

Behind the Word Moraya: Heroic Actions Against Colonialism

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ABSTRACT

In addition to introducing foreign influence, European presence also led to the emergence of colonial practices that affected the social, economic, and cultural conditions of the local community. Colonialism in Minahasa generated strong resistance from the Minahasan people. These resistance movements left important historical traces that continue to attract attention from both local and international visitors, as reflected in the increasing number of tourists visiting sites associated with anti-colonial struggles. The term *Moraya*, meaning “the smell of blood” or “a pool of blood,” symbolizes the violent conflicts and heroic resistance of the Minahasan people against colonial domination. This study employed a historical research method through interviews conducted with representatives of the Department of Tourism and Culture, including the Head of the Tourism Division, as well as Mr. Maxi, a guide at Fort Moraya. The findings of this study demonstrate that Fort Moraya serves not only as a historical site commemorating anti-colonial resistance, but also as a cultural symbol representing the courage, solidarity, and identity of the Minahasan people.

INTRODUCTION

Minahasa Regency is one of the regencies located in North Sulawesi, with Tondano serving as its capital. It is recognized as one of the oldest regencies in the province. Historically, Minahasa was previously known as Malesung (Lolombulan et al., 1986). The term Minahasa is derived from the words Minaesa, Mahasa, and Minhasa, which collectively mean “to become united” or “to unite.” The term refers to the traditional grand deliberations held by the Minahasan people to resolve conflicts among communities, determine territorial boundaries among sub-ethnic groups, and strengthen unity against external threats. The term Minaesa first appeared during a gathering of the Tonaas (traditional leaders) at Watu Pinawetengan, also known as Pinabetengan Stone. The name Minahasa, popularized during the Dutch colonial period, was first documented in a report by Resident J.D. Schierstein dated October 8, 1789. The report described the peace agreement established between the Bantik and Tombulu (Tateli) sub-ethnic groups following the event later remembered as the “Tateli War.” The Minahasan people, traditionally regarded as descendants of Toar and Lumimuut, were socially divided into three major groups: (1) Makarua Siow, responsible for religious and customary affairs; (2) Makatelu Pitu, responsible for governance and administration; and (3) Pasiowan Telu, representing the general populace (Coté, 2020; Wuntu, 2002).

According to the investigation conducted by Dr. J.P.G. Riedel, around 1670 a grand deliberation was held at Watu Pinawetengan with the purpose of establishing customary laws and determining the territorial divisions of the Minahasan people (Gunawan & Prasadana, 2018). The Minahasa region was subsequently divided among several sub-ethnic groups: the Tontewoh (Tonsea) people occupied the northeastern area; the Tombulu people settled in the northern region; the Toulour people inhabited the eastern territory (*Atep*); and the Tompekawa people occupied the northwestern area, particularly east of Tombasian Besar (Rumengan, 2023). Historically, Minahasa did not recognize a monarchical system of government ruled by kings. Instead, leadership was organized through traditional community structures. The *Walian* functioned as religious leaders, custodians of customary law, and healers; the *Tonaas* were respected figures known for their expertise in agriculture and community leadership and were often selected as heads of the *walak* (traditional territorial units); the *Teterusan* served as war commanders; while the *Potuasan* acted as advisors within the social structure. In contemporary society, the major Minahasan sub-ethnic groups include the Tontemboan, Tonsea, Tombulu, Tondano, Pasan, Ponosakan, Toundangow Tombatu, Tou Bantik, and TonBabontewu communities of Manado Tua and Bunaken (Mokodenseho, 2020; Wenas, 2007).

Colonialism is commonly understood as a system of control, occupation, and exploitation exercised by one state over foreign territories and societies. It refers to the extension of political authority beyond a nation’s own jurisdiction in order to dominate and exploit other regions. Colonialism also represents a practice of domination involving the conquest of one people by another. Although its roots can be traced to ancient civilizations such as the Roman

Empire, colonialism is most closely associated with the era of European expansion from the sixteenth century until the mid-twentieth century. During this period, European powers established colonies across Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Australasia primarily to exploit natural resources and labor for economic gain (Nurmalasyari et al., 2024).

