 1938, when a patrol led by Lt. V.J.E.M. Van Arcken, comprising 12 soldiers, 10 convicts, and 24 Dayak, with air support for logistics, started on a traverse from Camp Bernhard, on the Idenburg River, to the southwest in direction of the Baliem valley. On August 7, Van Arcken reached the Baliem, where he connected up with Capt. C.G.J. Teerink’s patrol coming from the south. The Second Royal Dutch Geographical Society (KNAG) Expedition, under the leadership of C.C.F.M. Le Roux (1885-1947), a curator at the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden (and later its director), targeted the recently discovered Wissel Lakes (see below; later renamed Paniai Lakes) and the Nassau Mts. This expedition, started in June 1939, had to be aborted prematurely, soon after the outbreak of the Second World War.

The 1936 Colijn Expedition deserves a special mention, as it was a very small-scale outfit devised by mountaineers for their own pleasure, thus ushering in a new era. Three young men, Anton Colijn and two companions, Frits Wissel and Jean-Jacques Dozy⁶, planned an expedition to explore and climb Mt. Carstensz (near the island’s highest peak, later called Puncak Jaya, at about 5000 m). Anton, the son of Hendrikus Colijn (see Colijn 1913), then the prime minister of the Netherlands, was a manager of the Dutch New Guinea exploration activities for a company formed by Shell in 1935, operating out of the Bird’s Head (Dutch Vogelkop). He “borrowed” from his company eight Dayak geologic field assistants, “selected with great care for their daring, mental strength, and physical stamina” (Colijn 1937c: 46; see Fig. 9), and took advantage of early land reconnaissance, robust logistical support, and a Sikorsky hydroplane (Colijn 1937a/b/c, Schumacher 1954: 74). The team left their base-camp at the end of October with the Dayak porters. En route, Dozy discovered the Ertzberg, the “ore mountain” – his 1939 geologic report remained unnoticed for the next twenty years, after which it led to the Grasberg discovery, a major gold and copper mine now operated by PT Freeport Indonesia (Christensen 2020).

⁵ This Society and the Dutch East Indies Committee for Scientific Research mentioned just above may well have been the same organization, the *Maatschappij ter bevordering van het natuurkundig onderzoek der Nederlandsche koloniën* (A. Ploeg, pers. comm., January 2022).

⁶ Antonie Hendrikus Colijn (1894-1945) was later captured in Tarakan, East Borneo, by the Japanese and died in an internment camp near Palembang, Sumatra, before the end of the war.



Fig. 9. The 1936 Colijn Expedition to Carstensz Mt.; J.J. Dozy, A.H. Colijn, and their eight Dayak porters in Western outfit and with traditional Kayan rattan backpack; author unknown; source: Colijn 1937c: facing p. 48.

The trio, however, had come for the sport. The Dayak were based at the timber line, at 3,790 m, where an “Alpine camp” had been established, from which they carried supplies – with payloads of up to 25-30 kilos per man – to the climbers (Fig. 10). These succeeded in ascending the highest glacier-covered summit – the Ngga Pulu, then measured at 4,900 m, has later been measured at 4,862 m, due to ice melting – but they failed to climb the steep rocky Carstensz Pyramid. On December 24th, the three and their Dayak porters – who could only be praised for their behavior during the trip (Colijn 1937: 47) – were safely back at their starting point, all in perfect health (Colijn 1937a/b, Christensen 2020, Ballard *et al.* 2001). While Colijn (1937b: 587) stressed that three Europeans and eight Dayak traveling light and fast was his recipe for success, Dozy later remarked on both the Dayak crew’s high proficiency in forest life ways and their congenial and cheerful company (see Firmino n.d.; also, Colijn 1937c: 46, Schumacher 1954: 74).

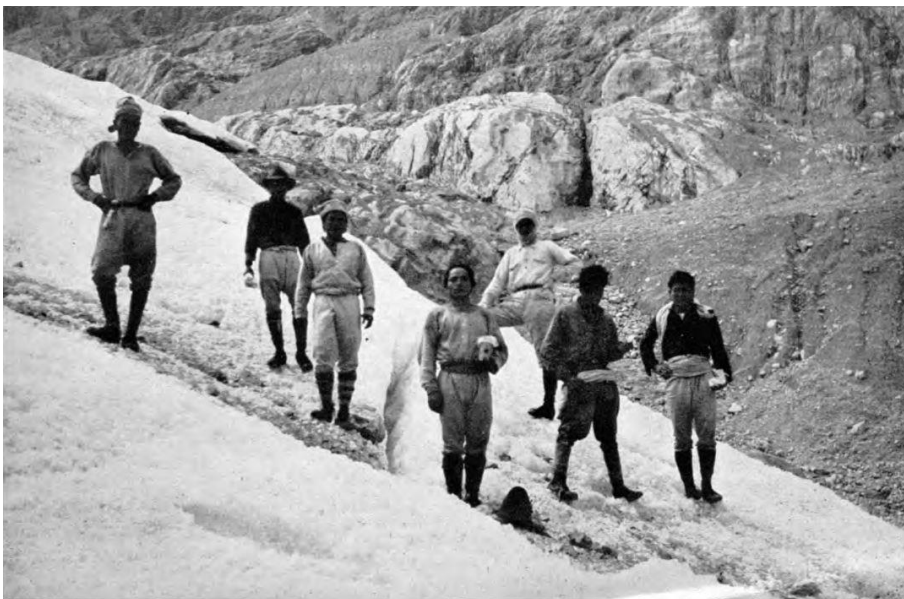


Fig. 10. “Our faithful Dayaks at the foot of the glacier tongue (4400 m), after they brought us our supplies”; the man in the middle, a Bahau Dayak, holds a can filled with snow to take back to Borneo; source: Colijn 1937c: facing p. 156.

As is well known, Indonesia's independence was declared in 1945 and internationally acknowledged in 1949, though western New Guinea remained a Dutch possession until, finally, Indonesia's claims were fully satisfied by the New York Agreement of August 15, 1962, when it became an Indonesian province, renamed Irian Jaya. The 1959 expedition to the Star Mts., on the eastern border, the third and last great KNAG Expedition, found that the situation – technically and logistically, but also, of course, mainly politically – had changed so much that resorting to “the trappers from Borneo or the convicted prison labourers of the past” no longer was an option (Van Duuren & Vink 2011: 97).

There is little information available about those Dayak recruits to New Guinea who decided, for work or for love, to remain there. It appears from Colijn's (1937a) article that some – one a Bahau Dayak from the upper Mahakam (Colijn 1937c: caption facing p. 156) – had found employment as “geologic field assistants” with a local Shell Petroleum subsidiary company, and from Horst von Bandat's recollection (1992: 20 & Fig. 40) of his 1936-37 geologic surveys that Dayak men, chosen for their reliability and stamina, were in the employ of the oil companies as helpers and transporters of field parties. Some may well have settled for good in New Guinea, never to return to Borneo.

