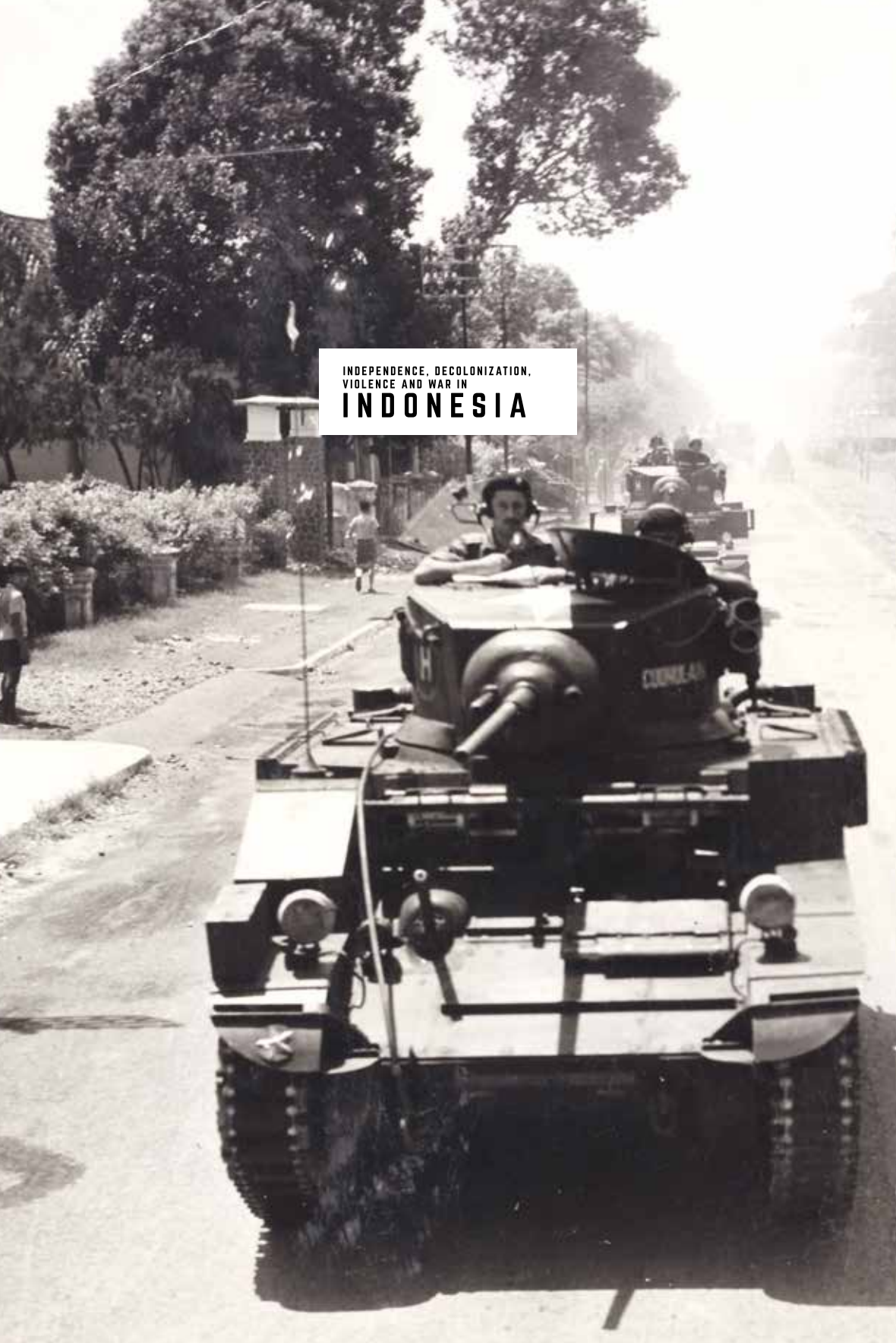
BEYOND THE PALE

DUTCH EXTREME VIOLENCE IN THE INDONESIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1945-1949



AUP

BEYOND THE PALE

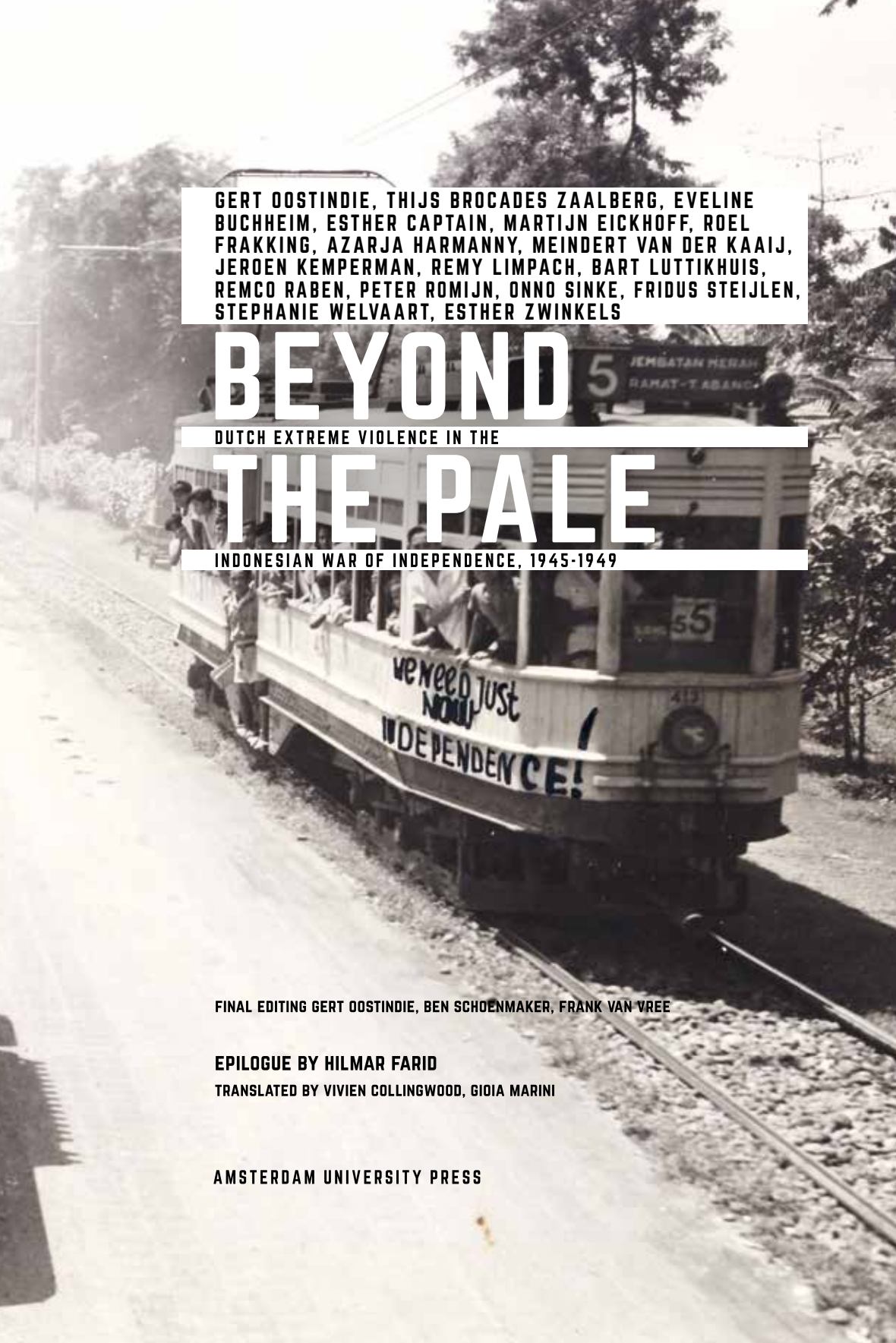


INDEPENDENCE, DECOLONIZATION, VIOLENCE AND WAR IN INDONESIA

GERT OOSTINDIE, THIJS BROCADES ZAALBERG, EVELINE BUCHHEIM, ESTHER CAPTAIN, MARTIJN EICKHOFF, ROEL FRAKKING, AZARJA HARMANNY, MEINDERT VAN DER KAAIJ, JEROEN KEMPERMAN, REMY LIMPACH, BART LUTTIKHUIS, REMCO RABEN, PETER ROMIJN, ONNO SINKE, FRIDUS STEIJLEN, STEPHANIE WELVAART, ESTHER ZWINKELS

BEYOND THE PALE

DUTCH EXTREME VIOLENCE IN THE INDONESIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE, 1945-1949



FINAL EDITING GERT OOSTINDIE, BEN SCHOENMAKER, FRANK VAN VREE

EPILOGUE BY HILMAR FARID

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Cover image: *Wayang Perjuangan* or *Wayang Revolusi,* a variant of shadow play (*Wayang Kulit*), was used between 1946 and 1949 in a call to the people to defend Indonesian independence. In the image on the cover of this book, on the left we see General Simon Spoor, the commander of the Dutch land forces, and on the right we see Sukarno, the president of the Republic. In the *wayang* tradition, the figure on the left depicts the bad, losing party, and the figure on the right the good, victorious party. The *wayang* figures on the cover were created by Ki Ledjar Soebroto (1938-2017), a renowned *wayang* player and maker of *wayang* puppets. These puppets form part of the larger collection that he created for the exhibition *Wayang Revolusi* in Museum Bronbeek (2009).

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Map 1


Overview Map of Indonesia
(FRENCH INDOCHINA)
Cam Ranh Bay
CAMBODIA
VIETNAM
SOUTH CHINA
SEA
THE PHILIPPINES
LEYTE
PACIFIC
OCEAN
The Netherlands on the same scale
PALAU
BRUNEI
(NORTH BORNEO)
MALAYSIA
(SARAWAK)
MALAYSIA
(BRITISH MALAYA)
Medan
SIMEULUE
Singapore
NIAS
SUMATRA
BATU ISLANDS
Padang
MENTAWAI ISLANDS
BANGKA
BELITUNG
Palembang
KALIMANTAN
(BORNEO)
Pontianak
Balikpapan
Banjarmasin
CELEBES SEA
Manado
HALMAHERA
MOLUCCA-
STRAIT
MAKASSAR
SULAWESI
(CELEBES)
Kendari
Makassar
MOLUCCAS
SEA
SERAM
AMBON
PAPUA
(NETHERLANDS NEW GUINEA)
BANDA
KEI ISLANDS
BANDA SEA
ARU ISLANDS
TANIMBAR ISLANDS
BABAR
TIMOR-LESTE
(PORTUGUESE TIMOR)
ARAFURA SEA
TIMOR
TIMOR SEA
Darwin
AUSTRALIA
JAVA SEA
Jakarta
(Batavia)
JAVA
MADURA
P. KAGEAN
P. SAPUDI
BALI
Surabaya
Yogyakarta
Lombok Strait
FLORES SEA
SUMBAWA
LOMBOK
FLORES
SUMBA
INDIAN
OCEAN
0
250
500 km
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH


Dutch-occupied area on Java
SUMATRA
JAVA SEA
BAWEAN
KRAKATAU
SUNDA STRAIT
BANTEN
Tangerang
JAKARTA
(BATAVIA)
Balongsari
(Rawagede)
KRAWANG
Bogor
(Buitenzorg)
Bandung
PRIANGAN
Cirebon
Linggarjati
Tegal
Pekalongan
Jepara
Rembang
Semarang
Ambarawa
BANYUMAS KEDU
Tasikmalaya
Purwokerto
Cilacap
Magelang
Surakarta
(Solo)
Klaten
Purworejo
BAGELEN
Yogyakarta
Ngawi
Madiun
KEDIRI
Kediri
Malang
Surabaya
MADURA
Bangkalan
Sumenep
Pamekasan
MADURA STRAIT
Probolinggo
Banyuwangi
BALI
INDIAN
OCEAN
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH
Legend
Dutch-occupied area on Java
before Operation Product
Dutch-occupied area on Java
during Operation Product
North Madura followed in November 1947
Dutch-occupied area on Java
during Operation Kraai
Demarcation line 1947
0
50
100 km

Map 2

Map 3


Dutch-occupied area on Sumatra
BAY OF BENGAL
SOUTH CHINA SEA
Banda Aceh (Koetaradja)
PENANG
MALAYSIA (BRITISH MALAYA)
Meulaboh
Medan
Lake Toba
Singkel
Tapos
Barus
Sibolga
SIMEULUE
Melaka (Malacca)
MALACCA STRAIT
SINGAPORE
RIAU ISLANDS
Daludalu
SUMATRA
NIAS
Natal
Air Bangis
Bonjol
Payakumbuh
Rengat
BATU ISLANDS
Bukittinggi (Fort de Kock)
Pariaman
Reteh
SINGKEP
Padang
Jambi
Muntok
Pangkal Pinang
BANGKA
MENTAWAI ISLANDS
Bangkakota
Palembang
PAGAI ISLANDS
INDIAN OCEAN
BELITUNG
Bengkulu
JAVA SEA
ENGGANO
JAKARTA (BATAVIA)
JAVA
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH
Legend
Dutch-occupied area on Sumatra before Operation Product
Dutch-occupied area on Sumatra during Operation Product
Dutch-occupied area on Sumatra during Operation Kraai
0
100
200 km


West Java
Map 4
SUNDA STRAIT
KRAKATAU
BANTEN
P. Kapal
(Onrust Island)
JAKARTA
(BATAVIA)
Tangerang
Cililitan
Balongsari
(Rawagede)
JAVA SEA
KRAWANG
Cikampek
Bogor
(Buitenzorg)
Puraseda
Ciawi
Maleber
Sukabumi
Ciharashas
Cimahi
Bandung
Cirebon
Tegal
Linggarjati
Kuningan
Balapulang
PRIANGAN
Baruhtunggul
Garut
Citabu
SALEM
Tasikmalaya
Purwokerto
Kalibagor
BANYUMAS
INDIAN
NUSA KAMBANGAN
Cilacap
OCEAN
0
25
50 km
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH


Central Java
J A V A S E A
Cirebon
Tegal
Pekalongan
Jepara
Rembang
Demak
Semarang
Dempet
Gubug
Linggarjati
Kuningan
Balapulang
Citabu
S A L E M
Ambarawa
Banyubiru
K E D U
Salatiga
Tasikmalaya
Purwokerto
Kalibagor
B A N Y U M A S
Magelang
Surakarta
(Solo)
Ngawi
Jombang
Madiun
Karanganyar
Kebumen
B A G E L E N
Purworejo
G.MERAPI
Klaten
Cilacap
NUSA KAMBANGAN
Yogyakarta
K E D I R I
Kediri
Pakisaji
I N D I A N O C E A N
0
25
50 km
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH


East Java
J A V A S E A
Jepara
Rembang
Demak
Semarang
Dempet
Gubug
Ambarawa
Banyubiru
Salatiga
Solo
Ngawi
Surakarta
(Solo)
G.MERAPI
Klaten
Yogyakarta
Madiun
Kediri
K E D I R I
Pakisaji
Malang
Jombang
Mojokerto
Brantas
Gresik
Cerme
Surabaya
Sidoarjo
Bangkalan
M A D U R A
Sumenep
Pamekasan
M A D U R A S T R A I T
Trawas
Probolinggo
Pasir Putih
Kadangjati
Kulon
Bondowoso
Lengang
Jember
Sempusari
Banyuwangi
B A L I
I N D I A N O C E A N
0
25
50 km
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH

Map 9

Map 7


Sumatra
BAY OF BENGAL
SOUTH
CHINA
SEA
PENANG
MALAYSIA
(BRITISH MALAYA)
Banda Aceh
(Koetaradja)
ACEH
Meulaboh
Medan
Tebing Tinggi
Lake Toba
SIMEULUE
Singkel
Tapos
Barus
Rantau Prapat
Sibolga
Melaka
(Malacca)
MALACCA STRAIT
SINGAPORE
RIAU
ISLANDS
SUMATRA
NIAS
Natal
Daludal
Air Bangis
Bonjol
BATU
ISLANDS
Bukittinggi
(Fort de Kock)
Payakumbuh
Rengat
Padang
Panjang
Pariaman
Reteh
SINGKEP
Padang
MENTAWAI
ISLANDS
Jambi
Muntok
Pangkal Pinang
BANGKA
Bangkakota
Palembang
PAGAI
ISLANDS
INDIAN
OCEAN
Bengkulu
BELITUNG
JAVA SEA
ENGGANO
JAKARTA
(BATAVIA)
JAVA
0
100
200 km
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH

Map 8


South Sulawesi
(South Celebes)
LUWU
Barupu
Mamasa
TORAJA
Rante Pao
Palopo
Sepang
Makale
MASENREMPULU
LUWU
BINUANG
Balanipa
PINRANG
Majene
BAY OF
MANDAR
Enrekang
SAWITTO
Pinrang
Rappang
Suppa
Pare-Pare
WAJO
BAY OF BONI
JAVA SEA
SIDENRENG
Sengkang
Pampanua
SOPPENG
Pasempa
Watampone
(Bone)
TANETTE
BONE
Mara
Maros
MAKASSAR
Balangnipa
Sinjai
GOA
Limbung
Takalar
Polombangkeng
Bonthain
Bulukumba
Turatea
Jeneponto
Selayar
0
25
50 km
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH

Map 9


Bali
B A L I S E A
Buleleng
Bungkulan
Singaraja
Jagaraga
B U L E L E N G
G. SILANGJANA
G.BRATAN
G. BATUR
G. LESONG
BT. POHEN
G. ABANG
J E M B R A N A
K A R A N G
BT. BATUKAU
B A N G L I
G. AGUNG
T A B A N A N
A S E M
Blimbing
Karangasem
KLUNG-
KUNG
Klungkung
M E N G W I
G I A N Y A R
I N D I A N
Sanur
Denpasar
NUSA PENIDA
B A D U N G
O C E A N
B A D U N G S T R A I T
S L O M B O K S T R A I T
0
10
20 km
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH

Map 10


Kalimantan (Borneo)
SOUTH CHINA SEA
(NORTH BORNEO)
MALAYSIA
BRUNEI
TIDUNG
TARAKAN
BULUNGAN
CELEBES SEA
(SARAWAK)
Kayan
Berau
Long Nawang
Kuching
Pemangkat
Sambas
Singkawang
Landak
SINTANG
Montrado
Mempawah
Mandor
Sanggau
Sintang
Pontianak
Landak
Tajan
KUTAI
Mahakam
Samarinda
Muara Teweh
MAKASSAR
Sukadana
KARIMATA
Barito
PASIR
Balikpapan
Buntok
Kahajan
Kapuas
KOTA WARINGIN
BANJARMASIN
STRAIT
Kota Waringin
Sampit
Amuntai
Margasari
Kendangan
Kualakapuas
Marabahan
Pengaron
Banjarmasin
Martapura
Tabanio
JAVA SEA
0 50 100 km
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH

Map 11


Papua (Netherlands New Guinea)
WAIGEO
Koor
Wakre
Sorong
Manokwari
SALAWATI
PAPUA
JAZIRAH DOBERAI
(BIRD'S HEAD PENINSULA)
MISOOL
SERAM SEA
MACCLUER GULF
Wahai
SERAM
Bula
Fak-Fak
ONI
BOMBARAI
TELUTI BAY
GESER
WATUBELA ISLANDS
BANDA SEA
KEI ISLANDS
Kaimana
ETNA BAY
Modowi
Wanapiri
Nabire
INEW - GUINEA
Danau Paniai (Wissel Lakes)
Mimika
TELUK CENDERAWASIH
MOOR ISLANDS
Waren
SUPIORI
BIAK ISLANDS
BIAK
Biak
NUMFUR
WUNDI
PADAIDO
JAPEN
Serui
Jobi
Sarmi
Tariku
vDaalen
BALIEM VALLEY
Jayapura (Hollandia)
Ifar
PACIFIC OCEAN
Agats
Otsjanep
COOKS BAY
Soba
Tanahmerah (Upper Digul)
Asike
Digoel
Kibol
DOLOK
Okaba
Merauke
Dobo
ARU ISLANDS
Koba
TANIMBAR ISLANDS
YAMDENA
ARAFURA SEA
0
100 km
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH

Map 12


Moluccas
TALAUD ISLANDS
SANGIHE ISLANDS
Siau
MOROTAI
Manado
SULAWESI
(CELEBES)
Ternate
Tidore
Motir
Makian
HALMAHERA
MOLUCCA
SEA
BACAN
ISLANDS
MOLUCCAS
PAPUA
ISLANDS
PAPUA
(NETHERLANDS
NEW GUINEA)
SULA
ISLANDS
SERAM SEA
Hoamoal
SERAM
BURU
AMBON
GORAM
ISLANDS
BANDA
ISLANDS
BANDA SEA
KEI
ISLANDS
ARU
ISLANDS
Neira
Gunung
Api
Bandaneira
Ai
Run
BANDA
ISLANDS
Lontor
Rosengain
0
5 km
0
100 km
SERAM
Hoamoal
STRAIT
MANIPA
Manipa
BURU
Hitu
Haruku
Saparua
AMBON
Ambon city
Leitimor
Ambon Bay
0
50 km
Cartography: Erik van Oosten - NIMH

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I.
INTRODUCTION

1.

Background, guiding principles and methodology

Gert Oostindie

Between 1945 and 1949, Indonesia defended its recently declared independence, and the Netherlands waged its last major colonial war.[1] Much is now known about this war, but a great deal has also remained unclear or contested. At the end of 2016, the second Rutte cabinet decided to finance a broad-based study – conducted by the KITLV, the NIMH and NIOD[2] – on the Dutch military conduct during this conflict.[3] This book presents the conclusions of that study. In this chapter, the background, guiding principles and methodology of the study will be explained.

The war and its aftermath in the Netherlands

On 17 August 1945, Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta proclaimed the Republic of Indonesia. Their proclamation of independence came two days after the Japanese capitulation, which had brought an end to the Second World War and paved the way for the departure of the Japanese occupation forces from Indonesia. The Japanese occupation, which had lasted three and a half years, had effectively brought an end to the Dutch East Indies in 1942. The Dutch government refused to accept Sukarno and Hatta's proclamation of

independence and initially sought to recolonize the archipelago – that is, to restore its colonial authority. From 1946, Dutch policy was geared towards a process of decolonization under the auspices of the Dutch government. This was made conditional upon a restoration of 'calm and order' – or, as a later wording put it, 'order and peace' – that had to be enforced by military means. It was for this reason that this process – which from the Dutch perspective was concluded on 27 December 1949 with the transfer of sovereignty – was characterized by not only protracted negotiations, but also bitter warfare. The war took a very unequal toll, as demonstrated by the fatalities documented by the Dutch armed forces: approximately 5,300 deaths on the Dutch side, of which half were the result of accidents or disease, compared to possibly 100,000 soldiers and civilians killed on the Indonesian side as a result of Dutch violence.[4]

The Dutch authorities justified the war as necessary for restoring calm and order. Hidden behind this justification were economic and geopolitical interests as well as a colonial sense of obligation to help the colony in its development. More specifically, the Republic was portrayed as nothing more than a Japanese fabrication, while the restoration of order was allegedly focused primarily on protecting the European population – and other groups affiliated with the colonial regime – from the revolutionary violence. By contrast, the Indonesian nationalists saw the return of the Dutch military and colonial administration as an act of aggression and an attempt to restore the colonial order. This remains the leading view in Indonesia, a view that comes in many variations. This period is seen by Indonesians as a Dutch attempt to 'reoccupy' and 'recolonize' the archipelago, and by the same token as the 'defence of our independence'.

The Dutch government's standpoint has since evolved from one of justifying its own policy to that of concluding that the Netherlands had stood 'on the wrong side of history' during these war years. With this statement, pronounced in 2005 by the then Minister of Foreign Affairs Ben Bot, the Dutch government 'generously' accepted the legitimacy of the proclamation of independence both 'politically and morally', reaffirming 'earlier expressions of regret'. In his speech, Minister Bot described the entire history as 'extremely bitter for everyone involved: for the Indo-Dutch community, for the Dutch soldiers, but first and foremost for the Indonesian population itself'. In doing so, he made a statement about the appropriateness – and implicitly also the legitimacy – of the Dutch decision to deploy military resources on a large scale.[5]

Bot was less explicit about the way in which the Dutch military had waged this war, even though he did say that 'the separation of Indonesia from the Netherlands took longer and was accompanied by more military violence than was necessary'. In 2020 in Indonesia, King Willem-Alexander unequivocally offered excuses for the 'excessive violence on the part of the Dutch'. He did not, however, make clear whether these excesses had been incidental or more structural in nature. The idea that these excesses were 'merely' incidents has been questioned for some time. Nonetheless, the government stance formulated in 1969 by Prime Minister Piet de Jong – which states that while regrettable 'excesses' did occur, 'the armed forces as a whole acted correctly in Indonesia' – to this day remains unrevised.[6]

The De Jong cabinet made this assessment on the basis of the 'Memorandum on excesses' (*Excessennota*), a government-commissioned survey of cases of excessive violence documented in the available archives — a survey that was not considered complete even by the government researchers who had worked on it. The memorandum had been written in much haste in reaction to revelations by war veteran Joop Hueting about crimes committed by Dutch soldiers – revelations that had caused considerable public and political commotion. Although new disclosures have since been made on a fairly regular basis and renewed publicity has been given to well-known cases, successive governments have never reconsidered this 1969 stance. Neither did these revelations lead to the prosecution of perpetrators of individual or collective acts of violence generally referred to as 'excesses' and 'excessive violence'. Indeed, in 1971 the government even deliberately pressed for a statute of limitations for war crimes committed by its own armed forces in Indonesia.[7] It was not until 2011 that a start was made on offering the victims serious reparations.

In the decades following 1969, the debate in the Netherlands was cursory, with short episodes of publicity in between long periods in which there was little public interest in the matter. One such episode of public attention occurred when the Dutch East Indies sections of Loe de Jong's scholarly tome *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* [The Kingdom of the Netherlands during the Second World War] was published. De Jong, who was highly critical in his assessment of Dutch political and military policy, only agreed *not* to use the term 'war crimes' after coming under considerable pressure from veterans of the Indonesian war and their sympathizers. In 1995, Queen Beatrix's state visit to Indonesia generated a new wave

of discussions. The visit prompted much publicity, including a startling TV documentary about Dutch atrocities in Rawagede. Well in advance of the state visit, Lower House Speaker Wim Deetman had called for a debate on the Dutch military action during the war against the Republic of Indonesia. His call fell on deaf ears, however, and once again there was silence. This silence was maintained until the second Balkenende cabinet made the aforementioned statements— through the mouthpiece of Bot — on the eve of the sixtieth anniversary of the 17th of August, Indonesia's proclamation of independence.

The public silence was once again broken in 2011 when a ground-breaking court ruling was issued in response to civil claims over the massacre in Rawagede. The claims were submitted by Liesbeth Zegveld, a lawyer, on behalf of the Committee of Dutch Debts of Honour (*Stichting Comité Nederlandse Ereschulden*, which goes by the Indonesian acronym KUKB) chaired by Jeffry Pondaag. Although the State had initially invoked the statute of limitations, the district court of The Hague ruled in favour of the claimants, eight surviving relatives. The State subsequently decided to settle with the plaintiffs. The position taken by the State marked a break from the line it had previously taken, which essentially involved turning a blind eye or, when this was no longer possible, delaying or categorically denying the claims. In its response to the court's verdict, the government openly apologized for several specific cases of extreme violence. From 2013, the State again paid reparations to Indonesian widows. These new claims — several dozen — dealt with the massacre perpetrated by the commandos under Captain Raymond Westerling in South Sulawesi with the support of other soldiers of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger, KNIL) in late 1946 and early 1947. The State established a scheme to deal with similar cases of 'summary executions'. These court cases ran into some snags, however, mostly due to the difficulty of the burden of proof laid upon the claimants so long after the event. Nonetheless, the State was no longer contesting the principle of liability for the crimes committed by Dutch soldiers between 1945 and 1949 in Indonesia. In 2015, the court ruled that this liability could be extended to the cases of the children of unlawfully executed Indonesian men. This ruling was not without consequences: since then, a civil-law arrangement for these children has also come into force. In addition, the KUKB has expanded its lawsuits — with some success — to cover other forms of extreme violence such as torture and rape.

These lawsuits have received much publicity. Moreover, the Dutch media have come forward with new revelations as well as more reporting on familiar cases. Journalists and documentary makers have played an important role in setting the agenda, which in turn has helped to prepare the ground within society for a broader study of this period in Dutch history. The academic world also began to contribute to the public debate on extreme violence in the war against the Republic; barring a few exceptions, this occurred remarkably late, as historian Stef Scagliola has noted.[8] In the research and in the public debates, the emphasis has increasingly come to lie on questions regarding the nature and the frequency of — as well as the explanations for — actions that had previously been identified as 'excesses'. More generally, the issue was raised of how to characterize a period that had long been referred to in the Netherlands as a period of 'police actions', but which was increasingly coming to be called a 'war'.

It was in this context that the KITLV, the NIMH and NIOD made their plea in mid-2012 for a study of the Dutch military action. The first Rutte cabinet refused to finance this study, a decision that the second Rutte cabinet initially upheld, reminding the institutes that they were free to conduct the study using their own resources. At the end of 2016, the government nevertheless indicated that it was willing to finance this research after all, referring to the recently published study *De brandende kampongs van generaal Spoor* [The Burning Kampongs of General Spoor] and its author Rémy Limpach's harsh conclusions about the Dutch use of extreme violence.[9] In September 2017, the four-year research programme *Independence, Decolonization, Violence and War in Indonesia, 1945-1950* was launched, the main findings and conclusions of which are presented in this book. A series of books on the topics examined under this programme is being published at the same time.

From the plea in 2012 to the research design in 2017

On 19 June 2012, the directors of the KITLV, the NIMH and NIOD wrote a plea published in the Dutch newspaper *de Volkskrant* advocating a study of the Dutch military violence in Indonesia.[10] They argued that the study was necessary given the controversies and emotions evoked by the memories and interpretations of the violence of war – making the case for 'the will to know' (facts, insights, explanations) – and steered clear of making moral judgments within the ongoing debates. They maintained that a scholarly

analysis would lead to a better understanding of collective and individual conduct. At the same time, the institutes took pains not to create the illusion that such a comprehensive research project, to be conducted together with Indonesian historians, would offer the last word on the matter: 'This is, after all, historiography.'

While the plea was taken up by the media and the academic world, it gave rise to mixed reactions among Dutch politicians and was thereupon rejected by the government, as mentioned earlier. The three institutes nonetheless turned their plea into an initial research proposal that was sent to the relevant members of government, the chairpersons of the upper and lower houses of parliament and all the political parties represented in parliament.[11] Much of the contents of this first research proposal eventually found its way into the research design for which the second Rutte cabinet awarded funding at the beginning of 2017.[12]

The 2012 proposal contained four sub-projects, the largest of which was described as an 'empirical study to establish and analyse the use of force by Dutch troops in the years 1945 to 1950, understood in the broader context of the Indonesian Revolution from the proclamation and *bersiap* to the transfer of sovereignty and the dissolution of the KNIL'. A second project was to investigate 'whether and how violence subsequently led to investigations by the military, judicial and/or official bodies to establish facts and to interpret events', while a third project was to offer an explanation for the violence at the micro-level and in 'the broader context of the use of force in post-war decolonization processes in Asia'. A final project would address 'the public response to the Dutch military conduct in the period 1945-1950, both in the Netherlands and in Indonesia'. If we compare this first proposal with the research design approved by the government in February 2017 for which funding was obtained, it is clear that while the later design is more elaborate and has a broader scope, the central questions are essentially the same.

After the rejection of funding by the Rutte cabinet in 2012, the three institutes each continued with the research independently while also forming an informal lobby in The Hague. Then, in the first half of 2016, the political tide turned. It was in this context that the three institutes decided to revise and elaborate the 2012 research proposal. This led to an extensive research proposal that was shared with a consultation group of various government ministries. In the meantime, Foreign Minister Affairs Bert Koenders indicated that he wanted to revisit the initial rejection of the 2012 request. The

government's reaction to this new research proposal was positive. There were requests to clarify some points, which led to an expansion of the passages about the 'bersiap period' and the collaboration with Indonesian scientists, but the content was not changed in any substantial way.

In the ensuing months, the research proposal was further developed. The proposed collaboration with Indonesian colleagues took shape in a separate project called *Regional Studies*. At the request of the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport (VWS), an extra project called *Witnesses & Contemporaries* was added in order to give those directly involved a voice with respect to the topic of the study. The arrangement between the government and the three institutes is explicitly not a commission but rather a co-financing arrangement.[13] This means that, in accordance with the principles for independent research specified by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, KNAW), the public funding body neither interferes with the content nor is responsible for the execution and results of the research, while the researchers are bound only by procedural and financial accountability to the grant provider. Throughout the research project, this relationship was never called into question.

While gradual additions were thus made to the final research design, one element of the original research design was relegated to the background: the pursuit of 'an explanation of the violence at the micro-level', which at the time was thought to require a behavioural science approach, also with a view to ongoing and future military missions.[14] Although this element of drawing lessons for the future remains relevant, we lacked the capacity and the expertise to explore this specific theme.

As mentioned above, this study aims to provide a descriptive analysis and explanation of Dutch military conduct in Indonesia, with considerable attention given to the historical, political and international context as well as to the aftermath of the war. More specifically, we consider the question whether the extreme violence of the Dutch armed forces was structural in nature and if so, why this occurred, who was responsible, and the extent to which people were held accountable for this violence at the time and later.

This line of questioning builds on previous research. In the years before 2012, and certainly in the ensuing years, an increasing number of studies were published – written, among others, by historians associated with the three institutes – that questioned the earlier views and especially the government position of 1969 regarding the incidental character of the 'exces-

sive force' used by the Dutch military on the basis of new research into the source material. Based on this historiography, a research plan was designed that included a series of studies aiming to explore key issues and address some important gaps in the existing knowledge:

- *Bersiap*: researched within the broader context of the dynamics of violence in the early days of the Indonesian Revolution.
- *Political-administrative context*: focused in particular on the question of how politics and government administration in the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies/Indonesia dealt with information about the high level of violence during the war.
- *International political context*: what role did other countries play with respect to Dutch diplomatic and military policies and how did this affect the dynamics of the war?
- *Comparative research on decolonization wars*, with the aim of identifying similarities and unique characteristics.
- *Asymmetric warfare*: focused on the Dutch armed forces and the dynamics between these armed forces and the Indonesian army and other combat groups; divided into three sub-investigations: the Dutch intelligence and security services in the field; 'technical violence' (artillery and air forces); and military justice.
- *Regional studies*: a joint Indonesian-Dutch study of the context of the dynamics of violence in a number of selected Indonesian regions.
- *Societal aftermath*: the public and political processing of the war in the Netherlands to date.
- *Witnesses & Contemporaries*: This part of the research programme fulfils a different, more societal role. It is primarily designed to collect testimonies and egodocuments and thus to give more 'colour' and layering to the experiences and memories of those involved both then and now.

This book summarizes the most important results of the research. Part I outlines in three chapters and an interim conclusion the context in which the rest of the book can be understood; it is based on the historiography and therefore is a collation of mostly existing knowledge and insights. This is followed by an intermezzo that is based on the *Witnesses & Contemporaries* project, in which multiple perspectives are highlighted. In the second part, the results of the research programme are presented per project. In the final conclusion, the findings of the entire programme are brought together and

the main question is answered. The book concludes with an epilogue by the Indonesian historian Hilmar Farid.

Organization and implementation of the research

The research programme began on 1 September 2017. In the Netherlands, the research team consisted of researchers from the three institutes as well as a number of employees hired specifically for this programme.[15] For the *Comparative Research* project, carried out in collaboration with the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS-KNAW), six researchers (mostly foreign) were hired for a short period of time. The projects were divided among the institutes on the basis of their expertise. The entire research team came together regularly in a Programme Council. The three directors of the institutes were in charge of the research programme, supported by a coordinator. NIOD acted as the lead institute, and the director of NIOD was the chairman of the Programme Council.[16]

The Scientific Advisory Board and the Social Resonance Group ('Maatschappelijke Klankbordgroep') were regularly consulted. The committee scientifically assessed the research plan and results, providing particularly valuable comments on two draft versions of this final work.[17] And we had intensive discussions with the Social Resonance Group about the expectations surrounding our research and the possible impact it would have on the groups most involved in this topic, such as the veterans of the Indonesian war and the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities. The public was periodically informed about the research design and about developments within the research through public forums – before the COVID crisis, that is – as well as via the programme website and a newsletter.

The plea in *de Volkskrant* in June 2012 stemmed from a conviction shared by the three institutes that thorough research was necessary to give Dutch society more clarity about the nature of the war, about extreme Dutch violence and about the actions of those involved, both during and after the war. Implicitly, the directors of the institutes were referring to a strongly felt need for a re-evaluation of the government position of 1969, but also more broadly for more critical reflection about the colonial past. Since then, this debate has not ceased. Our research programme made a modest contribution to that debate, but also became the object of it.

In 2012, bringing together these three institutes seemed the most suitable and promising way to spur the government into action. The KITLV

has a long tradition of conducting research on the Dutch East Indies and Indonesia, and NIOD of researching wars and mass violence in general but also specifically in Indonesia. Both institutes are part of the KNAW. The NIMH has a long track record of covering Dutch military history, including warfare in the colonies. The institute falls under the Ministry of Defence but operates under guarantees of scientific independence. The idea in 2012 was that this combination of three scientific institutes would carry sufficient weight in the societal debate and ultimately also among Dutch politicians.

But once the government decided to fund the research, the institutes faced criticism from several quarters. Part of that criticism entailed such questions as 'Why is this only now being done?'. In a way, this criticism is justified. It is true that these institutes were also party to what is sometimes referred to as the tradition of remaining silent. This theme will be discussed in more detail elsewhere in this book.

The scientific independence, integrity and expertise of the three institutes and the research group have also been called into question. Generally speaking, it is difficult to respond to such accusations in a way that would satisfy everyone. We would merely point out that we work under the rules of scientific integrity as formulated by the KNAW. That is why it was contractually stipulated – and put into practice – that the government, as the funder, would have no influence on the content. As far as the expertise of the research team is concerned, we expect our publications to dispel those doubts. Regarding the composition of the team, it has been noted that the proportion of Indonesian researchers was small. While this is true, it does make sense given that the programme mainly asked questions about the Dutch role in the war.

A recurring reproach, made in particular by the KUKB, concerns the position of the NIMH.[18] The claim that this institute, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Defence, is by definition unable to write critically about colonial warfare can easily be refuted: the NIMH, after all, was at the forefront of critical studies on the 1945-1949 war, even before 2017.[19] Another objection is that the NIMH is playing incompatible roles by cooperating both in this research and in the investigation assessing the plausibility of claims by Indonesian victims of Dutch violence and their relatives. According to this accusation, the NIMH purports in its first role to contribute to impartial scientific research, while in its second role it 'helps' the government to refute the claims of the victims. This is simply not the case. The NIMH is

carrying out the historical verification investigation at the request of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, based on its military-historical expertise. That investigation is conducted independently and in accordance with scientific standards. The researchers consult the relevant archives and literature available in the Netherlands and report on what can be found in those sources about the specific events mentioned in the claims and what other relevant background information those sources contain – nothing more than that. The findings are meant to inform all the parties involved as well as the court, which ultimately issues a ruling on the claims. Some of the submitted claims have in fact been granted partly on the basis of the results of this investigation.

The KITLV, the NIMH and NIOD are *Dutch* institutes. Although Indonesian and Dutch scholars have for decades been cooperating regularly and with often fruitful results, there has been no strong shared tradition of researching the history of the Indonesian Revolution and the war years of 1945 to 1949. After the fall of President Suharto in 1998, the scope for such cooperation grew, helped by the fact that researchers from both countries began meeting each other in wider international networks. This increased cooperation was evident in the NIOD programme *From the Indies to Indonesia* (2002-2008), in the KITLV's intensive contact with a large number of Indonesian academic institutions, and also in the successful collaboration between Indonesian and Dutch heritage institutions. On the basis of these experiences, therefore, the plea in *de Volkskrant* and the first research proposal from 2012 already included optimistic words about the importance of – and opportunities for – intensive bilateral cooperation.

The research design produced by the KITLV, the NIMH and NIOD envisaged the use of 'mirrored research' in which historians from both countries would study the same regions and episodes of the war from their own perspectives and on the basis of an exchange of sources in order to conduct a comparative analysis of the results. This was to be done in particular for the '*Bersiap*' and 'Regional Studies' projects, and it was expected to lead to the 'co-creation' of new insights in which the usually separate national historiographies would come together.

However, discussions with the envisaged Indonesian parties about the effect of such an approach quickly led to a different direction being taken. The Indonesian researchers indicated that they wanted to pursue their own priorities and did not want to be guided solely by questions arising from the

Dutch perspective. Their questions were not primarily focused on Dutch violence itself but on various dimensions of the Indonesian Revolution, in particular its social impact. This research proved to be invaluable for a better understanding of the Indonesian experience of the Dutch military conduct. The Dutch researchers understood and appreciated their Indonesian colleagues' wish to pursue different paths. The collaboration thus led not only to a better understanding of the diversity of perspectives and priorities but also to a broadening of the content of the study, although the focus remained on the Dutch war violence.

One complicating factor was that reports in the Indonesian press and social media – fuelled in part by critics in the Netherlands – began to cast the research programme in an unfavourable light by depicting it as an attempt by the Dutch to cleanse their record. This led to opposition to the project within political and military circles.[20] It is possible that this was one of the reasons the Indonesian archives have remained largely closed to Dutch researchers. The wary attitude of the Indonesian authorities did not come as a complete surprise to us. In the run-up to the start of this study, and until shortly before the Rutte cabinet decided to finance the research, Indonesian diplomats had made clear to both the Dutch government and the three institutes that they had serious reservations in view of the possible strains the research could put on bilateral relations. Be that as it may, as a result of these limitations and the other priorities of our Indonesian colleagues, we have not conducted the research in the way we had planned. We have uncovered fewer sources on the dynamics of violence than originally envisaged, leaving questions unanswered – questions about Indonesian perceptions of Dutch war violence and their impact on Indonesians, as well as the dynamics of violence on the Indonesian side.

Another development played a role in all of this: the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This ongoing crisis not only meant that the archives in the Netherlands and Indonesia were closed for shorter or longer periods, bringing additional delays, but also that travel became virtually impossible. Visits to Indonesian archives, interviews, workshops and field research became practically impossible from March 2020. Thus, it was often a matter of seeking ways around problems, calling on local assistance and relying on digital consultation.

All this did not prevent the very diverse (in more ways than one) Indonesian and Dutch research groups from maintaining an intensive and cordial collaboration, as evidenced by the joint workshops and discussions and,

of course, the joint publications. The leading partner in Indonesia was the history programme at the Universitas Gadjah Mada (UGM) in Yogyakarta, and the research leader was Bambang Purwanto. The UGM subsequently involved historians from a number of other Indonesian universities in the research. The collaboration between Indonesian and Dutch researchers took shape mainly in the *Regional Studies* and *Witnesses & Contemporaries* projects, but there was also contact with researchers from other projects and various joint discussions about perspectives and terminology. The Indonesian-Dutch collaboration has led to joint English-language publications, but also publications released exclusively in Indonesian.

The guiding principles of the study

Scientific research benefits from the greatest possible transparency and freedom, starting with the design of the research and the formulation of the leading questions. For this reason, considerable attention is paid, both in this introduction and on the programme website, to the history of how this study came about. What is of crucial importance here is that the content has always been under the control of the institutes and their scientific independence has been sufficiently guaranteed. The researchers wanted to be able to understand history untethered by the government's standpoint or other views within society. This is by no means to say that each individual researcher as well as the researchers as a group are completely free of blind spots and preconceptions.

Historical research does not take place in a social and political vacuum. Especially when a theme is perceived by society as being fraught, the writing of history requires critical reflection on the guiding principles and working methods of the researchers.[21] Historians rarely promise to write 'the last word' or 'the truth' on a particular issue. This is not only due to the limited nature of available sources; it is because they realize that, over time, new interpretations of the past are constantly being developed – 'each generation writes its own history' – but also that these interpretations partly depend on the backgrounds and often very different perspectives of those who look at a certain facet of history, whether they are professional historians or not. In this sense, too, history is, in Pieter Geyl's famous words, a 'discussion without end'. None of which is to say that anything goes. The historian strives to create plausible interpretations of historical events – as open-mindedly as possible and on the basis of sound empirical research and a careful consideration of the arguments. Multiperspectivity and mul-

tiple voices are indispensable tools in this respect, because differences of opinion can shed light on clashing interests and on the conduct of historical figures.[22]

To underline the importance of this, this book contains two contributions that challenge the reader to think about the diversity of perspectives. We asked Hilmar Farid, a respected Indonesian historian who had no involvement whatsoever with the programme, to reflect in an Epilogue on this primarily Dutch research and the resulting book. And the chapter that emerged from the *Witnesses & Contemporaries* project gives the reader a compelling picture of the diversity of perspectives.

As said earlier, recognition of this complexity does not absolve us of the duty to strive for objectivity by way of method. Historical research should be based on knowledge of the historiography and the careful use of sources, including in our case in-depth reflection on the limitations of – and 'gaps' in – the colonial source material. Such research should rest on a balanced processing of this source material, but it should also make explicit the historians' own presuppositions and reasoning and do justice to all findings, even if new information conflicts with the researchers' own assumptions and arguments. This also requires transparency with regard to the use of terminology, because interpretations are often already implied in the decision to use certain terms.

In recent years, a number of veterans of the Indonesian war and the very diverse Indo-Dutch community have criticized the alleged one-sidedness of this study, which they claim is manifested in an emphasis on a priori assumptions made about structurally excessive violence on the Dutch side as well the overlooking or condoning of Indonesian violence, in particular during the 'bersiap period'. Conversely, there have been reproaches from other groups within society that too little attention has been paid to the inherently reprehensible and structurally violent nature of Dutch colonialism over the centuries, meaning that the study assumes a legitimizing tone rather than a critical one while also offering the Dutch government an excuse to withhold reparations to Indonesian victims. And finally, there was criticism about the ambitions and the reality of the Dutch-Indonesian collaboration within the study.

This criticism has been discussed both within the research group itself and with the Scientific Advisory Board, the Social Resonance Group, and a diverse group of external critics. This led to a deepening, clarification or reformulation of the study's guiding principles in a number of areas. It turned

out that there were also differences of opinion within the research group itself. This is not surprising given the size and diversity of the team of researchers: about 25 in the Netherlands affiliated with three institutes with different traditions, another twelve in Indonesia spread over the archipelago, the six researchers from the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS), and finally at least a dozen temporary assistants. In short, it is inherent to such a large scientific study that different perspectives and priorities emerge. These differences cannot simply be identified as Indonesian versus Dutch: there were also differences in approach within the Dutch team, partly fuelled by the 'postcolonial debate' about colonialism within the Netherlands and abroad. Internal discussions forced all of us involved to critically examine our own working methods; they also helped us to make space for multiple perspectives and reminded us of the need to choose concepts and words carefully.

Below we discuss the most important conceptual issues, beginning with the question of when the Republic of Indonesia became a fact and the consequences this has for the classification of the period 1945-1949 and for the legitimization of Dutch warfare. Next, we consider what terminology is most suitable for analysing the nature of the war and in particular the Dutch military conduct. Finally, we discuss how we approached the set of terms commonly used in the Netherlands at the time.

Legitimization and description of the war

In both the historiography and the political and social debate, the Dutch return to the Indonesian archipelago after the Japanese capitulation and the legitimacy and nature of the Dutch military conduct have been judged in different ways. Indonesian historians – like many of their Dutch colleagues – reject the legality of pre-war colonialism and underline the legitimacy of Indonesians' independence from Dutch colonial rule and their struggle to defend it. They therefore qualify the actions of the Dutch from 1945 onwards as a 'reoccupation', a 'recolonization' and as 'aggression'. Nor is there room in this view for the term 'decolonization' as a description of the events of 1945-1949, because it suggests that the initiative lay with the colonizer to hand over sovereignty. As far as Indonesia is concerned, there is a broad consensus in this respect not only among historians but in the whole of Indonesian society and politics, even though different conclusions may be drawn on issues such as the

main driving forces in the process (the importance of armed struggle versus negotiations), the role of internal contradictions (regional, political, religious) and the significance of the first years of the war for the later development of the republic. This also explains the great interest in regional histories of the revolution.

On the Dutch side, there were – and still are – major differences in the interpretation of the war. These differences stem from changes in the way the Dutch look at their own colonial history in a broader sense.[23] During the colonial period, the legitimacy of the colonial system was only questioned by a small minority. It therefore comes as no surprise that between 1945 and 1949 the aim of restoring Dutch authority – including the deployment of military violence for that purpose – was regarded as legitimate, initially as an end in itself but gradually as a means to ensure that a decolonization process took place under Dutch auspices. It was only 60 years later, in 2005 – with Minister Bot's statement that the Netherlands had been 'on the wrong side of history' due to its large-scale deployment of military force – that the Dutch government for the first time explicitly sought to align itself with the Indonesian position regarding the legitimacy of the struggle for independence, a position that retroactively characterized the Dutch military actions as unjust. As mentioned, Bot spoke only in general terms about the way in which the Dutch armed forces had waged the war and did not go into the legitimacy of the colonialism that had preceded it.

A brief remark regarding the legitimacy of colonialism is needed here. In the immense literature on European colonialism, widely differing views about colonialism's intentions, function and effects have been defended. Historians have also paid much attention to differences between and within empires and between different periods. What is less controversial, however, is the assessment that colonialism was primarily driven by economic and geopolitical self-interest, that it was generally racist and paternalistic in nature – even in the later phase of 'ethical' policies in the Dutch East Indies – and that political repression and the exercise of violence were inherent to the colonial state. One of the guiding principles of this study is that the same holds true for Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. The Dutch colonial period, which in effect ended in 1942 with the Japanese occupation, is not the subject of this study, but this interpretation of colonialism did play an important role in our interpretation of Indonesian nationalism and the Dutch attempt after 1945 to reimpose their authority over the entire archipelago.

Colonial rule was considered legitimate by the Western states concerned as well as in the world order they dominated. Although in the interwar period and during the Second World War the relevant European states and certainly also the United States became somewhat more receptive to the resistance movements against the colonial order, and even though plans were devised for future decolonization, the premise continued to be that the colonial powers should determine the direction and pace of this process. This was no different for the Dutch position toward the Dutch East Indies, which is why Dutch politicians and large parts of the Dutch population considered a 'restoration' of the colonial order to be self-evident, whether or not as a 'phase' on the way to decolonization. What was overlooked or dismissed was that, since the 1920s, a nationalist movement had developed that had gained a massive following by 1945, despite all attempts to repress it. The underestimation and rejection of this Indonesian quest for independence proved to be a divisive issue in post-war Dutch politics – and also had the effect of hijacking the discussion about the level of violence during the war, long after 1949.

During the war and for many years afterwards, the dominant Indonesian and Dutch perspectives on this history differed significantly. This was most apparent in the discussions about dates and definitions. From the Indonesian perspective, the Dutch colonial period had already come to an end on 9 March 1942 with its capitulation to Japan, and the independent Republic of Indonesia was a *fait accompli* on 17 August 1945.[24] The return of the Dutch colonial administration and military was, from this point of view, an unlawful attempt to reoccupy or recolonize the archipelago, and the war was thus a conflict between two states in which the Netherlands acted as an aggressor on Indonesian territory. This perspective was accordingly made explicit in the title of our research programme by the addition of the term 'independence' – *Independence, Decolonization, War and Violence in Indonesia, 1945-1950* – at the suggestion of our Indonesian researchers.

Within Dutch politics, the opposite perspective was dominant: the Netherlands had not only the right but also the duty to restore 'order and peace' in the archipelago with the aim of reaching a new arrangement under Dutch auspices. From this perspective, 27 December 1949 was the decisive moment in the decolonization process because it was the day on which the Kingdom of the Netherlands transferred sovereignty over the entire archipelago – with the exception of West New Guinea – to the United States of Indonesia, which needed to remain tied to the Kingdom of the Netherlands through a Union.[25]

In recent decades, the Dutch political position has gradually shifted in the direction of the official Indonesian narrative. The categorical rejection of the *proklamasi* of 17 August has reluctantly been turned into an effective recognition – known in the jargon as a de facto recognition – of that date as the founding date of the Republic. The Dutch government has always argued that a formal legal – i.e., de jure – recognition is not possible on a retroactive basis or that it would in any case be an anachronism. By this reasoning, what the Dutch government can do is recognize that the proclamation and thus the ambitions of 17 August *should* have been recognized, but it cannot undo the fact that this did not happen at the time.

In summary, the Indonesian and Dutch views on the legitimacy of the war were diametrically opposed to each other. The choice to designate 17 August 1945 or 27 December 1949 as the day that Indonesia became independent was at the time, therefore, one that was heavily politically charged, with immediate repercussions for the characterization of the war. In the case of 17 August 1945, a war took place on Indonesian territory between two sovereign states whereby the Netherlands was the aggressor. In the case of 27 December 1949, one could describe the conflict as police actions against an armed rebellion or as a traditional colonial war such as had frequently been waged in the past in the Dutch East Indies, but this time on a larger scale and with a different outcome. As historians, we do not make a choice between the two views. What is relevant for us is the knowledge that 17 August 1945 was the starting shot for two partly opposing processes of state formation in the archipelago, with the Republic seeking to construct an independent unitary state and the Dutch and Dutch East Indies governments pursuing a federal state with strong ties to the Netherlands – all of which resulted in a bloody war.

The de facto Dutch recognition of 17 August 1945 implied a break with the framing of the war in terms of 'police actions' undertaken in its own colonial territory. This point of view invoked an international legal order that at the time was still mainly dominated by the Western – generally colonial – countries. At the same time, the Dutch view was already contested during the war, not only by the Republic but also by other countries, including some in the Security Council of the United Nations. Nonetheless, the vast majority of states did not recognize Indonesia until after 27 December 1949, while its accession to the United Nations came only on 28 September 1950.

Indonesians usually refer to this period in history simply as the *Revolusi Nasional*, which implies a struggle against the Netherlands in defence of the independence already achieved on 17 August 1945. The two so called 'police actions' are consequently referred to as *Agresi Militer Belanda 1* and *Agresi Militer Belanda 2*. In the recent Dutch historiography, the misleading term 'police actions' to designate the years 1945-1949 has been replaced by the term 'war', used in compound phrases such as 'war of independence', 'decolonization war', 'colonial war' as well as 'Indonesian war' and 'Dutch-Indonesian war'. There is something to be said for all these terms. When one speaks of a 'decolonization war', the emphasis is more on the struggle as part of a process that also includes the political negotiations concluded at the end of 1949, or one is referring to international debates where the term is commonly used. In choosing to use the term 'war of independence' – also referred to in Indonesian as 'freedom war' in addition to 'national revolution' – the emphasis is placed more on '1945' and the Indonesian war of defence against the Dutch 'recolonization' in the ensuing years. There are good arguments for both choices, and they do not necessarily contradict each other. Our preference for the term 'war of independence' does justice to the Indonesian perspective and is in line with the broader use of this term for similar historical events – for example, in relation to both the American and the Dutch wars of independence.

Analytical terms and (colonial) language

In terms of the nature of the Dutch military conduct, the government's position from 1969 officially still stands, namely that the armed forces as a rule behaved 'correctly' and that although there were regrettable 'excesses' – incidents, in other words – there was 'no question of systematic cruelty'. On the basis of research that has since been carried out into the nature and extent of the Dutch violence, this position is rarely endorsed by historians anymore. More and more evidence has been documented that the extreme Dutch violence was widespread and was of a structural and/or systematic nature. That the Dutch government now sees cause to reconsider this, too, is evident from its decision to fund this research project and from its explanation for that decision, which alluded to the firm conclusions reached by Limpach about the extreme violence perpetrated by the Dutch.

The current debate therefore focuses mainly on the question of whether this violence should be labelled as structural and/or systematic – instead of

incidental – and why it happened. We agree with the way in which these terms are used in the historiography in the sense that the difference between structural and systematic is not a question of quantity or frequency but rather a question of intention. The systematic deployment of extreme violence occurs intentionally – that is, by order or with the approval of the senior military and political leadership – while the structural use of extreme violence involves (tacit) tolerance or indifference. In Chapter 3, we consider this historiography in further detail. In the interim conclusions included at the end of Part I, we recap how we define a number of key concepts, explain the focus of the sub-projects, and outline how we use the term 'extreme violence' in this study.

The question of *how* the Netherlands waged the war can be decoupled from the question of the legitimacy of the war. Looking back, experts also reach different conclusions on the question of which legal rules and norms should be applied to the war. In the lawsuit filed against the Dutch state by the KUKB, the claimants use the legal framework derived from the Dutch standpoint, in which the Dutch armed forces perpetrated violence against Dutch subjects and not against the citizens of a sovereign state of Indonesia. The question of the applicability of international humanitarian law is not easy to answer, given the different viewpoints concerning the characterization of the war, and also because it was precisely this area of law that was very much in development during this period. There are, however, powerful arguments for the view that the core rules of international humanitarian law were already applicable during the conflict – or in any case were declared applicable by the Netherlands[26] – and that many of the actions that we, following the lead of many scholars, categorize as 'extreme violence' were at odds with these rules, just as much of the extreme violence was in conflict with national law. Taking a legal-theoretical approach to the question of the nature of the violence is not the most obvious course for a historical study. What is more important to us is to establish what normative and legal framework the Dutch political and military authorities themselves used in the period 1945-1949 to assess what forms of violence were permissible or not. What rules of conduct did they impose on the soldiers? And to what extent were these rules upheld? Another question that we encountered in the course of the research is how individual soldiers reflected on their own sense of justice about the use of violence and in particular the extreme forms of violence. Did they feel there was a clear threshold between what was and was not acceptable?[27]

It is not only words such as 'war' and 'police actions' that are loaded with often implicit meanings; this holds true for many terms — especially in relation to the colonial past. Terminology matters. This study tries to distance itself from the often-implicit assumptions and judgments embedded in the word usage of the past, because these words were steeped in a specific colonial perspective and lay at the root of a one-sided framing. Dutch-language sources often barely distinguish between different groups of adversaries. In addition to quite neutral terms such as 'the enemy' and 'freedom fighters', the Dutch documents primarily use characterizations such as 'terrorists', 'extremists', 'bandits', '*rampokkers*' and 'gangs', thus essentially disqualifying every incidence of armed resistance as criminal and depicting enemy forces in such a way as to encourage the use of violence against them. This study avoids loaded descriptions such as these, but does so without lapsing into disingenuous language as regards Indonesian acts of violence.

The misleading term 'police actions' is only used as a historical term for the two specific military operations (Operation Product and Operation Kraai) and is mirrored by the use of the terms *Agresi Militer Belanda 1* and *2*. And in referring to the Indonesian archipelago, we generally use the term 'Indonesia', certainly when referring to the period after the capitulation of Japan. From a strictly legal perspective, this is an anachronism. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that this term had been widely used since the late nineteenth century and that even the Dutch authorities had begun to use it from 1948, for example in their aim to bring about a United States of Indonesia and in their changing of the 'I' in KNIL from 'Indies' to 'Indonesian'.

The designation and spelling of Indonesian names and locations are not neutral, either. We chose to use the contemporary Indonesian designations and spelling instead of the colonial terms, except in the obvious case of citations. Terms such as 'Batavia' or 'the East Indies government' are only used to indicate the colonial context.

The Indonesian violence and bersiap

This study focuses on questions concerning *Dutch* violence and not Indonesian violence. The intra-Indonesian violence that was an inherent part of the process of state-building during the Indonesian Revolution is discussed only briefly, while in the Dutch source material it is referred to frequently, partly as a trigger and sometimes an excuse for Dutch violence.

In the Indonesian historiography and above all in public perception

(schoolbooks, museums, media), the armed struggle against the Netherlands – and also against the Japanese and British troops – is characterized as justified, collective and also often as heroic. At the national level, little attention is given to Indonesian victimhood. The entire period is often simply referred to as the Indonesian Revolution, which both emphasizes that independence was a historical fact on 17 August 1945 and evokes an image of social transformation. The fact that extreme violence also occurred on the Indonesian side is not denied, but this has thus far not played a major role in the Indonesian historiography. The emphasis lies on the legitimate nature of the struggle against what is described as Dutch aggression. This emphasis is reflected in the way that not only the guerrilla war but also the battles such as in Surabaya, Semarang and Ambarawa are showcased. Themes such as violence against the (Indo-)Europeans, the Chinese and other communities and individuals suspected of collaborating with the Dutch did not play a major role in the official narrative. The same holds for a theme such as bersiap, which has only recently begun to receive explicit attention.[28]

In the Dutch government's letter informing the lower house of its intention to finance this research study, explicit reference was made to the Indonesian violence that was a part of 'the difficult context in which Dutch soldiers had to operate'. In this context, the government also pointed to 'the suffering of the victims of "bersiap" as well as their families'.[29] The violence during bersiap has been described by previous researchers and also in the memoirs of those who were involved, and we have continued this research. This is significant because during this violent period, thousands of – primarily (Indies) Dutch and Chinese people became the victims of extreme violence and because it was an episode that had long-lasting repercussions that received little attention for a long time, including in the Netherlands. This research is important also because the impact of this period may have influenced the way in which the Dutch armed forces perceived and fought against the opponent. In our research on bersiap, we have explicitly sought to take a broader perspective and to encompass all the victims of the 'spiral of violence', focusing on a comprehensive analysis of culpability and motives. We have also explored the significance given to this violence from the Dutch perspective, both at the time and later.

The implications of this study

From the very beginning, the three institutes have indicated that the research seeks to understand, analyse and explain the Dutch war violence in

a broader context. The goal is not to deliver political, moral or legal judgments. It was our implicit intention to contribute to not only the scholarly debates, but also to the reflection taking place within society on this dramatic episode in Dutch colonial history.

The conclusions of this research support the views that have been articulated in recent years by an increasing number of historians, namely that the Dutch armed forces resorted to extreme violence not on an incidental basis, but rather on a structural basis. The official line of 1969 does not square with what we now know. This immediately raises questions about the responsibility of the military command and more importantly about political responsibility – prior to and during the war but also in the period thereafter when, as will become clear, the policies adopted were seldom aimed at 'establishing the truth'. We return to this point in Part III and in the Conclusions of this book.



2.

The Netherlands and Indonesia 1945-1949

The political-historical context

Gert Oostindie

The proclamation of Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945 and the subsequent war were preceded by a long period of Dutch colonial rule and a brief but consequential period of Japanese occupation. This chapter describes this history very briefly, with an emphasis on the political history. It should be emphasized that in the Indonesian historiography, the role of the Dutch is given much less attention, as other perspectives come to the fore and other questions are asked.[1] In Chapter 3, the military history from 1945 to 1949 is outlined. The aim of this and the following chapter is to provide a context in which to understand the conduct of the Dutch armed forces.

The colonial era

In the fifteenth century, Portugal and Spain were the first European countries to establish overseas empires. Other states including the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands soon followed. In the centuries that follo-

On 17 August 1945, Sukarno proclaims the independent Republic of Indonesia, accompanied by Mohammad Hatta (on the right of the picture). Source: Frans Mendur, ANRI/IPPHOS.

wed, Europe became a dominant force in a world that was becoming increasingly globalized, partly owing to the raw materials and agricultural products extracted from the colonies, which subsequently also functioned as markets for Europe's industrial products. The start of Dutch colonial rule in the Indonesian archipelago is often dated around 1600. This is a somewhat misleading representation of history. In fact, it took until the end of the Aceh War, around 1910, for the entire archipelago to be brought more or less under Dutch control.[2] During the period of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands, the Dutch East India Company or VOC (Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, 1602-1799) only exercised territorial authority in a limited number of places – in particular West Java and the Moluccas. The VOC period is sometimes referred to as a period of commercial colonialism, even though the VOC took the first parts of the archipelago by brute force and made use of coercion and armed action even in its trade practices. During the Napoleonic Wars, the colony was temporarily in British hands. With the establishment of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (1813/1815), a period of large-scale military and administrative subjugation began, first mainly on Java and then in the rest of the archipelago. And in this way, the Dutch East Indies gradually took shape as the territorial unit that ultimately became the Republic of Indonesia.

The establishment, expansion and consolidation of Dutch colonial authority were accompanied by much violence. The number of armed conflicts and larger wars that the VOC and later the Kingdom of the Netherlands waged in the archipelago runs into the many hundreds, and the number of victims into the hundreds of thousands.[3] The threat and actual use of force were indispensable to the construction and consolidation of the colonial state, but violence alone could not be the basis for a reasonably stable colonial state, especially since the number of Europeans was negligible compared to the total population. The Dutch therefore preferred to exercise authority via the Indonesian elites, a large and heterogeneous group of aristocrats who were forced or induced to cooperate during successive stages of colonial expansion. Those who refused were confronted with intimidation and, if necessary, violence. The result was that on the eve of the Japanese occupation in 1942, there was a colonial state with an extremely small Dutch upper class that ruled through a dual administration, a richly varied system in which Indonesian administrators drawn from local Indonesian elites worked alongside their Dutch counterparts and were given considerable room within the margins of the colonial system to represent their own interests as well.

Over the course of the nineteenth century, 'the East Indies' was developed further and further into an economic colony. On Java, the Cultivation System (*Cultuurstelsel*, 1830-1870) – which made use of forced labour, one of the elements lampooned in the famous novel *Max Havelaar* by the Dutch writer Multatuli – yielded unprecedented profits. The subsequent 'liberal' period led to a boom in the plantation sector on this island and also on Sumatra. In some circles in the Netherlands there was growing discomfort with the one-sided benefits that this colonial success story yielded, especially in the light of the glaring inequality in Indonesia itself. Sometime around 1900, this led to what was presented as a new approach focused on improving the welfare of the population, the 'Ethical Policy' programme. This did not, however, put an end to the exploitation of the land and its people, for the colony remained of crucial importance to the Dutch economy. Nonetheless, the advocates of the Ethical Policy argued that more of the benefits gained should be invested in modernizing the colony, thereby allowing for the 'elevation' of the Indonesian population. This policy, which in comparison with the previous period could arguably be called enlightened, coincided with a final, decidedly aggressive phase of territorial expansion and consolidation in which the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (Koninklijk Nederlands-Indische Leger, KNIL) killed many tens of thousands of Indonesians, especially during the Aceh War. It was also precisely in these years that a widespread system of indentured labour arose, including on the plantations of Sumatra, exploiting workers who had almost no rights at all.

From a European perspective, colonialism was hardly controversial; indeed, internal wars and conflicts were mainly about who was allowed to appropriate which part of the world. This led to constant conflict and to the continual redistribution of territories, not only in the decades preceding the First World War but also thereafter, when Germany was forced to cede its colonies. The United States had meanwhile also become a colonial power – as had Japan, which led to unrest in Europe and the United States. At this point in time, colonialism was not generally considered controversial in the Western-dominated global political arena and international law, although the Americans were somewhat more critical than the European powers and in 1936 had even promised the Philippines independence within a decade. Only China and especially the Soviet Union – which was itself a product of imperial expansion – spoke out against Western imperialism, but this carried little weight in the world at the time. Before the Second World War, the

Soviet Union offered an ideological alternative that inspired anti-colonial movements worldwide, but its geopolitical power was not very significant yet. Moreover, the influence of communist parties in European colonial states was limited.

In this context, unlike within the colony itself, the Dutch East Indies in 1940 was a virtually uncontested entity in the international political and legal arena dominated by the West, just like the colonies of other Western powers. This partly explains why, in 1945, the Netherlands and initially other Western states took as more or less self-evident the 'restoration' of colonial affairs – or at least Dutch oversight over a possible decolonization process. And it also explains why Indonesia's independence was not immediately recognized internationally in 1945 but only in 1949, after the Netherlands had transferred sovereignty – under significant international pressure but formally speaking voluntarily – to the United States of Indonesia, which on Dutch insistence remained attached to the Kingdom of the Netherlands in a Union.

Indonesian nationalism and colonial repression

From the outset, colonialism was governed by economic and geopolitical motives, or more specifically the self-interest of the European states concerned. The subjugation of and control over the population of the conquered territories implied an inherent threat – and, if necessary, also the use – of military force. The same applied to the organization of additional labour through the slave trade and slavery, forced crop cultivation, or forms of contract labour that often bordered on wage slavery. All this was legitimized by European assumptions about racial and cultural superiority; and by extension, all colonial societies had a racial order, which came in many variants. To widely varying degrees, European powers focused on spreading their own culture – including language and religion – in their colonies. From the late nineteenth century onwards, the motive of economic modernization and the related motive of social modernization based on the Western model became increasingly important, not only as a way to confer legitimization but also as an additional mission of the empire.

The Dutch East Indies – the core of the Dutch 'empire' which by then only consisted, beyond the Netherlands itself, of Suriname and six small Caribbean islands – was no exception to this rule.[4] On the eve of the Japanese occupation, colonial society was more or less divided into three

socio-legal categories. Totalling around 300,000, the (Indo-)European population accounted for less than half a per cent of the total population of about 70 million; interestingly, the small number of Japanese residents were included in this category. The second category was 'Foreign Easterners', mainly Chinese immigrants and their descendants but also Arabs, in all a few per cent of the population. The vast majority, the 'indigenous population', were – apart from the local aristocrats – at the bottom of the social ladder in their own country. They were the colonial authority's subjects, virtually deprived of education even under the 'Ethical Policy'. Indeed, in 1930, 97 per cent of the population was illiterate, at least in the Latin script, even if many did have a certain knowledge of the Javanese or Arabic script. Ethnically speaking, the boundaries between the three classes were not watertight. In the interwar period, a limited number of families from the Indonesian and Chinese elites were legally 'put on an equal footing' with the European population, which among other things secured them better legal protection and access to a good education. However, this did not substantially overturn the racial colonial order, either socially or politically.

The establishment of colonial authority provoked resistance from the outset – both passive resistance and, as demonstrated by the long series of skirmishes and wars, often active and militant resistance. Until the twentieth century, however, this resistance was of a local or regional nature and was dependent on pragmatic considerations and the attitude of the local elites. This changed with the emergence of a nationalist movement that took on an increasingly ideological character and began to encompass the entire archipelago – mirroring the colonial state's archipelago-wide 'pacification policy'. Important moments in this process include the creation of Budi Utomo (1908), the Sarekat Islam (1912), the East Indies Party (1912), the Partai Komunis Indonesia (1924), the Indonesian Society/Perhimpunan Indonesia (1922-1925) and Sukarno's Partai Nasional Indonesia (1927). At the Kongres Pemuda (youth congress) in 1928, the Sumpah Pemuda (Youth Pledge) was sworn ('one country – Indonesia, one people – the Indonesian people, and one language – Indonesian') and the national anthem 'Indonesia Raya' was sung for the first time.

These movements and organizations differed significantly from each other; some had a pronounced national character, while others were more regional. In addition, they disagreed about the importance that should be attributed to religion and especially Islam, and they also differed in terms of

political affiliation (liberal, socialist, communist). These differences had an impact on each organization's willingness to compromise with the colonial authority and its preference for either gradualism or armed struggle. What united all these movements, however, was their strong criticism of the colonial system.

Indonesian nationalism was never fully understood on the Dutch side and was in any case dismissed, barring a few exceptions. This observation requires some clarification and nuance. First of all, a distinction must be made between the Netherlands and the Dutch East Indies, and between politics and society. In the Netherlands, there were different views across the political spectrum on colonial policy, but only some left-wing intellectual circles, revolutionary socialists, and the small communist party categorically rejected colonialism, the latter under the slogan 'Indonesia separate from Holland now!'. Within the Social Democratic Workers' Party (Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiderspartij, SDAP), the predominant position was that the exploitation should stop but that an independent Indonesia was something for the distant future. The other parties were significantly more cautious. Three arguments against the 'surrender' of the colony were invariably put forward. First, there was the economic importance of the colony, expressed in the greatly exaggerated metaphor that the Dutch East Indies was the 'cork' on which the Dutch economy floated. Then there was the geopolitical argument that without the East Indies (the small Caribbean colonies hardly counted in this line of reasoning), the Netherlands would become internationally insignificant or would be relegated 'to a country of the rank of Denmark', in a post-war figure of speech. Finally, there was also the more paternalistic argument that drew on the Ethical Policy, which posited that there was still so much important work the Netherlands could do for the colony and its people, which also had to be protected against its own elites. In 1945, this reasoning came to be coupled with the belief that the Netherlands first had to complete this development task – which had been brutally interrupted by the Japanese occupation – before the East Indies could stand on its own two feet. The parliamentary debates before the war – and initially also after the war – encapsulated the following mindset: that the Netherlands could not do without the East Indies, and the East Indies certainly could not do without the Netherlands.

That was politics – dominated by outspoken colonial views which were also fully shared by Queen Wilhelmina, as evidenced by her support for the

cult surrounding Governor General Johannes van Heutsz, the 'pacificator' of Aceh. The monarch's feelings were also reflected in the obvious reluctance with which she discussed post-war decolonization with the war cabinet in London. Whether and in what way colonialism – and in particular the far East Indies – was a topic in Dutch society is more difficult to determine. What is clear is that in institutions such as churches, schools, the press, popular culture and even the arts, colonialism was usually presented as self-evident. Since these institutions were closely tied to the political parties, given the social and religious stratification ('pillarization') of Dutch society, there was little room – and probably little enthusiasm – in the various constituencies for dissenting views. This docility played a major role in the post-war decolonization policy.

In the Dutch East Indies itself, the population group classified as 'European' was more closely linked with the colonial administration. On the eve of the Japanese occupation, roughly one-third of this group consisted of so-called *totoks*, the term used for Dutch people and other white Westerners. The Europeans, and in particular the *totoks*, were dominant in the higher positions in business and in the colonial administration. The majority of this legal population group, however, was made up of people of mixed European-Asian descent, also referred to as Indo-Europeans or Indos, a term that had a negative connotation at the time. Most of their families had lived in the colony for generations, and some had a family tree that went back to the seventeenth century. While the *totoks* often belonged to the higher classes, the Indo-European population was more stratified in socio-economic and cultural terms. Their position – between the *totoks* on the one hand and the Chinese middle class, the indigenous aristocracy, and the emerging Indonesian middle class on the other – was fragile. This was equally true of some ethnic groups that had acquired a more or less privileged position within the colonial administration and army, in particular Christians from the Moluccas, Minahasa and Timor – groups that were collectively referred to as the 'Ambonese'.

Unsurprisingly, the identification of all these groups with the colonial system led them almost collectively to adopt outspoken reactionary positions on Indonesian nationalism, colonial reforms and certainly also independence. In the 1930s, for example, the radical right-wing Patriotic Club was popular among the European population (even among Indos), as was the East Indian branch of the fascist National Socialist Movement (Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging, NSB), which incidentally placed

less emphasis on 'racial purity' than the party in the Netherlands did. It is perhaps surprising that it was precisely in *totok* circles – where Indonesians were not represented – that a small group of social democratically oriented civil servants was involved in advocating the re-evaluation and eventual dismantling of the colonial system over time, albeit under Dutch leadership. Some key players in the post-war years emerged from this so-called Stuwgroep, including Hubertus van Mook, Johann Logemann, and Jan Jonkman. Van Mook later became lieutenant governor-general of the Dutch East Indies, while Logemann and Jonkman successively became Minister of Overseas Territories for the Dutch Labour Party (Partij van de Arbeid, PvdA).

These voices did not, however, result in real reform of the colonial administration in the pre-war period. Under the Dutch Ethical Policy, the People's Council – a kind of consultative parliament – was established in 1918, with one part of the membership elected by the European population and the other part made up of 'natives', Chinese and Arabs who had been designated by the Governor-General. The People's Council did not advocate any radical changes. In any case, real power lay not with this council but with the Governor-General, even if he was formally required for certain topics to submit bills to the People's Council for consultation. The successive holders of this position followed what were clearly different policies: while Alexander Idenburg (1909-1916), Johan Paul van Limburg Stirum (1916-1921) and Dirk Fock (1921-1926) were considered somewhat reformist, Andries de Graeff (1926-1931) was a transitional figure and Bonifacius de Jonge (1931-1936) and A.W.L. Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer (1936-1942) were decidedly conservative. The Dutch government's policy also became increasingly conservative, certainly under Prime Minister Hendrik Colijn (1925-1926 and 1933-1939), who had himself been involved in various bloody military campaigns as a KNIL officer. Initially, Indonesian nationalism was more or less tolerated by the Dutch, but from the late 1920s onwards merciless repression was the watchword, especially following some communist-inspired uprisings on Java (in 1926) and Sumatra (in 1927). From that moment on, nationalism and communism were often mentioned in one and the same breath within colonial circles, which demonstrated a fundamental ignorance with regard to what was going on and how Indonesian nationalism was developing.

The architect Sukarno, who had graduated from the Technical College of Bandung, developed into the most prominent nationalist in the pre-war

years. He was continuously coming into conflict with the colonial administration, which had him imprisoned twice and then exiled: once briefly in Bandung (1930-1931), and the second time for longer, when he was exiled to Flores and then Bengkulu (1934-1942). Thousands of others were also exiled, including Mohammad Hatta and Sutan Sjahrir (who later became the first prime minister of Indonesia), who had both studied in the Netherlands. They were political prisoners from 1934 to 1942, partly in the Upper Digul camp deep in the inhospitable eastern region of New Guinea (Papua). The colonial response to Indonesian nationalism essentially came down to the development of an authoritarian state in which the colonial army and the police played a crucial role.

The repression of the 1930s set the tone in many ways for what was to take place in the next decade. This hard line was successful in that the leaders of the nationalist movement were isolated and the colonial authority felt less threatened. But this apparent calm led to complacency and to a serious underestimation of the power of nationalism. Governor-General De Jonge publicly declared in 1935 that, 'now that we have worked here in the East Indies for three hundred years, it will be another three hundred years before the East Indies might be ripe for a form of independence'.[5] Also after 1945, the direct and painful experience of Dutch repression, together with the knowledge that the colonial mentality would not disappear overnight, fuelled the Indonesians' distrust of the sincerity of the Dutch decolonization policy – that is, if Indonesians even accepted the idea that the old colonizer still had a role to play.

The Japanese period

Colonialism is not the exclusive prerogative of European countries, neither is the euphemistic framing of colonialism. The United States also went down this path, as did Japan. The Japanese colonial expansion began with the occupation of a series of islands in the Pacific Ocean, then Taiwan (1895), Korea (1910), Manchuria (1931) and parts of China (1937). After its attack on the American war fleet at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, Japan went on to take most of the European colonies in East, Southeast and South Asia. From the 1930s, Japan had framed its policy of expansion as 'the liberation of Asia'. The invasion of the Dutch East Indies began around the end of 1941 and the beginning of 1942, and just over two months later, on 9 March, army commander Henk ter Poorten capitulated. He was taken prisoner of war, and Governor-General Tjarda was interned. In no

time at all, the Dutch colonial system had been defeated and humiliated for all to see. The archipelago now belonged to the Japanese empire, which championed 'Asia for Asians' but which essentially began a new colonial occupation.

In retrospect, the Japanese victory in Indonesia sealed the fate of the Dutch East Indies. However, this was far from evident to the Dutch in 1942 or even in 1945. The Second World War and in particular the Japanese occupation were decisive for the way in which Indonesia gained independence. First of all, this world war ushered in a process of decolonization worldwide, one in which developments in a series of empires and the American attitude in the subsequent new war (now a Cold War) reinforced each other. Furthermore, the Japanese occupation generated considerable political, intellectual, psychological and military momentum for Indonesian nationalism, whereas the Dutch colonial administrative machinery had been removed. Finally, the fact that key Dutch players were isolated during the war reinforced their already deep-seated underestimation of that nationalism. These last two factors require a brief explanation.

The Japanese occupation of Indonesia was colonial in nature, geared towards ruthless exploitation. This worsened as the Allied advance progressively weakened Japan's position. This led to severe impoverishment and famine as well as the recruitment of several million forced labourers – known as *romusha* – to work in Indonesia or elsewhere in Japan's Asian empire. The demographic toll of the three years of Japanese occupation was enormous, with an estimated three million deaths on Java alone and perhaps four million in the entire archipelago out of a total population of about 70 million Indonesians.[6] The deep crisis in large parts of the archipelago led to acute social tensions that in the aftermath of the Japanese occupation gave rise to violence against local indigenous administrators and Chinese traders, who were accused of having benefited from the economic crisis.

Japan's colonial exploitation of the Indonesian population went hand in hand with a steadily increasing political and military mobilization. Immediately after the Dutch capitulation, Japan released all political exiles. A number of them, including Sukarno and Hatta, were subsequently heavily involved in the Japanese-led mobilization of the Indonesian population. These nationalist leaders later insisted that they had to seize this opportunity – which the Netherlands had never given them – in order to eventually achieve independence via a roundabout route. Other nationalists such as

Sjahrir opted for non-cooperation. But in the first years of the Japanese occupation, even Sukarno and his men were given little room to follow their own political course. It was only in the last months of the occupation that Japan reluctantly started to cooperate with preparations for independence. This was certainly opportunistic of the Japanese, but it was further than the Netherlands had ever been willing to go.