In Asia, particularly in Indonesia, colonialism provoked widespread resistance movements in many regions, including Tondano in Minahasa Regency. The arrival of foreign powers led directly to colonial practices that profoundly influenced Minahasan society and culture, the effects of which continue to be visible in the twenty-first century. Historical traces of resistance can still be observed through the remains of large wooden fortifications that once served as defensive structures during anti-colonial struggles. Today, these historical remains attract not only local communities but also international visitors (Bremen, 2024). The strategic importance, natural resources, and strong cultural identity of Minahasa made the region a target for foreign domination by several colonial powers. Consequently, this study seeks to examine historically the practices of colonialism in Minahasa and the violent conflicts that emerged as a result of the deeply rooted cultural identity and resistance of the Minahasan people.

This research is considered urgent for several reasons. First, studies concerning colonial resistance in Minahasa remain relatively limited in international academic discourse despite the region's significant contribution to anti-colonial movements in eastern Indonesia. Second, the preservation of Minahasan historical memory is increasingly important amid rapid modernization and globalization that threaten the continuity of local cultural identity. Third, understanding the historical dynamics of colonialism and indigenous resistance provides valuable insight into the formation of collective identity, nationalism, and cultural resilience among the Minahasan people. Finally, this study contributes to broader postcolonial and historical scholarship by highlighting local perspectives and indigenous experiences that have often been marginalized in mainstream colonial historiography.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Cultural Identity Theory

Cultural Identity Theory explains how a community's identity is formed through shared traditions, language, customs, beliefs, historical experiences, and collective values that are continuously transmitted across generations. Cultural identity is not merely an inherited characteristic, but also a social construct shaped by historical experiences and interactions with external forces, including colonialism (Servaes, 2012). According to cultural theorists, identity becomes stronger when a community faces external threats, social pressure, or political domination because members of the community develop a collective consciousness to preserve their cultural existence.

In the context of Minahasa Regency, Cultural Identity Theory is highly relevant to understanding the resistance of the Minahasan people against colonial powers. The concept of *Minahasa*, derived from the meaning "to become united,"

reflects the strong collective identity embedded within Minahasan society long before colonial intervention. Traditional institutions such as the *Walian*, *Tonaas*, and *Walak* demonstrate that the Minahasan people possessed established indigenous social and cultural systems that functioned as the foundation of social unity and communal solidarity (Barnett, 2009; Hecht et al., 2005).

The heroic actions carried out by the Minahasan people against colonialism can therefore be interpreted not only as political or military resistance, but also as a cultural struggle to defend indigenous identity, traditional values, and territorial sovereignty. Colonial domination threatened the continuity of local customs, leadership structures, and communal life, encouraging Minahasan communities to strengthen solidarity and preserve their cultural heritage. Through this perspective, resistance becomes a manifestation of collective cultural consciousness rooted in shared identity and historical memory.

Furthermore, Cultural Identity Theory supports this study in explaining how historical narratives, oral traditions, and cultural symbols continue to preserve the memory of anti-colonial resistance among contemporary Minahasan society. The remains of traditional defensive structures and the continued recognition of Minahasan cultural values indicate that collective identity remains an important element in shaping community memory and historical awareness.

Previous studies have also employed Cultural Identity Theory to analyze indigenous resistance and the preservation of local identity under colonial domination. Research conducted by Stuart Hall emphasized that cultural identity is continuously reconstructed through historical experience and collective memory, particularly in postcolonial societies. Similarly, studies on indigenous communities in Southeast Asia have shown that cultural identity often serves as a foundation for social resistance against colonial and external domination. Several historical studies in Indonesia have further demonstrated that local communities strengthened traditional values and collective solidarity in response to colonial intervention. These findings indicate that Cultural Identity Theory provides a strong conceptual framework for understanding how the Minahasan people maintained unity, defended their cultural heritage, and carried out heroic resistance against colonial powers.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a historical research method to examine the heroic resistance of the Minahasan people against colonialism, particularly through the historical significance of Fort Moraya. The historical method was selected because it enables researchers to investigate past events systematically through the collection, evaluation, interpretation, and reconstruction of historical evidence. This approach is appropriate for understanding the socio-cultural and historical context surrounding colonial practices and indigenous resistance in Minahasa.