4. MORE ON DAYAK: WHO, WHENCE, WHY, ETC.

Dutch East Indies expeditions, as mentioned earlier, usually comprised a military squad, warden of a gang of convicts serving as coolies (porters). Dutch New Guinea expeditions are reported to have rarely hired local Papuans as guides or/and carriers (Timmer 2006), but some, as early as the 1913-1915 Mamberamo expedition, did hire them, and in large numbers, as canoe paddlers (Biak Papuans; see above). Considering the type of monoxyles these Papuans manufactured, they were mainly recruited for transport on the calm waters of lower rivers and estuaries, where they excelled (see, e.g., Langelier & Dooman 1918: 47). More Papuans, from coastal or lower-river communities, were later recruited, as they became better acquainted and more conversant with outsiders; e.g., by the 1935-1936 Bijlmer Expedition to the Mimika area (see Bijlmer n.d.).

Hiring Papuans from interior or upriver communities, hitherto uncontacted, was quite another issue. Beyond initial language unintelligibility, these tribes were sometimes scared, edgy, and hostile, ambushing and killing transport personnel (e.g., Le Roux 1948-1950; also, see Matthew Stirling in Taylor 2006b: “The transport was twice attacked [...] the canoes were greeted with a shower of arrows”). Hired as porters, they were held as unreliable – or even as a systemic hazard – since they were operating within their own territory and, in case of any disagreement, or only a mere misunderstanding, could at any time up and vanish, leaving the expedition stranded and endangered for lack of food or transport (Bijlmer n.d.: 97).

As for convict gangs, an assortment of “criminals” hailing from anywhere in the East Indies (often, Javanese; or Malays from Borneo, see Timmer 2006), many of them unused to forest and river work and/or unable to swim, they frequently were, as expedition laborers, viewed as both fairly incompetent and only very soberly motivated. Wollaston (1912: 93-94), however, made a point that Dutch expeditions' convicts were “extremely well treated”, with a one-florin-per-month salary, the same food rations and accommodation as the soldiers, and rather shorter work hours and no overly heavy loads to carry. Furthermore, good behavior may earn them a substantial reduction of their long sentences. More than the soldiers, however, convicts certainly felt frightened in an unusual, potentially dangerous environment.

Due to their home environment of dense tropical forest and tricky swift streams, Dayak tribesmen of the remote interior regions were already famous throughout both Sarawak and Dutch Borneo as indefatigable and speedy porters, skilled paddlers and rapids shooters, expert canoe makers, and even house builders. As Ploeg (1995: 230) noted, Dayak were employed in most Dutch expeditions in New Guinea because of their skills in canoeing and canoe building.

It seems that the trend of hiring Dayak crews for New Guinea expeditions originated with a private bird collector, J.M. Dumas, who took some along as assistants in his 1900 travels, and with the 1903 Wichmann expedition, which tried and failed to secure some in Banjarmasin. Obviously, as noted above, Dumas had already made use of Dayak “field assistants” in his earlier expeditions. The Wichmann-Dumas connection was soon followed by a Lorentz-Nieuwenhuis connection, and it appears that, from the early years of the twentieth century, explorers of New Guinea, civil or military, Dutch or foreign, actively and sometimes even desperately sought Dayak tribesmen to help them cope with the local terrain, especially in the mountainous interior that their expeditions had to face. They came to regard the Dayak as competent and reliable field crews, and the key to success.

Clearly, then, subsequent to the good reputation Nieuwenhuis had established for the Borneo Kayan, complemented by Habbema’s robust commendation of the Kenyah – and, of course, these Dayak’s own ability to live up to that reputation and earn praise in all circumstances – the choice crews for Dutch New Guinea expeditions were recruited from two sets of tribal groups, the Kayan and Kenyah, owing to their specific and multifarious “jungle and river skills”, adjusted to difficult terrain conditions in the remote hinterland of Borneo, which made them invaluable assets in New Guinea’s similar tropical conditions.

4.1. Beyond the Call of Duty

“The Dyaks are tireless, burdened each with sixty pound packs, they hike right along over a trail where most of the time we [Westerners] were using both feet and both hands. It is a miracle almost, the way the Dyaks carry their heavy packs up and down these places” (Taylor 2006b: 226-227). As for their canoe-making skills, Langelier and Doorman (1918: 45) noted, when the Navy personnel took care of the caulking and pitching of the boards, the Dayaks could keep on making canoes and deliver six new ones every week – excellent canoes, “of a superior class” (Bijlmer n.d.: 97). Contrasting with Papuan canoes, the upriver Dayak canoe, which I have failed so far to describe, consists in a long and sturdy dug-out monoxyle base, from which a narrow bow and side planking are raised, making it a capacious and stable craft, perfectly profiled and easy to steer through wave and swirl, and ranging in size up to over twenty meters (it is now called a “longboat”).

While this was somehow still part of the Dayak’s daily grind or routine work, some of their actions struck Western expedition leaders as extraordinary heroic feats, such as Dayak warriors, with sword and shield, defending their transport canoes against Papuan assailants and chasing them for hours in the jungle, to finally catch and kill them (Taylor 2006b: 148-149); the Dayak headman locating and bringing back two soldiers gone astray into the forest and feared dead (*ibid.*: 133-134); or a canoe crew “shooting” dangerous rapids on a dark and stormy night: “It was a black, starless night with intermittent rain storms; surely a more hazardous trip was never undertaken. To make the trip in daylight under the best of conditions is practically impossible to any excepting Dyaks, for between them and Batavia camp were the Batavia rapids, yet they went through” (*ibid.*: 130-131).

Much of the praise words issued by Western expedition leaders and writers has already been conveyed in previous sections. Below is an early statement, which sounds strong and definitive:

“One of the first phases brought forty Dayaks to Pioneer Bivouac and I would first like to say a few things about this auxiliary troop that was not valued enough. [...] They have already rendered excellent services on several expeditions of the same kind as ours and again they were ideally suited for our purpose. The Kayan [River], I am told, is much wilder than the Mamberamo; who would have been better to get us through the gears than these Kayan people? They have no equal in felling trees and working wood; who would have been better suited for bivouac and canoe making than these Dayaks? An ideal exploration of this sort should work exclusively with Dayaks.” (Langelier & Doorman 1918: 31).

4.2. Whence the Dayak

Although we do not know for certain, about all of New Guinea expeditions, where their Dayak crews originated, a trend regarding the sourcing of this particular form of expert labor can be discerned along the first four decades of the twentieth century. “Dayak” being a wholesale label for all non-Malay people of Borneo’s interior and thus encompassing, literally, hundreds of ethnic groups, the questions raised are: which Dayak? and why them?

Following in Nieuwenhuis’ steps, H.A. Lorentz hired 66 Kayan men from West Borneo for his 1909-1910 expedition, while Lt. Habbema recruited for him sixteen Kenyah from Bulungan. As noted above, Lorentz was very happy with “his” Dayak (1913: 13).