As the military situation deteriorated, the Japanese occupiers started to invest more in the – partly forced – recruitment of Indonesians to local combat groups under Japanese command. These militias were meant to contribute to the fight against the Allies, but this never happened, since Japan capitulated on 15 August 1945, before there was an Allied invasion of Java and Sumatra. But in the meantime, Japan had trained and enlisted hundreds of thousands of Indonesians in various auxiliary corps. These groups did go on to make an important contribution to the fight against two Allied powers, first the British and then the Dutch, but not in defence of the Japanese empire, but of Indonesian independence. The Japanese contribution to this military struggle lay mainly in the recruitment and the training prior to 15 August 1945 and, thereafter, in the large number of weapons that the Japanese handed over to the Indonesians, voluntarily or otherwise. In addition, a small number of Japanese soldiers joined the Indonesian struggle.[7]

And now a few words on the isolated position of the Dutch. From May 1940, the Dutch war cabinet had been based in London. Until the Japanese invasion, this war cabinet had had to leave the administration of the colony to the Dutch East Indies government until the latter was forced to move to Australia as a result of the Japanese occupation. With more reluctance than commitment, and under strong pressure from the Americans and to a lesser extent the British, who understood that the legitimacy of the Allied war efforts depended partly on the promise of decolonization, the Dutch war cabinet set out to write a declaration in the spirit of the Atlantic Charter of 14 August 1941. This led to the much-quoted '7 December speech' (1942) in which Queen Wilhelmina promised post-war reforms in relatively vague terms. This declaration was preceded by intense internal discussions that reflected a blatant colonial mentality. A plea by the only Indonesian member of the war cabinet, Ario Sujono, for the Netherlands to offer the promise of full independence, was never given a chance. The result was a declaration that was 'too little, too late' in the eyes of the Indonesian nationalists but was cited in Dutch circles long after the war as proof that the government had indeed understood the signs of the times

and was sincerely striving for a new arrangement for the archipelago. Given all that had gone before, this is questionable. Either way, the Dutch held on to the quintessentially colonial view that they should be in charge of the process of decolonization.

The Dutch cabinet's isolation in London and the lack of reliable information about developments in Indonesia perpetuated the Dutch underestimation of the nationalist movement. It also reinforced their fierce resentment against nationalists like Sukarno, who were portrayed as puppets of the Japanese regime with no meaningful support from their own population. This resentment and this misconception were shared by most of the Dutch who were released from the internment camps after the Japanese capitulation, as well as by the few pre-war colonial administrators who had fled to Australia. It is in this context that we should view Van Mook's initial assessment that nationalism and the *proklamasi* did not amount to much. A few days before the declaration of independence, he wrote that he returned to the archipelago 'to find millions of Indonesians who are [...] entirely on our side'. A week later, he noted 'the last cries of despair of Sukarno, who knows he has lost'; a month later, in early October 1945, he promised to have him caught 'in a cage'.[8] Two weeks after this, however, Van Mook had changed his mind, this time advocating direct discussions with Sukarno and his group and foreseeing Indonesian autonomy, albeit within the Dutch kingdom and not for another 25 years. But his kindred spirit in the 'Stuwgroep', Logemann, who was now Minister of Overseas Territories, declared in parliament that any discussion with Sukarno and his group would be 'as unworthy as it would be fruitless', adding that everything was aimed at 'making the East Indies understand that it is a blessing to be a part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands'. His words were met with overwhelming applause.[9]

Playing a role in all this were not only political beliefs, colonial sentiments (ethical or not) or missionary ambitions, which was an important factor for the Christian parties in the Netherlands, but also – and especially – hard economic and geopolitical interests. The majority of the Dutch East Indian and Dutch business community wanted nothing more than to have their privileged pre-war economic positions restored. And those in government circles felt very strongly that the colonial connection was crucial for the post-war reconstruction of the Netherlands and for retaining a somewhat prominent place in world politics.



The signing of the ceasefire agreement on 14 October 1946 at the British Consulate General in Jakarta. From left to right: Wim Schermerhorn (chairman of the General Commission), the British intermediary Lord Killearn, and Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir.

Source: Netherlands Indies Government Information Service, Nationaal Archief/Anefo.

The Indonesian Revolution

On 17 August 1945, Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta proclaimed the independence of Indonesia in a short but ground-breaking declaration. This moment was preceded by hectic and emotional deliberations. Almost a year earlier, in September 1944, the Japanese authorities had declared for the first time that they wanted to cooperate in a controlled transfer of power – albeit in still vague and therefore disappointing terms for Sukarno and his circle. As Japan's position deteriorated, the Japanese leaders decided to give the nationalists more leeway, and the first concrete steps were taken towards an independent state. This preparation for independence ended abruptly with the sudden Japanese capitulation on 15 August, nine and six days after American atomic bombs had fallen on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, respectively. The capitulation came as a surprise even for the Japanese commanders in Jakarta, and it meant that they were obliged to maintain the status quo, protect the internees and cooperate in the process of demobilizing and repa-

triating their own armed forces. Cooperating in the establishment of a new republic was explicitly not covered by this mandate.

What followed was a frenzy in which various Japanese military leaders played different roles and radical nationalist youths (*pemuda*) kidnapped Sukarno and forced him to proclaim independence immediately, instead of waiting for the Japanese to present it to them. This culminated in a sleepless night in which the brief text of the *proklamasi* was written (in Indonesian, naturally) at the home of the Japanese rear admiral Tadashi Maeda in Jakarta: 'We, the people of Indonesia, hereby declare Indonesia independent. Matters relating to the transfer of power and other issues will be settled in an orderly manner and as soon as possible.' The next morning, on 17 August, Sukarno read this text out to a small audience and, along with Hatta, signed it 'on behalf of the Indonesian people' as the first president and vice president of the Republic. The date of the signing still followed the Japanese calendar.

And so it was that on 17 August, the formative years of the Republic of Indonesia were brought to an end. This is now recognized by the Netherlands, but at the time this was not the case. The message of the proclamation was brushed aside by the Dutch, and it would only sink in much later. On Java, the message spread rapidly, but it took weeks before the news was known everywhere in Indonesia.

The Republic now had to build a state and expand from its core (Java and to a much lesser degree Sumatra). A parliament was formed, a constitution was adopted and public services had to be maintained and strengthened. This state formation took years and was made significantly more difficult by the fight against the Netherlands and by internal conflicts. In the eyes of the Republicans, the fight against the Netherlands was a rebellion against the former colonizer's attempt to 'reoccupy' the country – a term that was initially also used by the Dutch army command. Seen in this way, the Dutch-Indonesian war was 'merely' a part of the Indonesian Revolution. This book is mainly about that war of independence, but it is necessary to say a little more about that revolution and more specifically about the most important internal contradictions during the Indonesian Revolution.

When the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed, its leaders envisioned a religiously neutral, socially progressive unitary state. The foundations of the state that was to be established were already laid on 1 June 1945, as an introduction to the constitution, in the 'Pancasila' – the five pillars. The guiding

motto was 'unity in Indonesia'. However, there were strong currents within the country that rejected these principles or that espoused more radical doctrines. This led to internal political and military conflicts that caused divisions not only during the war with the Netherlands, but also long thereafter.

The top priority was the Republic's claim on the entire territory of the Dutch East Indies as a unitary state. This had been the guiding principle already before the war in the most important nationalist movements, and it went without saying that it would be maintained in 1945. However, there were movements scattered throughout the archipelago that sought a degree of regional autonomy – ambitions that were not in line with the principle of a unitary state. For example, there was resistance in some regions, such as Aceh and parts of the Moluccas, to being ruled by the demographically dominant island of Java. In Eastern Indonesia, there was a strong desire among the elite for regional autonomy, which many felt could easily be combined with an independent federal Indonesia. Even within Java itself, such regionalism existed. In the partly Sundanese West Java, plans were made to establish an autonomous state of Pasundan in 1947, the leaders of which nonetheless unequivocally stated that they wanted to be part of an independent Indonesia.

The Dutch attempt to create a federal United States of Indonesia (Republik Indonesia Serikat, RIS) instead of a unitary Republic initially joined these centrifugal forces. But the paternalistic way in which this policy was implemented, and its overly emphatic divide-and-conquer strategy mainly aimed at isolating the Republic, gave federalism a bad name and weakened it politically. While the Netherlands appeared to have achieved part of its goals when sovereignty was transferred to the federal United States of Indonesia in 1949, this turned out to be an illusion. Within a year, Indonesia had been transformed into a unitary state. A few failed subversive actions in 1950 – namely the APRA coup led by former KNIL captain Raymond Westerling in Bandung[10] and actions of KNIL soldiers in Makassar and on the Moluccas – gave Sukarno the perfect argument for transforming Indonesia into a unitary state. In the 1950s, several uprisings were crushed or nipped in the bud by the Republic, and even thereafter tensions continued to flare up between the unitary state and regional movements.

The Pancasila does not define Indonesia as a secular state, but neither is it described as an Islamic state: the guiding principle of belief in 'the only God' encompasses two major monotheistic religions (Islam and Christian-

ity) and was interpreted in such a way that there was also room for Buddhism, Hinduism, and later also Confucianism. This liberal approach was in direct opposition to the view that an independent Indonesia should be an Islamic state, given that some 90 per cent of the population adhered to this religion. Between 1945 and 1949 and long thereafter, the Republic fought against radical Islamic movements such as Darul Islam. Regional and religious resistance overlapped regularly, as in Aceh.

The other three pillars of the Pancasila – alongside 'unity in diversity' and 'belief in the one and only God' – are humanity, democracy and social justice. There was no consensus on how these concepts should be implemented. Social democratic beliefs were strongly present within the nationalist movement, including in Sjahrir's socialist party and the Islamic Masyumi. But there was also an important communist movement, part of which was organized in the PKI, the communist party, as well as supporters of Amir Sjarifuddin and Tan Malaka. During the war years, there were in fact armed confrontations between the Republic and the PKI, culminating in the Madiun uprising in September 1948. This was to have a long and violent sequel after 1949, leading to the mass killings of (alleged) communists in 1965 and 1966.

The internal tensions within the nationalist movement gave rise to political instability. Between 1 September 1945 and 20 December 1950, the Republic had ten different cabinets: three cabinets under Sutan Sjahrir (14 November 1945 – 3 July 1947), two under Amir Sjarifuddin (3 July 1947 – 29 January 1948) and four under Hatta (29 January 1948 – 6 September 1950). As the entire political leadership of the Republic was imprisoned after Operation Kraai or *Agresi Militer Belanda 2*,[11] an emergency cabinet also formally served under Sjarifuddin Prawiranegara (19 December 1948 – 13 July 1949). After an initial presidential cabinet, all the others were headed by a prime minister, while Sukarno remained president. Cabinet changes reflected disagreements between parties, between political leaders and between politicians and the military; Sukarno remained the unifying factor. None of these cabinets came into being as a result of elections, for the first general elections did not take place until 1955.

In a military sense, too, the Republic of Indonesia was a state under construction. During the war, it was essential for the Republic to develop its own army, in which the motley mixture of battle groups could be united under the command of General Sudirman. This history is explained in more detail in the next chapter. The Republican military command

did not succeed in establishing a monopoly on violence in those years, however. The armed forces waged war against the Netherlands but also had to fight against Indonesian groups that were regionally, religiously and/or politically driven, and there were also internal conflicts within the Republican army itself. In addition, there was constant tension between the army and the political leadership of the Republic, as the latter made concessions in the negotiation process more often than the army leadership and radical revolutionary groups felt was acceptable. These tensions ran high on several occasions in early 1949, but did not result in a rift or a military coup. Instead, the Republic and its army, the Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), jointly achieved victory in the Indonesian War of Independence.

The British interregnum

During the Second World War, all of Indonesia – with the exception of Sumatra – was part of the allied South West Pacific Area (SWPA) under the command of the American General Douglas MacArthur. When Japan capitulated, the SWPA was abolished, and Indonesia came under the British-led South East Asia Command (SEAC). At that moment, more than 100,000 Allied soldiers were already present in some eastern islands and particularly in New Guinea. Yet it was not until the beginning of September that the first British SEAC soldiers arrived on Java and Sumatra. Their main task was to demobilize and repatriate the Japanese army, to implement the orderly evacuation of the Japanese internment and prisoner-of-war camps, and in general to enforce the law.[12] The British wanted to avoid becoming involved in the Indonesian-Dutch conflict, but they inevitably did become entangled. In the Dutch view, the British had sent out entirely the wrong signal by recognizing the Republic as an interlocutor as early as September 1945. On the Indonesian side, the arrival of British troops, often accompanied by Dutch civil servants, was seen as the beginning of a colonial reoccupation – a view that appeared to be confirmed by the violent action of the British against Republican fighter groups, especially in the Battle of Surabaya in November 1945. Although the British did put pressure on the Netherlands to take its place at the negotiating table, in practice they acted in close consultation with the Dutch authorities and ultimately transferred authority to the Netherlands – and not the Republic – in the spring of 1946.

A complete reoccupation of the archipelago by the Allies was not on the

agenda – given their limited aims – and was moreover militarily impossible, above all due to the lack of troops. The Allied forces limited themselves to the occupation of seven urban enclaves on Java and Sumatra. The British commander Lieutenant-General Philip Christison, who became convinced that the nationalist movement was stronger than his Dutch interlocutors believed, tried to get the two sides to talk – with mixed success. Meanwhile, the situation in parts of Java and Sumatra was escalating and quickly degenerated into large-scale violence, an episode that later became known in the Netherlands as *bersiap*. This affected the safety of the internees and the capitulated Japanese troops for whom SEAC was responsible, which meant that the British troops unwittingly became party to these conflicts.

On 17 August 1945, the Republic could count on broad support in its own country, certainly much more than the Dutch side presumed. However, real state power was available to the Republic to only a limited degree, and it certainly did not have a monopoly on violence. The first month after the proclamation remained relatively quiet, but after that the violence escalated, partly fuelled by a power vacuum but also as a reaction to the arrival of the British and the Dutch.

This episode of intense violence is discussed in detail in Part II. In brief, several conflicts were waged simultaneously, many of which involved groups lacking any clear-cut command structure. Between September 1945 and March 1946, *pemuda* perpetrated violence – often gruesome – against Europeans, Indo-Europeans and 'Ambonese'. Estimates of the number of deaths in this period vary widely in the historiography of the Indonesian Revolution, from 3,000 to as many as 30,000. These figures are subjected to a critical analysis elsewhere in this volume.[13] This Indonesian violence must be set against the violence of the KNIL troops and Indonesian hit squads loyal to the Dutch – in total in the order of thousands – which resulted in an unknown number of victims. Indonesian violence was also directed against the Japanese troops, who were unpopular and were now suspected of participating in a colonial reoccupation. The number of Japanese casualties is estimated to have been in the order of 1,000 – higher than the number of Japanese who had died during the conquest of the archipelago. The violence against the Chinese population, which lasted much longer, most likely claimed many more deaths. The violence was also directed against the Indonesian nobility and others who were seen as collaborators with the Dutch and thereafter the Japanese occupiers. There are no reliable figures on

this period, referred to in the Indonesian historiography as *berdaulat*, which continued for years.

The information received by the British army command in Jakarta regarding these waves of violence, while fragmented, was enough for them to realize the seriousness of the situation. For the British, this only underlined the urgency of getting the Republic and the Netherlands to talk. The British interest lay in completing their original tasks and then leaving as soon as possible. The idea was to keep military deployment to a minimum – a deployment that, with a total troop strength of about 60,000 Allied soldiers in a country with 70 million inhabitants, was in any case precarious. Nevertheless, the British were sucked into the war and did not shy away from using hard-hitting measures, as in the bloody Battle of Surabaya.

Politically, the British attitude – that of the newly appointed Labour government and of SEAC commander-in-chief Lord Louis Mountbatten, as well as Christison (who was on the ground) – and the clever negotiating style of Sjahrir forced the Netherlands to backtrack on its initial complete dismissal of the Republic. Part of this pressure was that for months the British refused to allow new Dutch troops in and would not lift this ban until the Dutch were willing to start negotiations with the Republic of Indonesia, which they finally did in March 1946. It was in this context that the Linggarjati Agreement, which is discussed below, was concluded in November of that year. Although this treaty did not ultimately lead to the peaceful acknowledgement of independence, it did allow the British to let the Dutch troops in and hand over authority to the Netherlands before withdrawing in haste.

The Dutch return: politics

It was noted above that the dominant political and military view in the Netherlands immediately after the Second World War, which was fully in line with the dismissive and repressive attitude towards Indonesian nationalism in the preceding years, was that the Republic was a Japanese fabrication. From this point of view, it was necessary for Dutch colonial authority to be restored. This was the conviction not only of the colonial hawks but also of the moderates, who regarded the Dutch return as preparation for a process of decolonization carried out under the auspices of the Netherlands, after which both countries would remain closely linked. The Dutch derived the right to control this decolonization process from its centuries-long presence in Indonesia. We have to keep in mind that Indonesia was by far the largest

of the two countries both in geographical terms (see Map 1) and in demographic terms.[14]

We can conclude in retrospect that this was a serious underestimation of the strength of both the nationalist movement and the profound changes that had taken place in international relations. This is not to say that Dutch policy was completely rigid. In fact, initially there was a steep learning curve on the Dutch side, as evidenced by the decision to start negotiations with the Republic. However, these new insights met with resistance in the Netherlands, and standpoints subsequently hardened again, with the result that even the more moderate protagonists became proponents of a large-scale military deployment. The learning curve was cut prematurely, and successive Dutch governments – trapped in their outdated colonial vision – ended up being overtaken by the facts and also coming under heavy international pressure.

A considerable number of studies have been published on this phase in Dutch policy towards Indonesia and the negotiations that eventually led to the transfer of sovereignty. The focus of this book lies elsewhere, which is why a summary of the Dutch way of thinking and Dutch policy will suffice here. In this brief overview the most important players, their views of the opponent, their objectives and the treaties, as well as the relationship between the political and military measures taken will be highlighted.

For a long time, the Dutch historiography on the Indonesian War of Independence revolved around the political and diplomatic conflict and, by extension, the relationship between the political and military leadership on the Dutch side. There have been two opposing camps in recent decades. On the one hand, there was the view that the Netherlands was driven by an incorrigible colonial mentality throughout the period in question, which puts the blame squarely on the Netherlands. On the other hand, there was a revisionist minority view that emphasized the Netherlands' sincere efforts to bring about a rapid decolonization, efforts that failed partly due to opposition from – or the irreconcilable and untrustworthy position of – the Republic and other parties. In other words, 'If two are fighting, two are to blame', as a Dutch proverb goes. Which of these two camps is correct is less relevant for this research programme's main question concerning the nature and consequences of Dutch military action. What we can say with certainty is that the Netherlands eventually opted for tough military intervention and that the military command insisted on the need for such a firm line.

Before the Second World War, the Indies government in Batavia operated relatively autonomously from the government in The Hague, operating under a governor-general who was able to rule in a relatively autocratic manner with full support from The Hague. The last pre-war governor-general (or 'GG'), A.W.L. Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer, did not want to return to his post after the war due to his difference of opinion with the new post-war Dutch government on the policy to be pursued in the Dutch East Indies. He was succeeded by a Lieutenant Governor-General, Hubertus van Mook, who held this position until November 1948. Before the Second World War, Van Mook had been a senior civil servant in the Dutch East Indies. Shortly before the capitulation he had left for Australia, where he began preparing a plan for the Dutch return to the archipelago. He later continued this work as Minister of the Colonies in the Dutch war cabinet in London. In April 1944, the Dutch government established the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA) as a forerunner of the government to be restored in the East Indies. In early October 1945, Van Mook was able to return to Jakarta under the protection of the British troops, the militarized NICA and the first units of the KNIL. Once there, he quickly set up an administrative body that was largely staffed by members of the old civil service corps. 'Jakarta' had to go back to being 'Batavia'.

In Jakarta, Van Mook did have to deal with divergent views on the Dutch side, but not with a parliament to which he had to answer. He was, however, accountable to the Dutch government; and this is where 'the Netherlands' becomes a complex concept, because there were differences in opinion among Dutch politicians and also between the successive cabinets. In his three years as Lieutenant Governor-General, Van Mook had to deal with the transitional Schermerhorn-Drees cabinet (June 1945-July 1946), the Beel cabinet (KVP-PvdA, July 1946-August 1948) and until his departure at the end of October 1948 the Drees-Van Schaik cabinet comprising the Catholic People's Party (Katholieke Volkspartij, KVP), the Labour Party (PvdA), the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, VVD) and the Christian Historical Union (Christen-Historische Unie, CHU), which governed from August 1948 to March 1951. Van Mook frequently acted without waiting for instructions from the Dutch government, such as when he decided to reach out to President Sukarno. Nonetheless, in July 1947, he too wanted to take responsibility for the first so-called 'police action', and over time he began to condemn the Republican government more firmly. Moreover, he has gone down in history as the ar-

chitect of the aborted plans for a federal Indonesia, a construction that the Republic reluctantly accepted for reasons of expediency but actually regarded as an example of colonial divide-and-rule politics.

The KVP and the PvdA dominated the government in The Hague during this period. Under their party leader Carl Romme, the Catholics quite consistently advocated a hard line on Indonesia. When Lieutenant Governor-General Van Mook was replaced by KVP leader Louis Beel in the new position of 'High Representative of the Crown' in late 1948, this hard line prevailed. From the outset, the PvdA was more cautious and also more hesitant than the KVP. Within the party, there was resistance to the restoration of the colonial order and to the use of military force. Nevertheless, PvdA party leader Willem Drees time and again supported and implemented a policy that can only be regarded as colonial. As for the other Dutch political parties, they were as a rule even more radical in their opposition to relinquishing control over the colony or at least over the decolonization process, with the notable exception again being the Community Party of the Netherlands (CPN).

'The Indonesian question', as it came to be called, was a hotly debated topic in this period. The decolonization policy and the war in particular were not completely uncontroversial within Dutch society, but there was no broad-based opposition to the approach taken by the government. Institutions such as churches, trade unions, the press and universities generally kept quiet. In the immediate post-war decades, Dutch society was strictly divided into political-denominational pillars, where obedience was paramount. There were exceptions, of course, such as among former members of the resistance and among the radical left. But opinion polls consistently indicated that there was support for the government's tough policies. There was no opposition to the hasty constitutional amendment of 1946 that made it possible to send conscripts to Indonesia. The number of conscientious objectors ran into the thousands, but only a few per cent explicitly gave political motives as their objection. This is not surprising, given the severe punishments imposed on those who did. There were a few protests and petitions in the Netherlands against the policy of decolonization, but these were always reactionary in nature and meant to prevent the Dutch government from making concessions to the Republic or calling on the government to undo such concessions.

Sukarno, Hatta, the Republic and in fact the entire nationalist movement were at first categorically rejected by most Dutch people involved.

Van Mook was the first player to understand that this had to change. Despite the criticism Van Mook received, the Dutch government was not long thereafter forced under heavy British pressure to sit down and talk with the Republic, thereby de facto recognizing the new nation, although Sukarno in particular remained controversial and even hated by the Dutch. Preference was given to those such as Sjahrir who had not cooperated with Japan and who were seen as less anti-Dutch. But it soon became clear that the choice was not for the Netherlands to make.

As mentioned above, the Dutch initially seemed to be on a relatively steep learning curve in terms of their objectives for the colony. The aim was first to achieve victory over the Japanese occupier and then the restoration of Dutch authority. While before 1940 the idea was that independence would only come after a period of three centuries, during and immediately after the Second World War this became a matter of decades, and soon thereafter the time horizon was substantially reduced to a matter of years. On 15 November 1946, the Netherlands signed the Linggarjati Agreement, thereby de facto recognizing the Republic and agreeing to the swift realization of independence. The learning curve thus continued. However, the Netherlands demanded that Indonesia become a federal state that remained closely linked to the Netherlands in a Union under the Crown. In the end, 'Linggarjati' was signed by both parties but was never implemented because a majority of Dutch politicians felt that too much had been conceded to the Republic, while on the Indonesian side, especially among the army command, there was considerable criticism of the concessions made by the Republican government.

The Netherlands continued to pursue the concept of a federal Indonesia and a Union – which would effectively come under Dutch leadership – at the Malino Conference (15-25 July 1946) and in the Renville Agreement (17 January 1948), the Rum-Van Roijen Agreement (7 May 1949) and during the Round Table Conference (RTC) that preceded the formal transfer of sovereignty (27 December 1949). Moreover, the Netherlands initially succeeded in keeping New Guinea (Papua) out of the sovereignty transfer. Less than a year after formally obtaining independence, however, Indonesia dismantled the federation and became a unitary state. The Union never acquired any real significance and was unilaterally denounced by Indonesia in 1956. In 1962-63, the Netherlands was forced – via the United States – to hand over New Guinea to Indonesia following a conflict lasting many years that severely damaged Indonesian-Dutch relations.



Prime Minister Willem Drees speaks during the transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia in the Royal Palace on Dam Square, 27 December 1949. Next to Drees, from left to right: Sultan Hamid II (chairman of the Federal States), Mohammad Hatta (prime minister of the Republic of Indonesia) and Queen Juliana. Source: Joop van Bilsen, Nationaal Archief/ Anefo.

Since then, the question has often been raised – to begin with by Queen Juliana during the transfer of sovereignty – why the road to independence was so long and so violent. This question is all the more pressing because there had been the prospect of a negotiated peace in 1946. The answer lies partly in the fact that until the bitter end, the parties involved had deeply differing views on the ultimate aim of the negotiations and the question of who should be in charge. The Netherlands claimed the right to call the shots and was not willing to concede much more than a federal Indonesia and a Union in which the Republic would be reduced to nothing more than a federated state. Moreover, in this view, Indonesia would not be responsible

for matters such as foreign policy and defence. The Republic argued that the Netherlands was an intruder and that the proposals from The Hague reflected the Dutch colonial mentality. The successive compromises that the Republican government was forced to make under the threat of Dutch violence and international pressure – a learning curve in itself – were regarded as necessary but undesirable, and were therefore seen as temporary concessions required to defend independence, concessions that would eventually be reversed.

The clash between these incompatible premises was eventually settled by force. The military commanders on both sides were moreover in favour of taking a hard line, sometimes more so than their political leaders. Having said that, even Sukarno remarked out loud on the day after the transfer of sovereignty that independence would not have been achieved without the armed struggle. There is every reason to believe this was the case.

The following chapter focuses on the Dutch armed forces in the Dutch East Indies and Indonesia. There is a degree of continuity in terms of leadership and mentality that can be seen in the pre-war and post-war KNIL, the colonial army that had a strong influence on the way in which the entire Dutch armed forces in Indonesia thought and operated. Significantly, Army Commander Simon Spoor, supported by the rest of the army command, insisted that a military victory was possible and that victory was a prerequisite for negotiating successfully with the Republic. This revealed an underestimation of the military capacity of the opponent, which was paralleled by the Dutch underestimation of the support for Indonesian nationalism among the population.

The entire period from August 1945 to December 1949 can be regarded – at least in the case of Java – as one continuous period of war, with two short periods of what could be labelled conventional warfare and a very large number of smaller military confrontations. The objective of bringing 'order and peace' to the archipelago as a new *pax Neerlandica* resulted in significant violence. The Dutch armed forces carried out two major offensives: 'Operation Product' (mid-1947) and 'Operation Kraai' (late 1948) – euphemistically referred to for diplomatic reasons as domestic 'police actions'. As will be discussed in the next chapter, in each case the operation appeared to be a military success but turned into a diplomatic fiasco and a military impasse – the bankruptcy of Spoor's 'spearhead strategy'. The TNI increasingly focused on guerrilla warfare, and the Dutch armed forces appeared to

have neither the experience nor the means to find an effective response to this. The result was that the Dutch army could not win the battle and the Indonesian forces managed to sustain the war of attrition. The population suffered the greatest losses.

Political and military milestones

During the war, periods of negotiations and relative calm were interspersed with episodes of fierce fighting, which exhibited major local and regional differences. The important events in Dutch-Indonesian relations and their aftermath are listed chronologically:

- 15 August 1945: the capitulation of Japan
- 17 August 1945: the *proklamasi* of the Republik Indonesia
- 29 September 1945: the arrival of the first British troops
- September 1945 - March 1946: *bersiap*
- 2 October 1945: the arrival of Van Mook in Jakarta
- 27 October - 20 November 1945: the Battle of Surabaya (Heroes' Day in Indonesia, 10 November)
- 4 January 1946: the relocation of the Republican seat of government from Jakarta to Yogyakarta
- 7 February 1946: the Netherlands declares its intention to strive for a commonwealth with Indonesia
- End of February 1946: the arrival of the first troops from the Netherlands
- 14-24 April 1946: the Hoge Veluwe Conference
- 15-25 July 1946: the Malino Conference
- 14 October 1946: the signing of a truce
- 15 November 1946: the signing of the Linggarjati Agreement
- End of November 1946: the departure of the last British troops
- 7 December 1946: the Den Pasar conference and the establishment of the State of East Indonesia
- 11 December 1946 - 22 February 1947: extrajudicial executions by Special Forces (Depot Speciale Troepen, DST) under Captain Westerling in Sulawesi
- 25 March 1947: the failure of the Linggarjati Agreement after unilateral Dutch adjustments
- 21 July - 5 August 1947: Operation Product / *Agresi Militer Belanda 1*
- 9 December 1947: the Dutch 'cleansing operation' in Rawagede
- 17 January 1948: the signing of the Renville Agreement

- 18 - 30 September 1948: the Madiun uprising
- 19 December 1948 - 5 January 1949: Operation Kraai / *Agresi Militer Belanda 2*
- 1 March 1949: Indonesian assault on Yogyakarta
- 7 May 1949: the signing of the Rum-Van Roijen Agreement
- 7 August 1949: Darul Islam proclaims the Islamic State of Indonesia (completely crushed in 1962)
- 10 and 14 August 1949: truce in Java and Sumatra respectively
- 23 August - 2 November 1949: the Round Table Conference (RTC) in The Hague
- 27 December 1949: the transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia (USI)
- 26 July 1950: the dissolution of the KNIL
- 17 August 1950: the establishment of the unitary state of Republik Indonesia; the dissolution of the USI
- Mid-1951: the return of the last Dutch KL and KNIL troops to the Netherlands
- August 1954 - 21 February 1956: Indonesia dissolves the Dutch-Indonesian Union
- 1962-1963: the transfer of New Guinea via the United Nations to Indonesia

What is evident from this chronology is both the constant intertwining of diplomatic and military battles and the succession of implemented or only partially implemented treaties. From the Hoge Veluwe conference via Linggarjati, Renville and Rum-Van Roijen to the Round Table Conference (RTC), the Dutch government gave the dual message that it was willing to take leave of its colony but, as noted above, only along the path mapped out by the Netherlands, which would also allow the interests of Dutch business to be firmly secured. It should have been obvious to the Dutch that the Republic could not possibly have accepted such a proposal.

In summary, the acknowledgement by the Dutch that Indonesia would soon become an independent state had already been included in the government declaration of 7 February 1946 and was subsequently confirmed at the (failed) Hoge Veluwe Conference (April 1946) and – in particular – the Linggarjati Agreement signed on 15 November 1946, in which the Republic was de facto recognized. However, the Netherlands sought to limit the dominant role of the Republic by two means, namely by pressing for a





An enthusiastic crowd welcomes President Sukarno (1950). The slogans on the banners read 'Selamat datang. Merdeka!' *(Welcome. Freedom!),* 'Hapuskan! Negara djadjahan pasti rakjat [makmur]' *(Down with the colony. [Then] the people will prosper), and* 'Tentara dan rakjat bersatu-bulat. Kita menjadi kuat' *([When] army and people are united, we are strong).* Source: Photographer unknown, ANRI/IPPHOS.

federal state and by proposing a Union. Both objectives were achieved at the RTC, but the structures set up for this purpose did not last long. While the Netherlands interpreted sovereignty in a fundamentally limited way, the Republic continued to pursue unconditional self-determination. That the Republican negotiators at the RTC put their signatures to something less than this was a tactical compromise; after the transfer of sovereignty there would be more political leeway to take matters into their own hands. The Dutch side had always demanded more than could actually be asked of the Republic and had by no means always honoured their own concessions. Certainly the army command – and when push came to shove also the governments in The Hague and in Batavia – were willing to enforce this by military means. In this context, there are good arguments for considering 'the failure of the generations' to which Queen Juliana referred in the transfer of sovereignty to be primarily a *Dutch* failure.[15]

The RTC was also where the two sides came to an agreement on a financial settlement, which painfully illustrates just how much the Dutch side was thinking in terms of lost property and their own rights. Moreover, the Netherlands demanded that Indonesia pay a debt of 6.3 billion Dutch guilders, which also included an amount of some 2 billion guilders for the military costs incurred from 1945 to 1949. Hence the Indonesians were essentially billed for the Dutch attempt to reoccupy their archipelago. The Indonesian negotiators successfully refused to pay the latter, while they had already accepted the former in principle in 1946. The Netherlands – with Prime Minister Drees in the lead – felt very short-changed by this and only accepted the reduction under heavy American pressure. This Indonesian debt to the Netherlands was almost entirely repaid. By contrast, the Dutch government has to this day not paid the salaries and pensions of civil servants and soldiers in the service of the Dutch East Indies that went unpaid during the Japanese occupation, referring to the formally correct argument – but highly debatable from a moral and political perspective – that this obligation, if it existed at all, had been transferred from the colonial government to the Indonesian government.[16]

The international context

The dominant Dutch view thus shifted from a rejection of Indonesian nationalism and of the Republic to a recognition of the inevitability of a transfer of sovereignty in the short term, but under Dutch auspices and only as a federal Indonesia that would remain tied to the Netherlands in a Union. The Dutch military build-up and the deployment of the armed forces were seen – and defended – in that light. After all, the restoration of their own position of power was necessary for the envisaged decolonization process, which meant that any Indonesian resistance to this Dutch policy stance had to be suppressed.

From the outset, however, the Netherlands was confronted with an internationalization of the conflict, which began in the British period. Thereafter the United States became a crucial but certainly not the only factor, alongside the United Nations where the Soviet Union, China and several former colonies also had a voice.

Time and again, the pattern of bilateral and multilateral pressure followed by Dutch concessions repeated itself. The Dutch government continued to try to present the war as an internal matter and to prevent the internationalization of the conflict. However, international interference could not be kept out of the equation and repeatedly compelled the Netherlands to make concessions. It was British pressure that led to the Linggarjati Agreement; American pressure and direct involvement that resulted in the Renville Agreement; and condemnations by the United Nations Security Council that put a stop to Operations Product and Kraai, allowed the restoration of the Republican government in Yogyakarta, and ultimately led to the Rum-Van Roijen Agreement, the ceasefire and the RTC, where the UN also had a seat at the table. On several occasions, the Dutch government agreed to international mediation, including under the auspices of the UN Security Council. Often, however, the outcome was disappointing from a Dutch perspective, which in turn gave rise to resentment of foreign interference – even though it became increasingly apparent that the war simply could not be won militarily.[17]

International interference in the Dutch-Indonesian war reflected changing geopolitical relations. The Cold War played an important role in this, including at the United Nations, for which the 'Indonesian question' was a litmus test. Even before the Second World War, the Soviet Union had taken an anti-colonial stance, and after the end of that war, colonialism and decolonization became a crucial issue in the Cold War. This led the United States

to adopt a policy that was supportive of decolonization, provided that the new states were not communist. One complication for the Americans in the Dutch-Indonesian conflict was that they did not want to alienate the Netherlands, given the precarious security situation in Europe. However, the suppression – by the Republic – of the communist Madiun uprising in September 1948 convinced Washington that the Republic could become a reliable partner. This left the Dutch government with little choice, especially since Washington threatened the Netherlands with a discontinuation of Marshall Aid.

Furthermore, the Indonesian struggle for independence took place in the context of the first phase of a global post-war decolonization process in which several countries in Asia and the Middle East became independent, in some cases following an armed struggle. The Republic of Indonesia was supported by new states such as India, which became independent in 1947. At the same time, the British and the French were themselves involved in decolonization processes in several places, including Southeast Asia, and this meant that they adopted difficult and sometimes inconsistent policies with regard to the Dutch-Indonesian conflict. Some Arab countries such as Egypt also recognized the Republic of Indonesia de jure even before 27 December 1949. Given the geopolitical situation and international law of that time, the colonial period only really ended for Indonesia with the formal transfer of sovereignty, even though many states granted the Republic de facto recognition.

The former colonies' struggle to achieve independence was in many cases an extremely bloody process – just as the end and aftermath of the Second World War had been in Europe. Many of the questions being asked about Dutch military conduct in Indonesia can therefore be discussed most meaningfully in a comparative perspective, and that has indeed been the approach in this book. It is, however, important to note that even from such a perspective, the Dutch-Indonesian war was anything but inevitable. Other countries demonstrated that this was possible. In the Philippines, for example, the Americans transferred sovereignty in 1946, as they had promised in 1936, albeit to a very pro-American elite. Great Britain peacefully transferred sovereignty to Burma in 1948. Even the independence of the former British colony of India in 1947 was the result of negotiations – the violence only came afterwards with the so-called Partition of India and Pakistan. In any case, military conflicts in the British colonies mainly took place after 1949.

The closest equivalent process in these first post-war years was the drama that played out in French Indochina (1946-1954); this explains why there was a certain degree of French-Dutch diplomatic solidarity in this period. However, the most violent phase of the French decolonization process – in and around Vietnam (1950-1954) and in Algeria (1954-1962) – had yet to begin at this point. This was also true of the colonial wars that dictatorial Portugal waged in Africa and which did not end until 1974.

In short, the Dutch-Indonesian decolonization process and war took place in a historical context that was new to all the parties involved. This insight may make the Dutch mindset and conduct at the time – which was 'on the wrong side of history' – more understandable. However, it certainly does not alter the fact that they were altogether unacceptable from an Indonesian perspective, even back then.



3.

The war in Indonesia 1945-1949

The military-historical context

Gert Oostindie and Rémy Limpach

The main focus of this research programme is the nature of the Dutch military conduct in the Indonesian War of Independence. Much has already been published on this theme, at first mostly in the form of commemorative literature. Following the *Excessennota* [Memorandum on excesses] in 1969, a handful of academic books on violent 'infringements' (*ontsporingen*) was published, but only in the last decade have thorough analyses appeared.[1] Drawing on this historiography, this chapter opens with a brief analysis of the strategy, organization and actions of the Indonesian and British armed forces. We then consider the Dutch armed forces in more depth. This is followed by an outline of the course of the war and, finally, a discussion of the current state of the historiography. The latter anticipates the interim conclusions to this first part, in which we relate the choice of sub-projects back to our approach to the main research question.

The Indonesian commander-in-chief, General Sudirman, greeting his men; Yogyakarta, 28 April 1946. Source: Photographer unknown, ANRI/IPPHOS.

The Indonesian armed forces

The Republic was a state under construction, not only administratively but also militarily; whereas the British and – on paper, at least – the Dutch armed forces were tightly organized institutions, this could not be said of the majority of armed groups on the Indonesian side. On 17 August 1945, the day of the proclamation, no national army existed at all. Faced with the external threat of reoccupation, major internal divisions, and violent conflicts, however, the creation of a national army was a top priority for the Republican leaders. Sukarno took the first step on 22 August by founding the *Badan Keamanan Rakyat* (BKR, 'People's Security Agency'), a federation of existing armed groups that, for diplomatic reasons, was not yet described as an 'army'. On 5 October, a more centralized army was founded, the *Tentara Keamanan Rakyat* (TKR, 'People's Security Army'). In early 1946, the TKR was reformed and renamed the *Tentara Republik Indonesia* (TRI, 'Army of the Republic of Indonesia'); and in June 1947 it was reorganized once more as the *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI, 'Indonesian National Armed Forces').

As far as personnel were concerned, though, the foundations of what would become the TNI were laid much earlier. Holding senior positions in that army were mainly servicemen who had been trained by the Japanese during the occupation, besides a few dozen Indonesians who had completed Dutch officer training before the war. During the Japanese period, Indonesians were recruited as auxiliaries under Japanese command, with the intention that they would join the fight against the Allies. It never came to that, as the Allied advance into South East Asia hardly touched Indonesia and Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945. By then, however, large numbers of Indonesians had received basic training and been assigned to various forces under Japanese control. Tens of thousands of Indonesians who had previously served in the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) were enlisted in the Japanese army as *heiho* (auxiliary soldiers); in addition, hundreds of thousands of young Indonesians were trained militarily, more or less, by the Japanese occupying forces, including around 57,000 recruits for the Indonesian volunteer army, the *Pembela Tanah Air* (PETA, 'Defenders of the Homeland').

The groups formed by the Japanese would make an important contribution to the fight against two Allied powers, the British and the Dutch, but not in defence of Japan, but of Indonesian independence. The Japanese contribution to the military confrontation was not limited to the recruitment

and training activities prior to 15 August 1945, but was followed up by the large numbers of weapons that the Japanese handed over to the Indonesians in the last quarter of 1945, voluntarily or otherwise. A limited number – inflated in Dutch propaganda – of 3,000 Japanese soldiers joined the Indonesian struggle.[2] Japanese soldiers were also used as auxiliaries by the British, their former enemies, who initially faced a shortage of troops. In doing so, the Japanese undertook their own harsh reprisals in response to Indonesian attacks on their troops or civilians.

Two main lines can be identified in the army's development from the BKR, via the TKR and TRI, into the TNI; the first organizational, the second strategic and tactic. The successive reorganizations were intended to downscale, rationalize and professionalize what was initially a massive army. First of all, this meant that the political and military leaders made every effort to transform what was originally a motley collection of military and paramilitary units formed on an ad hoc, bottom-up basis into a more tightly organized and uniform army with top-down leadership. Outside the Republican army, large numbers of more or less independent armed groups (*laskars*) were active; the aim was to disband some and incorporate and discipline others of these militias, which frequently clashed with the TNI. The total size of the armed forces was gradually reduced. In the reorganization in mid-1947 that would produce the TNI, an army of 350,000 servicemen had to be merged with 470,000 *laskars*. This operation, which entailed downsizing to create a well-trained, mobile army of – on paper – 160,000 men, did not happen without resistance and was one of the causes of the communist Madiun uprising in September 1948. By Dutch estimates, at the time of Operation Kraai/*Agresi Militer Belanda 2* the TNI had 100,000 men on Java and 40,000 on Sumatra; the separate militias also had around 150,000 combatants. In addition to this, Islamic armed groups such as Hizbullah and Sabilillah were operating, some under the banner of Darul Islam, which had several tens of thousands of members.

At the same time, the Republican army leadership thus sought to improve the training, discipline and arming of the troops. Regarding weaponry, the cliché of *pemuda* armed with bamboo spears (*bambu runcing*) needs rectification. In the first months after the surrender, the army took firearms from pre-war KNIL depots on Java; unlike on Sumatra, the Japanese army did not intervene. Furthermore, much modern weaponry was captured from – and, less frequently, voluntarily handed over by – the initially passive Japanese army, which had withdrawn to its barracks. This included large quantities of

heavy weapons such as tanks and artillery. The latter, however, were mostly lost as early as 1945-1946, mainly in the war against the British. In the course of the war, new weapons were acquired through 'smuggling' (as the Dutch viewed it) with Singapore and the Philippines, which the Republic paid for with quantities of opium, among other things. Indonesia also established its own weapons industry and munitions production.

The Republic's efforts could not alter the fact that throughout the war, the armaments and equipment of the Dutch armed forces, though hardly optimal, were far superior both quantitatively and qualitatively. Prior to the reorganization of 1947, it is estimated that only a quarter of all regular Indonesian soldiers had firearms. In late 1948, according to Dutch estimates, 40-50 per cent of TNI soldiers on Java and 25 per cent on Sumatra were equipped with firearms; the percentage was sometimes lower among semi-autonomous armed groups. The Republican armed forces had a limited arsenal of heavy weapons, mainly artillery guns and mortars, but they also had access to large numbers of aerial bombs, mainly deployed as pull bombs, which could also be seen as heavy weapons. The air force, *Angkatan Udara*, and the navy, *Angkatan Laut,* were both small in size.

Professionalization involved creating a more efficient organization. On 12 November 1945, the army commanders from Java and Sumatra chose former PETA officer Sudirman, just 29 years old, as commander-in-chief (*Panglima Besar*). He was selected against the wishes of the political leaders, who preferred Urip Sumoharjo, a former KNIL officer. Sudirman, who was suffering from tuberculosis and would have to be carried countless kilometres on a stretcher in 1949 to evade capture by the Dutch, would become a symbol of Indonesian indomitability. His chief of staff was initially Sumoharjo, followed by a former KNIL reserve officer candidate, Abdul Haris Nasution. Although the majority of TNI commanders had previously been PETA officers, among the most senior military leaders, who generally had little experience, a group of around 60 former KNIL (prospective) officers was overrepresented. Officers with a KNIL background included TNI leaders such as Tahi Bonar Simatupang and Alex Kawilarang, who had trained at the Royal Military Academy (Koninklijke Militaire Academie, KMA) in Bandung. Although there were internal tensions between these two founding groups, these were overcome when it came to facing a common enemy, the Dutch.

In 1947, the TNI had ten divisions on Java and six on Sumatra. In mid-1948, the number of divisions on Java was reduced to four as part of the

reorganization: Division I Brawidjaja (East Java), Division II Diponegoro (Central Java East), Division III Susan Gunungjati (Central Java West) and Division IV Siliwangi (West Java and Bantam). In addition, the TNI had two independent brigades on Java: Brigade XVI (Seberang) and XVII (Peladjar). As well as a staff, the divisions had auxiliary weapons and services such as artillery and heavy machine guns, liaison units, medical personnel, carriers and military police. The most famous division was the Siliwangi division, a relatively well-armed crack regiment. The Republican headquarters consisted of two commandos, one on Java and one on Sumatra, under Nasution and Suhardjo Hardjowardojo, respectively; the latter was succeeded in late 1948 by Hidajat Martaatmadja, formerly of the KNIL.

The second main line was the development of a military strategy and tactical doctrine. The objective remained unchanged: unconditional independence and the expulsion of the Dutch armed forces, by military means if negotiations failed to achieve adequate results. At first, the Indonesian army largely used conventional tactics and frontal attacks, such as in the Battle of Surabaya (November 1945) and during the fighting in Semarang (August 1946) and elsewhere. It soon became clear that the British and Dutch troops were much better equipped for open confrontations such as these, which resulted in very large losses on the Indonesian side.[3] The army commander therefore gradually switched to a guerrilla approach. During both 'police actions', he decided to withdraw all soldiers to limit losses and then regroup in areas beyond the Dutch army's reach, from which a guerrilla war was waged. Although the TNI focused on guerrilla warfare from mid-1947, it still carried out regular conventional attacks on Dutch positions and Dutch-occupied towns, too, such as on Yogyakarta (under Colonel Suharto, 1 March 1949) and Solo (7-10 August 1949). These were symbolic operations that were important for Republican morale and also gave a crucial political signal. Despite resulting in large Republican losses, they showed the outside world and their own people that the TNI and the Republic were anything but beaten, and undermined the Dutch claim that everything was under control.

As mentioned above, the switch to guerrilla warfare in 1947 was primarily motivated by the large losses in open confrontations, in which the TNI was invariably the losing party. The training of Nasution, Kawilarang and Simatupang at the KMA proved useful in this tactical shift. The TNI's sources of inspiration stretched further, however, from the British action behind Japanese lines in Burma to the Long March by the Chinese Red Army, as well

as the ideas of the Indonesian communist activist Tan Malaka. The most important source of inspiration, though, was the classic text *On War* by military theorist Carl von Clausewitz (1780-1831), especially his discussion of the 'people's war'. In line with the chosen mode of combat, the TNI maintained the regular army structure but also organized so-called *Wehrkreise*. These were military districts lying in areas occupied by the Dutch, where well-armed mobile units carried out as many small attacks and sabotage actions as possible, whilst more static troops – and civilians – undertook defensive and support tasks. Local residents – coerced if necessary – also played an important role in providing armed groups with food, recruits, intelligence, medical care and shelter. In this 'total people's war' – a concept proposed by Nasution in mid-1947 and adopted by Sjahrir's cabinet – the administration, armed forces and residents worked together under military leadership to carry out an intricate 'people's defence'. At the *desa* and village level, this was led by the *lurah*, the village chief. Village chiefs, other officials and civilians who sided with the Dutch or worked for the Dutch authorities were viewed as legitimate targets of intimidation and violence; indeed, thousands of 'collaborators' were killed. As the Dutch armed forces and administrators associated with the Dutch regime also demanded loyalty, the people – and certainly the lurah – were caught precariously between two lines of fire.

The TNI, broadly supported by the population, was increasingly able to wage an effective guerrilla war; the Dutch armed forces were unable to come up with an appropriate response. It is usually the case in such wars that the conventional occupying army is unable to suppress the guerrilla fighters, whilst the latter are unable to defeat the opponent in direct combat, but have greater endurance in a battle that is exhausting for both sides. For the Netherlands, the human and financial cost of the armed deployment became increasingly problematic. The determination, stamina, resilience and resourcefulness of the Indonesian side, as well as their demographic and material reserves, were great and remained so even when the Dutch ramped up their use of force.

The TNI did not gain a military monopoly on the Indonesian side, however. While the Republican army waged war with the Netherlands, it also had to fight religiously and politically motivated regional conflicts with Indonesian armed groups, such as local laskars in Karawang in 1947-1948. The armed groups affiliated with *Darul Islam* sought confrontation with the Republic as well as the Netherlands. On 7 August 1949, just as a Republican

victory came into sight, Darul Islam, led by Kartosuwirjo, proclaimed the Islamic State of Indonesia in West Java. This precipitated a bloody struggle between the TNI and Darul Islam, which would not be settled definitively in the Republican army's favour until 1962. Furthermore, in late 1948 communist soldiers within the TNI in Madiun and elsewhere rebelled against the reorganizations and their imminent marginalization. In the many months of fighting with nationalist TNI units, which would ultimately prevail, at least 8,000 people were killed. Their leaders, in particular, were later executed by TNI forces loyal to Yogyakarta.

During the war, as explained above, local militias but also criminal gangs were active throughout the country, sometimes in alliance with politically motivated armed organizations. These groups contributed substantially to the extreme violence on the Indonesian side, beginning with bersiap. The fact that the Republican army failed to achieve an effective monopoly on force weakened the political position of the Republic versus the Netherlands, and did little for its international reputation. On the other hand, the Republican political and military leadership could blame the atrocities and demarcation-line violations on the militias, even when these were carried out by the TNI.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there were tensions between the army and the political leaders of the Republic, who made more concessions in the negotiations with the Dutch than the army leadership considered acceptable. These tensions did not provoke a rift between the Republican political leaders and the TNI, however. In a general sense, it can be said that whilst internal divisions partly determined the course of the struggle, the great majority of political movements and warring parties were striving for independence and were therefore extremely suspicious, if not downright dismissive, of an Allied occupation and certainly a Dutch return. This anti-colonial attitude was and continued to be the main unifying element on the Republican side.

The British (and Australian) armed forces

On 15 August 1945, the Allied high command decided to expand the area of the British South East Asia Command (SEAC) under Admiral Louis Mountbatten, which was already responsible for Allied operations in South East Asia, including Sumatra, to the entire Indonesian archipelago. SEAC's most important tasks were maintaining law and order, and disarming and repatri-

ating the 300,000-strong Japanese force, as well as evacuating 35,000 prisoners of war and around 80,000 civilians from Japanese internment camps. On Java, most of these civilians were Dutch; in the rest of Indonesia, they were also Indo-European. The first British (predominantly British Indian) troops arrived on Java on 29 September 1945, six weeks after the declaration of independence. The British force increased to a total of around 60,000 soldiers, mainly stationed on Java (45,000) and Sumatra (15,000). The last British troops left over a year later, in late November 1946.

Their apparently limited mission proved complex, because having assumed the (provisional) restoration of colonial order, upon arrival the British troops found themselves in a nascent Indonesian state. Facing two opposing claims to sovereignty, the British armed forces attempted in vain to navigate between them, alienating all parties and becoming embroiled in a colonial war in the process. The Republic distrusted the British as the potential harbingers of a Dutch reoccupation; the Dutch colonial authorities believed that the British were overly passive, thus frustrating their legitimate return and undermining Dutch authority. The British, who had different priorities and limited resources in the wake of a devastating world war, tried to minimize their role as a party to – and maximize their role as a mediator in – an incipient grim colonial war. Ideally, they wanted to leave Indonesia as soon as possible.

The British approach was necessarily limited to establishing control in seven key urban areas on Java and Sumatra that were essential for carrying out the demobilization and evacuation. Elsewhere, the authority of the Republic was left untouched. The British presence and offensive operations nevertheless sparked protests and armed actions by the Indonesians against what the latter viewed as a colonial reoccupation. These were initially small-scale attacks, but in October and November 1945 the resistance culminated in the Battle of Surabaya, which would ultimately become the largest conventional confrontation of the entire war. It is estimated that 16,000 Indonesians were killed in the urban fighting, compared to 400 British servicemen.

Although the research programme did not focus on the actions of the British army in these months, it is important to note that this episode foreshadowed the military action to follow, especially the great asymmetry in the number of victims. This partly stemmed from what was initially the badly organized mode of combat on the Indonesian side, and partly from the harshness of the British approach. Often in response to Indonesian force, on several occasions the British used extremely violent reprisal measures, such

as reducing villages to ashes; their 'methods' also included the systematic torture of prisoners. The later Dutch army commander S.H. (Simon) Spoor, then head of the NEFIS intelligence service, made an extremely negative assessment of the British use of extreme force – ironically, in view of the heavy-handed Dutch actions in later years.[4]

In addition to the British on Java and Sumatra, around 50,000 mostly Australian troops were stationed in Kalimantan and the 'Great East', all of the islands between Java and New Guinea, until February 1946. There was only limited armed resistance in the areas that they took over from the Japanese or had captured during the Second World War. This would soon change, particularly in South Sulawesi and on Bali in the course of 1946, but by then the Dutch armed forces had partly taken over these parts of the archipelago from the British, Australian and Japanese troops.

The Dutch armed forces: strategy

The Dutch armed forces waged a continuous war for many years, not just two 'police actions'; historians are now virtually unanimous on this point. The original mission prior to 15 August 1945 was to fight the Japanese occupying forces; the mission then became to bring 'order and peace' through the restoration of Dutch authority, later presented as the creation of an essential transitional phase in the establishment of a federal Indonesian state that would be bound with the Netherlands in a Union. The Dutch military approach focused on eliminating the Republican armed forces. Due to the guerrilla war, however, it proved extremely difficult to distinguish between civilians and the TNI – only partly in uniform – and other armed groups. Despite the negotiations and successive cease-fires, the military conflict continued almost unabated, because both the Dutch and the Republican army leaders felt only partly bound to the agreements, in view of the alleged demarcation-line violations and the unreliability of the opponent. What is more, military hawks and their supporters on both sides preferred to play the military card.

The military strategy developed under Spoor initially focused on a gradual expansion of the urban enclaves inherited from the British to strategically and/or economically important areas. Spoor subsequently embarked on his 'spearhead strategy', a 'shock and awe' strategy from the KNIL playbook: the use of overwhelming operations and much show of force to push through to centres of enemy resistance and eliminate military leaders, after which the anti-Dutch resistance was expected to collapse like a house of cards. It

was in this spirit that the first major military offensive, Operation Product/*Agresi Militer 1*, was launched in mid-1947. It appeared to be a great success. The large mobile columns, supported by superior heavy weaponry, warships and the air force, met with relatively little resistance. Within two weeks, the Dutch had managed to expand their territory enormously, partly because most Republican troops retreated to inaccessible areas in order to evade encirclement and destruction.

The downside of this success rapidly became clear. The supply lines to the population centres occupied by the Dutch and the hundreds of outposts became longer and more vulnerable. The Republican armed forces focused their hit-and-run operations on this Achilles heel in particular. Moreover, the Dutch failed to establish a stable regime in the captured territories. They did not generally get further than establishing superficial area control. Military resources fell far short: a battalion consisting of 800 men, only half of whom were operational on average, was responsible for 1,600 square kilometres, an area slightly larger than the province of Utrecht and almost twice the size of today's province of Yogyakarta. Nevertheless, in a similar way – again without detailed military and administrative plans for effective and lasting area control – another large offensive, Operation Kraai/*Agresi Militer Belanda 2*, was launched in late 1948. In order to limit the expected international condemnation of this offensive and achieve a *fait accompli*, the Netherlands deliberately chose the United Nation's Christmas recess. This time Spoor, in an attempt to wipe what he considered the recalcitrant Republic off the map, was allowed to carry out his fervently desired 'push-through' to the Republican seat of government, Yogyakarta. The political leaders were captured, the military leaders escaped. Once more, the campaign appeared to have been a great military success. But once the smoke of battle had cleared, it turned out that the operational problems had only multiplied. That was hardly surprising, because the size of the occupied territory – the whole of Java and key parts of Sumatra – had become even larger, and with it the overstretch of the armed forces and the administration. Moreover, the international community was definite in its condemnation of what was seen as aggressive Dutch action.

The Dutch army leadership had – once again – seriously miscalculated these problems. Spoor and his most important deputy commanders, almost all of whom were KNIL officers, had underestimated the Indonesian opponent. Their optimism was based on the successes against the TNI in 1945-1946, as well as the low opinion that KNIL commanders traditionally had of

Indonesian combat capability. Nevertheless, in mid-1947, in the wake of the first military offensive, attempts were made to adjust the mode of combat to Indonesian guerrilla warfare, in the direction of a counter-guerrilla warfare in which the Dutch army would mainly operate in smaller mobile units. The aim, following the proven KNIL approach, was to enforce 'pacification' with intensive patrols, large and small 'purges' and the 'ceaseless pursuit' of Indonesian armed groups with the intention of eliminating them. This would be followed by the development of the civilian administration, in which achieving or forcing the support and allegiance of local residents would play a central role.

In this 'pacification phase', the traditionally influential village chiefs who gave their support to Dutch units could count on (modest) rewards in the form of money, clothing, promotion or better housing. In order to placate them and the villagers, the Dutch troops provided regular humanitarian and medical assistance in particular, and they also helped to rebuild damaged infrastructure. Dutch political and military leaders continued to base all of this on an outdated, paternalistic colonial worldview, in which the population would naturally be on the Dutch side once Republican 'pockets of resistance' had finally been eliminated. Due to this colonial illusion, they considered it unnecessary to develop an integrated policy to win over the Indonesian people. It should be noted that the very limited nature of Dutch administrative and financial resources played a role in this, too, meaning that aid remained fragmented and limited in scope. All in all, the Dutch authorities took a 'carrot and stick' approach in which the 'stick' wielded by the armed forces – in line with the traditionally heavy-handed operations of the KNIL – prevailed. The repression consisted of a range of collective and sometimes bloody punishments of local people who were considered hostile or insufficiently cooperative. This included executions without trial, assault, mass arrests, the torching of villages and the destruction of provisions, to set a deterrent example.[5]

After the first Dutch offensive, reality thus proved to be many times more complex than Spoor and his staff's optimistic assessments suggested. Dutch military predominance was reduced by improvements in the organization and arming of the tactically more flexible TNI, which took the initiative. Moreover, the area occupied by the Dutch – which, with its many mountains, forests and swamps, was perfect for guerrilla warfare – was simply too large and inaccessible to be controlled effectively. As not all Republican servicemen were in uniform, as mentioned above, it was virtually impossible to

distinguish fighters from civilians. Moreover, the Dutch troops had inadequate intelligence, whereas the Republic had set up an efficient alarm system, so that most Dutch operations came to nothing.[6] All of this gradually increased the vulnerability of the Dutch position, however healthy the situation on the map might have seemed after the first offensive and after Operation Kraai/*Agresi Militer Belanda 2*. They were pyrrhic victories: Dutch area control was usually superficial and limited to population centres and vulnerable supply lines, whilst the TNI controlled the edges of the terrain and had great freedom of movement, particularly at night.

Dutch military leaders issued deceptively phrased, rose-tinted reports on the difficult military situation, which was leading to rising losses and mounting exhaustion, particularly in the first quarter of 1949. As mentioned above, from the very outset of the war in 1945, the army leadership had underestimated the strength of nationalism, the Republic and the TNI, although opinions diverged on numbers of troops and the amount of time that would be needed to bring the entire archipelago back under Dutch rule. In November 1945, the commander of all armed forces in the Dutch East Indies, Lieutenant Admiral Conrad Helfrich, and the commander of the KNIL, Lieutenant General Ludolph Hendrik van Oyen, thought 75,000 men would be needed for the reoccupation of Java and Sumatra. Major General Wybrandus Schilling (KNIL) initially made the same assessment for what he described as the 'war of reconquest' ('not yet counting Bantam and Aceh'). Only shortly later, however, he was already talking about 200,000 men for a period of five to even ten years; with hindsight a more realistic estimate, for which Helfrich and Van Oyen did not thank him.[7]

On 1 February 1946, against the advice of Van Mook, the Schermerhorn cabinet eventually appointed not Schilling but the younger and less experienced Spoor as army commander general to succeed Van Oyen. Spoor retained this position until his unexpected death after a heart attack on 25 May 1949. Throughout that time, he repeatedly shared his optimistic assessments of the 'reoccupation', provided he was granted a sufficient mandate and resources. His stance betrayed an enormous underestimation of both the support for Indonesian nationalism and the opponent's military capacities; he once characterized the Republican army leaders as 'inept amateurs [who] had to be taught the military trade'.[8] The adjutant chief of staff of the TNI, Colonel Simatupang, later wrote caustically about the systematic underestimation on the Dutch side:

> From conversations with the Dutch before the attack [Operation Kraai/*Agresi Militer Belanda 2*], I had gained the impression that they – and their soldiers in particular – had no idea of the nature of the forces they would face. [...] These Dutch soldiers, with their conventional training, had often served too long in the Dutch East Indies, with the result that they viewed everything through the lens of the past.[9]

The army leadership was formally under the supreme authority of the Dutch colonial government – Van Mook, then Beel – and ultimately the Dutch cabinet. Spoor, however, has gone down in history as a 'political general'. Without any doubt, he played a key role throughout the entire war, until his sudden death in late May 1949. He maintained intensive contact with the Dutch administration and business community, understood the importance of the media in the struggle with the Republic, and was personally in charge of almost all military affairs, including scandals that could have political repercussions. Spoor's advice weighed very heavily in The Hague, of course; he was better informed than any politician about the military dimension of the conflict.

Spoor saw little advantage in negotiations, and the way he and the NEFIS intelligence service shared information with the Dutch government was downright manipulative. Republican 'demarcation-line violations' were constantly emphasized, for example, whilst there was silence on Dutch violations. In so doing, Spoor tried to portray the Republican negotiators as unreliable and gain greater scope from the Dutch government for the advance to Yogyakarta, among other things, in order to inflict a decisive defeat on the Republic. To his great frustration, he was only given permission for this attack with Operation Kraai, in December 1948. Spoor and NEFIS also kept harping on about the communist threat, partly in order to garner international support for military action.[10] Van Mook, the official commander-in-chief, would frequently (but ineffectively) complain to Spoor about the latter's communication with the Dutch government behind his back, and about military operations that were often undertaken without his knowledge.

Van Mook also repeatedly expressed his displeasure at Spoor's patchy reporting of (potential) misconduct by the armed forces. The picture that emerges from the historiography is one in which Spoor and his adjutant commanders covered up excessive violence by Dutch troops as much as possible, just as Van Mook himself did. But the concealment was often after

the event: the governor general and even the army commander general were frequently surprised by news of unauthorized offensive actions and extreme acts of violence by their own units.

The Dutch armed forces: size and resources

The first troops arrived in Jakarta from the Netherlands in late February 1946, after the British had withdrawn their above-mentioned landing ban, which had been issued in November 1945 in order to get the Dutch to the negotiating table. During the war, a total of some 220,000 soldiers from the Dutch armed forces served in Indonesia; partly in combat roles and partly in support and administrative roles.[11] At the peak in 1949, 150,000 soldiers were in service (chart 1). By far the majority of them were stationed in the core area of the Republic, hence Java, followed at some distance by Sumatra.

A total of 120,000 soldiers served in the Royal Netherlands Army (Koninklijke Landmacht, KL), previously only deployed in Europe. It should be noted, though, that the two armies – the KL and the KNIL – did not operate separately from one another. In the third quarter of 1946, there were two light divisions (A and B), each with three brigades and divisional troops; each of these brigades consisted of KL units and separate KNIL battalions, and were led by a KNIL field officer familiar with 'East Indian conditions and tactics'. This remained the case in practice; only the C Division (until mid-1948) and the Marine Brigade, founded in 1943, differed in this respect. From September 1946, the first KL division predominantly made up of conscripts (1925 batch) was dispatched: the C Division, also known as the First Division '7 December'. Between March and June 1947, this was followed by the Second Division 'Palmboom' (D division, 1926 batch). The E Division (1927 batch) was dispatched between November 1948 and February 1949 and almost immediately split into smaller units, as these were better suited to counter-guerrilla warfare.[12]

The KL was almost entirely manned by Dutch soldiers; namely, several thousand professional military, 25,000 to 30,000 war volunteers (*oorlogsvrijwilligers*, OVWs) – who were originally recruited for the war against Japan – and 95,000 to 100,000 conscripts. There was also a small women's volunteer auxiliary corps (Vrijwillig Vrouwen Hulpkorps, VHK). Because the KNIL officers dominated the army leadership, the staffs, the intelligence services, the special forces, information provision, training and the logistics

chain, and emphatically wanted to remain in charge, this colonial army left a strong mark on the KL, which as a result mainly functioned as a supplier of men and heavy weaponry.

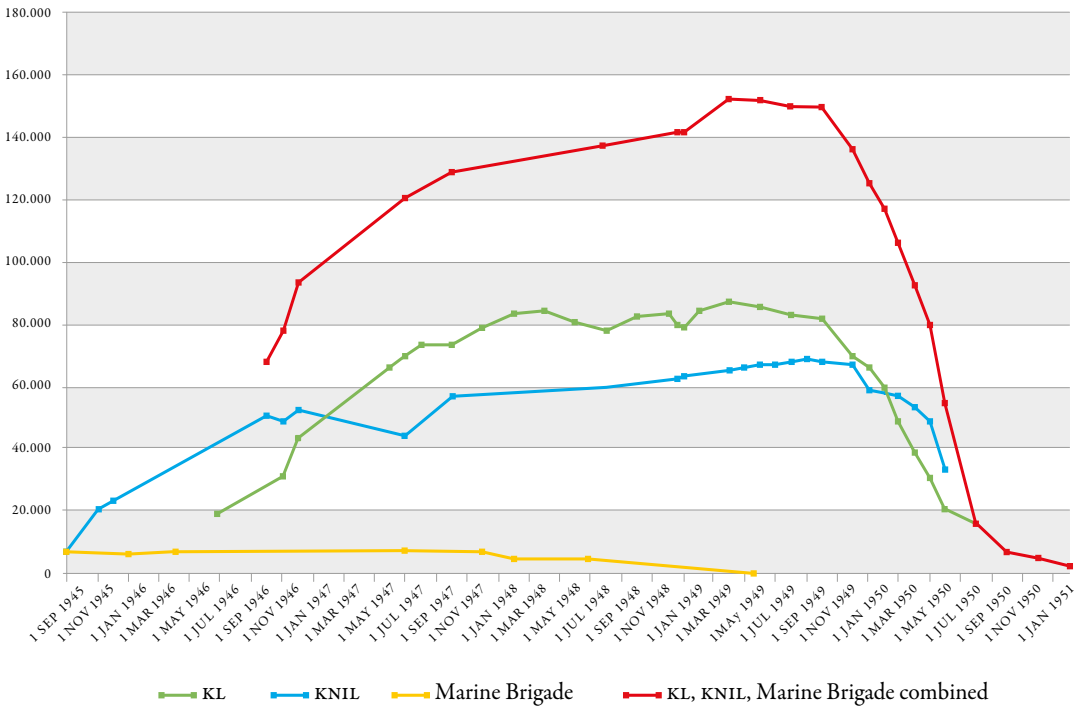
A total of 75,000 to 80,000 soldiers served in the KNIL between 1945 and 1950. The lower ranks were mainly made up of Indonesians (60,000), reflecting a colonial society divided along strict ethnic lines. The overwhelming number of soldiers came from Java, Madura, the Moluccas and the Minahasa. Owing to their alleged 'martial qualities' and unusually high level of loyalty, the largely Christian 'Ambonese' (from the Moluccas, but also the Minahasa) were overrepresented, but did not form a majority. A small number of Chinese also served in the KNIL. On average, 30-35 per cent of the KNIL consisted of European and Indo-European soldiers, but this proportion fell; in late 1949, it was less than a quarter. Around 500 war volunteers from Suriname and the Antilles also served in the KNIL, and 1,000 women served in the women's KNIL corps (Vrouwenkorps KNIL), founded in Australia in 1944.

The rebuilding of the colonial army began immediately after the Japanese surrender. During the Japanese occupation, some 30,000 European, Indo-European and 'Ambonese' KNIL servicemen had been interned under extremely harsh conditions. In late 1945, around 10,000 of these former prisoners of war were called back to arms. Initially most KNIL military, then only a few companies, were deployed on Java, but in late 1945 the British also gave permission for the stationing of KNIL units in the Riau archipelago, Kalimantan and the Great East, especially Sulawesi, and, in March 1946, on Bali. Only seven of the 23 KNIL battalions were ultimately stationed on Java or Sumatra.

In March 1946, the newly appointed army commander Spoor reorganized the KNIL and gave it a leading role. Spoor himself was a professional officer in the KNIL, as was his chief of staff, Dick Buurman van Vreeden, and almost all key officials in the General Staff, the other staffs in Jakarta, and the brigade and division staffs. The forced resignation in September 1948 of division commander Major General Henri Dürst Britt, a KL 'outsider' who was made a scapegoat by Spoor for the 'pacification problems' on West Java, and his replacement by Major General Edu Engles (KNIL), is illustrative of the dominance of the KNIL vision and mentality in the army leadership.

Unlike the soldiers brought in from the Netherlands, most KNIL servicemen were familiar with Indonesia; on the other hand, many had been

Strength of the KL, KNIL and Marine Brigade, 1945-1950



This diagram is based on archival research in military sources dating from the period 1945-1951. Where necessary, it has been supplemented with literature research (especially in relation to the Navy). Due to the nature of the conflict in the early years of 1945 and 1946, there is less clarity about the numbers of KL and KNIL soldiers who were mobilized at that time. According to the archive material itself, the figures up to May 1946 are considered 'unreliable'. After that, they are 'less reliable', and they are only considered 'reliable' from 1 October 1948 (diagram based on Groen et al, Krijgsgeweld en kolonie*, p. 364).*

physically and mentally tested during the Japanese occupation and were strongly opposed to Indonesian nationalism. From a British perspective, KNIL military from all ranks had behaved in a provocative, trigger-happy and vindictive fashion on Java, behaviour that had contributed to the landing ban.[13] The record of the KNIL Infantry Battalion XV, deployed on South Sulawesi in early 1946, also reports that this unit behaved in an undisciplined and uncontrolled way, rapidly became violent, harboured

feelings of revenge against Indonesians, and showed little regard for Australian authority.

Spoor wanted to professionalize the KL and the KNIL, and complained about the shortage of officers. As late as 1948, an investigation showed that a majority of the officers, who had of necessity been promoted too rapidly, did not meet the minimum requirements of their rank. This far from benefitted the quality of the leadership, of course, something that was particularly disadvantageous in guerrilla warfare and probably did little to curb the extreme violence. Because the force was divided into small units and spread over a large number of often isolated outposts, low-ranking and young officers bore a high level of responsibility that was incommensurate with their experience.

In June 1946, the Special Forces known as the Depot Speciale Troepen (DST) were founded as part of the KNIL, later renamed the Korps Speciale Troepen (KST); these were elite commando units, the 'Green Berets' under the command of Captain Raymond Westerling. As a general mobile reserve unit, the Special Forces were supposed to support the infantry when the latter faced setbacks. The total size of the DST/KST, who were notorious for their repeated and systematic use of extreme violence, never exceeded 1,250 men. They included a large number of Indonesians, especially 'Ambonese'.

The KNIL had its own artillery, armoured personnel carriers and tanks, as well as military police (MP). The KNIL also had an air force, the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army Air Force (ML-KNIL), in which around 2,000 servicemen served in 1945, and almost 8,000 in 1949. In late 1947, the ML-KNIL had 333 aircraft, only a part of which operational. Its main tasks were to provide air support for the infantry and artillery, transport, reconnaissance and supply. They had little to fear from the small Republican air force. The ML-KNIL made an important contribution to Operation Product/*Agresi Militer Belanda 1* (1,039 combat flights) and Operation Kraai/*Agresi Militer Belanda 2* (2,412 combat flights), but most sorties took place between the two 'actions' and after the second. Like tanks and other heavy weapons, the air force also contributed to psychological warfare with displays of force and intimidation, including at military parades. The Dutch authorities, often ridden with orientalist notions, believed that 'the Oriental' in particular felt 'holy awe' for these modern weapons. But it did not stop there; there are several known cases of the ML-KNIL firing on civilian targets, such as marketplaces, *kampongs* and means of transport (on land and at sea), which

were subsequently condemned – in private – by Van Mook and Spoor, but not punished.

Spoor also deployed Indonesian auxiliary troops as part of the area control and counter-guerrilla effort, including static security guards and Chinese urban vigilantes (Pao An Tui), but also Indonesian soldiers and militias who had defected, some with criminal backgrounds, including Her Majesty's Irregular Troops (Harer Majesteits Ongeregelde Troepen, HAMOTs) and the special troops known as Speciale Troepen Groep Spier. In late 1947, the KNIL began to recruit and train 15,000 men for the so-called Security Battalions. These were entirely made up of Indonesian troops for the federal states founded with Dutch help. The police force was expanded to 35,000 men, and the number of security guards increased to 18,000 men in 1948 and 30,000 in 1949. The fighting power and loyalty of all these paramilitary organizations proved disappointing, however, from a Dutch perspective. There is an obvious parallel with the rapid and ignominious defeat of the KNIL by Japan in 1942. Then, too, Dutch army leaders had assumed that all Indonesian troops would risk their lives for the colonial cause. That had proved an illusion; numerous Indonesian KNIL soldiers had refused to fight in the battles with Japanese troops.

The Royal Navy (c. 20,000 men) consisted of a relatively large number of professional servicemen (3,000), as well as 7,000 war volunteers, 5,000 conscripts and 5,000 locally recruited Indonesians. The Royal Navy also had a women's unit, the Marine Vrouwenafdeling (MARVA, 470 women). The Marine Brigade, an elite unit that operationally fell directly under Spoor, was assigned to the A Division and served in East Java. To the great annoyance of the army and navy leadership, the brigade was slimmed down as a result of governmental cuts in 1948, and disbanded in mid-1949. The fleet was mainly deployed to prevent the Republican transport of fighters and goods by means of patrols and a blockade. This task was complicated by the limited size of the fleet and the enormous length of the coastline. The navy nevertheless succeeded in seriously hindering the Republican transport of weapons and troops; in doing so, it also failed the population by halting the supply of food and medicines, among other things. It was led by Vice Admiral Albert Pinke, a colonial hardliner, as shown by statements such as 'the sea is ours' and his intention to 'strangle' the Republic at sea.[14]

It was often noted, certainly by Dutch veterans, that the troops' armaments, clothing, food and medical care were sub-standard. This seems to have been a correct observation for the early years, as shown by the appeals

and complaints from soldiers of all ranks. Many weapons and other surplus equipment from the Second World War were in poor condition. Until the very end, there were complaints about equipment shortages, including munitions. Despite this, the weaponry of the Dutch armed forces was and continued to be quantitatively and qualitatively superior to that of their Indonesian opponents. On the other hand, building up the armed forces put a large burden on the limited financial resources of the Netherlands, which was destitute after 1940-1945. This was one of the driving forces behind 'Operation Product': to restore the profitable colonial economy.

Another frequently voiced complaint concerned the inadequate preparation of the Dutch recruits for the complex guerrilla battle in the archipelago – again a factor that may have had the effect of promoting violence. The first batch of war volunteers, who had undergone hardly any selection, struggled with a lack of training, information and discipline. The army leadership was very aware of this problem. The training that was intended to remedy this, later extended to conscripts, was mostly given in the Netherlands and on the ship to Indonesia, mainly by older KNIL instructors and 'tropics advisors' attached to KL units. This 'East Indies training' remained limited. The troops were deployed almost immediately upon arrival, at the expense of further training. Some of the training was military-technical, some was cultural and political. The second part was of little consequence, however, and much of what was taught to servicemen came down to an underestimation of the widely supported nationalism and the Indonesian opponents, who were reduced to 'extremists', '*rampokkers*' (raiders) and 'gangs'; precisely as the army leadership saw it.

The recruits were taught that their mission was to bring 'order and peace' to people who would overwhelmingly be on the Dutch side. The military doctrine was based on the pre-war conditions and more or less summarized in the *Voorschrift voor de Uitoefening van de Politiek-politionele Taak van het Leger* (Regulations on the army's political and policing duties, *VPTL*, 1924), which was based on the experiences in the final phase of the Aceh War (1873-1914). The basic principle of the task description was to reach a situation in which the civilian administration functioned efficiently and the vast majority of the population did not oppose colonial rule. According to this pre-war doctrine, it was always possible that local 'insurgents' might provoke an uprising; in that case, demonstrative crackdowns were the tried and tested method for rapid suppression. The *VPTL* was saturated with a colonial, orientalist mind-set that admittedly did preach respect for local cul-

tures, but simultaneously referred to 'Eastern fanaticism' and devious fighting methods. There were also warnings against taking unnecessarily harsh action so as to avoid alienating the population from the colonial regime, but in practice these admonitions tended to be ignored. Display of power and extreme violence had been characteristic of the KNIL's colonial wars since the early nineteenth century.[15]

As the army leadership stubbornly stuck to its risky strategy between 1945 and 1949, the instructions given to lower ranks changed little. Only minor amendments were made to the new edition of the *VPTL* published after 1945, although these regulations in no way provided for crushing a broadly-supported nationalist revolution in almost the entire Indonesian archipelago. In this sense, Spoor's 'spearhead strategy' – a modern variant of the traditional KNIL strategy of overawing the enemy ('*imponeerstrategie*') by advancing with mobile columns to key 'hotbeds of resistance' or population centres and thereby 'decapitating' the resistance in one go – was also more consistent with pre-war doctrines and practices than the new reality. Moreover, on this point – unlike with regard to weaponry – the Dutch armed forces were at a disadvantage: their knowledge and understanding of the local situation and relations were invariably inadequate.

The equipment and the prevailing strategic and tactical concepts were not the only factors behind the use of extreme violence, however. In addition, the strength of the armed forces was largely determined by the 'mental component': military leadership, military ethics and military experience and tradition. To what extent was the 'mental strength' of the Dutch armed forces in 1945 adequate for the new conflict overseas? There are many indications that the armed forces – the KNIL, the KL and the Royal Navy – were inadequately prepared. The KNIL had lost many (senior) officers and had mainly specialized in policing tasks prior to the war, not large-scale, integrated military operations on land, at sea and in the air. The Marine Brigade was trained for deployment in large-scale regular operations, and the war had stripped the units of the Royal Netherlands Army of sufficiently well-trained and experienced officers and NCOs. As mentioned above, the first batch of war volunteers in particular, hardly any of whom had undergone any selection, struggled with a significant lack of training and leadership.

This lack of professional, skilled and experienced leadership not only affected the lower ranks, but also the entire Dutch armed forces in Indonesia from top to bottom. In many respects, General Spoor also lacked the exper-

tise, experience and training needed to lead an operation of such unprecedented scale and duration, with inexperienced and poorly equipped troops, whilst also having to act as a pivot between political intentions and military reality. The training was adjusted over time, of course, but by then there were strong indications that within the armed forces in Indonesia the use of force was not only based on legality and proportionality, but also on the frequent use of extreme violence.

From 1945, as mentioned above, the Dutch authorities acted as though they were dealing with 'gangs', '*rampokkers*' and 'insurgents' who had to be suppressed harshly. A key administrative instrument for this purpose was the declaration of a state of emergency: the State of War and the State of Siege (martial law). The State of Siege in particular, which had been invoked on 10 May 1940 and was not immediately repealed after the Japanese surrender, gave the Military Authority far-reaching powers in relation to internment, expulsion and censorship, in order to maintain or restore order, as it was called. The colonial administration and the rest of the civilian apparatus thus became subordinate to the military, even though Van Mook officially remained commander-in-chief. Measures under these emergency laws had to be established and published by decree, but in 'special cases' an order could be given in writing or orally, provided that the (lieutenant) governor general was informed as soon as possible. On these grounds, the Dutch authorities frequently used emergency military powers (*Verordeningen Militair Gezag*, VMG) to restrict the freedoms of the Indonesian population, especially on Java and Sumatra. A complex patchwork of locally applicable regulations gradually emerged. Moreover, martial law intensified the increasing intertwining of the military and civilian justice systems, including in relation to personnel. This was all the more risky because military justice gave priority to serving military ends, not the rights of the individual.[16] In that sense, too, the emergency powers provided an opportunity for harsh crackdowns. There were limits, however. For example, the regulations based on these powers, as explicitly noted in contemporary legal reports and by army leaders, provided no legal basis for the use of 'summary justice', even though this unlawful practice was frequently used on South Sulawesi, in any case.

With the exception of professional military men, service was of limited duration. War volunteers signed up for two or a maximum of three years; conscripts were called up to serve for two years. This meant that from 1947, experienced military had to be relieved by newcomers. In practice, things

worked out slightly differently. Facing unexpectedly large military setbacks and problems with the planned 'pacification', the army leadership persuaded the government to extend the periods of service in 1948 and 1949. In the end, the war volunteers served for an extra six months on average, and half of the conscripts for not two but three years. Military reports and egodocuments show that the extension of service was hard for the soldiers involved and badly affected their morale, certainly in the final year of the war. The restrictions on repatriation were not lifted until 1 June 1949.