The research utilized qualitative historical inquiry by combining primary and secondary sources. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted with key informants who possessed direct knowledge regarding the historical and cultural value of Fort Moraya. The informants included Mrs. Situmpul, Head of the Tourism Division at the Department of

Tourism and Culture of Minahasa Regency, and Mr. Maxi, a local tour guide at Fort Moraya. These interviews provided contextual information concerning the historical narratives, cultural meaning, and contemporary preservation of the site.

Secondary data were collected from various literature sources, including books, journal articles, historical archives, government documents, and other scholarly references related to Fort Moraya, colonialism in Minahasa, and indigenous resistance movements in North Sulawesi. The use of multiple literature sources was intended to strengthen historical interpretation and ensure the reliability of the findings through data triangulation.

Data analysis was conducted using historical analysis procedures consisting of heuristics, source criticism, interpretation, and historiography. The heuristic stage involved identifying and collecting relevant historical sources. Source criticism was applied to evaluate the credibility, authenticity, and relevance of both oral and written sources. Interpretation was then conducted to analyze the relationship between colonial practices, cultural identity, and resistance movements in Minahasa. Finally, historiography was employed to reconstruct the historical narrative systematically and academically. To ensure the validity of the research findings, the study applied source triangulation by comparing interview results with documentary and literature evidence. This process enabled the researcher to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the historical role of Fort Moraya and its significance in the anti-colonial struggle of the Minahasan people.

RESULTS

Minahasan Culture

Minahasan society is characterized by rich and deeply rooted cultural values. However, this study specifically focuses on the local wisdom of the Minahasan people, particularly the Tondano/Toulour community, by examining several important cultural values, namely *Maesa-esa'an*, *Mangenang-genangan*, *Masawang-sawangan*, *Matombo-tombolan*, *Malinga-lingaan*, *Mapalus*, and *Maleoleosan*.

1. *Maesa-esa'an*

Maesa-esa'an refers to the concept of unity and togetherness. This idea serves as a symbol for the Minahasan people in strengthening solidarity and social cohesion among community members. This value was observed in every village included in the research location. For example, Rerer Village consists of communities from various ethnic backgrounds, including Javanese, Batak, Minahasan, and others. Despite this diversity, the community continues to maintain unity as a manifestation of *Maesa-esa'an*.

This value is also reflected through the establishment of neighborhood associations, community gatherings (*arisan*), and village social organizations. For instance, when a member of the community experiences bereavement, all residents within the village participate in mourning activities and provide support to the affected family. Similarly, in Makalonsouw, the value of *Maesa-esa'an* is implemented through family associations. During funeral ceremonies,

family organizations conduct a communal meal known as *makan kasih*, which is intended to comfort and support grieving families after the mourning period.

2. Mängenang-genangan,

Mängenang-genangan refers to emotional bonds, mutual remembrance, and social awareness among community members. This cultural value emphasizes the importance of maintaining social relationships and showing concern for others. For example, when a death occurs within the community, individuals who fail to attend the mourning ceremony often experience feelings of shame and social discomfort because participation is considered a moral and social responsibility. This value is also expressed through mutual prayers, exchanging souvenirs or gifts, visiting one another, giving advice, reminding each other of moral responsibilities, and supporting individuals facing economic or social difficulties. Community members are encouraged to remember and assist those who are experiencing hardship.

In Kampung Jawa, *Mängenang-genangan* is implemented through a Cultural Preservation Association (*Arisan Pelestarian Budaya*), which functions as a forum for strengthening cultural awareness and maintaining social solidarity among both younger and older generations. This cultural value is also manifested through traditional artistic activities such as *rebana* performances, Javanese *shalawatan* conducted every Monday and Saturday night, and various cultural festivals. Although the forms of implementation and organizational structures may differ, the essential meaning of *Mängenang-genangan* remains the same, namely fostering mutual care, solidarity, and collective cultural identity within the community

3. Masawang-sawangan

Masawang-sawangan refers to mutual assistance and collective cooperation among community members. This cultural value is commonly expressed through village social gatherings and community-based support systems intended to help families during both joyful and sorrowful occasions. In Kampung Jawa, this value is manifested through village *arisan* activities involving nearly all members of the community, especially during ceremonies such as weddings, celebrations, or funeral events.