Lorentz’s 1913 book includes all sorts of personal information about his 1909-1910 crew, not just the names of headmen and foremen, but each and every one’s names, which village they came from, or whether they were married or not (Lorentz 1913: 13). An appendix provides the names of these men (*ibid.*: 250-251). The Kayan came from their villages along the Mendalam River, on the upper Kapuas – where three sub-groups (Uma’ Aging, Uma’ Pagung, Uma’ Suling) had settled one century earlier – and were under three “heads”, Tigang, Ajang, and Ngau Abui. This West Borneo “Kayan” team actually included two Bukat and one Batang Lupar Iban (Lorentz 1913: 13). Habbema’s sixteen Kenyah, headed by Amban Kelisau (*id.*; or Kelesan, in Habbema 1910: 587), were of the Uma’ Kulit sub-group (Ma Koelit, in Habbema 1910: 594).

At some point during that same expedition, the western Kayan fell from favor to the benefit of the Kenyah. It turned out that the (Bulungan) Kenyah were regarded as “far superior” to these Kayan in terms of “their zeal and modesty” (whatever this meant; *Militaire Expeditie* 1920: 104). Was it due to a “minor drawback”, e.g., the Dayak’s (or their chiefs’) slight problem of attitude in case of want of trust (Lorentz 1913: 15)? Was it because of budget constraints and pressure from higher up to make use of forced laborers, which, of course, was a cheaper option? At that time, Lorentz (1913: 18) writes, the Dayak received a monthly salary of twenty florins, free food, transport (from and to Borneo), warm clothes, tobacco and *sirih* – the last article being to the Dayak a vital one, and some of the *sirih*’s fresh ingredients (betel leaves, areca nuts) they had to procure from the forest. A few years later, Langelier and Doorman (1918: 31) remarked that, while Dayak were first-rate crews, “their wages were one florin per day outside the board, while forced laborers come [...] only at the expense of rations”; moreover, these Dayak consumed an “astonishing” amount of rice, a $\frac{3}{4}$ kg daily ration instead of the standard $\frac{1}{2}$ kg (Langelier and Doorman 1918: 35). Irrespective of issues of attitude, budget, or rations, another factor possibly leading to interrupting the recruitment of Kayan from west Borneo was their limited availability in sufficient numbers in case of high labor demand, especially during intense farming work

periods, whereas the Kenyah of Bulungan were very numerous and their many sub-groups and villages were substitutable.

Hiring whole crews from east Borneo alone, then, also would make practical sense regarding their transport back and forth. On their way to and from New Guinea, Kayan crews from Samarinda and Kenyah crews from Bulungan (Tanjung Selor) and Tarakan (see Ploeg 2020) transited either at Banjarmasin and/or Surabaya, then Makassar, along the southern route, as in 1909 (Habbema 1910: 594), or by the northern route at Manado. In 1926 (see below), part of the Dayak crews transited at Makassar and part at Ambon (Taylor 2006b). This depended on the ships' routes and on the Dayak crews' endpoint (New Guinea's southern or northern coast).

In any event, it was then (1909-1910) decided to only hire about six Kenyah canoe makers from Bulungan, but complaints soon came from the military commander that, due to the convicts' ineptitude in manning canoes, goods were lost during each transport by water, and Dayak canoe crews were hired again (*Militaire Expeditie* 1920: 104-105).

From then on, eastern Dayak – Kayan of the upper Mahakam and Kenyah from the Bulungan – may have become steady expedition fixtures. This turned the upper Mahakam region into one “unlikely central hub for the last phase of Dutch exploration in the East Indies” (Oesterheld 2020: 209). The 1910 Franssen Herderschee expedition's Dayak crews were all hired from east Borneo, though ethnic groups are not mentioned. Jean Demmeni was expected to “mentor the Dayak”, and since he might have been unable to communicate with Kenyah unless in Malay, they possibly were Kayan from the upper Mahakam, with whom he had been acquainted ten years earlier in the course of the Nieuwenhuis expeditions.

This trend seems confirmed for the 1912-1913 Third South New Guinea Expedition, whose 149 Dayak were recruited “in two parts of Borneo” and included Kayan and Aoheng from the upper Mahakam and Kenyah from the Bulungan. Versteeg (2020a, 1: 46-48, 120-122) provides a complete list of the 149 Dayak – a rare instance, Poeze (2020) remarks, as coolies then were mostly anonymous, “fungible natives” (but see Lorentz's 1913 book, above). The first ten persons hailed from Lonkaäi (Long Ka'é) village, including, unexpectedly, a young woman named Heman Ulok; these are Aoheng (or Penihing, etc., but not Penking, as in p. 122). For the 66 “Kayan” Dayak, no names of villages are given, but two men's names stick out: “Juk Bang, *kamponghoofd*” (village chief) was a Kayan noble man, son of Nieuwenhuis' acquaintance Bang Lawing, and head of a longhouse on the upper Mahakam, while “Bang Kueng, *stamhoofd*” (paramount chief; see Fig. 2 & 6), was the son of Kueng Irang, the great chieftain of the Kayan and Nieuwenhuis' friend and ally, and they led teams from two different genealogical lines, called *sepui ut* and *sepui lung* (Christian Oesterheld, pers. comm, August 2021). These “Kayan”, including the Aoheng of Long Ka'é, had probably been recruited by the *controleur* of the Upper Mahakam (Boven-Mahakam) District at Long Iram and, possibly, through the military squad at Long Blu'u, farther upstream.

The remaining 73 men, listed as “Kenyah” (Versteeg 2020a, 1: 120-122), came from various villages of the Bulungan area (lower-middle Kayan River), east Borneo, and were certainly recruited through the administrative center of Tanjung Selor, near the east coast. A half-dozen village names are listed (*id.*): Long Klamo (actually Naha Keramo, in Apo Kayan; 19 men), Long Ledjoe (Long Leju, upstream from the Riam Raya rapids, 18 men), Long Mahan (just downstream from Long Leju, 22 men), and Long Ngisan (Long Isan, on the Pangean River, 6 men) are all Uma' Kulit villages (see Habbema 1910: 582); to which “Malem Long Pesoe” is added, which may be understood as “Kenyah Uma' Alim from Long Pesoe” (which is an Uma'

Kulit settlement, 5 men). Posthumus (1930: 483), beside Long Isau (cf. Long Isan) and Long Leju, also mentions Long Pleban (Peleban), another important Uma' Kulit village (spelled Peleben by Le Roux, as cited in Mulder 2009: 10 n. 2; see also Soriente 2002: 50). Some among this overwhelming Kenyah Uma' Kulit majority had taken part in Lorentz's 1909 expedition (see above), along with possibly some Uma' Alim, originally from the Pujungan River, a right tributary of the Bahau River.

The upper Mahakam origin of recruitment of the Aoheng and Kayan is confirmed by Justinianus Goossens, a Capucine missionary: "It is from these regions that Pnihing and Kayan were recruited up to three times for the voyages of exploration to New Guinea. It was thought that these people were preeminently skilled in the making of small boats, or *prahu* [in Malay]" (Goossens 1918: 96). These *prahu*, especially designed for travel through the upper Mahakam's dreadful rapids, certainly were very appropriate for New Guinea's unknown and famously wild rivers, and the description of canoes and of their makers' skills also applied to upriver Kenyah.