At the Round Table Conference (23 August–2 November 1949), it was agreed that the Netherlands would withdraw its troops no later than half a year after the transfer of sovereignty. This proved unworkable, as too little space was available on the ships. In the end, repatriation did not commence properly until mid-1950. One year later, the last KL soldiers returned to the Netherlands. The KNIL – renamed the Royal Netherlands Indonesian Army in September 1948, in the vain hope that it would form the backbone of the army of the Federation of Indonesian States – was disbanded on 26 July 1950. The last KNIL soldiers, now demobilized, arrived in the Netherlands in mid-1951. Among them were 4,000 Moluccans and their families. The Dutch Military Mission in Jakarta, intended to promote bilateral cooperation, was disbanded in 1954.

The course of the war

The phasing of the war of independence depends on the perspective that one chooses. From an Indonesian perspective, the struggle only really ended with the transfer of Papua (Irian Barat/New Guinea) in 1962; in addition, a number of internal Indonesian conflicts that emerged in 1945-1949 continued into the 1960s. When it comes to the Dutch military conduct, we can identify four phases running from 15 August 1945 to the formal transfer of sovereignty on 27 December 1949. Strictly speaking, the subsequent period, in which there were several military confrontations and violent incidents, was not part of the war.[17]

It is important to note that most of the main combat operations in the Indonesian War of Independence took place on Java, and to a lesser extent on Sumatra. Elsewhere in the archipelago, the Dutch reoccupation was effective and the Republic gained less of a foothold, although there were short but bloody conflicts on Bali, Kalimantan (around Banjarmasin) and in particular Sulawesi (around Makassar), some of which had a long aftermath.

Phase 1: August 1945–November 1946

The first phase ran from the Japanese surrender and the Indonesian declaration of independence on 15 and 17 August 1945, respectively, to the Linggarjati Agreement and the departure of the British in late November 1946. The build-up of the Indonesian armed forces started immediately, while the Dutch military presence was marginal at first. The British army brought the disarmament and repatriation of Japanese troops and the evacuation of civilians and prisoners of war from Japanese internment camps to a largely successful conclusion, but the British also unwittingly became a party to the war of independence, intensifying their desire for a speedy departure.

The return of Dutch rule was symbolized by the arrival of Lieutenant Governor General Van Mook on 2 October 1945. The rebuilding of the KNIL was now gathering pace, manned by soldiers who had survived the Japanese camps or fled to Australia and Ceylon (modern-day Sri Lanka), and mainly by fresh Indonesian recruits. In September 1945 the first volunteer battalions embarked from the Netherlands. On 2 November, however, as mentioned above, SEAC forbade more Dutch troops to land; the first volunteer battalions and the Marine Brigade had to stay in British Malaya for months on end. Van Mook, the Dutch army leadership and the servicemen dispatched overseas experienced their ally's landing ban as a slap in the face, whereas the British believed it was impossible to do otherwise. Sukarno had protested vehemently against the arrival of Dutch troops, which he thought would only further endanger the safety of the Europeans and Indo-Europeans. Most of the latter were confined in Republican-controlled camps; 'protection camps' according to the Republic, 'hostage camps' according to its opponents. Moreover, the British, already concerned about what they saw as the provocative and extremely violent behaviour of the still-small KNIL units and armed Dutch civilians in Jakarta and Bandung, believed that the arrival of more Dutch troops would be tantamount to pouring oil on the revolutionary flames. In short, the British had every reason to force the Netherlands to negotiate with the Republic, and the landing ban was meant to help achieve this. From early February 1946, after talks had started between the Republic and the Netherlands, the British nevertheless allowed Dutch troops onto Java and Sumatra.

The start of the first phase was marked by two extremely dramatic developments. Almost immediately after the Japanese surrender, a period of extreme violence broke out, later known in the Netherlands as *bersiap*. The violence was not only directed against Europeans, Indo-Europeans, Chinese

and other groups, but also against Indonesians during the *berdaulat*, the term used to describe the intra-Indonesian violence. The second dramatic episode was the British-Indonesian Battle of Surabaya. The former period – bersiap – lasted from September 1945 to March 1946; the extreme violence in these months against (Indisch) Dutch and other groups and people who were associated with the Dutch or the Japanese occupation thus took place prior to the arrival of substantial numbers of troops from the Netherlands. There is no consensus in the historiography on the number of victims; estimates of European and Indo-European fatalities range from 3,500 to multiples of this, as well as perhaps tens of thousands of Indonesian and 10,000 Chinese fatalities.[18]

To this day, the bloody Battle of Surabaya (27 October–20 November 1945) is celebrated in Indonesia as marking the beginning of the armed struggle in defence of independence. The enormous asymmetry in the death tolls and the British use of heavy weapons and harsh collective punishments formed a pattern that would later be echoed by Dutch operations.[19] The British also suppressed revolutionary violence in Jakarta in late 1945, this time not with heavy weapons but mainly through mass arrests during Operation Pounce. The Republican government called on its weakened armed groups to leave the city, after which the fighting shifted further into rural areas; the government was forced – by threats to Sjahrir by KNIL soldiers, among other things – to move its seat to Yogyakarta on 4 January 1946. Indonesian troops also fought British, Japanese, and Dutch troops in other Javanese towns in this period, notably in Semarang, Bandung and Ambarawa.

The Indonesian extreme violence against groups associated with colonialism was curbed somewhat in March 1946, mainly thanks to British and Japanese efforts, but the Chinese population in particular lived under persistent threat, as shown by the bloodbath of Tangerang in May 1946, for example, in which hundreds of Chinese died. In the meantime, the Dutch armed forces were taking over more and more locations from British troops and expanding their territory, notably in West Java between Jakarta, Bogor and Bandung, and in East Java around Surabaya. Dutch units also recaptured territory on Sumatra with military operations that, yet again, had not been cleared with the British commanders on the ground. This prompted protests from the British and new confrontations with Indonesian fighters. Again, the fatalities were distributed very unevenly. The Linggarjati Agreement, concluded under great pressure from the British on 15 November 1946, gave the latter the opportunity to withdraw their last troops. They

left behind more than a thousand fallen and missing military, mainly British Indians and Gurkhas. The Dutch military build-up now continued at an accelerated pace.

Japanese military played a role in the first phase, too. A small number joined the Indonesian side, as mentioned above; much more important from a military perspective, though, was the fact that the British were temporarily forced to call on their former enemy as auxiliaries, due to the shortage of troops. This deployment resulted in many more Japanese war deaths than during the conquest of the Dutch East Indies in 1942.[20] The number of Indonesian fatalities at the hands of Japanese soldiers is not known but was much higher, partly as a consequence of bloody reprisals for Indonesian actions.

Phase 2: November 1946–August 1947

The second phase was characterized by continuous, mostly small-scale skirmishes and a gradual and limited expansion by military means of the territory occupied by the Dutch. This phase ended with the first major Dutch offensive, the deceptively named 'police action' known as 'Operation Product' or *Agresi Militer Belanda 1*. The common threads in this period were truce violations on both sides and the gradual demise of the Linggarjati Agreement.

Indonesian reservations about 'Linggarjati', which were already strong, particularly within the army, were reinforced by the continued Dutch military build-up. As it had not been possible to reach a joint agreement on the borders between Indonesian and Dutch territory, Spoor unilaterally established demarcation lines on 22 November 1946. In the following months, there were constant violations of these lines by the TNI and other armed groups, as seen from a Dutch perspective, or legitimate attempts to recapture territory, as seen from an Indonesian perspective. The Netherlands also engaged in operations on the other side of the demarcation lines. The situation escalated when – despite an agreement that the administration around Bogor (Buitenzorg) would remain in Republican hands – the local commander, Colonel Lodewijk Thomson, arrested local Republican administrators on 19 December, on suspicion of subversive actions. This reinforced the scepticism about the Netherlands' intentions felt by Republican political and military leaders, and TNI commander-in-chief Sudirman called for the fight to continue. Dutch commanders seized on Van Mook's order to prepare for Republican attacks by zealously launching their own offensive



Photo seized by the Regiment Storm Troops, showing Indonesian soldiers with a mix of weapons and uniforms, South Sumatra, between 1946 and 1948. Source: NIMH.

operations. The British had hardly departed when the fighting re-erupted.

The military struggle spread from Java, where the fighting was fierce, including around Surabaya, to population centres on Sumatra. There were constant small-scale military skirmishes there, too, but also some large battles, including around Padang, Medan and Palembang. The Dutch armed forces occupied more and more territory, but it proved more difficult to establish a sustainable civilian administration. On South Sulawesi, colonial rule – which was considered to be seriously under threat – was re-imposed in heavy-handed fashion by the DST led by Captain Raymond Westerling and other KNIL troops. Between mid-December 1946 and 22 February 1947, at least 3,500 unarmed Indonesians were publicly executed without any kind of trial or legal basis. The Dutch Navy also took offensive action, including against the Republican flagship *Gadjah Mada* (4 January 1947). As with many other military actions, Van Mook was not informed of this in advance.

The Dutch army command saw little benefit in restarting the negotiations and was in favour of offensive action; in this context, Spoor spoke of capturing Yogyakarta as a simple 'walkover'. The eventual signing of 'Ling-

garjati' on 25 March 1947, four months after the agreement had been concluded, proved meaningless in military and political terms. The Republic had signed the original agreement with great hesitation, whilst the Netherlands approved a version that had been unilaterally 'adjusted' to meet its own wishes. This, in turn, reinforced Indonesian doubts. Little came of the implementation, and the treaty was revoked by the Drees cabinet on 20 July 1947; this was now less risky, because the last Europeans and Indo-Europeans had left the Republican camps. The next day, Spoor was ordered to launch Operation Product.

This Dutch offensive, undertaken by more than 100,000 soldiers, was successful in the sense that two-thirds of Java and one-third of Sumatra were occupied, including 1,100 plantations. Contrary to the pleas of military leaders, the Dutch government forbade any advance to the Republican seat of government, later described by Wim Schermerhorn (Labour) as 'plague-ridden Djokja'. Van Mook and Spoor were extremely frustrated by the government's decision, taken under great international pressure, to halt the offensive on 5 August 1947. Once again, the balance of casualties was very one-sided. On the Dutch side 76 soldiers were killed, while thousands died on the Indonesian side. The TNI remained undefeated, however; the army units withdrew into Indonesian areas and difficult-to-access parts of the territory occupied by the Netherlands.

Phase 3: August 1947–December 1948

After Operation Product/*Agresi Militer Belanda 1*, the Dutch anticipated a period of 'pacification' in which the recaptured territory would be 'purged' of opponents and brought under Dutch control. The phase in which this was attempted lasted until late 1948. In this period, the TNI and other armed groups mainly carried out a guerrilla war, to which the Dutch armed forces developed a rather ineffective counter-guerrilla response.

On 29 August 1947, Van Mook and Spoor again unilaterally drew a demarcation line on Java and Sumatra, the 'Van Mook line'. Their troops were tasked with consolidating the captured territory while the TNI made every effort to hamper them. Spoor pleaded in vain to push on to Yogyakarta. He even kept troops on standby for this for weeks on end, preventing them from taking part in the intended 'pacification'. The government in The Hague – again under great international pressure –took a different political tack. In mid-January 1948, the Renville Agreement was signed. This treaty also appeared to be militarily attractive to the Netherlands, because the Re-

public agreed to withdraw the TNI from the areas occupied by the Dutch. Around 30,000 TNI fighters did indeed withdraw, but numerous TNI soldiers and militias remained. On West Java, many joined the forces of Darul Islam (Hizbullah and Sabilillah), a powerful competitor of the Republic and the TNI.

In the first months after Renville, the number of armed confrontations fell sharply. This 'breathing space' facilitated the necessary rotations in the Dutch armed forces: the replacement of KNIL soldiers and war volunteers by new batches of conscripts. The armed forces lost much military experience as a result. From a Dutch perspective, this was all the more problematic because the negotiations about the implementation of Renville broke down in June 1948, and the Indonesian guerrilla war flared up once more. The situation became even more complex in late 1948; in West Java, a 'triangular war' broke out between the TNI, the Dutch armed forces and the armed wing of Darul Islam.[21] One important development for the TNI and the Republic was the violent suppression of the communist Madiun uprising in Central Java in September 1948. Not only did this victory promote the cohesion of the Republican camp and strengthen the position of the TNI, but the Republic and the TNI also gained credibility and thereby support in the West as a result, against the background of the fledgling Cold War. A further effect of 'Madiun' was the reduction of the large number of Indonesian troops and the seizure of the communist units' arms – in effect, a rationalization of the TNI.

The year 1948 was also marked by violations of the demarcation lines by both sides. The TNI and other armed groups attacked Dutch patrols, encampments, police posts, communication lines and enterprises, as well as Indonesians who held civilian posts in the Dutch administration or worked for the Dutch in some other capacity; cooperating with the colonial authority thus became increasingly risky. The Netherlands lacked the crucial support of the population in the guerrilla war. This meant that military operations acquired an increasingly hopeless character, not least because the Dutch armed forces were forced to split up into smaller units that had to control impossibly large areas with regular patrols and 'purges'. The army leadership realized that their own troops regularly overstepped the mark in doing so. In response to the massacre in Rawagede (now Balongsari) on 9 December 1947 and the many extrajudicial executions, 'special courts martial' were set up in March 1948 to curb extreme Dutch violence with potentially serious political repercussions. These courts martial were staffed by

judges, sitting alone, who could use accelerated proceedings to impose the death penalty on Indonesian 'terrorists' and '*rampokkers*'; they hardly had a moderating effect.

As in 1947, little came of the intended 'pacification', a combination of heavy-handed military action and the rebuilding of the administration. It hardly helped that repatriation had reduced the fighting force on Java from 48 battalions in April to 37 in August 1948. Bringing in Chinese and Indonesian auxiliaries failed to deliver the desired result. Spoor repeatedly indicated that he considered the situation untenable, and advocated larger-scale military intervention. He assumed that a second military offensive, focused on destroying the TNI and eliminating the Republican political and military leadership in Yogyakarta, would deliver the final blow to the opponent. A period of three to six months of intensive 'purging' would subsequently be sufficient to consolidate the regime and gain the support of the population. With strategic cabinet seats being taken by hawks from the Catholic KVP and Van Mook having been replaced, opposition to Spoor's plan weakened further. After much hesitation, mainly by Labour Party ministers, the Drees cabinet approved the second 'police action'.

Army commander General Simon Spoor bids farewell to repatriating soldiers from 2-5 RI. Tanjung Priok, between 20 and 23 July 1948. Source: NIMH/Dienst voor Legercontacten.



Phase 4: December 1948–August/December 1949

On 19 December 1948, Operation Kraai/*Agresi Militer Belanda 2* began, heralding the final and bloodiest phase of the war. This time Spoor was allowed to push on to Yogyakarta, where the Republic's political leaders were captured. The military leadership and most of the TNI managed to escape. The operation was less overwhelming than Operation Product, because the Indonesian opposition was by now better organized. Once again, the offensive was halted on 5 January under great international pressure; by the time of the cease-fire, the Netherlands occupied on paper the whole of Java, as well as large and strategic parts of Sumatra. Operation Kraai/*Agresi Militer Belanda 2* cost 113 Dutch lives, while more than 3,000 Indonesians were killed on Java alone.

Once more, the offensive was followed by a grim impasse of guerrilla and counter-guerrilla warfare. The Dutch armed forces initially carried out large 'purges', making intensive use of artillery, the KST and the air force. The TNI suffered major setbacks on Java and Sumatra. Beyond the towns, effective Dutch authority remained extremely limited; it was contested by both the TNI and by competing armed groups, particularly Darul Islam. The hardening of the struggle was reflected in the enormous rise in the number of fatalities. On the Dutch side, the number of fallen servicemen rose from 34 per month in the months before the offensive to 155 in the following months; according to Dutch counts, the death toll on the Indonesian side was 46,800.[22] And that was not all; the Republicans viewed Indonesians who cooperated militarily or administratively with the Dutch regime – policemen, security guards, informants, civil and judicial officials – as legitimate targets of ruthless reprisals and intimidation. This, too, contributed to the spiral of violence. As a result of this, and due to the development of local shadow Republican governments, the 'pacification' planned by the Dutch failed.

Partly due to the repatriation of the first batches, the Dutch armed forces faced a serious shortage of experienced soldiers in the final years of the war, especially in the officer ranks. As mentioned above, Spoor observed regretfully that relatively inexperienced soldiers had been promoted prematurely and given responsibilities for which they were not equipped. The armed forces had to control ever-larger areas, and were eventually spread over some 2,000 isolated outposts, situated along or at the end of long supply lines that were impossible to secure permanently. As they were extremely vulnerable



'Slowly but surely ... we fight to the last man!' A watercolour by an Indonesian fighter with the initials A.K. The artist collected twenty striking watercolours and drawings in a book to 'commemorate the Indonesian war'. The collection fell into Dutch hands in May 1949.

Source: A.K., Nationaal Museum van Wereldculturen.

to Indonesian attacks on these hazardous roads, in the long run the soldiers at many of these posts were more concerned with survival than with 'purges', let alone with helping to build a civilian administration.

The historiography shows that Dutch counter-operations in these dire circumstances regularly degenerated into counter-terror, something that was also confirmed by the soldiers themselves. One KL soldier noted: 'We have far too few troops and are trying to solve this by taking harsher action. By shooting everything off the road and burning down *kampongs* if needs be'. Corporal J. Eshuis wrote: 'Liberating the population is more like exercising terror'. The above-mentioned sharp rise in Indonesian fatalities, although it is likely to have involved fighters, should perhaps be read as an indication of this.[23]

In April 1949, shortly before his death, Spoor was still optimistic, although it was telling that he now claimed that 'pacification' would take a year and a half, not three to six months. Back in The Hague, the Drees-Van Schaik cabinet was more pessimistic and no longer gave much credence to Spoor's rose-tinted reports. Under great international pressure, the gov-

ernment decided to resume the negotiations with the Republic in April. This resulted in the Rum-Van Roijen Agreement on 7 May, and a cease-fire was agreed. On 22 June, the Dutch evacuated Yogyakarta, giving rise to a persistent back-stabbing legend in which Dutch soldiers blamed national and international politicians for a defeat that could have been prevented militarily. The final cease-fire was announced for Java on 10 August and Sumatra on 14 August. In the subsequent period, until the transfer of sovereignty on 27 December 1949, the level of Dutch-Indonesian – as opposed to intra-Indonesian – violence fell significantly, although there were still violent confrontations in the second half of 1949 on Java and Sumatra, and also on Sulawesi and Kalimantan; again, with many victims mainly on the Indonesian side.

'Extreme violence' in the Dutch historiography

Reports of extreme violence by the Dutch armed forces were brought to public notice on an occasional basis during the war, particularly in 1949 and also afterwards, but the political and social debates did not begin until war veteran Joop Hueting made his revelations in 1969. That history will be told in part II of this book.[24] In this chapter, we highlight a different dimension of the debate, namely the development of the historiography, for it is of direct relevance to this research programme. That historiography, almost without exception, consists of works by Dutch historians; there has been little interest in the international and the Indonesian historiography, past and present, in questions relating to the Dutch use of violence. This last section also looks ahead to the following chapter, in which we round off the introductory part of this book by setting out some of the conclusions and questions that shaped the implementation of the research programme.

For decades, the *Excessennota* [Memorandum on excesses, 1969], which was commissioned by the government and compiled in several months only by an official commission, was regarded as the canonical inventory of violent 'infringements' by the Dutch armed forces, so far as these had left archival traces. As the researchers noted at the time, the list was incomplete – a reservation that was watered down by the De Jong cabinet in order to make room for its statement that 'the armed forces as a whole had behaved correctly in Indonesia'. The memo had no academic pretensions, nor did it attempt to explain the 'excesses'. Both the collated source material and the cabinet's

subsequent conclusions continued to form a benchmark for later historical studies, but this provoked increasingly critical reactions.

Ontsporing van geweld [Derailment of Violence, 1970], written by sociologists and war veterans Jacques van Doorn and Wim Hendrix, proved to be a ground-breaking study. Based on research carried out at their own initiative into some 80 'infringements' during their service in Indonesia more than 20 years beforehand, they described the military conduct – always anonymously – and offered explanations for it. The essence of their argument was that in an increasingly hopeless guerrilla conflict, the army leaders had provided ambiguous instructions on the use of force and inadequate leadership. Responsibility for the extent of the violence was thus shifted *de facto* to lower-ranking infantry officers and non-commissioned officers, who were insufficiently equipped for the task, and unable – and perhaps less inclined – to prevent excessive violence. They operated in a 'trap of violence', in which the constant threat of being overwhelmed by superior numbers of enemy guerrillas was countered with extreme violence. In their view, the infringements or excesses were not mere incidents, but a recurring pattern. Their definition of 'infringements' included not only practices such as 'summary' – in other words, unlawful – executions, but also the routine extreme violence perpetrated during interrogations by the intelligence services and during daily patrols and purges, as well as the bombing and shelling of *kampongs*.

Like Hueting, Doorn and Hendrix believed that the cases listed in the *Excessennota* were merely the tip of the iceberg. Despite the limitations of their research – little archival research, the anonymization of cases they had compiled themselves – *Ontsporing van geweld* is still regarded as an influential study. That is also true of the supplement that the authors provided for the new edition in 1983, in which they were the first to take an international comparative approach – one that reflected remarkably well on the Netherlands, one should add. This comparative angle was only taken up once more in a systematic fashion by the current research programme.[25]

In later years, three cases that were briefly described in the *Excessennota* were investigated in separate studies. In 1984, historian Willem IJzereef published *De Zuid-Celebes affaire* [The South Sulawesi Affair], based on his thesis on the extremely harsh intervention by the special forces led by Captain Westerling in 1946-1947. The campaign resulted in at least 3,500 casualties, and is thereby considered the most serious Dutch 'excess' – a term that IJzereef also used – of the war. In 1997, Ad van Liempt published *De lijken-*

trein [The corpse train] about a prisoner transport in Bondowoso, East Java, in 1947, in which 46 Indonesian men died as a result of culpable neglect. In 2007, Harm Scholtens wrote the unpublished thesis, *Rawagede, 9 December 1947*, about a KL operation in which around 120, according to Dutch internal correspondence – or 430, according to Indonesian counts – Indonesians were 'summarily' executed.

That it took so long for these publications to appear is in itself remarkable, as is the fact that not one of them was written by an established historian. But it was the doyen of Dutch national historiography, Loe de Jong, who eventually put the cat among the pigeons with the twelfth volume of his series *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* [The Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Second World War, 1988]. In a draft version, De Jong wrote uncompromisingly about 'war crimes' and drew harsh comparisons with German actions in the occupied Netherlands. After much commotion, he replaced the term 'war crimes' with 'excesses' and moderated his terminology and tone somewhat; but the overall picture that he painted was nevertheless extremely critical of the Dutch use of force, as well as military and political leaders' responsibility for it.

In the following years, the Dutch conduct of the war in a broader sense was mainly addressed by military historians working at the predecessor of today's NIMH. In *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen* [Marching routes and wrong turns, 1991], Petra Groen drew critical conclusions about Spoor's military-strategic policy. Even though his 'spearhead strategy' was utterly lacking in realism, he had clung on to it until the bitter end. Groen did not focus on extreme violence as a separate category *per se*, but argued plausibly that the military leadership, with political support, had persisted with a mode of combat that had inevitably resulted in much violence, including against the civilian population.

Groen's later colleague, Jaap de Moor, published two substantial studies. In *Westerling's oorlog* [Westerling's war, 1999], he describes the history of the Dutch special forces in the war, paying significant attention to Westerling's actions in South Sulawesi. Although he is reluctant to draw general conclusions about the use of violence by the armed forces as a whole, he does make it clear that the DST, and later the KST, undoubtedly acted extremely harshly and frequently crossed the line. De Moor's biography *Generaal Spoor* (2011) does not focus on the use of violence by the armed forces either, but this study does support the image of a 'political general' who persisted with a risky, enemy-focused strategy, thereby creating the conditions for an

inevitable hardening of the conflict. This essentially confirmed Van Doorn and Hendrix's picture of a trap of violence, and Groen's analysis of a failing military-strategic policy.

Stef Scagliola's study *Last van de oorlog* [Burden of the war], published in 2002, does not investigate the war *per se,* but mainly its aftermath. She focuses on the course of the public debate about what she unequivocally describes as 'war crimes', and thus on cycles of silence, concealment and (re)discovery. *Last van de oorlog* is of particular significance to the research on the Dutch use of violence in an indirect sense, because Scagliola reveals the strength of the mechanisms within the armed forces and the veteran community that functioned to cover up the violence, a phenomenon that had already been identified by Van Doorn and Hendrix. In this research programme*, Last van de oorlog* was of particular importance to the 'Aftermath' sub-project.

In terms of academic interest in the war, the fact that there was a turnaround in the last decade was not only shown by the 2012 plea – initially in vain – by the KITLV, the NIMH and NIOD for a broader investigation, but also by the publications that have since appeared. In the end, the present research programme would not be launched until 2017. In the intervening years, however, a number of studies on the war violence were published. These were, successively, the collection *Colonial Counterinsurgency and Mass Violence* (2014), edited by Bart Luttikhuis and A. Dirk Moses, with various contributions from the KITLV, the NIMH and NIOD; *Soldaat in Indonesië* [Soldier in Indonesia] by Gert Oostindie (2015); and, in particular, Rémy Limpach's *Brandende kampongs* [Burning *kampongs*, 2016]. Other publications included two articles on the extreme violence by former NIMH researcher Thijs Brocades Zaalberg (2014, 2015).

The conclusions of these publications are consistent in the sense that they characterize the Dutch use of violence as structurally excessive, and thus reject its framing as 'incidental excesses'. The studies use different terminology, however – Luttikhuis and Moses use 'mass violence', Brocades Zaalberg uses 'excessive violence' and 'war crimes', Oostindie uses 'war crimes', Limpach uses 'extreme violence' and 'mass violence' – and the same applies to the use of sources. Limpach's *Brandende kampongs,* the commercial edition of the doctoral thesis he defended in Switzerland in 2015, is based on the most in-depth research into the extreme violence and incorporates all of the above-mentioned studies. His book formed the catalyst for the Dutch government's decision to fund this research programme.

Towards the end of the research programme, various articles were published that provided in-depth knowledge with regard to specific points; they are not discussed individually here, but many of them will be covered in the second part of the book. Regarding the problem of estimating the number of victims, reference should be made here to a recent article by Limpach, in which he highlights the asymmetry in the mode of warfare and casualties,

Corporal S. van Langen of battalion 3-7 RI wrote about a surprise attack on his post on 29 September 1947: 'A frenzied mob from a kampong*, led by a few Hadjis and* peloppers *[fighters] armed with carbines, attacked our post in Goeboeg [Gubung, Central Java]. Aside from the guards, the men were still sleeping at the 3rd Company, for it was still early in the morning. The horde rushed up to the fence, got it open, and stormed up the path to the sleeping company. Then the guards started up the machine guns. They fell like mown corn. When the attackers took to their heels, the dead were still lying there; 31 men.'*

Source: S. van Langen, NIMH.



and in so doing moreover reflects explicitly on the way in which the war was fought on the Indonesian side. He also stresses the weak grounds for quantification.[26]

Also of interest – as a concise summary of previous research – are several chapters from the overview by Piet Hagen, *Koloniale oorlogen in Indonesië* [Colonial wars in Indonesia, 2018] and, in particular, the substantial text book *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie* [Military violence and colony, 2021], part of the NIMH series *Militaire Geschiedenis van Nederland* [Military history of the Netherlands]. Groen and Limpach summarize the period 1945-1949 in around 70 pages. Not surprisingly, their conclusions are similar to those in their earlier work. Finally, it can be noted that various smaller publications based on source research, which are not discussed here, conclude almost without exception that the Dutch armed forces were guilty of the structural use of extreme violence.

In his PhD thesis *'Zoeken, aangrijpen en vernietigen!'* ['Search, attack and destroy!', 2021], Christiaan Harinck – a former doctoral student at the KITLV, although not affiliated with this programme – shifts the focus from specific cases of extreme violence to an analysis of the consequences of the army leaders' strategy for the resulting widespread use of violence and their adherence to a highly enemy-focused doctrine. He concludes – in line with the earlier conclusions of Groen and De Moor, among others – that the learning capacity of the armed forces, particularly that of the military leadership, was poor. The enemy-focused approach, which was derived from colonial experience and based on violent oppression, continued to prevail even when it was repeatedly shown not to work. As a result, the army leadership's only real response, time and again, was to escalate: deploying even harsher means, which led to even more casualties. Harinck thereby emphasizes that the line between 'regular' and 'extreme' violence was usually blurred and often difficult to determine *post facto*.

An entirely contrary approach is taken by Bauke Geersing, a lawyer who trained at the Royal Military Academy. In *Kapitein Westerling* (2019), Geersing adheres strictly to the legal frameworks that were used by the Dutch government at the time; in his view, no Indonesian state existed, which meant there was no war and by definition no 'war crimes', either. His interpretation of Westerling's actions is largely consistent with the image that the captain himself presented in his memoirs: his actions were harsh but fair, they were a successful response to the need to suppress terrorism posing as nationalism, and they were approved from above – and thus legitimate. However,

Geersing does not offer any evidence to support the claim that Westerling's actions were legally defensible.[27]

For the sake of completeness, it should be added that a large number of media publications on the war have also appeared in the last decade, as well as egodocuments by or about veterans and, finally, two works in the genre of literary (historical) non-fiction: Martin Bossenbroek's *De wraak* van Diponegoro [Diponegoro's revenge, 2020] and David van Reybrouck's *Revolusi* [Revolution, 2020]. The picture painted by much of this work – one that in the case of *Revolusi* has certainly drawn widespread publicity – is consistent with the prevailing state of the scholarship described above.

Interim conclusions

The three preceding chapters outlined the background to the research programme, as well as the political-historical and military-historical context. This interim section functions as a bridge to the second part of the book. In line with the programme design and funding, the aim of the research was to answer 'the most important questions in relation to decolonization policy, violence and war – with a focus on (explaining) the Dutch military conduct', whilst 'paying ample attention to the historical, political and international context and aftermath of the war'. The focus was on the research into the conduct of the war, more specifically, the use of extreme violence by the Dutch armed forces, its consequences, and the extent to which responsibility was taken for this extreme violence both at the time and afterwards. Based on the state of academic knowledge at the start of the programme, there was little reason to doubt that the Dutch armed forces were guilty of more than incidental use of excessive force during the war. The question is to what extent did this happen, and how can this be explained; and that is preceded by the question of why the Netherlands went to war.

Drawing on the existing historiography, it was relatively straightforward to answer the latter question without doing further research. Exceptions aside, Dutch politicians were convinced they had both the right and the duty to 'liberate' the Dutch East Indies from Japan and subsequently from

the Republic of Indonesia, and to retain Indonesia for the kingdom in some way on a permanent basis. Economic, geopolitical and ethical arguments were advanced to justify this. As the existing literature provides sufficient grounds for this interpretation, the programme did not re-investigate this issue at length. However, the sub-project on the international political context did raise the question of the extent to which Dutch policy attracted support, or rather criticism. Furthermore, the sub-project on the bersiap period looked at whether the violence in this period might have constituted an (additional) argument or pretext for the military intervention.

How was the war fought and what can we already conclude, based on the historiography, about the Dutch use of force and its consequences? That the war increasingly assumed the nature of a guerrilla conflict is a given, as is the fact that the number of casualties was distributed very unevenly. When describing the warfare, much previous research focused on the actions of the infantry. When designing this research programme, we therefore decided to focus sub-projects on two elements of warfare that had received less attention from researchers in the past, and that are often associated with extreme violence and the discrepancy in casualty numbers: namely, technical violence and the intelligence services.

More broadly, it was a challenge to improve on the existing estimates of casualties of war violence, including the question of which parts of the armed forces were more or less responsible for these and the question of the proportion of civilian casualties in these figures. A number of sub-projects addresses this issue, and there was every reason to do so. In contrast to the claim of the De Jong cabinet that the 'excesses' were 'incidental', the prevailing view in the current historiography is that the extreme violence was structural or sometimes even systematic in character. However, this raises the question of which criteria should be used to determine this. Quantification could offer part of the answer, but it is clear that this is an extremely difficult, perhaps impassable road, one that leads only to limited or fragmentary results.

The main question requires conceptual consideration. Various terms are used in the historiography, such as 'inordinate' or 'excessive violence', 'extreme violence', 'mass violence' and 'war crimes'. In this research programme, we preferred to use concrete descriptions of such acts and the concept of 'extreme violence' as an overarching term. In the first chapter it was stated that there are powerful arguments for the claim that the core of international humanitarian law was applicable, or at least considered applicable, by the

Netherlands, and that the actions of the Dutch armed forces could and can be measured against those rules. Indeed, according to many sources this is consistent with the intuitive sense of justice felt by many of the military men involved, who expressed their views as to whether certain acts of war had 'crossed the line'.

On the one hand, the analytical concept of 'extreme violence' refers to violence that was largely used outside direct regular combat situations against civilians or fighters, who may or may not have served in the Indonesian army and who were disarmed after their capture or surrender, usually without direct military necessity or without a clearly-defined military objective. On the other hand, forms of extreme violence were also used within regular combat. This mostly involved the use of heavy (but also light) weaponry, whereby the risk of civilian casualties was evidently disregarded. In many of the thousands of combat engagements involving Dutch troops and Indonesian fighters – often literally situations of kill or be killed – it is impossible to determine whether proportionate violence tipped over into disproportionate violence. This is mainly due to the limited source material. What can be said with certainty, however, is that the Dutch units usually had great 'fire superiority' and made ample use of this, resulting in a large imbalance in the casualty numbers: there were many more dead and wounded on the Indonesian side than on the Dutch side.

The aim of this study is thus not to draw conclusions about the overall extent of the extreme violence as such, but rather to identify, as well as we can, the situations – within or beyond military action – in which forms of violence occurred, whether structurally or systematically or otherwise. The concept of 'extreme violence' functions primarily as a way to describe the nature of the warfare, but it simultaneously opens up possibilities for considering the impact of the violence on the victims and the moral or legal aspects of this violence. After all, as mentioned above, these forms of violence were contrary to everything that contemporary Dutch political and military leaders claimed to stand for, and clashed with widely held moral values, often those held by the perpetrators themselves.

Needless to say, the choice of this overarching concept does not imply that the Dutch armed conduct would have been lawful had extreme violence not been used. This question goes back to the debate about the legitimacy of the Dutch warfare, which could in fact only be justified from a colonial perspective. But this conceptualization does create the space to ask questions about the proportionality of the military action, given the decision to go to war.

Let us return to the main question about the mode of warfare, and thus the question of why the Dutch conduct of war was so (extremely) violent. The existing literature identifies clusters of factors, aside from the highly violent nature of Indonesian guerrilla warfare. The most important of these include the unrealistic and therefore risky military strategy pursued with inadequate resources based on an underestimation of the opponent, which lowered the threshold for extreme violence; political policies that had no effective preventive effect; and the failure and often the obduracy of the civilian and military-judicial authorities, resulting in a practice of secrecy and impunity. In addition, the literature highlights the quality and culture of the armed forces: inadequate leadership, inexperience and lack of education, training, information and discipline, as well as a lack of learning capacity at the conceptual (or doctrinal) level; continuity of administrative and military traditions rooted in exemplary violence and the maintenance of colonial prestige, passed on via the KNIL to the military dispatched from the Netherlands – in short, an inward-looking culture in which failing leadership facilitated arbitrary action and excessive violence. In the final phase of the war, according to many sources, there was also the physical and mental exhaustion of the soldiers in the field as a result of the perceived futility of their own actions and the repeated postponement of their repatriation.

The results of the sub-projects are presented in the second part of this book. By choosing these projects in particular, the research programme aimed to investigate the explanatory factors listed above in more depth, and possibly add others. Although each of these sub-projects had its own focus, we found that they often overlapped. For example, both the research on the *bersiap* period and the Dutch-Indonesian 'Regional Studies' sub-project provide new insights into the extremely complex dynamics of violence that involved multiple armed groups, some organized and some not, and how this affected the Indonesian population. Both the chapters about the intelligence war and the deployment of heavy weapons aim to examine aspects of the Dutch military action that are still relatively under-researched, but almost automatically raise questions about the chain of command, views on proportionality and the concealment of extreme violence. Both the research on the military justice system and that on how administrators and politicians 'handled' reports of extreme violence focus on the way in which such behaviour was or was not judged and punished, and whether this did or did not have a preventive effect. The international comparative research on violence in decolonization wars is directly related to this: in this chap-

ter, the tension between liability and impunity forms an important theme. The sub-project on international involvement in the war is likewise partly concerned with questions about whether or not to share information about violence. Finally, the research on the aftermath of the war investigates how and why the concealment of the violence and the avoidance of public debate about it persisted long after the war.

In short, each of the contributions in part II, individually but also in combination, aims to provide answers to aspects of the overarching research question. In the Conclusions, these answers will be brought together and an attempt will be made to answer these questions.

Next pages: *Two pages from the photo album of sergeant and war volunteer B. Berends, who was attached to the carrier platoon of the 4th battalion of the 5th Infantry Regiment (4-5 R.I.). Most photos relate to daily life in the army, but a few pages also bear witness to the tough reality of the war. Malang, East Java, early August 1947. Inscriptions: 'Prisoners. Malang, Aug. 1947 / A moment for a Caravelles / Across the makeshift bridge / Prisoners / Bearers of Safety and Law ...? / Bedali Kampong, from which we came under fire / Prisoners / "Freedom is the glory of every nation. Indonesia for Indonesians!"'*

Source: Photographer unknown, NIOD/Berends Collection.



Gevangenen.

Malang.

Aug. 47.



Even tijd voor een Caravelles.



Over de noodbrug



Gevangenen



Brengers van Veiligheid en recht...?

Kampong Beccali. Van waaruit We een beetje vuur kregen.



Gerangeerden.

„Vrijheid is de Glorie van iedere natie Indonesia voor Indonesiërs."



II.

INTERMEZZO



The human dimension

The search for stories about the Indonesian War of Independence

Eveline Buchheim, Fridus Steijlen, Stephanie Welvaart

Edi Kuncoro, born on 27 December 1930 in Boyolali, Surakarta/Solo, joined the *Barisan Pemberontakan Rakyat Indonesia* (BPRI) as a fifteen-year-old boy in December 1945.[1] This people's movement was founded by the famous resistance fighter and later politician Sutomo (better known as Bung Tomo), who played an important role in the Battle of Surabaya in November 1945. Pak (Mr) Edi related how the Dutch had repeatedly violated their trust at that time:

> We fought the British, they came without permission and wanted to free the prisoners of war. They released the Dutch who had been held captive by the Japanese. Without our knowing it, the Dutch army joined them [the British]. That was NICA, the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration. They wanted to restore order and arm the prisoners

A relief located at the heroes' cemetery in Koto Nan Gadang, Payakumbuh, 2008.
Photo: Fridus Steijlen.

> who were held captive in Ambarawa. I fought in the second line, in Banyubiru. The battle took place in Ambarawa and was led by Pak Dirman, General Sudirman.[2]

In 1947, Willem F. van Breen, born in Amsterdam on 13 March 1925, went to North Sumatra as a conscript with the 4-2 RI battalion. He described an experience that stayed with him for life:

> We were on patrol. [...] We arrived at a *kampong* and came under fire. We were lying in a trench and had to fire the mortar. Next to me the sergeant says: 'Van Breen, mortar fire'. But we were lying in the trench and I had to go and stand on the road. Crouching on the road I fired the mortar, I fired 15-20 mortar bombs at the *kampong*. Later we entered the *kampong*, and then I saw the effect. Those are the things that keep me awake at night. They were civilians; as far as they were men, I could be at peace with that, certainly, because they were not in uniform, they were civilians, that was guerrilla warfare. As far as they were women and children, that of course was very difficult. A mortar bomb doesn't just make a little hole, they were all dead. Well, there was nothing we could do...[3]

What can personal stories, such as the stories of these two veterans, tell us about the Indonesian War of Independence? Their accounts do not necessarily represent 'the' Indonesian or 'the' Dutch perspective: they are the experiences of 'just' two soldiers who were on opposing sides between 1945 and 1949. Their experiences differ in many respects, but there are also similarities. Both men were young; the Indonesian veteran was even younger than the Dutchman. Both felt they had little choice but to fight for their country. The Dutch veteran was sent out as a conscript, the Indonesian veteran could not imagine not defending Indonesian freedom. Their stories show that neither had a complete overview of the conflict. One had heard that NICA was going to arm internees in Ambarawa, the other was fired at and had to respond. Each felt that they had to do what they did. Instinct told them they had no other option. Their stories bring nuance and personal justification to grand historical narratives, but they also create room for doubt.[4] Hesitation is an excellent measure of the human dimension, the realm of personal experience and perception; and that is what we were seeking in the Witnesses & Contemporaries project.

By paying attention to the experiences and memories of individuals and small groups, and by focusing on their personal stories, we come closer to different people's individual perceptions. Searching for the human dimension can help us to understand events that took place in the past. Moreover, we gain greater insight into the way in which these events are remembered afterwards, by the witnesses themselves as well as the social communities to which they belong. When we create space for multiple perspectives, different or even conflicting views and ways of thinking are given a place in the historical narrative, and the layered nature of history becomes clearer as a result.[5]

More or less official stories about the war are in circulation in both the Netherlands and Indonesia, perpetuated by the government, politics, the army or other groups and institutions. In these narratives, meaning is ascribed to the past; they reflect the norms, values and beliefs of a country, organization or community. Yet behind these grand overarching narratives lie a multitude *and* an incredible variety of personal stories. Stories that may deviate from and add nuance to the official versions. Stories about fear, about hesitation, about choices that turned out not to be real choices at all. Stories that reflect the experiences of individuals and small groups, stories that in fact make up the human dimension of history, that show how the past was lived and how it was perceived and remembered.

Personal stories and overarching narratives are rarely in sync, and for that reason alone, personal stories all too easily become hidden in the public domain. After all, a tangle of divergent storylines seldom makes history any clearer. In order to get a grip on history nevertheless, we often resort to timelines and national canons, which can serve as frameworks for historical narrative. In doing so, we attempt to bring order to the past, but at the same time we make choices, consciously or not; emphasis is placed on a certain perspective, whether it is the national perspective or that of a particular social group.

In search of stories

The emphasis of the Witnesses & Contemporaries project was on collecting as many different stories as possible. Designed as a kind of 'window', or 'front office', that could be approached by people who were personally involved in this history, the project soon took an active course, inviting people in the Netherlands and Indonesia to share their personal stories and individual experiences.[6] As the majority of the research was carried out in the Nether-

lands, where the Witnesses & Contemporaries project was based, this did not work equally well in the two countries. Despite this, we also managed to gather Indonesian stories.

In the Netherlands, the invitation to share personal stories prompted hundreds of emails and letters, telephone conversations, multiple interviews and group conversations, as well as original material from the war years themselves – such as diaries, photographs and letters. Some people shared only a short anecdote, others added more general political or sociological views or related what the period had meant to them personally. Yet others shared diary entries or correspondence written by their parents, and added their own reflections on this. Sometimes they searched for additional information among their parents' papers. All in all, the programme yielded a large quantity of material, in addition to what had already been collected in previous projects.[7]

This large collection of stories allows us to depict the past through a kaleidoscope, as it were, with a multitude of colours, perspectives, timelines, aspects and elements. The personal documents and stories offer an opportunity to get closer to the experiences of the people who helped to shape history, and who lived through and experienced it as eyewitnesses in different ways, and with different nuances and different accents, which have also changed in the course of time. Thanks to these personal impressions and stories, we not only acquire a clearer view of individual choices and circumstances, but we also gain a better understanding of history.

But that is not all: individual perspectives also help us to look critically at official sources, such as colonial archives, which are often formed by institutions and dominated by colonial ideas. Minority voices or divergent opinions are less common in such sources, or they are framed in a specific way, certainly when they concern controversial issues such as violence or rebellion against authority or intimacy, to name a few obvious examples.

In her book, *Along the Archival Grain*, Ann Stoler suggests 'reading along' with the colonial archive in order to gain a better understanding of the nature, the concerns and the fears of the colonial state.[8] In addition, postcolonial and feminist researchers suggest that these archives should also be read 'against the grain', and personal testimonies and documents can help us to do this. It soon became clear that many people not only wanted to relate their experiences, but they also wanted to share their personal views on the overarching research programme, and on the social debate about the period between 1945 and 1949 in Indonesia. This was the response of one man, for

example, who, although he himself was not directly involved, grew up in a small Frisian village with 500 inhabitants, ten of whom went to Indonesia at that time. He wrote:

> [they left] ... a hole in the village community and came back totally changed. In doing so, they encountered a lack of understanding from their family and a village community misinformed by government censorship.

He expressed his concern about the focus of the research 'on the violence, which emphasized the soldiers' guilt, while at the same time keeping those who decided to wage war out of range'.[9]

Suggestions were also made regarding the publications we should read and themes we should address. For example, a Dutchman who had been sixteen back then, and who had wondered at the time why soldiers were being sent to die again so soon after the end of the Second World War, wrote that the research should focus on the role of 'the people behind the scenes at that time, who set this whole disgraceful history in motion, the plantation owners and other private parties who wanted to see their interests safeguarded after the Second World War'.[10] There was also criticism, for example from a former trade unionist who had himself published a book on the Indonesian Revolution, who wrote that there was every sign that the research would produce a 'second *Excessennota* [memorandum on excesses]', because the focus on excessive violence seemed to imply that 'there is also violence that is not excessive. So where to draw the line?'[11]

From the outset, the aim was to give the floor to a wide range of witnesses and contemporaries. In the Netherlands, we put out calls to reach specific target groups or made appeals linked to certain themes, so that we could gather less well-known stories and testimonies. For example, those of conscientious objectors and soldiers who refused to follow certain orders, such as Mr Bruin, who was sent to Indonesia as a marine. He related how he was ready to fight for his 'native country'; he had no problem with the military culture of authority. But he nevertheless refused to follow one order. One day, he was sent to a kampong where a house was on fire. Dutch soldiers yelled that no one should be allowed to flee from the surrounding houses.

> Then I suddenly saw a little boy walking through the *sawa* [rice field], a little boy aged ten, eight or ten. [...] Then the commander said to me,

> 'Open fire!' All at once he said, 'In a warzone I give the command to "fire!", you do it or else' [...] But I didn't open fire. I let that boy walk on. I thought, 'I can't shoot a child.' So I didn't. The child got away.[12]

Stories like these raise questions about where personal boundaries lie, from refusing to serve to refusing to follow an order. When do soldiers feel that violence is justified and when does it go too far? Mr Den Adel told us that at the time, he did not question the order to set houses on fire, even if he did not know whether anyone was inside:

> When the fire had burned itself out, we went back. Yes, it didn't really bother me, you know. The house burned down and it was over. We'd carried out another task. Yes, at that time I thought about it very differently from the way I do now. Now it's just regret, regret and shame, but I didn't feel that back then.[13]

Another way to find witnesses was to put out a call to people who could share common experiences, such as women who had served in the armed forces or people who could speak about specific historical events, such as the Republican camps or the *Bandung Lautan Api,* the 'Bandung Sea of Fire' on 24 March 1946, when a large part of the southern side of Bandung was torched by retreating Indonesian Republicans.

By interviewing people who were in the same place at more or less the same time, we could enrich their experiences with images and stories from others who were relatively close by. Moreover, it allowed us to look 'over the fence' at what was happening on the 'other side'. The witness seminar at which we spoke with three members of the Indo-Dutch community about their experiences in Bandung in 1945-1946 gave an impression of what had happened in the northern part of the city.[14] The conversation took us through the streets of Bandung on the Dutch side of the demarcation line, the railway that ran through the middle of the city. The witnesses recounted the tense situations they had experienced, but also how they had been helped by Indonesians.[15] Ami spoke of *pemuda*, as the Dutch called Republican youths, who wanted to force their way into his aunt's house. His aunt knew that there was an Indonesian armed guard in the neighbouring house at night, and she called out to him loudly in Indonesian for help:

> And then he came. And he fired in the air. And then the youths came, they were in the backyard. They stole away immediately... When people say the pemuda [young irregular fighters] were all murderers, then I have to say, now we were the exception. Our family is alive thanks to the pemuda.

An incident that occurred during a transport of people who had been taken for their own protection from their homes on Lembang Road was still fresh in Robert's mind. They were shot at by snipers and had to seek cover in the ditch by the road, and unfortunately there were many fatalities among them. But, he countered:

> We're talking about these troubles... and all the misery we went through. But I know from my own experience, and from several friends, that they personally sometimes received great help from Indonesian boys, girls, women, who helped them at the time... we should think of that too, of course...

Connie described the dangers she faced when she went out to fetch milk, and how she had to lie still in the ditch when *peloppers* (fighters) turned up: 'That's logical, because they don't see you in the ditch. But what's more, if they do shoot, then you hope the bullets will pass over you. Then you're safer there, relatively speaking.'

After this group interview in the Netherlands, we searched for Indonesian accounts of these events. During a visit to a veterans' office in Bandung, we were able to interview veteran Pak Ididjuhana, who had lived through the *Lautan Api*. The conversation was special for two reasons. First, because he told his story at the office of the war veterans' legion, surrounded by other veterans. Second, because his story gave insight into what happened to the people on what is described in the Netherlands as the 'other side of the demarcation line'. He spoke of Indonesian colleagues who sometimes crossed the demarcation line:

> We went there for surveillance activities. Some of us were taken prisoner when they were spying on the Dutch in the north. But they were unarmed; they were simply locating the Dutch troops. Some of my friends were captured and were never able to return. I don't know where they are. We were defending our territory. Between 1945 and 1946, there was a lot of fighting.

When the Republican troops withdrew from the city in March 1946, they used a scorched earth tactic: they set fire to buildings that could be used by the Dutch. Part of the city burned down as a result. Pak Ididjuhana described his experiences on 24 March 1946:

> I was in the south. [...] I was stationed with the battalion in Gang Pabaki. [...] My group was ordered to patrol Bandung train station. We were ordered to watch out for attacks from the north. The station was located near the governor's office. I was on patrol until midnight. We didn't receive any orders to set fire to Bandung. We were just on patrol. No orders. But when I looked up, the sky had turned crimson.

Pak Ididjuhana then described how, as he slowly fell back to the south, he witnessed hundreds of people fleeing their homes. He helped to evacuate the hospital, but he also set fire to buildings:

> I burned things there. Why did we burn it all? Because we didn't want everything to be misused by the foreign troops.[16]

Another historical event that served as the starting point for gathering personal experiences was the violence that took place near Payakumbuh, on Sumatra. This was also investigated by the research programme as part of the project on the intelligence services.[17] In Payakumbuh in 1949, young Indonesian men were shot dead by a bridge by Dutch soldiers. Today it is the site of a monument, which was previously visited by one of the researchers of the Witnesses & Contemporaries project, Fridus Steijlen, as part of an audio-visual project. For the book *Sporen vol betekenis* [Meaningful Traces], which is being published in the context of Witnesses & Contemporaries, he went back to the recordings in order to reflect on what he had seen back then and how he viewed it now. In April 2021, Ody Dwicahyo, another researcher of Witnesses & Contemporaries, also visited the area, full of *lieux de mémoire* – places of remembrance where history is told and retold and constantly acquires new meanings. Today, the actions of the Dutch army in January 1949 are commemorated on Sumatra with several monuments. In Indonesia, such places are easy to find, and they tend to convey a message of victory or make references to Dutch violence. The situation in the Netherlands is different; there, such monuments do not commemorate specific battlefields, but rather the loss and the victims. Discussions about monuments

in the Netherlands continue to this day, mostly about who is commemorated where and in what way.[18]

Personal stories: reflections

Personal stories, like monuments to commemorate the war, show how the same history can be viewed from different perspectives: who tells what from which point of view? What role do these narratives play in the commemoration of the history of this period? And why do some stories become dominant whilst others are overlooked?

Both the dominant narratives and the personal stories are partly coloured by what Gloria Wekker, in her analysis of the multicultural Netherlands, *Witte onschuld: paradoxen van kolonialisme en ras* [White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race], calls the 'cultural archive'.[19] This 'cultural archive' also explains, for example, why Dutch soldiers were able to draw on existing paternalistic and racist ideas about the people of Indonesia despite never having been there. We find echoes of this 'cultural archive' in oral and visual sources, both from the time and in the present day.

Language and terminology, words and ideas in contemporary sources can and will be different from today's norms and ideals. We can draw on these discrepancies between the language of the past and present to gain more insight into how, in different times and in different places, events and people are presented in different ways. There is growing awareness that words matter; the words that we choose to narrate a story can reveal underlying beliefs or prejudices. Nowadays, people in the Netherlands are more aware of the use of terms such as 'coolie', 'slave', '*baboe*' ('housemaid') and '*djongos*' (servant), and what these words may mean for readers or listeners. We are more attuned to how the language we use can have a connecting or exclusionary effect, consciously or unconsciously. Indeed, we need to ask ourselves what impact certain words can have. In order to make this extra step towards greater understanding, it is important to reflect on the words that are used in contemporary material – and sometimes still used, in recent interviews and written material – that are often perceived as hurtful.

Many written sources about the violence in the period between 1945 and 1949, such as battlefield reports by the Dutch army, were produced for a specific purpose. When we use them today, we should take account of that original context. Source criticism also means asking ourselves how credible or factual the story that is being told actually is. Oral history sources present similar problems. For example, it is difficult to make a precise distinction

between our own experiences and the way in which others' stories, or films or books, colour our memories. In any case, we know for sure that the memories that stem from our own minds are not necessarily accurate or reliable. That does not mean that the personal stories have less meaning or no meaning at all; the key is to judge them on their own value and in context.

Written, oral and visual sources offer insight into the personal experiences of people who directly or indirectly witnessed dramatic historical events in the period between 1945 and 1949. These stories go beyond experiences alone; they also offer insight into the sensitivities involved. Moreover, they show how emotions and loyalties shaped decisions and how those experiences are viewed in retrospect. The starting point of the Witnesses & Contemporaries project was to make our representation of the past more inclusive and varied by creating space for as many different perspectives as possible, without claiming to be comprehensive. After all, not everyone can or wishes to write, and not everyone is able or prepared to tell their story. Moreover, not everything that has ever been described has been preserved. The material that we have at our disposal today has already undergone a considerable process of pre-selection over time.

Written sources

When it comes to personal sources written at the time of the conflict – such as letters, diaries and memoirs – or life stories that are written after the event, there are various questions to consider: who can or who wants to make his or her voice heard? For someone from the Netherlands who is far away from home and finds himself in a new environment, writing things down is an obvious way to inform his absent family while at the same time processing new impressions. But the extent to which someone is used to setting his thoughts on paper also plays a role. It is questionable whether it was common practice for the Indonesians involved or KNIL soldiers to put pen to paper in order to record their thoughts and experiences; and if this did happen, were their writings preserved and can we trace them? In the end, the written personal sources that we consulted were mostly Dutch sources, which in itself gave an unbalanced picture. Nevertheless, the Dutch sources turned out to represent a wide range of very diverse experiences and ideas.[20]

Letters and diaries written by civilians or soldiers can provide insight into how the war was seen by contemporaries who were sometimes in the very midst of the action. Many of these writings were cherished for years by the writers or the recipients, often as a personal reminder of a significant period

in their lives. Other personal documents were forgotten but then rediscovered again after many years. Much of the material we have at our disposal is from people who had a connection with the Netherlands at the time. For them, writing was a way to keep in touch with the home front, but also a way to document or process new experiences in an unfamiliar world. The letters also describe the emotions and loyalties that influenced decisions at the time. In retrospect, these letters often turn out to have had many more functions than the writer anticipated. Although the degree of reflection and explanation varies greatly from writer to writer, individually – and certainly in large quantities – they add nuance to the many official reports and thereby further our understanding of the human dimension.

In the letter that the Dutchwoman Eida Tan-Schepers wrote to her parents in The Hague, two weeks after her Chinese husband Dr Tan Sin Hok had been killed by Indonesians, she described his murder at length. This description of a murder during bersiap is in itself remarkable, but the letter also offers insight into the couple's considerations at the time:

> Neither of us wanted to enter the camp anymore, and because Hok belonged to a race that was well regarded by both parties, we believed ourselves to be safe in an ordinary street – but it was precisely that street that was chosen for destruction – When the houses opposite ours were in flames, I still thought that they would pass us by – I was not afraid for a moment, and the last thing I said to Hok was: 'Rest assured, nothing will happen to us!' By that time they had already started smashing our windows and Hok left us for the last time – When I went to look, maybe fifteen minutes later – he was lying on the ground, unconscious I thought, not for one moment did it occur to me that he might be dead – It was around 7 o'clock in the evening and already dark, I couldn't see his injuries – I waited another hour or so for help, not imagining that in an area protected by the English no help would come in such a situation. I then ran to the Hospital, where hundreds of healthy Dutchmen wearing red crosses were hanging around – They promised me they would come and get Hok, I could assure them the hordes had left – but the heroes did not dare to – I waited the whole night at Borromeus [hospital] for news of Hok's arrival – Although I could not imagine that Hok was not alive, I started to realize that he might also die – so I was completely calm when I received the news the following morning.

In letters such as this, we are taken into a very personal, dramatic time. We should not forget, though, that (self-)censorship, certainly in the case of letters written by soldiers, could influence what was shared. This is clear from a collection of letters that we received, written by a Dutch conscript soldier to his family and several friends in the Netherlands between 1948 and 1950.[21] The collection includes a letter from 2009, in which the writer reflects on an old letter that he wrote to a friend on 24 May 1949, and that he had re-read:

> Thank you very much for sending my letter from Watoetoelis that you found. It evokes a lot of memories. [...] The story of the 'baboe from Surabaya' was actually a little different. And it shocked me very much, and I didn't dare write that to you.

This is followed by an explicit description of the sexual abuse of an Indonesian woman, and to this memory he adds another of how he witnessed the shooting of an elderly man during a 'sweep' of a kampong.

> The kampong was surrounded and then a group of marines went from house to house through the kampong to track down peloppers. I had to hide behind a bush with another marine, someone I didn't know, watching to make sure no one escaped from the kampong. In the first light of day we saw an old man emerge from the back of his house, stand still in his garden and stretch. 'Beng', my colleague shot him. While I don't think that there was any question of his trying to flee. Then the endless waiting, until we got the signal to go on. Upon which my colleague walked up to the shot man, took a quick look, and shot him dead. He came back: 'I just gave him a mercy shot, my previous bullet had hit him in the neck.' As though he'd been a sick dog. Harmless. A sleepy old man.

Only years later would he dare to write about it. If we only had access to the letters from the years 1945-1949, we would not have read about such incidents, or only in euphemistic form. Then we mostly would have read about incidents such as his day of leave in May 1949, when he made a sailing trip from Surabaya to Madura with some friends and the boat's owner, a former marine, and three of his nieces, after which they drove a military car along the beach on Madura: 'The girls kept finding shells

and stones, they ran up and down at breakneck speed and chattered. Another funny incident', and 'we ate lots of chicken and a huge amount of ice cream'. Individual experiences shed light on personal circumstances and perceptions. In addition, they show how some memories are accessible while others are not; how, consciously or unconsciously, certain memories are hidden away or given space. The war veteran ends his letter by reflecting on the murder of the elderly man: 'I had no idea what to do about it, it remains a horrible memory. That also explains why I'd "erased" other memories too, such as the one of that sailing trip. Enough of the past.'

Although the focus of the overarching research programme is on the period between 1945 and 1950, we never imposed this periodization on the Witnesses & Contemporaries project. Divisions into historical periods are constructed with hindsight and often are out of step with witnesses' experiences. For many Indo-Dutch, the Japanese occupation flowed almost seamlessly into the threats and the violence of bersiap. Indonesians may have experienced the invasion of the Japanese army as a change of colonial power. And then again: during the conflict, people were sometimes confronted with several changes of power without their lives being transformed substantially in the meantime. We were given a good example of this during an interview with Tarsu'ah, a 93-year-old grandmother from Salem on the border between West and Central Java. She related how one time fighters of the Republican Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) had come to the village, another time the militia of the Islamic Darul Islam, and yet another time the Dutch army. As she remembered it, they had all done the same thing: steal her chickens. Only the way in which they did it differed.

Group interviews

In the interviews and witness seminars that we held for the Witnesses & Contemporaries project, the period 1945-1949 could not be viewed in isolation from the colonial history that preceded it. In the seminar with eyewitnesses with Chinese or Indo-Chinese backgrounds, it became clear how far their parents' social position had determined whether they came into contact with other communities in the former Dutch East Indies, a society that was segregated along ethnic lines. Patricia, who had two Chinese parents, knew Indonesians mainly as servants. She spent most of her childhood in a Chinese neighbourhood. 'Only afterwards', she said, 'when looking back,

do I see how all of those communities lived in their own bubble ... to use the modern term'. At Lisa's home, with her Chinese father Tan Sin Hok and Dutch mother Eida Tan-Schepers, Indonesians were also servants. Her parents were oriented towards European culture, and their circle of friends mainly consisted of Europeans and Chinese. The home of Abraham, the third witness to take part in the seminar, was visited by well-to-do Europeans and Chinese, as well as Indonesians from the same class, such as Indonesian doctors.

Their experiences during the period 1945-1949 were very different. We asked them which events in those years had made the greatest impression on them. Much passed Patricia by, as she was still very young in 1945. That was due to her age, but also where she lived. During the Japanese occupation, her family had moved from Cirebon to the relatively closed and safe Chinese neighbourhood in Semarang. After the Japanese surrender, during bersiap, her parents went back to Cirebon to see whether they could get their businesses back. She remembered her parents being worried, mostly about the businesses, but they never talked about their experiences during the revolution. Lisa spoke about the killing of her father, which we read about in the aforementioned letter from her mother. During the witness seminar she gave her own version of the story, but she also spoke about the rising tensions in the preceding period:

> I was walking along with my father, briefly on the street, while there was all that shouting going on, when it was so threatening. It was a dreadful sound, of course. We walked past a cornfield. I wanted to pick a corncob, and a man with a gun was sitting there. He turned the barrel on me. So I stood eye to eye with death for a moment, but then I went back to my father.

Abraham's experience was also different. He was fifteen years old at the time and lived in Kediri. When the fighting broke out in Surabaya in November 1945, the refugee flows started, including towards Kediri. Abraham was a member of the Chinese boy scouts, who were sent to the station each morning to receive and help the refugees, for example by transporting their luggage on bicycles. There were also pemuda at the station, who sometimes hassled the girls. The Chinese boys could do little about it; the pemuda were armed, the Chinese scouts were not. This was deliberate, said Abraham, in order to prevent escalation; otherwise they would be suspected of being

against the pemuda and on the side of the Dutch. They knew that things had got out of hand elsewhere on Java. 'We lived separately from each other, as it were', Abraham explained. 'The pemuda walked with *bambu runcings* [sharpened bamboo spears] and we had our bikes'.

We sometimes gained new perspectives when we asked witnesses to reflect collectively on their experiences during group interviews. Moreover, this setting provided an insight into the often winding road that the stories could take from the actual event to the eventual memory. It showed how memories can assume different forms at different times, and how personal memories are partly influenced by collective memories.[22]

This was clearly evident from a group interview in 2018 with civilian internees who had ended up in the Republican camp Sumobito (on East Java) after the Japanese surrender. The participants added to each other's stories and shared their memories, which sometimes varied widely. Some had experienced the camp as a hostage camp, others as a place that offered protection. Class, age, prior history and the time of arrival seem to have shaped their experiences. They also reflected on how memories could suddenly surface at times. One of the participants related how, at the time of the Bosnian war, he had been overwhelmed by memories of his time in Indonesia; another actively went in search of additional memories and stories by organizing a camp reunion.[23] The dynamic in the group interviews was not only inspiring for the participants, but it was also an enriching experience that yielded new information for the project.

As interesting and informative as interviews with eyewitnesses conducted 70 years later can be, we should not forget that these people were extremely young when the events took place. The older eyewitnesses whom we describe here were recalling memories of their lives as teenagers or young adults. During the group interview with people who had been teenagers in the divided city of Bandung in the spring of 1946, Ami explained that it took many years for him to understand what had happened there in those days. He said: 'At that time, we had no idea what was going on in the southern part of the city, which was in Indonesian hands. Only years later [...] did I read in a book about what had played out mere kilometres from my own home.'[24]

The stories that emerge in families as a result of personal documents and conversations can have a major impact on younger generations. Exchange with others can thus lead to new insights. In 2021, we organized an online group discussion with the children and grandchildren of war veterans from

Indonesia and the Netherlands.[25] The participants had similar questions about the role played by their parents and grandparents, and there was also space to share different experiences. During the conversation, family stories could be placed in a broader context. The participants John and Frans related how the years 1945-1949 had changed their fathers' lives. Cousins Santi and Ratmurti, also known as Songsong, said that their grandfather actually spoke more about later times, namely the thirteen years during which he was village chief; for them, the period that we focused on during the witness seminar was too limited. Ratmurti: 'In 1965, my grandfather was village chief; those were hard times, because the regime rounded up every member of the communist party.'

The conversation again highlighted the importance of personal documents for relatives, and how egodocuments are sometimes deliberately withheld or only later shared more widely in the family. Frans explained that at the age of sixteen, for example, he protested against the American war in Vietnam and thereby brought international politics into the family, but his father never wanted to talk about it. When Poncke Princen (a soldier who defected from the Dutch to the Indonesian side) appeared on TV in the mid-1980s, his father also remained silent: 'I was with my parents and wanted to talk about him. I know there was a diary. They refused to give it to me; it was lost, burned, etc. My father became furious when I asked him to talk about it.' During the group interview, Ratmurti, in turn, shared documents that he had recently found, which showed that his grandfather had been part of the student army in 1945-1948, and had joined the Siliwangi division in 1949. This came as a surprise to his cousin Santi:

> I have never seen these documents, except for that last one. [...] This discussion opens up opportunities, so that we can create a new perspective. [...] Yesterday I asked my father. He answered that he knew nothing about it. I think that these documents were in the possession of Songsong's mother because she cared for my grandfather before he died. Yes, it is so heart-warming to see all these documents, what he did, that I really... My whole life, his whole life, there was a part of his personal identity we never really knew. So it is wonderful to see. [...] It is strange. That is a fact. Even among the family, we don't really have an opportunity to talk about it.

The conversation highlighted the considerations that are made when deciding to share documents within families and with archival institutions. In addition to the question of which people are able or willing to write down their stories, there is the question of which documents are subsequently shared and which remain hidden from wider view. Public archives can give a distorted picture. For example, Frans talked about his considerations when donating his father's diary to NIOD:

> If the content had been more controversial, that might have been a problem. [...] For example, descriptions of war crimes, or his own participation, that would be controversial, also from the family's point of view, I think. And that is not the case with my father.

Visual sources

Visual sources are well suited to bringing out the human dimension of history. How can you for example use photographs to highlight the role played by female fighters on the Indonesian side? The most telling way would be to use photos of women bearing arms. Our search of the online collections yielded a photo of marching women carrying bambu runcing in the archive of the Indonesian Press Photo Service (IPPHOS). The photography collection of the National Archives of the Netherlands in The Hague also gave a number of hits for female TNI fighters. One of the photos shows three figures strolling through Yogyakarta, then the capital of the Republic of Indonesia. According to the description, the photo shows three female fighters: the one in the middle in a dress, flanked by 'female fighters' in trousers, carrying weapons. The photo was also shown in the 'Revolusi' exhibition in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (2022), but this time the caption referred to young male fighters from Sulawesi, out for a stroll with a female friend; and they are indeed young men with long hair. Taking a closer look at two more photos of 'female fighters' in the National Archives of the Netherlands reveals that they, too, are young men with long hair.

In our book *Sporen vol betekenis,* we used photos and quotes to tell the story of Ibu (Mrs) Djoewariyah, whom we got to know via students at Universitas Gadjah Mada in Yogyakarta. Ibu Djoewariyah had a photo that was taken when she was working for the Red Cross when she was fifteen. She said of this: 'Coincidentally, someone had a Kodak camera with him. He was from the *Tentara Pelajar*, the student army. He took a photo. In fact, it was taken after we had buried a fallen comrade.' Ibu Djoewariyah



Ibu Djoewariyah (standing girl, fourth from the left) as a fifteen-year-old in 1948, with her fellow fighters. On the back of the photo is written: 'Kenangan massa perjuangan Ibu Djoewariyah. Tahun 1948, Clas II Belanda menduduk kota Yogyakarta'/ 'Memory of the period of conflict Ibu Djoewariyah, 1948, Confrontation II, the Netherlands occupies Yogyakarta.' Source: Private collection of Ibu Djoewariyah.

became involved with the Red Cross when she saw refugees passing by her home. She gradually became active as a courier, too, carrying information from the city to the guerrilla fighters in the mountains outside Yogyakarta. She regularly visited a warung (restaurant) in the city centre, which functioned as a meeting point for the guerrillas. Nowadays there is a relief in front of the restaurant, showing the guerrilla activities. Photos of the relief and the warung allowed us to visualize Ibu Djoewariyah's story. A photo of Ibu Djoewariyah with the students who were at our interview added a further layer to these images. It shows how she passed on her story to the following generations, an important theme in the Witnesses & Contemporaries project. Sadly, we learned that Ibu Djoewariyah died on 1 October 2021.

The photographs and photo albums that were sent to Witnesses & Contemporaries belonged almost exclusively to soldiers from the Royal Neth-

erlands Army (Koninklijke Landmacht). Most albums bear a remarkable number of similarities, not only in relation to the subjects in the photos, but also literally: the same photos pop up in multiple albums. The reason for this is that only a limited number of soldiers had a camera, and some of those who did shared or sold prints of their photos among their comrades. Often the films were developed on Java and the negatives were sent to the Netherlands to be printed, after which the ordered photos were sent back to Indonesia and distributed there. Moreover, servicemen bought copies of army photos.

What photo albums look like and what is made visible or invisible is partly determined by the intended audience. Were the albums compiled for relatives, as personal commemorative albums, or to share with other soldiers? For example, the albums that we know of from Indonesia tend to be official commemorative books. Although there was always a larger audience for these photos, for example within veterans' circles, and the line between private and public was sometimes blurred as a result, it is important to be aware that the compiler made certain choices and that the donor – who could be the compiler, but also a family member – chose to share the photo album with an archive in the first place. Although photo albums were also compiled by Dutch and Indo-Dutch civilians, for example, these were not offered to the project as frequently.

A collection of photo albums on the same period or theme can reveal how photographic material is presented and how countless choices are thereby made at different levels. Who is visible and who is missing from the photos? Which photos are ultimately included, and which are repeat-ordered and circulated widely? One such example is that of photos of the graves and funerals of Dutch soldiers, which seldom show their human remains, as compared to the (rarer) photos of the dead bodies of Indonesian soldiers/fighters, frequently still lying in the place where they were shot. The depiction of death could not be more different.[26]

The captions provide an additional layer of meaning. What is explained and what needs no explanation? In some albums, for example, there are no captions for photos showing soldiers posing in front of a car, by a panorama or in front of a house, but photos of prisoners and dead bodies are sometimes explained in more detail. In the photo collection belonging to a Dutch marine, for instance, a photo of two dead bodies is accompanied by the following caption: 'Three prisoners escaped in the mine explosion, two of whom were shot on the spot.'[27] The former photos would not look out of

place in an album of holiday snaps, and would thus have been more self-explanatory for the intended audience; a caption was therefore considered unnecessary. The compiler of a photo album is telling a story, consciously and sometimes unconsciously. Sometimes the narrative is presented very literally, as in the example of a photo album with the following caption on the last page: *'Djokjakarta, hotel Merdeka en het paleis van Soekarno, 't sprookje is uit...'* [Yogyakarta, hotel Merdeka and the palace of Sukarno, the fairy tale is over...].[28]

Objects, like personal documents, can also tell a story; this was something that Ody Dwicahyo noticed after the death of his grandpa. The latter had fought against the Dutch and had the right to a veteran's funeral. The officer who was arranging the funeral asked the family for documents that could prove his involvement in the fight against the Dutch. It turned out that Ody's grandpa had created an entire archive, including certificates for his medals, a membership card for the veterans' legion, and a report cut out

Medals belonging to Ody's grandfather: twelve in total, three of which were for the War of Independence, the others for domestic military operations. Source: Satrio (Ody) Dwicahyo, collection of the author.



of the newspaper *Berita Bhuana*, in which his name was mentioned as the bearer of the red-and-white flag of the student army, which returned to Yogyakarta after fighters from the Indonesian Republic had taken the city for a short time. He had enlarged this newspaper clipping several times and made a number of photocopies.

This personal archive revealed the story of a young man who had kept moving to different places; Ody's grandfather had fought on several fronts. Unexpectedly, it also revealed the personal story of a Dutch soldier. The archive contained a collection of typed sheets belonging to one of grandpa's comrades; they concerned shared experiences, including an attack on a Dutch patrol at Ngasem market in Yogyakarta. It was later found that the three Dutch soldiers had not survived the incident. During the attack, one of the Dutchmen had lost his helmet, weapon and wallet, and his name was known as a result. In this way, the personal story of a fallen Dutchman intersected with that of Ody's grandpa.

The human dimension

The results of the search undertaken by the Witnesses & Contemporaries project show that there are many different stories to be told about the Indonesian struggle for independence. When gathering these stories, we wanted to emphasize their human dimension in particular. In doing so, we wanted not only to reveal the differences and nuances that are often missing from the 'larger historical story', but also to show that exchanging these different experiences and perceptions can help former opponents and different generations to gain a better understanding of diverse positions. Highlighting the human dimension also shows that history and the writing of history are lived and re-lived in dialogue and debate. The stories that were collected are available in the archives, and a detailed anthology of the stories can be found in our book, *Sporen vol betekenis*.

III.
RESEARCH RESULTS



I.

‘Hatred of foreign elements and their “accomplices”’

Extreme violence in the first phase of the Indonesian Revolution (17 August 1945 to 31 March 1946)[1]

Esther Captain and Onno Sinke

A cemetery in the centre of Yogyakarta turns out to be a lively spot. The final resting place of the deceased serves as an area for young people to hang out and provides a means of subsistence for food vendors, street sweepers and caretakers who will show you around for a small fee. Graves consist of tombs of granite, concrete or glazed masonry tiles. Some graves have a special marking at the head of the tomb: the red and white flag of Indonesia, the *merah putih*. This is attached to a flagpole about one metre high, which has the designation *‘pejuang’* – freedom fighter – a reference to the Indonesian Revolution. The flagpole is shaped like a bamboo spear, *bambu runcing*,

Young men of the Laskar Bambu Runcing stand ready with spears to take on the Dutch, 1946. The two men in front have firearms. Source: Photographer unknown, ANRI/IPPHOS.

with a sharp point that is sometimes painted red. The symbolism is clear: the spear is infused with the blood of the enemy.[2]

The bambu runcing, but also knives and *krissen* (daggers), were used as weapons in the earliest and extremely violent phase of the Indonesian Revolution. In Indonesia, knives and krissen were to be found in and around the house, garden and yard and were used daily as utensils or as ritual objects. That everyday objects could be used as weapons heightened the sense of vulnerability for those who were associated with the colonial system. The Dutch reporter Johan Fabricius, born in Bandung, wrote in 1947:

> Every Javanese carries such a knife in his belt; in his everyday life, it is indispensable. What else would he use to chop wood for the kitchen or for his *pagger* [fence]; what would he use to open a coconut? Of course, he can also cut open a skull with it, just as well as a coconut; and to see a bamboo spear as something other than a child's toy, one only has to see the gaping wounds that were caused by it...[3]

For Indonesians, the bambu runcing stands for heroism and can be seen not only in cemeteries, but also on countless memorials, paintings and dioramas. In addition, the bambu runcing is described as an iconic weapon in *Indonesia dalam Arus Sejarah* [Indonesia in the Course of History], the most recent standard work of Indonesian history.[4] Indonesians who had cooperated with the Dutch government were also unable to elude this weapon. For example, the bambu runcing was used by nationalist Indonesians to murder the noble Raden Mas Soehodo Gondosamito, the *camat* (sub-district head) of Lebaksiu in Tegal (Central Java).[5] This same fate was met by countless Chinese.[6] That the bambu runcing can evoke such contrasting memories and meanings is exemplary of the diversity of perspectives on the brutality in the earliest phase of the Indonesian Revolution.

Between 1945 and 1949, the term *bersiap* was used primarily in the context of random acts of violence by individual '*rampokkers*', '*peloppers*' and 'extremists' in uncoordinated actions. Since the mid-1980s, the extreme Indonesian violence in the first months of the Indonesian Revolution has become known in the Dutch and English-language historiography and in particular the public domain in the Netherlands as the bersiap period. This term was virtually unknown in the Indonesian historiography until 2012. Indonesian historians have recently defined the first phase of the Revolution as

> a period in which spontaneous hatred of foreign elements (i.e., Japan, the Netherlands and the Allies) and concomitant acts of violence against government officials complicit in upholding colonial rule escalated.[7]

The 'bersiap period' is commonly seen as an integral part of the Indonesian Revolution.[8] In the context of the Indonesian Revolution, the Indonesian word 'bersiap' refers to the eponymous battle cry 'get ready' and 'be ready' of the nationalist youths (pemuda) who came together out of dissatisfaction with Japanese policy and who were trained by the Japanese occupier and placed in paramilitary organizations. During the course of the Japanese occupation, it became increasingly clear that Japan would not be the hoped-for liberator of the Indonesians from Dutch colonial rule. Japan steadily proved to be an oppressive power, for example by imposing a rice (re)distribution system and recruiting *romusha* (forced labourers) among the Indonesians. The basis of the pemuda movement can be found in the Japanese occupation, when pemuda began to organize themselves locally in various places.[9] Pemuda were not a part of the regular armed forces. Their organizations often started out as groups that were involved in street fights in the *kampongs*.

In early October 1943, Japan established the *Pembala Tanah Air* (PETA) on Java, Madura and Bali, an anti-Allied auxiliary army in which some 38,000 nationalist youths ultimately found refuge.[10] On Sumatra, a similar organization was founded, the *Giyugun*. Although the PETA and the Giyugun were disbanded and disarmed after Japan's surrender on 15 August 1945, in the meantime a youth movement had emerged with members that were well-educated, knew how to handle weapons, were able to organize themselves, and were driven by resentment towards the Netherlands and Japan. This also applied to other more or less militarily trained members of the student battalions and the Seinendan, a 'labour service' made up of young people. There were approximately two million young and adult Indonesians on Java who were trained in a paramilitary manner.[11] The Republic of Indonesia opted not to immediately establish its own army, but instead proceeded to create the *Badan Keamanan Rakyat* (BKR, People's Security Organization) on 23 August 1945, so as not to offend the Allies. In doing so, the Republic demonstrated its intention to handle the revolution with tact, because although it had de facto control over the administration, de jure recognition could only be obtained through diplomacy. Despite the great acclaim it received, the BKR was unable to unite all the nationalist youths.

The feeling of dissatisfaction was strong among them because a regular army had not been immediately established. Many viewed the BKR as a surrogate and preferred to create their own movement, leading to a massive splintering into disparate organizations that acted on their own authority and at their own discretion.[12] The pemuda opted for armed struggle and radical actions. '*Merdeka atau mati*', was their slogan: freedom or death. They formed local *laskars* (militias) in which they acted autonomously, separate from the older generation in and around Jakarta who were in favour of conducting negotiations with the Netherlands.[13]

In the recent debate within the Netherlands about the Dutch war record in Indonesia, various interest groups have used the term bersiap as a key concept to put the period 1945-1949 into perspective.[14] There is also a discussion among historians about the 'bersiap period' regarding not just its periodization and character, for example, but also its origin and development (chaos arising from a power vacuum, or organized and directed), the number of victims, and the extent to which there was an ethnic struggle or even a 'brief genocide'.[15] These underlying discussions play a role in our research.

Central question and approach

The purpose of this chapter is to provide insights into the broad dynamic of violence during the very first stage of the Indonesian Revolution, known in the Dutch historiography as the 'bersiap period', as pointed out earlier.[16] The research results in this chapter provide a link to the other chapters in this book, because a better understanding of the dynamics of violence in the earliest phase of the Indonesian Revolution can offer more insight into the use of force by Dutch troops in Indonesia in the years after March 1946.[17] Our central question is: what are the characteristics of and explanations for the (extreme) violence against civilians and captured fighters of different nationalities and communities in Indonesia carried out by mainly non-regular combat groups in the period between 17 August 1945 and 31 March 1946, and what is the most plausible estimate of the number of victims?

In studying the violence during the earliest phase of the Indonesian Revolution, we have opted for a broader approach than has been customary among historians.[18] To begin with, our research is not limited to the violence on Java and Sumatra but extends to the islands beyond. And in the case of Java and Sumatra, instead of a city or regional approach, we adopt a perspective that goes beyond village and region. Secondly, we address a broader spectrum of potential targets and victims than has been the

norm so far in the Dutch and English-language historiography. Although the emphasis in this chapter is on extreme violence by Indonesian combat groups against Indo-European, Dutch and Moluccan civilians and captured, unarmed fighters, we explicitly place this in the context of extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters from other communities in the archipelago between 17 August 1945 and 31 March 1946.[19] This means we will first be looking at the violence against Indonesian administrators and officials who were working for the Dutch (intra-Indonesian violence). In addition to these government officials, there were also many casualties among ordinary Indonesian civilians. There was also Indonesian violence against the Chinese community, some members of whom had lived in the archipelago for several generations. Furthermore, the broad context we use also portrays the violence by the Japanese, the British, the British Indians, the Dutch and the Chinese against Indonesian civilians and captured fighters. These acts of violence usually occurred outside of combat operations and without a clear military purpose or military necessity. Seen in this context, we can establish – in line with the principles set out in the introduction to this volume - that in the earliest phase of the Indonesian Revolution there was an extremely violent situation. This statement is in-

An older Chinese man is supported after he is beaten by Indonesian revolutionary youths (pemuda), Cilimus, Cirebon, West Java, 1945-1946. Source: Photographer unknown, NIMH.



spired by the notion of an 'extremely violent society' by the German historian Christian Gerlach, a society in which different communities become victims of physical and non-physical violence perpetrated by multiple parties and social groups, often in collaboration with official organizations. We use the term 'situation' to indicate that this was a temporary condition. Moreover, Indonesian society was in and of itself not inherently extremely violent.[20]

A closer analysis of the widespread and often extreme violence in this period has made it clear that in order to understand the events, the colonial regime of the Netherlands must be taken into account, more so than has been done to date.[21] What is also important here are the promises made by Japan of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and an independent Indonesia, as well as the Japanese training and propaganda during the occupation years. In the ambitions and zeal of the pemuda lay a potential for violence that the Japanese occupiers had mobilized, particularly after 1944, through military training and anti-Western influences. However, the promise of an independent Indonesia went hand in hand with a total disruption of Indonesian society, as the Japanese occupier compelled ten million men to work as forced labour in military infrastructure, industry, agriculture and horticulture, with the proceeds having to be handed over.[22] Hundreds of thousands of romusha died in the process. Food production collapsed, resulting in famine and countless deaths. Indonesian women were forced into prostitution in Japanese army brothels, a fate also suffered by Chinese, Indo-European and Dutch women.[23] It led to the economic and social disruption of Indonesian society. As a result, thousands of young people were ready to take up arms as pemuda against those they considered their enemies: the Japanese occupiers and the Indonesian administrators who had collaborated with the Japanese. They also directed their violence against the Dutch, including staff members of the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA) as well as (Indo-) Europeans and Allies who embodied recolonization.