In other villages within Minahasa Regency, this concept is implemented through activities known as *kumaus* or weekly communal gatherings. These activities are usually held on Sundays following the death or burial of a community member. During the event, each household prepares food in their own home and brings it to the mourning family's house to be shared collectively. This practice represents a concrete expression of solidarity, mutual care, and cooperation within Minahasan society.

4. Matombo-tombolan

Matombo-tombolan means supporting and strengthening one another within the community. This value is reflected in everyday social life through the encouragement and protection of individuals who achieve success or occupy important social positions. According to this principle, community members should support those who attain leadership positions, such as village heads or

school principals, rather than attempting to undermine or discredit them. This attitude is considered one of the defining characteristics of Minahasan society.

The concept of *Matombo-tombolan* is also evident in educational support within families and communities. When children demonstrate academic achievement and aspire to pursue higher education, relatives and community members often provide financial assistance to help cover educational expenses. Through this support system, students are expected to complete their studies more easily and successfully. In this context, those who are more knowledgeable assist those with less educational experience, while economically capable individuals help those who are financially disadvantaged. Metaphorically, *Matombo-tombolan* can be compared to the pillars of a house that firmly support the roof structure. Although this cultural value continues to exist within contemporary Minahasan society, its practice is not as strong or widespread as it was in previous generations

5. Mapalus

Mapalus remains practiced within certain Minahasan communities, including Makalonsouw, although its implementation has become less common in recent years. This decline is associated with changing economic conditions and occupational shifts, as many community members have transitioned to other professions such as motorcycle taxi drivers, while increasing attention to formal education has also influenced traditional communal practices.

Mapalus generally refers to a rotating system of mutual assistance. In the agricultural context, *Mapalus* involves a group of approximately twenty members who take turns helping one another with farming activities. Each *Mapalus* group maintains its own customary regulations and working arrangements. For example, the *Mapalus* group in Makalonsouw applies a system in which members dedicate three days to assisting fellow group members and another three days to earning income for their own families. Participation in *Mapalus* is considered both an obligation and a reciprocal social responsibility among members. Assistance provided by one member is expected to be returned in a similar form by others. The group also maintains clear social rules; for instance, if Member A refuses to assist Member B, then Member B is not obligated to help Member A in the future. This reciprocal mechanism strengthens communal solidarity, responsibility, and cooperation within Minahasan society.

6. Malinga-lingaan

Malinga-lingaan, often interpreted as “mutual listening,” refers to the cultural practice of listening respectfully to one another in order to maintain harmony and social order within the community. This value emphasizes respect for communication, advice, and social hierarchy in everyday interactions. Within Minahasan society, younger individuals are expected to listen to elders, younger siblings are expected to respect older siblings, and community members are encouraged to pay attention when others are speaking, particularly when advice or guidance is being delivered.

According to this principle, individuals should listen carefully before responding and are only permitted to speak after being given the opportunity. Respect for differing opinions and for those who possess greater experience, age,

or leadership responsibilities is considered essential. When elders or community leaders speak, younger members of society are expected to listen attentively as a sign of respect and social discipline.

Through the practice of *Malinga-lingaan*, Minahasan communities seek to create a harmonious and orderly social environment. This cultural value contributes to conflict prevention, strengthens interpersonal relationships, and promotes peaceful coexistence within society.

7. Maleo-leosan

Maleo-leosan refers to attitudes and behaviors characterized by mutual affection, kindness, and compassion toward others. This cultural principle encourages individuals to care for one another and to maintain positive social relationships within the community. According to Minahasan cultural understanding, when people practice mutual love and kindness sincerely, society will experience conditions of peace, security, and social harmony.

Maleo-leosan is considered the highest and most fundamental value among other forms of Minahasan local wisdom because it serves as the moral foundation that supports the implementation of all other cultural principles. When *Maleo-leosan* is practiced properly, other cultural values can be realized more effectively, including *Maesa-esa'an* (unity), *Mangenang-genangan* (mutual remembrance and concern), *Masawang-sawangan* (mutual assistance), *Matombo-tombolan* (mutual support), *Malinga-lingaan* (mutual listening), and *Mapalus* (collective cooperation, especially in agricultural work). Therefore, *Maleo-leosan* functions as the central ethical principle that strengthens solidarity, social responsibility, compassion, and communal harmony within Minahasan society.