For the 1920-1922 Central New Guinea Expedition, Jongejans recruited 116 men in its first phase, most probably all from east Borneo; in its second phase, they were 206 (ethnic breakdown not given; Jongejans 1922a, Schumacher 1954). For the 1923-1926 Stirling Expedition, the Dayak crews were recruited on the lower Kayan River (Bulungan, east Borneo) by the Indies Committee, bringing with them ten of their traditional dug-out canoes (Schumacher 1954: 78; also Taylor 2006b), and they "surely made a great impression on the Dutch and American expedition members" (Mulder 2009: 81). A fair proportion of these Dayak – two teams, each with its headman, possibly from two different villages (see Hedberg 1926; on this, see below) – came from the same powerful Kenyah Uma' Kulit group (see Posthumus 1930: 483, cited in Mulder 2009: 10) that had earlier taken part in both Lorentz's 1909 and Franssen Herderschee's 1912-13 expeditions and elicited so much praise from their leaders (see above).

Excursus: Dayak as Convicts

In Lorentz's 1909-1910 expedition, Lt. Habbema's Exploration Detachment included, beside its strictly military personnel, some twenty forced laborers, half or more of whom were Dayak (Lorentz 1913: 7, 30, 83). Contrasting with contract porters (*verbonden dragers*) or free coolies (*vrije koelies*), the forced laborers (*dwangarbeiders*), sometimes also called penal prisoners (*strafgevangenen*), and often disparagingly nicknamed *kettingberen* or *kettingjongens* (lit., "bears in chains" or "chain boys"; see, e.g., Versteeg 2020b: 18, 196), were convicted criminals, and many of those from Borneo, probably, were convicted head hunters.

One of these, whom Lorentz (1913: 30-31) mentions by name, was Wan Pay, a famous leader of the Segai people of the middle Kayan River who, in the early years of the twentieth century, along with his brother Li' Pay and another chief, Anyi' Lohong, agitated against the sultan of Bulungan, committed extortions, and conducted recurrent headhunting raids. Strong action by the Dutch military under Capt. Fischer in 1906 helped to halt such raids and establish peace between tribes, after which Wan Pay was banished to forced labor (Fischer & Gramberg 1910: 268-269; *Rijksarchief* 1906-1909; Jongejans 1922a: 275; about the dreaded Li' Pay or Lig Pai, see Habbema 1910: 592). Wan Pay, certainly an influential and popular character, as convicted headhunters, back then, were still regarded as heroes among their own communities, was given a warm welcome by the Dayak crews in New Guinea (Lorentz 1913: 30-31).

In Lorentz's book (1913: 124), I also came across the names of two other forced laborers I knew of from my own upper Mahakam research: Njoerai (Nyurúi, a.k.a. Jurai) and Dahieng (or

Dahing). Both were young Aoheng men of Cihan village, near the sources of the Mahakam in eastern Dutch Borneo. In 1907, Anyé' Suling, grandson of Cihan headman Paron Irang, was grieving the recent death of his beloved son Nyipa'. He decided to give the boy a grand and unusual two-staged funeral, and ordered a team of four young warriors, among them Dahing, to go hunt heads for use in the funerary rituals (Sellato 1986). The gang went across to the upper Kapuas and brought back four heads. Anyé' sent again a team of three, including Dahing and Nyuréi, who went to the Murung River, to the southeast, and returned with three heads.

Eventually, all the offenders were captured by the Dutch military, and Anyé' Suling was finally arrested. Tried in 1908, Anyé', as the sponsor of the raids, was hanged, and the headhunters sentenced to forced labor and sent to New Guinea (see also Lumholtz 1920: 219). After a few years, Dahing and Nyuréi were returned to their village, bursting with exciting stories about Liu Pua-Pua (Papua Island; see also Oesterheld 2020: 209 & n. 11; Taylor 2006a3: 5). Around 1935, Nyuréi had a vision and, under the name of Kaji' Orap ("Blind Master"), became a prophet and a healer, imposing hands on the sick, till he was taken to prison (c. 1945) and soon died. As for Dahing, he married and had a son, Dirung (b. 1930), the present writer's adopted father.

4.3. Stratified Dayak

To Kenyah, Kayan, and Aoheng Dayak, working in New Guinea was, indeed, similar to what they were used to in Borneo (see, e.g., Habbema 1910: 579). As teenagers, they had trained to become rough trekkers, strong carriers, reliable canoe crew, even in difficult terrain or in foul weather, or in case of a failed "rice equation" (*i.e.*, food shortage). As hired crews, they received a good salary and were well treated, and therefore much more motivated than forced laborers.

From 1910 onward, photographs began appearing, in books or the press, of Dayak as porters, paddlers, or climbers, or building bridges, canoes, or base camps, and it soon transpired that these experts in jungle crafts were much more than plain coolies or porters. A trend had been set, among expedition leaders, of a steady reliance on Dayak "jungle and river" crews: They stood a notch or two, in terms of their proficiencies, above other, standard waged porters, not to mention forced laborers.

As Lorentz remarked, foremen picked and appointed from amongst the coolies in earlier expeditions hardly had any authority upon them, whereas his 1909-1910 Dayak team chiefs were powerful, orders were strictly followed, all went smoothly and quickly, and he only had to confer with the chiefs in the morning and refrain from interfering later with the execution of the work. Furthermore, he remarked, young Dayak men were never seen idle, as any free time was used to go hunting or fishing (Lorentz 1913: 13-14). Commenting on the Third South New Guinea Expedition (1912-1913), Anton Ploeg wondered: "In the perception of the Dutch members of the expedition, the Dayak did not form a collection of individuals, but were to some extent organized" (A. Ploeg, pers. comm., 2020). In that expedition's records, as in that of Lorentz in 1909-1910, names of village heads (*kamponghoofd*) or tribal chieftains (*stamhoofd*) do appear in lists (Versteeg 2020a, 1: 46-48; see above).

Dayak, indeed, were organized. Recruited as village-based teams, they epitomized the best a Dayak village could offer, as there were among them excellent canoe makers, blacksmiths, carpenters, woodcarvers, hunters, and fishermen (see Lorentz 1913: 14-15). As teams, they were headed by competent and experienced leaders. Although their river transport teams were frequently attacked (e.g., Le Roux 1948-1950, I: 478), the Dayak and their headmen appeared as "never being at a loss as to how to tackle any particularly difficult situation" (Taylor 2006b),

e.g., bringing back stray soldiers, portaging boats over scary waterfalls, or solving practical problems, like coupling several canoes to carry more men and goods (Le Roux 1926: 455) or manufacturing a wooden rudder from a tree's flat buttress root to replace a ship's metal rudder (Langelier & Doorman 1918: 101). These headmen, eventually, were entrusted with establishing communication with as yet uncontacted Papuan groups (Ploeg 1995: 235). As early as in 1910, Lorentz (1913: 14) acknowledged the fact that almost all "his" Dayak could speak Malay and that two of their chiefs could even write very well, which they had learned from Nieuwenhuis in the last years of the nineteenth century.

Furthermore, Dayak crews were often accompanied, "mentored", by a Dutch civil or military officer with prior experience with Dayak in Borneo (e.g., Habbema, Demmeni, Jongejans, Posthumus; there may have been others I am not yet aware of), who ensured smooth communication along the chain of command between the expedition's leadership and the crews' chiefs. But who were the Dayak crews' chiefs?