To sum up, we can say that the struggle of the Republic of Indonesia and of Indonesian combat groups was directed at those both inside and outside the archipelago who represented colonial rule, those who advocated a return to the colonial system, and those who threatened (or were rightly or wrongly suspected of threatening) the independence of Indonesia. Whether someone became a victim of ruthless violence was often arbitrary: the possession of certain (colour combinations of) clothing, fabrics or paintings, a preference for Dutch products, or having social contact or a business

relationship with Dutch people was sometimes enough to label a person a 'traitor' or 'collaborator'.

The end of the earliest period of excessive violence can be dated to late March 1946. By then, the first wave of Indonesian extreme violence had been contained, partly as a result of British and Japanese military intervention, interventions by the government and the army of the Republic of Indonesia, and negotiations between the Indonesians and the Dutch. This did not mean, however, that the violence directed against specific groups stopped – on the contrary. In particular, the Chinese and the Indonesians suffered many civilian casualties also after March 1946. Indeed, most Chinese victims were probably killed after March 1946, for example in June of that year in Tanggerang, West Java, when local criminal gangs attacked, raped and killed Chinese people.[24] And in the second half of 1946, hundreds of Indonesian men, women and children were gruesomely murdered in extreme intra-Indonesian violence on South Sulawesi directed against persons who were (allegedly) pro-Dutch. These events were the reason for the deployment from 5 December 1946 of the Depot Special Forces (DST) under the leadership of Lieutenant – and later Captain – Westerling, which also resorted to extreme violence.[25]

Furthermore, Dutch, Indo-European, Moluccan and (allegedly) pro-Dutch Indonesian citizens remained targets of intimidation, assault and murder to a greater or lesser degree throughout the entire period 1946-1949. At certain moments – such as around the time of the first major Dutch military offensive (21 July to 5 August 1947) – the extreme Indonesian violence against these groups even increased exponentially.

Extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters on Java and Sumatra

The Netherlands did not recognize the independence that the Republic of Indonesia had declared on 17 August 1945, because it believed it was within its rights to take back control over its colony, and because it wanted to be in charge of the future of Indonesia. The Dutch East Indies authorities were not in Indonesia at the time of the Indonesian declaration of independence: the government-in-exile was still in Australia, and there were no Dutch military units. Most Dutch people on Java were in prisoner-of-war camps or civilian internment camps. The Indo-Europeans on Java had largely remained outside the camps; outside Java, Japan had interned members of this community.

Although the Japanese occupying forces had capitulated, they had received orders from the Allies to maintain public order and to ensure the safety of – and provide assistance to – Allied prisoners of war and interned civilians while awaiting their arrival. On Java, however, the Japanese army leadership decided to put themselves in self-internment in remote mountainous areas in order to avoid problems with the Allied army leadership. By contrast, on Sumatra the Japanese did not put themselves in self-internment and were therefore able to carry out their tasks. In the meantime, nationalist Indonesians were busy trying to shape their republic. A government was formed under the leadership of Sukarno, and a security organization, Badan Keamanan Rakyat, was established, while the state apparatus was being constructed and local nationalist committees were set up throughout the country. From the very beginning, there was a difference in approach between the pemuda, who pressed for more action, and the older nationalist leaders, who proceeded more cautiously.

It was in this context that the first Allied troops arrived. The arrival of the first British and British-Indian units and a limited number of Dutch soldiers and civil servants on Java (29 September 1945) and Sumatra (10 October 1945) was viewed with great suspicion by many Indonesians. They rightly feared that Dutch soldiers and civil servants of the NICA would prepare for the return of colonial rule and that the Netherlands would proceed with the reoccupation of the Indonesian archipelago. The Japanese and British were suspected of collaborating in this scheme, even though this was not always the case. The first KNIL units active on the island of Java contributed to the use of brute force against Indonesian civilians from the end of September/beginning of October 1945 by shooting at everything that seemed suspicious to them.[26] Reports in the Indonesian media about the heavy-handed tactics of the first KNIL units and armed civilians in Jakarta fuelled the suspicion that the Dutch were hiding behind the British troops and had come to reclaim possession of their former colony. In October 1945 and in the following months, many reports appeared in the Indonesian media about the robbery, torture and murder of Indonesians by 'NICA soldiers', who were sometimes accompanied by the Japanese.[27]

Given the circumstances, the pemuda in the various combat groups felt the need to acquire weapons. They tried to persuade Japanese units to hand over their weapons, when necessary by force. At the same time, the Japanese came under heavy Allied pressure to take tougher action against pemuda. From the end of September 1945, many incidents of violence took place be-

tween the two sides, with entire battles even being fought in October and November 1945.[28] This was accompanied by ruthless violence against Japanese civilians and captured Japanese soldiers in which hundreds of people were killed. In Sukabumi (West Java), immediately following Japan's capitulation, pemuda cut off the hands, arms, heads and legs of Japanese citizens.[29] As revenge for the deaths of their fellow fighters during the First Battle of Semarang (15-19 October 1945), pemuda pulled 86 virtually unarmed servicemen of the Japanese navy from a train near Cikampek and tortured them to death.[30]

One of the characteristics of the extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters in the early phase of the Indonesian Revolution was that it targeted different groups almost simultaneously and took place on different islands. At about the same time as the attacks on the Japanese, pemuda and other militias attacked Indo-European, Moluccan and Dutch civilians on Java and Sumatra. Indonesians and the Chinese also became victims, although, as mentioned earlier, most of the large-scale massacres of Chinese civilians took place after March 1946.[31] The murder of Dutch, Indo-European and Moluccan citizens in the Simpang country club in Surabaya (15 October 1945 and the following days) and in the residential neighbourhood of Indisch Bronbeek in Bandung (27 November 1945) are among the best-known examples of extreme violence in the Dutch and Anglo-Saxon historiography on the first phase of the Indonesian Revolution. The Simpang Club in Surabaya (East Java) had been the headquarters of the Pemuda Republik Indonesia (PRI) since 4 October 1945. Before the Japanese occupation, this country club was only accessible to white Dutch people; it was also the place where the arch-conservative political party De Vaderlandsche Club was founded in 1929. On 15 October, c. 3,300 Dutch men and boys were arrested in Surabaya and brought to the Kalisosok and Bubutan prisons. Some of the prisoners were assembled in the Simpang Club. The PRI wanted a tribunal to determine whether they were involved with the NICA. The situation quickly got out of hand. Impatient pemuda guards and residents of the surrounding *kampongs* gathered outside the Simpang Club and began to shout '*Merdeka*' and 'Death to the white people'.[32]

The Europeans who had been brought in were frisked by the pemuda. Those who had NICA money or a red-white-and-blue pin on them were murdered on the spot. According to eyewitnesses, they were first beaten and thereafter maimed and beheaded.[33] According to a witness statement from 1947, one of those present remembers seeing hunks of meat from severed



Mutilated body of an Indo-European woman in the Ancol canal in Jakarta, 1945. Source: Photographer unknown, NIMH.

limbs between which the wounded still lay.[34] Another witness recounted the women in the backyard of the Simpang Club who were tied to a tree and then stabbed with a bamboo runcing (sharp bamboo spear) in their genitals:

> The heartrending screams and the cringing body of the unfortunate woman only increased the executioners' fury. They stabbed the place in question in the lower body with their bamboo runcing until the unfortunate person gave up the ghost due to the injuries and the loss of blood.[35]

It is likely that somewhere between 40 and 50 Dutch and Indo-European prisoners were killed at the Simpang Club.[36]

In November 1945, the administrative city of Bandung (West Java) counted c. 60,000 Dutch and Indo-European refugees that had come to the city in the hopes of being protected by the British units that had arrived there on 17 October 1945. However, the units, comprised of more than 2,200 Gur-

khas from Nepal, had difficulty holding their own against the Indonesian attacks that were also directed at them: they were powerless in the face of the countless cases of looting, kidnapping and murders. In Bandung, Dutch and European refugees had found refuge in the residential area of Indisch Bronbeek where estates for retired KNIL soldiers were located. On 27 November 1945 at 10 a.m., pemuda pulled 33 people from their houses: four Dutch, one Menadonese woman and 28 Indo-Europeans:

> The people had to give their age, name and nationality. Young and old were separated. At 11 a.m., those between 15 and 50 years of age were brought to an unknown place. The next day at 10 a.m., two leaders came with six men to once again ask for the age of those between 50 and 60 years old. During this conversation, one pemuda came in with bloody clothes. He asked for a *klewang* [machete] and got one from the leader. He then left with eight of the men and the woman between the age of 50 and 60.[37]

In total, the pemuda brutally killed and maimed between 80 and 120 of these refugees, including many children and babies. They threw the bodies in a mass grave that was then covered. The British units, which had earlier been informed by a doctor about the impending slaughter, had not dared to intervene even though Indisch Bronbeek was only 400 metres from their post.[38] In the months that followed, various mass graves were found on the estate, including one with more than 80 Indo-European men, women and children.[39] On 20 December 1945, twelve bodies were found in a small ditch in West Bronbeek at a depth of around 80 centimetres. The hands had been tied behind the backs and the throats were almost completely slashed.[40] The KNIL and the Red Cross were given the task to identify the bodies where possible and to rebury them.

Attacks also took place elsewhere, but they are less well-known. We will therefore describe in more detail one of these lesser-known incidents which, according to the Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS), took place in Kuningan near Cirebon, West Java, on 14 October 1945. Armed with bambu runcings, axes and other weapons, a group of Indonesians who most likely belonged to the Islamic umbrella organization *Masyumi* and the socialist youth organization *Pesindo* attacked twelve Indo-Europeans who were supposed to be brought to Cirebon by the Republican police in order to be interned in a Republican camp. But before this occurred, they

were 'displayed on the *pasar* [market]', according to the NEFIS report. The Masyumi members then uttered the following words:

> Indo-Europeans are not to be trusted; they are responsible for the death of many Indonesians in Batavia and are the biggest enemy of the Indonesian people. Let us therefore take revenge.[41]

The Indo-Europeans were then attacked by 'the mob' with bludgeons and bladed weapons. Only a few of them reached the prison alive. The next day, Indonesian police picked up another eleven Indo-Europeans from Cilimus and other locations in the Kuningan area. According to the NEFIS report, 'the people' attacked these eleven along the way, not killing them immediately but first cutting off their hands and stabbing them with bambu runcings. Their bodies were then taken to the prison. The governor of the prison had the other prisoners dig a pit and throw all 23 victims into it. Those who were still alive were stoned to death or beaten with a shovel. Some would have been buried alive.[42]

In response to this Indonesian extreme violence, former KNIL soldiers of Indo-European, Moluccan, Menadonese and Dutch origin as well as youths in Jakarta and Bandung formed their own armed groups. According to historian Herman Bussemaker, patrolling militia groups that were part of the Dutch side rescued hundreds of Indo-European families in Jakarta.[43] But this was not the whole story. These militant groups not only offered protection, they also took revenge for the Indonesian extreme violence and tried to restore colonial authority. Sometimes they turned on their own initiative to extreme violence against Indonesian civilians too, often without any direct reason or as a pretext.[44]

Regular Dutch units were also guilty of extreme violence against Indonesian civilians. According to the British, there were so many shooting incidents in which KNIL soldiers were the first to open fire that on 15 October 1945, General Christison decided to remove all KNIL units from the centre of Jakarta and to concentrate them in the south of the city.[45] His colleague on Sumatra, Brigadier T.E.D. Kelly, took the same measure, disarming the police force of Lieutenant Raymond Westerling in Medan and banning them from the city because of their aggressive actions. Incidentally, Kelly also disarmed the Republican police in Medan when they increasingly began to target the Dutch and the protected encampments in the city.[46] British and British Indian soldiers were also both victims and perpetrators of

extreme violence. The burning down of villages and towns, the mistreatment and shooting of prisoners, and excessive technical force via the deployment of aircraft and artillery were routine measures and part of a strategy that was tolerated from above.[47] For the British, their mission in Indonesia was mainly a matter of survival and of taking as little risk as possible. Numerically they were vastly outnumbered, and they were overextended physically and psychologically by an unruly conflict that was not theirs. The ambushing and killing of British soldiers were followed by harsh reprisals which in turn triggered counterreactions on the Indonesian side, resulting in a vicious circle of extreme violence.

It was above all the Battle of Surabaya and the killing of 24 passengers on a British military aircraft in Bekasi, but also the large-scale fighting elsewhere, that led to a hardening of the British action and an approach focused on deterrence through violence.[48] During the intense battle for Semarang – occurring at the same moment as the battle of Surabaya – the British RAPWI officer Leland put it bluntly in a letter to his wife:

> We will try all we know to prevent useless bloodshed on either side, but the timehas [sic] come to take the glovesoff [sic] to a certain extent, and make the most of our very small forces by using a certain amount of 'terror tactics'. The shoot-up of yesterday [a bombardment by aircraft] and the odd *kampong* burning has, I am sure, been very economical in life of Indonesian civilians. The effect is tremendous. They are at present quite bewildered, and the cohesion has gone out of them.[49]

It is essential to bear in mind the fluid position of perpetrators and victims, because this contributed to the dynamics of extreme violence in the first phase of the Indonesian Revolution. After the capitulation, the Japanese were not only victims of extreme violence but also perpetrators. Over time, the number of clashes with Japanese troops increased, because pemuda tried to get hold of their weapons in order to fight against the British.[50] Through negotiations, bluff and with the help of potentially as many as 350 Japanese deserters, the TKR 'b' – a combat group affiliated with the TKR (People's Security Army) – and pemuda of the Pesindo in the vicinity of Medan and the rest of Sumatra's east coast were able to get hold of Japanese weapons on several occasions. The British troops' battles with Indonesians made the British commander Brigadier Kelly decide on 13 December 1945 to limit Allied operations to an area of 8.5 kilometres outside the city

limits of Medan and Belawan. Anyone carrying weapons within this area were to be shot immediately.[51] Until that point, the Japanese commanders had reacted relatively mildly to these types of actions. At the highest level, the Japanese commanders had made implicit or explicit agreements with the Republic of Indonesia that weapons would be handed over in order to prevent clashes. Even when one or two Japanese were killed, this formed no obstacle for the demotivated Japanese troops to turn over their weapons without a fight.[52] This changed in early December 1945. In the first ten days of that month, pemuda killed dozens of Japanese soldiers at various locations in Tebing Tinggi and surroundings. According to the Japanese liaison officer Takao Fusayama, the large number of Japanese victims – in particular the 60 killed in Tebing Tinggi – was the immediate cause of the large-scale Japanese retaliation on 13 December 1945 that resulted in hundreds, if not thousands, of Indonesian casualties.[53] They cut off the heads of about 60 Indonesians, which were then placed on poles alongside the road as a deterrent example.[54]

Around the same time as the extreme violence against European and Japanese civilians and captured fighters on Java and Sumatra, there was a settling of scores with local Indonesian officials, police officers and other representatives of the traditional elite in Banten and Pekalongan on Java, and somewhat later in Aceh (North Sumatra) and East Sumatra. They were humiliated, removed from office, driven out, kidnapped and sometimes murdered – by local coalitions of bandits, communists, pemuda, older nationalists and *ulama* (Islamic clerics) – out of anger over their cooperation with the Japanese regime and before that the Dutch colonial administration.[55] In the province of Sumatra Utara (North Sumatra), with Medan as its capital, there was much violence. After British and Dutch troops had occupied Medan, they exerted pressure on the *raja* (local Malaysian rulers) and sultans to cooperate, partly in view of the importance of the large plantations to the colonial economy. The weak, moderate leaders of the Republican movement could not prevent the major outbreak of violence in March 1946 by pemuda, nationalists and communists against the raja and sultans and their families. They were viewed as symbols of the oppression and collaboration. Hundreds of casualties resulted from this explosive violence. Non-Malaysians also took revenge on Malaysians because of the privileges they had enjoyed under the colonial system. With the help of three ministers of the national government who came over from Java, the regional Republican leaders were able to bring the situation under control

again. The ministers appealed to the more radical revolutionaries to give priority to the national revolution above the social revolution for the time being.[56] The interventions of the TKR in Banten and Pekalongan and the Republican authorities in eastern Sumatra ensured that the intra-Indonesian violence in these areas were brought somewhat under control. The arrest of the legendary communist politician Tan Malaka and several radical supporters on 17 March 1946 also strengthened the authority of the Republic of Indonesia.[57]

The events in the Pekalongan residency in Central Java are a good illustration of the concurrency and entanglement of the extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters in the early stages of the Indonesian Revolution. In Pekalongan, the revolutionary movement consisted of a coalition of pemuda and veterans of the nationalist and communist movement. Initially, Japanese soldiers were targeted when they were unwilling to hand over their weapons. After the Japanese left the region following negotiations, the extreme violence was directed against Indonesian administrators and Chinese, Indo-European, Moluccan and Menadonese citizens. From 8 October 1945, so-called *lenggaong* ('bandits') led actions against the established order. Within a few weeks they had ousted almost all local Indonesian officials – including the regent – from their positions and in some cases even killed them. The lenggaong also took the lead in anti-Chinese extreme violence: they set fire to Chinese shops and confiscated Chinese rice mills. Leaders of the pemuda organizations API, AMRI and AMRI-I were involved in the murder of more than 100 Indo-Europeans, Moluccans and Menadonese in the Pekalongan residency from 11 to 14 October 1945.[58]

In Balapulang, not far from Tegal, eighteen Europeans from four different families – including several children between the ages of two and fourteen – were tortured with bambu runcings, after which they received a blow with an iron rod. Those who were not yet dead were killed with bambu runcings. Two children were grabbed by the legs, hit against the wall of the well and thrown into it, onto the pile of corpses of the other victims. One of the children survived these atrocities.[59]

Extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters in Eastern Indonesia

In the approach to the bersiap period that has hitherto been common in the Dutch and Anglo-Saxon historiography, little or no attention has been

paid to the islands in Eastern Indonesia because the violence against Dutch, Indo-European, Moluccan and (allegedly) pro-Dutch Indonesian citizens was less extreme there. What factors contributed to the violence against these groups being much less extreme on these islands until mid-1946? Did the extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters on these islands involve other nationalities and/or ethnicities? And who was responsible for the violence? A study of the violence in Eastern Indonesia could reveal certain general patterns that may apply to the other islands as well.

The Allies were present in the east of the archipelago earlier than on Java and Sumatra. Some parts had already been recaptured by American and Australian troops during the war. In the other areas, with the exception of Bali, the Australians arrived relatively soon after the Japanese capitulation, although this occupation was initially limited to the larger cities. The first NICA units also arrived, together with the Allied troops and accompanied by KNIL soldiers, to take over the civil administration on islands in the eastern archipelago.[60]

On Java and Sumatra, the Australian troops not only arrived faster than the British, they were also numerically much stronger. At the time of the Japanese capitulation, there were already 50,000 men on Kalimantan. The British had only 24,000 soldiers on Java until 16 October, a number that later grew to about 65,000 including Sumatra.[61] Due to their rapid arrival and relative strength, the Australians were able to assemble and evacuate the former Allied prisoners of war and internees swiftly. They also did not have to call on Japanese troops to maintain order, unlike the British on Java and Sumatra. Moreover, the Japanese seem to have been more cooperative in the eastern part of the archipelago.[62] In addition, some parts of the eastern archipelago, such as the Moluccan Islands and the Minahasa peninsula of North Sulawesi, were predominantly Christian and thus oriented towards the Netherlands, and Indonesian nationalism was less developed there than on Java. This part of the archipelago therefore did not have any massive mobilization of Indonesian youths by the Japanese, as was the case on Java. While these self-aware and militant youths played an important role in the extreme violence on Java and Sumatra, they were far less numerous in the eastern archipelago.[63] As a result, there was in this region not only a weak representation of the nationalist movement, but also no existing potential for violence (with the exception of Bali and South Sulawesi).

These circumstances meant that, with the exception of Bali, the Japanese were not a significant factor in this region after 15 August 1945 and were only

involved to a very limited extent in violence against civilians or captured fighters, whether as perpetrators or as victims. In general, extreme violence against civilians or captured fighters in the eastern archipelago was more limited in scope than on Java and Sumatra. On Ambon and New Guinea, the Dutch were so dominant that there was hardly any Indonesian extreme violence against people who were pro-Dutch. The little extreme violence that did nonetheless take place there was committed by Dutch units and was mainly directed against pro-Republican Indonesians and interned Japanese.

On Ambon, one of the first actions taken by the returning Dutch officials was to remobilize former KNIL soldiers who had been in captivity. It was not long before these KNIL soldiers became involved in confrontations with Javanese and Madurese fellow soldiers; they also undertook retaliatory actions against interned Japanese soldiers and those who in their eyes had collaborated with the Japanese.[64] For example, some ex-KNIL soldiers who had been mistreated by the Japanese *Kempeitai* (military police) during the war went from the island of Saparua to the nearby island of Seram, attacking the Japanese there and disarming them. During the shootings that ensued, there were some fatalities.[65]

On New Guinea in the last months of 1945, tensions mounted in the capital Jayapura (then called Hollandia) between pro-Republican Javanese and pro-Dutch Menadonese KNIL soldiers following reports of the murder of Moluccan, Indo-European and Dutch civilians on Java.[66] When a large number of weapons were stolen from an army depot, rumours immediately circulated that the Javanese on the island were plotting to revolt on 15 December 1945. In response, on the night of 14 to 15 December, Menadonese KNIL soldiers arrested not only all the Javanese present but also those among the police who were considered untrustworthy by the Dutch. The Menadonese 'completely went off the rails during the operation', in the words of J.P.K. van Eechoud, the Senior Officer NICA (SONICA). During the arrests, nine people among the Javanese and the police officers were killed in so-called attempts to escape. Although an order had been given to fire if anyone tried to escape, Van Eechoud was of the opinion that the deaths could have been prevented if the soldiers had been calmer.

In South Sulawesi, where the Allied presence was less predominant and where resistance against the Dutch colonial administration traditionally existed, there were more casualties among civilians and captured fighters on both the Indonesian and Dutch sides than on Ambon and New Guinea. Compared to the other islands in the eastern part of Indonesia, there was

more armed resistance here against the restoration of Dutch authority in these first months of the Indonesian Revolution. From October 1945, a dynamic of mutual provocations and violence emerged in Makassar and its surroundings between on the one side Moluccan KNIL soldiers and on the other side pemuda and other Indonesians. Dozens of civilians were killed on both sides in various incidents. On 2 October 1945, the first such incident took place. In four different locations, a truck with Moluccan soldiers broke ranks and fired at groups of Indonesians wearing red and white pins. It is not known exactly how many were killed in this incident.[67] What followed became known as the 'Ambon Murder' or the '*pembalasan terhadap kekejaman* KNIL Ambon' ('retribution for the atrocities of the Ambonese KNIL').[68] On the night of 2 to 3 October 1945, pemuda and civilians from the Makassar area went to Ambonese kampongs with anything that could serve as a weapon and murdered dozens of Moluccan civilians, according to Indonesian sources. They made no distinction between Moluccans who were pro-Republican and those who were pro-Dutch. Relatives of fighters belonging to the Moluccan pro-Republican combat group *Kebaktian Rakyat Indonesia Maluku* (KRIM) were also murdered.[69] Australian troops managed to put an end to the massacres in the early morning. The tensions continued for several days and nights, during which there were probably more casualties.[70] On 13 and 15 October 1945, incidents took place again between Moluccan soldiers and pemuda.[71]

Major General Ivan Dougherty, the Australian commander in Makassar, evidently considered the Moluccans to be mainly responsible for the incidents of violence in Makassar, for on 16 October 1945 he ordered all KNIL soldiers to remain in their barracks until further notice.[72] Three days later, the Australian Commander-in-Chief General T.A. Blamey transferred the Moluccan soldiers to Balikpapan on Kalimantan. Blamey claimed to have seen with his own eyes during a walk how Moluccan soldiers had shot down Makassarese or Bugis who were busy picking coconuts from the trees.[73] As indicated earlier, British commanders in Jakarta and Medan took similar measures due to the provocative actions of KNIL units there.[74]

Dutch military and civilian authorities such as the civil servants G.J. Wohlhoff and H.J. Koerts acknowledged the need to 'moderate and bring [the Moluccans] under control'.[75] Colonel C. Giebel, a Dutch liaison officer at the Australian headquarters in Morotai, wrote in his memoirs that a number of KNIL officers were present at the beginning of October 1945, but that they were unable to 'keep in check' the Moluccan soldiers who were out for

revenge.[76] He did point out that these officers were 'extremely handicapped' by their captivity on Kalimantan and were unable to exercise authority over their men.[77]

The heavy-handed tactics of these Moluccan KNIL soldiers – as well as the actions of their European colleagues who were present in the archipelago at the time – can partly be explained by the fact that they stemmed from a long colonial-military tradition aimed at intimidating the Indonesian population with a great deal of violence and show of force. It was only in this way that the relatively small KNIL, together with a police force that was likewise modest in size, could keep millions of Indonesians under control. Extreme violence against belligerents and the population was a structural component of colonial warfare and law enforcement in Indonesia even before 1942.[78]

Other circumstances may also have contributed to the heavy-handed approach by KNIL units in the first months of the Indonesian Revolution. After three and a half years of Japanese captivity, the KNIL soldiers were often mentally and physically exhausted, but the Dutch army command nevertheless immediately deployed them. Fears that KNIL soldiers may have had about the fate of their families may have also played a role, as well as feelings of revenge among those whose relatives had been murdered.[79]

The extreme violence in South Sulawesi by soldiers on the Dutch side – which can be seen as an aspect that was characteristic of the culture of the colonial armed forces – had a counterpart on the Indonesian side. The Republican leaders tolerated the violence or were unable to curb it. After the failed attack on Makassar by pemuda at the end of October 1945, the armed Republican resistance fled to Java and to the rural areas of Sulawesi. Outside Makassar, the situation remained precarious. Because the Republican resistance was poorly armed, it focused mainly on civilians, including pro-Dutch Indonesians.[80] On 26 January 1946, a local pemuda group in the Surutanga district near Palopo murdered eleven Indonesians accused of being NICA accomplices.[81] In the second half of 1946, there was extreme intra-Indonesian violence in South Sulawesi against people who were (allegedly) pro-Dutch, with hundreds of men and women but also children being murdered, often in the most gruesome manner. As mentioned, this situation led to the deployment of Westerling and his Depot Special Forces.[82]

To sum up, we can state that on the islands where the Allies prevailed, such as on Ambon and New Guinea, the extreme violence was primarily by soldiers on the Dutch side against pro-Republican civilians. There was little or no violence against Indo-European, Moluccan and Dutch civilians.

Where no party was dominant, such as in South Sulawesi, the extreme violence went in both directions: KNIL soldiers against Indonesian civilians, and Indonesian fighters against Moluccan civilians.

Perpetrators and organization of extreme violence on the Indonesian side

An important question is who should be held responsible for the Indonesian extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters — in particular against Moluccan, Menadonese, Indo-European and Dutch citizens in the first phase of the Indonesian Revolution. Who were the perpetrators, and to what extent were the murders organized? Contemporary sources regularly refer to Indonesian perpetrators in very general terms. For example, the Australian units that were active on Sulawesi often mentioned the 'Free Indonesian Movement' (or its members) in their reports.[83] In Dutch newspapers in Indonesia such as *Het Dagblad*, Indonesian perpetrators were often referred to in general terms such as 'extremists' or '*pemoeda's*'/'*pamoeda's*'.[84]

The most detailed information available to us comes from interrogations and reports by the Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS). These sources are clearly biased, given that they were prepared by a Dutch intelligence service, and should therefore be interpreted with great caution. No representative or quantitative statements can thus be made on this basis. What becomes evident from studying the NEFIS reports is that the vast majority of the alleged perpetrators were Indonesian men. Their backgrounds were very diverse: from *soto* seller, *wajang* player and hairdresser to village head or *lurah*, or another type of chief.[85]

The number of perpetrators who were part of an organization was small, according to the NEFIS reports. When an organization was mentioned, in most cases it was the *Pemuda Republik Indonesia* (PRI) and the Republican police.[86] We must ask ourselves whether NEFIS had a good understanding of how organized the perpetrators were and to what extent it had an interest in painting a certain picture of this. In a few cases, NEFIS mentioned the Badan Keamanan Rakyat, the forerunner of the Indonesian army *Tentara Keamanan Rakyat* (TKR) – for example when eighteen Europeans in Cibatu (West Java) were murdered by members of the BKR led by Ambas, *kepala* (head) of the BKR department in Cibatu.[87] The stance taken by the local branches of the BKR varied greatly. According to a Dutch eyewitness, the local BKR unit in Garut (West Java) in fact protected Indo-European and Dutch citizens from the violence of 'leaderless gangs'.[88]

To what extent were the killings coordinated, either at the national, regional or local level? Given that the murders started at about the same time on Java, Sumatra and Sulawesi – in the first and second week of October 1945 – this might indicate a certain degree of coordination. But thus far, no evidence has been found of a central order to engage in murder in this period,[89] and it is also rather unlikely that this happened. It has been persuasively argued in both the academic literature and in contemporary sources that the extreme violence against civilians and imprisoned fighters was not in the interest of the Republican government. The newly formed government wanted to show the Allies and the rest of the world that the Republic was capable of maintaining order and effectively governing the country. For example, by interning (Indo-)Europeans, President Sukarno wanted to prevent the deaths of thousands of them, which would have damaged the international reputation of the Republic, according to researcher Mary van Delden.[90] The government hoped in this way to gain international recognition. The extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters that nonetheless occurred obviously did nothing to help this endeavour.[91]

On several occasions, President Sukarno and Vice President Hatta publicly called on Indonesians not to use violence and not to take the law into their own hands. On 30 October 1945, for example, a statement from the government appeared in the daily *Merdeka* calling on the Indonesian people to exercise discipline because arbitrary action would only lead to anarchy and harm the cause of the Republic.[92] Sutan Sjahrir, prime minister of the Republic from 14 November 1945, also disapproved of the murders. In his pamphlet *Perdjuangan kita* [Our Struggle], published on 10 November 1945, he wrote that the enthusiastic actions of young men provided momentum on the one hand, but on the other hand worked to the disadvantage of the Republic. 'This is the case, for example, with incitement and hostile acts towards foreigners that weaken our position in the eyes of the world,' wrote Sjahrir.[93]

These statements could, of course, be dismissed as attempts to make a good impression on the outside world. But minutes of the Indonesian Council of Ministers confiscated by the Dutch reveal that even behind closed doors, Sjahrir and his ministers emphasized the need to avoid confrontations with the Allies. They recognized, however, the difficulty of keeping the revolutionaries in check.[94]

At the same time, the Republican leaders did seem to react somewhat ambiguously to the extreme violence against civilians and captured fight-



ers, which they quite possibly tolerated in order to maintain good relations with more radical groups. They may also have used it as a means of exerting pressure in negotiations, as when Sukarno and Hatta warned – in letters to the British commanders Christison (9 October 1945) and King (11 October 1945) – that the violence by Indonesian youths against Indo-Europeans and the Dutch could only be prevented by taking certain measures.[95] In his letter to Christison, Sukarno laid out a number of minimum requirements to prevent bloodshed, including Allied recognition of his government as the *de facto* government of the Indonesian Republic.[96] Hatta pointed out that emotions were running high due to Dutch provocations:

> One of these days, some foolish Indonesian youths will start hitting back at the Dutch, the trouble will soon spread throughout the city, and in a short while we will be in big trouble. This I want to avoid. If I may make a suggestion, would it not be better for the time being to restrain all activities of Dutch soldiers?[97]

The possibility cannot be ruled out that some authorities were involved in the encouragement of extreme violence, for example via the radio. In October 1945, General Sudirman, the commander of the Indonesian Army, helped the journalist Sutomo set up his Radio Pemberontakan Rakyat. Sutomo became known as 'Bung Tomo' and gained widespread fame through his fierce radio speeches calling on Indonesians to fight against the British and the Dutch.[98]

At the local level, Indonesian authorities sometimes tolerated the extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters. Zainul Sabaruddin, for example, formed a unit of the military police, *Polisi Tentara Keamanan Rakyat*, in the East Javanese city of Sidoarjo in early October 1945. Within weeks, the unit had acquired such a reputation for sadism and bloodlust that no Indonesian authority had the courage or the means to deal with Sabaruddin. But he was initially also tolerated because his ruthlessness, and the fact that he had one of the best armed and equipped groups in East Java, made him a useful tool for leaders and commanders who wanted to strengthen their position of power. For example, Sabaruddin developed a

This man, the 'killer of Tjibatoe', was suspected of killing 24 European citizens in late 1945. His arrest took place in Wanaraja, West Java, on 5 November 1947. He is being guarded by a KNIL soldier. Source: Photographer unknown, NIMH.

close relationship with the young aristocrat Raden Mas Yonosewoyo, commander of a TKR unit in Surabaya, who deployed him to eliminate military rivals.[99]

In addition, there are indications in the Dutch sources that at the local level on the Indonesian side, aspects of the extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters were organized to a certain degree. In its reports, NEFIS sometimes referred to a *markas* (command post) where the victims were taken or to an order from a markas to go to a certain *kampong*, without it always being immediately clear whether this was actually a command post, to which organization this post belonged, or who had given the order.[100]

There were also other cases in which an order to murder Dutch and Indo-Europeans was explicitly mentioned. In Semarang, the local leader of the pemuda organization Angkatan Muda – most likely Angkatan Muda Republik Indonesia – gave the order to murder the family of the pharmacist Flohr (mother, son and three daughters). The order was carried out on 19 November 1945. The four women were raped, after which two of the women and the boy were shot and then killed with a golok (machete); the other two women were shot dead. The corpses were thrown into a well, after which the well was filled with earth.[101] It is, of course, entirely possible that during his interrogation the perpetrator wanted to shift responsibility away from himself by referring to an assignment.

However, there were also instances of pemuda or other Indonesians spontaneously turning to extreme violence against civilians. In Surabaya, the image of armed Indonesians sealing off European neighbourhoods and taking frightened, helpless Dutch people to prison in trucks provoked a spontaneous, violent action among the inhabitants of the surrounding kampongs. Armed with bamboo spears, knives and a single rifle, the kampong residents managed to force the *Pemuda Republik Indonesia* (PRI) guards at the Kalisosok (Werfstraat) prison to hand over the prisoners to them. Most of the prisoners were killed or injured while trying to reach the prison.[102]

Mainly on the basis of sources from the Dutch intelligence service, it is possible to make a statement – albeit a qualified one – about who was responsible for the extreme violence in the first phase of the Indonesian Revolution: we can conclude that most Indonesian perpetrators do not seem to have been affiliated with a national or regional organization, even if they did sometimes act in groups. Furthermore, the extreme violence does not seem to have been centrally controlled, but at times the massacres were coordinated at the local level. Finally, it is plausible that the national

and regional authorities sometimes tolerated the violence to a greater or lesser extent.

Estimated number of casualties among civilians and captured fighters

Determining how many civilians and captured fighters died as a result of the extreme violence in the earliest period of the Indonesian Revolution is complicated for several reasons. The registration of deaths was deeply flawed, as is often the case in wartime situations. The administrative apparatus of the Republic of Indonesia was still being established, while the government bodies on the Dutch side were only slowly returning, among them the Deceased Persons Investigation Service (Opsporingsdienst Overledenen, ODO) that was created in December 1945. The number of fatalities was, moreover, better documented for the one population group than the other. For example, the total number of Japanese and British deaths can be determined fairly accurately, although the number of captured and unarmed soldiers who were killed is difficult to determine. But hardly any research has been conducted on the Indonesian and Chinese victims. More information is available about the victims on the Dutch side.

Between 1945 and 1949, there were already estimates circulating of the number of victims on the Dutch side during the first months of the Indonesian Revolution. What seems to have been the first estimate dates from 6 December 1947. A code telegram from the Far East Directorate in Jakarta to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague reads: 'The number of Dutch people who have been murdered by the extremists since August 1945 is 3,500; 3,400 of these are known by name. Information on other nationalities will follow as soon as possible.'[103] This telegram was probably the source of the first estimate in the historiography, namely in the twelfth volume of *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, for long the standard reference work on the history of the Kingdom of the Netherlands during the Second World War, written by Loe de Jong and published in 1988.[104]

In the decades since the publication of De Jong's book, estimates of the number of civilians on the Dutch side who were murdered during the first months of the Indonesian Revolution have risen sharply, both in scientific publications and in the public debate. In his standard work *Bersiap! Opstand in het paradijs. De Bersiap-periode op Java en Sumatra 1945-1946* [Bersiap! Rebellion in paradise. The bersiap period on Java and Sumatra 1945-1946],

published in 2005, Herman Bussemaker wrote that estimates of victims on the Dutch side have ranged from 3,500 to 20,000. He himself was inclined to assume the highest number, without providing substantiation for this.[105] A few years later, Bussemaker explained that he had added to the 3,500 victims documented by the ODO an estimated 14,000 abductees and missing persons, plus an excess mortality of 2,500 people in post-war Indonesian internment camps.[106]

In the years that followed, higher estimates became more and more common – in some cases because possibly Moluccans, Menadonese and Timorese were also included in the total. In a 2008 article, the Australian historian Robert Cribb wrote that the total number of deaths may have been 25,000: about 5,000 recorded deaths and an estimated 20,000 Indo-Europeans who had been registered missing by the time Dutch authorities were able to compile files. He did, however, acknowledge the possibility that many of the missing had actually survived the bersiap period.[107]

Four years later, the American historian William H. Frederick came up with even higher numbers: 25,000 to 30,000 Dutch and Indo-Europeans had been killed in the years 1945 to 1949 on Java and Sumatra alone. This number is likely to have included Moluccans, Menadonese and Timorese. Frederick also chose a longer time period than we did – until 1949; he even distinguished a 'second bersiap', namely during the first Dutch military offensive in July 1947.[108] Upon closer examination, many of these abovementioned estimates turn out to be based on extrapolations or unclear and unreliable sources, as the historians Jeroen Kemperman and Bert Immerzeel have convincingly demonstrated.[109]

This is the first study that has conducted in-depth research on the number of victims. We are aware that these data are not complete. In addition, it is important to consider who compiled the lists, and when and for what purpose. The most complete list of victims on the Dutch side who died during the Second World War and subsequent violent conflicts – including the war of independence – is kept up to date by the War Graves Foundation.[110] We used these data as the starting point and then compared and supplemented this with information about victims from the retired Colonel Jan Willem de Leeuw's list, the reports of the Deceased Persons Investigation Service in the National Archives and NIOD, other lists from Dutch archives and newspapers, and the files in the archives of the Pelita Foundation.

Our comparative research resulted in a total of 3,723 registered victims for the period between 17 August 1945 and 31 March 1946, of whom we can state

with certainty that 1,344 died due to violence. The number 3,723 is fairly similar to the first estimate of 3,500 given in 1947, although the latter number was limited to Dutch victims, which also included Indo-Europeans. The number of victims we established includes 226 Moluccans, 48 Chinese, 93 Menadonese, 15 Timorese and 168 Indonesians.

The number 3,723 is a minimum estimate, since in wartime it is impossible to register every death. To this we should add the official number of 2,000 missing persons registered by the ODO in December 1949, even though a missing person does not necessarily equal a death. Nevertheless, if we assume that all of the missing were killed, and we count the more than 125 people who died, who were found in the sources used but whose date of death is unknown, and who therefore cannot be included as victims, then the estimated number of fatalities on the Dutch side (civilians and soldiers) in the period 17 August 1945 to 31 March 1946 would amount to almost 6,000. There is no reason to believe that the number of deaths was much higher, and it certainly would not have reached the figure of 20,000 to 30,000 deaths mentioned by Cribb and Frederick.

It is much more difficult to determine the number of civilians and captured fighters killed among the other nationalities and population groups in Indonesia in the early phase of the revolution. We know that until the end of November 1945, 58 civilians in military service and 235 civilians died on the Japanese side, more than the number of soldiers killed in the same period (231). It is unknown how many of the killed soldiers had been taken captive.[111] A total of 1,057 Japanese soldiers died on Java between 15 August 1945 and June 1946. How many of them had been held captive at the time of their deaths is unknown.[112]

Until their departure from the archipelago, the British counted 620 British and British-Indian fatalities and 402 missing on Java and Sumatra. The figure of 620 deaths is probably a lower limit, as there is a good chance that the missing persons died, but they were not found or identified. Again, it is not known how many of them were held captive when they became the victims of extreme violence.[113] A conservative estimate of the number of Chinese civilian casualties as a result of Indonesian extreme violence between 1945 and 1949 is 10,000 victims in Java alone; of these, it is unknown how many were killed in the period between 17 August 1945 and the end of March 1946. Most of the casualties probably occurred much later, sometime around the two Dutch military offensives.[114]

There are no well-substantiated estimates of the number of Indonesian casualties in the first months of the war of independence, let alone for the number of Indonesians who did not actively participate in the struggle. What applies to the first months also applies to the war as a whole: it is not possi-

ble to say with any certainty how many Indonesians were killed by Dutch or by intra-Indonesian violence. The only serious indication dates from 2017, when a substantiated estimate of the number of Indonesians killed over the entire period between 1945 and 1949 was published for the first time. This estimate was made on the basis of 'enemy losses' reported in the Dutch armed forces' periodic operation overviews and therefore does not include the deaths resulting from intra-Indonesian violence. The number of 97,421 deaths – an estimate, despite the suggestion of precision – was most likely a minimum estimate, according to the authors. It proved impossible to distinguish between civilians and captured fighters for this estimate.[115]

Although the periodic overviews for the period September 1945 to March 1946 are not complete, the extant overviews allow us to deduce that in this period at least 1,622 Indonesians were killed due to military violence by the Dutch in the entire archipelago. Here as well, it remains unclear how many of these were captured fighters or civilians.[116] There were, in addition, the many victims of British violence. During the Battle of Surabaya alone (from 10 to 29 November 1945), thousands of Indonesians died. In this case, too, it is impossible to find out how many of the fatalities were active fighters, if only because tens of thousands of (rudimentarily) armed Indonesian civilians fought in that battle.[117] Finally, the number of victims of intra-Indonesian violence cannot even be approximated.[118]

Explanations for the violence

The question of the motives of the perpetrators of violence during the Indonesian Revolution is a particularly complex one. The underlying motives for the use of extreme violence in the first phase of the revolution are difficult to determine because many individual perpetrators are not included in the source material, and they are the key to a better understanding of the acts of violence. If we take the foregoing into account, it becomes extremely difficult to make general statements about the motives for the violence in the first phase of the revolution. But refraining from providing possible explanations is unsatisfying. Because the emphasis in this chapter is on (extreme) violence by Indonesians against the Dutch, Indo-Europeans and Moluccans, the focus here will be mainly on the specific motives behind the Indonesian violence against these groups. In proceeding, we are aware of two extra complicating factors: first, we can hardly expect loosely organized combat groups in times of war to leave behind sources that reveal the motives for their actions. Furthermore, vi-

olent criminal activities were sometimes carried out under the guise of the Indonesian struggle for freedom, which makes our picture – which was already diffuse – even more opaque. Apart from these caveats, we can state that extreme violence on the Indonesian side was directed against persons who had turned their backs on Indonesian independence or at least appeared to do so – due to an (alleged) desire to return to colonial Dutch rule – or against persons who did not want to – or appear to want to – join the side of the Republic of Indonesia. We would like to offer three possible explanations for this.

First, anticolonial and political feelings and ideas merged to create a motive for the use of extreme violence.[119] Because the Indonesian nation did not yet exist, this meant that becoming free also meant becoming Indonesian.[120] The politicization and militarization that took place during the Japanese occupation had been directed mainly at the younger generation. For Indonesian youths, defending Indonesian independence by force of arms was a way of ensuring that they could shape their own future. The political, anti-colonial motive can be interpreted as a reaction to and a reckoning with the repressive colonial Dutch policy as well as the Japanese occupation policy. Although Europeans and Asians changed places in terms of their position at the top of the social hierarchy under the Dutch and the Japanese ruler, both systems can be considered segregated societies that were based on oppression and racism.[121] The Indonesian Revolution aimed to put an end to this: revolutionary groups felt a radical compulsion, as it were, for a 'total cleansing', whereby the 'cleansing violence' was considered a necessary prelude to peace and prosperity.[122] The expulsion of the European and Japanese rulers and their Indonesian collaborators was meant to pave the way for a new society. Groups organized on a nationalist, socialist, communist or religious basis interpreted this in their own way. This subsequently led to tensions and violence between these groups.

In addition to political, anti-colonial motives, there were also economic and social motives. Poverty, unemployment, inadequate education and limited future prospects – in many ways a consequence of the colonial system, but also the Japanese occupation – galvanized people to take up arms against wealthier people and the privileged belonging to the upper layer of colonial society. Often these acts of violence were committed and justified under the banner of Indonesian independence.

Third, there are explanations that can be classified as opportunistic motives for violence, both at the collective level and the individual level. Rival

gangs, part of a culture of *djagos* – literally ruffs – that were traditionally present in Javanese society, were given free rein to develop or further expand their criminal activities.[123] Their familiarity with violence meant that gangs became an appealing partner in the independence struggle, while participating in the violence was a way for criminals with political ambitions to obtain legitimate positions. Moreover, the absence of a normal power apparatus led to the principle of 'might makes right' and impunity.[124] And under the guise of defending Indonesian sovereignty, violence took place that was motivated by revenge, envy, sadism and other personal motives. Sometimes perpetrators ended up becoming intoxicated by the violence. This meant that what originally began as anticolonial and politically motivated violence intermingled with other motives for violence. For the extreme violence in the first phase of the Indonesian Revolution, both deep-seated factors and the short-lived momentum immediately after the Japanese capitulation are relevant. The deeper factors include the resistance to being dominated by external powers: the protracted Dutch colonial system followed by the Japanese occupation. The short-lived momentum immediately after 15 August 1945 ushered in an extremely tense situation for several months in which the Republic of Indonesia grabbed the opportunity to declare independence and various combat groups went to extremes to achieve and defend that goal. An inherent feature of any revolution is that the absence of a legal and accepted authority can lead to chaos and violence.[125] This amalgam led to an extremely violent situation in which there was undirected and arbitrary violence that caused many civilian casualties.

The discovery (or rediscovery) of *bersiap*

When in early 1946 it slowly but surely started to become clear in the Netherlands – through letters and reports in newspapers and magazines – what kinds of atrocities had taken place in that first phase of the revolution, Dutch people with relatives and friends in Indonesia as well as Dutch soldiers and a number of conservative politicians used this fact as an argument to deploy weapons.[126] But their efforts were unnecessary: the Dutch government was planning to send troops to Indonesia anyway, first and foremost to liberate the archipelago from the Japanese occupying forces. The first plans for this reoccupation were made already in December 1942.[127] The aim of Dutch policy was to give the impression to both the Dutch and the Indonesians

that the Netherlands was working with Indonesia to rebuild the country. The idea was therefore originally to respond calmly to the Republic of Indonesia and to acts of violence by combat groups. The Netherlands also wanted to come across as reasonable in the international arena, and violence during the early phase of the Indonesian Revolution did not fit into this picture, regardless of which side perpetrated it.

When the Dutch troops arrived, the military intelligence justified the presence of the troops with the argument that they were there to help the 'well-meaning citizens'. This fit into a broader and more general discourse that posited that the Dutch soldiers had to act against a small group of 'malicious Indonesians' in order to restore 'order and peace'. The military intelligence, the government information service and the media focused

Young men and women, fighters of Laskar Rakyat (people's militias), show they are willing to defend Indonesian independence, 1945. Source: Photographer unknown, ANRI/IPPHOS.



in this regard on the countless arbitrary acts of violence committed by individual 'rampokkers', 'peloppers' and 'extremists' in uncoordinated actions.

References to 'bersiap' at the end of the war period can be found in warnings against a further escalation or repetition of the early violence – for example, a possible 'new bersiap' or a 'second bersiap'.[128] Dutch troops played little or no role in curbing the violence in the first phase of the revolution or in bringing the interned Indo-Europeans and Dutch to safety. Most of the Dutch troops started arriving in Indonesia only from March 1946, the moment that the extreme violence in the first months after the declaration of Indonesian independence had essentially come to an end.

Even after 1950, there were for decades almost no references in the public domain to the violence in the first phase of the Indonesian Revolution. This situation only changed after 1980 – and in particular between 1990 and 2010 – when many veterans began to publish their memoirs of the war in Indonesia and a public culture of remembrance developed in the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities as well. They often interpreted the earliest phase of the Indonesian Revolution as a traumatic tail end to an equally traumatic experience in a Japanese internment camp. Such publications after 1980s are indicative of a 'retirement effect': these veterans' working lives were behind them, and any children they might have had were now adults and had moved out of the family home. They now had the time to reflect on their lives. Another factor that played a role was the Dutch policy towards veterans and the establishment of a number of veterans' organizations as well as (self-help) organizations that the East Indian and Moluccan communities themselves had founded in the late 1980s and early 1990s. In these memoirs, written much later, the extreme violence from the first months of the Indonesian Revolution under the label 'bersiap' is frequently mentioned and explicitly presented as a justification for the presence of the Dutch army to 'restore order and peace in Indonesia'.[129] It was in this way that the bersiap period was rediscovered in the public domain and gradually assumed an increasingly prominent role there.

Conclusions

Characteristic of the extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters in the earliest phase of the Indonesian Revolution was its concurrency and the way it involved different nationalities and communities. The organizing principle behind the Indonesian violence against civilians and fighters was

that it targeted anyone who seemed to advocate a return to Dutch colonial rule or who appeared to stand in the way of defending the independence of the Republic of Indonesia. This meant that any community could be affected: Indonesians, Indo-Europeans, Moluccans, Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, British, British Indians and others. It also meant that no one was exempt from the violence on the basis of gender, age, legal position, ethnicity, status, religion, education or profession. The violence was ruthless and indiscriminate, even affecting children and babies, who could not possibly have been held responsible for colonial policy. What also took place was Indonesian violence that can be related only indirectly – or not at all – to anticolonial and political reasons for breaking free from the external domination by the Netherlands and Japan, but instead stemmed from economic-social factors and opportunistic motives that were criminal or otherwise. The Japanese, the British and the Dutch also contributed to the dynamic set in motion by the events through the deployment of extreme violence against Indonesian civilians. The foregoing necessitates a reconsideration of the interpretation of the term 'bersiap period' as a period of extreme violence that was largely based on ethnic origin and therefore mainly directed against Indo-Europeans, Dutch and Moluccans. The extreme violence against these groups cannot be seen as an isolated phenomenon, nor can it be considered separate from the broader colonial and at the same time revolutionary context in which these acts of violence took place. They must be seen as part of a much larger deployment of violence that also caused large numbers of victims among other groups.

It is possible to discern a pattern in the extreme violence, a pattern that applies to both the Republican and the Dutch military and civilian authorities: both sides often had great difficulty controlling the extreme violence of the pemuda and some KNIL units, respectively, thus raising the question of whether they really tried to restrain them. Both sides thereby contributed to the extreme violence against civilians and fighters, although the extreme violence by the Dutch side in this early phase of the Indonesian Revolution seems to have been more limited in scope. Local circumstances tended to determine who the extreme violence was directed against. In areas where the Allies prevailed, such as on Ambon and New Guinea, we find extreme violence being used primarily by the Dutch side against pro-Republican Indonesians. On the islands where multiple parties and groupings fought each other for power and there was no one dominant party, such as on Java, Sumatra and South Sulawesi, the extreme violence came from several quar-

ters and was aimed at multiple groups: Indonesians against Indonesians, Indo-European, Dutch, British, Moluccans and the Japanese. But the reverse also occurred: extreme violence by the British, the Japanese, the Dutch, the Indo-Europeans and the Moluccans against Indonesian civilians and captured fighters.

We have a limited picture (as yet) of the perpetrators of the extreme Indonesian violence.[130] The number of perpetrators affiliated with organizations in this early period appears to have been small, at least on the basis of reports by the Dutch intelligence service NEFIS. No hard evidence has yet been found that the extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters in the early phase of the Indonesian Revolution was commanded or coordinated at the national level by the government of the Republic of Indonesia. This is also unlikely, because it ran counter to the desire of Republican leaders to obtain international recognition. They wanted to show the Allies and the rest of the world that the Republic was perfectly capable of maintaining order and effectively governing the country. At the same time, it is not implausible that they may have sometimes tolerated extreme violence in order to maintain friendly relations with more radical groups or to use it as a means of exerting pressure in order to achieve their political wishes. At the local level, there seems to have been some coordination of the extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters.

One of the motives of the Indonesian revolutionary fighters relates to the social status of possible targets, in this case those from the upper and middle layers of the colonial social order. This status was in some cases intertwined with and based on ethnicity. Anticolonial and political feelings and ideas came together as a motive for the use of extreme violence against those who represented colonial rule, those who advocated (or seemed to advocate) a return to the colonial system, and those who threatened Indonesia's independence or were suspected of threatening it – whether this was true or not.

The period from autumn 1945 to spring 1946 should not be regarded as an isolated epoch in historical terms, but as the first or earliest phase in the struggle for Indonesian independence and thus as part of the Indonesian Revolution. Moreover, the Indonesian historiography and Indonesian society do not seem to impart much significance to bersiap as a separate period. Nonetheless, for the first generation of Indo-Europeans, Dutch and Moluccans, the battle cry 'bersiap' understandably still evokes harmful and traumatizing memories. The effect of this is sometimes still visible in later

generations, and its impact on the Dutch historiography and society has increased over the decades.

At the same time, it should be noted that the extreme violence in this period was not the main reason for the Netherlands to deploy troops in Indonesia. The Dutch government wanted to restore colonial rule in Indonesia for other reasons – such as prestige and the economy – in order to set in motion a process of decolonization under Dutch auspices. From the 1980s and 1990s, 'bersiap' gradually began to acquire the connotation of conscious actions by Indonesians that were purportedly aimed at a clearly defined target group: Indo-Europeans, Moluccans and the Dutch. The 'bersiap period' can thus be found multiple times in the memoirs of veterans, as a retrospective justification for the deployment of Dutch troops in Indonesia and the use of violence by the Dutch side against Indonesians.


FREEDOM
FOR
ALL NATION

2.

Revolutionary worlds

Legitimacy, violence and loyalty during the Indonesian War of Independence

Roel Frakking and Martijn Eickhoff[1]

Wolter Mongisidi, a prominent resistance leader in South Sulawesi, distributed a pamphlet in 1946 in which he explained, roughly a year after Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta's proclamation of independence, how much the Dutch reoccupation of the Indonesian archipelago had spurred Indonesians to action. Indonesians 'are still seriously wounded', Mongisidi wrote. 'The Japanese occupation brought even more pain! And now the Dutch NICA are rubbing a wound that was already very serious!' That wound could be understood quite literally: soldiers from the Dutch army and the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger, KNIL) electrocuted, stabbed, beat and murdered so brutally – 'beyond the tortures' of the Japanese – that they drove many Indonesians onto the path to revolution. '[Not] a single force' could stop the Indonesian people, Mongisidi decided, now that the Netherlands was weakened and the Republic was getting stronger and stronger.[2] If we go by Mongisidi's words, the Re-

Protest slogan for independence: 'Freedom for all nations', Cas Oorthuys Jan-Feb 1947.

Source: Nederlands Fotomuseum.

public and its representatives could count on support at any time, anywhere – for all Indonesians supported the revolution and the war against the Netherlands from the outset. The reality, however, was considerably more complicated.

The image that Mongidisi sketched in 1946 lives on to this day in the public culture of remembrance in Indonesia. This is also the case in the Netherlands, where the image of one war – against the Republic and its army – has lingered. As stated above, though, the reality was rather more complex. Not only were there, in addition to the Republic and its army, many other combat groups involved in the war, but the Indonesian Revolution was also multifaceted in itself, with political, religious, social and regional differences being fought out partly by force, sometimes in parallel with the war against the Netherlands and sometimes as a part of it. These developments and their consequences are best studied at the local and regional level, which also opens up other perspectives – the perspectives of social movements, local communities and individual citizens, with their own ideals and fears, in situations where strategic and sometimes existential choices were unavoidable.

Revolutionary worlds

In order to investigate the plurality of the Indonesian War of Independence, the *Regional Studies* project was set up: a collaboration between Indonesian and Dutch historians enabling an exchange of knowledge and historiographical perspectives by means of workshops and discussion meetings, including one on terminology. In some cases, researchers from other projects were involved as well.

The explicit aim of the project was not to systematically compare different regions or the Dutch and Indonesian use of violence, but rather to reveal the layered nature and complexity of the developments. In the course of the research, the title that connected all the different themes emerged: 'Revolutionary worlds', as a reference to the myriad experiential worlds, collective but also individual, local and national, organized and disorganized – worlds populated and inspired by diverse groups and individuals in Indonesian society, in a time of major and sweeping changes, all with their own interests, views, expectations and ideals. In order to be able to show something of these worlds, we chose to work with case studies that focus on various themes and aspects in different regions: West, Central and East Java; South Sulawesi; Bali; and North and West Sumatra. We believe this paints

a good picture of the revolution as a complex of divergent processes and realities, which, although intertwined, were nevertheless shaped by different actors in different ways.

In this chapter we want to provide an impression of the findings of this joint project and thereby to touch on the different regions and themes from the sub-projects, in more or less extensive form, as illustrations. It does not lie within the scope of this chapter to provide a complete picture of all the contributions; these can be found in the collection *Revolutionary Worlds. Local Perspectives and Dynamics during the Indonesian Independence War, 1945-1949*, edited by Bambang Purwanto, Abdul Wahid, Yulianti, Ireen Hoogenboom, Martijn Eickhoff and Roel Frakking.[3]

This is not the first time that developments in the years since 1945 have been viewed from a regional perspective. One groundbreaking study in this regard was *Regional Dynamics of the Indonesian Revolution* from 1986, edited by Audrey Kahin. The focus was not, as is usually the case, on the centre of power – Java – but on revolutionary movements in other regions and the question of how the national revolution in different regions took on a form of its own, a process that was described by a critical Taufik Abdullah during a seminar in the late 1980s as a 'franchise model'.[4] The insight that in these revolutionary years there were different, competing forces at work on the Indonesian side is not new, either. In fact, the tensions were already clearly visible in this revolutionary period and were used, for example, by the Dutch colonial administration, including the armed forces, in its fight against the Republic. In the historiography, this theme was also addressed at an early stage, starting with *Om een rode of groene merdeka* ('For the sake of a red or green merdeka') by Henri Alers from 1956, in which 'green stands for the feudal, conservative, colonial and religious forces, and red for the forces of the social revolution and the Sukarnoist tendencies'.[5] And in the Indonesian historiography, similar themes were addressed decades ago by the eminent historian Taufik Abdullah.[6]

This project builds on these insights and at the same time opens up a perspective that offers plenty of room for other themes, movements, voices and experiences, away from the prevailing Indonesian representation of the revolution, but also away from the prevailing Dutch image of the war as a linear history, an image that leaves little or no room for heterogeneity. In this research, the focus is mainly on the *agency* – the ability to act in a purposeful manner – and the experiential world of various groups. A thorough approach offers a clearer view of the various processes that took

place – sometimes far from the Dutch-Republican front lines, literally and figuratively; in short, of the rich diversity of 'revolutionary worlds', and the friction and clashes that resulted from them.

Legitimacy, violence and loyalty

In August 1945, and even thereafter, few had a clearly defined idea of what 'the' revolution should look like. That the pursuit of independence was widely supported is beyond dispute, but how to proceed was by no means clear. As Taufik Abdullah has observed, Republican and other military and civilian leaders did have certain *notions* of their end goals, such as independence and the character of the new state, but the precise details and the path leading to it were still open. The same was true for individual Indonesians who were (or became) politically engaged. They too tried to shape 'the' revolution by taking advantage of the opportunities that such a period of upheaval offered.

Many took advantage of these opportunities to fight actively for the Republic, for example by joining armed groups; others saw opportunities to engage in more or less criminal activities, while some communities – such as the Chinese in Medan and elsewhere – organized themselves to protect their own groups. Many – perhaps most – also tried to remain aloof, at least from the violence: survival was their primary motivation.[7] They sought connections with rulers or authorities more powerful than themselves who could protect them from violence and give them access to food or clothing. In return, they provided political support – or at least they tried to give that impression – and shared intelligence with them or offered fighters a hiding place.[8]

In this situation of competing forces, it was crucial for the warring parties to gain the support of the population: that support was essential for them to survive, to gain legitimacy and to create stability, sustained by a functioning administration.[9] In order to obtain this support, the parties had many means at their disposal, ranging from the use of traditional, hierarchical relationships and material incentives, to propaganda and, above all, violence. Violence played an essential role, not only to acquire or expand territory and drive out other rulers, but also, in the case of violence against civilians, to enforce that support if necessary, and subsequently to protect them from the violence of other parties.[10] The violence in all its gradations, including the threat of it, was thus in many ways 'functional' — except that the difference between functional and dysfunctional violence mattered little to those who were subjected to that violence.

In practice, this meant that the different parties sometimes suppressed and at other times rekindled certain political preferences and ethnic, regional, religious and class differences. After all, the goal was to develop their own ideas regarding the constitutional arrangement of the future Indonesia.[11] The use of violence against civilians became – especially, but certainly not only, when there was no natural connection with the population – a fixed and widespread aspect of the revolutionary war: the end justifies the means; necessity knows no laws. Or the law was reinterpreted or amended.[12] At the same time, the boundaries between and within the various parties involved turned out to be fluid. Although there were two dominant opponents – the Republic and the Dutch colonial administration – there were also many other parties and movements of different bents and functioning at different levels, from local to national – not to mention the regional and local rulers, who often had no clear political plan. And even this distinction is still too schematic, because within the different camps there were different groups, factions and organizations that sometimes even came to be diametrically opposed to each other.

Research at the local and regional level is ideally suited to show this intricate and layered dynamic in the struggle for power, recognition and loyalty and the pursuit of state-building. Three connecting themes are used here: legitimacy, violence and loyalty or affiliation. All parties to the conflict sought recognition of their authority – that is, legitimacy – in the territory they had claimed, for this legitimacy was a prerequisite for building a state and making it function. Violence and the threat of violence served as a crucial means to enforce authority and to obtain the support of local populations where this was (still) lacking. The term loyalty refers to the attachment of citizens to a party or to those in power; in addition, loyalty could also be read as 'affiliation', which in turn can be understood as a *factual* and often *temporary* attachment, even if the *heart* lay elsewhere – a tension that often occurred when political relations were reversed, as we shall see.

In all this, it is important to realize that the people, who were faced with the efforts of the various parties to obtain their support, were not just 'passive objects'. As demonstrated by the different sub-projects, many developments were actively supported and fostered by large sections of the population. This could vary from sympathizing with the pursuit of independence and the leading role of the Republic to direct participation in or support for the armed struggle. And even when an enemy party was in power in a particular territory, the people still had countless ways to withdraw their support in whole or in part.

A multifaceted revolution

After the declaration of independence by Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta in August 1945, the Republic quickly assumed a more solid form in many places in Indonesia. At the central level, the Republic was embodied in representative organs, ministries, a constitution, and gradually an army, which in large part grew out of militias created during the Japanese occupation and was eventually renamed Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI). Republican governors were appointed, who together with the *pamong praja* (the traditional Indonesian civil service), the regional branch of the Komite Nasional Indonesia and the army made up the regional administration. Locally, the Republican government was often assisted – and sometimes monitored – by in particular the youth combat organizations, *pemuda,* which had emerged early on as militant defenders of independence.[13]

This new state was immediately confronted with many acute problems. For example, some Japanese military leaders, whom the Allies after the capitulation had made responsible for maintaining the status quo, had proceeded to expel Republican officials and combat organizations from the cities. And in the context of the repatriation of the Japanese troops and the former prisoners of the Japanese internment camps, the Allied and Dutch troops did the same in the following months, where necessary by force.[14] But the Republic was determined not to allow itself to be pushed aside. The military and Republican officials very quickly began operating from the countryside rather than cities like Jakarta or Makassar. It was not for nothing that Republican leaders had sworn – in the words of Sulawesi Governor Sam Ratulangi – that they would 'defend every [inch] of Indonesia against the greed of our enemies who want to recolonize our country'.[15]

The Republic faced opposition on several fronts. A number of other parties also claimed authority and legitimacy, particularly in areas that were far from the heart of the Republic, which was located in and around Yogyakarta in Central Java. Meanwhile, the Dutch colonial authority was working on the realization of its plans for a federation, forged in collaboration with moderate Indonesian nationalists who wanted to achieve independence and autonomy in a non-revolutionary way. In different parts of the archipelago, the Republic also faced competition from groups, movements and local leaders who opposed the politics of the Republic for various reasons, sometimes out of self-interest or to maintain local power themselves, often also out of regionalism or dissatisfaction with the course of the revolution, especially with regard to radical social reforms. Local combat organizations

and politicians sometimes felt that the Republic did not go far enough in its revolutionary plans. For example, the Republic sided with traditional, feudal Indonesian landowners where this group would otherwise be wiped out by pemuda.

Such tensions also arose in the territorial heart of the Republic in Yogyakarta. There, too, the leadership of the young state constantly had to deal with opposition, which in the context of revolution was vociferous and was often organized, such as in the case of young people and women. An important source of inspiration for these groups was the ideal of popular sovereignty – *kedaulatan rakyat* – which was also included in the Republic's constitution. The point of contention was the actual implementation of this ideal, understood as the pursuit of a radically different social and political order.

Such interpretations of the revolution, however, were at odds with the aspirations of the Republic's political leadership. Sukarno and Hatta attached great importance to the building of the state and to diplomatic negotiations; they wanted to demonstrate to the world that Indonesia could be a well-ordered, functioning and modern state.[16] That attitude led in all sorts of ways to tensions, both with socio-political movements and militias and with parts of the army, because the choice to negotiate, as army chief Abdul Haris Nasution wrote more than fifteen years later, came at the expense of the establishment of 'a clear, outspoken, phased [guerrilla] programme [and] the creation of a chain of command in Java and the regions where [the revolutionary youth] were moving'.[17] 'Struggle or diplomacy' – a dilemma in which those who demanded '100% *merdeka*' clashed with more moderate nationalists – remained a source of sometimes sharp internal conflict at all levels until the end of the war.

How the new state was designed and the visible and invisible tensions that accompanied it can be told on the basis of the history of Yogyakarta, the revolutionary capital of the Republic from the beginning of 1946 to the end of 1948. In many ways, the city formed a vibrant microcosm in which many developments came together, as evidenced by the research carried out by Farabi Fakih in the context of this project.[18]

Yogyakarta served for almost three years as the symbolic centre of the Republic, and was exactly what a capital should be in the eyes of the Republican leadership. In a speech on the occasion of the relocation of the seat of government from Jakarta to Yogyakarta, President Sukarno said that 'no nation state can last without centralism. Russia has Moscow, America has

Washington, England has London, Majapahit has Wilwatikta'. With that last reference, he implicitly portrayed the Republic as the heir to an illustrious precolonial empire that encompassed the entire Indonesian archipelago. In practice, not all of the central institutions of the young state were actually located in Yogyakarta. On the contrary, they were scattered across Java. For example, from its base in Purworejo, 60 kilometres west of Yogya, the parliament organized meetings that took place in alternating Republican cities. The Foreign Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office had initially remained in Jakarta, while other ministries had moved into buildings in surrounding cities, such as Surakarta and Klaten. The military headquarters were also located elsewhere, in two major centres – one in Bandung and the other in Central Java.

Yogyakarta may have been a capital without modern state power, but according to Fakih, the city functioned as a symbolic centre, as a stage on which the revolution and independence were shaped in various ways – just as Sukarno had outlined. It was a theatre that was also open to the rest of the world, to diplomats, journalists and other visitors, so that they could convince themselves of the right of the young nation to exist. Yogyakarta, with its modern hotels, shops, restaurants, busy streets and evening entertainment, represented modernity and nationalist élan, displayed through nationalist rallies. But above all, the city was a symbolic hub, as part of the movements of government officials, diplomats, left-wing pemuda from the social elite, Islamic spiritual leaders (*ulama*) and their followers, artists, professors and students, on their way to their diplomatic or religious meetings, theatre performances and art exhibitions, and conferences for youths, women and workers.

This performative, nationalistic use of Yogyakarta's streets and spaces was intended to strengthen the Indonesian nation both inwardly and outwardly, Fakih explains. Dutch journalists may have derisively called the city a mirage, Sukarno's model republic or dream city, but the fact is that Yogyakarta was presented as the centre of the Eastern reflection of Western Enlightenment values. In his autobiography, Sindu Sudjojono, considered by many to be the father of Indonesian modern painting, explained the strategies artists used in making nationalist posters. There were no posters full of violence,

Female member of the provisional parliament, the KNIP (Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat), singing during the Fourth Plenary Session in Kota Malang, East Java, 1947.

Source: Cas Oorthuys, Nederlands Fotomuseum



but prints that had to chime with the most refined sense of culture in the Western world, referring to great writers and philosophers, to the French Revolution, the American War of Independence and the spirit of William of Orange. 'We were in a dialogue with them,' Sudjojono said.[19] A left-wing Dutch student who was visiting the city in 1947 with a communist international youth group and had attended an artists' exhibition, exclaimed: 'I didn't know you had time for this!'[20]

However, the revolutionary world created in Yogyakarta also had its limitations, according to Fakih: '[i]n order for the play to become a reality, it was also important for the state to convince the rest of the Indonesians to adopt the same development-oriented values that had inspired Republican nationalism'.[21] In other words, the people had to be taken into account in this ideal of civilization; they had to be convinced and disciplined, starting with the pemuda, the youths, who were the embodiment of the nation's fighting spirit and the promise of the new man.

But it was precisely these young men, who embodied the undisciplined zeal (*semangat*), who mocked everything that the 'official' Republic saw as respectable. As long as they did not come from the elite, young people distinguished themselves in their characteristic fashion – loose hairstyles, bare feet in boots, samurai swords carried like canes, *bambu runcing* – a sharpened bamboo stick – carried like a gun, headbands worn in blood red, the ammunition belts worn crisscross across the bare chest. The Indonesian politician and diplomat Ali Sastroamidjojo wrote in his memoirs about his first trip to Yogyakarta:

> There were many pemuda with long hair, carrying weapons. Their clothes often hung in tatters. Their attitude and manners were like those of fighters who have just won a war. They feel victorious, brave and strong enough to face the enemy who opposes their state and nation or... in fact opposes them and their groups. These long-haired pemuda, armed fighters without a name, with their reckless behaviour, are the strength of our Revolution. Without them, the history of our country's independence would have looked completely different.[22]

The leadership of the Republic tried, both in word and in concrete deeds, to create a new generation out of these youths – a new generation with a new morality – and to dispense with what it considered to be non-modern and undisciplined forces. Fakih concludes that the enlightened elite failed

to bridge the gap with the pemuda and other communities and to realize its modernist ideals.

Yogyakarta's revolutionary microcosm was not only open to social and cultural change, it also provided space for ideas about women's equality, as Galuh Ambar Sasi shows in her contribution to this research.[23] In the traditional Indonesian historiography of the Indonesian revolution, women are often portrayed as primarily being involved in soup kitchens, the Red Cross, women's organizations or women's congresses. However, her contribution, based among other things on newspaper research, shows that from the beginning of Indonesian independence, women were not merely relegated to a subordinate or subservient position. Many women in Yogyakarta, who came from all walks of life, did not submit to the male initiative, but instead decided for themselves which revolutionary steps to take.

They founded organizations such as Persatuan Wanita Indonesia (Perwani), a group that aimed to revive the national Women's Congress. The first congress was held in December 1928 and was attended by more than a thousand women, making it a broad-based and important platform. The next congresses were held in 1935 (Jakarta), 1939 (Bandung) and 1941 (Semarang); the Fifth Indonesian Women's Congress, which was to take place once again in Semarang in 1942, was cancelled due to the Second World War. Perwani wanted to organize that meeting in 1945, but this time in the context of an independent state. As a result of British air raids on Yogyakarta on 25 and 27 November 1945, the location of the congress had to be moved to Klaten. The bombing thus perfectly linked the emancipation efforts with the struggle against the British and Dutch attempts at recolonization.

This last observation fits well with the findings of Mary Margaret Steedly. In her study *Rifle Reports. A Story of Indonesian Independence*, she concluded that the activities of many women in the context of the revolutionary struggle, although relatively traditional and gender-conforming, were given an emancipatory, revolutionary élan by the context in which they were carried out.[24] The desire for emancipation, according to Sasi, manifested itself in various ways and often gave rise to conflicts and clashes, both within the family and outside it. Everyday tensions thus acquired a collective, revolutionary connotation.

For Chinese women in Yogyakarta, the revolution not only brought revolutionary fervour, it also revealed their vulnerable position as a minority. Liem Gien Nio, the owner of restaurant Oen, for example, changed the work clothes of her waiters and waitresses into a new uniform similar to

that worn by Sukarno: a white shirt, trousers and a black *peci*. In this way she expressed her identity as a citizen of the new republic. She nonetheless had to deal with negative stereotypes and was mocked as *Cino loleng* (crazy Chinese).[25]

Rivalry

Just how high the tensions in the Republican camp could rise became clear after the Renville Agreement of January 1948. That agreement followed lengthy negotiations, after Dutch troops had captured much territory during Operation Product, including the richest parts of Java. The agreement forced the Republic to recognize the lost ground as Dutch territory and to withdraw its army from East and West Java – to the displeasure of many of the soldiers, politicians and popular leaders involved. In addition, the army leadership had announced that it wanted drastically to reduce and reorganize the armed forces. Militias in West Java blamed the leadership of the Republic for having forsaken the principles of the struggle for independence by negotiating with the Dutch, an indication that they had insufficient faith in the power of revolution.[26]

In East Java, it was not so much separate militias as Republican army units that turned against their leaders in Yogyakarta – and with success, as shown in research by Gerry van Klinken and Maarten van der Bent.[27] Their study focuses on what they call a 'revolutionary war', to use sociologist Charles Tilly's term: a struggle between 'multiple sovereignties' in the same territory, the outcome of which was determined by coalitions of sometimes competing parties. They demonstrate how Indonesian radicals exerted a decisive influence on the course of the revolution, a prime illustration of which being the life of Colonel Sungkono (1911-1977) and his actions in East Java. His life story is a perfect example of how radicalism and conformism could interact and alternate with one another during the Indonesian War of Independence, especially in the phase after 'Operation Product'.

Sungkono, the son of a tailor, played a leading role among the young men who fought in the Battle of Surabaya in November 1945. He was then commander of a coordinating body called *Badan Keamanan Rakyat* (BKR, Organization for the Safety of the People), the forerunner of the Indonesian armed forces TNI. Haven risen in the hierarchy of the TNI, Sungkono understood all too well in early 1948 that the army had to be reduced and rationalized, in line with the wishes of the leadership of the Republic and the army command (which itself was not of one mind), but as a revolution-

ary he went along with the indignation felt by his men. The rationalization order meant a substantial reduction of the Republican force and was ultimately aimed at the army's future inclusion in a federal armed forces led by the Netherlands – or so he thought. Sungkono organized protest rallies among like-minded people in East Java. On 28 May 1948, he even declared that General Spoor and Prime Minister Beel had suggested the rationalization plan to Nasution in the context of the Renville Agreement. In response to this accusation, the authorities in Yogyakarta suspended Sungkono; an 'honour council' headed by Nasution convicted him of insubordination and demoted him.

The resistance from military units that, like Sungkono, were determined to maintain a massive people's army, was considerable, but this was by no means the only concern of the government in Yogyakarta. Its authority was also being challenged by other parties, starting with left-wing radicals and populist armed groups, who were initially stationed in Solo and had retreated to Madiun in East Java in September. Although these groups were included in the Indonesian armed forces in name, they had their own leaders and ideology. On 18 September 1948, the *Front Demokrasi Rakyat* (FDR, Democratic People's Front) – an alliance between the *Partai Sosialis*, the communist PKI, the socialist youth organization *Pesindo* and the important trade union federation *Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia* (SOBSI) – decided to occupy the local government offices, a move that Yogyakarta regarded as a communist coup in the heart of Republican territory. The government, which in the words of Van Klinken and Van der Bent 'did not have enough men to suppress the radicals they did not know, [thereupon] made peace with the radical it did know': Sungkono. They appointed him as military governor of East Java and instructed him to assist the Siliwangi division in the bloody crushing of the so-called Madiun uprising – which he did.

Sungkono established himself in a tiny village on the rugged northeast slopes of Wilis volcano, between Madiun and Kediri. His military controlled the black economy there. For example, coffee plantations were handed over to local farmers in exchange for a share of the proceeds; there was also trading in opium and weapons. Van Klinken and Van der Bent add that it was a situation that did not last long. In the course of 1950, people in East Java became increasingly dissatisfied with this military control. The press described Sungkono as a 'warlord'. In the end, he was given an office job in Jakarta on 6 June 1950.

In West Java, meanwhile, a completely different process had taken place. After Dutch troops had occupied that area, the Sundanese aristocrat Musa Suriakartalegawa declared – at the instigation of Van Mook, by his own account – the federal state of *Pasundan* in the spring of 1947. This did not last long, either; the state had already effectively collapsed even before the first Dutch offensive – only to be given new life in February 1948, immediately after the Renville Agreement. This was possible because the Republican troops were to withdraw as stipulated in that agreement – which they did, at least formally speaking.[28] The administration of Pasundan was weak, however, and proved unable to bring under effective control the entire area that the Republican troops had given up, even with support from Dutch

Colonel Sungkono (right, with flower in lapel) during a meeting with Republican troops at Kediri, September 1949. Source: Nationaal Archief/Dienst voor Legercontacten.



troops. In the process, a third party presented itself, the Islamic movement *Darul Islam* (DI, House of Islam), which aimed to establish an Islamic state in the archipelago. The DI took advantage of the weaknesses of the other parties and the prevailing discontent, but also of the diplomatic negotiations between the Netherlands and the Republic. All of this led on 7 August 1949 to the DI proclaiming its own state, *Negara Islam Indonesia,* in the middle of territory over which the Pasundan, the Netherlands *and* the Republic claimed control. Its army soon captured parts of West Java and from there fought against the Republic as well as against the Netherlands and the Pasundan government.[29] This put the population in these areas in an extraordinarily precarious position: where should their loyalty lie, and how should they act?

