The governorship of Kielstra turned out to be the ultimate expression of authoritarian colonial rule. World War II reshuffled the cards in Suriname and internationally. In a twist of irony, in 1944 Kielstra was removed from his post because his administration fostered social unrest, thus undermining the war effort. This chapter reviews socioeconomic, political, cultural, and demographic developments in the decades between the beginning of the war in Suriname and independence. It was a heady time of economic progress and increasing political and cultural awareness.

The war jump started the economy. The expansion of the bauxite sector had great impact on the economic growth rate as well as on society. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of bauxite to Suriname’s small economy. Between the end of the war and independence, the industry generated approximately one-third of GDP. In addition, the sector contributed immensely to government revenues through taxation and other transfers. However, volatility in world market prices, revenues, and income directly affected government spending. Bauxite revenues, and Dutch development funds, not only financed the growing civil service sector, but also comprehensive plans to strengthen and expand the economy. Many of these development plans focused on the interior and the systematic exploitation of natural resources. In the postwar era, the primary responsibility for setting economic objectives was in the hands of Surinamese rather than Dutch officials.

This changed relationship with the Netherlands was also an outcome of World War II. In 1954 Suriname became autonomous, with independence following in 1975. However, in the quest for more autonomy, the political landscape was divided by ethnic and religious affairs. As a result, the newly formed political parties were based on ethnicity, not ideology. A coalition of Creole, Javanese, and Hindustani parties governed the country in the late 1950s and 1960s. These political alliances linked class and ethnic emancipation as it advanced the interests of the Afro-Surinamese working class, the Javanese and the Hindustanis. This broad emancipation was

R. Hoefte, *Suriname in the Long Twentieth Century* © Rosemarijn Hoefte 2014
based on patronage: an increasing number of people joined the expanding ranks of the civil service on the basis of their political allegiance.

In the wake of the country’s political emancipation came the development of trade unions. In Suriname, politics and trade unionism traditionally have been interwoven. When the unions became more independent from political parties, they slowly but surely increased their influence. The significance of the unions reached its peak between 1965 and 1975, as expressed during the massive strikes of 1966, 1969, and 1973. For the first time in history, union actions brought down a government.

Finally, this review chapter focuses on social and cultural developments—emphasizing the role of culture and education as both a vehicle of emancipation and as a way to strengthen Dutch cultural hegemony—and demographic transformations that changed Suriname from an immigration to an emigration country, when thousands of Surinamese per year left their home country in the years preceding independence.

**World War II in Suriname**

The Nazi invasion of the Netherlands on May 10, 1940 had immediate political and social repercussions: the governor proclaimed martial law and ordered the imprisonment of all Germans in the colony. In the early morning of May 10, 73 German men as well as several anticolonial activists were rounded up. Later, nine more German men, 45 women, and 35 children were incarcerated, regardless of whether they were Nazi sympathizers or not. Most of these Germans were members of the Moravian Church and their arrest could not count on much approval, particularly not among the older generation. The sinking of the German vessel Goslar by its crew in the harbor of Paramaribo was another immediate and visible reminder of the war situation (Van der Horst 2004: 15–18, 69–80, 90; Scholtens 1991: 8–9). In addition, Suriname bordered French Guiana, at that time enemy territory as it was in the hands of the pro-Nazi Vichy regime.

As in several Caribbean colonies there was active support for the Allied war effort. There existed a lively interest in the situation in the Netherlands. Hugo Pos, the first Surinamese to return from occupied Holland to his home country recalls in his autobiography that Bellevue theater was chockfull to hear him speak about his war-time experiences (Pos 1995: 53). Money was raised to support the Red Cross, buy a Spitfire, and send relief packages.

Local civil defense organizations, organized in 1942, drafted men of all ethnic groups to work together to guard the country against possible attacks and civil unrest, and to help with the rationing and distribution of food and fuel. At its height, the Schutterij counted some 5,000 men. At first the majority of Javanese and Hindustani recruits were not accepted as they did not speak Dutch. In 1943 this requirement was waved; in addition,