This state of affairs was in line with the social stratification prevailing among Kenyah and Kayan communities, a rough hierarchical tripartition into nobility, commoners, and slaves, whereby noble chiefs, whose authority over their juniors and their commoners remained unchallenged, were able to build compact and disciplined multitask crews and very efficiently run these crews' teamwork (see, e.g., Whittier 1973, Rousseau 1990, Sellato 1992, 2002). As von Bandat (1992: 20) put it, headmen (or *mandor*, foremen) "managed" their teams. In the early 1970s, the teams of Kayan I hired as porters, canoe crews, and hunters to carry out geologic surveys in the Müller Mts. were headed by Kueng Hang and Ding Hang, the grandsons of paramount Kayan chief Kueng Irang, Nieuwenhuis' upper Mahakam associate. Traditional trading expeditions through foreign territories, quite perilous in the earlier times of endemic tribal feuding, were always led by senior noblemen and, for any young Dayak man, were great opportunities, not only for material benefits, but also, and possibly more importantly, for gaining experience and prestige and secure higher grades or status in their communities.

Expeditions to New Guinea were just more such opportunities for adventure and trade (see below), not to mention a fixed salary. Noble chiefs, responsible for their men and answerable to the expedition leaders (usually the military detachment's leader), most probably received a higher salary or some kind of bonus. Moreover, returning crew chiefs were awarded medals or decorations by the Dutch government (Anonymous 1910, 1914, cited in Oesterheld 2020: 208; Taylor 2006b), as was the case with Bang Kueng after the 1912-1913 expedition, and had been the case with Kayan headmen after Nieuwenhuis' Borneo expeditions (Oesterheld, pers. comm., July 2021).

This peculiar feature of formal social stratification is found in a rather small number of Dayak groups, mostly Kayan and related peoples (Bahau, Busang, Aoheng) and the numerous Kenyah groups distributed over east Borneo and eastern Sarawak. No wonder the same Kayan and Aoheng were repeatedly called upon (Goossens 1918: 96; see above). Likewise, excellent Dayak leaders: Anyi' Ipuai, leader of [one of the Kenyah] Dayak crews on the 1926 Stirling expedition and "a fine looking man", had already been headman "on all three of the military expeditions from 1907 up to 1922" (Taylor 2006b; Langelier & Doorman 1918; see also Mulder 2009: 81).

The Dutch expedition members' perception mentioned above echoed the usual intuition a foreign visitor has, or had, when entering a Kayan or Kenyah village in Borneo, a feeling that all things are well ordered, under control, and running smooth. Charles Hose was fascinated with the "systems of social hierarchy" of the Kenyah and Kayan of the Baram River region of eastern

Sarawak (Durrans 1989: 361), and Nieuwenhuis was impressed by their chiefs' authority (see Van Goor 1995: 260-261), as well as with Mahakam Kayan carpenters' team work to complete the complex construction of Kueng Irang's huge house (Fig. 11; see also, Nieuwenhuis 1904-1907, II: plate 23).



Fig. 11. Kueng Irang's new big house, with Kayan roof finials; Source: Nieuwenhuis 1904-1907, II: plate 24.

Social stratification and the presence of noble chiefs (Kayan *sepui*, Aoheng *supi*, Kenyah *paren*) in Dayak crews, however, had unexpected side effects. Upon first contact or following a jumpy encounter or even a skirmish, Dayak crew chiefs were expected by their Papuan "counterparts", *i.e.*, local village or tribal headmen – as well as by the military squad's leaders, anxious to prevent an all-out mêlée or a blood bath – to take part, in the name of their whole (ethnic) team, in a blood-friendship (or blood brotherhood) ceremony consisting in the smearing of a little blood on each other's hand, a form of ritual also common in Borneo – called *petutong lewa* among the Kenyah (and *totong hocong* among the Aoheng) – and meant to ensure safe and peaceful subsequent intercourse (Le Roux 1948-1950, I: 93).

Based on the same set of principles of upland Borneo etiquette, high-nobility Dayak chiefs in New Guinea appraised Dutch and other Western expedition leaders as "foreign nobility", socially on a par with themselves, and, behaving accordingly, initiated at the time of parting an exchange of presents with the "White chiefs". Bang Kueng, a paramount Kayan chief, presented Franssen Herderschee, leader of the Third South New Guinea Expedition and, therefore, his Dutch "counterpart", with a prized decorated *mandau* (an heirloom war sword). Franssen Herderschee, probably surprised but willing to abide by the Dayak's "local customs", presented him in return with a *Wels kamplamp* (a type of petrol lamp) and was left wondering whether it was received as properly matching the sword in value (Versteeg 2020a, 2: 154, 166; A. Ploeg, pers. comm. 2020). Another exchange of gifts is reported in the 1923-1926 Stirling Expedition, with Anyi' Ipui promising Le Roux and Stirling each one of his most beautifully and intricately carved ear ornaments, and expecting a rifle in return (Stirling in Taylor 2006b: 30).

The same Stirling Expedition, the first to use air support (by a hydroplane), saw the same Kenyah headman becoming the first ever airborne Dayak (Fig. 12; see Hedberg 1926; Taylor 2006a3: 25, 2006b); this was an important event for all Dayak and, probably, a personal favor to Anyi' Ipui, whose proud written report of his experience to the sultan of Kutai was discussed at

length, rewritten, and even translated into English (Taylor 2006b: 119), while Stirling was expected to present him with a pair of wings in honor of that occasion (Hedberg 1926).



Fig. 12. Kenyah team leader Anyi' Ipui with pilot's glasses, after his flight with pilot H. (Hans) Hoyte wearing a Dayak head cap; "Stirling Expedition" (1923-1926); photo: M. Stirling, June 1926; source: Stirling in Taylor 2006b: 119 (photo ref. Arb463n, courtesy Smithsonian Institution).

5. PERCEPTIONS AND RELATIONS: DAYAK AND WESTERNERS

Any government expedition to West New Guinea incorporated an interesting assortment of humanity and cultures – a true social laboratory – mostly classified by function rather than ethnic origins, as with East Indies soldiers (e.g., Ambonese), contract porters (e.g., Javanese, Toraja, Batak, or "generic Malays"), and forced laborers (miscellaneous origins), with a few more homogeneous categories, such as the Westerners (mostly Dutch, except on foreign expeditions), the Dayak, and the local Papuan porters (Fig. 13). The last category, itself quite heterogeneous, had to figure out who was who in the social motley they came in contact with. Interestingly, the so-called "Pygmies", freshly contacted in the course of the Stirling Expedition, were reported as being "thoroughly democratic": Having yet detected, by their own standards, no social difference among the expedition's categories, they fraternized equally with soldiers, convicts, Dayak, and Westerners, giving presents to all (Taylor 2006b: 239).