Violence, support and loyalty

Shifts in power relations, as described in the previous paragraph, led to complicated situations and coerced choices. People were confronted with rival authorities – potential and actual – that each laid claim to a political future and to power and legitimacy, and thus to control over communities. Where one authority ruled, another was excluded. The Republic, for example, refused to recognize states as part of a possible future federation and dismissed them as 'puppets' of the Dutch.[30]

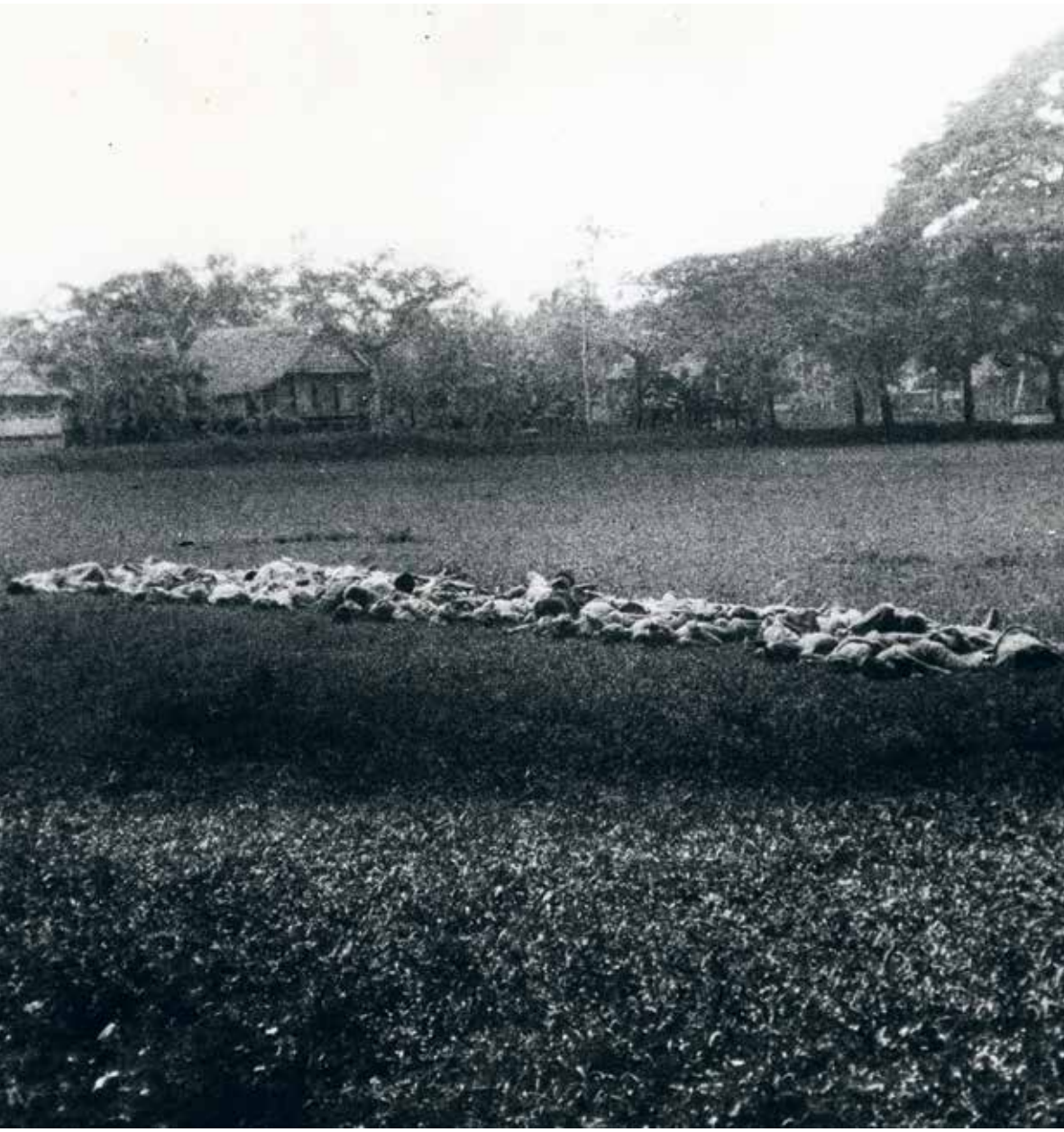
When different authorities clashed, it was the local communities that often suffered. Revolutionary wars, as the Indonesian-Dutch conflict can be called, are sometimes referred to as 'wars among the people' – at stake was their support and loyalty.[31] In reality, however, the war also *targeted* people, whereby the differences between the various perpetrators of violence and their ultimate goals were often not clear to many people. This was particularly true of the border areas, where different spheres of influence collided or overlapped – areas and places where the battle for the people was often waged by potential rulers using all available means.

For all sides, violence was the perfect way to enforce support. Threatening with and using violence against civilians had a function: simply put, they were used, successfully or not, to create the desired order within the chaos'. Violence – directed against individuals, village chiefs, Republican and Dutch administrators and fighters, and even entire (ethnic) communities – offered nascent rulers the opportunity to solve pressing problems, for prisoners, the starving, the expelled and the dead did not pose a threat, while doubters could be converted into supporters – if only for the sake of appear-

ances.[32] Republican fighters were able to use their armed presence to threaten doubters, oust suspects and persuade sympathizers to participate in active resistance. Dutch violence, in all its varieties, mainly had a dampening effect on the political preferences and ideals of the people and could even (temporarily) eliminate them – just as well as Indonesian violence, which served the opposite aim. Both parties operated from the conviction that they knew best what was good for the people, whether that was Dutch protection or casting off the colonial yoke.[33]

Thus, all warring parties deliberately used violence, often against civilians, to demonstrate who was in charge in a certain area. Against this background, it can be argued – perhaps somewhat cynically – that the mass murder of more than a thousand Chinese in Tangerang (West Java) by revolutionary militias should be seen not only as a dramatic, local ethnic cleansing, but also as an affirmation of the primacy of pemuda over the more traditional authority in this city. The Chinese were considered accomplices of the Dutch colonial regime, and their elimination symbolized the success of Indonesian independence.[34] Similarly, the visible heinousness with which local Indonesian leaders – up-and-coming or otherwise – slaughtered Indo-Europeans in the first months of the Indonesian revolution, which has become known in the Netherlands as the '*Bersiap* period', underlined the same thing: that the period of Dutch oppression was over. The violence moreover created a bond between leaders and followers.[35]

A similar dynamic characterized the Dutch violence during the Indonesian War of Independence. That violence was by definition colonial and repressive. Violent action – and the threat to use violence – marked a return to, or confirmation of, the old order and dampened possible expressions of resistance to it, including political activities in favour of the Republic. Violence in the public sphere had a deterring or intimidating function: for example, corpses of alleged perpetrators were hung alongside the road or not removed after they had been shot. In one notorious case, the head of a resistance fighter was impaled on a fence at the local market.[36] After Westerling and the Depot Special Forces had left a trail of death and destruction through Sulawesi, there was a sharp decline in large-scale and organized anti-Dutch resistance. On Bali, brief but very intensive violence paved the way for Van Mook's plans for a federal Indonesia – an effect that Westerling's violence in South Sulawesi also had.[37] This terror was effective, purely from a utilitarian point of view, although it could ultimately backfire.



The bodies of c. 30 Indonesians, arrested and shot by the Depot Special Forces (Depot Speciale Troepen) in retaliation for an attack on the prison and homes of two Dutch officials in Kampung Baru, South Sulawesi, early January 1947. Shortly hereafter, another 24 prisoners were executed. By order of the commander, the bodies remained on the ground for half a day. Source: H.C. Kavelaars, NIMH.

Whenever 'friend' and 'enemy' were difficult to separate – a characteristic feature of guerrilla warfare – all of the parties involved used violence more often and more intensively. As a result, many villages fell prey to Dutch patrols and units, which often unceremoniously shot civilians. On the other hand, in early 1947, for example, the *Laskar Pemberontak Turatea* (Laptur), a combat group in Turatea, South Sulawesi, murdered – in the name of the revolution – large numbers of villagers who had collaborated with the Dutch authorities, on suspicion of anti-revolutionary behaviour.[38] In these cases, too, the violence was far from 'useless': on the contrary, it was the result of an internal logic that implicitly legitimized its character.

An apt illustration of the way in which various parties used violence to get the population on their side were the events after the Renville Agreement, in January 1948. As indicated above, this agreement stipulated that the TNI withdraw from East and West Java, behind the demarcation line, in the direction of Yogyakarta. In addition, a plebiscite was to be organized, to allow the people to speak in favour of autonomy within the federated state of Indonesia that was being pursued by the Netherlands. Although the TNI seemed to adhere to the commitment to withdraw, plenty of pro-Republican armed groups remained throughout West Java to put pressure on the people in order to influence the atmosphere around the plebiscite. In turn, Dutch soldiers made extensive use of violence to make it clear to villagers how they should behave.

The extent to which the people could be crushed between the various parties became clear in late January 1949 in the vicinity of Sukabumi. Four days after a Red Cross truck hit a land mine planted by the guerrilla forces, killing two soldiers and seriously wounding another, a full-scale revenge operation took place: paratroops from the special forces (Korps Speciale Troepen) shot 116 residents, including elderly people and children, in various villages and destroyed 90 houses with mortar fire.[39] The village leaders from the area then turned to the head of the federal state of Pasundan asking for justice, drawing a comparison with German and Japanese war crimes. The village leaders acknowledged that there were people who had 'embraced a [certain] political trend' that the Dutch did not like, but that this was no reason to 'cleanse' the villages.[40]

Following these complaints, the Dutch administration initiated an investigation. It found that there had been no question of revenge, but 'that there were many fatalities due to a lack of understanding back and forth between

the local military power and the people, without putting the blame on one side or the other'. The army command therefore decided to let the matter 'rest' – although the handling of this case left a somewhat bad taste in the mouth for army commander Spoor. However, even before the case was settled, the same Red Berets had committed another massacre in the same area, resulting in 77 deaths, five rapes and 177 cases of theft.[41]

And there are countless examples of violence – from the 'cleansing' of villages to executions without trial and mass internment – that served primarily to force the people into support or cooperation, on the part of all parties involved and not infrequently (on the Dutch side, at least) by invoking 'military necessity'.[42] The same claim of 'necessity' also led on the part of the revolutionaries to increasingly loose interpretations of target categories, and to violence quickly acquiring a revolutionary character. Uniformed fighters could rob village leaders for no particular reason.[43] Those who held administrative positions in territory occupied by the Netherlands were collaborators who could be murdered.[44] Indonesian managers of Dutch plantations were kidnapped or murdered as traitors, sometimes together with their families.[45] Where their political sympathies truly lay made no difference.

In Depok, near Jakarta, Europeans and Indo-Europeans were targeted in late 1945 because of their 'strong commitment to Dutch colonial rule' and their high economic status as major landowners, as shown in research by Tri Wahyuning M. Irsyam.[46] Although the violence that descended on the inhabitants of Depok in October of that year – resulting in more than twenty deaths – was perpetrated by Indonesians decorated with 'red and white symbols', it was the vulgar desire to strip these landowners of their wealth that seemed to prevail. The perpetrators 'took valuables, looted' and threw away everything without value, 'so that the roads on the private estates were strewn with possessions'.[47]

Reactions and loyalties

Faced with the violence used by rival parties to occupy an area and bring the population under control, local and regional administrators – and sometimes even entire communities – fled *en masse* for shorter or longer periods of time. When Republican violence came too close, they slept in rice fields or sought refuge at night in cities controlled by the Netherlands or even at Dutch posts.[48] Residents fled before and also during attacks, which led to huge refugee flows – if at least we can go by newspaper reports, with

the possibility that events were exaggerated or downplayed for propagandistic reasons. For example, thousands of Chinese left Tangerang in mid-1946 when the disturbances began there.[49] People fled Subang when Dutch troops advanced towards the city during the Dutch offensive in the summer of 1947.[50] In Sumatra, fighting also prompted evacuees to flee, victims of the TNI's 'scorched earth' strategy. Displaced in Republican territory, tens of thousands tried to return to their homes, which were now in Dutch occupied territory.[51] Entire villages were sometimes found virtually deserted, such as Wonosobo in Central Java in January 1949.[52] According to Dutch sources, some 3,000 people tried in March 1947 to move from Republican territory to Dutch territory in search of work.[53] As a result of these itinerant crowds, many camps arose on Java where refugees, both Indonesians and Europeans, had to be fed and clothed. All across Sumatra and Java, people roamed in search of safety, both on Dutch and Republican territory, and sometimes moving between them.[54]

If one would-be ruler radiated authority in a convincing way, this had a 'pull effect', causing that ruler to gain more and more support. Individuals and groups entered into a new affiliation with the strongest party in an area, at the expense of their previous commitment to another party. In cases where Dutch troops ruled in a credible manner, it could happen that members of the people's militias (*laskar rakyat*) laid down their arms. Military-political supremacy could generate support; this happened at different times and moments. When the federal state of Pasundan in West Java seemed strong enough, Republican officials came to report for work, as happened in Bogor in May 1947.[55] With the Dutch show of force during the capture of the city of Sukabumi in August 1947 still fresh in their minds, Republican officials understood all too well how they should interpret the Dutch request for cooperation.[56] In numerous areas occupied by the Netherlands, Republican shadow administrations or adminstrators were active. But when, in turn, the Republic and its representatives seemed strong, the reverse happened and Indonesians who collaborated with the Dutch secretly sided with the Republic, sometimes even by committing acts of resistance.[57]

Taking sides in response to shifts in front lines and power relations was one thing; it was quite another when a community was in danger of being caught between two or more parties. In such cases, the villagers were forced to divide their attention between those in power. For example, village leaders and their followers in the middle of Dutch territory signed

statements that they supported those resistance cells that had stayed behind.[58] Not infrequently, powerful signals were also sent out: in September 1947, for example, TNI soldiers murdered sympathizers of the federal *Daerah Soematra Timur* in Tebing Tinggi, North Sumatra, so that other inhabitants knew where their sympathies should lie; at least that is how it was recorded in Dutch sources.[59] For many villagers in the state of Pasundan, where the 'official' authority was not effective, the precarious balance of power meant that in 1949 they also started supporting the fighters of Darul Islam. [60]

For the Chinese population, the situation was particularly dire in many areas. For example, the Chinese communities in and around Medan, North Sumatra, tried to break free from traditional interest representation through Dutch channels, but Indonesians distrusted them, despite their sympathy for the revolution.[61] In order to protect themselves and their possessions from revolutionary violence, in January 1946 the Chinese in Medan organized a security corps, the *Pao An Tui* – first under the British flag, and later under the Dutch flag.[62] Divisions of this corps also cooperated with Republican authorities, but it was not long before pemuda and Chinese clashed.[63] In the end, the Chinese in Medan looked to Dutch authorities for more protection; the Pao An Tui was then incorporated into the Dutch security system.[64] Similar patterns emerged on Java and Sumatra.

Just how complicated relations could be at the regional or local level is clear from Taufik Ahmad's micro-historical study of the Polombangkeng region in South Sulawesi in the years 1945-1949.[65] Ahmad investigated the role and position of the different groups in this region, the alliances they entered into, and their relationship with the changing authorities. The revolution and the Dutch attempts to restore its colonial power created a new arena for political competition between elites, which also involved the lower layers of the population. Banditry, which was deeply rooted in society, played a crucial role in this.

This power struggle can best be understood through an analysis of the history of the toloq in Polombangkeng. These toloq are a social group consisting of fearless, strong people of distinction who did not hesitate to break the law in order to achieve their goals. The term toloq refers to astute and dedicated leaders of thieves and is therefore often associated with banditry.[66] During the upheavals in South Sulawesi, these toloq were confronted with various choices: to join pro-Republican alliances or the Netherlands

East Indies Civil Administration (NICA), or to remain elusive. Also playing a role were their diverse relationships with the local nobility, who were divided amongst themselves. The NICA took advantage of this and succeeded in persuading some of them to take its side. Importantly, the royal family of Bajeng – the name by which Polombangkeng was originally known – explicitly positioned itself as a supporter of the Republic of Indonesia. Subsequently, the state of East Indonesia (*Negara Indonesia Timur*, NIT) was formed – a construction that on the one hand was interpreted as an attempt by the Netherlands to maintain its power, but on the other hand seemed to offer a way out of the dilemma of choosing between a pro-Republican or a pro-Dutch stance. For the different toloq, this intricate power constellation created space for new alliances, shifts in alliances, and/or opportunities to strengthen old alliances. In doing so, they used violent practices: raids, theft, setting fire to houses, and executions of alleged opponents and 'spies' – NICA supporters in the case of pro-Republican toloq, and Republicans in the case of pro-Dutch toloq.

As elsewhere, the dividing lines in Polombangkeng were not tightly defined. A remarkable aspect of the revolutionary alliances was that it was quite common for someone to cooperate with the Dutch but for his children to help fighters who were supporters of the Bajeng family, for example, by providing food and shelter. On the other hand, it could also happen that a family member who had joined the Bajeng fighters was cared for in the house of a pro-Dutch relative.[67]

There are countless examples from all the regions and all the parties that show that borders and loyalties in these years of war and revolution were often fluid. This also applied to the relationship between the state of East Indonesia (NIT) and the Republic. Despite the mutual violence, at times these parties were not as fiercely opposed to each other than thought, and certainly than the Dutch regime would have liked. For many politicians, participation in the NIT stemmed from a strategic choice, self-interest or opportunism, or a combination thereof, while at the same time their ideals were were not far those of the Republic, as Sarkawi B. Husain shows in his study of Eastern Indonesia.[68] Some even saw the NIT primarily as a means of building bridges – which is why they advocated using the red and white flag and the national anthem 'Indonesia Raya', the symbols of the Republic, for the NIT as well. According to pro-Republican NIT politicians, singing a shared national anthem and hoisting one national flag would promote peace throughout the archipelago.

By 1949, as it became clear to more and more people that the Republic would win, it became easier for some, but more necessary for others, to show their true colours. Republican 'shadow governments', some of which had been active for years, emerged in West and East Java and Sumatra, while numerous federal politicians and administrators sided with the Republic without much fuss. The same also applied to paramilitaries and police officers in Dutch service on Java and Sumatra, many of whom had already deserted *en masse* in the course of 1948, if not out of political conviction then out of fear of being attacked, kidnapped or murdered. Officials from the state of Pasundan left with the Dutch troops and administrators, only to return a few weeks later to rally behind the Republic.[69]

Conclusion

An important goal of the research programme was to situate the actions of the Dutch armed forces during the Indonesian War of Independence in their historical, political and international context. That context was primarily shaped by the revolutionary developments in Indonesia – and it is these developments that have been the subject of this chapter.

That context was considerably more complex and layered than the image that has remained in the public culture of remembrance in the Netherlands, but also in Indonesia: the image of a single war between the Republic and the Netherlands. That depiction is, of course, itself a product of history – nurtured in the Republic, promulgated in the words of Wolter Mongisidi, with which this chapter began, and then repeated and sanctioned time and again. In the Netherlands, the one-dimensional image that is perpetuated in the public culture of remembrance – not so much in the historiography – emerged only later. During the war, the divisions and chaos of the Indonesian nationalists were emphasized – obviously to justify the Dutch reoccupation.

In this chapter we have tried to give an idea of the layered nature and complexity of the Indonesian revolution by focusing on regional developments and movements, not only around the theme of violence, but also in the political and social spheres. And that yields a very diverse picture: there were grand and compelling ambitions – complete independence for Indonesia, a social revolution, a new generation – but there was also a complex daily reality in which some, simply to survive in times of war, engaged with various small, sometimes even personal ideals, which together led to 'the' revolution.

Out of the various sub-projects in this research project emerges a picture of rivalry, but also of fluidity and ambiguity with regard to the boundaries between parties and the loyalty of citizens. This fluidity even applies to the categories of perpetrators and victims. Indonesians, Chinese, Dutch, Indo-Europeans and others were not just victims or perpetrators, precisely because the violence in this revolutionary war acted as a means to bind locally or regionally present communities – Indonesians, Chinese, Indo-Europeans – to a certain programme, to force them into loyalty and support, and thereby to undermine the position of other parties. The non-combative individuals and communities were often at the end of the chain of violence and soon became victims of the mutually exclusive parties that were fighting for power and legitimacy. Dutch soldiers and Indonesians or Chinese fighting under the Dutch flag were involved in this as perpetrators, but also pemuda, soldiers of the Republican army or – for example – communist or Islamic-oriented groups.

The authority of the Republic was also not undisputed in its own territory. In different areas, the Republic was confronted with rival parties, such as the Darul Islam movement and left-wing revolutionaries – which continued to agitate even after 1950. The heterogeneous nationalist youth movement, collectively referred to as pemuda, demanded a forward-looking, uncompromising attitude from the Republic, based on *perjuangan* (struggle) and one hundred percent independence. This clashed with the ambitions and strategy of the leadership in the political heart of the Republic, Yogyakarta; and that rivalry also regularly escalated into violence.

In areas where more than one of these nascent authorities operated, often in border areas, the people were confronted with multiple parties, each demanding support and trying to enforce it by force if necessary. That was a particularly risky position. Local communities developed a strategy of shifting and multiple loyalties in the hope of escaping the violence that almost inevitably followed if they failed to offer support, but also to gain influence or access to food and clothing themselves.

When one authority was able to assert itself in a certain area for a longer period of time, loyalty to other authorities usually decreased or even seemed to disappear altogether. Such a demonstrative transition marked obedience to the new authority and prevented revenge for previous 'collaboration'. For the Dutch administration and the Dutch armed forces, but equally for their Republican counterparts, such shifts in loyalty often came as an unpleasant surprise, because they thought they had a 'grip' on the population. In the

end, the Republic finally prevailed. It was only at the end of the war that it became clear how much the balance had tipped against the Netherlands: while support for the Republic had only grown, local support for the colonial government had largely evaporated.



3.

‘Information costs lives’

The intelligence war for Indonesia, 1945-1949[1]

Rémy Limpach

Introduction

‘You should hit him on the head with a hammer, then you’ll get more out of him.’ That was the advice given to an interrogator by Major Willem Wasch (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army, KNIL), head of the Territorial Intelligence Service in West Borneo, on 24 September 1948 during the interrogation of an Indonesian detainee, Mulyono, in Pontianak. For Wasch, it was evidently standard practice to use brute force to get incommunicative prisoners to talk.[2]

Wasch was certainly not the only Dutch military intelligence officer to think this way during the Indonesian War of Independence – and to act accordingly. Despite this, it would be twenty years before the wider public in the Netherlands became aware of such inhumane interrogation prac-

Two servicemen in a map room study a relief model of the landscape in the Bogor region. The Dutch intelligence and security services used maps and models such as these in an attempt to track the positions of the Indonesian armed forces. Java, July 1947. Source: National Archives of the Netherlands/Dienst voor Legercontacten.

tices. This was largely thanks to the whistle-blower Joop Hueting, whose television interview in 1969 for the VARA programme *Achter het Nieuws* [Behind the headlines] hit a raw nerve. Hueting, who had served in an intelligence squad in both the Royal Netherlands Army (Koninklijke Landmacht, KL) and the KNIL, calmly and accurately described all kinds of horrors in which he himself had taken part. Most shocking was his account of the torture used during interrogations, which he said was standard practice in the intelligence services. Hueting's sensational revelations forced the government to issue a response, published three months later in the form of the *Excessennota* [Memorandum on excesses]. According to Prime Minister Piet de Jong (Catholic People's Party, KVP), the hastily executed government investigation confirmed that 'the armed forces as a whole had behaved correctly' and that there had been no 'systematic cruelty'. With respect to the latter, however, the prime minister added a 'reservation' about the massacre in South Sulawesi, 'and also – although virtually no archival material has been found on the matter – with regard to actions that may have been taken when gathering intelligence about the opponent'.[3]

During the Indonesian War of Independence, which was largely a guerrilla conflict, the intelligence war was crucial to achieving success. Dutch counter-guerrilla warfare, which was characterized by small-scale operations and intensive patrols, was dependent on the gathering of up-to-date and reliable intelligence. No less important were the activities in counter-intelligence and 'field security'.[4] A grim intelligence war thus unfolded, largely behind the scenes. Both the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia used diverse means in this conflict, including forms of extreme violence such as murder, torture and arson. This violence was often directed against unarmed or detained individuals, but it was also used collectively.

In order to answer the overarching question posed by this research programme, in this chapter we will analyse and contextualize the extreme violence used in the intelligence war, mainly on the Dutch side, but also by the Indonesians. The mechanism of this violence will not be described chronologically, but with reference to several cases. We will examine whether the Dutch military intelligence and security services did indeed make systematic use of torture, as cautiously suggested by the *Excessennota* and that appeared to be confirmed by later studies.[5] 'Systematic' does not mean that torture was used everywhere, all of the time, but that there was a high probability that a detainee would be subjected to this torment. The causes and impact

of these and other forms of extreme violence on the Indonesian population will also be addressed, something that has seldom been investigated until now. This also applies to the violence perpetrated outside the interrogation centres and other aspects of the intelligence war.

The chapter opens with an explanation of the tasks, organization and personnel of the intelligence and security services. Then the forms of extreme violence that were used by these services are discussed. Indonesian intelligence work is subsequently addressed, including the use of violence. After several causes and motives for Dutch extreme violence have been considered in more depth, the chapter concludes with an analysis of the course of the intelligence war.

Tasks, organization and personnel

Between 1945 and 1950, Dutch intelligence staff in Indonesia faced an immense task. Their primary objective was to gather, process, analyse and disseminate military, political, economic and topographical intelligence, which would enable commanders, administrators and government officials to make well-founded decisions. On the military front there was a particular need for knowledge about Republican troop movements and plans, so that these could be thwarted. The soldiers in the field were all too well aware of their dependence on the intelligence services, their 'eyes and ears'.[6] 'An army without an effective intelligence service can simply be compared to a blindfolded boxer' was the telling comparison made by a former KNIL officer, Sjoerd Lapré.[7]

During the War of Independence, around 5,000 to 6,000 soldiers were deployed for crucial intelligence and security work. Of a total Dutch military force of 220,000 soldiers, in other words, only 2.5 to 3 per cent worked in intelligence. However, the intelligence staff were supported by an unknown but substantial number of Indonesian auxiliaries: spies (informants), interpreters, guides and defected 'laskars' (Indonesian fighters).[8]

The services drew on a range of sources to gather intelligence. Human intelligence – by far the most important source – was provided by spies, prisoners and deserters, the police and civil servants, as well as local residents. Other sources included Republican documents that had been seized or found, reconnaissance and intelligence patrols, intercepted (and cracked) Indonesian messaging and aerial photographs. Providing security was the second main task. This broad concept included both combatting enemy espionage through infiltration (counter-intelligence) and guaranteeing 'field

security': securing Dutch intelligence, operations, personnel, equipment and access to buildings and camps. In addition to these demanding core tasks, in the chaotic reality of guerrilla warfare the services were assigned various tasks that lay beyond their usual duties, such as administration, judicial investigations and police work.[9]

Not only was the range of tasks broad, but especially at the beginning of the war there was also a proliferation of services that often worked side-by-side, alongside and against each other.[10] The civilian administration, the police and the armed forces all had their own intelligence capacity, but the military had the upper hand. The best-known military intelligence service was the Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service (NEFIS), founded in Australia in 1942 and renamed the Central Military Intelligence Service (Centrale Militaire Inlichtingendienst, CMI) in 1948. The NEFIS, which was directly accountable to Army Commander General Spoor, gathered mainly strategic (political) intelligence and mostly served senior political and military leaders.[11] The naval leadership had its own service, the Naval Intelligence Service (Marine Inlichtingendienst, MARID), which gathered both strategic and operational intelligence.[12]

Most intelligence staff served with the troops in the field and were mainly tasked with gathering combat intelligence and providing security. From 1946, the Marine Brigade had its own service for this purpose, the Marine Brigade Security Service (Veiligheidsdienst van de Mariniersbrigade, VDMB). Within the KNIL and KL, intelligence and security squads were active at the division, brigade, battalion, company and even platoon level. They were known as the (Military) Intelligence Service ([Militaire] Inlichtingendienst, ID/MID)[13] or (Territorial) Intelligence and Security Groups (Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsgroepen, IVGs or TIVGs). At the lowest levels, they contained only a few men. For example, the IVG of 4-4-9 RI (the fourth company of the fourth battalion of the ninth infantry regiment) consisted of a Dutch sergeant, two Javanese KNIL soldiers and some spies/informants.[14] The military intelligence services had their own *esprit de corps* and often looked down on the other servicemen. The latter, in turn, usually wanted little to do with the IVGs and tended to steer clear of the notorious interrogation centres.

From 1945, intelligence capacity had to be built almost from scratch in an improvised manner. This was in part because the KNIL did not have a combat intelligence service before the Second World War. The training for intelligence staff established by the army after the liberation of the Netherlands

was extremely limited and, despite the addition of KNIL instructors, oriented towards the Western theatre of war. In the Indonesian archipelago, extra ad hoc training was given at the small intelligence posts. After newcomers had gained a few weeks of practical experience as a kind of intern, they were on their own. They were soon given the heavy responsibility of taking over an existing intelligence post or establishing a new one.[15]

In view of the importance of human intelligence, the military intelligence services relied heavily on their network of Indonesian, Chinese and Indo-European spies.[16] Due to their supposed knowledge of the country, culture and language, KNIL personnel played a dominant role in every link of the intelligence chain. For this reason, KNIL staff were added to most army IVGs.[17] The approximately 130 militarized civilian 'interpreters' from the VDMB were a case apart. These so-called 'Special Services Employees' (Employées Speciale Diensten, ESDs), a motley crew of Eurasians, Moluccans, Javanese and Chinese who acted as interrogators, among other things, left a harsh mark on the intelligence war in East Java.[18]

The IVGs mainly worked for their own unit's commander; a battalion IVG had to provide the battalion commander with intelligence, for example. As the head of the Intelligence section, the chief of the IVG formed part of the battalion staff. However, the small intelligence squads tended to act independently and use unconventional methods. They received few instructions from above and were subject to little scrutiny. According to Van Doorn and Hendrix, this meant that they had more or less *carte blanche* to 'use any means to achieve their goal', something that came with a 'huge risk of infringements [*ontsporing*]'.[19]

Forms of extreme violence and mass arrests

Torture inside and outside the interrogation rooms

There is abundant evidence of the abovementioned infringements by small intelligence squads – especially the use of torture in the interrogation of detainees – not only in letters, diaries, interviews and memoirs, but also in scholarly research, newspapers, TV documentaries and literature, as well as administrative and military sources. In 2011, for example, former court-martial employee Herman Burgers declared that there had been routine use of torture, described by many at the time as 'Japanese methods'.[20] Others noted

that the Dutch 'were hardly placed to complain about the Mof' [derogatory term for a German].[21]

There was a wide range of abuse and torture, with beating and kicking often being the standard introductory treatment for incommunicative detainees. In addition to their fists, interrogators also beat prisoners with cudgels, knuckledusters, rifle butts, sticks, planks, canes, whips, rolling pins, hammers, stones and other hard objects. Another method was 'waterboarding'.[22] There is also documentation of the extinguishing of cigarettes on cheeks, in nostrils or on other parts of the bodies of detainees, sometimes mere boys. The same applies to pulling out hair, forcing prisoners to kneel in broken glass, and rubbing salt into wounds that had been cut open by the interrogators.[23]

Non-physical torture, such as mock executions, was also common.[24] Knowingly refusing a prisoner medical aid after an assault was another method.[25] Intelligence personnel also tried to get detainees to talk by shutting them up in small and cramped rooms, tying them up in painful positions, or denying them food or sleep.[26] Aside from a testimony by an official from the Government Information Service (more on which below) and a case of rape at a NEFIS outpost mentioned in the *Excessennota*,[27] there are few known reports of sexual violence by intelligence personnel. This is in part explained by the fact that most of the detainees were male. Furthermore, the silence about this form of violence may have been more persistent than that about other atrocities because of the taboo that surrounded it.[28]

Most torture was committed by regular interrogation staff including members of the ESD, the 'interpreters' from the VDMB. A less well-known fact is that Indonesian fighters ('*laskars*') who had defected and spies also carried out harsh interrogations. For example, intelligence sergeant Fokke Dijkstra (KL) described how 'their' laskars had interrogated five detainees in May 1948: 'They were even worse than the *Moffen* [Krauts]. It wouldn't have been good if the CGD [Committee of Good Offices of the United Nations] or the lieutenant-colonel had known about it.'[29] However, servicemen from other (regular) units, occasionally even including medics, sometimes took part in torture as well.[30] In addition, the various police forces, the Military Police (MP) and the security battalions (Veiligheidsbataljons, Indonesian auxiliary troops) also frequently used inhumane methods during interrogations.[31]

According to Burgers, Indonesians were mostly tortured using electricity, as it was 'clean' and left no traces.[32] In his testimony, intelligence employee



Original caption: 'Intimidation of two captured peloppers'. This intimidation, which was probably intended to get the captured fighters to talk, took the form of a mock execution with a noose. Place and date unknown; likely to have been in the vicinity of Demak (Central Java) in 1947-1948. Source: S. van Langen, NIMH.

Goos Blok (KL) said of the interrogation practices: 'Beatings and electric shocks were used. I used them myself, too. With the wires of a field phone in their hand [of the detainees].'[33] Official documents also bear witness to this practice. For example, a military-civilian commission that investigated torture by the MID in Sengkang, South Sulawesi, concluded in 1946: 'Electricity was frequently used in interrogations.'[34] Two public prosecutors reported from East Java in 1948: 'We have reliably been informed that two detainees [...] were subjected to electric current.'[35]

One rare testimony by a victim of Dutch torture was given by a Javanese, Yaseman. He was tortured by the IVG near Malang, for which he won a lawsuit against the Dutch state in 2018. 'A cane stroke is something you only feel once, I can take that. But electric current runs through your whole body and keeps on hurting. Your whole body shakes and you get completely disorientated,' he told a television interviewer.[36] Yaseman was arrested in mid-1947

when soldiers mistook him for a TNI soldier. 'My fingers were bound with a cable that was connected to a device [field telephone] that generated power when turned. [...] I had to tell them whether I was a soldier. As I [...] couldn't take it anymore, after two days I confessed that I was a soldier.' This and other forms of torture, according to Yaseman, were carried out each time by a Dutch soldier and a Javanese 'accomplice'.[37]

There is an abundance of testimonies about inhumane interrogation methods, but at the same time it should be emphasized that violence was not used in every interrogation, nor was it used by all intelligence groups.[38] As shall be discussed further below, the precise frequency with which coercion was used or not used can no longer be established, due to under-reporting and concealment. As a rule, torture was not used if the respondent was willing to talk. If that was not the case, some interrogators resorted to non-violent methods, such as patience, discretion, promises, money or deception. One 'trick', for example, was to lock up incommunicative prisoners with spies who posed as detainees.[39] In line with the interrogation instructions, some military intelligence personnel, such as Corporal Bert Carper (KL), believed harsh interrogations to be counterproductive. In a corrupt country such as Indonesia, as he saw it, much more could be achieved with money and he thus preferred to pay for information.[40]

The killing of interrogated prisoners

The killing of 'squeezed-out' (interrogated) prisoners who had provided information or 'confessed' was also a widespread phenomenon. These murders were committed because the prisoners were 'superfluous', as a punishment, as a deterrent, or to cover up previous torture. They were also the result of frustration about the release of prisoners, according to an ESD interrogator working for the VDMB, Adolf Birney: 'It often happened that people who had committed multiple murders were simply acquitted "due to lack of evidence". It goes without saying that such judgements [...] didn't go down well with the intelligence services. Appropriate measures were therefore taken.' No one prevented Birney and his fellow ESD staff from doing this.[41]

From the testimony of Jan van de Laar, who also worked for the VDMB, it seems that the killing of prisoners was common practice in this security service: 'If they didn't want to talk, they were locked up for three or four days [...]. Most of them were then [...] shot anyway.'[42] Reports of these practices seeped out. Former prime minister Wim Schermerhorn (Labour Party) confided in his diary that 'mistreating prisoners and then finishing them

off after interrogation [...] is considered quite normal, under the motto that they are all *rampokkers* [plunderers] against whom anything is permitted'.[43] In 1949, member of parliament Henk Gortzak (Communist Party) read out a soldier's letter in the Lower House, revealing the fate of a 'fully interrogated' prisoner who had given up the locations of his comrades-in-arms: 'The prisoner, who had given everything away, was taken to a quiet place and shot from behind. The shot in the neck.'[44] Military intelligence personnel usually committed such murders at their own initiative, but in some cases the command came – orally – from above.[45]

Clandestine investigative operations

The so-called Investigative Service (Opsporingsdienst, OD), part of the counter-intelligence sections, dealt with a special aspect of intelligence work that was routinely accompanied by extreme violence. This service had to track down, watch and arrest 'gang leaders' involved in espionage, sabotage or other subversive activities. The OD consisted of two groups: the 'spies and agent network' and the 'raiding groups'. The spies group had to infiltrate Republican organizations and also shadow, identify, lure and sometimes arrest 'suspicious' individuals. The military raiding groups that worked with the espionage group had to act 'in a silent manner' to thwart and dismantle 'suspicious elements' or 'underground organizations'. Although the guidelines offered no clarity about the degree of violence that could be used when doing so, they did state that the small raiding groups should be composed of 'native (or those who appear as such) staff dressed in civilian clothing' and had to travel in 'inconspicuous vehicles'. In their risky operations, 'possibly under the guise of Republican conviction', these men had to remove suspects unobtrusively 'from their homes or place of residence'. In addition, the raiding groups had to 'eradicate subversive pockets of resistance behind the demarcation lines'.[46]

These investigative operations, in which the OD played the role of both judge and executioner, left few traces in the archives. What is clear is that such actions could easily be denied by the Dutch authorities or blamed on the Republic. In their memoirs, Indo-European and Moluccan VDMB staff such as Giovanni Hakkenberg and ESD members such as Piet Tuankotta and Adolf Birney give examples of investigative operations, usually carried out at night. These were often undertaken alone, barefoot, in plainclothes and, of course, in the deepest secrecy. These men, who saw themselves as doing the dirty work for others, did not allow themselves to be held back by

instructions or demarcation lines. If they suspected their targets possessed relevant information, the latter were subject to 'strict interrogation' after arrest. Their objective, however, was usually to eliminate a 'gang leader' – and preferably also his most important 'accomplices' – for good. If the target was well-guarded or difficult to catch, a raiding group was formed consisting of plainclothes spies, guides, 'interpreters', police officers, intelligence personnel and marines. Investigative operations such as these were not always successful, in part because they often took place in unknown territory, and were sometimes performed in an amateurish fashion.[47]

The men from IVGs also carried out investigative operations. In early 1947, for example, intelligence sergeant J.P. Schultz (KL) of 1-12 RI attempted to eliminate a 'gang leader', Mardo, near Cerme (East Java). Even though Mardo lived on the other side of the demarcation line, which could lead to 'trouble', Schultz gave the order for his arrest. After the first attempt failed, he launched a second operation. With his small group of subordinates, Schultz discussed how they could prevent the detainee from 'giving away' where he had been seized 'to the brigade'. It seems to have taken little time to find a solution: 'A [staged] attempt, a shot and the man [would be] silenced for good.'[48] But the operation failed once more, as Mardo managed to escape. Several months later, Schultz noted exultantly in his diary that Mardo had 'finally' been arrested, albeit by another IVG unit: 'A brave exploit, although it had to be kept secret from the Brigade staff. The batt. commander heard about it and ... kept mum, but his smile said it all.' One day later, Mardo died 'as a result of rough treatment', Schultz wrote euphemistically.[49]

In West Java, *laskars* were called in to assist at least five KL infantry battalions and some artillery regiments with investigative operations. In the words of war volunteer Lieutenant Co Broerse: '*Laskars* are native auxiliaries who are selected and trained by our battalion's intelligence service [...]. They are invaluable, especially at night as stealth scouts and for tracking down suspicious persons.'[50] According to a commemorative book for 3-12 RI, too, 'these ID people ("our *Laskars*") rendered priceless services' in investigative operations, for which they were equipped with seized weapons and dressed in Indonesian clothing.[51] According to gunner Hendrik Knapen, the *laskars* managed by the IVGs were known for their brutality: 'Those are the people who defected to us at that time, fine hooligans, who massacred an entire *kampong* without a second thought.'[52] In some units, such as the 3rd battalion of the Garderegiment Prinses Irene, intelligence officers also trained their own (Dutch) commandos to take part in purge and in-

vestigative operations. According to a commemorative book bestrewn with euphemisms, those 'boys were not selected for their spotless records and gentle natures'.[53]

Mass arrests and the internment of civilians

Another, non-physical form of action by the military intelligence services with far-reaching consequences for those involved was the arrest of tens of thousands of civilians.[54] In early 1947 alone, for example, the TIVG in Palembang made an average of ten arrests a day.[55] Other soldiers (not always authorized), the MP and police officers also made arrests, both ad hoc during operations and based on intelligence, but the intelligence services took the lead. According to an analysis drafted in September 1947 by the head of the IVG at Base Command Semarang, Captain Pieter Dakkus (KNIL), the arrests were 'too often based on arbitrary, unmotivated accusations by fellow kampong residents, who wanted to avenge themselves on each other'. Allegations had to be investigated before an arrest could be made. 'Arbitrary arrests', Dakkus wrote, 'create unrest among the population'.[56] Another reason for arrests were accusations by spies or detainees, information that was often unreliable.

During the arrests, intelligence squads were troubled by the fact that even they were frequently unable to distinguish between civilians and combatants in the guerrilla context. The methods for doing so were often arbitrary. The advice from instructors, for example, was to look out for individuals who had no calluses on their hands (and were thus not farmers), or had long hair (who were therefore taken for guerrilla fighters). This arbitrariness is even clearer from an instruction to fish out 'the most suspicious faces' from the crowd when screening kampongs. The population saw that the 'sifting' of the 'sheep' from the 'goats' was often harsh – and that a large number of kampong residents were routinely taken away for further questioning.[57]

The mass arrests, which usually resulted in internment, left tens of thousands of Indonesian families in a state of uncertainty about the fate of their partners, fathers, sons and daughters. Families often lost a breadwinner. In addition to administrators and some intelligence officers, representatives of the military justice system complained about what they saw as the unlawful and arbitrary mass arrests throughout the archipelago. Furthermore, the intelligence services were ignoring the order, issued in December 1947 by Spoor and Attorney General Henk Felderhof, that arrests should only be made in cooperation with the civilian authorities.[58]

Mass arrests also led to overcrowded prisons and forced releases. Some soldiers feared that if they acted by the book and handed prisoners to the civilian authorities, former detainees would soon be waiting to ambush them. For this reason, they preferred to solve the 'prisoner problem' with a bullet on the spot. As a result, mass arrests paved the way for extrajudicial executions or 'summary justice', usually carried out by infantrymen.[59]

The collective punishment of civilians

According to Van Doorn and Hendrix, intelligence personnel often played a 'leading role' in all kinds of military operations, ranging from 'simple arrest patrols' to 'mass reprisals against an "unwilling" population'.[60] That the population was often 'unwilling', from the intelligence services' perspective, is in part explained by the fact that they were caught between two evils in the intelligence war. The safest option was to provide meaningless information or no information at all. However, we also know of many cases of kampong residents reporting Republican fighters, weapons caches or mines to the Dutch. Money or goods were provided to encourage such reports.[61] Sometimes the rewards backfired, though, as occasionally informants had an eye on the reward and provided exaggerated or incorrect information.

The intelligence services could act in an intimidating or violent fashion if the residents or *lurah* (village leader) failed to provide any information, or information they considered insufficient. On 8 May 1948, for example, after the Republican shelling of the encampment in Puraseda (West Java), intelligence sergeant Marten Sytsema (KL) of the 3rd Battalion of the Garderegiment Jagers noted: 'We will have to crack down on anyone who doesn't wish to provide information about what happened [...]. It is certain that the people here are aware of the whereabouts of the *garongs* [raiders], but they dare not say anything for fear of the gang members [insurgents].' A few months later, a frustrated Sytsema wrote: 'In fact, the whole population is cooperating [with the resistance movement], if only by keeping silent and pretending to be dumb.' In December 1948, he ordered the destruction of houses in two kampongs, 'because the people haven't reported anything'.[62]

Sytsema thereby contravened the rules. The IVG instructions did state, however, that intelligence services at new outposts had to convene a *lurah* meeting and demand 'in no uncertain terms [...] that they pass on reports of events in the kampongs'. If they did not, 'punitive measures would be taken against the *lurah* immediately'. On paper, such punishment amounted to up to three days' detention.[63] The intelligence services were tasked, when

they deemed it necessary, with appointing or replacing the lowest Indonesian level of the administration. These administrators, who were affiliated to the Netherlands but had no adequate protection, thereby became part of the Dutch alert system: they had to report any fighters present in their villages. This put them in an impossible position and made them the target of Indonesian extreme violence, resulting in hundreds of victims.[64]

Frustration and despair in the Dutch ranks increased, partly due to the poor intelligence and the resulting lack of success and mounting losses. This sense of powerlessness reinforced the need to punish villagers collectively or randomly in cases where there were well-founded or unjustified suspicions that they were supporting or failing to report the elusive opponent. For example, a war volunteer wrote: 'Another form of action was killing "as a deterrent"'. If the inhabitants of a 'suspicious kampong' – which had been 'combed-out in vain' on the basis of 'the intelligence obtained' – refused to provide information, 'some poor fellow was picked out of a row of terrified men' and shot. 'This measure was also fruitless, of course.'[65]

Terror as an intentional effect

One of the few reports explicitly to address the impact of the intelligence services' violence on the Indonesian population relates to the small town of Salatiga (Central Java), which was captured during Operation Product and subsequently lay on the demarcation line. According to Dutch sources, Salatiga and its surroundings were stricken in 1947-1948 by Republican 'violations of truce': espionage activities, ambushes, mines and hit-and-run attacks. The Dutch troops were unable to suppress the 'terror methods used by the Republican armed groups', which were mainly aimed at the parts of the population that were inclined or forced to collaborate.[66]

In September 1948, the deputy director of the Government Information Service (Regeringsvoorlichtingsdienst, RVD), former journalist Willem van Goudoever, reported on the Dutch terror methods in the 'friendly mountain town' of Salatiga. In a report entitled 'Holiday impressions from Central Java', the horrified civil servant described a reign of terror by the IVG. According to him, the Indonesians were in a 'psychosis of fear' due to interrogation methods 'that the Dutch [...] are in the habit of condemning [when used by] the Germans and Japanese'. No one dared to complain to the authorities or in public, according to the RVD official, 'because it is too dangerous to have the IVG as an enemy'. Van Goudoever also noted:

> The people are truly terrified. They feel they have no rights and that they are thus utterly powerless. If a motor vehicle stops somewhere in the night, people nearby lie listening with pounding hearts to see whether steps come in the direction of their house, and whether there will be a knock at the door. The description of such anxious waiting is [...] reminiscent of the [Dutch] resistance literature [about World War II]. [...] A special category of complaints concerns the treatment of female detainees. It is not the intention to go into details.[67]

Although the names of 'some of the most notorious IVG figures' had already been passed to higher administrative bodies, the population of Salatiga had 'little hope of radical intervention, because the psychosis of fear [...] is not an accidental phenomenon, but an effect intentionally pursued by the IVG'. The IVG believed that 'one should catch thieves with thieves' and that 'terror is the best weapon against terror, including as a preventive measure'. In addition to inhumane interrogation practices, Van Goudoever protested at the 'weeks-long detention of innocent people', including loyal Indonesian administrators. In his view, the extreme IVG violence and the mass arrests were undermining the administration's policy. As a result, the residents gave credence to the picture sketched by Republican propaganda: 'the return of the Dutch means the return of colonial oppression'.[68]

Van Goudoever's strident complaint prompted Spoor to order an 'in-depth investigation'. The general promised Van Mook's cabinet 'not to rest until these situations have been fully explained and remedied'. As Van Goudoever had promised to protect his sources due to their deep 'fear of revenge by some IVG figures', however, he was unable to reveal their names. Spoor seized upon this to bring a speedy end to the investigation, 'as there is little that can be done with anonymous complaints'. Although P.J. Koets, director of Van Mook's cabinet, considered the army commander's position to be 'quite unsatisfactory', Spoor got his way.[69]

Twenty years later, in line with Van Goudoever, Hueting also described the IVGs' use of terror, stating that their actions 'during the interrogations [... were] sometimes needlessly cruel. The people were in a paroxysm of fear; the actions had the effect of terrorizing, not pacifying them.' According to Hueting, in many places the intelligence and security services intentionally resorted to terror because 'the military superiority on the Dutch side' was so small that it could not be maintained 'without making use of these methods'.[70]

The Dutch archives contain even more official complaints about targeted terror and mass arrests by the intelligence services. Between 1946 and 1948, for example, the base police at Cililitan airbase (West Java), which operated as a security service, oversaw a reign of terror while the authorities looked the other way. Despite patently obvious evidence of a long series of liquidations, the individuals responsible escaped scot-free.[71] In early 1948, the most senior administrative official in East Java, Charles Olke van der Plas, denounced the 'reign of terror' and the 'security terror' by the MID on the Kangean and Sapudi islands. Extortion, assault, the deprivation of liberty and the trigger-happy behaviour of intelligence staff, 'rogues who had [already] made Madura unsafe', had been commonplace. This complaint, too, had little effect. The main culprit, Sergeant C.M. Leeuwenburgh (KNIL), was removed from Madura by Major General Simon de Waal (KNIL), but he escaped further punishment.[72]

The IVG reign of terror in Payakumbuh

In the first quarter of 1949, terror was also used intentionally by the IVG in the town of Payakumbuh (West Sumatra). The local branch was thereby guilty of what was perhaps the largest massacre by an intelligence service in Indonesia, a crime that remains virtually unknown in the Netherlands.[73] Payakumbuh forms part of the Minangkabau, a region that was occupied by Dutch troops from late 1948. According to Jan van der Velde, a government advisor on West Sumatra, the Minangkabau was in fact 'fiercely Republican'. The area had been captured, he wrote, on the basis of 'totally false information from a single spy in Singapore', who had reported the presence of a strong pro-Dutch federal movement. According to Van der Velde, however, this movement existed only in the mind of Army Commander General Spoor.[74]

The administrator's suspicions were soon confirmed. The occupation of the area, with its highly underestimated opposition, proved to be a disastrous undertaking 'with a political outcome that was nothing but counterproductive.' Despite help from commandos of the Special Forces (Korps Speciale Troepen, KST), the U-brigade units active in West Sumatra were hampered by fierce Republican resistance. Nor did a major Dutch 'victory' on 15 January 1949 in Situjuh Batur, a village near Payakumbuh, bring any change. A spy had indicated that a meeting of Republican leaders would take place there. When KST soldiers and troops from 1-4 RS (the first company of the 4th Battalion of the Regiment Stoottroepen) raided the building in question at daybreak, they shot dead nine military and civilian leaders.[75]

In total, no fewer than 69 Indonesians were killed in this operation in unknown circumstances.[76]

It did not end there, however; the operation had enormous consequences. From an Indonesian perspective, the raid was the result of a serious 'betrayal' that had resulted in the death of nine 'heroes' in the fight for independence.[77] The alleged spy, a TNI lieutenant, and his family were killed by armed groups.[78] According to a Dutch intelligence report, there was 'great suspicion' in Republican ranks after the raid: 'They saw Dutch spies everywhere [...]. Very large numbers of suspects were arrested and forced to "confess".'[79] In late January 1949, after the KST, according to its own reports, had killed 446 Indonesian fighters in three weeks and left for Java, the U-Brigade troops were on their own once more.[80] In February, Payakumbuh was attacked almost daily by Republican armed forces, even in broad daylight and with artillery. The supply convoys from the Sumatran capital of Bukittinggi, around 35 kilometres away, were regularly ambushed, too. But that was not all: intelligence was poor, Payakumbuh was targeted with some success by a Republican economic blockade, and the troops of 4 RS suffered mounting losses.[81]

In his memoirs, Geu Meulenbroeks of 4 RS described how his unit's IVG, in collaboration with KNIL soldiers, had already arrested 'many suspects' during the advance towards Bukittinggi, and had made them 'disappear' – 'innocent people' among them – into the *kali* (river) near Padang Panjang. 'But that's [the IVG's] business', he noted. 'If only the *kalis* could talk!'[82] In early 1949, a 50 men-strong police station was established in Payakumbuh to support the overburdened troops of 4 RS. The distrustful IVG kept a close eye on the policemen, however, the majority of whom were Indonesian. According to Meulenbroeks, it did not always stop there: 'There were some [police officers] who colluded with the other side. But there was no pardon for them and they were shot dead at the *kali*. That was very common.'[83]

The number of unlawful executions rose sharply. For example, the MP commander in Sumatra, Major Jan Fris (KNIL), reported in May 1949: 'Last Feb-March, a group of 123 men were shot by the TIVG in Pajakoembo [sic]. One of them was a British Indian, and a complaint seems to have been filed by the British Indian consul. Lieutenant-Colonel Raebel [battalion commander of 4 RS] was also aware of this. It was all covered up with the knowledge of [...] Col. V. Erp [troop commander in Central Sumatra]; according to the latter, it could be classified as "military necessity".'[84] In December 1949, judge advocate J. Albarda confirmed that this mass murder had been

covered up. He noted: 'I am aware that there has been large-scale tampering in this case. The main witness – an Indonesian – was "taken aside" by two officers from 4 RS and no longer wishes to say anything. The Military Police were tasked with producing a watertight report and hearing only those witnesses who could testify they knew nothing. [...] This resulted in a dismissal, of course; no evidence.'[85]

In 1977, Govert Zijlmans interviewed Louis Graf as part of his doctoral research on the colonial administration. This senior official had been in Bukittinggi and surroundings in early 1949 to investigate reports of large-scale Dutch looting. Graf spoke of the unlawful executions and torture committed in this city, and confirmed the large-scale looting; unfortunately, he did not mention the Dutch units by name. Graf also went to Payakumbuh at that time, where he heard reports of rapes and the shooting of civilians, including women and children. According to Graf, brigade commander J.C.C. van Erp (KL) reacted only half-heartedly to his complaints, whilst the battalion commander of 4 RS, Marinus Raebel (KL), even used intimidation to silence him.[86] Esther Zwinkel's chapter in this book, 'The law as a weapon', describes how in this period Raebel also threatened Asser, a judge advocate who was also active in Bukittinggi, to refrain from investigating. It is very possible that Raebel was also one of the 4 RS officers who, according to Albarda, had frightened the main witness to the IVG terror in Payakumbuh.

In the Dutch sources, this is where the trail goes cold. However, Indonesian historical research and media reports clarify that the bridge over the Batang Agam river served as a 'site of slaughter' (see image on page 116). The 'murderous excesses' committed by the IVG and its 'accomplices', according to these Indonesian sources, were 'the height of Dutch cruelty' in and around the town. The cornered Dutch troops had responded by burning down hundreds of houses in villages around Payakumbuh and carrying out arbitrary mass arrests. 'Anyone they were able to catch' was detained. The prisoners were taken to the local IVG outpost, tortured and shot by the bridge, after which their bodies fell into the river. This gruesome spectacle usually took place in the afternoon, meaning that many of the residents of Payakumbuh no longer dared leave their houses. Two survivors of this IVG 'terror', M. Djuri and Ramli, were forced to throw the corpses of twelve fellow detainees into the *kali* during one of the execution rounds. When night fell, they managed to escape. Another witness, Buyuang Ketek, received a grazing shot at an execution and was able to dive to safety.[87]

According to Indonesian estimates, between 80 and 90 people, most of them civilians, were killed in the executions in Payakumbuh in early January 1949 alone. To commemorate the bloody events, in 1959 the local authorities named the bridge 'Ratapan Ibu' ('grieving mother'). This was followed in 1980 by the unveiling of a monument. This, too, commemorates the mothers of the victims. Many of the latter fled Payakumbuh because of the intelligence service's reign of terror, and it was only after the departure of the Dutch that they returned and went in search of their loved ones. They frequently went to the execution site to weep, pray and mourn.[88]

According to the report mentioned before by the MP commander in Sumatra, Major Jan Fris, the IVG murdered at least 123 people in Payakumbuh alone between February and March 1949. It is unclear how this figure relates to the Indonesian estimate of 80 to 90 victims killed in January. The Indonesian sources do not give figures for later periods, Dutch sources do not provide figures for earlier ones. It is possible that the two sets of figures should be added together, and even then, a figure of over 200 victims may still be a lower limit. Although the Dutch authorities ordered an investigation, it resulted in a dismissal and a cover-up, as mentioned above. We are thus unable to answer the question of whether the IVG acted on its own authority or on the orders of the company commander or the battalion commander Raebel, who was informed, in any case. However, the sources present a picture of powerlessness, fear and frustration. This situation – caused by poor intelligence, troop shortages, significant military pressure and rising losses – prompted the IVG to use deterrence in the (vain) hope of getting a grip on this part of 'fiercely Republican' Minangkabau.

Finally, the role of Major Fris remains ambivalent: on the one hand he reported the extreme violence to Batavia, yet on the other hand he helped 'his' MP to cover up the massacre in Payakumbuh. It is noteworthy that in the same period, Fris played a leading role in concealing another IVG crime, namely the clubbing to death of a detainee, Ngadiran, during an interrogation in Rantau Prapat (North Sumatra). When the facts of the case were established by a judicial enquiry, Fris had to explain why he had refrained from investigation. He indicated that an investigation would have resulted in 'people [...] becoming wary of using coercive measures in interrogations'. For the most senior MP official on Sumatra, 'military interests' and local security outweighed legal principles in this case. According to Fris, the IVG 'had to make use of illegal methods' because of the 'need to get timely

reports' and 'achieve results'. Fris was by no means alone in weighing up interests in this way, as shown by a second striking similarity between 'Rantau Prapat' and 'Payakumbuh': in both cases, the troop commanders responsible – Major General Piet Scholten (North Sumatra, KNIL) and Colonel Van Erp (Central Sumatra, KL) – helped to cover up the crimes committed by the intelligence services.[89]

Indonesian intelligence work and extreme violence

Indonesian espionage and Dutch field security

Cities such as Semarang, Surabaya and Batavia/Jakarta were constantly targeted by Republican infiltration and espionage. The Dutch intelligence and security services had their hands more than full as a result. Republican spies penetrated the cities disguised as traders, rice-sellers, beggars, refugees, farmers, craftsmen, entertainers or ordinary citizens, and there were also women and children among them. They observed Dutch soldiers in *pasars* (markets), shops, eating-houses, cinemas, gambling dens, brothels and on public transport, or sought to contact spies who had already infiltrated the Dutch authorities. In addition to intelligence-gathering, they also committed sabotage and theft, including of uniforms, weapons and ammunition.

According to Dutch security reports, infiltration in administrative centres usually took place with the aid of a 'false name and pass', which were provided by Indonesian administrative officials. These spies penetrated a territory – Semarang and the surrounding area, for example – separately and 'drop by drop'.[90] After their arrival, the infiltrators had to form small espionage organizations of three to five people. These small cells operated autonomously; contact with other groups was forbidden in order to prevent them from giving each other away.[91]

In their infiltration and espionage activities, the Republican intelligence services made grateful use of the enormous personnel needs of the Dutch civilian and military organizations. They sent their spies to apply for positions, especially those who understood Dutch and could read and write. Spies in these positions could then gather and pass on military, administrative and economic information. The 'counter-intelligence' divisions of the IVGs, NEFIS and MARID attempted to prevent this with screening, but despite catching many infiltrators, they were fighting a losing battle.

In Semarang, for example, infiltrated organizations included the Motor Transport Service, the Engineering Corps and the police.[92]

Republican intelligence-gathering was facilitated by the language problems hampering the KL's security service staff. As a result, it was impossible to monitor the Indonesian civilian workers ('*koelies*') who poured into Dutch encampments in large numbers on a daily basis. Due to the lack of female search personnel, women were hardly ever searched. Passes, which seldom displayed photos, were sometimes issued by intelligence staff without any screening at all. Moreover, there were hardly any checks on the collection of the passes, meaning that forging them or passing them on was child's play.[93]

The security problems were not limited to actual counter-espionage. The Dutch services also had poor 'field security': the defensive capacities of the armed forces and the administration to ensure the security of intelligence reports, military operations, personnel, equipment and access to complexes. Republican intelligence-gathering was facilitated by 'chatty' soldiers, among other things. A security officer stationed in South Sumatra noted that 'Careless talk is still a common problem.'[94] This picture was confirmed by other servicemen. For example, an infantryman complained: 'Conversations are usually held in a way that makes a complete mockery of the concept of "field security"!'[95] Illustrative of this is a complaint by a security officer about two Marine Brigade officers who had discussed an upcoming military operation 'in the broadest terms at the stands of a football ground', thereby endangering the security of the operation. The security officer had already noted that espionage was carried out by 'Indonesians or Indo-Europeans (some mere children) who can understand Dutch', who 'simply listen and are often aware of our upcoming patrols several hours in advance, and pass this on'.[96] Among other things, the security services attempted to fight indiscretion with posters featuring the slogan 'information costs lives' ('*gegevens kosten levens*')

– a motto that, in view of the torture to death of Indonesian prisoners, unwittingly carried a double meaning.

With posters such as these, the security services attempted to raise awareness of security among servicemen. They were urged to destroy their notes, for example, and not to write or talk about military issues. According to this image, the phenomenon of the 'inheemse schoon' (native beauty), in colonial jargon, was seen as an especial danger ('Zwijg. Ook zij kan onbetrouwbaar zijn' / 'Keep silent. She, too, may be untrustworthy').

Source: Overloon War Museum.

ZWIJG



GEGEVENS KOSTEN LEVENS

VELDVEILIGHEIDSDIENST

One gains a good impression of the speed and effectiveness of the Republican intelligence flow from an account given by Lieutenant Jozef Kootker (KL). In his diary he described an operation over several days in West Java, in which his unit had seized a briefcase containing documents from Indonesian military. To his astonishment, he found that it contained 'the entire disposition of the 7 Dec division [...], including that of our company in Maleber, Tjiharashas and Lodji, with map coordinates, even a sketch dated 2/10/1947 of the four groups taking part in the purge operation that we were still carrying out!'[97] In April 1949, a disillusioned security officer reported from East Java: 'After operation Olifant, it turned out that the enemy was also aware of operation Idjen ahead of time.'[98]

The fact that army camps, warehouses, workshops, offices and lockers often had no barbed wire, lighting or padlocks, and sometimes even no doors or roofs, and were not or barely secured or guarded, hardly made the task of the security services any easier. Incautious behaviour was a factor that weighed even more heavily, however. Secret documents ended up in the trash, for example, or used as wrapping paper. Some commanders chose not to communicate sensitive information via ordinances or other secure channels, but relied on the postal service, servants or hotel staff. The army rags lying around in canteens and elsewhere were also easy prey for Republican spies, as they contained all kinds of information about the units. The same was sometimes true of Indonesian newspapers.[99]

Servicemen had a particular tendency to let things slip in front of women, according to a security report: 'Most soldiers are still too indiscreet in their dealings with women.'[100] Many a security officer warned specifically of the danger of female spies, 'an international phenomenon'.[101] In Semarang, security officer Lieutenant Jan Bakker (KNIL) of the T-brigade warned even more specifically about contact with women of 'easy virtue', not only because of the risk of contracting venereal disease, but mainly because of the threat of espionage. In East Java, according to a seized Indonesian police report, women did espionage work in brothels. According to Bakker, women 'who deliberately go out with Dutch soldiers in order to obtain information [...] should not be underestimated'.[102]

The Republican spy Truus Iswarni Sardjono was one such example. Looking to draw out Dutch military, she learned to dance so that she would be a welcome guest at Dutch dance evenings. 'Perhaps they thought, now, she speaks Dutch, so it will be okay.'[103] There were also many spies among the approximately 20,000 to 30,000 '*baboes*' (ayahs) who did the laundry for

the Dutch troops, among other things. For example, one cavalryman noted: 'One afternoon, all the *baboes* and *djongossen* [boy servants] had to come forward. [...] One of the worst was baboe Annie from the Staff [Company of the battalion]; accurate notes on patrol strengths and objectives were found in her house in Mindi. Annie was sent to the lock-up.'[104]

'Time and again', security officer Bakker considered the 'extreme underestimation of the enemy and their espionage activities' to be the main cause of the poor field security.[105] Other security officers also condemned the military's often shocking naivety, complacency and amateurism.[106] The greatest Dutch infiltration shock came in early 1949. According to first state secretary Joost Kist, when the smoke of battle in Yogyakarta had cleared, the intelligence services found a 'not insignificant number of [Dutch] secret documents' in the Republican ministerial archives and official residences. They included military documents from the NEFIS/CMI, staffs and various units of divisions and brigades, right down to information about personnel formations.

It was impossible to conduct a thorough investigation into the leaks, not only because of the 'large number' of military and civilian authorities that were involved in the leaked information in some way, but also because of staff shortages and the amount of time that had now elapsed. It turned out, however, that numerous civilian authorities had made copies of reports and forwarded them without any checks.[107] This was another way in which Republicans could get hold of secret documents, including via Indonesian administrative officials with Republican sympathies or spies who worked for Dutch administrators as clerks or secretaries. However, according to the official from the Public Prosecutor's Office involved in the preliminary research, A.G. Kloots, the overarching problem was that 'when it comes to state security, the Dutch are particularly slow learners. [...] On the whole, attention is only paid to security once it is too late.'[108]

The Republican intelligence and alert system

To the frustration of the Dutch, the Republic waged the intelligence war with a complex and efficient espionage system. In addition, in the context of the 'total people's war', the Indonesian armed forces involved the population in the struggle on a much greater scale than the Dutch. For example, the task of gathering information about Dutch troops was not limited to spies or administrators, but was also the duty of every Indonesian – enforced, if

necessary. TNI strategist Abdul Haris Nasution emphasized: 'All members of the population, men or women, the old, the young and the children, have an obligation to collect this information.'[109] TNI colonel Alex Kawilarang confirmed: 'The common man must find out where the enemy is going and report this to us.'[110]

The simple but extremely effective Republican alert system, which was often used to announce the arrival of Dutch troops, was likewise maintained by spies *and* the general population. Sound signals such as hitting *tongtongs* (wooden drums) were widely used. Women would sometimes beat out a certain rhythm when threshing rice. There is also documentation of smoke and mirror signals, the raising of bamboo blades or bird cages, and the flying of kites. Sometimes even the pattern of colours in the washing – hung out by a watchful baboe – gave away an upcoming operation. A security officer reported another method: 'Patrols are [...] often accompanied in deafening fashion by kampong children, who signal the troops and the route with their traditional thumb gestures and yelling!' The Republic also had an ingenious system of couriers, guard posts and surveillance posts. Scouts could observe Dutch positions from eateries, trees or rice fields, for example. Dogs, geese and tripwires also gave away Dutch actions. The Dutch themselves made an unwitting contribution to the alert system by announcing upcoming infantry operations with reconnaissance flights, gunnery bombardments and noisy movements.[111]

Extreme violence in Indonesian counter-espionage

In order to deter residents from spying for the Dutch, the Republicans not only resorted to propaganda, but they also used intimidation and extreme violence. As early as the first phase of the War of Independence, when the *pemuda* believed the Indonesian Revolution was under threat, there was a veritable spy hysteria. Being suspected of espionage had fatal consequences for those involved.[112] After this first phase, later known in the Netherlands as *bersiap*, the extreme Indonesian violence continued for a long time. In late 1946, a Chinese advisor to Van Mook blamed this Republican 'terror', which targeted the Chinese in particular, on an 'exaggerated fear of spies and enemy accomplices'.[113] This picture is confirmed by the large number of Republican documents seized by the Dutch intelligence services. These documents include orders that explicitly called for the killing of spies and 'NICA [Netherlands Indies Civil Administration] accomplices'.



Original caption: 'Our two spies. They were good fellows, they were. They had it both ways. They had our money, food and a bicycle. They demanded much more from the kampong residents, but we only discovered that later.' Source: S. van Langen, NIMH.

On the Republican side, not only the intelligence services but also (shadow) administrators, pemuda, TNI and armed group commanders and police officers incited these murders, or indicated that certain people should be 'cleaned up'. In December 1947, for example, the TNI sector commander in Lenggang ordered 'the termination of enemy spies on a large scale'.[114] An order issued in November 1947 by '*Wehrkreis* III of the Southern Territory' (of the 6th brigade of the 2nd TNI division) made it compulsory to punish 'pro-Dutch staff' and 'Dutch accomplices'. Two weeks later, the same TNI commander ordered the 'intensification' of 'the killing of spies'.[115] In early 1948, the armed group *Gerakan Beroeang Hitam* (GHB, Black Bear movement) also ordered that 'traitors' in the kampongs, including spies, be 'eradicated'. If a kampong refused, it 'shall (must) be set on fire by the GHB and the residents burned alive'. The extent to which these orders were acted upon remains unknown.[116] The violence was legitimized by painting victims

as 'traitors', 'enemy spies', 'collaborators', 'NICA accomplices' or 'treacherous worms'.[117]

Many a Republican document also reported the execution of liquidation orders, including the names, occupations and addresses of the victims. Under the heading 'killing spies', for example, company commander P. Amin reported: 'On 21-12-47 we sent a woman named B. Kasmiten, aged 40 and living in Sempoesari, to the next world, as she had confessed to having betrayed the whereabouts of the leaders and the troops.'[118] On 19 September 1949, a certain Bok-Ra'Pia in Kandangjati Kulon (East Java) was killed by the local authority in Kraksaan, according to a complaint from an assistant *wedono* (district head) from another district (where the murdered woman had lived). The victim had aroused suspicions by entering an IVG building.[119] Some were also condemned to death for espionage by courts martial and civilian courts. This was the fate of Abdul Rachman on 12 January 1948, for example, 'in relation to acts he had committed as a spy (NICA accomplice)'. He had led Dutch units 'to various places' in order to carry out purge operations.[120] In addition to executions and murders such as these, the torturing of alleged spies in Republican ranks was also common.

Dutch sources confirm that Indonesian – but also Chinese, Indo-European, Indian and Arab – spies (in permanent and irregular service) ran major risks in Dutch service. Many of them were killed, not infrequently with their families. For security reasons, those who spied for the Dutch were invariably left unnamed in official documents. For the Dutch intelligence services, this extreme Indonesian violence was sometimes the reason, in turn, to protect or avenge their own spies in heavy-handed fashion, for example by killing detainees. Many a military intelligence employee, such as Piet Hagenaar, looked back 'with deep respect' on those (apparently) nameless men and women, 'who gave all they had to fight alongside us'.[121] Indeed, these victims of the IVG personnel, whose numbers must have run into the hundreds, should be added to the almost 5,300 military who died on the Dutch side.

Causes and motives for extreme violence

What caused and motivated the extreme violence perpetrated by the IVGs? We have already considered factors such as frustration with poor area control, mounting losses, and incommunicative or otherwise obstructive residents, as well as the fear of releasing prisoners, an overly simplistic and dehumanizing image of the enemy and revenge for attacks on

spies. In this section, we shall explore several more fundamental causes in greater depth.

'Necessity' and the pressure to produce intelligence

Most testimonies about torture cite the need to 'squeeze' intelligence out of detainees quickly as a motive for its use. Reliable information was a prerequisite for military successes and limiting losses on one's own side. Republican detainees, spies and informants were the primary source of intelligence for this. Prisoners therefore had to be made to talk as quickly as possible. They were rarely willing to do so, however, because their honour had been offended by brutal interrogators, for example, or because they were loyal to the Republican cause. Fear of punishment by the Dutch or of Indonesian reprisals was another reason to remain silent for as long as possible.[122]

Soldiers in the field usually approved of the intelligence services doing the 'dirty work' for them. For example, Corporal Henk Volders (KL) suggested: 'In a war situation, it [can] sometimes be necessary, for reasons of personal preservation [...] to use some force to make the prisoner talk!'[123] Gunner Onne Dalinga (KL) noted: 'The treatment [of a prisoner] was not correct under international law, of course, but neither was men in civvies planting bombs. Guerrilla warfare comes with its own rules.'[124]

Intelligence corporal Henk van Dalen (KL) perceived a 'major dilemma' with regard to torture:

> We all knew it wasn't allowed, that had been agreed in the Hague Conventions, but we know that these kinds of things go on. In our service in particular, we often faced the choice of forcibly extracting information or just leaving it at that, with potentially serious consequences for our own troops and the civilian population, respectively. We tried [...] to strike a balance [...]. But it will always be a major dilemma for people who are pressured by the commanders to produce intelligence. 'Make sure I receive that information, and I don't care how you get hold of it!'[125]

Intelligence officer Eddy Mahler of the first KNIL battalion (Inf. I) confirmed that his battalion commander had given him a free rein, and that he was even expected to torture a prisoner. Mahler considered this 'indicative of the odd ideas that some commanders had [...] about intelligence work'.[126] According to a former officer, there were also commanders 'who wanted to

get in their superiors' good books by gathering intelligence and therefore accepted everything that their subordinates [...] "conjured up" in the way of intelligence'.[127]

Forced confessions

Many intelligence staff used torture not only to gather combat intelligence, as the *Excessennota* suggests, but also to force confessions. This is also evident from an investigation by Karel Bieger, a senior official at the Public Prosecutor's Office. When he understood that two Indonesian prisoners had been forced to confess, he carried out a house search at the intelligence service of the fifth KNIL battalion (Inf. V) on 21 April 1948. At the intelligence service's office in Gombong, a small town close to the demarcation line in Central Java, he confiscated a 'kind of telephone set' that had been used for torture. Bieger was astonished that the position of intelligence officer – 'a very responsible position!' – was held by a sergeant. The latter admitted torture. Bieger concluded that 'the intelligence service in Gombong had used unauthorized methods during interrogations in order to get suspects to confess'.[128]

Written sources and testimonies suggest that this was by no means an isolated case. For example, the Informal Advisory Committee (IAC) of the Banyumas regency, a military-administrative-judicial consultative body to which Bieger belonged, was convinced 'that unlawful and systematic abuse is taking place in various intelligence services'.[129] Bieger had reported, for example, that he had launched an 'extensive investigation' into the intelligence service in Cilacap, owing to the 'use of *Kempaitai* [Japanese military police] methods'.[130] At the intelligence service in Gombong, which had ignored a warning from Bieger, such malpractice had been 'going on for some time'.[131]

Spoor, who was informed by Felderhof, asked the troop commander in Central Java, Jan Meijer (KNIL), to respond to the 'improper interrogation methods' in Gombong. Although the colonel relieved the staff involved of their positions, this blatant crime did not result in a court-martial case.[132] Bieger also made a striking point in another report: 'The IAC [is] unanimous in its opinion that the reports from various intelligence services are often far from reliable, as these services use unauthorized coercive methods.' Indeed, Bieger considered forced confessions to be so unreliable that he refused to accept them as grounds for internment.[133]

Forced confessions were also recorded in official documents in Trawas (East Java) and elsewhere. The local IVG mistreated nine prisoners there in

March 1948. What makes this case special is that the civilian authority, in this case the field police in Mojokerto, investigated the 'abuse of power' and 'use of coercive measures in order to extract a confession'. The police investigation revealed that a Dutch sergeant in the KL, an Ambonese corporal in the KNIL and a 'Javanese accomplice' had mistreated the prisoners. On two prisoners, Sarto and Nagrawi, the police found visible traces of assault. In order to bring an end to the torment, all of the detainees had 'confessed' to being spies.[134]

In 1948, military doctor Ad van der Burg also complained to Spoor about the maltreatment of detainees, in this case in Cirebon (West Java). He also noticed that many suspects who had to appear in court retracted their 'pre-trial' testimonies obtained under duress. Whilst Spoor did not deny the abuse in Cirebon, he saw no causal link between the violence used in interrogations and the retraction of the confessions in court.[135] What is certain, however, is that forced 'confessions' led to prison sentences and even death sentences. It is also likely that a substantial number of innocent people were convicted on the basis of such unreliable confessions.

Impunity, the policy of condonation and ambiguous interrogation instructions

According to the army leadership, from early 1947 the 1929 Geneva Convention formed the basis for handling prisoners and prisoners of war. The convention provided that prisoners had to be treated humanely and that no coercive measures should be used during interrogations. Nevertheless, in May 1948 Spoor was forced to issue another explicit ban on torture: commanders had to be 'thorough' in their efforts to ensure that no 'unacceptable interrogation methods' were used.[136] In reality, though, the authorities continued to turn a blind eye to torture. According to Van Doorn and Hendrix, the courts martial were 'chronically blind' to 'functional' torture from a military perspective. Loe de Jong also emphasized the primacy of war goals: 'Most officers who sat on those courts martial were well aware that the guerrilla groups [...] would become even more elusive [...] if people adhered to the [torture] ban issued by General Spoor.' Criminal lawyer Frits Rüter offered an apt analysis: 'A government that finds that torture is being used in interrogations by the intelligence services, and fails to put an end to it, *desires* that mistreatment as a means of obtaining information.'[137]



Three Indonesian prisoners who, according to the original caption on 27 November 1947, had attacked a Dutch camp, are held at gunpoint by a Dutch soldier. They were probably interrogated shortly afterwards. Source: NIOD/Collection Verplanke.

In addition to Spoor's ban on torture, the IVG guidelines stated that 'heavy-handed action' was 'expressly prohibited' in interrogations.[138] However, some passages in the interrogation instructions also allowed for a violent interpretation of this task. Like the civilian and military authorities, intelligence squads in theory distinguished between military, political and criminal prisoners, who were often in fact interned detainees. According to these instructions, military detainees had to be treated humanely. Interrogators were warned to be 'extremely careful' when interrogating political detainees, because all kinds of (civilian) authorities were involved. According to the instructions, however, when it came to criminals, the gloves could come off: 'At criminal interrogations, where one is often dealing with felonious characters, one can act forcefully. These interrogations should be carried out by hard-hitting interrogators.'[139] It is unclear how the interrogators distinguished between 'military', 'political' and 'criminal' detainees in practice.

Most of them took their own line in this regard, too. Moreover, intelligence staff rarely received explicit instructions about the level of violence they were allowed to use (or have others use) in interrogations.[140]

According to the instructions, IVG staff had three options for dealing with detainees who had been interrogated: release, handing them over to the police for further investigation and possible trial ('prosecution for crimes'), or internment (based on article 20 of the State of War and Siege). According to the instructions, the explicit preference was for the second option – handing detainees over to the police – but on condition that the overstretched police should not be burdened with hopeless cases. For that reason, only detainees with the necessary 'evidence' – that is, a confession – could be handed over.[141] Many an intelligence officer will have read these instructions, if they received them at all, as an incitement to characterize detainees as criminals whenever possible and force confessions. As mentioned above, there was also a fourth option, one that was obviously not mentioned in the instructions: killing the detainees.

Unsuitable and poorly trained personnel

In 1948, Bieger, the official from the Public Prosecutor's Office, analysed what he saw as 'the cause' of extreme IVG violence, concluding

> that there are too few specially trained intelligence personnel in our army. At present it is often sufficient to appoint a few men who are wholly unfamiliar with the country and the language and are dependent on their interpreters and subordinates, who often lack the necessary capacities for this difficult work. As the intelligence services, in my opinion, at present are one of the most important parts of our army, I believe that it is absolutely essential to train competent personnel [...] in the short term.[142]

This remained a pipe dream.

Van Doorn and Hendrix also saw poor training and the lack of selection as factors that promoted violence. They considered it noteworthy, for example, that 'various figures who fail as troop commanders are taken on by the intelligence service'. Moreover, the shortage of trained specialists in IVGs meant that some untrained officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) carried out intelligence work themselves. In the VDMB,

marines – who were also not trained for this – had to make up for the personnel shortage, as well as selected civilians (members of the ESD).[143] According to marine Jacob Vredenbregt, the army and navy intelligence services were dominated by 'badly educated people'. In his view, most of them were Indo-Europeans 'who passed themselves off as "experts" on the country and culture'. He believed that these men excelled at the VDMB 'in their arbitrariness, cruelty and, above all, amateurism'.[144] The VDMB's official annual report in 1947 also complained about the inadequate training of its own staff, a need that 'unfortunately could not be met'. Although the reporter considered his own intelligence service to be the best in the Dutch camp, he still saw the VDMB as 'a band of enthusiastic amateurs in many respects'.[145]

ESD member Birney also sketched a picture of some unsuitable VDMB staff who indulged in murder and torture. The settlement of personal accounts often played a central role – for himself included. 'Most of the boys are filled with revenge and hatred of the peloppers [derogatory term for Indonesian combatants]. Even prisoners are often gunned down.'[146] One day, when Birney suggested that five arrested *pemuda* be killed with bayonets, his four colleagues from the ESD agreed. 'After all, those four interpreters were Eurasian boys whose mothers and sisters had been raped and cut into pieces before their eyes [during *bersiap*].'[147] Many a KNIL or KL interrogator was also driven by a sense of revenge.[148]

Like many other witnesses, military intelligence officer Leendert Sijsenaar traced the causes of extreme violence by the IVG to the KNIL military added to KL squads, and by the VDMB to assistant staff such as members of the ESD, who had endured traumatic experiences during their Japanese captivity and/or during *bersiap*.[149] Frans Doeleman, however, a military doctor who worked for a KL battalion, rightly attributed the responsibility more broadly. Although he observed that the IVGs' interrogation sections were composed 'primarily of native KNIL military', 'in the end, we [KL military] also bear responsibility'.[150] This argument reveals the complexity and layered nature of the 'guilt question'. It is indeed the case that those who worked for the intelligences services and who were usually associated with the KNIL – the Indo-European, Moluccan, Chinese and Indonesian military and ESD members – frequently acted as willing executioners. One factor that contributed to this was that, in contrast to KL servicemen, they believed that their future in Indonesia was at stake and feared a day of reckoning in the event of a Dutch withdrawal.

Nevertheless, following Doeleman's observation, it would be incorrect to attribute particular (or sole) blame to the KNIL personnel, members of the ESD and Indonesian assistants. After all, due to their alleged insider status and language skills they were over-represented at interrogations. Even more important is the argument that the intelligence personnel shipped in from the Netherlands routinely overstepped the mark too. Furthermore, in line with a colonial system that was segregated on ethnic grounds and following the example given by white KNIL officers, KL military regularly passed on the 'dirty work' to lower-ranking KNIL servicemen and/or Indonesian assistants. Another factor specific to white KL military intelligence personnel was that their poor command of the Indonesian language sometimes led them to act harshly in interrogations.[151]

Playing a losing hand

When we consider the course of the intelligence war, it is clear that the Republicans were ahead of the Dutch from the outset. In November 1945, for example, a reporter from so-called Base Command Batavia stated that 'the rebels were often well aware of the layout of the bivouacs and the positions of the weapons [...]. Using an extensive espionage system [...] they secure themselves against raids and keep informed of fixed transport routes and times'.[152] The Indonesian armed forces held all the trump cards: they were numerically much stronger, they were more mobile, had better knowledge of the terrain, had higher morale – and they were supported by a largely pro-Republican population, who made an important contribution to the intelligence war. Even before Operation Product, the Indonesian intelligence services had managed to infiltrate the Dutch camp on a large scale.