Minahasa: A Contested Land

The arrival of European powers, particularly the Dutch, in Minahasa Regency transformed the region into an area of strategic and economic importance for colonial interests. Minahasa also became a center for the spread of Christianity, which constituted one of the major motivations behind the arrival of Western powers in the region. However, the colonial ambition to accumulate wealth through the exploitation of local resources resulted in various forms of oppression and violence within Minahasa. Minahasa was widely recognized as a fertile region rich in agricultural commodities such as cloves, rice, copra, and coffee. Even today, the economic life of Minahasan communities continues to be closely associated with rice and clove production. Based on field observations, cloves are regarded not only as an economic commodity but also as a historical and cultural symbol of North Sulawesi, particularly within Minahasan society. In the 1970s, Minahasa was officially recognized as one of the largest and most prosperous clove-producing regions in Indonesia. Cloves became a source of prosperity and collective pride; however, the historical trajectory of the clove industry in Minahasa also reflects painful experiences associated with colonial exploitation. The fertile land of Minahasa made the region highly attractive to colonial powers seeking economic profit from plantation agriculture.

During the colonial period, the Dutch implemented a forced cultivation system requiring local residents throughout Minahasa to cultivate coffee

plantations. Supervisors were brought from Priangan, West Java, to oversee agricultural production. At one point, Minahasan coffee became a highly valuable export commodity with a market price exceeding that of coffee produced in other parts of the Indonesian archipelago, which was valued at only four guilders. Despite their labor, local communities were prohibited from consuming or selling the coffee they produced. Violations of these colonial regulations often resulted in harsh punishments that created long-lasting trauma among the Minahasan people.

The extraordinary fertility of Minahasan soil also encouraged agricultural transformation over time. After many coffee plantations were cleared, clove trees began to be cultivated extensively across the region. These clove plantations grew rapidly and became productive within approximately five to ten years. According to *The History of the National Awakening of North Sulawesi* (1978), clove cultivation in Minahasa began around 1878, and by 1940 the number of clove trees had reached approximately 300,000. This remarkable growth reflected the increasing economic importance of cloves within the region. According to Raymond, when clove production flourished in Minahasa, the kretek cigarette industry simultaneously expanded in Java, relying heavily on cloves as one of its primary raw materials. Consequently, Minahasan cloves became highly contested commodities within colonial economic networks. The abundance of natural resources and the fertility of Minahasan land contributed significantly to the implementation of forced labor systems aimed at maximizing colonial profit. These exploitative practices triggered resistance movements that resulted in substantial loss of life as Minahasan communities struggled to defend their dignity, honor, and rights. Culturally, the Minahasan people have long been recognized for strongly upholding personal and communal dignity. However, the presence of European colonial powers introduced forms of domination and treatment that were perceived as degrading and oppressive toward Minahasan society.

Colonial practices in Tondano illustrate the broader exploitation of Minahasan land and communities carried out by several foreign powers, including the British, Portuguese, and Dutch. These practices were strongly rejected by the people of Tondano and Minahasa. The name *Tondano* is derived from the phrase *Tou Dano*, in which *Tou* means "people" or "land," while *Dano* means "lake." Geographically, the Tondano region is closely associated with wetlands and rice fields nourished by abundant water sources surrounding the lake area. These environmental conditions made the region exceptionally fertile and agriculturally productive. The fertility and strategic importance of the Tondano area attracted increasing foreign interest and eventually stimulated attempts to dominate both the territory and its surrounding population. As a result, Tondano became one of the central locations of colonial contestation and indigenous resistance in Minahasa.