Fig. 13. The Mamberamo Expedition (1910-1915) at Pioniersbivak (Pioneer Camp), c. 1913: standing, Dutch and native military; squatting left, East Indies convicts; squatting right, Papuan coolies; standing far right, with sword on shoulder, Dayak crew;; source: KITLV, photo ref. 113740. [<http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:818454>]

The Dayak, Kayan and Kenyah alike, thanks to “their cheerfulness, fluency and activity” (Bijlmer 1922: 161), apparently got along well with other East Indies coolies (Javanese or Malay), though we know little about their relations with soldiers. We know, however, as mentioned earlier, that Dayak (both as canoe crew and as warriors) and soldiers were often joint attendants to the operating *cum* securing of an expedition’s transport lifeline along rivers, in fighting off Papuan attacks, and in initiating first contact with visited villagers.



Fig. 14. Coastal Papuan bird hunter and Kenyah Dayak canoe crewman; Central New Guinea Expedition, 1920-1921; source: Jongejans 1922a: Fig. 27; Collectie Wereldculturen (photo ref. TM-10005555).

The Dayak crews and the locally hired Papuan porters and paddlers (Fig. 14) found themselves in both professional competition and cultural confrontation. Both operated the transport canoe line, the former being in charge, but their respective canoeing performance became the locus of some resentment (called “a great rivalry” by Schumacher 1954: 50): In swift water the Dayak were far superior in dexterity and speed, while in calmer waters they lost out to the Biak Papuans, although they usually overtook them in the long run (Langelier & Doorman 1918: 47, 93, 99). In the 1911 phase of the Mamberamo Expeditions, the Papuan paddlers challenged their “foreign” competitors, and won (Schumacher 1954: 50). These races eventually, I assume, turned into a more playful game form, reminiscent of the “sport-as-substitute-for-warfare” regatta races that Charles Hose had staged on the lower Baram River in Sarawak.

The cultural confrontation was played out on two fronts: technology and hygiene. The Dayak detested and despised the Papuans and believed all natives of New Guinea to be deeply below them in culture. Very clean and neat and bathing daily, they looked down at Papuans as dirty unkempt savages (von Bandat 1992: 20). One of von Bandat’s Dayak guides, possibly making a display of it, suddenly stopped, vomited and, pointing at the two Papuans walking ahead, said: “I can’t stand those two, they stink” (*id.*). On the technological front, the Dayak harbored a deep contempt for all things Papuan (Bijlmer 1922: 172) although, taking full advantage of their metal-vs.-stone edge in technical kit, they very much enjoyed “showing off” with their machetes before an admiring group of Papuans (Stirling in Taylor 2006b: 251). As Stirling (in Taylor 2006b: 59) noted, the Dayak have a natural instinct for tools and mechanics; once they have given a new tool a careful study, they learn to use it with no difficulty.

Let us now turn to the complex relationship Dayak and Westerners constructed, in order to come closer to each other despite the social and hierarchical distance between them as set by the time and place. As was the case in central Borneo between Nieuwenhuis and his close Kayan associates Akam Igau and Kueng Irang, it appears that the relations between Westerners and Dayak in Dutch New Guinea often developed beyond the strictly “professional” level, *i.e.*, beyond a mere mutual acknowledgment and appreciation of competence. They definitely moved into a more personal or private field, curbing in part the standard professional distance. One example in point is that of Anyi’ Ipui (Fig. 15; see also Fig. 12 & 18), a Kenyah character often mentioned above and further discussed below.



Fig. 15. Anyi’ Ipui and Buyau Awan, Kenyah men from Bulungan, Mamberamo Expedition, c. 1910; source: Langelier & Doorman 1918: 32.

A first stage in relational evolution is expressed in the explicit recognition by their Western bosses of the Dayak’s individual existences: They no longer were anonymous “fungible natives” (Poeze 2020) and mentioned only by their total numbers, but they were identified by name and their personal particulars, mostly their qualities or exploits, exposed and discussed in detail in Westerners’ diaries, as they were or had been, certainly, at camp talks. This point is clearly and unequivocally stressed by Anton Colijn (1937c: 46); the Dayak, he explains, have a strong personality. They find it very unpleasant if people forget their name. One can obtain anything from them if a personal bond exists with them. They want to be treated as a person and not as a number, or as part of a crowd. Once one has won a Dayak over, then there is no more loyal and devoted companion. Conversely, if he feels that he is not being fully recognized by his boss, then he no longer cares, and all sorts of kinds of snags can be expected. With eight Dayak porters only, the Colijn team could easily get to know them and their particulars, e.g., a Bahau man nicknamed Gemuk (Fatty), the toughest of them, who likes to bathe daily in glacier water (Colijn 1937c: caption facing p. 156).

Later, the progressively emergent awareness and understanding among Westerners of Dayak crews’ internal hierarchy and organization as efficient functional teams (above) eventually led to the admiration and esteem that Westerners felt for a small number of “exceptional” individual Dayak, often their headmen, to collectively encompass the whole ethnic category: e.g., “the Dayak are great people” (Hedberg 1926); or the functional category: e.g., “They were good people whom the controleur of Bulungan had recruited for us” (Langelier & Doorman 1918: 31).

After his 1909-1910 expedition's successful outcome, Lorentz declared himself satisfied, and very happy with his Dayak crew, "who contributed so much to the success of the expedition" (Lorentz 1913: 13). Beyond this "professional" appreciation, he explicitly stated that he held in high esteem these Dayak, for whom he would decline to use the word "coolies" (which usually referred to indentured plantation workers; A. Ploeg, pers. comm.), "because in my opinion this word indicates a somewhat inferior class of persons, whereas the Dayak stand very high in my assessment" (Lorentz 1911a: 477). In acknowledgement, he named a mountain range the Kajan-gebergte (Kayan Mts.; Schumacher 1954: 63). He also extended a salute to A.W. Nieuwenhuis who, thanks to his earlier relation of trust with the Kayan of the upper Kapuas, allowed him to secure "such a number of excellent porters without whom it would never have been possible to achieve this result" (Lorentz 1913: xii, 3). And one member of the Stirling expedition quite enthusiastically wrote: "I think Holland is overlooking her best bet when she fails to realize the intellectual abilities of the Dyaks" (Hedberg 1926).

In what may be regarded as a second stage, again taking the Dayak as a category, Westerners stressed their humanity and human qualities, as well as their sophisticated cultures. Explorers of the turn of the twentieth century, such as Nieuwenhuis, among the first, apart from missionaries, to ever spend extended periods of time amongst central Borneo villagers and engage in studying their life ways and cultures, attested not only to their human qualities, referring to them as true human beings, and even pleasant and friendly ones, a most gentle and caring people with a high artistic sense, hence attempting to dispel their earlier collective reputation as vicious, bloodthirsty savages (Nieuwenhuis 1904-1907, I: 3, II: 279-280; see also Smythies 1955: 496, Ouwehand 2014: 38).

In 1913, Norwegian explorer Carl Lumholtz (1851-1922), "the quintessential professional explorer" (King 1992: 174, also King 1991) famed for his earlier exploration travels in Australia and Mexico, came to Batavia with a project to set up a major expedition to traverse Dutch New Guinea's central mountain ranges. His plan was to travel from the Digul River in the south to the Idenburg River in the north (Versteeg 2020a, 2: 174). But first of all, he went to the Bulungan region of east Borneo (Fig. 16) in order to hire Dayak crews for his New Guinea expedition (see Lumholtz 1920, I: 96-97), certainly based on Dutch expedition leaders' advice, and there he got acquainted with local Kayan and Kenyah villagers. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the First World War thwarted his project, and he decided to travel across Borneo instead (in 1915-1916; Lumholtz 1920). In 1920, almost seventy years old, he was still trying to raise funds for his New Guinea expedition, for which he planned to recruit no fewer than 175 Dayak.