The Dutch intelligence services became increasingly overburdened during the war, not least because they had to secure more extensive command areas as a result of the two offensives. They also struggled with staff shortages, an overly broad range of tasks, and sometimes poor connections, too. The services were also affected by the many troop movements, because this meant that they repeatedly lost their networks. The difficulties were compounded by the guerrilla tactics on the Republican side: after ambushes or attacks, the TNI and armed groups would often retreat rapidly behind the demarcation lines or melt into the population. In addition, some areas were so dangerous or difficult to access that Dutch intelligence patrols and spies could hardly – or seldom dared – to enter them. Moreover, to the (sometimes intentional) confusion of the intelligence staff, numerous military and

political Indonesian resistance organizations were created, regularly merged and split up again, often changing their names and leaders in the process. To make matters worse, the information obtained from prisoners and spies often proved to be unreliable or obsolete.[153]

Faulty intelligence such as this sometimes had fatal consequences for Indonesian civilians, because it could result in extreme violence by the responding infantry units, such as the massacre in Balongsari (Rawagede) and the 'blood wedding' in Cilacap.[154] Faulty intelligence could also lead to a kampong being targeted by mortars, artillery or aircraft on the grounds that it was said to be harbouring an armed group, when in reality only civilians were hit.[155]

Intelligence personnel found it almost impossible to understand the movements and plans of the enemy and prevent espionage. The military intelligence services – along with the entire armed forces – were often stumbling in the dark and overtaken by events. The frustration became even greater, because units frequently found that even intelligence that was deemed reliable failed to result in combat engagement. A commemorative book relates how troops were left 'empty-handed' after a major action, for example, because it turned out 'for the umpteenth time' that the 'enemy espionage network functioned brilliantly'.[156] Another commemorative book acknowledges fruitless intelligence-driven operations with remarks such as 'they were long gone, as usual' and 'we are marching around for nothing again'.[157] Military reporting also gives an insight into such frustrations. 'The resistance movement's perfected warning and intelligence system', stated the report of the eighteenth KNIL battalion in South Kalimantan, 'makes surprise operations [...] virtually impossible'.[158] As a result, most Dutch patrols and operations had little effect. The impact that this had on morale was a factor that promoted extreme violence among both the regular troops and the intelligence units.[159]

Specifically in the case of the military intelligence services, despair at the relentless Republican espionage could also lead to extreme violence. In early 1947, for example, security officer Jan Bakker, stationed in Semarang, pleaded for 'an example to be set'. 'A drastic measure might have political repercussions', Bakker argued, but it would have a preventive effect and would 'greatly reduce the ambition to spy in Semarang'.[160] How Bakker's superiors responded to his plea is unclear, but his suggestion speaks volumes. One year later, a NEFIS report revealed that Indonesians suspected of espionage in Semarang routinely underwent 'very harsh treatment' during IVG inter-

rogations, something that was 'widely known among Indonesians in Semarang'.[161]

There appears to be a link between the increasing overstretch and the use of extreme violence by the intelligence services out of a sense of powerlessness. One indication of this is the rise in documented acts of extreme violence by these services in the 'pacification' phases after the two major Dutch offensives, when the areas occupied by the Netherlands had expanded considerably, leading to major problems controlling this territory. Moreover, most of the acts of extreme violence described in this chapter were committed in areas that lay close to the demarcation line or that were otherwise considered to be contested. Witnesses such as Hueting also observed that there was a 'hardening or numbing' among the intelligence personnel, suggesting an increase in the extreme violence perpetrated by these services.[162]

Conclusion

As cautiously suggested in the *Excessennota*, extreme violence was used by the Dutch military intelligence services on a large scale. Due to underreporting and the notorious cover-up, however, the extent of this violence cannot be quantified with precision. It is clear, though, that the intelligence services made systematic use of torture; this was explicitly established by military jurists at the time and also confirmed by a large number of testimonies by the military, administrators and civilians involved, as well as historical research undertaken since 1970.

The torture was mainly carried out by relatively low-ranking and willing Dutch, Indo-European, Moluccan and Indonesian intelligence personnel from the KNIL, the KL and the Marine Brigade and their Indo-European, Chinese and Indonesian assistants, who were considered to be experts on the language, country and culture. Even greater responsibility is borne by their superiors, however, who passed on the 'dirty work' to these men. These intelligence officers were, in turn, under great pressure from the commander of the unit to which their intelligence squad had been added to provide good, rapid intelligence. This commander usually gave his subordinates a free rein and often implicitly sanctioned torture. These officers also routinely helped to cover up the crimes committed by the intelligence services, too.

The chief responsibility, however, lies at the highest level. Under the motto 'the end justifies the means', the military authorities turned a blind eye to unlawful interrogation methods, meaning that these and other forms of extreme violence by the intelligence services were rarely curbed and investi-

gated, let alone punished. Moreover, the sense of powerlessness, incapacity and unwillingness ensured that hardly any administrative or legal response was forthcoming. It is galling that Army Commander General Spoor repeatedly promised an 'in-depth' investigation, but never followed up on his commitment. Despite the official ban on torture, the army leadership and its adjutant commanders evidently considered torture to be an acceptable means to obtain what was considered to be crucial intelligence. Contrary to what is suggested in the *Excessennota*, obtaining intelligence was not the sole motive for torture. Forcing confessions from prisoners with the aim of being able to try them and/or prevent their release was also an important motivation. This practice undoubtedly led to prison sentences and even death penalties.

The military intelligence services frequently committed acts of extreme violence outside interrogation centres, too, such as killing 'squeezed-out' prisoners or eliminating those known in colonial jargon as '*bendeleiders*' (gang leaders), sometimes behind the demarcation line. An even more extreme form of behaviour was displayed by the intelligence squads, mainly in 1948 and 1949, in places such as Salatiga, Cililitan, the Kangean and Sapudi islands and Payakumbuh. In order to deter Indonesians from supporting the Republic, the services carried out a reign of terror in which they intentionally created a 'psychosis of fear' among the Indonesian population. In contrast to the more notorious practice of torture, these forms of extreme violence and their impact, as well as the overarching intelligence war, have hardly been investigated to date. These and the other cases of terror by the intelligence services described in this chapter suggest that the rise in extreme violence used by the intelligence services occurred in parallel with the expansion of the areas that had to be secured and the Dutch difficulties in counter-guerrilla warfare. However, this background was not always the determining factor for the use of such violence.

In addition to physical violence, the intelligence and security services were also guilty of arbitrary and unlawful mass arrests, which led to overcrowded prisons and encouraged Dutch troops to take matters into their own hands. Another far-reaching consequence of their activities was that faulty intelligence could sometimes pave the way to extreme violence by the Dutch infantry, artillery and air force, or their own interrogation and raiding groups. Moreover, unreliable intelligence gave rise to frustration and declining morale in the Dutch ranks, which had a general violence-promoting effect. For all of these reasons, the numerically small intelligence services

played a disproportionately large role in the extreme violence perpetrated by the Dutch armed forces.

Finally, it is striking that even when the often-amateurish intelligence services succeeded in locating the opponent, Dutch purge operations and patrols frequently yielded little. The Republican armed forces owed their 'elusiveness' to their mobility, their guerrilla tactics, their efficient intelligence and alert system, and their far-reaching infiltration of the Dutch military *and* civilian authorities, partly as a result of failed Dutch counter-espionage, poor field security and great visibility. The Republic, which in this respect also used extreme violence on a systematic basis, was the undisputed victor in the crucial intelligence war with the Netherlands. This strong asymmetry in intelligence in favour of the Indonesians was a key reason for the success of the Republican strategy of attrition.



4.

The myth of the 'Dutch Method'

Heavy weapons in the Indonesian War of Independence[1]

Azarja Harmanny

On *Wage*, the fourth day of the Javanese week, the war came to Karanganyar, a town in Republican territory not far from the demarcation line in Central Java. That morning, dated Sunday 19 October 1947 in Dutch sources, resident Ahmet Suwito saw a reconnaissance plane circling above the houses. At that same moment, the 3rd Battery of the 6th Field Artillery Regiment[2] of the Royal Netherlands Army (3-6 RVA of the Koninklijke Landmacht, KL) was positioning its guns on the other side of the demarcation line, near Gombong. It was market day, and the *pasar* was full of people. Suddenly the shells started hitting, Suwito recalls. 'Dung, dung-dung-dung, it sounded. I was hit by shrapnel and was severely wounded in my arm.' He grabbed his *kris* (dagger) from his house and fled to the hospital in Kebumen.[3] According to a present-day monument at the site of the *pasar*, the 'cannonade' on that day resulted in '786 [...] innocent victims of the atrocities committed by the Dutch army'.[4]

This event was possibly the largest Dutch artillery shelling in the years

Ahmet Suwito in front of his house in Karanganyar in 2017. He is showing the scar on his arm from pieces of shrapnel, 'as big as coins'. Photo: Azarja Harmanny

1945 to 1949 in terms of expended ammunition, among the more than 1,300 actions inventoried and analysed for this study (Table).[5] Together with part of the 5th Field Artillery Battery of the Royal Netherlands Army (5 VA), 3-6 RVA fired a total of 1,920 shells from twelve mounted guns (25-pounders). Despite this scale and the presumed high number of casualties, the shelling of Karanganyar has not received much attention until now.[6] This is typical of situations in which heavy weapons were used. The military judicial authorities turned a blind eye to this type of violence, and the *Memorandum on excesses*, known as the *Excessennota*, does not touch upon a single such case.[7]

Indicative figures of Dutch artillery fire missions

	3-6 RVA	Average	Cumulative
Number of fire missions	37	58	1,480
Number of targets	110	179	4,122
Total expended ammunition	7,488	5,791	133,191

As can be deduced from the table, the average number of shells fired per target for all units was 32 shells. For 3-6 RVA, this number was 68. The average number of targets per shelling was 2.78 for all units; for 3-6 RVA, this number was 2.97. The unit with the highest known amount of expended ammunition was 1 VA of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (Koninklijke Nederlands Indisch Leger, KNIL), at approximately 15,000 shells. There were also units that did not fire a single round. Several units for which no reliable statistics could be obtained are not included. The numbers are in part extrapolations. For a detailed explanation of the sources used and how the figures were reached, see Azarja Harmanny, Grof geschut/ Iron fist.

In *Ontsporing van geweld* [Derailment of Violence, 1970], Jacques van Doorn and Wim Hendrix, two veterans of the Indonesian war, classify the violence of aircraft, naval guns, artillery and tanks under the heading of 'technical violence' on the basis of their 'impersonal and mechanical nature'. This term is not used outside the discourse of the Indonesian War of Independence, nor does it refer to a clearly defined category of weapons or weapon systems. It has, nevertheless, been adopted by later historians. For instance, Rémy Limpach gives a number of examples of allegedly unlawful uses of 'technical violence', categorizing this as one of the forms of 'extreme violence'.[8] He rightly points out that empirical research into the deployment, effects and

assessment of this type of violence has been lacking to date. The research underpinning this chapter aims to fill this gap.[9]

The term 'technical violence' comes close to the military term 'fire support', which refers to indirect fire in support of infantry actions. 'Indirect' can refer to the unit making the request for support (and thus not doing the firing itself), the method of observation (fire and observation are separated) and the firing angle (not aimed directly at the target but in a curved trajectory). The Dutch armed forces distinguish three main categories of fire support: air support, naval gunfire support, and field artillery and mortar support.[10]

It should be pointed out that these three types of weapons were not used exclusively for fire support. Although assisting ground operations was their main purpose during the Indonesian War of Independence, these weapons could also be deployed independently, without simultaneous infantry action. Such situations are also included in this analysis, because they were still supportive of land operations in a general sense, e.g. when an air strike was called in instead of sending out an infantry patrol. The focus of this research is on situations in which the ground forces requested the aid of heavy weapons. These could be artillery guns (including naval guns), attack aircraft, tanks, armoured vehicles, mortars, and heavy machine guns. The last two are special cases: in their light variant, mortars and machine guns are the appropriate means for additional firepower from the infantry itself, while the heavy types are a means of fire support; however, since these were scarce in Indonesia, they were deployed on a limited basis.

In this study, the focus is on artillery and air power, which were the main auxiliary weapons for the infantry and are considered by many authors to be the most destructive ones that were deployed. While Van Doorn and Hendrix generally considered it a 'fairly solid fact' that support weapons 'caused quite a few civilian casualties', other authors have suggested that air strikes, and especially artillery, caused the majority of Indonesian casualties during the conflict.[11] The deployment of these weapons is therefore an important part of this research programme, which addresses broad questions about the nature and extent of the violence perpetrated by the Dutch armed forces in Indonesia. The research into 'technical violence' strives to answer the question of the role played by the use of heavy weapons therein.

This chapter alternates between analyses at the micro level (the shelling of Karanganyar), the meso level (the functioning of a fire support unit during the War of Independence) and the macro level (the overall deploy-

ment of technical violence), in order to draw links between the three levels.[12] Since the artillery guns are considered the most destructive weapons that were deployed in Indonesia, these will be the focus of this chapter. We trace the history of 3-6 RVA in particular, as this field artillery unit is representative in several respects. It was active during most of the war and was deployed in some of the main battlegrounds; it operated in various ways and worked with both the Royal Netherlands Army (KL) and the KNIL; it played a role not only in the offensives but also in the periods of guerrilla warfare that followed; it was involved in some of the largest fire missions of the entire conflict; and finally, the unit mainly consisted of conscripts and in that sense represents the majority of the military personnel deployed in Indonesia.

In this chapter, three men from 3-6 RVA are followed more closely: instructor Sergeant Major Klaas Kloeten, a former resistance member from Bussum; Corporal Onne Dallinga, a farmer's son from Godlinze in North Groningen; and Private 1st class Henry (or Henk) Pézy, a metalworker from Almelo who was also an observer.[13] Their egodocuments, interviews, and television appearances provide insight into the military-tactical, ethical and personal considerations concerning the violence they were directly involved in as perpetrators. They therefore serve to complement the official documents, which primarily show the considerations of the commanders and the formal decision-making process that preceded the deployment of artillery fire. To balance the one-sided Dutch perspective that all of these sources reveal, Indonesian literature, interviews and archives were also included in the research.

After briefly outlining the background to the role of heavy weapons in the Indonesian War of Independence and its different phases, we will analyse the action against Karanganyar in some detail, involving also the voices of Indonesian eyewitnesses. This case study should not be seen as evidence of the general conclusions about the deployment of heavy weapons detailed in this chapter (which are based on a much broader study); rather, the aim here is to highlight some distinctive aspects of these kinds of 'cleansing operations' and to provide insight into the local dynamics of 'technical violence'. And finally, we briefly discuss the deployment of fire support in terms of its effects, how its deployment can be explained, how it was reflected on by contemporaries, and the central role that the element of risk played in its use.

Background and the dynamics of violence

The development of weapons technology and related tactical concepts is primarily aimed at inflicting as much damage as possible on the opponents' forces in combat situations, thereby minimizing the risk of casualties among own troops. Fire support from the air, from the ground or from water is a particularly effective means of reducing risk to one's own troops while simultaneously increasing firepower. The development of fire support weapons took off from the second half of the nineteenth century and became manifest in the two world wars, when the vast numbers of casualties and the destruction also highlighted the severe drawbacks of the massive use of heavy weapons more sharply than ever.[14]

During the Indonesian War of Independence, the use of heavy weapons was controversial from the start, partly because of the way they were used by the British during the Battle of Surabaya in November 1945. The British, who had come to the Indonesian archipelago after the battle against Japan to 'maintain law and order', initially suffered heavy losses as a result of attacks by Indonesian freedom fighters armed with tanks, artillery and a variety of other, mainly Japanese, weapons. To counter these attacks and safeguard the evacuation of internees, the British decided to deploy attack aircraft, naval guns, tanks, artillery, and heavy mortars to take control over the city.

The Indonesian forces were dealt a serious blow in this urban battle. Casualties ran into the thousands, and valuable weapons were destroyed or fell into British hands. Gradually, the Indonesian forces were forced to switch more and more to guerrilla tactics. The British, by contrast, relied even more heavily on their support weapons after Surabaya.[15] In doing so, they tried to limit their own risks in a war in which they had become involved against their will. This tactic was criticized by their allies the Dutch, of all people. A number of KNIL officers and high-ranking officials condemned the 'repressive' British behaviour and were more in favour of what the later military commander Simon Spoor described as 'the Dutch method'. According to him, this consisted of conducting mainly small-scale operations with lightly armed units to restore (colonial) peace and order. Spoor seemed to be referring to the 'pacification' of Aceh (1873 to c. 1913) and other 'outer provinces' by the pre-war KNIL.[16]

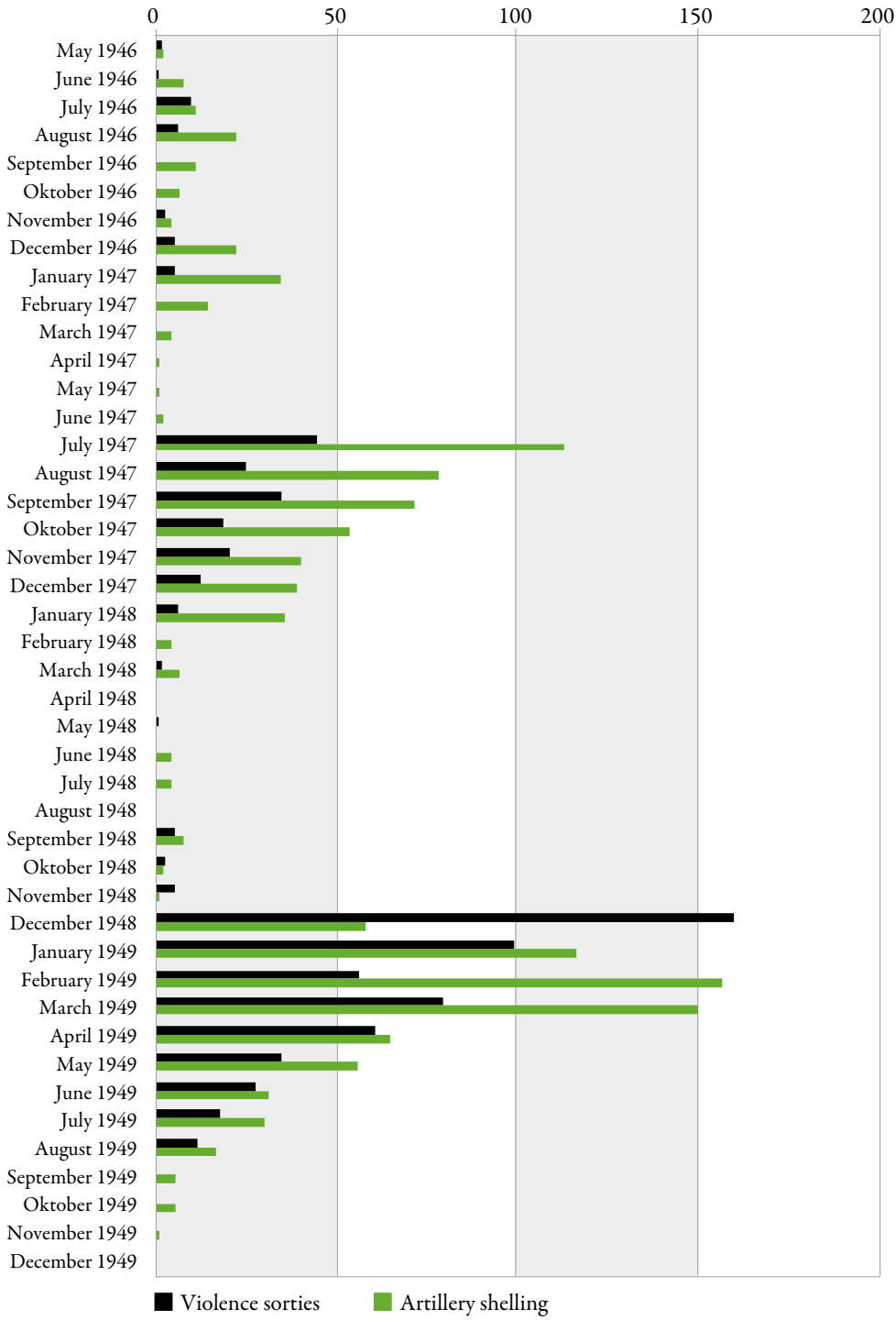
Indeed, during their British Army-modelled 'primary training' in the Netherlands, the recruits of 3-6 RVA were given instructions on Dutch tactics during the Aceh war, according to Onne Dallinga. 'When we asked what the

benefit was in learning about a war fought in the last century, we didn't get a satisfactory answer.'[17] The question was indeed how relevant or feasible the supposedly typical Dutch way of fighting that Spoor wanted to see implemented could be in the rapidly escalating War of Independence. The fact that artillerymen were being trained for deployment to Indonesia was in any case an implicit acknowledgment that light armament alone would not suffice. A colonel of the KL General Staff had already come to this conclusion during a visit to Indonesia at the time of the fighting in Surabaya and had urgently advised sending more auxiliary weapons. When units of the well-equipped Marine Brigade took over the first positions from the British in Surabaya from March 1946 onward, they quickly came to regard such combat equipment as indispensable. The fighting there bore little semblance to the small-scale 'pacification' tactics to which the military commander had referred. This was war.[18]

In the figure, which shows the frequency of deployment of Dutch artillery and attack aircraft during the conflict, the first two peaks of violence can be discerned in August 1946 and January 1947. It was during these periods that Dutch troops took over the key areas on Java and Sumatra from the British and consolidated their positions there. In terms of the intensity of violence, the two guerrilla phases that followed the two major Dutch offensives were the most active months of the conflict for the artillery. The gunners were called upon the most during these two time periods. The airforce was also regularly deployed in the guerrilla periods, although the number of 'violence sorties' – actions involving the bombing or machine-gunning of targets – clearly peaked during the two offensives. It is striking that the Linggarjati Agreement of 15 November 1946, which provided for a cease-fire, had no noticeable influence on the deployment of air support and artillery, although the overall intensity of the violence was considerably lower than in later periods. As for the navy, in 1946 and early 1947 it was still being deployed for coastal shelling on a somewhat regular basis, but after that, the warships offered only sporadic fire support to ground forces (particularly

Bar chart showing artillery fires and 'violence sorties' by fighter and/or bomber planes, as far as is known: there are gaps in the reporting. To offset this, we used official sources (NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1287-1289; idem, collectie onderdeelsverslagen in Nederlands-Indie, 1945-1950; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, Collectie Militaire eenheden; 806, ML-KNIL) as well as many egodocuments, flight logs, memoirs and literature. For a detailed explanation of the sources used and how the figures were reached, see Azarja Harmanny, Grof geschut. *Special thanks to Bas Smeets (data entry) and Gosewinus van Oorschot (data on violence sorties).*

Violence sorties and artillery shelling



during the offensives) and focused more on maintaining their blockade of Republican ports and combating 'smuggling'.[19]

The Renville Agreement of 17 January 1948 had much more of an impact on the use of heavy weapons. If we look at the statistics, it almost seems as though this was a 'year of peace'. But although the planes were grounded and the guns remained mostly silent, infantry violence gradually increased over the course of 1948. Artillerymen were also increasingly sent on patrol, as support weapons were not allowed to be placed at posts adjacent to the demarcation line (which now had become a demilitarized zone).[20] In this way, the men of unit 3-6 RVA became involved in the 'direct' violence of the guerrilla war – although, as with artillery shelling, the enemy remained largely invisible. Pézy: 'We never knew who the enemy was. You didn't see them, and when you did see them, well... they had their weapon back in the bushes. Until you got past them, and then they shot you in the back.'[21]

1-6 and 2-6 RVA, the two sister batteries of 3-6 RVA that continued to operate in a regimental context, for the most part performed infantry tasks throughout the war, forming a number of special troops known as 'Her Majesty's Unregulated Troops' that conducted a shadowy counter-guerrilla war in the Karawang region in West Java (although these units also made extensive use of the firepower of artillery guns). The reverse also occurred: in 1946, three infantry battalions made up of war volunteers (*oorlogsvrijwilligers*, OVW) set up, on their own initiative, unofficial artillery troops with guns from the pre-war KNIL.[22] Thus, on many occasions, artillery units employed 'direct' infantry violence, and infantry units made use of 'indirect' fire methods.

The Dutch offensives

Prior to the first offensive the 6th Field Artillery Regiment had split up. The first and second batteries remained in West Java, while 3-6 RVA was assigned to the storm troops heading for Yogyakarta during what would become known as the 'police action'. Dallinga noted that this term did not exactly cover their actions: 'too much matériel was involved for it to be called that way'.[23] This was 'European-style' warfare, as the military leadership also admitted in its internal correspondence.[24] For this offensive, 22 field artillery units, seven squadrons of fighter and/or bomber aircraft, nine tank squadrons, sixteen squadrons of armoured vehicles, and seven destroyers were mobilized. Including the infantry, a total of approximately 100,000 soldiers took part in the operation.[25]

During the advance, 3-6 RVA supported the infantry together with two troops of 5 VA and two of the improvised troops of the volunteer battalions. The V-brigade, the combat unit to which 3-6 RVA belonged, thus posessed 24 artillery pieces (four per troop). At the start of the offensive on 21 July 1947, 3-6 RVA provided a so-called creeping barrage to destroy pre-located field fortifications and to keep the opponents' forces at a distance. In practice, this meant that the guns covered a large rectangular area (in this case along the Grote Postweg), which was then fired upon line by line.[26] The majority of the large number of shells fired (more than 500) ended up in empty terrain, as the Indonesian National Armed Forces (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, TNI) had already left and the population had fled. The *kampongs* through which the endless column passed were deserted. When a gunfight finally did ensue after a few hours, an infantryman remarked: 'It looks like we were too careful with our artillery. But the civilian population – the people we were meant to save – was nowhere to be found'.[27] Also according to artilleryman Klaas Kloeten, most of the *tani* (farmers) had already been taken away by the Indonesian army, which was moreover out of firing range. 'Not many TRI soldiers were killed,' wrote Kloeten.[28]

Critical reports appeared in the Dutch media about the use of force during the advance. The action of the artillery was ignored, but apart from the infantry the air force in particular took the brunt of the critique. Their task, aside from destroying Japanese aircraft used by the Indonesian Air Force, had been to track down and attack enemy units. B-25 Mitchell bombers of the 18th Squadron, praised for their contribution in the fight against Japan, had machine-gunned several trains and cars, thereby also hitting civilians.[29] General Spoor stated in an interview with foreign journalists that he would take disciplinary measures against the pilots, who, according to him, had behaved as if the Second World War was still going on. But the focus on the actions of the air force quickly faded, and disciplinary action was never taken.[30]

The British had already learned that the use of air power was politically more sensitive than the use of artillery. For that reason they had preferred field artillery and naval gunfire support.[31] During the Dutch offensive, the role of the navy consisted mainly of transporting troops and facilitating the Marine Brigade's amphibious landings on East Java. Ships also carried out some coastal shelling, but this fire support task remained limited in scope during Operation Product and for the remainder of the war. Partly for this reason, the use of naval artillery attracted attention in only a few cases.[32]

During Operation Product, colonel Meijer had performed a risky feat by directing the V-Brigade over the inhospitable eastern slope of the Slamet

volcano, earning him the nickname 'Hannibal' as well as the Military Order of William decoration. By the time the column had reached the road to Yogya after the long detour, a cease-fire was imminent. At the last moment, the Dutch troops quickly occupied Gombong, a town 100 kilometres away from the Republican capital. 3-6 RVA also went into position there. The artillerymen had 'eerie memories' of their entry into Gombong. Retreating Indonesian units, mainly *laskar rakyat* (people's militias) and Hizbullah, had taken the population with them and had set the town on fire as part of the *bumi hangus*, the 'scorched earth' tactic.[33] Not long thereafter a cease-fire line was established, dividing the area into a Dutch and a Republican side. These and other demarcation lines, which cut through large parts of Java and Sumatra, became the main front lines and battlegrounds for the next year and a half. All the while, only one thought dominated the minds of Klaas Kloeten and his comrades-in-arms: to continue the push towards Yogya.[34]

It was not until 19 December 1948 that the advance resumed, with the second 'police action', codenamed Operatie Kraai (Operation Crow). 3-6 RVA was once again assigned to the assault group, now as part of the W-Brigade. This time it was not a 'military walk', as the first offensive had been described.[35] Fierce fighting broke out at Kebumen, and Republican troops set the town on fire. The losses on the Dutch side were not significant, but the TNI did manage to shoot down two Dutch fighter planes with an anti-aircraft gun. During the advance, 3-6 RVA did not come into action. The second offensive ended for the artillerymen in the burnt-out and deserted Magelang, north of Yogyakarta. The battery provided fire support for the first time during the operation when this former KNIL garrison town was taken. In those final days of 1948, the artillerymen carried out regular fire missions in support of actions by the KNIL Infantry V battalion in the vicinity of Magelang.[36] It was here that they would remain until the unit was relieved at the end of 1949, not long before the transfer of sovereignty.

Guerrilla warfare

As mentioned above, besides the two Dutch offensives, the subsequent phases of fierce guerrilla warfare were the most intense periods of the war. After the cessation of the offensive on 5 August 1947, the Dutch troops in Gombong consolidated their positions by almost immediately carrying out 'mopping up operations' in all directions, as did Dutch troops in many other places. The Indonesian side also consolidated their own positions, with reinforcements being brought in from other parts of Java and the archipelago.[37]

In October, Klaas Kloeten began to notice that the Indonesian forces were changing their way of fighting: they began laying more and more mines on roads used by the Dutch troops. It was part of a change in strategy implemented across Java and Sumatra. Having lost to the modern Dutch army in conventional warfare during the offensive, and given its inadequate weaponry and training, the TNI felt forced to embrace guerrilla warfare. The use of mines and *trekbommen* ('pull bombs'), in addition to sabotage and ambushes, proved to be an effective way to hit the enemy.[38]

Dutch troops tried to find ways to counter these actions, but were not allowed to cross the demarcation line. Observers from the United Nations Committee of Good Offices were monitoring the agreements that had been made. Dallinga: 'We kept to the rules of the game, which were: "Don't shoot until you get shot at." We used to say: "Don't shoot until you're dead-".'[39] When the observers were not in the vicinity, the Dutch troops often did take action, preferably using their artillery, which could fire more than ten kilometres into enemy territory without Dutch soldiers having to cross the demarcation line (see map on page 253).[40]

Things were different during the second intensive guerrilla phase in 1949. While in previous years there had been something of a front line (albeit porous), by 1949 such a line no longer existed; the enemy was everywhere.[41] The guerrilla fighters stayed in so-called 'pockets' in the areas occupied by the Netherlands. From there, on the instructions of General Sudirman, commander-in-chief of the Indonesian armed forces, they carried out attacks on the often remote Dutch posts.[42] Artillery unit 3-6 RVA was therefore deployed from Magelang for fire support in all directions, except when the UN observers were visiting: 'the gentlemen must get the impression that everything is under control, and after all you don't use artillery against a few *rampokkers*,' according to Dallinga.[43]

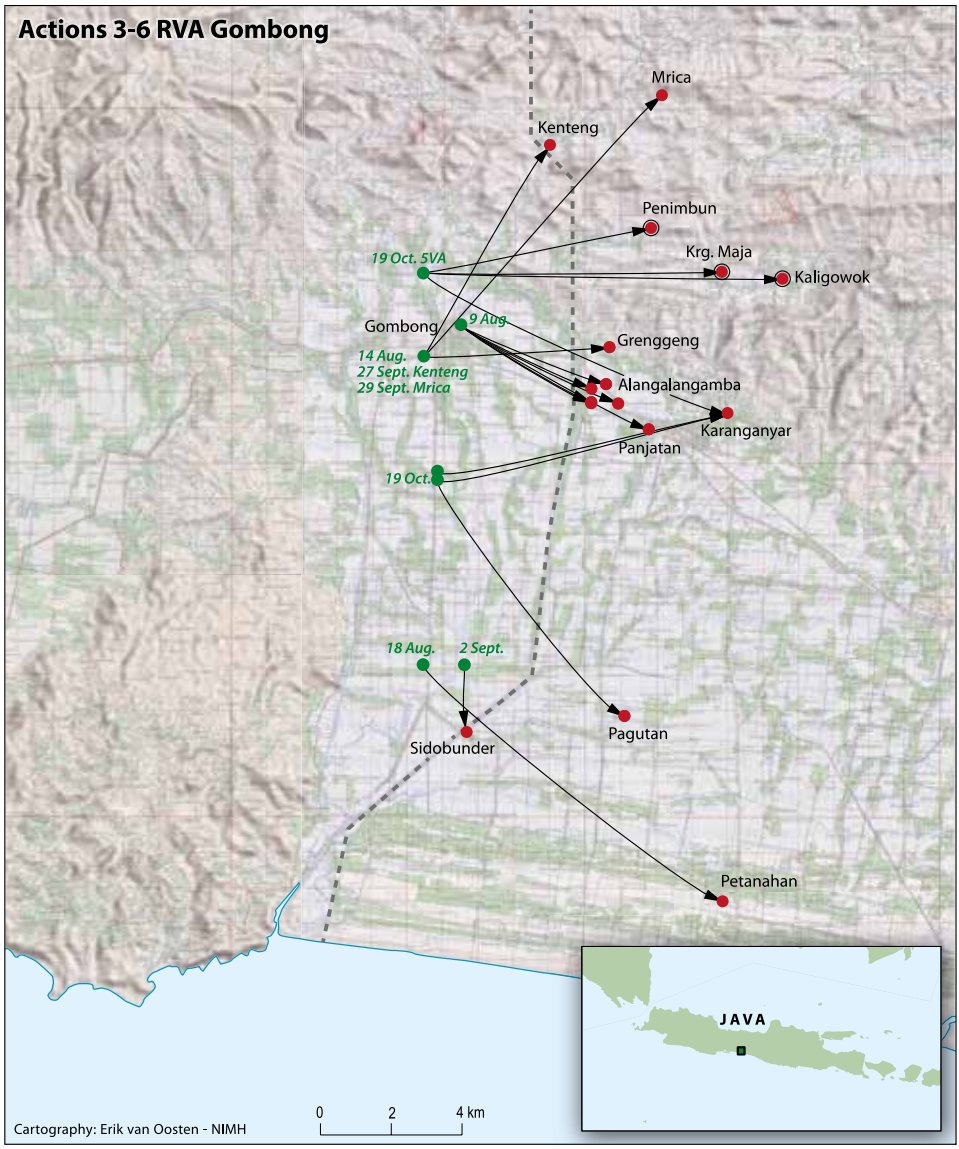
Just as in the period after the first Dutch offensive, in Magelang 3-6 RVA was added to Infantry V, better known by its nickname 'Andjing Nica', for direct support.[44] The battalion became dispersed over the area it had to control, which was more than 2,500 km², an area comparable to the country of Luxembourg.[45] 'Not possible to deal big blows,' noted battalion commander Lieutenant Colonel (KNIL) Piet van Santen in the war diary of Infantry V. Losses mounted, and with them frustration. According to Kloeten, the actions taken by the Dutch troops were 'pure folly. We achieved nothing.'[46] The Indonesian armed forces operated in ever smaller units, as a result of which major operations increasingly led nowhere. The successful Republi-

can alarm system (see the chapter on intelligence) ensured that the TNI and its allies were almost always able to get out of the way in time.

It was precisely during this period that the Dutch artillery carried out the most fire missions. This partly reflected an overall increase in the intensity of violence, as the number of infantry actions also rose significantly in this period. In addition, the peak in artillery deployment reflected the declining willingness to take risks. An indication of this is the number of casualties on the Dutch side, which in this period was actually lower than during the offensive.[47] After a peak during the second offensive, the number of 'violence sorties' gradually decreased during this phase. This is striking, because air support was also appealing to the Netherlands due to the low level of risk to its own troops. The airforces, however, increasingly suffered from shortages of personnel, spare parts and deployable aircraft, much more so than the artillery. This significantly hampered its deployment during the intensive months of guerrilla warfare. The aforementioned threat of political repercussions constituted another constraint. In this period, the aircraft mainly showed their worth – from a Dutch perspective – by attacking targets in remote areas (especially on the vast island of Sumatra) that were beyond the range of the infantry or for which not enough troops could be made available.

Although many Indonesian heavy weapons were destroyed or captured in the course of the war, Republican armed forces also used technical violence whenever possible. In Magelang, 3-6 RVA and the Andjing Nica Battalion were plagued by night-time shelling from a two-centimetre anti-aircraft gun, possibly the same gun that had also shot down a Dutch fighter plane during the second offensive. According to Dallinga, the 'pace of life in the barracks' was not affected by it: 'even the film that we were showing one evening in the square continued as usual. The "operator" amplified the sound to make it clear to the enemy that we were not impressed and that he'd better dispense with the harassment.' Due to the lack of aiming devices at the TNI, some shells ended up in *kampongs*, hitting civilians.[48]

The laying of mines and 'pull bombs' was much more effective, and thus further increased in 1949.[49] The Indonesian armed forces also made increasing use of the tactic of dispersal, which made them even more elusive to the Dutch troops. Due to the high risk associated with motorized transport – because of mine danger – Infantry V increasingly relied on small-scale foot patrols during this period.[50] To limit risks, these attack groups had an above-average amount of firepower, partly by using captured Indonesian mortars and machine guns.[51] In addition, the artillery or the KNIL Military



Fire missions carried out by 3-6 RVA and 5 VA in the region of Gombong in the period August-October 1947. Coordinates from the war diary of the units (Lambert Conical Orthomorphic Projection) were converted by Geografische Dienst of the Ministry of Defence to present-day WGS84 coordinates and plotted in Nodegoats research environment, and subsequently projected onto a georeferenced overlay of the map that was used in 1947 (45-XLI-C Gombong, map series Java & Madura 1:50.000, US Army Map Service 1943). The dotted line indicates the demarcation line. Sources: NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1441; Korpsgeschiedenis 3-6 RVA; NL-HANA, Strijdkrachten, 2277, 3-6 Regiment Veldartillerie; Historische Collectie Korps Veldartillerie (HCKVA) 106-1, Actieverslag; map collection at the National Library of Australia.

Aviation were also on standby for such small patrols. In this way, both sides adapted to the tactics of the opponent, but they also regularly fell back on less effective combat methods, such as massive attacks (by Indonesian forces) or large-scale 'mopping up operations' (by Dutch troops). The attack on Karanganyar, which took place during the first guerrilla phase in 1947, was a typical – albeit larger than average – example of the latter category. A closer look at this action allows us to not only understand how such operations worked, but also gain insight into their consequences and effectiveness, as well as the way in which those directly involved reflected upon the event.

Karanganyar

The Andjing Nica wanted revenge; after fifteen of their vehicles had been hit by 'pull bombs' and mines over a period of two weeks, battalion commander Van Santen was 'fuming', according to Klaas Kloeten. He therefore asked Colonel Meijer for permission for a brigade operation to Karanganyar. According to intelligence reports, this town was the site of large quantities of stored explosives and a regional command post of the TNI (*comando operasi pertempuran* or COP). In order to encircle Karanganyar and 'sweep' the surrounding terrain, an operation was prepared involving approximately 3,000 infantry supported by three artillery troops. Like Van Santen, Meijer was known to be 'very fiercely anti-Republican' and probably did not have to think long about this request. Earlier, Major General (KNIL) Simon de Waal, territorial and troop commander of Central Java, had already stated in a command order that he would allow operations outside the demarcation line if they were 'forced upon us by enemy acts'. The date was set for 19 October 1947, not by chance a day on which UN military observers would be elsewhere.[52]

During an interview in 2017, Ahmet Suwito, still visibly scarred on his arm, points to where the field kitchen, the military logistics centre, and the COP used to be located in Candi, a *desa* (village) on the eastern edge of Karanganyar. While these were all legitimate military targets, in the midst of them lay the market (*pasar*). According to another resident at the time, Edith Sapumo, the market had been moved out of the city centre because Karanganyar had been burned to the ground during the first Dutch offensive.[53] Although an intelligence report from the V-brigade gave a detailed overview of the 'state of the enemy', it made no mention of the *pasar*. As a result, any civilians whom Dutch military personnel might have faced during the operation were left out of the equation by the decision-makers, as was the case in many other major campaigns. The report did mention the presence of

troops from the 20th Regiment of the Diponegoro Division (Divisi III), supported by combat organizations such as the student army (*Tentara Pelajar*), the people's militias (*laskar rakyat*), and the navy. The leader of the operation, as commander of the V-brigade, was Colonel Meijer himself. The artillery also fell under his command. Lieutenant Colonel W.A. Schouten was attached to his staff as brigade artillery commander, coordinating the requests for observation by reconnaissance aircraft – the 'most ideal form of observation' according to Schouten. In addition to the KNIL Infantry II and V battalions, other participating troops included components of three KL battalions of war volunteers (1-3, 1-5, and 1-9 RI).[54]

According to the operation plan, the troops were to take up positions at night and, after a creeping barrage in the early morning, comb the entire area between Karanganyar and the south coast. But monsoon rains threatened to throw a spanner in the works. According to Commander Van Santen, there was severe weather 'such as I had never before experienced. [...] The path that we followed was so slippery that we advanced falling, sliding, but not walking.' The torrential rain also led to confusion among the TNI. During the advance, several Indonesian soldiers made themselves known to the Dutch troops by crying out *merdeka* ('freedom') in the assumption that they were dealing with fellow TNI. 'Since no shooting was allowed, these men were captured and made to lighten the load of the coolies who were heaving the 22 sets around.'[55] These field radios slowed down the advance considerably due to their size and weight but were indispensable for communication between the troops.[56]

Thanks in part to the rain, which had kept the Dutch advance hidden, the night-time infiltration was completely successful according to the report of the operation. However, this was only partly true. A slightly premature opening of artillery fire had alarmed the opponent before the encirclement of Karanganyar had been completed. A train full of people and equipment managed to escape towards Kebumen. Dallinga: 'It was difficult for the sloggers to watch the train pull away after a long night of lugging.'[57] In other respects as well, the artillery operation was not perfect. The first creeping barrage that was carried out – on troop concentrations in Kampong Pagutan – had to be cut short because 'the Frisians' (1-9 RI) reported that the grenades had landed among their own troops. 'Thanks, repeat, thanks,' was their sarcastic reaction over the radio. According to the commander of 3-6 RVA, Major W. de Bruyne, this was due to a defect in one of the aiming devices.

After Pagutan, the firing shifted to Karanganyar. Here too, a creeping barrage was used in which the guns shelled, one by one, fifteen firing lines at

100-metre intervals. This allowed for an area to be covered from Candi to the centre of Karanganyar, with the aim of driving 'enemy concentrations' into the hands of the advancing infantry. On the orders of Colonel Meijer, this barrage was carried out once again, which partly explains the exceptionally high number of rounds fired. It is not clear from the reports why he decided to do so.[58] A book written about the 20th Regiment of the Diponegoro Division describes how the first creeping barrage on Karanganyar descended on the people like a hail of grenades. Edith Sapumo and her sister tried their best to hide under a small table in their house, which was not far from the *pasar*. She was unharmed, but her sister was injured in her thigh, which had been protruding from under the table. When the firing ceased, the people rushed from their hiding places to flee the violence, but just then the guns began to roar again. In a letter to his parents, brothers and sisters, Klaas Kloeten remarked: 'I have never seen such heavy quickfire being commissioned.'[59]

Victims

Almost fifty years after the 'cannonade', Henk Pézy is standing at the *sawa* dike behind which the guns had been positioned. 'All those years I've wanted to know', he says, 'what is left of those people? How many people died here?' The unknown victims had haunted his dreams for years.[60] Pézy's question is not easy to answer. Little is known about the origin of the monument and the number 786 written on it. A simpler and older monument (unveiled in 1950) stands not far from the *pasar* in a front yard, but it only mentions the date of the event. The current memorial site may have been placed there in the 1970s or 1980s, when war cemeteries and monuments were erected throughout the country in memory of the period 1945-1950. But given that 30 or 40 years had passed since the events, it was not always possible to trace exactly what happened. A memorial stone in nearby Karanggayam shows that the information on such monuments cannot be accepted at face value. The plaque, which commemorates a battle on 19 August of the same year, states that no fewer than 60 Dutch soldiers were killed during the battle, while the war diary of the unit involved (Infantry V KNIL) states that it suffered no losses that day.[61]

What do the Dutch sources tell us about the victims of the attack on Karanganyar? The action report of Infantry V KNIL mentions 94 deaths on the Indonesian side, with the caveat that the casualties caused by the artillery were not included – a rather exceptional clause in such military reports. One of the participating artillery troops noted in its war diary: 'more than 300 TRI killed'. However, Republican Radio Djokja stated a few days later that



Soldiers of the 3-6 RVA unit use water to cool the overheated barrel of a 25-pounder during the 'cannonade' of Karanganyar on 19 October 1947. Source: HCKVA.

500 people had been killed, while an official protest at the United Nations Security Council against the violation of the cease-fire was also announced. This set off alarm bells among the upper echelon. Spoor made inquiries, as the number of 500 seemed to him 'fantastically high'. A week later, Lieutenant Colonel Pieter Six, a member of the Army Commander's cabinet, reported to Spoor that there were '124 counted deaths on the side of the opposing party', leaving it open as to the cause of these deaths.[62]

In memorial books and memoirs of Dutch soldiers who took part in these types of actions, the victims on the Indonesian side are often conspicuously absent.[63] The focus in these writings is often on the military aspects of such operations and the actions of the adversary. In that sense, these Dutch sources differ little from Indonesian literature, which also pays attention primarily to its own operations.[64] Air raids or artillery fires are usually cited as an illustration of Dutch atrocities or as an example of the violation of political agreements. For example, then Colonel Abdul Haris Nasution mentions the action against Karanganyar in his monumental work on the War of Independence

without going into the number of casualties. Wiyono, who wrote an overview of the struggle in Central Java, only notes that Karanganyar was 'occupied' and that during that period there were 'many casualties among our army and also among the people'.[65] Incidentally, the lack of more precise numbers was partly due to the fact that the young Republic was still developing its administrative machinery, which meant that by no means all victims were registered.

With regard to Indonesian sources that do mention or give an indication of the number of victims of the shelling on 19 October 1947, these are for the most part considerably lower than those given in Dutch archives. A history of the independence struggle in Kebumen states that the attack caused much grief in the Gombong area 'for causing all those human casualties'. At the Ketek River, for example, 'as many as 15 people died, while in the market at Candi as many as 60 people died in a gruesome manner'. The river Ketek flows one kilometre south of the city, the same area where the infantrymen began their advance, so this could also refer to the violence they used. Other sources cite similar numbers of victims in the marketplace.[66] A more general picture emerges in an Indonesian weekly overview of the battlefront in Central Java. This document, which was confiscated by the Dutch intelligence service, and is now in the National Archives in The Hague, reports 300 deaths in addition to 300 wounded around Karanganyar, said to have occurred during various battles in October. The document does not mention whether they were military or civilian deaths, but it does state that Karanganyar was 'the biggest attack since the "cease fire order"'.[67]

The memories of those who witnessed the events in Karanganyar are also inconclusive, but they do provide a glimpse into the human suffering caused by the shelling. Some of them were interviewed by a Dutch television crew in 2013. Abdullah Djaeni could still recall the river being 'red with blood. Women, men, children – everyone was dead.' Among the victims was his nine-year-old sister, whom he had tried to save. Another interviewee, Mad Sopyan, was injured in the hip and saw hundreds of casualties, both soldiers and civilians. Ahmet Suwito said a woman took shelter in his house but was then killed by shrapnel. The testimonies also reveal that most of the victims were buried in mass graves, anonymously and without a headstone. Others were carried off by the river and never found again.[68]

All in all, the available sources offer little guidance with regard to the question of exactly how many people died on 19 October 1947. The numbers in the Dutch military reports, although seemingly very precise, are but a few among many figures representing the possible death toll. Comparisons be-

tween different sources at the micro level, such as in the case of Karanganyar, show that macro-level estimates based on figures mentioned in these reports cannot be considered a reliable indication of the total number of Indonesian casualties. Indonesian sources sometimes give higher– and sometimes significantly lower numbers. In addition, it is just as tricky to make statements about what kind of violence inflicted the most casualties and what the ratio was between civilian and combatant deaths. After all, other than what the local monument suggests, the Karanganyar 'cannonade' was more than just an artillery shelling. As with many other major operations, the effects of the violence that was perpetrated (including the number of casualties) were de-

Monument in Karanganyar. The text on the monument reads: "You did not die in vain but as a sacrifice for independence. Innocent people, victims of the atrocities of the Dutch army during the cannonade on 19 October 1947." Photo: Azarja Harmanny.



termined by the totality of the resources deployed (which reinforced each other) and above all by the degree to which a distinction could be made between combatants and non-combatants.

Effects

The Dutch attack on Republican territory on 19 October 1947 had a major impact on both the military and civilians. Kloeten writes that during the action, the TNI had set fire to Kebumen, a sign that they thought the Dutch advance on Yogya had resumed. 'But we withdrew again. So they were unlucky.'[69] According to Indonesian eyewitnesses, many local residents fled to the mountains, where people hid for months in caves and other temporary shelters. Schools and *pasars* in the region were closed. A report by the Republican Military Police refers to a 'psychosis of fear' among the residents and 'demoralization' on the part of the TNI. Because the army withdrew to Kebumen and a power vacuum ensued, 'occasional *garong*' (robbers) originating from East Java, Borneo, and even Aceh were given free rein.[70]

In November, the Dutch army received a request from a number of *lurah* (village heads) to evacuate the residents of their *desa* on the Republican side of the demarcation line, now that the TNI could no longer offer protection. When the Dutch army indicated that it wanted to honour this request, the UN Committee of Good Services protested, because it interpreted the message as a warning for 'imminent action' in Republican territory. Spoor expressed his annoyance to Van Mook. 'So there will never be any vindication of the Dutch side in Lake Success [the seat of the United Nations at that time], even if so many Chinese are still being murdered, even if more and more factories are set on fire and the population is terrorized even more than is now the case.' Spoor was right that the Chinese population was being heavily hit in many areas. Even in the Gombong region, Chinese mass graves were discovered.[71] In his indignation, Spoor did not mention that much of this suffering was indirectly caused by Dutch artillery fires and other violence at the demarcation line, which meant that Republican authority in the border areas was weakened or even completely undermined and the ensuing vacuum partly filled by criminal groups, which then forced the residents to appeal to the Dutch.

The Dutch military personnel who were directly involved also paid little heed to these effects. They regarded the attack on Karanganyar above all as a 'great success' – one that 'substantially raised the morale of the troops'. The leaders of the operation were pleased with the creeping artillery barrage,

which had driven part of the enemy concentrations into the hands of the soldiers fencing off the combat area. During the short-lived occupation of Karanganyar, large quantities of airplane bombs (used as mines), incendiary bombs, hand grenades, and other explosives were also confiscated or destroyed. A month after the operation, Klaas Kloeten noticed that the troops were experiencing far fewer encounters with pull bombs than before. The peace was short-lived, however, because a week later the tone in his correspondence had once again changed: 'The TRI is soliciting a beating again,' he concluded in his letter of 25 November. 'And a taunted dog is very dangerous. For now, warm greetings from Klaas.'[72]

Onne Dallinga also observed how the military situation was once again deteriorating rapidly. At one point, informants reported that a train with new aircraft bombs had arrived in Kebumen. 'An operation like Karanganyar is not possible there because the artillery cannot reach Kebumen,' he wrote. 'The city is too far from the demarcation line.'[73] During the guerrilla phase in 1949, long after 3-6 RVA and the Andjing Nica had left for Magelang and other units had taken their place, the region was more unsafe than ever. The route connecting Gombong and Kebumen was known to the troops at the time as the 'pull bomb road'. An artilleryman of 2-12 RVA battery described the atmosphere in the last year of the war in 'terrible' Kebumen as follows: 'the daily confrontation with danger, living with death as your neighbour – bleached skulls in burned-down houses, graves in the backyard ...'[74]

The aftermath of the attack on Karanganyar is typical of the effects of major 'sweep operations' and the use of fire support. They could be very disruptive to the Indonesian armed forces and the population, and they often provided only temporary 'respite' for the Dutch forces. The army leadership seemed primarily concerned with the short-term military effectiveness of its operations. This effectiveness was influenced by myriad factors, depending on the situation. In addition to the aforementioned quality of intelligence and communications, key factors included the method of observation, the nature of the target, weather and terrain conditions, technical precision, fire discipline, command and control, training and proficiency of the troops, and the condition of matériel. Each of these factors could have a decisive effect on the success or failure of an operation. Although most of these factors are crucial to any form of military action to a greater or lesser extent, observation is particularly important in the case of fire support.

Predicted fire (*kaartvuur*) – that is, shelling unobserved from a reconnaissance aircraft or from the ground by a forward observer – posed a greater risk of collateral damage and civilian casualties and made it difficult to measure results, which is why several commanders discouraged or even prohibited this course of action.[75] 3-6 RVA appears to have used predicted fire only to a limited extent. Of the 37 fire missions that the unit carried out between 1947 and 1949, only four are known to have been executed without observation. Three of these took place during the Dutch offensives and were prepared fires, the targets having been reconnoitred at an earlier stage. In the fourth fire mission in support of an action by infantry battalion 3-11 RI, the reconnaissance aircraft was too late to observe one of nine prepared targets.[76] In general, the artillerymen themselves preferred air observation to ground observation. According to Major De Bruyne, observation from an aircraft was 'necessary', especially in the case of a fleeing enemy.[77]

Although unobserved artillery fire was highly indiscriminate by nature, predicted fires could under certain conditions be carried out effectively and in a selective manner. In the first months of 1949 in West Java, for example, the gunners of 6 RVA laid so-called disruptive fires almost every night at varying times along the access roads in the area they controlled, in order to prevent the enemy from burying pull bombs and mines in the dark.[78] Such fires had a preventive purpose, and the risk of civilian casualties was relatively small. Disruptive fire delivered in places where enemy concentrations were located – or shelling aimed at blocking the enemy from a certain terrain – could also be effective, but then mostly in open areas.

Often, however, it was not so clear who was being fired at. Pézy, who often had to take a forward position as an observer when the artillery was called in, said: 'Those *ploppers* [freedom fighters] were difficult to fight because we didn't see the difference between them and the kampong residents. Danger loomed behind every bush. That's when the animal in you comes out.'[79] According to another gunner, the enemy was 'everywhere and nowhere and almost always invisible'.[80] This was the dilemma that not only the artillery units but all Dutch troops in Indonesia were confronted with, and they were not the only ones: according to political scientist Stathis Kalyvas, 'the identification problem' is one of the greatest difficulties in irregular conflicts, a category that includes the Indonesian War of Independence.[81]

Governments and military personnel fighting guerrillas often take all kinds of measures to separate combatants from non-combatants, such as evacuation, internment, the cordoning off of areas and forced resettlement

programmes. Since the Dutch troops in Indonesia were for a number of reasons unable to establish this separation, much of the force that was used – regardless of the nature of that force – lacked discrimination. According to Kalyvas, it is difficult to distinguish selective violence from indiscriminate violence on a cumulative scale. It is therefore virtually impossible, according to him, to make reliable estimates of how much each individual type of violence contributed to the overall fatality count.[82] This is consistent with the picture that emerges from the analysis of 'technical violence' in Indonesia. Research into Karanganyar and other actions in which fire support was deployed shows that in most cases it is not possible to establish reliable casualty numbers, which precludes us from making valid statements on an aggregated level.

This also applies to the question of what type of violence resulted in the greatest number of casualties. The reported figures of enemy casualties in the actions of artillery battery 3-6 RVA in support of the Andjing Nica and other infantry units are impossible to analyse on the basis of the type of violence used, as they were the result of the joint use of direct and indirect violence. Soldiers from the battalions involved often emphasized the complementary nature of the units. The artillerymen of 3-6 RVA were impressed by the Andjing Nica and their commander Piet van Santen, who in their eyes was the 'legendary leader of the most feared fighting team in Central Java'. Onne Dallinga was grateful for the protection the KNIL soldiers gave them: 'We, the *totoks*, appreciate their actions but are ourselves not yet able to do what they do. As long as the opponent is at a distance, we can participate, but we wouldn't be able to handle a *klewang* [an Indonesian cutlass].' Without Van Santen's 'indigenous troops', Dallinga was sure that the Dutch troops would have suffered many more losses. Another artilleryman recalled that when shots were being fired, Major De Bruyne, commander of 3-6 RVA, said to his men: 'That's for the infantry, you're going the other way.'[83]

Indeed, there is a great contrast between the losses suffered by Infantry V battalion, which had one of the highest number of casualties (63 dead)[84] of all the infantry battalions, and artillery battery 3-6 RVA, which survived the war almost unscathed with just one fatal casualty. The KNIL battalion in turn was grateful to the artillerymen for the protection they offered. According to Dallinga, Van Santen saw the artillery as 'a weapon that you should use a lot'. His deputy commander first lieutenant Sjoerd Lapré considered the fire support provided by 3-6 RVA to be 'outstanding'.[85] The presence of field guns in an operations area often had a deterrent effect on the enemy. The same

was true of air power, which in many places prevented the TNI from congregating in open terrain and forced it to operate in a concealed and scattered manner.[86] The Dutch infantry benefited from the protective umbrella of the artillery and other heavy weapons. The 'direct methods' of the KNIL and the special forces were therefore partly dependent on the 'indirect methods' of technical weapons. Indeed, one of the largest artillery fires of the entire Independence War was requested by the KNIL battalion Andjing Nica.

Shelling by artillery, aircraft, navy ships, tanks, or heavy mortars has greater destructive power than the infantry's own firepower, but this did not mean that this technical violence always caused more damage or casualties. Destruction was not always the (main) objective of a fire mission. Preliminary bombardments usually served the purpose of enabling the infantry to advance. This was also the intention at Karanganyar, and this largely succeeded – except when the train was allowed to escape. But according to brigade artillery commander Schouten, with few available troops, a creeping barrage could also serve to chase the enemy into the infantry's machine gun bundles, which then functioned as a barrier.[87]

One of the main intended effects of the use of heavy weapons was also to undermine the 'morale' (in the sense of fighting spirit) of the enemy and to increase that of one's own troops. According to a 1948 tactical briefing, for example, the effect of the deployment of three-inch mortars should be 'valued more for its effect on morale than on material (destructive)'. Tanks and armoured vehicles were often used with 'effect on the morale of the Oriental' in mind, in the words of then First Lieutenant (KNIL) Carel Heshusius.[88] In reality heavy weapons tended to have this effect on morale in other places in the world as well; you didn't have to be an 'Oriental' to be persuaded by its force.

An analysis of the effects of the use of 'technical violence' should not overlook the measures taken by Indonesian combat groups and non-combatants to protect themselves against the Dutch use of force. After all, they were not passive potential victims waiting to be hit.[89] Civilians often fled areas where fighting broke out or threatened to break out, which meant that large areas became no man's land, especially around the demarcation lines. *Kampong* residents also built hideouts near their homes or made use of pre-war and Japanese bunkers. As early as August 1946, KNIL artillerymen found many 'expertly constructed hideouts' in an area that they had previously shelled. Other *kampongs* they passed through had been completely evacuated. Indonesians who had experienced Dutch air raids, artillery fire and naval gunfire

also mentioned hideouts, caves and other temporary refuges in which they had withstood the violence.[90]

The best means Indonesian armed forces had against the Dutch heavy firepower was dispersion. Traditionally, this principle has been used by combatants who find themselves facing an adversary that is superior in terms of weapons.[91] In 1949, the artillery battery 3-6 RVA was increasingly confronted with precisely such tactics. In the first months of that year, it regularly supported the KNIL infantry in purge actions, but this became increasingly difficult according to battery commander De Bruyne. '[T]he enemy in this district have disintegrated into a number of smaller gangs!', he noted, clearly frustrated that the opponent refused to let himself be fired upon by Dutch weapons.[92]

Reflections

How did the men of 3-6 RVA themselves reflect – then and later – on the fact that civilians may have become victims of the violence they perpetrated? During a group discussion of the Association for Dutch Military War Victims in Doorn in 1989, Henk Pézy spoke publicly for the first time about the events in Karanganyar. He spoke with difficulty, not only because of the gunshot in his jaw he had received 40 years ago, but also because of his 'war syndrome'. '[I] feel a mild sense of guilt,' he declared, 'even remorse.' In addition to mistreating old people during patrols, the shelling of Karanganyar was one of those things 'you can't justify', according to Pézy. With a broken voice, he stated: 'Not a soul came out alive.'[93]

Although other veterans of 3-6 RVA thought it brave of Pézy to talk about the events of 19 October 1947, they preferred to remain silent. But a former driver-signaller did state in general terms: 'When the artillery started to scatter and spread, firing the shells in rows, it was not always pleasant for the affected areas. But,' he added in a classic manner of putting things into perspective, 'a war is never clean and there are no winners.'[94] Klaas Kloeten, who described himself to his family as 'moderately indifferent' and someone who enjoyed the rugged life in the military, did not mention civilian casualties in his letters. But when the daughter of the *djongos* [boy servant] suddenly died of a high fever, he wrote: 'strange that such a death ends up affecting you while TRI soldiers who are killed mean completely nothing'.[95]

Onne Dallinga was on leave during the attack on Karanganyar, and in his memoirs does not comment on the ethical side of artillery shelling. What he did describe is an ethical discussion that arose after dissatisfaction with

a failed operation gave rise to a 'tune with the Bren' – a light machine gun – against a random *kampong*. The artillerymen had differing opinions on whether it was permissible simply to shoot at a *kampong*, given that it would put the civilian population at risk. 'There are idealists who think it's bad, but the majority don't worry about it. There are worse things and greater dangers for the population imaginable than firing a Bren from a great distance,' wrote Dallinga, possibly referring to artillery fire. 'Besides, shots at night have a preventive effect. It makes the enemy realize that we can pop up anywhere. They are not safe anywhere, and they should be aware of that.'[96]

These reflections, which oscillate between remorse, self-justification and indifference, attest to the fact that the men of 3-6 RVA were aware of the risk of civilian casualties resulting from the lack of discrimination in the violence they used. Pézy's statement and the silence of his former comrades-in-arms are also an indication that the shelling of Karanganyar was considered excessively violent even by those directly involved – although it cannot be ruled out that Pezy's assessment was only made in retrospect. Nevertheless, the majority of these veterans, who mainly had operational roles, seem to have had little difficulty, just like their superiors, with the way in which the artillery was deployed.

In his long letters to his wife Janke, Warrent Officer Klaas Bruinsma, gun commander at 2-6 RVA, was candid about the way in which he handled this paradox. In January 1948, he wrote about an unexploded grenade launcher that some children had taken back to their *kampong* and which had exploded in the middle of a crowd. Eighteen people were injured, six of whom did not survive. Bruinsma: 'I now see what effect our heavy shells have, which often affect innocent people as well. It's then that this whole messy business appals you, Jank. And yet I know the next time I will again just as well command 'Fire!!!' without worrying much about where the shell ends up.'[97]

Risk and proportionality

For Bruinsma, the effects of the artillery fire on civilians were a tragic but unavoidable consequence of the war. How this attitude can be explained is aptly described by then lieutenant Frans Hazekamp, who was assigned to 1-12 RVA in East Java as a battery officer and who later wrote several books about the Indonesian War of Independence. In his memoirs, he describes a

Artillerymen of 3-6 RVA open crates of high explosive (HE) ammunition for the 25-pounders deployed for the shelling of Karanganyar on 19 October 1947. Source: NIMH/donation Kloeten family.


25pdr HE

situation during the second Dutch offensive in which his unit laid a creeping barrage on a *kampong* from which enemy mortar fire had been received. When dogs started barking in another *kampong*, the commander of the action believed that the Indonesian fighters had fled there, and hence a creeping barrage was laid on that village as well. Later it turned out that there had been 'quite a few deaths and injuries among women and children', partly because one grenade had landed in a hideout. Hazekamp looked back in 2008:

> I wrote in my diary: 'Unfortunately, there was no other way given that the attackers were among those civilians. The protection of our own people had to be prioritized in that case.' Nevertheless, shooting based on barking dogs would probably be unacceptable to ethicists and the judiciary in the Netherlands these days and possibly lead to criminal prosecution. [...] Where do you draw the lines? For us, they were clear at the end of 1948: don't wait, don't take any risks. 'Live longer, shoot first' is the motto of many in response to the often elusive enemy. Poor civilians![98]

Two closely related issues emerge in this excerpt. First, Hazekamp provides us with the most important reason for the deployment of artillery, air power, tanks, naval guns, and mortars: to minimize the risk to one's own troops. Egodocuments and published sources show that in the majority of cases of 'technical violence' in which the author provides a reason for deploying those resources, reducing the risk to their own side is the most important motive.[99] Second, Hazekamp raises the question of the legitimacy of the barrage from a legal and ethical point of view. Although in retrospect he seems to conclude that a legal line may have been crossed, the diary entry suggests that at the time he saw it as a situation of military necessity.

There is no clear-cut answer to the question of whether legal boundaries were crossed in the shelling of *kampongs*, such as in the case described by Hazekamp but also in the shelling of Karanganyar. To begin with, there is the risk of anachronistic judgment. In addition to that, the law at that time was in a period of transition. It was only after the end of the Indonesian War of Independence that the lessons of the devastating bombings during the Second World War were codified in international treaties. There was little or no case law on the use of air power or artillery.[100] The restrictions that applied to the use of heavy weapons in the period 1945-1949 – especially during cease-fires – do provide us with criteria for determining what was

and was not allowed, but they also contain clauses that made it possible, under certain circumstances, to operate across the demarcation line.

Full-fledged rules of engagement in accordance with international humanitarian law – such as those that currently regulate the armed intervention of the Dutch armed forces – did not exist. As historian Robert Cribb rightly points out, much of the Dutch bombardments and artillery fires could therefore be justified on the basis of military necessity. In all likelihood, such a justification was less likely to have been successful if the reason for the shelling was the barking of dogs than if it was for preventing the laying of mines and pull bombs, as in the case of Karanganyar.[101]

In current international humanitarian law, the main question is whether the use of force is proportional and whether it differentiates between military and civilian objects: in other words, whether the military advantage to be gained (also called military necessity) is in proportion to the nature and extent of the force used, and whether the proper targets are hit.[102] Although these concepts already existed at the time of the Indonesian War of Independence, they did not form the basis on which Dutch artillery fires or air raids were assessed, as evidenced by the fact that, as far as is known, not one case has been brought to court. In hindsight, the Karanganyar 'cannonade' is very likely to have caused a disproportionate number of civilian casualties. It is reasonable to assume that the decision-makers were aware of the risks to civilians, although this cannot be verified in retrospect. The exact reason for the high number of fired artillery shells also remains unknown.

As mentioned, the element of risk plays a central role in current thinking about proportionality. Political scientist and philosopher Michael Walzer stated in 1978 that 'soldiers have to accept some risk (I don't attempt to say how much) in order to protect civilians from their own deadly fire'. While protecting one's own troops is in his view a legitimate motive, armies should not always be allowed to get away with simply invoking military necessity or *Kriegsräson*.[103] Interestingly, Walzer seems to be making the assumption that when soldiers accept a certain level of risk, the danger to civilians is reduced. In this line of thinking, infantry actions represent less danger, while artillery fires and air attacks represent more danger: 'the patrol must be sent out, the risk accepted, before the big guns are brought to bear'.[104] We also find the same implication in the argument put forward by military sociologist Martin Shaw that the development of heavy weapons has led to a pattern of risk transfer: the risk is transferred from one's own troops to the enemy and the civilian population.[105] However, the extremely violent and often indiscrim-

inate actions of infantry units in Indonesia, as noted in the work of various historians,[106] show that the intensity of the violence they used and the extent to which the infantry units operated indiscriminately posed at least as great a danger to civilians and enemy soldiers.[107]

What may obscure the picture in the debate about risk and proportionality in the Indonesian War of Independence is the idea that if Dutch troops reduced their own risk by deploying support weapons, this would intuitively be seen as an unfair battle. While the acceptance of personal risk in war situations is indeed often rewarded and labelled as courageous, the reality of warfare is that soldiers strive for self-preservation and armies try to protect their own troops as much as possible.[108] This was no different during the Indonesian War of Independence. From a military point of view, the constant shortage of troops also played a role in the strategic and tactical decisions of the Dutch troops, which were far outnumbered in their war against the Republican armed forces. In other words, asymmetry in troop strength was counterbalanced by asymmetry of arms. Indonesian troops were forced to find other ways to limit their risks and to harm the enemy as much as possible. They did so primarily by conducting a guerrilla war, which the TNI embraced as the official mode of combat after the first Dutch offensive.

In Dutch military sources, the evasive tactics of Indonesian combat groups are often categorized as cowardly. In addition, soldiers often emphasized the fact that guerrillas were endangering civilians by hiding among them. In reality, the Indonesians' acceptance of the danger of being killed and their capacity for self-sacrifice were considerably greater than that of their adversaries, who were able to protect themselves with their superior weapons and at the same time inflict large numbers of casualties.[109] It should therefore come as no surprise that the accusation of cowardice was also made the other way around. In short, both sides accused each other of using the wrong methods, while both had the same goal: to minimize their own losses while inflicting as much damage as possible on their opponent. In doing so, they deliberately endangered the lives of non-combatants.

Conclusion

Our analysis of the use of fire support during the Indonesian War of Independence leads to the unsatisfactory conclusion that it is impossible to make statements about the extent to which 'technical violence' was extreme or excessive, or whether artillery and air force were together responsible for the majority of Indonesian casualties. Moreover, for many actions it is impossi-

ble to even approximate how many casualties there were, let alone calculate how many deaths and injuries the Dutch violence as a whole caused. What can be stated, however, is that Dutch violence in general did little to discriminate between civilian and military targets, which meant that there was a significant risk of disproportionate damage and civilian casualties as a result of 'technical violence'. The attack on Karanganyar is a clear – albeit extreme – example of this.

The Dutch method of fighting that General Spoor had outlined at the beginning of the conflict – one in which small, lightly armed units would undertake highly mobile actions – turned out to consist largely of heavy-handed, indiscriminate and often large-scale use of military force in which fire support played an important role in limiting own losses. In the past, more than one attempt has been made to create an image of this kind of specifically Dutch approach, such as the so-called 'surgical violence' in the Aceh war or the alleged 'Dutch approach' in Iraq and Afghanistan, all of which are supposedly characterized by minimal and selective use of force. A recent survey of Dutch colonial violence, however, concluded that the doctrine of surgical violence was not observed in practice and that fire support played an important role in pre-war military expeditions, too.[110] As historian Thijs Brocades Zaalberg has shown, these methods of waging war did not differ fundamentally from British and other colonial and contemporary forms of combat.[111] Limpach also notes that, in practice, the methods advocated by Spoor resembled the 'excessively harsh and untargeted British conduct in Indonesia ... much more than the general would have liked'.[112] In other words, the 'Dutch method' was in reality nothing more than a myth born of wishful thinking, unless we redefine the term as a method characterized by an inability – or an unwillingness – to distinguish between combatants and non-combatants, a readiness to accept high numbers of civilian casualties, and an indispensable role reserved for fire support.



5.

The law as a weapon

The actions of the Dutch judiciary during the Indonesian War of Independence

Esther Zwinkels[1]

> Mr Attorney General, dropping the Waga case was indeed extremely opportunistic, but the event took place in the 'bersiap period' and the offender was an Indonesian who fought on our side. I believed and continue to believe that a blind eye should be turned to much of what happened at that time.[2]

This response from a public prosecutor reveals why the unprovoked shooting of a Chinese, Jauw A Pan, by a soldier of the Royal Dutch East Indies Army (Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger, KNIL) in November 1945 in Banjarmasin (Kalimantan) went unpunished. The lawyers involved saw lit-

The KNIL's field court martial in Jakarta, 1949. Seated, from left to right: judge advocate E. Bonn, secretary Captain J.A. Nijbakker, president Lieutenant Colonel P.R. Tak-Labrijn, and members Major D.M. Rosbach and Captain A.J.R.A.M. van Heyst. Standing: provost marshal Sergeant E.L.A. Orval. Source: P. van Dael, NIMH/Dienst voor Legercontacten.

tle point in pursuing prosecution, not least because military commanders opposed the investigation. Such obstruction and reluctance to prosecute forms of extreme violence[3] were symptomatic of the attitude of the Dutch authorities, and gave rise to a system of institutionalized impunity. The Netherlands was not unique in this regard. The same dynamic was evident in other wars of decolonization, as shown by the comparative international research carried out as part of this programme. Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Bart Luttikhuis argue that institutionalized impunity is a crucial factor for explaining extreme violence, and see it as 'the glue that binds most other causal factors'.[4]

Back in the 1970s and 1990s, it was argued by expert in criminal law Frits Rüter and historian R.P. Budding, respectively, that the military justice system in Indonesia was both unable and unwilling effectively to prevent, investigate, prosecute and punish the crimes committed by its own side.[5] Rémy Limpach has drawn on a large number of cases to confirm this picture, concluding that the military justice system was institutionally biased and willingly subordinated itself to military objectives. Moreover, with some exceptions, judge advocates – public prosecutors for courts martial – who did want to prosecute cases of extreme violence were unable to do so in the face of opposition from local commanders and army leaders, which in practice left them toothless.[6]

This impunity did not apply across the board, however, but only to crimes committed by *Dutch* military personnel.[7] The military and civilian justice systems in Indonesia, which were tightly intertwined in those years due to the state of emergency, also ruled in cases against Indonesian fighters and civilians. The latter were often subjected to very severe punishments and they were also interned on a large scale.[8] Some authors argue that by imposing numerous death sentences, the so-called special courts martial (*bijzondere krijgsgerechten*) and even the judiciary as a whole served as a weapon in the struggle.[9]

These damning assessments of the actions of the judiciary during the Indonesian War of Independence require a more detailed, systematic analysis of the functioning of the judicial system, prosecution policy and the administration of justice in this period. Such a systematic approach has been lacking to date.[10] In addition, the approach taken by the compilers of the *Excessennota* [Memorandum on Excesses] and, more specifically, the basis for the number of judgements concerning excessive violence cited in the memo – 110 in all – are yet to be investigated in detail. The

same applies to their conclusions about the administration of justice in Indonesia.[11]

This chapter focuses on the question of the role played by law in the Indonesian War of Independence. Although the judicial and administrative measures touch on various areas of law, including administrative law, here we focus on the way in which the Dutch military and judicial authorities used military and civil criminal law in the conflict. Which prosecution policies were followed with regard to Dutch servicemen on the one hand and Republican servicemen, fighters and civilians on the other? To what extent were the actions of the judiciary motivated by power/incapacity, willingness/unwillingness or skill/inability? What impact did the judiciary's actions have, and to what extent did the judiciary curb or indeed promote the use of extreme violence in the war?

The chapter focuses on the macro-level of the administration of justice from a Dutch perspective, and only briefly discusses the consequences of the violence and the conduct of the judiciary for the perpetrators and victims, and how this was experienced by the latter.[12] The chapter opens with a brief sketch of the organization of the (military) justice apparatus. We then consider prosecution policy and the administration of justice in relation to Dutch military personnel, before looking at the judiciary's treatment of Indonesian fighters and civilians. Finally, we reflect on the potential impact of the actions of the judiciary on the use of extreme violence in the War of Independence.

The military-judicial apparatus

The state of emergency

The Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia fought a bloody conflict. The Republic took up arms to defend its independence, invoking its right to self-determination.[13] Despite dispatching tens of thousands of soldiers, the Dutch government was of the view that this was not a war – in the sense of an armed conflict between two sovereign states – but a domestic conflict. From this perspective the Republic of Indonesia was not a sovereign state, a position that the Dutch would maintain at the diplomatic level until 27 December 1949. In the Dutch view, the codified law of war, which at that time was mainly based on the Hague Conventions (1899 and 1907) and the Geneva Convention of 1929, did not apply to this 'domestic conflict'. Following this line of reasoning, according to the Netherlands, no war crimes could officially be committed.[14]

In order to take a hard line against the 'insurgents', the Dutch colonial government invoked martial law, which had been in force throughout Indonesia since 10 May 1940 and continued to apply in much of the archipelago long after the Japanese surrender.[15] These emergency laws, which could be applied not only to the war situation but also to 'domestic unrest', gave the Military Authority[16] far-reaching powers to maintain or restore order.[17] This included measures to restrict the freedom of the press, prohibit meetings, and detain or expel individuals who were seen as a threat to 'internal security'.[18] Since the nineteenth century, the colonial authorities had frequently declared a state of emergency when suppressing anti-Dutch resistance.[19] In combination with the actions of the army, police and intelligence services, this set of repressive measures had often been an important instrument of power in colonial society. For this reason, the late colonial state is often described as a 'state of violence'.[20]

In the period between 1945 and 1949, too, the Dutch colonial government based its actions on the state of emergency that was still in force. This state could have two aspects: the State of War and the more far-reaching State of Siege (martial law), in which the Military Authority gained almost unlimited powers.[21] In addition to its existing powers, which were already broad and explicitly defined, in the State of Siege the Military Authority could take any measure 'of any kind' that it 'deemed necessary in view of the current state of emergency'.[22] There were limits to these powers, however, as shown by the response of Army Commander General Spoor, who had taught emergency law and international law for years, to Colonel H.J. de Vries' proposal to allow on-the-spot executions of suspects when the latter were caught red-handed. According to De Vries, who drew on his own experience when he argued that this method had proved effective in South Sulawesi, there was scope within the Regulations on the State of War and State of Siege (Regeling SOB) to order such executions without any form of trial.[23] Spoor strongly denied this, and it was also unequivocally rejected by Spoor's right-hand-man and jurist, head of Political Affairs J.Ph.H.E. van Lier: 'Neither in our legal system nor in relation to our goals would a "punishment-execution- without-any-form-of-trial" be well-founded or acceptable or officially feasible, even on the basis of the SOB [emergency powers] Regulations.'[24]

Measures that fell under the regulations on the State of War or State of Siege had to be adopted and published by decree, but in 'special cases' an order for the use of means that were unauthorized in normal circumstances could be given in writing or orally, provided that the (lieutenant) governor general was

informed as soon as possible.[25] The Dutch authorities in the colony frequently issued emergency military orders (Verordeningen Militair Gezag, VMG) at various command levels to restrict the freedom of Dutch subjects[26] and to implement far-reaching repressive measures in those parts of the archipelago where the State of War or State of Siege was in force. On Java and Sumatra, in any case, martial law was in force throughout the conflict.[27] Many of these measures were in response to local circumstances and were of an improvised nature, resulting in a patchwork of regulations. The state of emergency also had implications for both the relationship between the military and civilian authorities and the organization and practice of the law.

Military and civilian justice

The military judicial apparatus operated alongside the civilian judicial apparatus. This separate system was designed to ensure adequate knowledge and

Seized pamphlet from combat organization Field Preparation Barisan Hizbullah (FPBH) with text reading: 'Dutch atrocities!!!; The Rawa-Gedeh affair, in the regency of KRAWANG. The result of the Dutch terror action on 7-1-1948; after being forced to work, they were assembled and shot. 200 residents were killed, 350 were wounded (severely and lightly).' Source: National Archives of the Netherlands/Archive Marine en Leger Inlichtingendienst



understanding of military action, so that cases relating to the military would be handled properly. The military justice system judged and dealt with both violations of military discipline and criminal offences by members of the armed forces.[28] In addition to the 'civil offences' listed in the Penal Code (*Wetboek van Strafrecht*, WvS),[29] such as assault and manslaughter, the crimes included 'military offences' that could only be committed by servicemen. These crimes, including desertion, were listed in the Military Penal Code (*Wetboek van Militair Strafrecht*, WvMS).[30] In the State of War or Siege, other individuals in addition to Dutch soldiers were increasingly subject to military jurisdiction.

One important difference between civilian and military justice was that the latter, certainly in times of war, did not focus on the principle of general justice and the rights of the individual, but on maintaining troop discipline, enforcing orders, and protecting military values.[31] Military interests prevailed. This did not alter the fact that due to the state of emergency, the military and civilian judiciaries in Indonesia were increasingly intertwined and mutually dependent, including in terms of personnel. The public prosecutor, for example, who represented the public prosecution service (Openbaar Ministerie, OM) in civil criminal cases, often acted as a judge advocate (*auditeur-militair*, AM) in court-martial cases, too. In both roles and in many cases, he would consult the attorney general (*procureur-generaal*, PG). The attorney general was 'designated' by the commander of the army as the 'head of military prosecution policy', but primarily he was head of the civilian OM in Indonesia, which was tasked with prosecuting Dutch subjects. The attorney general also oversaw the police and the prison system.[32]

The office of the attorney general worked closely with the Dutch colonial Justice Department, whose responsibilities included legislation and the provision of staff for the judiciary. The organizational overlap was evident in the dance of musical chairs that took place among legal officials.[33] For example, the latter included lawyers who, in addition to a playing a dual role as prosecutors in military *and* civilian cases, sometimes served as judges for a court martial or spent time formulating policy as officials in the Justice Department.

The courts martial

With the arrival of large numbers of Dutch military personnel in Indonesia, the army commander established field courts martial (*krijgsraden te velde*) in various locations.[34] The Royal Netherlands Army (Koninklijke Landmacht,

KL), the KNIL and the Royal Navy (Koninklijke Marine, KM) all had slightly different jurisdiction systems and judicial procedures.[35] The courts martial consisted of a president and two – or in the case of the navy, four – members, all of whom were officers. The president was a field officer who had to be a lawyer; this condition did not apply to the other members, who fulfilled this task in addition to other duties. The judge advocate (*auditeur-militair* for the army, *fiscaal* for the navy) represented the OM and had to be a lawyer.[36] The right of appeal to the high military court (Hoog Militair Gerechtshof, HMG) in Indonesia against a judgement by a KNIL or KL court martial was suspended due to the state of emergency, because this would have hindered the rapid administration of justice. A condemned man could petition for a pardon, however, which was decided by the queen (in the case of the KL) or the lieutenant governor general (in the case of the KNIL). A serviceman from the KM could appeal to the HMG in Indonesia.