The Smell of Blood

Political rivalry and economic competition among European powers significantly contributed to the era of maritime exploration aimed at discovering

territories with high economic value. The spirit of expansion and persistence among European nations eventually led to the discovery of the East Indies. The well-known motives of *Gold, Glory, and Gospel* (3G) became inseparable from these overseas expeditions. One of the regions that later attracted considerable colonial interest was Minahasa Regency. The arrival of European powers in Minahasa affected nearly every aspect of local life. Colonial practices emerged systematically without regard for social conditions, human suffering, or local traditions. Resistance from the indigenous population inevitably followed. Between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, various conflicts occurred in response to foreign domination, particularly when the Spanish attempted to monopolize trade in Minahasa. However, following the Treaty of Zaragoza, which resulted from negotiations between Spain and Portugal in the Maluku region and was preceded by the Treaty of Tordesillas, Spanish influence gradually shifted toward Manila, leaving Minahasa under Dutch control.

The Dutch subsequently attempted to impose monopolistic control over the rice trade and required the Minahasan people to sell their agricultural products exclusively to Dutch authorities. These policies were strongly rejected by local communities. In addition, the Dutch blocked the flow of the Temberen River, one of the outlets of Lake Tondano, which caused severe flooding in surrounding areas. As a consequence, many residents adapted by constructing elevated stilt houses to survive the environmental changes created by colonial intervention. These events marked the increasing domination of Minahasa by the Dutch East India Company. In 1799, however, the VOC collapsed due to widespread corruption and growing trade competition with Britain. Following its dissolution, the colonial territories previously controlled by the VOC were taken over directly by the Dutch government, placing Minahasa under formal Dutch colonial administration.

At the time, the Dutch government was engaged in efforts to defend Java from British attacks and therefore required additional military forces. The Dutch attempted to recruit Minahasan youth because they were widely recognized for their bravery and military capabilities. However, many Minahasan youths rejected this recruitment policy, leading to violent armed conflict. A devastating war subsequently occurred in the Tondano region and eventually ended with Dutch victory. Following the conflict, Dutch forces destroyed and burned the settlements of *Tou Dano*. The term *Moraya* literally means “the smell of blood.” This name symbolizes the heroic struggle of the Minahasan people in resisting colonial domination on their homeland. The bloodshed resulting from these conflicts transcended gender and social status, as men and women alike participated in the struggle until the last drop of blood. The fierce resistance caused the Tondano area, considered the center of Minahasan resistance, to be flooded with the blood of its people. Although the Minahasans ultimately suffered defeat, their courage and determination to fight until the end became an enduring example of patriotism for future generations.

To commemorate this historical struggle, the Department of Tourism and Culture of Minahasa Regency established Fort Moraya. Originally known as *Fort Tou Dano*, the name *Tou Dano* refers to “the people of the water village” or “the

settlement above the water.” Initially, the fort functioned as a defensive structure used by Minahasan communities to protect themselves from attacks by the Mongondow people from the southern region. Constructed from massive wooden logs, the fort carries a long and tragic historical legacy. The primary defensive structures of the Minahasan people consisted of large *cempaka* wood logs. *Cempaka* wood was highly valued in North Sulawesi because of its exceptional quality and durability. These large wooden structures became symbols of protection and resilience for Minahasan communities. Their height and thickness provided effective shelter and defensive barriers during periods of conflict.

However, with the arrival of European colonial powers, the nature of conflict shifted from inter-ethnic warfare toward anti-colonial resistance. Fort Moraya therefore stands as an important historical legacy representing the struggle of the Minahasan people to defend their territory, dignity, and cultural identity. The name *Moraya* itself remains closely associated with the heroic spirit and sacrifice demonstrated by the Minahasan people during their resistance against colonial forces.

Fort in the Twenty-First Century

In 2009, the government of Minahasa Regency initiated the development of a tourism site in the former battlefield area associated with the anti-Dutch resistance in Tondano. During the excavation process, workers discovered large wooden remains and fragments of *waruga* stone tombs, which are traditional Minahasan burial structures. Recognizing the historical significance of these findings, the local government collected and preserved the excavation remains by placing them in the rear section of the reconstructed fort complex, which was later built using concrete materials. At the front courtyard of Fort Moraya stand twelve carved pillars depicting various aspects of Minahasan life and scenes from the bloody colonial wars. The fort was officially named “Fort Moraya,” with *Moraya* meaning “the smell of blood.” This naming serves as a symbolic reminder of the historical struggle of the Minahasan people, who fought courageously and sacrificed their lives in defense of their dignity, identity, and homeland.

