CHAPTER SEVEN

EPILOGUE: 1940-1980

Internment May 10, 1940

In 1939, World War II broke out in Europe. Its impact was not immediately evident in the Dutch Indies in general and in the Batak area in particular because at that time the Netherlands was still neutral and was not as yet involved in the abyss of battle. Until the beginning of 1940, the European workers of the Batakmission were able to continue their work without incident even though the public and the Batak church members who followed these world developments closely began to be anxious. Moreover, the Batakmission along with the HKBP were still able to hold the General Synod meeting at the beginning of 1940 in order to revise several articles of the Church Order of 1930 within the framework of strengthening the HKBP's independence.

This situation could not continue for long without serious hindrances. On the early morning of May 10, 1940, German forces occupied the Netherlands. On that same day, the Dutch colonial government interned all German citizens resident in the Indies, including the Batakmission's German workers, as a retaliatory response. We shall not discuss the details and more specific reasons for the internment because these matters are not related to the main topic of our research. What is definite is that practically speaking, after having continued for almost 80 years in the Batak area the RMG/Batakmission's work there had come to a close.

ZNB and BNZ

After internment, there remained just three Batakmission missionaries, De Kleine, Rijkhoek and Karelse (all from the Netherlands) and a number of Dutch teachers who operated Dutch schools independently from the Mission (see Chapter VI.A.5.), but the trio was unable to continue the work of the Batakmission by themselves. Therefore, they sought help from the Zendingconsulaat in Batavia requesting that a number of Dutch missionaries be sent to continue or to take over the work of the Batakmission. While waiting for assistance and further developments, De Kleine was appointed acting Voorzitter (chairperson and not Ephorus) of the HKBP.1

---

1 The appointment of De Kleine was made at the oral direction of Ephorus Verwiebe in
After May 10, 1940, the Dutch government formed the Commissie voor het Rechtsverkeer in Oorlogstijd (CRO, Wartime Legal Affairs Commission) to manage affairs arising in the Dutch Indies as a result of World War II. The Commission directed the Zendingsconsulaat to assume the administration of activities and property of mission bodies which were members of the Oegstgeest group, namely those clustered in the SZC and also of other bodies, including the RMG. In order to carry out this assignment, the Zendingsconsulaat formed a special organization, the Zendingsnoodbestuur (ZNB, Emergency Mission Board). To manage or take-over the work and property of the RMG in the Batak area and Nias, the ZNB formed the Batak-Nias Zending (BNZ).\(^2\)

Within a relatively brief period of time, the BNZ was present and at work in the Batakland through a number of Dutch missionaries, teachers and doctors recruited from mission fields in Java and Bali. Particularly in the field of schooling, the BNZ was charged with the responsibility of administering 450 subsidized schools (Volkscholen and Vervolgscholen) and their teachers. For that purpose it formed a special body, Algemeen Schoolbeheer (ASB, General School Administration). Later, the BNZ took over the Sipoholon seminary and the Laguboti Trade School too based on the same reason, namely both received government subsidies and were property of the RMG/Batakmission. The Dutch schools (HIS, MULO and Schakelschool) were not taken over or made an issue because these were administered autonomously by the two school associations which were under the supervision of Dutch teachers so they were not considered as Dutch enemies. The approximately 200 Volksscholen and Vervolgscholen which were not subsidized were not claimed by the BNZ because it was known that these were the property of the HKBP congregations and were therefore HKBP concerns. The BNZ knew that the HKBP was a legal body or possessed corporate status, so theoretically the BNZ had no intention of interfering in its organization or its ownership rights to non-subsidized schools unless asked to do so by the HKBP.

\(^2\) The ZNB was formed after the May 10, 1940 event and began to function actively in July 1940, whereas the BNZ (Batak-Nias Mission) was formed officially on September 27, 1940 and was acknowledged legally by the colonial government through its decision of April 17, 1941, but it had functioned de facto since the end of May, 1940. See Zendingsconsuls di Hindia Belanda, Hoeria Dohot Zending di Tano Batak (1941), pp. 17ff., and Verslag van het ZNB, May 10, 1940-March 8, 1942, p. 9 and 53.