The state of emergency formed the basis for the establishment of separate types of courts martial and also led to adjustments to the penal code, some of which related to non-servicemen.[37] Temporary courts martial (*temporaire krijgsraden*) were established, for example, which were primarily tasked with trying Japanese war criminals and collaborators, but also dealt with cases against KNIL soldiers in some parts of the archipelago, as well as Indonesians who had turned against the colonial regime. The most far-reaching measure was the establishment in March 1948 of special courts martial (*bijzondere krijgsgerechten*), where single military judges could try, often at a rapid tempo, Indonesian fighters who had taken up arms against the Dutch army or engaged in acts of sabotage.[38]

A number of steps preceded the passing of a judgement by a court martial. After an incident had been reported to a superior officer, the latter first had to determine whether there had been a violation of military discipline or a criminal offence had been committed. In the first case, the authorized superior officer (often the company commander) could impose a disciplinary penalty. If a criminal offence were suspected, the dossier was handed to the so-called 'commanding' officer (a brigade commander, for example), who could set up an 'internal investigation' to establish the facts and nature of the offence. If the suspicions persisted, he was expected to send the case to the army commander, who as the 'commanding general' had to decide whether to prosecute.[39] In doing so, he was obliged to seek advice from the judge advocate. For this purpose, the latter could set up an inquiry and/or order a preliminary judicial investigation by an examining magistrate (*of-*

ficier-commissaris) to hear witnesses under oath, for example. Based on his findings, the judge advocate advised the army commander on whether to prosecute. The latter, the highest authority in the army, was then authorized to deal with the case at his own discretion. He could refer the case to the court martial, settle it out of court or as a disciplinary offence, or dismiss it.

The decision to take a case to the court martial thus did not lie with the OM, as it did in the civilian justice system, but in the hands of the army commander.[40] The latter delegated the authority to refer cases to special referral officers, but in important cases he himself took a decision.[41] The army commander played the same crucial role, once the court martial had reached its verdict: in the absence of any right to appeal, he was the one who had to confirm the judgement with his 'writ of execution' (*fiat executie*). If he refused to grant this writ in a case involving the KL, it was officially up to the queen to decide on the case. If the KNIL were involved, the case was sent back to the court martial and, if the latter confirmed the judgement, submitted to the lieutenant governor general. If he concurred with the army commander's refusal, the case was put to the HMG, but this only happened in a limited number of cases. The commander of the army – General Spoor and later General Buurman van Vreeden – thus had significant influence on policy relating to prosecution and punishment.

Although the judge advocate had only an advisory role with regard to the referring authority, he nevertheless played a crucial part in the prosecution and trial of crimes. Given the limited legal knowledge of most members of the court martial, even more value was attached to his findings and opinion in the courtroom. Moreover, the judge advocate at the KNIL's field court martial was specially authorized to investigate independently rather than having to wait for the intervention of the commander, as was the case at the KL.[42] Although this was no guarantee of being able to take cases to the court martial, in theory it made it harder for commanders to cover up wrongdoing.

The intelligence and investigative services and the police played a key role in uncovering and prosecuting crimes. For more on the role played by the former, the reader is referred to the chapter by Rémy Limpach in this book. Military Police units, which were often attached to battalion and brigade staffs, fulfilled diverse military and general policing duties, including investigating criminal offences and overseeing military penal institutions and punishment cells.[43] The Military Police's Legal Department, led by the Central Legal Department in Jakarta, was tasked by various authorities to

carry out investigations in important criminal cases. These included cases relating to the violence in the earliest phase of the revolution, known in the Netherlands as *bersiap*.[44]

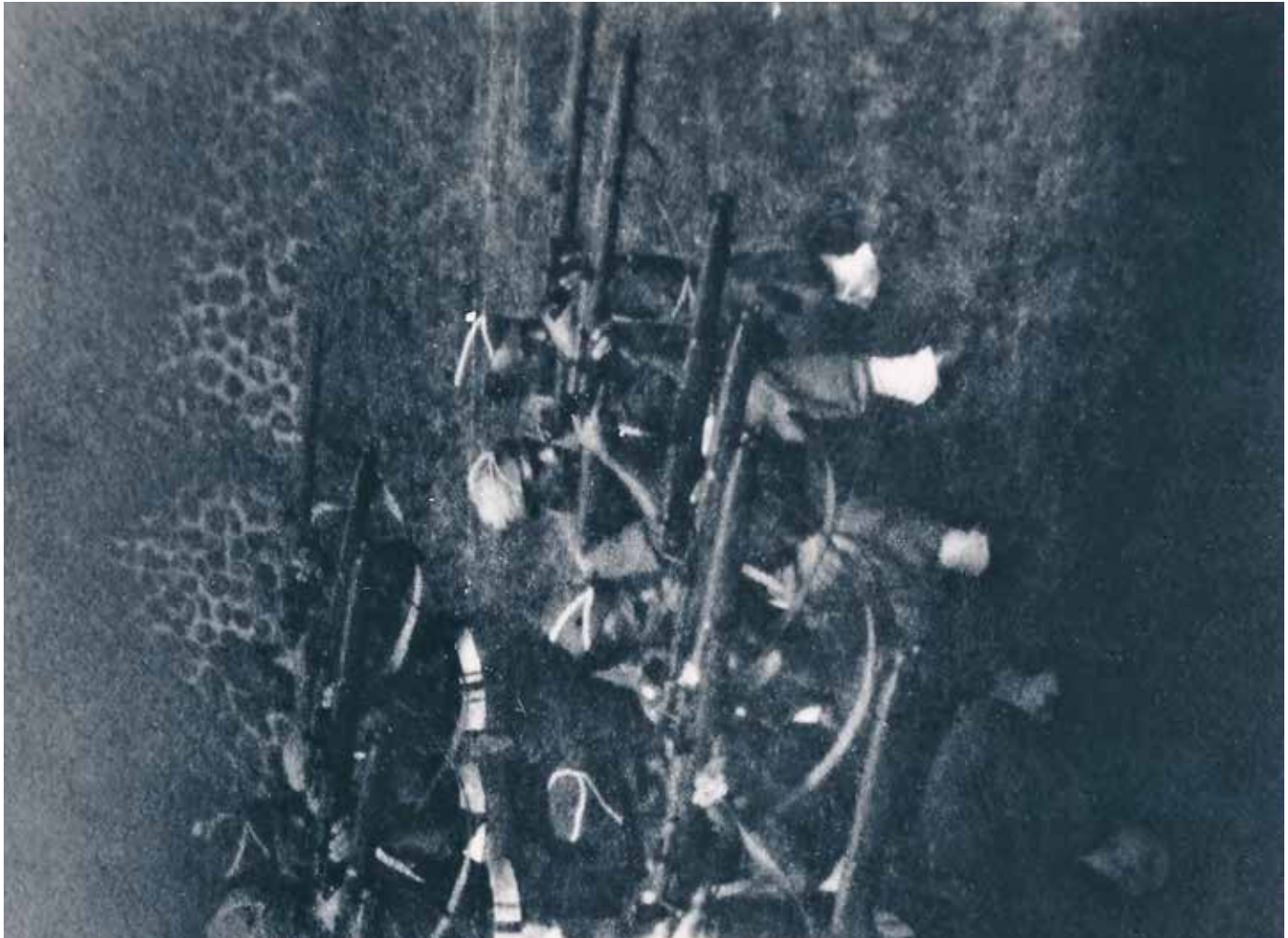
The weaknesses of the military justice system

The specific characteristics of the military judicial system in general and the system in Indonesia in particular, as outlined above, had the effect of reinforcing institutionalized impunity. There was institutional bias in the military justice system, a biased or prejudiced position. The main problem was that the judicial apparatus helped the military organization to mark its own homework, as it were. Its 'understanding' of the challenges facing military personnel in wartime was both the strength and the weakness of the system. The independence of military justice was constantly under pressure. Upon their appointment, the members of the courts martial and the judge advocates swore to perform their duties independently and in conformity with the applicable law, yet military interests and considerations usually weighed heavily in their judgements.[45] One president of a court martial even described the reciprocal dependence between the armed forces and military justice as a 'feudal relationship'.[46]

The military judicial system was also shaped by military culture. Loyalty, camaraderie and a strong respect for authority were important pillars of the military organization, but they were simultaneously its weakness. A strong sense of belonging, whereby servicemen did not grass on one another, combined with a tendency to avoid washing one's dirty linen in public, often undermined the quest for the truth. Although in theory all servicemen endorsed their importance, they often saw the military judiciary and police as 'the ones who screw their mates', particularly when they or their comrades were the subject of an investigation.[47] Commanders, in turn, often viewed investigating officers as interfering busybodies. They preferred to handle cases within the group and therefore deliberately bypassed military justice, as the judge advocate F.H. van Leeuwen complained to the army commander general.[48] The military justice system offered ample opportunity for this, aided by the fact that the troops were dispersed across a large area, certainly from July 1947.

Not only did Spoor's interference and that of other commanders undermine the military-judicial apparatus, but so too did inadequate human resources. Although the army in Indonesia had around twice as many KL





Military Police (MP) execution platoon in Manado, 1947. Platoons such as these were formed by contingents from the MP in order to execute Japanese war criminals and Indonesians, among others, who had been sentenced to death. Source: Photographer unknown, Marechaussee Museum/Collection Arie J. van Veen.

troops as in the Netherlands, only a quarter of the number of judge advocates and deputies worked in the archipelago.[49] The Minister for War, Alexander Fiévez (Catholic People's Party), spoke of a 'worrying gap', as the dispatched KL soldiers deserved a judicial system that was fit for purpose.[50]

Although knowledge of the law was not a requirement for all staff in the military justice system – and greater value was attached to knowledge and understanding of the 'psyche' and actions of the military – army leaders became increasingly aware that legal knowledge was a prerequisite for dealing with cases properly and rapidly.[51] Nevertheless, there was a persistent structural shortage of staff with legal expertise or experience. The KNIL had previously recruited many of its judge advocates from among the colonial legal officials who worked as public prosecutors, but as a result of the war it was now reliant on a younger generation of lawyers who had yet to serve or had little experience as independent prosecutors or judges.[52] To appoint presidents, the KNIL drew on the pool of reserve officers who had completed law degrees. When the staff shortage persisted, lawyers wrote to law faculties in the Netherlands in a personal capacity to persuade professors and students to apply for positions in Indonesia.[53]

The KL tried to bring over staff from the Dutch courts martial to work for its courts martial, but these experts were also in great demand at home. It therefore fell back on young lawyers who had worked as secretaries to the courts martial in the Netherlands for periods of six weeks to several months.[54] Some conscripts who happened to have a first degree in law were also transferred to the courts martial as soon as they arrived in Indonesia. However, both groups lacked experience in the administration of justice and the armed forces. There was very little time to train new recruits; they mostly had to learn on the job, which meant that dealing with cases took a lot of time – with a growing backlog as a result.[55] These delays only increased the temptation to bend the rules in order to settle cases.

To prosecute or not?

The above-mentioned weaknesses of the military justice system – assessing its own performance, staff shortages and the workload – also influenced the

decision as to whether or not to prosecute crimes. A company commander or a less senior commander could have various reasons for trying to prevent the prosecution of crimes by 'his' soldiers.[56] Personal interests might play a role, for example, such as his own involvement in a case or fear that a criminal case would reflect badly on his career. He could also avoid much administrative red tape that way, and prevent his unit from losing valuable manpower. The most important factor, however, was his concern for maintaining a good rapport with his subordinates. Commanders were often sympathetic when, due to the high degree of pressure under which they operated, soldiers overstepped the mark or took matters into their own hands.[57] Criminal prosecutions and convictions were fatal for a military career.[58] A disciplinary penalty, on the other hand, did not result in a criminal record. As a result, commanders sometimes punished serious crimes such as rape as violations of military discipline, even though this was contrary to the regulations and did in fact constitute a criminal offence.[59]

Commanders at all levels justified crimes such as the execution of prisoners without trial or the burning of houses in reprisal by invoking 'military necessity'.[60] According to this concept from international humanitarian law, only those acts and measures are permitted that are actually necessary to achieve the military goal *and* that fall within the limits of the law.[61] Commanders extended the vague definition of 'military necessity' to include crimes that were not in fact necessary, but that thereby became generally accepted practices. In this regard, the attitude of the head of the Central Legal Department, Henk Düster, is telling. He personally executed twenty guerrilla fighters with the argument that 'there simply aren't any prisons [...] in the jungle'. 'It was reported [by the Military Police], but you don't get it in the neck for that. On the contrary, you're awarded a star. It was raining stars at that time.'[62]

Moreover, among the highest civilian and military authorities there was an unwillingness to prosecute certain crimes because they were thought to have a desirable effect. These crimes were therefore seen as a necessary evil. In this regard, drawing on theories from criminology, Rüter refers to 'desired structural criminality': the crime was not the end in itself, but it was condoned in order to achieve a certain goal.[63] Rüter cites the examples of the actions of the special forces and the intelligence services. These services had to solve problems that had defeated regular units, and they were expected to use extreme violence in doing so. According to Rüter, because these actions were carried out on the orders of the military authorities, the judicial

authorities could not prevent or punish the use of violence.[64] In fact, if the decision had been made to prosecute the perpetrators of 'necessary' violence such as this, it would have likely led to a sharp fall in troop morale, much more so than when fighting other types of crimes. Moreover, acknowledging the frequent occurrence of such crimes would have led to a loss of face at the international level.[65]

The question is to what extent the judicial officials involved followed the example of the highest military authorities in failing to prosecute certain forms of extreme violence. When advising on whether to prosecute, Attorney general Henk Felderhof – who frequently consulted with the army commander general and the lieutenant governor general – and the judge advocates not only had to make a difficult call about the likelihood of obtaining evidence, but they also had to ask whether prosecution was desirable at all. They could advise the authorities to refrain from prosecution for the sake of the 'public interest'. This was a flexible concept, however, and personal, political or operational reasons were therefore cited frequently when applying this so-called opportunity principle.

Many a dossier on cases of extreme violence, including the killing of prisoners, was described by the attorney general and his close colleagues as 'a dirty business' or 'a dirty case'.[66] Based on the evidence collected and witness testimonies, they were often in no doubt that crimes had been committed, but when it came to soldiers, even those 'in the highest echelons', they frequently encountered a wall of obstructiveness.[67] Commanders often informed them, for example, that their own investigations had shown that no criminal or censurable offences had been committed. It was also common for a judge advocate to receive testimonies from servicemen involved who had evidently aligned their stories to prevent him from identifying the perpetrator(s) or discovering the exact nature of the offence. When encountering such opposition, the attorney general sometimes advised judge advocates to make the best of a bad job and opt for a disciplinary settlement, so that a punishment could nevertheless be imposed and the behaviour condemned.

The attorney general and the judge advocates could also refrain from prosecution for the sake of their precarious rapport with the military commanders, however. The fear was that if they rubbed the latter too much the wrong way, no incidents at all would come to light in future. Sometimes such decisions were forced in less subtle fashion, such as when a commander intimidated or threatened a judge advocate outright. For example, Lieutenant Colonel Marinus Raebel, commander of 4 RS on Sumatra, told judge ad-

vocate Rob Asser, as he laid a gun on the table: 'You'll leave my men alone.'[68]

In addition to the many reasons to refrain from prosecution, there were also factors that forced the Dutch authorities to act. This was the case when the victims included foreigners or prominent Indonesians, for example. The Chinese population in particular had representatives who advocated for their interests. The Dutch saw the Chinese consul general as a veritable terror, for instance, because he regularly approached the minister, the lieutenant governor general and the attorney general about prosecution when Chinese victims were killed by Dutch violence.[69] Consul Yu-Chuan Tsao and his Chinese delegation also visited various places in East Java, where they inquired about the investigation of various Chinese fatalities at Republican hands.[70]

Reports in the Dutch colonial, Republican or Dutch press about cases of extreme violence, such as rape, could also give rise to investigations; and when incidents were widely publicized, all the alarm bells sounded. There was a fear that such reports would be picked up by the UN or the Red Cross, and they thus became much harder to ignore or condone. Even in such situations, however, cases did not automatically result in prosecution, as shown

In August 1948, marines celebrate the acquittal of thirteen of the fourteen marines in the Bondowoso affair, in which 46 Indonesian prisoners of war lost their lives in goods carriages. Following protests, the High Military Court in Jakarta finally imposed light prison sentences on eight marines and acquitted three. The battalion commander responsible was not prosecuted. Source: Photographer unknown, Netherlands Marine Corps Museum/Collection N.C. Boudestein.



by the 'summary' executions on Sulawesi by the special forces led by Captain Raymond Westerling, already notorious at the time. It was more likely for the whistle-blower to be punished.[71]

The punishment of Dutch military personnel

At the first session of the KNIL field court martial in Jakarta in early 1946, the president of the court martial, Colonel Edu Engles (a non-lawyer), read out the following text:

> forming a small, yet very important part of this authority is the court martial – known in these extraordinary circumstances as the 'field court martial' – whose task in this nascent army is to administer justice in the name of Her Majesty the Queen and to make amends when injustice has been done. The court martial will also have to address problems of a different structure from that which was standard before these turbulent times. The court martial will have to take these new factors into account, yet it shall never allow injustice to be turned into law.[72]

Engles set lofty goals, but he also indicated that different standards would apply in this period of conflict. This raises the question of which standards the army leadership followed with regard to the use of violence, and how these standards were communicated to the soldiers.

International humanitarian law as a guide?

Although international humanitarian law had not officially been declared applicable, it did provide guidance in various respects.[73] This is shown by the distribution of a booklet entitled *Uittreksel van het conventionele oorlogsrecht* [Extract from the conventional law of war] to KNIL soldiers.[74] This booklet contained provisions from the Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land of 1907, which addressed the nature of warfare, including how to deal with spies, and the Geneva Convention of 1929, which regulated the treatment of prisoners of war. Routine orders show that soldiers were indeed expected to act in accordance with these provisions. When it became known in late 1946 that Dutch servicemen had engaged in combat operations whilst wearing Indonesian uniforms, the Chief of the General Staff, Major General Buurman van Vreeden, told his subordinates

that this practice was prohibited. 'Although there is no official war in the Dutch East Indies, nor a clearly recognizable enemy in uniform, I nevertheless expect the Dutch armed forces to adhere strictly to the rules governing the conduct of war as set out in the Geneva Convention.'[75]

Moreover, the Military Penal Code also provided that the law of war should form the touchstone for determining the punishability of the troops' conduct, as shall be explained further below.[76]

The Netherlands did not consider itself to be formally at war with the Republic, but it knew which acts of war were considered unacceptable. In order to try the Japanese, the Dutch used a list of 39 war crimes.[77] This list, which was based on the list used by the United Nations War Crimes Commission, included the torture of civilians, poor treatment of interned civilians or prisoners, and rape, among others. The Dutch colonial government supplemented the UNWCC list with some additional crimes, including 'acting in a heinous manner or carrying out executions'.[78] Although Dutch subjects – including Indonesians – could not formally commit these *war crimes* (only subjects of enemy powers could be prosecuted and tried for them), they could stand trial for the same offences as *crimes* that were punishable under national criminal law.[79] 'Torture', for example, was not included in the Penal Code as such, but it could be punished under the heading of 'assault'.

From their training and via publications, officers gained knowledge of military criminal law and the laws of war, but we do not know exactly how much legal knowledge the average soldier had. It is clear, however, that soldiers received poor instruction on the use of violence, law and the law of war.[80] The focus of the conscripts' training was mostly on military discipline, not criminal law, whilst the law of war was barely addressed in the curriculum.[81] In addition to the *Handboek voor den Soldaat* [Soldier's handbook], another general guideline was the widely circulated and taught *Uitoefening van de Politiek-Politionele Taak van het Leger* [Regulations on the army's political and policing duties, VPTL]. The army commander general issued an abbreviated and illustrated version of this booklet, which KNIL officers had used for years, so that conscripts and illiterate Indonesian KNIL soldiers could learn from it.[82] It contained instructions on how to use weapons, 'purge' *kampongs* and take and treat prisoners. Although the booklet did not mention the punishment of crimes, it did state that the population had to be treated 'humanely' and strongly condemned the destruction or burning of property. Moreover, the unabridged, pre-war version of the *VPTL* explicitly stated that it was forbidden to use violence against prisoners and

that 'the assault, mutilation or killing of resistance members who have fallen into our hands, other than in lawful self-defence, [...] should be prosecuted as a crime'.[83]

The operational orders that commanders gave before an action did not usually contain any instructions that set limits on the force that could be used.[84] As a result, it was mainly the adjutant commanders who determined what was and was not acceptable. The army commander general did issue frequent routine orders in which he condemned certain actions. In such an order in July 1947, for example, General Spoor called on soldiers who had lost family or friends at the hands of 'crime-hardened Indonesian elements' to 'never lose their self-control and dishonour their military role by seeking private vengeance'.[85] Not only would they be highly likely to hit innocent people, but they would also be punished. Spoor was repeatedly forced to issue routine orders in which he 'again had to observe' that certain undesirable practices kept occurring. He thereby expressed his displeasure at the looting, rape and poor treatment of prisoners.[86] To some extent these routine orders were largely symbolic and reflected theory rather than reality, because in practice Spoor turned a blind eye to the misdeeds that he condemned in public, or overlooked them if they appeared to have a desirable military impact.[87]

For the individual soldier, the fact that the training was poor and the standards on the use of violence were downright vague was no excuse for abandoning one's moral compass and obeying every order without question. Indeed, if a serviceman obeyed an unlawful order and committed a crime in doing so, he was considered guilty; it was his duty to refuse such orders. Soldiers were often unaware of this, however, and practice was sometimes very different. A telling example is the imposition of severe punishments on three marines who refused to reduce a *kampong* near Pakisaji in East Java to ashes, because they were unconvinced of the military necessity of doing so. They were found guilty by the court martial and convicted of refusing to carry out what the court martial considered to be a lawful order.[88] In 1969, the director of the State Psychology Service, F.J.E. Hogewind, who was in frequent contact with conscripts both during and after the war, cited ambiguous standards as one of the factors explaining the 'wound-up state' (*geprikkeldheid*) of the Dutch troops. In his view, this state had contributed to the display of transgressive behaviour in Indonesia. A commanding officer had once told him that the Dutch conscript in Indonesia had 'one foot in the grave and the other in the prison cell'.[89]

The convictions: the tip of the iceberg

That last statement in the previous section may offer a good illustration of the troops' frustration with the unclear regulations, but at the same time it does not give a realistic picture of the likelihood of being convicted. As mentioned above, appendix 6 of the *Excessennota* mentions 110 judgements relating to violent crimes committed by Dutch soldiers against Indonesian civilians and fighters.[90] This number seems to be in stark contrast to the potential number of crimes. We do not know the precise extent of the (extreme) violence committed by Dutch military personnel in Indonesia, but according to earlier, plausible estimates it may have run to tens of thousands of incidents.[91] Although, as shall be shown below, the number of cases of violent crime against Indonesians was indeed higher and the figure of 110 judgements should thus be revised upwards, this does not alter the fact that only a very small share of the violent crimes committed – the proverbial tip of the iceberg – ended in conviction by a court martial.

The aim of this research is not to reach a firm quantitative conclusion about the overall scale of the violence committed, because the sources simply do not allow it: much violence was never reported, let alone prosecuted. Nor is the aim to establish exactly how many judgements between 1945 and 1949 concerned violent crimes, because that source material is not complete, either. Nevertheless, the courts martial cases deserve more attention in this research for several reasons. First, the literature on the War of Independence has always treated the figures in the *Excessennota,* including the above-mentioned figure of 110 and the memo's conclusions about the working of the military justice system, as established fact, and this has never been investigated – even though it was found quite soon after the publication of the *Excessennota* that the latter was far from complete and that the committee's approach had its limitations. This is all the more reason to scrutinize the sources themselves.

A second reason for taking a closer look at the 'administration' of the courts martial – the courts martial registers, weekly case logs, cause lists and trial records – is to gain a better understanding of how the military justice system worked and to trace how the reporting of a possible crime led to a verdict or, as in the majority of cases, was settled in a different way; for even though the total size of the 'iceberg' of cases of extreme violence is unknown and much of it lies below the proverbial surface, we can get an impression of its size by considering reported incidents that did not lead to a verdict, but that were settled in another fashion.

Before looking at the figures, we should make a number of caveats with regard to comparing the material. Although the courts martial registers and weekly case logs by judge advocates seem to be largely complete, the same cannot be said of the underlying dossiers. Moreover, it is not a straightforward matter to compare all types of court sources. The registers, cause lists and dossiers do not contain uniform data. Similar problems are encountered in the *Excessennota* and in articles in the journal *Militair-Rechtelijk Tijdschrift* (MRT), which used diverse criteria when drawing up figures on the administration of justice; for example, with regard to the period to which the figures relate (for example, figures up to and including 1949 or also after 1949), the type of crime (all types of crime or only violent crimes), or the victims' background (all backgrounds or only Indonesian). After all, not all of the violent crimes committed by Dutch soldiers should be categorized as 'extreme violence', defined by Limpach as the 'use of physical violence that was used, predominantly outside of regular combat situations, against non-combatants (civilians) or combatants (military personnel or militia) who had been disarmed following their capture'.[92] Extreme violence thus mainly concerned crimes in which Indonesian civilians and combatants – and not Dutch military personnel – were victims. In order to determine whether a violent crime can be categorized as extreme violence, it is necessary to study and assess the trial records and other judicial sources one by one. Only in this way can we establish the circumstances in which the violence took place and the identity of the victim(s).

Researchers at the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV) undertook this time-consuming exercise by examining the dossiers in the court martial archives, among other things.[93] The disadvantage of this approach is that not all cases are accompanied by a dossier. Moreover, it is equally important to study how many cases were investigated that did *not* lead to a judgement, as well as the nature of those cases. For that reason, this research examined registers and cause lists in addition to judgements. By combining these data with qualitative data from military-legal correspondence, I sought to gain more insight into the working methods.[94]

As stated above, we can only guess at the overall scale of the incidents of extreme violence. In October 1947, judge advocate Van Leeuwen, who was well acquainted with the judicial system, estimated that at most, only 10 per cent of 'all looting and other property-related crimes, rapes, etc.' committed during and after the first military offensive had come to light.[95] He did not

specify these crimes with precision, but they appear to have included (serious) violent crimes, in any case. Although Van Leeuwen paints a picture that is far from complete, we can clearly infer that a great many crimes were not even reported, let alone resulted in judgement by a court martial.

We can only draw conclusions about the cases that *did* come to light, of course, and about how the judicial system handled them. As mentioned above, when it came to minor offences – or offences that were considered to be minor – the commander in charge could impose disciplinary penalties without the intervention of a higher body; those cases are not considered here. According to the law, certain 'minor' disciplinary violations could be settled with a disciplinary penalty; so-called 'improper military disciplinary offences' (*oneigenlijke krijgstuchtelijke vergrijpen*). Moreover, due to the state of war and the growing case backlog, the KL and the KM had a scheme that temporarily permitted criminal cases to be dealt with as disciplinary offences if they could not be handled within a short period of time. Initially this was meant to apply to straightforward cases for which a maximum sentence of two months in prison could be imposed.[96] As with so many measures, however, in late 1947 the KL's scheme was extended to cases 'of a serious nature' without this being specified in more detail.[97]

For cases that a commander could not handle independently, after an investigation had been carried out, a report was drafted and entered in the weekly case log by the local army or navy judge advocate. It is estimated that 32,000 to 35,000 offences of varying natures were registered in this way between 1946 and 1949.[98] The registers record the advice that the judge advocate gave to the referring officer: a disciplinary settlement, referral to the court martial or dismissal. A case could also be sent to a judge advocate in a different location to be dealt with there, meaning that the advice was not entered in that particular register. A detailed study of 300 successive cases in the registers of the KL's judge advocate in Semarang, Surabaya and Jakarta in the period after the first military offensive of 1947 shows that in this period, around a half up to a third of cases were dealt with by court martial, between a quarter and a half were settled with disciplinary proceedings, and between 11 and 14 per cent were dismissed.[99]

It is important to know which kinds of crimes were prosecuted and which were dealt with in another way. Aside from common cases such as traffic offences and curfew violations, the cases that were handled as disciplinary offences included incidents such as the destruction of homes, looting and embezzlement. The registers of the army prosecutor's office in Jakarta show

that this office also dealt with incidents of rape, assault and mistreatment as violations of military discipline, not as offences punishable under criminal law.[100] Contrary to what is stated in the *Excessennota*, cases were also dismissed on a large scale, including cases involving violent crimes.[101] The KL's judge advocate in Jakarta advised the dismissal of serious cases, including the shooting of escaped detainees, a shoot-out, murder and the mistreatment of prisoners.[102] This confirms the picture outlined above of judge advocates who refrained from prosecution for diverse reasons.

Data from the HMG show that in the period between 1946 and 1949, judge advocates for the KL advised referral to the court martial in around a quarter of cases, and their colleagues at the navy advised it in one fifth of cases.[103] These figures are slightly lower than those of the above mentioned sample. The cases that were referred were registered in the cause list of the court martial, where the details of the trial and the eventual verdict were also subsequently noted. According to the *Excessennota*, around 12,000 dossiers were found at the HMG in The Hague that related to the cases mentioned in the cause lists. But the number of dossiers is not equal to the number of trials, as appendix 6 of the memo erroneously suggests. When 'dossier numbers' were assigned, probably at the time of the 'excesses' investigation, the cases that were numbered included cases relating to Indonesians who were tried by the temporary courts martial. In addition, a case was sometimes 'put on hold' and dealt with at a later time, meaning that a new number was assigned. Above all, however, the numbered dossiers included cases that were sent by the court martial 'to the commanding officer' to be handled as disciplinary offences, and that therefore did not result in a criminal judgement.

When we consider the number of criminal judgements, the published overview of figures from the HMG shows that in the years 1947, 1948 and 1949, 8,442 verdicts relating to Dutch military personnel were passed by the courts martial in Indonesia: 5,735 at the KL's field court martial, 1,781 at the KNIL's field court martial, and 926 at the naval court martial.[104] Thus, this figure does not include judgements passed by the temporary courts martial and judgements from the years 1946 and 1950. In addition, these figures include all kinds of crimes, not only violent crimes or extreme violence. There is no way to infer from the figures whether Indonesians were victims. This figure thus offers no more than an indication of the total number of judgements.

The 'excesses' investigation of 1969 yielded 'between 5 and 600 cases' of 'war crimes'.[105] The latter 'war crimes' category included violent crimes com-

mitted against Indonesian civilians and combatants.[106] Around 500 of the defendants were related to looting cases, leaving the 149 defendants in the 110 cases of crimes reported in the memo. These 110 judgements included 10 cases of rape, 25 of manslaughter and 13 of murder.

The database of the archival research carried out by the KITLV contains 407 court martial cases of violence committed against Indonesians, divided into categories of types of crimes and violence that took place within or outside the framework of regular military action. Of these, 118 judgements relate to cases of murder and manslaughter outside the framework of military action.[107] Although these figures are not complete and the classification of categories is somewhat arbitrary, they give an indication of the types of crimes. In any case, the number of judgements relating to violent crimes, and extreme violence in particular, is thus higher than that reported in the *Excessennota*. When the figures from the database are compared to the total number of criminal judgements (for all types of crimes) mentioned by the HMG, we see that around 5 per cent of judgements relate to (potential) cases of extreme violence such as murder, manslaughter, assault, rape and arson. The majority relate to cases of robbery and theft, which were often accompanied by violence. What do these figures tell us? They say little about the extent of the extreme violence deployed, aside from the fact that the number of cases must have been a multiple of this, given the statements about percentages of unreported violence. If we consider the individual cases, we see that a very wide range of punishments was imposed. For example, the punishment for murder, which included the execution of prisoners, varied from a year in prison to the death penalty.[108] The death penalty was imposed twice on Dutch soldiers for serious violent crimes, but only carried out once.[109] This raises several questions: why were similar cases sometimes punished but often not, and which factors influenced sentencing?

Explanations for differences in sentencing

Criminal cases cannot simply be compared, of course, and unique factors were at play, but we can nevertheless make a number of general statements based on the judgements relating to violent offences, over 400 of them in all. The types of crimes that were tried and punished (relatively) severely were often individual actions that were taken at the defendant's own initiative and that did not benefit or even harm the military organization, their commanders or their own unit. Such cases can be described as 'dysfuncti-

onal behaviour'.[110] By contrast, there were also 'functional crimes' that reflected 'desired structural criminality', such as 'summary executions' and the killing of prisoners, which were dealt with in a different way.

The approach to punishment was largely determined by a very broad interpretation of the grounds for exclusion from punishment in the Military Penal Code that applied to military personnel:[111]

> He who in time of war, within the limits of his authority, commits an act that is permitted according to the rules of the law of war, or whose punishment would be contrary to a treaty in force between the Netherlands and the power with which the Netherlands is at war, or with any regulation laid down pursuant to such a treaty, is not punishable.[112]

In short: killing people was punishable under the Penal Code, for example, but the Military Penal Code provided grounds for exclusion if this killing took place in the context of the conflict and did not violate the limiting provisions of the law of war. Some commanders erroneously considered 'summary executions', whereby suspects were executed on the spot without any form of trial, to be part of military operations and therefore often failed to report them as crimes. Even in cases where mass executions came to light, such as in South Sulawesi, the highest authorities usually decided to refrain from prosecution. This is in stark contrast to the death sentences imposed by Dutch temporary courts martial on Japanese war criminals for carrying out similar executions.[113] The authorities applied much more lenient standards to their 'own boys' than to other parties.

One should add that the degree of cruelty and the openness with which a crime was committed had an impact on prosecution and sentencing. This was the case, for example, for an employee of the Military Intelligence Service on Bali, who killed two suspects after a heavy-handed interrogation and then had them beheaded with the intention of displaying the heads as a deterrent example.[114] Another intelligence officer, the commander of the Intelligence and Security Group (IVG) in Jombang (East Java), had seven prisoners taken to the market, tied up and shot. A pamphlet with a cautionary text for the residents was then fixed to a pole.[115] These actions – which were difficult to hush up – were punished; although the courts martial only imposed prison sentences of six and two years (including detention at the government's pleasure), they did at least come to trial. Cases that attracted less public attention, such as the abuse of internees or pris-

oners behind prison walls by the intelligence services, were only punished sporadically.

In cases where the victims of extreme violence were prominent individuals, the authorities were usually forced to investigate these crimes, too, and the court martial was under pressure to set an example. Thus, the court martial in Jakarta even sentenced a member of the Military Police to death for robbing and murdering a prominent Arab woman.[116] It was perhaps no coincidence that this crime clearly had nothing to do with the perpetrator's military duties, and that it had also made it into the papers.

Other factors led to lower penalties, however. The rank and position of the defendant, for example, influenced the handling and sentencing of a case. Officers appeared before the court martial the least often, in comparative terms, although relatively more often than they did in the Netherlands. When they were tried, it was for involvement in crimes such as looting, embezzlement, handling stolen goods or accepting a gift.[117] More striking, however, is the fact that officers often escaped sanction in cases that involved (serious) violent crimes, even though they were obviously involved or responsible. NCOs and corporals were frequently spared, too, in the sense that they were subjected more often to (partially) conditional punishments and discharged less often than the men. Furthermore, the registers show that their wrongdoings were handled as disciplinary offences more often than those of the men.

Courts martial also took all kinds of extenuating circumstances into account, even in relation to serious offences. When determining sentences in countless cases, especially those involving KNIL soldiers, personal experience in the Japanese internment camps and the loss of relatives in the *bersiap* period were considered extenuating circumstances. When it came to conscripts, the difficult conditions in the tropics, limited training and lack of experience were considered. If a crime was found to have had a positive impact on the local security situation, this often resulted in a lighter punishment too. Many a time, the members of the court martial underlined the need to take a tough line in order to break the anti-Dutch resistance. The desire to maintain troop numbers was also reflected in the penalties. In some cases, for example, the additional penalty of discharge was only imposed in the case of prison sentences of one year or longer.[118] This was done not only to maintain troop numbers, but also to prevent soldiers from committing crimes in order to be repatriated more quickly; after discharge, sentences were generally served in the Netherlands.

Different courts martial also took different approaches to sentencing. Perhaps the most important explanation for this lies in the composition of these institutions and the background of the judges and judge advocates. The members of the KL's courts martial, who all had the rank of officers, were more emphatically on the troops' side than their colleagues at the KNIL. M.P. Plantenga, who served as president of a KL court martial, was a vocal advocate of the use of military justice to support military action and therefore showed much understanding for the interests of the soldiers and their commanders. By contrast, the temporary courts martial, which were often chaired by militarized colonial legal officials, imposed more severe punishments on KNIL soldiers. In some cases, for example, an attempted manslaughter resulted in a five-year prison sentence.[119] The KNIL's courts martial, on which Netherlands Indies legal officials served as judge advocates, also imposed relatively severe sentences. The duration of a prison sentence for manslaughter and assault amounted to between two and twelve years, whereas KL servicemen usually received a prison sentence of one to five years for similar offences. In cases against KNIL servicemen, the severity of the punishment also depended on their ethnic background; Indonesians were punished more severely than Dutchmen for what were ostensibly similar crimes.[120]

Action against Indonesian opponents

During the War of Independence, the Dutch authorities used various repressive measures and violent means to gain control over the population. In addition to criminal prosecution, the Dutch colonial government fell back on internment, a much tried-and-tested method in the colony.[121] The Military Authority and the lieutenant governor general ordered people whom they considered to be a threat to public order or the state to be detained in camps for an indefinite time, without any need for concrete evidence, let alone a court ruling.[122] In order to avoid taking any risks, the authorities rounded up many tens of thousands of people before deciding whether to prosecute them. As a result, the internment camps and prisons soon became overcrowded.

The pressure to prevent the number of prisoners rising too high, or even to reduce numbers by handling cases rapidly and releasing prisoners, was at odds with the desire to punish severely and create security. There were also tensions between the military authorities, who preferred to deal with the prisoner problem with as little paperwork as possible, and lawyers at the OM

and judicial officials who took a legalistic approach and wanted to follow rules and regulations wherever possible, even if it meant devising new ones.

Three categories

The judicial system divided detainees[123] into three broad categories: '*de facto* prisoners of war', criminals and political prisoners.[124] At first captured Republican servicemen and fighters were put in prison, but because Army Commander General Spoor anticipated fierce criticism from the UN regarding their treatment, he and the Dutch colonial government decided to treat them as prisoners of war in accordance with the Geneva Convention.[125] The term 'prisoners of war' had to be avoided, though, in order to avoid giving the impression that the Netherlands was at war. Republican soldiers and fighters who were arrested during regular military operations in areas occupied by the Dutch were therefore described as '*de facto* prisoners of war' – provided that they had not committed crimes in the view of the Dutch authorities. They were imprisoned in internment camps supervised by the military, and had to be treated in accordance with separate regulations.[126]

The second category, the 'criminals', included soldiers and civilians who might be guilty of criminal offences, including both common offences and recently criminalized actions against the Dutch regime. If an investigation showed that they could be prosecuted, they were placed under the supervision of the (civilian) prison system and in principle their case was handled by one of the civilian courts. If the OM was unable to complete a case against a certain suspect – due to a lack of evidence, for example – it was still possible to intern them without trial.

The final category, the 'political prisoners', covered detainees with diverse backgrounds who had been detained because they posed a (potential) threat. In areas that were not yet considered to be 'purged', this included those suspected of carrying out criminal acts against the Dutch regime, such as acts of destruction, erecting roadblocks and laying mines, but whose guilt was difficult to determine.[127] This vague category overlapped with that of 'criminals'. The category to which someone was assigned on the basis of certain allegations varied from case to case.

The total number of internees and prisoners cannot be determined with any certainty. Despite the urging of the attorney general, the Military Authority reported only sporadically on this issue. There are no overviews for the different years, as far as we are aware, although we do know that the numbers must have fluctuated greatly. Given the dozens of people who, ac-

cording to military reports, were taken prisoner by the brigades on an almost daily basis, however, the number of internees and prisoners must have been high, certainly if we allow for the fact that it was easy to overlook the many prisoners who were held in towns, outposts or in unit encampments. In any case, according to military reports, between January and August 1949 almost 40,000 Indonesians were taken prisoner (of war) on Java and Sumatra.[128] For this reason, the estimate by the critical lawyer G.J. Resink, that there must have been 50,000 to 60,000 internees in late 1948, appears to have been more realistic than the 15,000 internees (in addition to *de facto* prisoners of war) on Java and Sumatra reported by the attorney general in December 1948.[129]

Internment was seen as a necessary political instrument; the wellbeing of internees was of minor importance. Although the conditions in the camps varied from place to place and from time to time, the interned Indonesian men and women usually lived in dreadful conditions. The director of the Department of Health, A.P.J. van der Burg, complained to Spoor about the poor treatment of prisoners and the abuse of Indonesian suspects in order to obtain confessions. Spoor acknowledged some abuses, but dismissed the complaint on the grounds that the abuse was due to a lack of self-discipline among the staff, and that the people in question would be subject to disciplinary proceedings. Inspections by the UN and the Red Cross, as well as the fear that the Republic would use the prisons for propaganda purposes, sometimes prompted minor improvements.[130] The internees were left in a state of great ignorance; many were not or barely interrogated, and thus had no idea why they had been locked up and for how long. A moving sketch of the situation in the camps can be found in a semi-autobiographical novel by the renowned writer and Republican Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who was imprisoned in Bukit Duri prison near Jakarta. He describes the impact of the fear, frustration, and uncertainty about the reasons for and duration of the internment on the detainees and their families, who often lost a breadwinner.[131] The Dutch authorities paid no attention to the needs of these families.

Release, expulsion and exchange

A number of measures were taken to reduce the large number of detainees. When it came to the categories of prisoners of war and political prisoners, in principle release was possible if there was insufficient evidence of (serious) criminal behaviour and if they were 'accomplices' or 'insignificant' individuals. This did not happen as a matter of course, though, because the autho-

rities always saw these detainees as a potential threat and considered their presence in Dutch territory to be undesirable. Fearing that they would soon re-join armed groups after their release, the judge advocate or judge, under the guise of re-education and future prospects, sent young men to so-called rehabilitation camps where they were obliged stay.[132] This compulsory stay meant that there was very little difference between these camps and 'regular' internment camps.

In addition, thousands of Indonesians were 'expelled' to Republican territory.[133] By recording their descriptions and warning them that any return to Dutch-controlled territory would be a criminal offence, the military authorities hoped to bar any 'undesirable elements'. Which internees were eligible for release or expulsion was determined by the so-called Informal Advisory Committees (Informele Adviescommissies, IACs), which consisted of representatives of the civilian administration (administrative officer), the judiciary (public prosecutor) and the army (IVG intelligence officer, possibly also

Meeting of the Informal Advisory Committee (IAC) in Banyumas prison to decide on the prosecution or release of interned Indonesians, April 1948. Seated at the table, from left to right: NN (Sergeant Major of the Military Police; K.S. Bieger (public prosecutor); J.A. Reus (administrator of Banyumas) and Lieutenant A.M.J. van Wamelen (Staff V Brigade). Source: J.C. Taillie, National Archives of the Netherlands/Dienst voor Legercontacten



the local commander).[134] The evaluation process was time-consuming and large backlogs soon developed.

Another measure intended to reduce the number of internees was to exchange (large numbers of) *de facto* prisoners of war and political prisoners for (much smaller numbers of) Dutch soldiers who had fallen into Republican hands. In part under pressure from the UN, Dutch and Republican delegations discussed such exchanges in various committees. The negotiations were often tricky, however, because neither party was above using deception and misinformation, and both wanted to exploit the exchanges for propaganda purposes. Despite this, in the course of the war several thousand Indonesian prisoners of war were exchanged for several dozen Dutch soldiers.[135]

Criminal prosecution

In addition to internment, criminal prosecution was another way to put Indonesian opponents out of action and portray them in a negative light. Both the Justice Department and the army leadership emphasized how much the population was suffering from the murders, looting and arson committed by 'criminals', and that the perpetrators would be punished severely. The so-called '*bersiap* murders', committed in the first phase of the revolution, received special attention from the authorities. The investigation did not get going properly until July 1947, because many areas had previously been inaccessible. Many of the suspected main perpetrators of the crimes had already fled to Republican areas, however, meaning that mostly co-conspirators and accomplices – a few dozen, in any case – were brought to trial. Nevertheless, sentences of fifteen to twenty years and even the death penalty were handed out.[136]

In view of the wartime conditions, in 1945 the maximum sentences for many crimes were made more severe, meaning that the death penalty could be imposed in many cases.[137] In addition, the justice system continued to extend the grounds for criminal prosecution or interpret them creatively. For example, Attorney General Felderhof urged the prosecution of Indonesian suspects on the grounds that they had 'participated' in an association that was prohibited or that intended to commit crimes; it was then unnecessary to prove that the suspect had personally committed a crime.[138] Furthermore, more and more actions were criminalized by the Allied or Military Authority regulations, such as having knowledge of where weapons and munitions were stored without reporting this to the military or civilian authorities.[139] Resistance to the Dutch regime was criminalized. One of the first far-reach-

ing measures was the 'Hawthorn Proclamation' of October 1945, which stated that people could be 'shot' or 'punished' if caught in the act of carrying weapons, sabotage or looting.[140] This proclamation, which was issued by the British military authority, remained in force until early 1948.[141]

The trying of political cases took on a new dimension after the Dutch military offensives, when the Dutch administration wanted to restore Dutch justice in the newly occupied territories. The territorial expansions not only increased the workload for the judiciary, but they also created new challenges. Namely, colonial legal officials were appointed as so-called 'special judges' (*bijzondere rechters*) to try political cases in these areas, because Indonesian judges who had been retained by the Dutch regime were reluctant to deal with such cases for fear of revenge. These cases concerned the murder of police officers, suspected spies and 'collaborators' by 'gangs' and ex-TNI servicemen, for example, for which the death penalty was regularly demanded.[142]

As well as the special judges, the district courts, which handled civilian criminal cases, and temporary courts martial had their hands full with an unknown number of criminal cases, some of which related to the revolution.[143] Finally, the special courts martial played an important role in the criminal prosecution of crimes against the Dutch regime.[144]

Special courts martial

The release of prisoners and internees created a new dilemma for the justice system. There were reports, for example, that frustrated Dutch soldiers were switching to the 'summary' execution of captured servicemen, fighters and civilians, to prevent them from taking up arms against the Dutch again. The scale on which such executions occurred is not known, but we do know that executions without trial certainly took place from early 1946, and were alternately condoned and condemned by brigade and battalion commanders and the army authorities in Jakarta.[145]

In order to counter this development and meet the widely felt need for 'rapid and brief on-site trials of acts of terror', in March 1948 the justice system created a new type of military court on Java and Sumatra, the special court martial (*bijzondere krijgsgerecht*).[146] A brigade commander could establish a special court martial in his jurisdiction and appoint a field officer from his brigade as a judge. Sitting alone, this military judge, who was not required to have legal expertise or experience, could use fast-track proceedings in cases 'of a straightforward nature'; in other words, cases that demand-

ed little time or attention because the evidence spoke for itself.

The special courts martial were tasked with dealing with crimes committed by (suspected) members of armed groups who had taken up arms against the Dutch regime, including carrying out espionage operations and infiltrating Dutch territory. In three sessions of the special court martial of the V-Brigade, for example, 32 defendants were put on trial for infiltration, six of whom were sentenced to death and seventeen sentenced to prison for periods of five to twenty years. Nine young defendants did not receive prison sentences but were 'ordered to be detained at the government's pleasure', which usually meant that they were sent to the above-mentioned rehabilitation camps.[147] Although the special courts martial sometimes passed mild judgements, the punishments were usually severe.[148]

The special courts martial were intended to prevent soldiers from taking matters into their own hands, but in practice they paved the way for injustice. The judge advocate usually acted as prosecutor for the temporary court martial, but in unforeseen circumstances the brigade commander could appoint any officer for this purpose. It could thus happen that a judgement could be passed without any lawyer having been involved in the judicial process. It could also happen that defendants failed to receive legal counsel because they were not informed about their rights. It is striking that even in these 'straightforward' cases, the most severe punishment of all – the death penalty – could be imposed, something that was not usually left to a single judge. It is unclear how many cases and death sentences were involved, but research in newspapers from the time has revealed more than fifty reports of death sentences. All in all, the number of death sentences imposed by special courts martial, special judges, temporary courts martial and district courts is likely to have run into the hundreds.[149] In fact, the only guarantee against excessive sentencing and wrongful convictions had been eroded: aside from the possibility of a pardon, this lay in the withholding of the writ of execution by the brigade commander – someone who lacked legal training, was probably biased, and was the one to have set up the court martial in the first place.

The simplified procedure and speed at which the cases were dealt with undermined the process of establishing the truth. The special courts martial often handled multiple cases in a single day, sometimes in a number of locations, leaving little time to prepare and deal with a case thoroughly. The burden of proof was often scant. Testimonies from witnesses and suspects were frequently the most important source of evidence and, as shown by



Four shackled defendants waiting for the session of the special court martial in Garut, February 1949. All were sentenced to death. The Japanese Aoki, alias Abu Bakar (right), was convicted for carrying out 'terrorist actions' in West Java on behalf of the TNI. Source: Photographer unknown, NIOD/Collection T. Smid.

Limpach's chapter on the intelligence services, a heavy-handed approach was often taken to obtaining statements. Defendants regularly withdrew their statements during the court session, because they had been forced to confess under threats or ill-treatment.[150] In some cases, a judge would declare the evidence inadmissible and acquit the defendant, but judges often questioned the defendant's word and saw such withdrawals as an attempt to lessen the punishment or achieve an acquittal.

For political and pragmatic reasons, until the transfer of sovereignty the authorities continued to adjust the categories of prisoners and internees and adapt the instructions for their treatment, but this could not conceal the fact that the justice system lacked an overview of the situation and that cases were often handled arbitrarily. The decision to establish special courts martial shows that on the one hand, the judicial authorities were unable to take a

stand against unauthorized and extrajudicial executions by military personnel, and on the other hand, they gave in to pressure from the military to take a hard line against 'enemy elements' and punish them as severely as possible. By creating these courts martial, the justice system legitimized and legalized the killing of Indonesian prisoners on extremely shaky legal grounds. In doing so, they and the military authorities were guilty of what can only be described as judicial killing.

The impact on the war and the use of violence

Although it is difficult to measure the impact of the actions of the judiciary on the use of violence in the war, based on this research we can make several statements about the extent to which it promoted or curbed the use of violence on the Dutch and Indonesian sides. One direct and evident link between the use of violence and the failure to punish crimes committed by Dutch soldiers, or punish them in a timely manner, is that the perpetrators of extreme violence were able to keep overstepping the mark. In June 1947, for example, Jan Nordmann, a warrant-officer in the KNIL, committed crimes including murder and manslaughter, and in August also inciting murder, aggravated assault and handling stolen goods.[151] He was not placed under provisional arrest until February 1948, however, after which it took until January 1949 for the court martial to deal with his cases and sentence him to seventeen years in prison. The precise reason for this slow response is unknown, but it was not unusual for servicemen to remain at large for a long time. Failing to punish crimes or punish them swiftly had the operational advantage of maximizing troop numbers in the battalions. In any case, this was a factor in the decision, taken in the run-up to the two military offensives, to suspend or defer the implementation of prison sentences of six months or less.[152]

As the judiciary only became involved in a case after a crime had been committed, when it came to preventing extreme violence the main potential strength of the judiciary lay in its ability to generate a deterrent effect by means of punishment. Its ability in this regard appears to have been limited, however. We know from egodocuments that sentencing for offences and crimes did occupy soldiers' minds at the time, but it is difficult to say whether the threat of punishment prevented them from overstepping the mark.[153] In any case, the justice system and the army leadership tried to evoke a sense of shame among the troops by publicly disclosing the crimes com-

mitted and the sentences imposed, including by reading out judgements at roll call and hanging up punishment lists in the mess.[154] The Dutch colonial press was also fed information about judgements relating to theft, looting and attempted manslaughter. Such reports in the media – which for some time even included the initials of the perpetrators – were intended to deter soldiers, but they also served to contradict reports in the Republican media about impunity for crimes committed by Dutch soldiers.[155]

It is difficult to determine how far these 'naming and shaming' measures were effective. They may have helped to raise awareness among young servicemen who had just arrived in Indonesia. In any event, though, the publicized judgements included few cases of structural criminality, such as the abuse of detainees, meaning that this policy would have had little effect on the perpetration of this form of extreme violence; and it was precisely by rarely punishing and not publicly condemning this structural criminality that the authorities gave the clear impression that they considered this form of violence to be acceptable. Thus, whether consciously or unconsciously, they sent a legitimizing signal to the Dutch troops.

In the case of Indonesian military personnel and fighters, the actions of the judiciary had contradictory effects. Large-scale internment and the execution of civilians, servicemen and fighters may have weakened the Republic in a numerical sense, but this rebounded on the Dutch; the severe punishments and measures had a motivational, rather than a deterrent, effect. Some fighters were proud of their contribution to the revolution and were convinced that they would be released as soon as the Dutch were defeated.[156] Moreover, the prisons and internment camps functioned as 'hotbeds' of Indonesian nationalism. Internment gave prisoners and internees the opportunity to unite and plan campaigns.[157] The arrests of Republican leaders also prompted diverse groups to organize resistance campaigns and carry out reprisals.[158]

Conclusion

During the Indonesian War of Independence, the Netherlands used law, particularly criminal law, as a weapon in the fight against the Republic. Showing themselves bound by their institutional bias, the Dutch judiciary and military authorities in Indonesia deliberately abandoned important legal principles for the sake of military interests.

The extreme violence committed by Dutch soldiers was punished only selectively and on a very limited scale. There was a high degree of impunity,

especially in the case of capital offences such as murder and manslaughter. The few cases in which perpetrators were punished were often individual actions that played no 'functional' role in the military organization and operations. The number of convictions thus says little about the total extent of the extreme violence. Although the number of sentences for violent crimes that can be categorized as extreme violence was higher than reported in the *Excessennota,* such acts – if they were reported at all – were usually handled as disciplinary offences or even dismissed. The courts martial were not short of work, however, because they had their hands full with punishing offences and (minor) crimes committed by Dutch soldiers with an eye to maintaining discipline. The key issue, however, was that the military-legal apparatus saw serving military interests, not punishing crime or violent crime, as its primary objective.

Precisely for this reason, the highest Dutch authorities condoned forms of desired structural criminality, such as the torture of detainees, as part of the waging of war. Although in theory there was adherence to the law of war, in practice this was of insufficient significance and the attitude of the immediate commander was usually the determining factor. Much violence was classified as military necessity and therefore exempt from investigation or prosecution. Army Commander General Spoor was aware that his troops regularly overstepped the mark, but he preferred to look the other way; and if not, as the highest authority he could decide not to prosecute. The attorney general often showed himself to be pragmatic and benevolent regarding the army authorities, whereby this highest legal authority gave a legitimizing signal to the judge advocates. Although some of the latter felt impotent and would have preferred to prosecute such actions, in many cases they too eventually gave in to military pressure. In addition, the presidents and the members of the courts martial, some of whom lacked any legal background, often showed themselves to be very sympathetic to military interests. The end apparently justified the means.

The latter also applied to how the Dutch judiciary treated Indonesians who had turned against the Dutch colonial regime. By declaring a state of emergency, the political, military and legal authorities extended existing laws and regulations, criminalized the actions of the opponent, and thereby paved the way for the imposition of the severest penalties for relatively minor offences. They also fell back on the colonial practice of large-scale internment. This not only affected individuals who had actually used violence for whatever reason, but also civilians who gave more or less passive support

to the Republic or who refused to work with the Dutch colonial regime, for example. Legal norms were eroded in the process. Illustrative of this was the establishment of the special courts martial, whereby the justice system legalized the execution of Indonesian civilians, servicemen and fighters and created a semblance of legitimacy – without being able to prevent extrajudicial killings.

Although Colonel Engles had assured that the court martial would never allow 'injustice to be turned into law', this was indeed borne out by the actions of the judiciary in 1945-1949. That is not to say that all of the measures and – in particular – their implementation were the result of a deliberate policy to put law at the service of war, or that the judicial apparatus was entirely inadequate. The overloaded and relatively inexperienced apparatus operated under challenging conditions and faced many practical problems. Moreover, the justice system had only limited influence over the many factors that determined the use of extreme violence.

Nevertheless, it is more than likely that the opportunistic actions of the judicial system promoted, rather than curbed, the use of extreme violence. Even if the effects are difficult to measure, by only lightly punishing or failing to punish severe crimes by Dutch soldiers, the judicial system allowed them to continue their violent behaviour. Indeed, by turning a blind eye to this behaviour, as mentioned above, the authorities sent out a legitimizing signal. When it came to Indonesians, the repressive regime provoked feelings of bitterness and a greater resolve to fight, both among the individuals who were detained or punished and among their relatives and acquaintances. The same will have been true of the relatives of victims of (unpunished) Dutch extreme violence.

In short, until the bitter end the Dutch judiciary in Indonesia remained a crucial instrument of colonial authority that bent the rules and provisions to its will. Due to the hybrid and militarized character of the judiciary, its condoning and simultaneously repressive actions came to serve military interests. Moreover, the legalistic approach of the civilian judiciary gave a semblance of legitimacy to its actions. By applying double standards, the justice system encouraged both Dutch and Indonesian servicemen and fighters to use every possible means in the conflict, even if this meant overstepping the mark.



6.

Silence, information and deception in the Indonesian War of Independence[1]

Remco Raben and Peter Romijn

The war that raged over large parts of Indonesia between 1945 and 1949 was a colonial war. Many Indonesians saw the conflict as an attempt by the Netherlands to reoccupy Indonesia and fought to defend their newly won freedom. Indeed, the Dutch entered the conflict to regain power in the former Dutch East Indies. The war of conquest was directed from the Netherlands and was intended to serve the interests of the Netherlands. These interests were both material – the recovery of both the Dutch economy and the position of the Dutch and Dutch East Indies business community – and immaterial – the reestablishment of Dutch political and administrative responsibility for Indonesia and its political future.

That the Indonesian War of Independence was very violent is not a sur-

Prime Minister Louis Beel speaks with journalists upon his departure to Indonesia, 13 December 1947. Source: J.D. Noske, Nationaal Archief/Anefo.

prising statement, although this has not always been fully grasped by everyone. In the Netherlands there was – and still is – a tendency to turn a blind eye to the violence perpetrated by its troops or to justify this violence, for example by offsetting it against Indonesian violence. Until fairly recently, the nature and extent of the war violence in Indonesia were obscured in the Netherlands, allowing it to remain largely invisible. By contrast, the legacy of that war can be found everywhere in Indonesia. In many villages there are memorial plaques, burial fields and monuments to the victims of the War of Independence. And yet even there, the memory of the war is selective. For example, those who fell prey to the violence of revolutionary Indonesian soldiers or combat groups – often even people from within the community – remain out of sight.

The way in which the violence is remembered in the Netherlands and Indonesia is very much related to the nature of the war and the way in which information about war violence was handled at the time. The existence or absence of reporting, the wording used, and the way in which the knowledge was picked up and disseminated have determined how the violence is depicted in Indonesia and the Netherlands. The issue of information provision is relevant and urgent, as evidenced by the discussions that have taken place in recent decades in the Netherlands and, to a much lesser degree, in Indonesia. Thus the question of how much violence took place during the revolution has everything to do with the way in which knowledge about that violence was disseminated and discussed at the time.

Information management

This research analyses the way in which information about the war violence played a role in the justification, stimulation or restraining of that violence. We focus in particular on the role of what can be called 'extreme violence', a term that is in fact too vague. Our aim is not to make a strict distinction between 'legitimate' and 'extreme' violence but rather to investigate the ways in which the reporting made the violence acceptable and how acts of violence were discussed or withheld in politics and government, including the army and the judiciary. Simply put, what did the politicians and civil servants responsible, from all ranks and from top to bottom, come to know in terms of the nature of the violence, and what did they do with that knowledge?

We investigated two different dimensions of information: information management and discourses on violence. The first dimension encompasses all the ways in which knowledge about the violence was written down,

spread, shared, used, withheld and accounted for.[2] We follow the routes that the information about violence took – from the first reporting in the field and on the street, via whistle-blowers, journalists and diplomats to the offices of senior civil servants. Inextricably linked to information provision was the administrative attitude to dealing with violence. That is why we identify cover-ups and whistle-blowers and determine how, if at all, people were held accountable. Military actions and administrative strategies were guided not only by rational considerations but also by perceptions of the surrounding world. These perceptions also determined how events in the political and administrative process came to be understood. Language was a formative component of the dynamics of violence.

Information never comes in the form of objective and innocuous 'data' but is an essential part of power and politics. This was made particularly evident to us in the research we conducted into the complex context of the colonial warfare. Both the Republican and the Dutch East Indies governments manipulated the message of violence, which consequently became an important element of that violence. Governments incited violence, controlled the perception of the violence perpetrated by the opponent, withheld information about certain events or did the precise opposite and made them public. Hence information says everything about the way in which those involved wanted to take responsibility for the violence that was used.[3] Governments were very aware of this, especially when it came to extreme violence that could lead to scandals. They therefore strove to influence the scope and nature of the reporting.

Information management is not only important as an instrument of warfare; for the Netherlands, it was also essential for shaping the perception of the conflict with the Republic and for justifying the violence being used. In a number of cases, scandals threatened to erupt when specific acts of extreme violence became publicly known and were criticized. This sometimes led to investigations in which the Dutch government asked the colonial administration and the army command for clarification. This dynamic determined the perception of the war in a profound way. The cases that were investigated at the time have become known in common parlance as 'excesses'. This is a misleading term because it suggests that these acts of violence were exceptions. It was precisely because so little information was made public – or at least so little was known in detail – that the individual cases that did land in the spotlight and on the desks of civil servants could be labelled as 'excesses' or as exceptions to the rule that, in general, a clean war was being waged. The

term therefore suggests not only a violation of the rules of warfare but also an exception to the ordinary course of events. 'Excess' has come to mean a deviation from legitimate *and* regular practice.

The 'excesses' of the Dutch-Indonesian War and their context and aftermath have to a significant extent been gathered in a specific corpus in the archives of the colonial civil, judicial and military authorities.[4] The files that make up this extensive corpus are primarily cases that were in the news during the war and that gave rise to questions and were thus the result of scandal management. It is striking that, with limited exceptions, very few offences were investigated unless there was a risk that the Dutch population or the international community would find out about them. The information that was gathered under the heading of 'excesses' – during the war and also later when the government 'Memorandum on excesses' of 1969 was being prepared – is not an exhaustive record of 'violations' but rather a collection of data that ended up in the archive because there was a political and administrative need to document and evaluate them. The 'excesses' files are what the American anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler calls 'archival events': they reflect the Dutch administrative or legal practice and mentality, and they define the range of possibilities within which colonial governments could act.[5]

The practice of documentation mirrors the practice of scandal management. In the view of the authorities who were responsible, an event was only an 'excess' if it provoked a scandal. The influence of this archiving was so great that even later generations took these 'excesses' (which were already described as such during the war) in part as criteria for assessing what was permissible and what was unlawful violence. This successful framing deprived contemporaries and later historians of seeing the nature and extent of Dutch violence, and gave some Dutch people the impression that the violence was 'not all that bad' or that it was at any rate limited in terms of the number of times it occurred. The Dutch government's 1969 'Memorandum on excesses' *(Excessennota)* canonized this idea.[6] The fixation on the internal Dutch political discussions on decolonization and the negotiation process between the Netherlands and the Indonesian Republic has monopolized the attention of not only the protagonists at the time but also later historians. The result is not only that the term 'excessive violence' remains to this day embedded in historical language, but also that references continue to be made to the limited number of cases – such as Bondowoso, South Sulawesi or Rawagede – that raised concerns at the time and have since been crystal-

lized as excesses in the archive files. We too have not been able to completely evade this context in this study. However, we do want to illustrate the context in which this war violence took place and how information management ensured that only some cases were made into 'excesses'.

Colonial dissociation

The Dutch discourse was – and still is – strongly rooted in international public law and the law of war. According to successive Dutch governments, the war in Indonesia was lawful and was fought in a legitimate manner – barring the incidental 'excesses'. Thus, the framing of a violent act as an 'excess' and as an exception had – and still has – a legitimizing effect on the military action in general. For Indonesian nationalists, the greatest evil was the colonizer's claim that its intervention was lawful, even more than the specific acts of violence during the war. Republican representatives never failed to point out, certainly in the international arena, the injustice of the Dutch interventions.

The war in Indonesia between 1945 and 1949 can be understood as a clash of worldviews with dramatic humanitarian consequences. There was a deep chasm between the views of the Indonesian and Dutch leaders about the right of Indonesians immediately and unconditionally to determine their own fate and the desire of the Dutch to continue to control the steps towards colonial disentanglement and, not least, to safeguard their own interests. At the root of the violence were fundamentally divergent notions of right and wrong, of agency and moral authority. The conflict was about the Indonesian right to be free versus the colonial right as a ruler to determine what the political future of the country should look like; about having a say in the fate of a colonized people and the moral authority to declare oneself free of an oppressive system. In other words, the Netherlands and the Republic were talking right past each other as they fought.

Essential for the emergence of this chasm between the two parties' worldviews is a phenomenon we might call 'colonial dissociation' or mental disconnection: the Dutch inability to put themselves in the state of mind of the Indonesians and to accord it equal and legitimate value. This dissociation has both a geographical and a moral dimension. The events of the war took place far away and were difficult for the Dutch to fathom, and thus failed to engender empathy. In addition, these events took place outside of their own moral order due to the distance, but also due to the perception that things outside Europe were fundamentally 'different'. This distinction between the 'metropolitan' and the 'colonial' domain, which was based on

racist and culturalist notions, had already been apparent since the early European conquests. Colonial possessions were subject to different rules and different norms than those at home.

The Netherlands believed, as the colonial power, that Indonesia was its rightful possession and that consequently it was fully entitled to shape the future of Indonesia. This stemmed from the ingrained paternalistic attitude of the Netherlands towards Indonesia and the Indonesians as well as a self-image that emphasized its own superiority and responsibility. The colonial relationship based its legitimization on the colonial self-perception that it was necessary for the development and even for the eventual independence of the country. Moreover, this colonial domination was embedded in a legal system that was rigged by the Dutch colonial government. During the War of Independence, the Dutch authorities continued to use this legal framework as their reference point. In the eyes of the Indonesian authorities and people, however, the legal system was part of the domination; they had only limited access to the system, and during the war the law worked primarily in favour of the other party.[7] As the commander of the 16th Brigade of the Indonesian army (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, TNI), Joop Warouw, remarked in 1949 to his sub-commanders while fighting in the mountains above Malang, the Dutch looked at everything 'from a legal point of view'. They reduced political issues to the quasi-objective legal domain. Warouw seems to have meant that the political claims of nationalists were criminalized. He had a point: the judicialization on the Dutch side served to legitimize the military action and to enable the Dutch to penalize the opponent, not to exercise control over the behaviour of their own troops.[8]

The war in Indonesia cannot be seen in isolation from the structural patterns of colonial warfare, judicialization and information provision that had developed in the decades and centuries before this endgame. Already during their wars of conquest in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Dutch placed the Indonesian adversary outside of the moral order. The law of war, as it was developing in Europe at that time, was not considered applicable to the Indonesian enemy,[9] since they did not represent a recognized state and thus stood outside of the law. Although there was a trend sometime around the turn of the century towards making warfare 'more humane', little of this could be seen in colonial practices.[10]

Another point concerns the long tradition of Indonesian resistance. The prevailing image in the Netherlands is that the conquests and 'pacification' of the archipelago around 1900 had been successful. And indeed, thereafter

there were very few large-scale uprisings against Dutch rule. The rulers were subjugated effectively, and rebellious government officials were replaced by loyal authority figures, thereby taking the sting out of the military and political resistance. Nevertheless, in the last decades of the colonial occupation, there were regularly small or larger acts of resistance against the authority of the colonial regime or against measures it had imposed. These acts of resistance came in the form of political agitation, disorder, demonstrations, strikes, tax riots, vandalism and religiously inspired acts of resistance.[11] In the Dutch news coverage, such acts were invariably framed as disturbances, as the actions of 'evildoers', or as inspired by religious fanaticism and never as politically inspired anti-colonial resistance. But the understructure of the colony was one of discontent and irritation with the foreign interference. Colonial rule was never axiomatic.

A third essential feature of colonial occupation was the distance in communication and lines of accountability. The Dutch East Indies played only a minor role in Dutch politics in the interwar period; the colony was the preserve of a few specialists, and colonial policy rarely gave rise to any fundamental discussion. Prime Minister Hendrik Colijn, who had extensive experience as an officer and oilman in the Dutch East Indies, even went so far as to say he found the lack of interest in the Netherlands in the East Indies 'frightening'.[12] Political-administrative reporting on the colony was highly standardized and misleadingly 'objective' in its detailed factuality and quantification. Information on military operations was generally inaccessible to the press; coverage of such operations was orchestrated by the military. In The Hague, senior civil servants in the pre-war Ministry of Colonies and politicians in parliament and in government were only given the views of the Dutch administrators in the colony to read.

The Indonesian War of Independence can thus be seen as an extension of pre-war colonial patterns. Nevertheless, there were a number of new aspects to this colonial war. In the first place, the resistance – which in the earlier wars of conquest was mostly local – began to spread out over large parts of the archipelago such as Java, Sumatra, Bali and parts of Sulawesi and Kalimantan. A second new feature was the intensive and protean entanglement of Dutch military and civilian-administrative goals. The latter had precedents in the days of Van Heutsz and Snouck Hurgronje and the newly conquered territories in the archipelago around the turn of the century, but now it was all about reconquering the colonial territory and restoring the colonial legal order. Thirdly, the decolonization war was characterized by the intensively



Posters of two sides of the political spectrum in the Netherlands: on the left the CPN (Communist Party of the Netherlands), on the right the Stichting 'Indië in Nood' (Foundation 'Indies in Need'). Source: Cor Vree, IISG – Stichting Indië in Nood, NIOD

active political involvement of the Netherlands in the struggle. Relations between The Hague and Batavia had never been so intensive. Perhaps the best illustration of this is the fact that for the first time in the history of the colony, the incumbent prime minister visited the Dutch East Indies to gauge the situation – first Louis Beel and then his successor Willem Drees. After resigning as prime minister, Beel succeeded Lieutenant Governor General Huib van Mook in the newly-named office of High Representative of of the Crown. Ministers and MPs also travelled regularly to Indonesia. Never before had Dutch politicians been so concerned about the events in the Dutch East Indies, often to the irritation of the military leadership and the soldiers in the field.

A final novelty of the war in 1945-1949 was the involvement of other countries. In many ways, the war was an international conflict. Foreign powers – the United States, Great Britain, Australia – were militarily involved in the reoccupation of the Dutch East Indies, and there was significant international political and diplomatic interference in the war. The Chinese consul in Batavia repeatedly called upon the Dutch to discuss the situation; Indonesian diplomats travelled the world for support; and UN

rapporteurs appeared on the scene following the Dutch offensive of July 1947 and acted as a conduit for complaints. The Republic proved itself capable in the art of diplomacy and succeeded among other things in putting the Netherlands on the defensive in the United Nations, especially following the second offensive. Both sides were well aware that the world was looking over their shoulders, exerting pressure and could influence the opposing party.[13]

On the fringes of restoring control

The war between the Netherlands and Indonesia was a multifaceted conflict with widespread, brutal, extreme and at times large-scale violence. It was a dirty war, but this fact sunk in only slowly in the Netherlands and was long refuted by the Dutch government and the army leadership. In July 1946, army commander Simon Spoor contended in the Council of Ministers that there were only 'difficulties' with the Republic.[14] Over the course of the struggle, the Dutch de facto acknowledged that there was a war going on, and an order was issued to treat captured fighters as 'de facto prisoners of war', but formally they steered away from calling it a war.[15] The military action was legitimized as the restoration of authority and the maintenance of law and order, but the deployment was primarily military and frequently offensive in nature. In any case, hardcore proponents of restoring colonial authority continued to deny that the Republic of Indonesia would ever be 'something real and enduring'.[16] This view prevailed among conservatives even after the second Dutch offensive leading to the capture of Yogyakarta. Even so-called moderate Dutch politicians and colonial officials believed that strong military action could force Republican leaders to come to an agreement.[17]

The Dutch historiography has long maintained the idea that the two 'police actions' of July 1947 and December 1948 were episodes of military confrontation, each of which was the concluding part of difficult and ultimately deadlocked negotiations. At the time, these military actions were sold to the domestic audience as a necessary 'continuation of politics by other means', to use Carl von Clausewitz's oft-quoted phrase, which was the equivalent of portraying the 'police actions' as exceptions in an otherwise militarily restrained policy. But nothing could have been further from the truth. From the very first moment that Dutch troops disembarked in the Indonesian archipelago, they were on the offensive, with the explicit aim of expanding Dutch territory and fighting and destroying the 'insurgents'.

Most of the armed violence did not take place during the two major Dutch offensives.[18] From mid-1947, Indonesian troops seldom allowed themselves to be lured into direct confrontations with the Dutch troops, which were often better armed. At the beginning of 1949, the army of the Republic once again carried out some conventional operations such as the attacks on Yogyakarta and Solo, causing heavy casualties. There are many reasons for assuming that the vast majority of the deaths occurred as a result of the Dutch attempts to restore authority: during the patrols and the 'purge' operations in the regions and villages where Dutch authority was contested by guerrilla warfare and resistance. It was precisely at this lowest operational level – removed from the control mechanisms of the army and the colonial administration and under the pressure of constant enemy resistance, at what could be called the 'fringes' of the attempts to restore authority – that soldiers operated ruthlessly and arbitrarily.[19] Numerous witnesses from both the Indonesian and Dutch sides have drawn attention to the violence that Dutch troops deployed in their almost daily hunt for 'insurgents', which resulted in a large number of casualties. The military reports are remarkably explicit about the numbers of victims.[20] Body counts were an integral part of the reporting and an instrument often used in colonial wars to prove one's effectiveness. However, the *way* in which these victims died was systematically shrouded in mystery. Vague terms such as 'downed' and 'shot while fleeing' were used routinely and deliberately to avoid difficult questions.[21]

The Dutch manner of conducting warfare was often presented as a specific reaction to an enemy that was difficult to capture, or as a consequence of being forced into a situation. In fact, patrol violence was an inseparable part of a political strategy and a desire to control that had deep colonial roots. The aim of the Dutch was to destroy the resistance, which was systematically branded as 'criminal', and to establish their own government. This method of fighting was a corollary of the political desire to remove all resistance so that regular governance could be established and a political solution for the future of Indonesia could be sought on Dutch terms. As early as the spring of 1946, Dutch troops went on the offensive to eliminate opponents and to conquer and control areas. Throughout the course of the war, there was no change in the purpose or method of violence but only in the frequency with which it took place, because the area the troops had to control became larger and larger. After the two 'police actions' (July-August 1947 and December 1948-January 1949), there was a sharp rise in violence as a result of the territorial expansion and the active guerrilla war.

Dutch combat instructions were broadly formulated, which, under the pressure to carry out purges, soon led to indiscriminate and brute force. For 'Operation Shark' (*Actie Haai*), which began on 17 February 1949 on the southern slopes of Mount Kawi near Malang, the assignment was to search the villages as thoroughly as possible and 'to track down and eliminate enemy elements'. The aim was to inflict as many casualties as possible on the enemy.[22] That such an order in the light of the counter-guerrilla war was a license to shoot at every moving man is not explicitly stated, but this was almost daily practice in the occupied territories where the enemy was located or suspected of being. Such attempts at 'pacification' largely failed. In South Sulawesi, it was only after a long and extremely bloody hunt for 'insurgents' and a consistent purge of Indonesian officials that a situation of tense stability was created.[23] In large parts of Java, this kind of stability was never achieved.

Research in various villages in the vicinity of Mojokerto and Bojonegoro in East Java and around Yogyakarta gives an idea of the effects of such Dutch attempts at 'restoring authority'. Older villagers still remember how the male population – usually including the village chief – quickly fled en masse as soon as Dutch patrols appeared. This is confirmed by patrol reports, that often mention abandoned villages. The people were collectively terrified, and not without good reason, as an event on 4 June 1949 in the village of Mojoranu, a few kilometres southwest of Mojokerto, shows. On that day, a Dutch patrol came across a destroyed section of the railway line. To track down the perpetrators, the soldiers searched the nearby village of Mojoranu. The first man the soldiers encountered, Sadir, who was working in front of his house in his rice field, was shot point blank. According to witness statements, the Dutch killed another ten men in their trek through the villages of Mojoranu and Balongwono, even though they were not under threat or shot at, and even though there were no indications that these men were armed. A pull bomb found on the train tracks was brought into the village and detonated in the largest house. The case came to light when an Indonesian administration official, the assistant *wedana* M. Margono of neighbouring Trowulan, informed his chief, the wedana in Mojokerto, and a police investigation was launched.[24]

This one example shows not only how unstable the situation in the occupied territories was – Mojokerto had been occupied by the Netherlands two years before this event – but also how, in their hunt for Republican soldiers or resistance fighters, small Dutch units in particular conducted a reign of

terror that often resulted in murder and revenge. Anyone travelling through the villages of Java searching for the memorials, recording the stories or going through the Dutch administrative and military archives will discover just how widespread the Indonesian experience of Dutch violence was.[25] For many Dutch readers, this is perhaps a new revelation. It is for this reason that the present research is above all a Dutch exercise. For the Indonesian villagers, it is part of their local history.

Lines of disinformation

The manner in which the war was conducted had major consequences for the way in which information about Dutch actions found its way to the outside world. The Dutch army – and not the civil administration – was dominant in the occupied territories. The army was tasked with 'restoring' colonial authority, and it fulfilled this task in an almost desperate manner by endlessly patrolling and carrying out purges. In most of the areas where Dutch troops operated, the State of War and Siege was in force, which gave the army a broad mandate. In theory, civil administrators jointly carried military authority, but in practice they were outflanked by the troop commanders on the ground.[26] Although there were occasional tensions, most civil servants supported the principle that order had to be restored first before there could be any question of governing. As resident W. Schols wrote in August 1947: 'we will accomplish nothing without peace and order'.[27] In Batavia and The Hague, the desire to find a political solution predominated, if necessary facilitated by military action. Although the political and military objectives were in alignment and the mandates of the military and civilian leaders overlapped under the State of War and Siege, the primacy of maintaining law and order – and thus the primacy of the army – persisted in most places.[28] Almost all administrative and political stakeholders were convinced that the country could only be reconstructed once order was restored. In practice, this resulted in broad support for military action and often also acceptance of tough and transgressive action. This is also the picture that emerges in the discourse about the violence deployed.

For in the vast majority of cases, the details of the military operations remained within the walls of the barracks and encampments. The Dutch armed forces in Indonesia – made up of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger, KNIL), the Royal Netherlands Army and the Royal Netherlands Navy – were at the same time extremely bureaucratic organizations. Everything was reported on and accounted for

in telegram style: the marching routes, the encounters with the enemy, the ammunition fired, the casualties. However, what was rarely reported in detail (or not at all) was whether the men they shot at – who were usually at a distance – were indeed enemy fighters. In the reality of conducting patrols and purges, the soldiers could not – and did not bother to – differentiate between civilians and fighters, and they felt justified in shooting at anything that moved.

One example of this type of reporting demonstrates how information about what had happened was structured and how, in this way, the logic of 'operational necessity' determined the norm. On 18 March 1949, a purge operation was carried out in Sedayu, southwest of Yogyakarta. The daily report states:

> There turned out to be many armed enemies hiding in the *sawah*, all of whom were killed. [...] In Sengon a *markas* [post], military encampments, and a kitchen were found, which were destroyed [...]. When mounting the cars, some prisoners tried to flee, all of whom were downed. [...] Own losses: 2 killed. Enemy losses: 104 dead counted, 25 prisoners. Seized: 2 heavy Colt machine guns, 3 PMs, 5 carbines, 2 American rifles, 23 hand grenades, 2,500 colt cartridges, 400 various cartridges, 1 battery radio, 1 typewriter, blunt weapons and daggers.[29]

From the daily report, it is far from clear exactly how the Javanese victims were killed. What is clear, however, is that 1-15 RI company did not operate with a soft hand: everyone who potentially supported the resistance was destroyed. The shooting of 104 men in a rice field is in any case an instance of fierce gunfire, as a Javanese eyewitness confirmed. The weaponry of those who were killed was rather limited for a group of this size, which raises the question whether all of them were fighters. As in many other cases we have encountered, when the Dutch soldiers approached, the entire male population of the village went into the *sawahs* and forests to hide. According to witnesses, the Dutch troops shot from a distance at everything in the fields that moved.[30]

The reporting was deceptive and euphemistic, and the standard formulations were cryptic. This discourse found its way from the patrol report to the headquarters of the territorial commander, also troop commander, and from there, in the form of a situation report (*overzicht en ontwikkeling van de toestand*, or OOT), to the general staff in Batavia, which was Spoor's office.

His staff then summarized the OOTs in reports for the lieutenant governor general or, later, the high representative of the crown. The latter then reported to the minister in The Hague. In the lengthy process of interpretation between the actions of the units and the office of the top government official, the information was further condensed, causing much of it to be lost. What remained was the consistent characterization of the Indonesian adversaries as terrorists, extremists and unruly gangs, a characterization that served to legitimize the violent actions of the Dutch troops.

Very little pressure was brought to bear by the Dutch to investigate matters and to punish the perpetrators, even though there were concrete indications that fighters and non-combatants had been killed because of brutality, torture or executions. Only in exceptional cases did details of atrocities reach the offices of the administrators and politicians in Batavia/Jakarta and through them their counterparts in The Hague. What was an almost daily reality for military units in the field was something of which those in Batavia and certainly in The Hague were often unaware. In wars, it is often the case that the exact course of events remains hidden from the view of the government responsible. In Indonesia, the reality of colonial dissociation further hindered the development of any familiarity and affinity with events on the ground. The officials in Batavia were shown only the embellished military reports alongside the political reports by the civil servants of the colonial administration in which adversaries were presented as terror-spreading extremists. Yet it was not only the military deception that kept the hard facts out of the picture; at least as important was the generally shared view in government circles that the Netherlands was within its rights to re-occupy the archipelago, that it should play a leading role in the formation of an autonomous Indonesia and that for this purpose the use of force was inevitable and legitimate.