In addition to the fort structure, the government also constructed an amphitheater designed for musical performances, cultural events, and community activities. The walls surrounding the complex are engraved with the names of prominent Minahasan family clans (*fam*), emphasizing the collective historical memory and cultural identity of the Minahasan people. As a silent witness to history, Fort Moraya has become deeply connected to various historical events, ranging from heroic battles to broader social transformations across different historical periods. The symbols and reliefs carved into the walls of the fort are not merely decorative ornaments; each detail represents important historical values and serves as a testimony to the past glory of the Tondano people. These artistic representations also document the historical development of Tondano and preserve the memory of resistance against colonial domination.

The history embodied within Fort Moraya continues to be remembered as a symbol of courage, resistance, and the enduring identity of the Tondano

community. Today, Fort Moraya stands as an important historical and cultural destination. Every carved symbol and engraved relief reflects the greatness and resilience of the Tondano people. Amid rapid modernization, the fort remains firmly preserved, reminding visitors of the region's historical legacy while offering meaningful cultural and educational experiences. At present, Fort Moraya functions both as an educational site and as a recreational destination. As a source of historical learning, the fort provides insight into the anti-colonial struggles of the Minahasan people, while simultaneously serving as a cultural tourism attraction for local, national, and international visitors.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Political conflicts and economic competition in Europe significantly influenced global history through the era of maritime exploration and the discovery of territories that later became interconnected through international trade and colonial expansion. The East Indies emerged as one of the world's most important centers of spice production, including Minahasa Regency in North Sulawesi. The natural wealth and fertile land of Minahasa played a crucial role in supporting the prosperity and expansion of European colonial powers from the fifteenth to the twentieth century. The region's agricultural potential enabled the cultivation of highly valuable commodities such as coffee, cloves, coconuts, and rice, which became central to colonial economic interests.

The Minahasan people themselves also contributed significantly to sustaining the colonial economy in the East Indies. Local communities were forced to work primarily as agricultural laborers and were often prohibited from freely using or trading the products they cultivated. These exploitative colonial practices eventually generated resistance among the Minahasan people. Despite limited resources and simple military equipment, local communities organized various forms of resistance against colonial domination. The Minahasan people utilized boats to conduct resistance movements through swamp and lake areas, while wooden fortifications served as defensive structures against colonial attacks. These traditional strategies demonstrate the resilience, courage, and collective solidarity of Minahasan society in defending their dignity, territory, and cultural identity. The heroic struggle of the Minahasan people against colonialism remains an important historical legacy that continues to be remembered and transmitted across generations.

Recommendations

This study recommends that greater attention be given to the preservation of historical sites and cultural heritage related to anti-colonial resistance in Minahasa, particularly Fort Moraya. Local governments, educational institutions, and cultural organizations should strengthen historical education and cultural preservation programs to ensure that younger generations understand the historical significance of Minahasan resistance against colonialism.

Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to conduct broader interdisciplinary studies concerning Minahasan history, indigenous resistance, and cultural identity by integrating perspectives from history, anthropology, cultural studies, and postcolonial studies. Additional documentation and

international publication of Minahasan historical heritage are also important in promoting global recognition of local resistance movements and indigenous historical experiences in Indonesia.

FURTHER STUDY

This study acknowledges several limitations, particularly regarding the availability and scope of historical literature related to the struggle of the Minahasan people against colonialism. Therefore, future research is encouraged to expand and deepen scholarly exploration concerning Minahasan resistance movements, considering that the fertile land of Minahasa Regency was closely connected to the arrival and colonial interests of Western powers in the Indonesian archipelago.

In addition to its rich natural resources, Minahasan society has historically been recognized for its bravery, strong warrior traditions, and collective solidarity. These cultural characteristics are reflected in the traditional Kabasaran Dance, which symbolizes courage, unity, discipline, and gratitude among the Minahasan people of North Sulawesi. Future studies are therefore recommended to examine more comprehensively the relationship between Minahasan cultural identity, traditional arts, indigenous resistance, and anti-colonial movements. Interdisciplinary approaches integrating history, anthropology, cultural studies, and postcolonial perspectives would contribute significantly to a broader understanding of Minahasan heritage and its role within Indonesian historical narratives.

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