Fig. 16. Carl Lumholtz at Tanjung Selor, East Borneo, 1914; source: Lumholtz 1920: Frontispiece.

Lumholtz commended the Dayak with whom he traveled through Borneo, and their culture and art: “Never have I been among a people so close to nature, strikingly intelligent, friendly, and the most aesthetic on the globe” (1920, I: 9). In his final intellectual statement, he flatly wrote: “The Dayaks are hospitable, generous, and loyal” and claimed “the credit for having been able [after Nieuwenhuis and Hose, that is] to put the head hunters of Borneo in the right light before the civilized world” (Lumholtz 1921: 238, 241; also, Langlois 1922, Eek 2007: 376).

“Finest of all the native peoples of the East Indies are the Dyaks of Borneo”, Matthew Stirling wrote in 1926, “[t]he more I see of them, the greater is my admiration” (in Taylor 2006a3: 21). What did those Westerners admire in the Dayak of their crews? The competences for which Dayak were recruited are the most common focus of Westerners’ statements, e.g., “their ability at handling canoes in dangerous rapids, their tireless strength as carriers on difficult mountain trails, and their general resourcefulness in the jungle” (Stirling in Taylor 2006a3: 21). However, perhaps surprisingly, the Dayak’s looks, including their skin complexion and their demeanor, often feature among early, sometimes immediate descriptive comments: e.g., “All strong and healthy, swift, graceful and sure in their movements” [...] “With their lively gaiety, their fine tools, but even more so because of their strong build, their light brown, almost yellow complexion, and their great cleanliness of the body, the Dayaks made an exceedingly pleasant impression” (Langelier & Doorman 1918: 31, 34); “They are for the most part of rather small stature but very well built and with thick chests and muscular arms and legs. In color they have a somewhat yellowish tinge and are much lighter in complexion than the Malays. Their bearing is very good and they look one directly in the eye when addressed”, or “their clean limbed athletic figures” in “striking contrast with coarser Papuans” (Stirling in Taylor 2006b: 9, 109-110). Dayak physical features are favorably mentioned in comparison to those of other human categories: “the (darker) Malays” or “the (coarser) Papuans”. Less unexpectedly, though later in time, are their “artistic minds” cited, and the beautiful objects they produced.

From most reports, physical looks excluded, it appears that expressions of admiration by Westerners occurred after extended periods of close acquaintance with Dayak crews. This is especially true when difficult field work situations, in which shared space, food, worry, and occasional misery led to some degree of intimacy, and reciprocal reliance and dependence, at times a matter of life or death, led to a relationship of mutual trust. Trust is clearly what was put

forth by Nieuwenhuis, who in 1896 had totally placed himself, in uncharted territory and without an armed escort, at the mercy of his Kayan partners. Nieuwenhuis' notion of the value of trust or confidence is accredited by Lorentz (1913: xii), who probably owed his life to one Dayak man who lost his (see Van Duuren & Vink 2011: 69). As for Lumholtz, he wrote of loyalty (above), as did Nieuwenhuis.

No doubt the Dayak crews in New Guinea felt admiration and awe, if not for the Westerners themselves, at least for their civilizational achievements, not least of all Matthew Stirling's hydroplane. There certainly was a broad curiosity and interest among the Dayak for all things Western, especially technical ones, from a plain brace and bit to a chain hoist (Stirling in Taylor 2006b: 59).

Dayak and Westerners, somehow, were brought together by circumstances. Both groups were strangers in a foreign land, in a yet unfamiliar natural and human environment, and possibly felt that their fates were interconnected, interdependent. And they did seek each other's company, they socialized. "In the evening after dinner, when the weather is calm, the Dayak come on our aft deck to talk with us"; "we show them the book of Prof. Nieuwenhuis, and they shout when they see persons or objects they recognize" (Lorentz 1913: 33). "This evening Anyi' paid us a long visit and we talked of Borneo, America, astronomy, geography, and politics; he never tires of hearing of the marvels of America" (Stirling in Taylor 2006b: 138).



Fig. 17. The Dayak house at Albatross Base Camp, with elaborately carved Kenyah-style roof finials; foreground, one of the Dayak's long transport canoes; "Stirling Expedition" (1923-1926); photo: M. Stirling, May 1926; source: Stirling in Taylor 2006b: 59 (photo ref. B008, courtesy Smithsonian Institution).

Their intercourse entailed a continuous exchange of favors. Various favors were done to the Dayak, as has been mentioned earlier, ranging from a more generous daily ration of rice to Anyi' Ipui's flight in the hydroplane. On their part, according to Stirling (in Taylor 2006b: 77-78), the Dayak had "a particular liking" for him and the American team and "went to extra pains in the work" of building for them a permanent house decorated with wood carvings, a cool and comfortable place "and a welcome improvement over our sweltering temporary shack" (Fig. 17; see also Fig. 11). When the Dayak heard that one of the Americans was leaving for home, "they all felt very badly about it" and in the evening gave him a Dayak farewell song and dance festival (Stirling in Taylor 2006b: 155). Surprisingly, the Matthew Stirling New Guinea ethnographic collection in Washington, DC, includes a large number of Dayak artifacts (Mulder 2009: 81), which suggests that the Dayak crews may have presented the Westerners with Dayak objects that they had made for them – but does not preclude possible barter or cash transactions.

And Anyi' Ipui, the Kenyah headman who participated in several expeditions from 1907 onward, was reported to initially be unable to understand Malay (Langelier & Doorman 1918: 35), but eventually ended up teaching Malay to the Stirling Expedition members in 1926: A striking photograph shows them (Fig. 18) in an intimate evening setting at their base camp (Stirling in Taylor 2006b: 63).



Fig. 18. Kenyah chief Anyi' Ipui teaching Malay to mechanic A. (Prince) E. Hamer in an intimate evening setting at Albatross Base Camp; "Stirling Expedition" (1923-1926); photo: M. Stirling, May 1926; source: Stirling in Taylor 2006b: 63 (photo ref. W083, courtesy Smithsonian Institution).

Given the sort of cozy friendly social intercourse Dayak and Westerners eventually ended up settling in together, the question of the Dayak headmen's demeanor or "attitude", which may have become at some point an issue, calls for a brief discussion – that "zeal and modesty" issue caused the western Kayan to fall from favor (*Militaire Expeditie* 1920: 104). As noted earlier, the proud Dayak's noble chiefs felt themselves the White chiefs' counterparts. The latter, while relishing the Dayak's smart bearing, their lack of obsequiousness, their trademark fun-poking sense of humor, and the way "they look one directly in the eye when addressed" (Stirling in Taylor 2006b: 9), sometimes were slightly annoyed when the Dayak appeared a little too at ease and taking advantage of the situation, though they mostly viewed quite tolerantly such out-of-line familiarity.

In any event, Westerners and Dayak often were associated in more than one way. Matthew Stirling resorted to the Dayak crews to gather his New Guinea ethnographic collections for him. This clearly was a business arrangement, the Dayak acting as brokers, bartering ethnographica from the Papuans to supply the Westerners (Timmer 2006). The Dayak paid in used glass bottles and tin cans, iron blades or tools, or salt provided by the Americans. Prejudiced as they were, they possibly made a game of cheating their trade partners. And quite likely, this (side) activity brought in, for some of them, more profit than their wages.

It is noteworthy that two parallel such networks were functioning: Anyi' Ipui, an Uma' Alim noble, with his team of Uma' Kulit, was associated with Stirling and the Americans; and the other team, probably Uma' Kulit from Long Peleban, headed by Tama Lenda (Taman Lendah), was lined up with Capt. Posthumus, who had known him/them back in Borneo, and associated with the Dutch members of the expedition, such as Charles Le Roux (Hedberg 1926). This

dichotomy likely mirrored the conflict-ridden relationship between the two co-organizing parties of the expedition.

Le Roux noted that the same Taman Lendah had collected for himself pieces of Papuan jewelry, which he intended to take home, and that he could not be persuaded to hand over this ethnographic material, for money or good words (Le Roux 1948-1950, I: 173). This not only qualifies an earlier blanket statement (by Bijlmer 1922: 172) that the Dayak despised all Papuan productions, but also highlights the fact that Dayak may have had a more general interest in exotica to bring back home from the strange lands they visited. A bequest to a Swiss museum of Dayak artefacts collected by a petroleum geologist stationed in the 1920s in eastern Borneo – more precisely at Tanjung Selor, near the mouth of the Bulungan River – includes a bow and arrows, which, despite an accompanying bamboo quiver decorated with typical Kenyah design (Isler & von Wyss-Giacosa 2011: 120, 123), appear foreign to Kenyah culture, or more generally to Borneo cultures, and may well be a souvenir from some Kenyah's excursion to New Guinea.

Principally because of my limited command of the period literature on Dutch New Guinea, I do not intend here to examine in greater detail or depth the ways in which Dayak and Westerners interacted in the course of New Guinea expeditions. It certainly would be rewarding to more thoroughly explore these explorers' diaries for better insights into their feelings. Also, the role as “mentors” played by a *controleur* or related characters, Westerners themselves, who spent years posted in Borneo and later were required to mediate between the Dayak villagers they had administered and then hired and the Western leaders and members of New Guinea expeditions.

It would be naïve, of course, to deny that *ad hoc* agreements between Dayak and Westerners were struck based on convergent interests – this was true of Stirling and Anyi' Ipui's Dayak crew, as it had been of Nieuwenhuis and the central Borneo Kayan chieftains – and that parties took advantage of each other for personal or collective political, economic, or other (scientific?) gain. There was, nevertheless, something more to their relationships. Dayak and Westerners found each other having the same open-minded curiosity, the same desire to learn, share, and discuss. Surrounded by soldiers, convicts, and Papuans, in a foreign land that was strange to them, they felt drawn to each other, sought each other's company, and confidence, trust, and loyalty emerged. The Dayak, wrote Lorentz (1913: xii), “are so much closer to us”. “They belong with us”, wrote Bijlmer (n.d.: 97).

It was, possibly, at the moment of parting, or altogether *post facto*, that some writers recognized that closeness, that field fraternity, and evoked feelings: When he left Sarawak, Charles Hose expressed “his deep affection and respect” for the Kenyah and Kayan of the Baram River region (Durrans 1988; see also Hose 1927, Durrans 1993); Matthew Stirling (in Taylor 2006b), after parting with “his” Dayak at Ambon at the close of the 1926 expedition, wrote: “we bid them goodbye, not without real feeling”.

In a recent study (Helliwell 2021) of guerrilla operations carried out in 1945 in the deep jungle of interior Borneo by a makeshift commando joint force of Anglo-Australian military and local highland Dayak warriors – totally alien to and scared of each other – against the Japanese occupation army, in-depth interviews with Western and Dayak veterans and relatives revealed a very similar pattern in their mutual perception and relations, including at the “real feeling” stage, as they lived and fought and had fun and hiked and starved, for months on end in a brothers-in-arms kind of companionship, under constant peril of death. “The Dayaks were our saviours. Really”, said one veteran. Such great guys! Their crucial role, long overlooked, has now been exposed. On a much broader scale, in one of the most important books written about WWII in

the Pacific, noted historian Gavin Long (1963: 493) wrote: “Of all the Asian and island peoples among whom the Australian soldier campaigned and trained in six years of war – Arabs, Palestinians, Lebanese, Ceylonese, Malays, Chinese, Indonesians, Papuans, and others – none won more respect from him than did the Dyaks, with their courage, dignity, friendliness and generosity”. As for our Kayan and Kenyah support crews’ role in New Guinea expeditions, it has yet to be fully researched and assessed, as Jaap Timmer (2006) has argued, especially through biographies of outstanding characters such as Bang Kueng (Kayan) and Anyi’ Ipui (Kenyah), as well as through both Papuan and Dayak oral traditions about their common experience and interaction in the course of these expeditions.

5. CONCLUDING NOTE

While Nieuwenhuis’ published works, whether scientific or aimed at a more general readership, helped position Borneo on the mental map of the cultured Dutch person, Jean Demmeni’s outstanding photographs, which were also used as educational material in schools, both in textbooks and as large-sized prints (see Wagenaar Reisiger 1911, Niermeyer *et al.*, 1911-1913, Gonggryp 1934), ensured the East Indies’ reality and familiarity in the wider Dutch society. The East Indies, with their beautiful nature and rich cultures, were made part of the average Dutch household. Borneo and her peoples also benefited from this broad visual and textual exposure to public awareness and appreciation, including of the Dayak’s human and artistic qualities.

The same Nieuwenhuis’ highly satisfactory experience with Dayak people during his Borneo expeditions, as exposed in his writings, persuaded other explorers – prominent among whom were H. Lorentz, A. Franssen Herderschee, C. Lumholtz, M. Stirling, and H. Bijlmer – to seek these Dayak and their “jungle and river expertise”, which, combined with their social discipline and team work efficiency, made them choice crews for many a Dutch New Guinea expedition in the course of almost four decades.

Many illustrated books about exploration in Dutch New Guinea (by, e.g., Lorentz, Pulle, Langelier & Doorman, Bijlmer, Le Roux), as well as the coverage in Dutch- and English-language newspapers and magazines of highly mediatized expeditions featuring the conquest of major snowy summits, helped to further expose these Dayak crews and their role and achievements in these expeditions, while arresting photographs of Dayak on snow-covered mountain peaks and frequent flattering comments certainly contributed to the circulation, in the Dutch and broader Western world’s educated public, of a more advantageous view of Borneo and to the relative waning of earlier imageries (the Papuans took over the savage-headhunters-*cum*-cannibals part).

The Second World War and Indonesia’s accession to independence led to Borneo and her Dayak jungle and river experts’ disappearance from the news and to some degree of disaffection with now less relevant Dutch colonial topics.

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