Were Dutch officials, civil servants and politicians thus left completely in the dark about what was going on in the field? That is unlikely. The claim that people did not know what was happening does not hold up. People may not have been aware of the extent, nature and frequency of the violence, but even so, local government officials, civil servants in Batavia, and senior colonial officials received documents and heard stories that were unambiguous and crystal clear. They were, however, powerless – and even more so, unwilling – to do anything about it.

What is remarkable is how little the top level of the civil administration intervened in the military violence. A striking example is the attitude of lieu-

tenant governor general Huib van Mook. He was both commander-in-chief of the army in Indonesia and chief administrator. Although he was the most senior person responsible, he intervened little in military decision-making. Worse still, he was not always notified in a timely manner about military actions.[31] As a rule, Van Mook was guided by Spoor in all matters relating to the misconduct of the troops. His correspondence reveals how much he was preoccupied with his political scenarios for building a federal Indonesian state, with his own standing, and with his relations with the government in The Hague.[32] Moreover, although he embraced the idea in 1946 that negotiations were inevitable, he never ruled out military force, and he had the army carry out very violent purge operations in South Sulawesi, Bali and Java at the time of the negotiations.

Van Mook's stance was not an anomaly. Within the higher echelons of the civil service in Batavia, there appears to have been almost unanimous support for firm action against the 'terrorists'. Even chief of staff Peter John ('PéJé') Koets, who was known as a progressive and a friend of the Republic, did not object to such deployment of violence.[33] Men of his stamp were frustrated with the way the 'radicals' in the Republic seemed to be setting the tone. Moreover, the colonial situation meant that people listened mainly to their own ilk and had little close personal contact with Indonesians.

Although civil servants regularly expressed their discomfort about the military action, this rarely led to formal investigations into extreme violence. The civil servants of the colonial administration had the task of restoring and exercising Dutch authority. They tended to endorse the political objectives of the Dutch government as well as the military policy, and in general supported the decision to launch the major offensives aimed at conquering territory. They felt dependent on the military presence to carry out their tasks.[34] They saw how much the public order was disrupted by the guerrilla warfare and the intimidation methods of the Republican army and local resistance groups, and how this made the restoration of authority impossible. Accordingly, their daily security reports, the weekly reports and the monthly political reports focused on the violence perpetrated by the Indonesian side. The disturbances and the bloody actions of their own troops were not included or were portrayed as a necessary reaction.

Furthermore, the Dutch government officials were often far away from the events in the villages under their jurisdiction as well as from the victims who were killed. Most were desk officials who were unable to tour their areas due to the dangerous circumstances. Relations with village chiefs were

primarily maintained by Indonesian administrators, the wedana and assistant wedana. Moreover, little in terms of real local governance was realized in the newly occupied territories following Operation Product in July 1947 and even more so after Operation Crow in December 1948. As the assistant resident of Blitar in East Java wrote to his son in the Netherlands in January 1949:

> The military action is a failure for the time being, although that will never be openly admitted by the leadership. For the umpteenth time, the opponent has been underestimated. We have occupied some cities where we can barely maintain a degree of security, the connecting roads between those cities can barely be kept open [...] and in the countryside we have no influence at all.[35]

The Dutch civil administrators were often aware of the harsh military action that occurred in their jurisdiction. Sometimes they asked for it and fully supported it, such as the resident of South Sulawesi, Carel Lion Cachet, who made himself partly responsible for the bloody deployment of the Depot Special Forces under Raymond Westerling.[36] But other officials denied having heard of any wrongdoing.[37] Nevertheless, there were also local officials who reported cases of violence in their jurisdiction after having received messages from Indonesian administrators in the region. Indonesian village chiefs or local officials always looked first to their superiors – often a regent or wedana – who then took the case to a European government official. But because this official was in turn completely dependent on the military command, he rarely pushed the matter to the limit. This meant that typically little was done with these reports of extreme violence.

Within the colonial administration, there were some voices criticizing the actions of the army, but almost unanimous support for the Dutch political line, which was that the use of force was a legitimate means to defend Dutch interests and to strengthen the Dutch negotiating position. The Dutch administrators in Batavia and in the region usually condoned brute force by the Dutch soldiers as necessary for the establishment of order. One factor that no doubt played a role in this was that the Republican and other Indonesian combat troops also committed acts of murderous violence, not only in the period that has come to be called *bersiap* by the Dutch and the Indo-Dutch community, but also in later years. The Indonesian violence stimulated the criminalization of the enemy by the Dutch government and

by journalists in Indonesia and in the Netherlands. The killings, threats and kidnappings made it easy for the Indonesian fighters to be categorically dismissed as extremists, terrorists and unruly gangs, and for the Republic to be portrayed as an irresponsible government.

Naturally, the army did its best to show that it was perfectly capable of self-correction. Army commander Spoor repeatedly claimed that in general the behaviour of his soldiers was excellent, although to be safe he added that the conditions under which the men operated were excruciatingly difficult. He regularly issued instructions to the troops not to use excessive force and to abide by the rules – a rather perfunctory gesture, given that misconduct was rarely punished.[38] Spoor insisted that the internal disciplinary measures were sufficient and that, in the unlikely event that something went wrong, then there were always the courts martial in the field, which in his view were functioning well. Throughout the war, the army commander and his staff strove to preserve the image of a clean war for the outside world. They did this by imposing strict restrictions on journalists in Indonesia; by running an active information campaign via the Army Contacts Service (Dienst Leger Contacten); by constantly telling governor general Van Mook and his successors, the high commissioners Beel and Lovink what to say; and by maintaining direct contact with the military top and like-minded politicians in the Netherlands.

Of course, the Republican government also regularly made accusations about the Dutch actions through public communication and propaganda and in discussions with international observers from the Good Offices Committee (1947-1949) and the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (1949-1950). Yet the Republican authorities and delegations did not make full use of the Dutch violence to discredit the Netherlands. This was because in the first place, the Republican authority was vulnerable to the counterargument that Indonesian regular and irregular troops were also guilty of murderous violence. Secondly, it appears that information about what took place in those villages that were formally in Dutch territory found its way to Yogyakarta only rarely and slowly.[39]

Complaints made by Indonesian citizens received little response from the Dutch military and civil authorities. This demonstrates just how much colonial rule was still based on the principle of governing *over* the people but not *with* them. In addition, Indonesian citizens had very limited access to the law, and they rarely sought it. For example, *Bapak* Sumaryamtono, village chief of the hamlet of Samben in Sedayu southwest of Yogyakarta,

was a witness to the aforementioned purge operations of Dutch troops. On 18 March 1949, more than a hundred men were shot by the Dutch soldiers in the rice fields – a fact confirmed by Dutch reports. The former village chief explained that he had not thought it necessary to report the massacre because all the officials in the area were already aware of what had happened. He also had not thought of seeking justice by going to the Dutch, as the Dutch presence in the region consisted of the same soldiers who had shot his fellow villagers. Moreover, he and his townsfolk were resisting the Dutch and therefore wanted to avoid contact as much as possible.[40]

It is not surprising that for most residents of the (former) Republican area, complaining to the Dutch was out of the question. We would note that while the administration in Republican territory was stable and effective in many places on Java and Sumatra, this was disrupted precisely because of the Dutch attacks and occupation. In 1949, the area around Yogyakarta was a war zone in which Dutch civil administration was non-existent and Republican local administration was disrupted and had come under military command. Elsewhere, too, citizens often opted not to turn to the Dutch authorities for protection or with their complaints. In the village of Peniwen near Malang in East Java, where patients and nurses from a hospital had been executed in February 1949, the villagers had so little faith in the Dutch judicial process that they refused to appear as witnesses, choosing to flee instead. In the Dutch sources, the explanation given was that they had been intimidated by the TNI.[41] The Dutch civil administration was far removed from the population and embodied colonial control mechanisms.[42] When Indonesians wanted to raise the issue of violence, they did so with Indonesian administrators – the *bupati*, the wedana and the village chiefs. This was one of the consequences of the dual structure of Dutch colonial administration, which remained the practice at the time of the Revolution.

These Indonesian administrators in occupied territory did regularly turn to the Dutch authorities, as evidenced by the numerous complaints by Indonesian *lurah*, wedana and *bupati* about the army's actions as recorded in the Dutch archives. On 8 March 1949, green berets from the Special Forces Corps (Korps Speciale Troepen, KST) executed a local court official, raped a woman and stole some goods during their search for a group of Republican fighters in Bangil (between Surabaya and Pasuruan). That same day, the assistant wedana Suparno telephoned to report this incident. He produced several reports, which he delivered to the acting regent of Pasuruan, who in turn gave them to the Dutch resident Head of Temporary Administrative

Service (Hoofd Tijdelijke Bestuursdienst, HTB), who was Dutch, in Malang. It led to an investigation, which the public prosecutor and representative of the attorney general in East Java had pushed for. The army dragged its feet so much that after frequent reminders in November, the head of the Military Police Corps, who was in charge of the investigation reported that no conclusive answer could be given in the case because the soldiers involved had already been transferred more than once and witnesses had failed to show up. The attorney general did not pursue the case and instead decided to drop it.[43]

There are many such examples of military officials remaining silent, obstructing justice, stalling and ultimately 'depositing' the case, as the term goes in administrative and legal jargon, which amounted to closing the case. Even after the execution on 24 February 1949 of the Republican Minister of Youth and Construction Supeno, who had been hiding in the mountains above Nganjuk since the Dutch occupation of Yogyakarta, the army was reluctant to start an investigation. Although the Republican radio service was outraged by the news of the execution, which was even reported in some Dutch newspapers, the army dismissed it as 'Republican radio propaganda'. The military police in Surabaya simply announced that 'no substantiated charges' had been pressed.[44] Thus, even the assassination of a cabinet member of a government that had just been de facto recognized failed to stir up Dutch emotions. The complaints brought forward by Indonesian administrators usually became bogged down at various levels in the administrative apparatus – a situation that was reinforced by the army's unwillingness and obstructionism – and were dismissed as unreliable, vague or as Republican propaganda.

In general, the Dutch East Indies government only came into action when a scandal arose or was threatening to arise. A 'scandal' meant that Dutch political or administrative authority was being called into question. This rarely happened in Indonesia itself. Instead, it usually occurred through the political arena in The Hague, which in turn was spurred by protests that came out into the open via journalists, church interventions, or soldiers' letters that were picked up by MPs in The Hague and consequently became a political issue. The Minister of Overseas Territories responsible would in such cases ask the government in Batavia for clarification. The primary concern of the minister was being able to counter his critics in the lower house of parliament – in other words, his political survival. Such requests for clarification usually led to uneasiness in Batavia. The senior civil servants would in

turn ask the army command for clarification. The army commanders Simon Spoor – and after Spoor's sudden death in May 1949, Dirk Buurman van Vreeden – would then rush to cast doubt on the accusations and sometimes would also take active steps to dampen the scandals. The same type of reaction ensued when the Chinese and Indian consuls intervened, when the Republican government complained to the UN, and when reports appeared in the foreign press.[45]

The regular judiciary remained relatively powerless throughout the war when it came to prosecuting misdeeds committed by Dutch troops. The legal apparatus was led by the attorney general at the Supreme Court in Batavia, a position held first by Henk Felderhof and from June 1949 by Oerip Kartodirdjo. As head of the judge advocates, the attorney general's mandate also extended to the KNIL, meaning that he held final responsibility for not only civil prosecution policy, but also to some extent for military prosecution policy with respect to the KNIL. The armed forces nonetheless pretended that they were capable of keeping their own house in order, given that they had their own legal apparatus – the court martial in the field – which was the first body to administer justice. But if one searches the archives of these courts martial, one mostly comes across minor disciplinary offences within the army's own ranks, such as drunken behaviour, theft, falling asleep on guard, or incorrect clothing.[46] Violent crimes in the context of military operations, such as patrols or interrogations, were mostly kept outside of the military justice system. Commanders in the field acted as a filter here, which meant that the criminal justice system was powerless to intervene. The attorney general and his staff in Batavia regularly made cynical comments about the obvious military manipulation of information. But they saw no possibility of taking action against this state of affairs without straining their relations with the military, and consequently they legitimized such matters as the sanguinary implementation of 'summary justice' in South Sulawesi or dropped cases on the grounds of expediency or lack of evidence. Prosecutors often followed the lead of their military counterparts in the preliminary investigation and were quick to go along with a martial law settlement by the commanders. In the few cases in which a legal (preliminary) investigation was initiated into the violence of Dutch soldiers during military operations, such cases were rarely brought to court.

Opposition was virtually non-existent. Several individuals – both within and outside the civil service apparatus – turned against the military action, but they formed only a small minority. Anyone who spoke out strongly

against Dutch violence was discredited and was considered literally an enemy of the state. In Batavia, there was a circle of Dutch and Indo-Europeans who called themselves the Progressive Group, who first spoke out in March 1946 in *Het Dagblad*, a newspaper published in Batavia, with a statement of principles in which they 'opposed any solution to the current conflict that relied on force of arms'.[47] The Group remained a mainly an ('Indies'-)Dutch initiative – without any Indonesians – and was thus a typical case of progressive thinking within colonial frameworks. Individual members of the Progressive Group – which later morphed into the Progressive Concentration – did criticize the Dutch violence, as writer Beb Vuyk did in the socialist magazine *De Baanbreker* regarding the case of the Dutch attack on the village of Pesing west of Jakarta/Batavia on 15 April 1946.[48] And critical articles also appeared in the relaunched progressive magazine *Kritiek en Opbouw* – which temporarily changed into *Opbouw-Pembinaan* in mid-1947 – about Dutch policy toward Indonesia and the military violence.

Nevertheless, due to the censorship and the absence of democratic bodies in the Dutch-controlled part of Indonesia, it was difficult to protest against the military violence. A critical press hardly existed, which is why critics sought publicity in the Netherlands. In the last year of the war, three members of the Progressive Concentration gave an interview during their stay in the Netherlands to the left-wing weekly *De Vrije Katheder,* in which they disclosed abuses committed by Dutch soldiers.[49] The article prompted Secretary-General C.L.W. Fock of the Ministry of General Affairs to invite two of those interviewed – A.J.P. van den Burg and P.D. van Leeuwen, both doctors working in Indonesia – for a dialogue. Fock was ready to believe that the cases of torture they mentioned had indeed taken place.[50] He notified Prime Minister Drees, who nonetheless left the matter to the discretion of the Minister of Overseas Territories. This was all that came of it, and Drees did not insist on any further investigation.

The few Dutch newspapers that existed in Indonesia, which were slow to get off the ground after the Japanese occupation, largely followed the line of the Government Information Service (Regerings Voorlichtings Dienst Batavia, RVD) in Batavia and the Army Liaison Service. There was little room for them to do their own reporting, and the editorial staff were therefore heavily dependent on the information they received from the army, which employed its own reporters, photographers and filmmakers. The information they did receive was meagre, very selective and often significantly delayed.[51] It is striking how many news reports in



Dutch-language newspapers were almost literal reproductions of communiqués issued by the information services of the army and the government. A critical public sphere that could provide oversight was thus completely absent on the Dutch side in Indonesia. Interestingly enough, pro-Republican Indonesian newspapers were tolerated in Dutch territory, although they were strictly controlled and regularly forbidden from publishing, and their editorial staff members were arrested whenever they included reports that were overly anti-Dutch.

We can conclude, then, that on the Dutch side there was a very high degree of tolerance towards the intensity, arbitrariness and cruelty of the military violence. Essential mechanisms of political accountability and control were lacking in the colonial situation. The administrative leadership of the colony reported to the Minister of Overseas Territories in The Hague and not to any supervisory body in Indonesia itself. Even the People's Council, the flawed colonial advisory body that existed before the Japanese invasion, had not been re-established after World War II. Dutch Indonesia was an autocratic state in which law enforcement was entirely in the hands of the army and the police. Civil administrators prioritized the restoration of authority and accepted the primacy of the military and its extreme violence. Information provided by the Republic was systematically distrusted and the voice of the Indonesian people completely ignored.

Scandal management in the Netherlands

The war took place in Indonesia, and the daily decision-making with regard to the warfare took place in Batavia. At the same time, the primacy of the political decision-making regarding the Dutch involvement in the conflict lay with the government and the parliament in The Hague. The politicians responsible for this took their duty seriously, but in order to do so they depended on communication with the civil and military authorities in Batavia. The main channel of information and control ran between the lieutenant governor general/high representative of the crown and the Minister of Colonies/Overseas Territories, who reported to the government and to the States General.

President Sukarno with the chairman of the General Commission for the Netherlands East Indies, Wim Schermerhorn, at lunch in the house of the Kwee family in Linggarjati, 12 November 1946. The drawing is by Henk Ngantung, who was invited by Sukarno to capture the negotiations. Pen on paper, 30 x 43 cm. Source: Henk Ngantung, Museum Seni Rupa.

Information about the war was in fact managed from Indonesia by the army. As mentioned before, General Spoor's staff provided the civil administration in Batavia and the military and civil information services with periodic reports on the situation 'in the field'. The civil servants under Van Mook condensed these reports into a constant stream of messages sent to the minister. There were, of course, parallel flows of information going to other ministries, such as those for Foreign Affairs, War, and the Navy. The reporting from Batavia gave the government in The Hague the one-sided impression that constant skirmishes were taking place with a malicious and cruel adversary. In addition, plenty of attention was given to internal political conflicts within the Republican leadership, suggesting a failing state. Strangely enough, the parliamentary committees dealing with the Dutch government's policy on Indonesia were shown only the political and not the military overviews, and thus the military aspects were rarely discussed in these deliberations. For anything pertaining to military operations, the military information services set the tone, either directly via their own bulletins or indirectly via the Government Information Service (RVD) in Batavia and journalists who were embedded with the troops.[52]

The RVD-Batavia instructed its employees to make the news positive in tone: the troops were deployed to restore 'peace and order' in the interest of 'ordinary Indonesians' – 'the peace-loving rice farmers'.[53] Indonesian freedom fighters were referred to as autonomously operating 'gangs' and 'indigenous militia'.[54] In this way, politicians as well as the public received reports that delegitimized the adversary and that encouraged the idea that the troops had to act firmly to restore peace and order. The consequences of 'purge operations' were described in euphemistic terms or were simply withheld. In his dispatches to the minister, Van Mook only briefly mentioned the large-scale killing campaign of the Depot Special Forces in South Sulawesi: in response to sabotage and looting, 'arrests were made and some gang leaders were downed'.[55] The military reporting listed the casualties of these actions as 'enemy losses'.[56] The discursive distinction that was always made between 'the well-meaning population' and 'the extremists' made it easy for the politicians responsible to identify with the concept of pacification. According to the MP Jan Schouten of the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP), when something went wrong, this simply had to be accepted because the troops were faced with a difficult task and therefore deserved respect instead of criticism from the sidelines.[57]

Nevertheless, critical questions were asked in parliament and in the media in response to reports of brutal actions by Dutch troops – at first only occasionally, but in later years more and more often. Newspapers regularly published letters from soldiers with testimonies about atrocities, which were read out loud in the Lower House. Politicians and senior civil servants clearly knew more than the general public, or at least could have known more. And yet it was usually not the knowledge of offences that prompted them to act but rather the fact that such misdeeds were publicly condemned. Politicians developed a repertoire to control information flows in such a way that they could more or less evade public accountability for what went wrong. Questions were circumvented, answers were delayed, questioners were manipulated by their political leaders, whistle-blowers were discredited, facts were denied or considered unsubstantiated and investigations were obstructed.

All this took place in a Dutch context of post-war reconstruction and the fresh memory of the Second World War and the German occupation. At the same time, many Dutch people had found that while the violence of war brought misery, it could also have a problem-solving and liberating effect. The armed restoration of Dutch authority in the Dutch East Indies carried the promise of a 'liberation' of the Indonesians and a boost to the Dutch economy through profits from the colony. Dutch politics between 1945 and 1949 was defined by deep divisions between the proponents of gradual devolution of colonial authority and those who wanted to maintain colonial ties using harsh methods – as well as a small and fragmented left wing that unconditionally supported Indonesia's independence.

The government coalitions, sustained by a political centre based on a Catholic party and the social democrats, were shaky and divided and faced harsh criticism from both the left and the right. The Labour Party had to consider anti-colonial criticism of government policy from within its own circle as well as strong criticism from the Communist Party of the Netherlands. Under the influence of the Cold War, the Labour Party and the Communist Party began to oppose each other as mortal enemies, rendering the resistance of the political left to the war in Indonesia ineffective. The parties on the right, such as the ARP mentioned before, rabidly opposed the government's colonial policy, both within parliament and outside. Under this pressure, the Catholic People's Party (Katholieke Volkspartij, KVP) pulled government policy more to the right. This made Van Mook's position as governor-general the subject of a prolonged power struggle between the two directions. The centre-left supported his policy

of gradually autonomizing Indonesia under a Dutch umbrella, while the right deeply distrusted him. All this absorbed so much energy from politicians that the war violence faded into the background, not least because a majority did not want to acknowledge the problem of the extremely violent character of the war.

Among conscripted soldiers, who were being sent overseas from September 1946, there were initially more cases of conscientious objection and conscripts going into hiding than the army and the politicians had expected. According to the historian Antoine Weijzen, there were 1,400 dissenters for the years 1945-1950 based on the formal conscription procedures, 613 of whom were 'not granted' the status of conscientious objector on the grounds of the very strict criteria that were applicable at the time. Outside of the normal procedures, an unknown number of conscripts tried to evade being sent overseas. The unrecognized dissenters were dealt with harshly and often ended up in prison for three years.[58] Nevertheless, a solid majority of conscripts went to war without a strong political stance – out of allegiance to authority, fear of imprisonment, belief in the necessity of the mission or in the hope of adventure. A large home front empathized with the troops through what were often restrained letters as well as the officially orchestrated coverage via the press, radio and newsreels. Information about atrocities filtered through in dribs and drabs relatively late in the game.[59] Politicians of course had to consider the fact that the more than 120,000 deployed soldiers represented a multitude of voters who felt closely involved with the troops. Given this context, it was not a good idea to criticize the actions of the troops.

The political system in this period was accompanied by a media landscape that was strongly linked to political interests. There were few truly independent newspapers of significance, as many press organizations and broadcasting networks maintained close ties with political parties. Carl Romme (KVP) and Sieuwert Bruins Slot (ARP) were simultaneously MPs and political editors-in-chief of the Dutch newspapers *de Volkskrant* and *Trouw* respectively. Critical independent weeklies such as *Vrij Nederland* and *De Groene Amsterdammer* were read, but their influence remained limited due to their pronounced left-wing bent. The widely read *Elseviers Weekblad,* by contrast, had a strong influence on Dutch public opinion with its unadulterated colonial position. The non-aligned daily press also had to take political pressure into account, something that Frans Goedhart, alias Pieter 't Hoen, the founder of the resistance newspaper *Het Parool*, experienced himself. As

a member of parliament and a critical journalist, he denounced the misconduct of Dutch soldiers, but in 1949 he came under growing pressure from within his own Labour Party (PvdA) and from his own newspaper to exercise restraint.[60]

The political influencing of the news often had a dampening effect – but not always, for sometimes information came from abroad that the government was unable to filter. Because of the delicate position of the Netherlands in the international political arena, the government had to react quickly when cases of misconduct were brought to light by sources as diverse as the *Sydney Morning Herald,* the International Red Cross, or the United Nations. To provide information to its own diplomatic posts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established an office of the Far East Directorate (Directie Verre Oosten, DIRVO) in Batavia. The RVD-Batavia closely monitored the foreign news coverage and tried to steer the Dutch (and Dutch-Indies) news agencies ANP and Aneta in a certain direction so that they could act as a counterbalance to the reporting of their Indonesian counterpart Antara. But other channels were also used to denounce the Dutch violence. The Republican government touched upon the December 1947 massacre at Rawagede in talks with the UN Good Offices Committee, which called the actions of the Dutch troops 'deliberate and ruthless'. Nonetheless, Dutch diplomacy was able – with American support – to keep these findings out of the deliberations of the Security Council.[61] Matters that were potentially highly explosive abroad were sometimes not even picked up by the domestic press.

The question remains whether we can speak of a 'cover-up' in The Hague. The concept is a difficult one because the problem cannot be judged solely in simple terms of whether or not something was known, or whether or not actions were taken deliberately. Those in a position of responsibility who had knowledge of wrongs being committed did not necessarily follow this up with action. The process of communication and truth-finding went through many steps, and each step offered an opportunity to frame what had happened in acceptable terms and then manoeuvre it strategically in order to circumvent scandals. The 'cover-up' can best be described as a process rather than a goal. In this process, those at the top level of the colonial administration and the Minister of Colonies/Overseas Territories were the main senders as well as receivers of sensitive information. The impetus for action, meanwhile, came mainly from informal channels: reports in the press and reports from first- or second-hand witnesses. On the basis of these reports,

MPs could choose to ask the minister privately about the matter or publicly call for an investigation.

If this happened, time was the most important factor. The investigations ordered by the Dutch government often met with delays and foot-dragging and consequently lost their urgency. The report on misconduct by Dutch troops at Pesing (in April 1946) remained on a shelf somewhere in Batavia gathering dust for several months because there were a number of unanswered questions. Van Mook finally forwarded it to The Hague at the end of November, adding that the case was already 'so outdated that a new investigation would only create misunderstanding'.[62] This pattern of information provision was repeated on a larger scale in a much more serious matter: the infamous campaign of extrajudicial executions by Captain Raymond Westerling's Special Forces Depot on South Sulawesi, which took place from late 1946 to early 1947. The ministers responsible were aware of this campaign already in February 1947, but the Dutch newspapers only managed several months later, in May, to obtain enough information to be able to report on it. The left-wing press – *De Waarheid*, *Het Parool*, *Vrij Nederland*, *De Stem van Nederland* – described the ruthless actions committed by the unit on the basis of its own news gathering and reports from groups that had been at the scene. In the Lower House, the left-wing parties questioned PvdA minister Jan Jonkman on this matter, but other parties simply rejected criticism of the troops as a targeted undermining of the Dutch position. The anti-revolutionary *Friesch Dagblad* accused Frans Goedhart of using stories about atrocities to advocate a dangerous policy of 'talking and conceding' vis-a-vis the Republic.[63]

Minister Jonkman informed parliament that Van Mook had in the meantime set up a committee of inquiry. He claimed that the report was expected soon, after which he would inform parliament 'in such a way that will then prove to be appropriate'.[64] In doing so, he reserved the freedom to decide for himself whether, how and when he would share the results of the report. The report was slow to materialize, and in January 1948, Jonkman told the Lower House that Van Mook was doing the best he could but that Batavia was struggling with a shortage of staff. On 13 April, Jonkman received the Enthoven Committee's report, which acknowledged cases of excessive action but pardoned the campaign by invoking the principle of self-defence against the fierce guerrilla warfare taking place there.[65] Before forwarding the report, Van Mook suggested the minister submit it confidentially to the Lower House. He also advised Jonkman to read through the piece first be-

fore announcing that he had received it.[66] Jonkman followed this suggestion and kept the matter to himself. In August 1948, when his successor Emmanuel Sassen was questioned by Drees about the matter, Sassen admitted that the report had already been completed. Sassen said that some subcommanders would probably be prosecuted but that, according to Van Mook, 'Captain Wesselink'[sic!] would probably go free.[67] Two months later, after another reminder from Drees, the minister finally sent the Enthoven report confidentially to the States General – two years after the events had taken place. This was in the week that the second 'police action' was about to be launched, which naturally had everyone's attention. Nonetheless, at the High Military Court in Indonesia, a criminal preliminary investigation by lieutenant colonel J.L. Paardekooper was started in February 1949 and completed in August.[68] It was months later that the dossier was examined by the lawyers C. van Rij and W.J.H. Stam who had come over from the Netherlands, but their final report disappeared into Drees' desk drawer in 1954 without consequences and was not seen again until 1969.[69]

The South Sulawesi affair is a classic example of how the Dutch approach of 'hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil' worked in the interaction between the army and the administration in the colony and in the Netherlands. During his visit to the Netherlands at the end of January 1947, Spoor told the ministers involved very briefly about his decision to deploy the Depot Special Forces against 'gangs' on South Sulawesi.[70] At the time, other troubled areas – Palembang on Sumatra, and Semarang and Surabaya on Java – were receiving much more attention in the discussions between the government and the military command.[71] Prime Minister Louis Beel (KVP) found out more about the South Sulawesi affair through a different channel. On 1 February, his fellow party member Max van Poll, a member of the General Commission, wrote to him in a private letter about the mass executions there, expressing the hope 'that such methods will not become known to the world forum'.[72] In the meantime, Minister Jonkman was receiving reports about 'purge operations' and 'clashes with terrorists' in which leading figures were 'downed'.[73] Neither Beel nor Jonkman asked further questions upon reading these reports. Instead, the ministers focused on the difficult negotiations with the Republic regarding the Linggarjati Agreement and on gaining support for this accord in parliament. They considered strong military action to be the key to success in these negotiations. South Sulawesi thus remained a side show in Dutch politics until the press began reporting on the events a few months later.[74]

In many cases, the army commander did not wait until questions from the minister reached him. If Spoor saw that the armed forces were in danger of being discredited by certain events, he took the initiative and thereby determined the playing field, as it were. In the notorious case of the Bondowoso 'death train' in which on 23 November 1947 46 Indonesian prisoners died as a result of suffocation, heat and negligence, Spoor himself quickly announced an inquiry to be conducted by himself and some senior officials. In a press release, the Dutch East Indies government expressed its 'sorrow, horror and indignation' at what had happened, without directly apportioning blame. The case was commented on extensively in the Dutch press.[75] News reports soon appeared about a government report showing that the prisoners had died from heat, dehydration and lack of ventilation, and that the deaths were not intentional. Later it turned out that Spoor and others had not drawn up a report at all but had only issued a statement to the news agency Aneta.[76] The government in The Hague decided to leave it at that. In a cabinet meeting, Drees suggested that the government firmly condemn the events, but Jonkman wanted to keep this under deliberation, and thereafter it simply did not happen. Nine months later, fourteen Dutch marines stood trial before the Navy's court-martial dealing with this case on charges of involuntary manslaughter and were given relatively mild sentences.[77]

The cabinet of the army commander did not shy away from counterattacks to limit reputational damage. Critical questions and complaints were immediately dismissed as baseless, and officials refused to deal with allegations that did not contain enough concrete information or were based on anonymous sources. If journalists wanted to protect their sources – with good reason – this was considered proof of bad faith. When Van Mook was asked for a reaction to reports that appeared in *Het Parool* and began to ask around about what had happened, he was told in March 1948 that army headquarters in Batavia/Jakarta were far too busy with 'constructive work' to correct 'apparently deliberate half-truths and untruths that were being released by a less than scrupulous newspaper'.[78] But while headquarters still felt the need to offer a strong rebuttal to reports in newspapers such as *Het Parool*, reports in the communist party newspaper *De Waarheid* were simply ignored as hostile agitation.

The administration and the judiciary in Batavia usually followed the reporting provided by Spoor. The minister was thus given the army command's explanation of events, which were sanctioned by the attorney

general and senior civil servants. If the latter had any doubts, these were usually expressed on the side. Critics in Indonesia felt their voices were not being heard, even though they wrote and spoke to politicians and to the media whenever possible and told them what they had seen or heard. More and more whistle-blowers began to emerge in 1948 and 1949, but they were discredited in both Batavia and the Netherlands. In a letter to Minister Sassen, Spoor called the aforementioned government doctor Van den Burg a politically dubious figure who made propaganda for the Republic and whose allegations testified to a 'less benevolent intent' or even 'perfidy'.[79]

Other whistle-blowers who were discredited in order to negate what they had to say included reserve officer J.J. (Ko) Zweeres and the pastors Jan Buskes and H.A.C. Hildering. Reverend Buskes compared 'Spoor's burned down *dessas*' to the destruction of the Dutch village of Putten by the German occupiers in 1944.[80] The missionary minister Reverend Hildering brought the matter of the massacre in Peniwen before the local commander, and when nothing happened, he passed the story on to the news agency of the Dutch Reformed Church, which published it.[81] From Semarang, Zweeres wrote to a friend in the Netherlands about the beatings and executions without trial carried out by Dutch troops near Yogya.[82] General Spoor and Attorney General Felderhof threatened Zweeres and Hildering with criminal prosecution, and Minister of War Wim Schokking had the attorney general investigate Buskes' sermons, but ultimately no charges were pressed.[83] The cabinet complained to the Dutch Reformed Synod about both pastors.[84] There was no criminal case against Zweeres either, but Spoor and the Ministry of Overseas Territories did have a background check of his private life carried out in an attempt to discredit him.[85] Through the intercession of Drees, Zweeres was sent back to the Netherlands owing to a nervous breakdown.[86]

In the aftermath of the second 'police action', the conflict intensified and the number of casualties on both sides increased. More and more reports started coming in about misconduct of Dutch troops. Among politicians in The Hague, the communists and a few critical socialists were still the only ones denouncing these incidents. Although this opposition was divided and powerless, these parties did call for an independent investigation. For F.J. Goedhart in particular, the frustration with the way in which information was managed mounted. In February 1949, he followed in the footsteps of his communist colleagues by reading out to the Lower House several letters

from soldiers recounting the shooting of a hundred captured adversaries. He then submitted a motion to have a committee sent from the Netherlands to conduct 'a completely independent investigation'.[87] Sassen's successor, Minister Van Maarseveen, did not respond to the shocking facts presented by the CPN in the parliamentary debate and told Goedhart not to ask the government 'to do the impossible'. The minister emphasized the stance of his predecessors, who were guided by Spoor, that there was no point in in-

Talks between Indonesian and Dutch military delegates about the determination of the demarcation line. Surabaya, 28 November 1946. From left to right: General Sungkono (Commander 6th division TRI), Gadjo Atmosontoso (head of information service), Lieutenant General Urip Sumohardjo (chief of staff TRI) and Amir Sjarifuddin (Minister of Defence) and Major General of the Marines M.R. de Bruyne (territorial commander of East Java). Source: Hugo Wilmar, NIMH.



vestigating unspecified complaints. Goedhart was persuaded to withdraw the motion but continued to insist throughout the year on the need for an independent investigation.

Van Maarseveen continued to look for a way out and turned Goedhart's idea into a solution that posed less risk to himself. In consultation with the high representative of the crown (Lovink), the army commander and the attorney general in Batavia, the minister decided to send the lawyers C. van Rij, W.L.J. Stam and F.A. Groeninx van Zoelen to Batavia to assist the overburdened public prosecutor's office there. After much fuss, they left the Netherlands at the end of October.[88] Batavia was opposed to the 'non-judicial' investigation that Goedhart had called for, believing it would be politically inspired. Van Maarseveen was able to carry out his plan because Goedhart, who was an independently operating party member, was not on good terms with the leadership of the PvdA. Given that the party was partly responsible for government policy, PvdA party chairman Koos Vorrink and parliamentary party leader Marinus Van der Goes van Naters only half-heartedly supported Goedhart in the context of PvdA's participation in the coalition and tried to discourage him as soon as he tried to dig deeper. Although Prime Minister Drees did allow himself to be informed about atrocities, he gave Van Maarseveen as the minister responsible a free rein to handle the matter as he saw fit.

In the cabinet, the socialist ministers focused their attention on working towards a settlement with the Republic on the political future of Indonesia. In response to Goedhart and Van der Goes, Van Maarseveen used the argument that publicity about Dutch atrocities could seriously spoil the atmosphere at the Round Table Conference.[89] He approached party leader Van der Goes in an effort to prevent Goedhart from holding an interpellation, and it worked. To Goedhart, Van Maarseveen insisted that the excesses on the Dutch side were only incidental, all of which could be attributed to the brutal interaction between the Indonesian KNIL soldiers and the Republican fighters, who shared an 'Asian mentality'.[90] Goedhart was effectively isolated as a critical questioner within his own circle. His fellow party members hoped that the impending transfer of sovereignty would put a definitive end to the violence. It was clear that they only wanted to look ahead. The other parties – with the exception of the CPN – continued to support the troops through thick and thin and refused even to engage in a discussion about the nature of the violence. And that was as far as parliamentary responsibility went.

Findings

In the previous pages, we followed the path of violence from the villages and fields in Indonesia to the offices in The Hague. In doing so, we focused on two things: the way in which information about violence was disseminated, blocked and manipulated, and the language that was used for this. Our starting point was that the violence deployed was not just the result of decisions 'in the field' but that it can only be understood in the context of the creation of images, the use of language and political accountability.

The Dutch tolerance of the large-scale and brutal violence used by the own armed forces in the war had several causes. In the first place, the underlying colonial mentality of the parties responsible was crucial. Dutch violence in the revolutionary period was the result of deeply ingrained patterns and ways of thinking formed during the lengthy colonial occupation.[91] The conflict between the Indonesian nationalists and the Netherlands can therefore be seen as a clash of worldviews: one view was determined by a colonial sense of legitimacy in which Indonesians had only a limited right to speak, and the other consisted of a world of resistance and the desire to determine one's own destiny. The latter view challenged not only the right of the Netherlands to recolonize the archipelago, but also its ambition to determine the route to independence.

Secondly, Dutch soldiers and government officials in Indonesia and the Netherlands were guided by the colonial impulses of prejudice, paternalism and control. Due to their distance – both geographically and psychologically – from the violence in Indonesia, politicians and their constituencies in the Netherlands rarely took responsibility for the wide array of violence perpetrated. This phenomenon, which we branded 'colonial dissociation', enabled political leaders in the Netherlands to use different standards for the colonies and colonial subjects due to the geographical and moral distance. In addition, oversight mechanisms were absent in colonial Indonesia. The war was waged in an authoritarian system in which the civilian population was effectively denied access to justice. The civil administration, in many places functioning under the State of War and Siege, relied upon the army and largely supported it, or was at least obedient to it. Dutch politicians and administrators claimed to stand up for those Indonesians who were 'well-meaning', but in the area controlled by the Netherlands, there was neither the civil society nor the freedom of opinion that might have acted as a check or corrective force. A policy of 'good intentions' degenerated into 'dirty' law enforcement in the field.

The perception of the enemy was determined by racist and criminalizing images and language.

Thirdly, the nature of the war greatly influenced the reporting and thus the knowledge about the violence deployed. The level of violence in this bloody and gruelling war was born out of the Dutch aim to control the territory and the population. This meant patrolling vast areas, heavy-handed interrogations, executions of adversaries, reprisals and counter-guerrilla warfare. Much of the violence took place during the patrolling and purge operations. The long and often interrupted lines of accountability made it possible and even necessary for those at the lowest operational level to act autonomously. It was often up to the commanders in the field to assess transgressive behaviour. In their reporting, the nature of the violence applied by the soldiers was often hidden while that of the enemy was highlighted. When the commanders in the field were asked from above to investigate certain cases, such atrocities could be presented as individual excesses.

Fourthly, our research into the discursive aspect of information management reveals how the government in The Hague consciously and unconsciously internalized the terminology and mindset of the soldiers. The many steps that information provision went through and the length of the lines of accountability made it possible for those in the Netherlands to regard the extremely brutal violence as a tool to restore authority without having to face the consequences. The official communication between The Hague and Batavia was between the minister and the governor general or high commmissioner; it was formalized and legalized in administrative terms that largely obscured their visibility of what was happening 'on the ground'. In every step of reporting to the 'powers above', it was possible to manipulate information and thus reinforce the dominant mindset of restoring authority as well as the overriding war narrative. In addition, the shaping of the image of the enemy found fertile ground in the long colonial tradition in which colonial subjects and opponents were placed outside the moral order on a racial and cultural basis. From this perspective, the Republic was incapable of establishing a stable government, and the anti-colonial resistance was branded as criminal. In the colonial tradition, a distinction was made between 'well-meaning' people and 'extremists', which legitimized a harsh approach.

Fifthly, it has become clear that the army had primacy when it came to information provision, including investigations into extreme violence. Spoor and his staff largely determined the playing field when it came to

information provision. Batavia only informed the minister responsible about specific issues when the government in The Hague asked questions. The stream of periodic reports in The Hague did not raise critical questions, rather it confirmed what Dutch politicians thought they knew: that the opponent operated aggressively and ruthlessly. The politicians and civil servants responsible acted on the basis of their formal information role, driven by Batavia. There was little room to process informal allegations, which were perceived as troublesome and damaging. Concerns were mainly raised by reports from parallel and informal channels. And if the Dutch government did ask for more information or for an investigation after all, it was not difficult for the army leadership to activate mechanisms that cast doubt on the accusations, to formulate a reassuring interpretative framework or to dampen any impending scandals – all under the protective umbrella of the colonial administration. Whistle-blowers were discredited, intimidated, blacklisted, threatened with criminal prosecution and shut out.

And on a final note, it is striking that the Dutch violence was not fully publicized or exploited by the Indonesian authorities. The legal qualifications of Dutch acts of violence played a much less prominent role for the Republicans in their communication about Dutch actions. Moreover, it was not expedient to exploit the violence argument against the Dutch troops given the involvement of Republican troops in lethal violence against civilians and local administrators.[92] The Republicans focused more on political strategy, putting an emphasis on manoeuvring the international fora more than on seeking justice for the victims. There was also a lack of well-structured lines of information on the Republican side, which meant that many events remained 'local', and messages were distorted. While notorious cases such as the mass executions on Sulawesi and in Rawagede (Karawang) were exploited as propaganda, many other cases of large-scale violence against civilians remained unmentioned. The Dutch authorities often complained about so-called Republican 'fabrications' and did not allow themselves to be persuaded by them to investigate their own actions – except when the United Nations or its committee members started to take notice of them.

So were the Dutch engaged in a cover-up or not? The answer must be a nuanced one, if only because the very concept of a 'cover-up' is not very precise. The above-mentioned cases all show how crucial the process of information management was in preventing the full scope and implications of

the incriminating facts from being revealed, which would have led to serious political difficulties. In many ways, the whole process reflected the political and administrative culture in the Netherlands and in the colony, which rested on a combination of colonial prejudice, moral exclusion, an intentional strategy of turning a blind eye and deliberate manipulation. It is a fact that at all levels, those on the Dutch side who were politically and administratively responsible remained silent, deliberately concealed the practice of violence in the field or provided more 'useable' interpretations. Civil servants and legal officials regularly expressed criticism of the violent military action, but they were seldom able or willing to challenge the primacy of the military, and it was rare for criticism from the civil administration to lead to disciplinary or criminal measures. In the exceptional case that they did express their disquiet, this probably had little impact on the behaviour of the troops. Much of the outcry came weeks or months after what had happened, and the investigation into the incident usually took even longer. Moreover, remedial actions were seldom taken.

Somenggalan cemetery in Argomulyo, Sedayu, Yogyakarta. Here lie 202 soldiers and civilian victims of the Dutch violence in Sedayu during and after Operation Kraai (1948-1949). Photo: Remco Raben.



This situation reflects a colonial administration under pressure from massive resistance. The legitimacy of their actions was justified by invoking the need to restore order and 'rebuild the country', a stance that was endorsed by every Dutch official. Those officials who were involved certainly filed their reports – of their own accord or when requested – as was appropriate in a well-organized state structure in those days, as now. At the same time, civil servants, administrators and soldiers had plenty of opportunities to deny or downplay unpleasant facts by influencing, manipulating or slowing down investigations, by filing away reports into oblivion and by discrediting any 'bad news' as well as the bearers of such news. The procedures of information provision and accountability were designed to ensure oversight and accountability, but in practice they were used to achieve the precise opposite: to conceal and to take no action.

This state of affairs undoubtedly gave many Dutch people, and even soldiers in the field, the impression that 'things were not so bad'. Nevertheless, our research has made it clear that knowledge about the extreme violence perpetrated by Dutch (and Indonesian) troops reached all levels sooner or later. It was only in exceptional cases that this led to action to curb the violence or to criminally prosecute the perpetrators. The urgency to do something about the violence was absent for two reasons. In the first place, the priority for policymakers was to win the war, and they were therefore quick to justify non-prosecution on the grounds of the principle of opportunity.[93] What also played a role in this was the fear that prosecutions would undermine the morale of the troops. In short, the end justified the means, even if they did not want to know what those means were. Secondly, 'colonial dissociation' ensured that politicians in the Netherlands followed developments from a safe distance and simply accepted the fact that they had only marginal control over the armed forces. The political struggle in the Netherlands was first and foremost about the political design of the future relations between the Netherlands and Indonesia and the safeguarding of Dutch interests. And it was in this light that the 'police actions' were legitimized. Rabid opponents continued to the very end to cling to the hope that the Republic of Indonesia could be defeated militarily. Those who were more moderate hoped that a negotiated peace would put an end to all forms of extreme violence. They were worried that raising the issue of acts of extreme violence – whichever side committed them – would disrupt the already fragile peace negotiations. For them, the need to end the violence of the war was paramount. In this context,

any concerns about the large-scale and extreme violence practically perished. Responsibility for the consequences of the violence for the hard-hit population of Indonesia was thus held not only by the armed forces, but also by all political leaders.



7.

Silence as a strategy

International visions of the Indonesian War of Independence

Jeroen Kemperman (with Tom van den Berge and Emma Keizer)[1]

'The fate of Indonesia, more than that of other nations, is bound up with the international situation and world history,' wrote Sutan Sjahrir in *Onze Strijd* [Our Struggle], his pamphlet published in 1946.[2] Diplomacy has been defined as a system of formal conventions for negotiations between governments, aimed at achieving mutually satisfactory relations. In the context of the struggle between the Netherlands and the Republic of Indonesia, however, in certain periods diplomacy could also be viewed as the continuation of war by other means.[3]

When viewed as such, it is hardly surprising that between 1945 and 1949, periods of intensive military combat for the control of towns, villages and territory alternated with periods of intensive negotiations to consolidate or reverse the outcome of those battles. The international

Foreign military observers from Belgium, France and the United States visit Tajeman kampong*, Salatiga, September 1947.* Source: Th. van de Burgt, National Archives of the Netherlands/Dienst voor Legercontacten.

context had a major impact on this process, because nations other than the Netherlands and Indonesia also had an interest in the outcome. In the long term this worked in favour of the Republic of Indonesia, which sought to compensate for the conventional military superiority of the Netherlands by, among other things, generating international pressure on the Dutch government.

In his book about his country's foreign relations between 1945 and 1965, former Indonesian Foreign Minister Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung wrote: 'In the efforts to solve this Indonesian-Dutch dispute, the Indonesian government always avoided considering that issue as a matter which concerned only the two countries.' He observed that his government had succeeded in internationalizing the conflict, 'thanks to the support of such friendly countries as Australia and India'.[4] Although the growing international intervention in the fighting in the Indonesian archipelago did not result in the direct cessation of hostilities, it did ensure that the course of the conflict was influenced by contributions from diplomats from, among others, Brussels, Canberra, London, New Delhi, New York, Paris and Washington.

Given the high degree of interaction between diplomacy and the deployment of military means, and the role that foreign parties played (or wanted to play) in that process, it is important to consider the Indonesian War of Independence and the use of violence in that war within this international political context. First, it is relevant to view the conflict through the eyes of contemporary 'outsiders'. Did they sympathize with the Dutch or with Indonesian political and military policy? Second, foreign powers and international organizations attempted to influence the Dutch and Indonesian use of military violence through active diplomacy.

In this research programme, it was not possible to cover the entire international political context of the Indonesian War of Independence over a period of five or so years. We therefore focused on the role played by three of the major international players: the United States, the United Kingdom and France. Studying the views of these 'third parties' to the conflict offers a broader perspective on the positions of the warring parties, both with respect to how these international players viewed the Dutch attitude to the political and diplomatic aspects of the conflict, and the way in which the Dutch used military means in Indonesia.

From the British and American perspective, the war between the Republic of Indonesia and the Netherlands was not a struggle between good and

evil. The issue at stake was not how to achieve the fairest solution to the conflict, but which solution would work in practice. Although they argued that their position on the war was characterized by relative neutrality, the British and the Americans also had their own national interests to defend in Asia. Their policymakers were concerned with questions such as: what does this conflict mean for our geopolitical and economic role in the world, and what consequences could it have for our domestic position with regard to parliament/Congress, the opposition and the electorate? Reducing the role of countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom and France to a 'pro-Dutch' or 'pro-Republican' stance is thus an oversimplification that does little justice to a much more complex reality.

Yet despite this complexity, it is possible to discern some common threads in the international perspectives on a conflict that went on for years, and in which in the course of time many actors played an important role. Detailed reconstructions of the international diplomatic imbroglio that surrounded the fighting in the archipelago tend to emphasize every possible policy change that occurred between 1945 and 1949,[5] but in this chapter we shall argue that British, American and French policy on the conflict was characterized more by continuity than by fault lines.

A constant factor in British and American policy regarding the Indonesian question was these countries' condemnation of the large-scale use of force by the warring parties. The attempts by the latter to resolve the conflict by force of arms had to be discouraged as far as possible. In particular, the Dutch threats to break the deadlock at the negotiating table by resorting to large-scale violence were a source of almost constant concern in Washington and London. Although the Dutch were seen as the stronger party militarily, it seemed impossible that they would be able to suppress the unleashed forces of Indonesian nationalism in the longer term. From a British and American perspective, it was therefore essential, time and again, to remind the Dutch in particular of the importance of resolving the conflict peacefully, and to point out that a negotiated settlement, however difficult it might be to achieve, was preferable to the large-scale use of force.

According to London and Washington, a large-scale war in the archipelago would have all kinds of negative consequences not only for Indonesia and the Netherlands, which would suffer major humanitarian and economic losses, but also for the Americans and British themselves. From a geopolitical perspective, the enormous deployment of the Dutch armed

forces overseas came at the cost of their military strength in Western Europe, weakening the position of the West in the context of the Cold War. In addition, London and Washington could expect international criticism for any failure on their part to restrain the Dutch; an escalation in the conflict in Indonesia might complicate relations between the West and the emerging Asian nations (especially China and India); and the Soviet Union might take advantage of the uncertain situation to expand its influence. Moreover, the economic consequences of widespread violence in Indonesia would be detrimental across the board: not just for British and American companies that wanted to re-start their activities there, but for large parts of the world, because products and raw materials from the archipelago had a key role to play in the economic recovery of countries affected by the Second World War. Indonesia therefore had to be opened up to world trade again as soon as possible.

Diplomacy or war?

During the war with Japan, the Allies divided the conflict theatre into different operational areas. From mid-August 1945, the Indonesian archipelago fell under the responsibility of the British armed forces, but they lacked sufficient resources to carry out all military tasks in Southeast Asia in the immediate wake of the sudden Japanese surrender. That is why the first British and British Indian units of any size did not arrive until the second half of September 1945. The British did not intend to occupy the entire Indonesian archipelago, but limited their military presence to a number of 'key areas' on Java and Sumatra, from which the Dutch authorities could subsequently restore control over the rest of the territory.

Indonesian resistance to the restoration of Dutch rule proved to be much greater than the British or Dutch had anticipated, however. In late September 1945, the British Joint Planning Staff of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (CSC) acknowledged that Sukarno and Hatta's Republic of Indonesia had become firmly rooted and, moreover, that its armed units could be expected to make things very difficult for the British and British Indian troops. The British high command concluded that the initial plans had been overly optimistic. There were not enough Allied troops on Java and Sumatra to enforce a military solution. Furthermore, there were strong objections in India to the deployment of Indian troops against Indonesian nationalists. In the British view, the Dutch units that were present were of inadequate quality.

The military options were therefore limited. Moreover, London faced a major political dilemma: both using force to restore Dutch colonial rule and showing too much lenience with regard to Indonesian nationalism could create considerable problems in the United Kingdom's relations with nationalist movements in its own colonial territories in South and Southeast Asia. A political agreement between the Dutch and the Indonesian nationalists seemed the best solution to this dilemma. The Dutch authorities had strong reservations about negotiating with Sukarno and Hatta, however, whom they regarded as having collaborated with the Japanese. On the other side, the Republic saw itself as an independent and sovereign state, and the nationalists were adamantly opposed to the return of Dutch rule. In a bid to unwind the British mission in Indonesia as well as possible, the British government put pressure on both the Netherlands and the Republic.

This marked the beginning of a pattern that would be repeated in the following years. International pressure was almost invariably needed to get the warring parties to the negotiating table and, above all, to keep them there, and significant external involvement was then needed to achieve an agreement, after which there was still the question of how long the agreement would hold. The Dutch were reluctant to come to the table with the revolutionaries from the unilaterally proclaimed Republic. They would have much preferred to negotiate with what they viewed as more 'respectable' parties; that is, Indonesian interlocutors with closer ties to the Netherlands.

It was not until 15 November 1946 that, under the watchful eye of a British mediator, Dutch and Republican negotiators in Linggarjati reached an agreement on broad outlines. It seemed a promising development and was therefore warmly welcomed by the British and the Americans, but it left many crucial questions unanswered that would have to be covered in future negotiations. That process became deadlocked in mid-1947, and was followed by a major Dutch offensive against the Republic: 'Operation Product', or *Agresi Militer Belanda 1*. This development was completely at odds with what the British and Americans had envisaged, and that although in the months prior to the Dutch offensive they had frequently urged the government in The Hague to refrain from using large-scale violence in an attempt to settle the conflict.

The British, in their perception, had even sounded the alarm so often that, on 17 June 1947, the British ambassador in The Hague reported to the For-

eign Office that the Dutch had become tired of Albion's admonitions. London had informed The Hague that if large-scale fighting were to break out in Indonesia, the British government, in consideration of public opinion, might decide to stop providing military equipment and training facilities to the Dutch troops. One day before the start of Operation Product, the head of the American State Department's Office of Far Eastern Affairs noted that the Americans had already made their negative stance on Dutch military intervention clear to the Dutch government on several occasions. In British circles, on the other hand, it was suspected that the Dutch might have interpreted the United States' relatively detached attitude to the Indonesian case as encouragement for the use of force. The American consul general in Batavia/Jakarta, who held pro-Dutch views, appears to have played a particular role in this. The fact that some American diplomats may personally have been more sympathetic to the Dutch position, however, does not alter the fact that the general line in Washington was to achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict.[6]

In early June 1947, the State Department's Division of Southeast Asian Affairs (SEA) formulated the primary aim of American policy as follows: 'a non-totalitarian Indonesia friendly to the West'. In order to achieve this, there were three lines of policy:

1) Promoting a peaceful and equitable implementation of the Linggarjati Agreement that should lead to a voluntary association between the Netherlands and Indonesia.
2) Facilitating the reconstruction of the archipelago and the resumption of international trade and investment in a non-discriminatory way.
3) Preventing the spread of communism, fascism or other totalitarian regimes in the area by means of the economic and political measures put forward under points 1 and 2, and by the promotion of friendly relations with the United States by cultural means.

It was expressly stated that political stability would not be reached by means of external economic aid alone: 'The chief determinant of political stability is the achievement of Dutch-Indonesian political accord.'[7]

If neither the Netherlands nor the Republic were willing to reach a compromise, pressure would have to be exerted on the parties involved: sometimes on one, sometimes on the other, and sometimes on both simultaneously. London and Washington were not driven by sympathy for one

warring party or the other; for the British and the Americans, finding a satisfactory end to the conflict as soon as possible was largely a matter of self-interest. 'We are pursuing our own interests and policies,' wrote a senior State Department official shortly after the outbreak of the second Dutch military action: 'Today [the] pursuit of our policy may make us critical of Dutch; tomorrow [the] pursuit of [the] same policy in different circumstances may make us equally critical of Indonesians.'[8]

There were limits to the pressure that the British and the Americans could exert on the warring parties, however. They had no wish to alienate the Netherlands, an important European ally. Certain warnings were therefore expressed in such cautious terms that it was easy for Dutch politicians and diplomats to maintain the notion that the international criticism was quite moderate. As the Minister for Overseas Territories, J.A. Jonkman, put it in July 1947: 'As far as America and England are concerned, we always have the impression that the governments in Washington and London fully understand our position, although they take a somewhat cautious stand with an eye to domestic politics.'[9]

The international community could never be certain that the pressure that was exerted would have the intended effect. After all, Dutch policy was not only determined by careful consideration of the political and economic arguments, but also by emotions and feelings. 'There is a psychological factor which is an imponderable in the situation, growing out of three centuries of Dutch relations with the Indies', wrote an Asia specialist from the State Department in an internal memo in December 1947.[10] This made the Dutch position unpredictable.

The Security Council

The first major Dutch military offensive in July 1947 prompted the recently formed UN Security Council, which had been established in October 1945, to address the fighting on Java and Sumatra. As a rule, the resolutions adopted by the Security Council were the outcome of stern confrontations between the different members. In particular, the five permanent members – China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States – carried significant weight in such deliberations, thanks to their right of veto, although that is not to say that a single permanent member could control the results of the debates and votes. Whilst Washington and London feared that politically and ideologically inspired debates in the Security Council about the conflict between the Netherlands and the Repub-

lic would only further complicate efforts to reach a peaceful solution, they realized that it would be impossible to dissuade the Eastern Bloc and countries such as India and Australia from raising the Indonesian question at the Council. The Americans, who were also concerned about the prestige of the Security Council, therefore adopted a proactive stance, hoping to take the wind out of the Soviet Union's sails.

The Netherlands wanted to prevent any foreign involvement in the conflict, if possible. As long as British and British Indian troops were present on Java and Sumatra, it was obviously impossible in practice to keep the British at arm's length, but the departure of these troops in late 1946 was followed by a period in which the Netherlands and the Republic faced one another directly without the moderating presence of a third party. If pressure from abroad was stepped up, the Dutch government was at most prepared to accept the good offices of a friendly nation. In contrast to this defensive stance of the Dutch, the policy of the Republic of Indonesia was aimed at internationalizing the conflict, preferably through the United Nations. Its attempts to gain international recognition as a sovereign state while the fight for independence continued, however, had very limited success.

The Dutch position was clear: the conflict was an internal matter in which the United Nations had no right to intervene. In order to determine how far this position was correct, the Security Council had to consider two important, closely interrelated matters: namely, the international status of the Republic of Indonesia and the question of whether the struggle between the Netherlands and the Republic was an internal or an international conflict. Whilst the members of the Security Council did not agree on these issues, in practice this did not prevent them from making a number of important decisions regarding the Indonesian question.

In response to Operation Product, on 1 August 1947, for the first time in its history the Security Council adopted a resolution calling on the warring parties – in this case the Netherlands and the Republic – to cease hostilities and resolve the conflict by peaceful means. On 12 August, the Security Council agreed that a representative from the Republic of Indonesia should be admitted to all subsequent debates about the Indonesian question. This was followed on 25 August by a resolution establishing a Consular Commission to oversee compliance with the cease-fire. The commission consisted of six consul generals who were based in Batavia/Jakarta and who each represented a country with a seat on the Security Council; namely, the United

States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, Belgium and China. The Soviet Union, which did not have an official diplomatic delegation in Indonesia, was therefore excluded.

Finally, the Security Council set up an international UN committee to mediate between the warring parties on Sumatra, Java and Madura: the Committee of Good Offices on the Indonesian Question or Good Offices Committee (GOC), renamed the United Nations Commission for Indonesia (UNCI) in early 1949. This committee consisted of representatives from three members of the Security Council: the Netherlands chose Belgium, the Republic selected Australia, and the third representative, who had to steer a middle course, was an American.

These measures show that in response to the first Dutch 'police action', most members of the Security Council wished to circumvent thorny issues about the competence of the Security Council and the international status of the Republic. They took a pragmatic position in order to allow for a certain degree of international intervention in the conflict. This implied a *de facto* recognition – but not yet a full recognition under international law – of the Republic of Indonesia. The deliberations in and resolutions by the Security Council from August 1947 show that a majority of its members did not share the Dutch view of an internal conflict of limited scope, but had instead concluded that the fighting in the archipelago had such implications for the international peace and security that the UN had to interfere in the conflict as a neutral mediator, a role that the Security Council fulfilled through the GOC.[11]

A SQUARE RATIO[12]

As there were similar conflicts underway in the Indonesian archipelago and Indochina, it would be reasonable to assume that the two young republics of Indonesia and Vietnam on the one hand, and the Netherlands and France on the other, would seek each other's support.

The connections between Indonesia and Vietnam had very little impact on the course of the war in Indonesia, however. A joint statement submitted to Sukarno by the Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh in November 1945, for example, was never signed by a representative of the Republic. Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sutan Sjahrir believed that an open alliance with communist Vietnam would do little for Indonesia's international standing. There was no structural cooperation between the two countries, although there was a rare joint performance by Indonesia and Vietnam at the Asian

Relations Conference in March-April 1947, held in New Delhi at the initiative of the Indian leader, Nehru.

At that meeting of representatives of Asian independence movements, the Indonesian and Vietnamese delegates presented a five-point programme to fight colonialism. Pledges of concrete material aid from the other participants were not forthcoming, however, and Indonesia and Vietnam had to make do with moral support. Nor was this followed by further international cooperation between the two countries. In the long term, the fact that the Republic of Indonesia chose not to cooperate structurally with communist Vietnam appears to have aided its attempts to drum up international support from the non-communist world. In the international diplomatic arena, Indonesia was better off without Vietnam at its side.

By contrast, French-Dutch connections between 1945 and 1949 seem to have been much closer. The 1946 agreement between Ho Chi Minh and the French to establish a *Fédération indochinoise* of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, which in turn would be incorporated into a *Union française*, inspired Van Mook's plans to establish a United States of Indonesia and a Dutch-Indonesian Union. The fact that the two European powers found themselves in similar political and military positions in Southeast Asia shortly after the Second World War also brought them closer together in the international arena, particularly in the UN context. These parallel international interests undoubtedly had an impact on the course and outcome of the Dutch-Indonesian conflict, although ultimately this impact was not nearly as great as the Dutch government had hoped. As France, a permanent member of the Security Council, had a right of veto, in the last resort it could block all actions by this body against the Netherlands.

Although this ultimately only happened once – following a proposal by the Soviet Union to establish a broad supervisory committee on which all eleven members of the Security Council would be represented – a potential French blockade of far-reaching Security Council measures was invariably something that the other members had to consider. The French government tried to limit international interference in the Dutch-Indonesian conflict, but its actions were always primarily driven by self-interest. On the one hand, the Security Council's intervention in colonial conflicts such as the struggle in Indonesia formed a potential threat to France's own position in Vietnam, and on the other hand, weighing in too heavily on the side of the Dutch might have had interna-

tional repercussions – particularly among emerging Asian nations – that could also be detrimental to France's position in the world.

In January 1949, Nehru organized another conference in New Delhi in response to the situation in Indonesia, where the Netherlands had launched a second major military offensive against the Republic and captured the main nationalist leaders. This time over fifteen countries took part, together representing more than half of the world's population. They sent a resolution to the Security Council demanding, *inter alia,* the withdrawal of Dutch troops to the positions held prior to the second offensive and the transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia on 1 January 1950.

American diplomats used this package of demands to put pressure on their French counterparts. Washington was lobbying for a new Security Council resolution that would make the GOC/UNCI more effective; the French Government had threatened to veto the resolution if it went too far. The State Department was well aware that the French government's primary concern was not to support the Dutch, but to protect its own interests in Indochina. 'I know only too well that the Dutch have been stupid', the French foreign minister explained to the American ambassador in Paris, 'but facing facts and having in mind our situation in Indochina I hope your people will not be too severe with them.' Due to the conference in New Delhi, the French government realized that using its right of veto would incur the displeasure of the Asian nations.[13]

On 28 January, the Security Council adopted a resolution tabled by China, Cuba, Norway and the United States. It called for the return of the Republican government to Yogyakarta, the establishment of a federal interim government no later than 15 March 1949, and the transfer of sovereignty from the Netherlands to the United States of Indonesia 'as early as possible', but in any case, no later than 1 July 1950. Whilst the resolution did not impose sanctions on the Netherlands, it limited the frameworks in which the Netherlands could shape the further process of state formation in the Indonesian archipelago. The Security Council set out a detailed, step-by-step timetable for the Dutch transfer of sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia.

All in all, it can be concluded that the French gave as much support as possible to the Dutch position on the Security Council over the years, but that it was not in France's interest to play the role of anti-Indonesian obstructionist on the Council at every turn. It therefore comes as little surprise that the French tolerated certain forms of intervention by the Se-

curity Council in the Dutch-Indonesian conflict. By abstaining from the vote, for example, the French representative at the Council refrained from blocking the resolution of 28 January 1949, whilst prior to that in August 1947, he had voted for the establishment of the Consular Commission and the GOC. French foreign policy was no stranger to the adage, 'Les états n'ont pas d'amis, ils n'ont que des intérêts' (states have no friends, they only have interests).[14]

British and American arms embargoes[15]

The warring parties in the Indonesian archipelago had a great interest in gaining international support in the form of political alliances, financial aid and supplies of military equipment. Viewed the other way around, foreign governments, especially those of the great powers, also had to take account of domestic and foreign criticism of their actual or alleged stance with regard to the conflict. The United States and the United Kingdom were important suppliers of weapons and equipment for the Dutch armed forces in Indonesia. Most of the British and American weapons deployed by the Dutch in the archipelago had already been obtained during the Second World War, including as part of the Lend-Lease agreement with the United States. At the beginning of the conflict with the Republic, the British were still the main suppliers, partly because after the German and Japanese surrenders they were left with large surpluses of military equipment that they were keen to sell. In the later phases of the conflict, the Dutch armed forces had a great need for reserve parts in order to keep their British and American armaments operational.

Although the United Kingdom announced an arms embargo in late July 1947 in response to the first Dutch offensive, the British continued to make a significant contribution to the Dutch overseas military effort. This was a consequence of ambiguities in the precise scope of the boycott measures, which allowed the occasional loophole in the embargo to be exploited. In particular, both Dutch buyers and British suppliers could exploit the fact that supplies of equipment to the Dutch armed forces in Europe could continue on condition that the Dutch declared that the equipment would not be deployed in Asia. Moreover, the scarcely concealed lack of rigour with which the British imposed the embargo gave the Dutch the impression that certain matters could be handled 'under the counter'.

The British were ambivalent about the boycott, because it complicated and clouded their relations with the Netherlands, an important partner

in Europe. The aim of the measure was not in fact to curtail Dutch military strength, but to encourage the Dutch government to resolve the conflict at the negotiating table, and to show the rest of the world that the United Kingdom disapproved of the Dutch military offensive against the Republic. The British army leadership, in particular, viewed the embargo not so much as a sanctioning measure against the Netherlands, but as a political signal to public opinion in the newly emerging Asian countries that the British government wished to remain neutral in the conflict.[16] As the British hoped that the mere proclamation of the embargo would achieve the intended goal, there seemed to be little need to enforce it strictly.

After the Asia-Pacific War came to an end, there was an American boycott of arms, munitions and equipment for military use in the Indonesian archipelago. Washington did not permit exports of such goods from the US or their transportation across American territory, nor did it allow American ships or aircraft to be used to carry British or Dutch troops or military equipment to or from Indonesia.[17] Although the United States did not want to support the attempts by the European powers to restore colonial rule in Southeast Asia by force, it did initially authorize the sale of surplus military equipment stored in the region to the Dutch armed forces. This generated revenue and obviated the need for costly shipping to North America. In addition, the Dutch Marine Brigade was trained and equipped by the Americans. At a later stage, Marshall Aid gave the Dutch and Dutch East Indian governments more economic scope, thereby inadvertently and indirectly contributing to the financing of the Dutch overseas war effort.

The Netherlands was an important geopolitical ally for Washington, as it was for London, and it was therefore considered undesirable to discipline the government in The Hague with tough sanctions. As it was not in the American interest to weaken the Netherlands financially or militarily, in practice the United States continued, even after the first Dutch offensive against the Republic, to supply military equipment to the Dutch armed forces (not only from the Lend-Lease stocks that were stored in Southeast Asia), although this was mainly 'non-lethal' equipment. When it came to supplying potentially 'lethal' equipment, the Americans were far more reluctant. Operation Kraai, or *Agresi Militer Belanda 2,* marked a turning point in this policy, partly because international criticism of American aid to the Netherlands peaked as a result. From that time, the American government

put a halt to all supplies of military equipment to the Dutch armed forces in Indonesia.

Sovereignty

In the view of the British and American governments, the declaration of Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945 did not automatically herald the creation of a new sovereign state. Therefore, the Republic was unable to count on official, full recognition from the British and the Americans. The latter did not wish to question Dutch sovereignty over the archipelago for the time being, but they did believe that the Dutch government had to take account of the Republic's position of dominance on Java, Madura and Sumatra. In June 1946, Van Mook summarized the British position as follows: 'They consider many of our arguments – grounded in sovereignty and international law but at odds with the facts and power relations – to be childish or pedantic, and believe we are out of touch with reality.'[18]

The United States believed that a balance had to be struck between the legitimate Indonesian desire for self-government and Dutch interests in the archipelago. A radical breach between the Netherlands and Indonesia had to be avoided; it was also in the interest of the Indonesians themselves to continue to benefit from European knowledge and expertise in the future. The two parties would have to negotiate seriously with one other in order to reach an agreement that would guarantee the Dutch presence in the archipelago for some time to come.

The Linggarjati Agreement provided for the formation prior to 1 January 1949 of a sovereign federal state, the United States of Indonesia (USI), which would subsequently form a Union with the Kingdom of the Netherlands. This appeared to be a significant step in the right direction, but it failed to address a number of difficult questions. These would have to be discussed further in future negotiations. In particular, the matter of exactly how the power relations between the Netherlands and the Republic would be managed in the period leading up to the establishment of a federal state proved a major stumbling block. Although in the Linggarjati Agreement the Netherlands had recognized that the government of the Republic of Indonesia exercised '*de facto* authority over Java, Madura and Sumatra', in the Dutch view this limited recognition did not detract from the internationally recognized Dutch sovereignty over the entire archipelago, including Java, Madura and Sumatra. Not surprisingly the Republic disputed this view. How the Dutch claim to full sovereignty on the one

hand, and, on the other, Dutch recognition of the authority of the Republic on these three islands should co-exist in practice remained a vexed question for years to come.

After the ratification of the Linggarjati Agreement in March 1947, the British and American governments followed the Dutch government in recognizing the *de facto* authority of the Republic on Java, Madura and Sumatra; and according to the two Anglo-Saxon countries, the Netherlands retained formal rule over the entire archipelago for the time being. 'In our reading of [the] Linggadjati Agreement, it is clear a transition period was envisaged (between now and January 1949) during which the Netherlands retains sovereignty and ultimate authority in Indonesia', wrote the American Secretary of State in an *aide-mémoire* to the Republic at the end of June. Sukarno reluctantly accepted this principle under great pressure from the Americans, but he added that the *de facto* authority of the Republic, as recognized in the Linggarjati Agreement, should not be jeopardized as a result.[19]

The Renville Agreement of January 1948, concluded under the auspices of the GOC, also included a provision, at Washington's insistence, that sovereignty be retained by the Netherlands, including during the transition period, until it had been transferred to the United States of Indonesia. The Republican leaders sought confirmation from the committee that this would not have any negative consequences for the *de facto* authority of the Republic. During an intensive consultation with the committee members, they enquired about the status of the Republic and whether it would be affected by the provisions of the Renville Agreement. 'You are what you are', is said to have been the response of Frank Graham, the American committee member, to the Republicans.

This cryptic remark would subsequently take on a life of its own. It is noteworthy that Graham's words have been interpreted by some historians as an American acknowledgement of the Republic's right to maintain its own army, finances and foreign relations.[20] However, Graham personally believed that the Republic should leave diplomatic relations of a political nature with foreign governments to the Dutch government for the time being.[21] With his vague response – 'you are what you are' – he evidently wanted to avoid making a clear statement on this matter, in the hope that the Indonesians would make no further point of it. According to the report on the meeting, the American had said the following:

> You note that the Netherlands says one thing about your status and you say another. We don't have powers of arbitration as between the two claims. Whatever you are now, you are. Whatever it is, is regardless of these points [of the Renville Agreement]. You might have in the political discussions negotiations with [the] Netherlands Government about that.[22]

The GOC was therefore unable to resolve the crucial problem of Dutch sovereignty versus Republican authority. Like the Linggarjati Agreement, the Renville Agreement did not resolve the matter either, and it would continue to overshadow the negotiations throughout 1948.

The fact that in the meantime, the British and the Americans continued to assume that sovereignty was held by the Netherlands – a principle that had been accepted by the Republic with great reluctance, in the hope that this forced but necessary step back would be followed by two steps forward – is not to say that they were of the opinion that the Dutch had a free rein to do whatever they liked in Indonesia. After all, the conclusion that could be drawn from the Linggarjati Agreement was that the authority that the Netherlands could exercise as a sovereign power should not be understood as absolute, but limited by the *de facto* authority of the Republic. The question remained: where exactly did those limits lie?

In the course of 1948, the Americans gradually realized that the structural discord on that point formed an almost insurmountable obstacle to the creation of a joint interim government. The burning question was thus whether it was indeed such a good idea to have two captains of one ship. 'Powers of government cannot in the last analysis be divided', was the terse summary of the problem given by the American delegation to the GOC. 'Regardless questions [of] sovereignty, the actual Government [of] Indonesia must be in the hands [of] the Dutch or the Indonesians.'[23] In Washington there were growing doubts as to whether the warring parties would ever succeed in reaching a lasting peaceful solution without the steering hand of the GOC.

Peace and order

The problem of sovereignty was inextricably linked to the question of the legitimacy of the use of military force. In the Dutch view, a political solution could only be reached in Indonesia if peace and order would be restored first, whereas the Republic argued that it was impossible to restore order



A Dutch soldier in front of a Republican poster. Translated freely, the text on the poster reads: 'The guerrilla. Capable of forcing 100 per cent independence. With sharp bamboo spears, carbines and mortar shells. The people united. Your possessions and ideals will be meaningless if we are colonized again! We are determined.' Bukittinggi (West Sumatra), December 1948. Source: H. Steggerda, National Archives of the Netherlands/Dienst voor Legercontacten.

without first reaching a political agreement. As the internationally recognized sovereign power in Indonesia, the Dutch saw it as their task, and even their duty, to maintain order. However, this idea was diametrically opposed to the Republic's view that it was not up to European colonial occupying forces to restore order, and that much of the disorder had been caused by their presence in the first place. The question of which government was formally authorized to maintain order – a core task that would involve the use of force – formed one of the main issues of contention between the two parties. 'Since the "restoration of law and order" obviously involved the question of governmental jurisdiction,' concluded an American intelligence report as early as November 1946, 'this function of the NEI [Netherlands East Indies] forces immediately touched upon the very crux of the Dutch-Indonesian political conflict.'[24]

What were British and American expectations with regard to the outcome of a major military confrontation between the Netherlands and the Republic? Intelligence reports gave London and Washington a fairly consistent picture. Before *Agresi Militer Belanda I,* military analysts were already estimating that in the short term the Netherlands was militarily much stronger than its Indonesian opponent. It would not be too difficult for Dutch troops to sweep aside the Republican armed forces and capture the most important towns and territories ruled by the Republic, but this would not settle the conflict. The Indonesians would then switch to guerrilla tactics and sabotage operations, making it impossible for the Dutch fully to pacify and rule the captured territories in the long term. 'The Dutch will never be strong enough now to keep 70 million people under martial law indefinitely', reported the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the American foreign intelligence service, in mid-October 1945. Several days before the start of 'Operation Product', the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee of the British Chiefs of Staff Committee likewise believed that the Indonesians could keep a guerrilla war going for an indefinite period.[25]

That it would prove virtually impossible to permanently quash the Indonesian resistance, however, did not mean that a major Dutch offensive could not weaken the Republic administratively to such an extent that it would no longer have a say as a political entity. Such a weakening did not imply, though, that the Netherlands would thereby be able to decide the military conflict in its favour. On the contrary, there was a risk that the potential collapse of Sukarno and Hatta's Republic, seen as a moderate regime, would

create more room for the rise of 'extreme' Indonesian forces, only leading to increased fighting and disorder. Two days before the start of the *Agresi Militer Belanda 2*, George F. Kennan, the State Department's influential Director of Policy Planning, predicted that the Dutch would fail to restore their authority over or stabilize Java, Madura and Sumatra. 'The choice therefore lies not between Republican and Dutch sovereignty over these islands but between Republican sovereignty and chaos', he concluded.[26]

Violence

How did international diplomats view the military violence used in Indonesia that could be described as excessive? The *Excessennota* [Memorandum on excesses] of 1969 states that, as a rule, the Security Council paid less attention to extreme violence – which the memo described as 'excesses' – than to observance of the cease-fire desired by the Council. Although the memorandum did not provide an explanation for this international restraint, on further investigation this conclusion holds up very well.

Each party to the conflict accused the other of violating the cease-fire agreement. The international mediators were generally of the opinion that both the Netherlands and the Republic were guilty of such offences, and that violations by the one party were magnified and highlighted somewhat eagerly by its opponent. 'With regard to Dutch complaints of continued Republican incursions and other breaches of the truce, it should be borne in mind that similar complaints are always coming in from Djokja [Yogyakarta]', reported the British consul general in Batavia/Jakarta to London, a few weeks before the first Dutch military offensive: 'There are probably faults on both sides, but according to my Service Liaison Officers there is also much exaggeration on both sides.'[27] International observers assumed, however, that the Dutch army leadership had much more control over their own troops than Republican leaders had over the various Indonesian armed groups and gangs. The British and the Americans sympathized with Dutch complaints about Indonesian truce violations. They therefore expected the Republic to make more effort to stop these, but they also considered it unlikely that the Republican authorities would be able to bring an immediate end to all such incidents even if they wanted to, certainly not when no political agreement had yet been reached about resolving the conflict.

Whilst the Netherlands repeatedly cited Indonesian violence as evidence that it was impossible to negotiate with the Republic, representa-

tives from the Republic generally took the line that they were willing to continue negotiating, despite the Dutch violence. At the GOC, the Republican approach fell on more fruitful ground than the Dutch one. The committee believed that the Dutch government should not use the Republican inability to prevent any Indonesian act of violence as a reason to block further political talks. On the other hand, Dutch military actions could also make it difficult for moderate Republicans to continue the negotiations. For this reason, the international negotiators always feared that a flare-up in violence would gravely endanger the negotiations, because thereby the unforgiving view that the opponent could not be trusted threatened to prevail on both sides.

That this fear could influence the way in which the GOC reported to the Security Council on excessive military actions is shown, among other things, by the case of Rawagede. It was in this village in West Java that, according to a report by a team of military observers (or 'Milobs') from the GOC, Dutch soldiers had acted in a 'deliberate and ruthless' manner, leading to large numbers of fatalities. The Australian delegation to the committee wanted to include this report in an official committee report to the Security Council, but the American representative, Graham, warned Washington that this would be inadvisable. A debate in the Security Council on this subject 'could lead only [to] new waves of recriminations and charges and countercharges of atrocities which might seriously jeopardize [the] truce'. Ultimately, a compromise with the Australians seems to have been reached. The Rawagede report was mentioned in the GOC's first progress report to the Security Council, but without any information about its content. Even the fact that the Milobs had undertaken the investigation at the Republic's request went unmentioned.

For the international mediators, violent incidents were not the most pressing issue of concern. Moreover, there were not enough Milobs to undertake a thorough investigation of all reported incidents, in addition to their primary task of monitoring the demarcation line between Dutch and Republican troops. To the extent that they were carried out, such investigations were approached by the Americans in a pragmatic fashion: they were viewed positively if they could prevent serious disruption to the atmosphere between the warring parties, and they were considered problematic if the opposite threatened to occur. The GOC did not want the extreme violence, the incidents, and the truce violations on both sides to stand in the way of what it saw as the main objective: for the Netherlands and the

Republic of Indonesia to conclude a political agreement as soon as possible, something that – the mediators hoped – would in itself bring an end to the violence. As a result, the extreme violence was deliberately kept out of the limelight.

The GOC, particularly its American members, always drew an inverse link between violence and diplomacy. In this view, it was not the violence itself that was frustrating the negotiations, but in fact the failure to achieve a negotiated settlement that was inflaming the situation, making it all the more difficult to achieve a final agreement. 'The rising number of infringements of the truce agreement [...] is testimony to the relationship between the maintenance of the truce and successful progress in political negotiations', the committee reported to the Security Council in November 1948.[28] The same mechanism was described in an explanation from the State Department to a Democratic senator in August 1949:

> Understandably, the failure to implement the political principles [of the Renville Agreement] led to a rise in tension and a series of incidents which compounded to make the atmosphere for negotiation most difficult. The question of responsibility for these events aside, it is sufficient that the failure to obtain a political settlement and consequently the failure to grant sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia, contributed to these mounting tensions and the inevitable breakdown of the truce agreement.[29]

In order to avoid any further escalation in the tensions, the American negotiators in Indonesia wanted to avoid too much focus on the excessive violence, regardless of whether it was perpetrated by the Dutch or the Indonesians. In their view, these regrettable aspects of the conflict threatened to further complicate what was already a difficult peace process.

That is not to say that they were completely indifferent to the violence or that ethical principles played no role in their assessments. Strictly speaking, however, it was not the task of the GOC or the UNCI to examine the military actions of both parties in the light of the international laws of war. The most important objectives of the committee were to maintain the shaky cease-fire as far as possible and mediate in what were extremely difficult negotiations. From this perspective, the silence on the truce violations and excessive violence can be seen as a deliberate strategy to achieve these objectives. Viewed as such, it is hardly surprising that, besides the long summaries of infringe-

ments that were submitted by the warring parties, the UN archive compiled by the international mediators contains relatively little data on extreme military violence.[30]

Yet another factor may have played a role in the lack of attention paid to cases of extreme violence. The great powers undoubtedly realized that their own records in the field of international politics were far from spotless, making them vulnerable to reproach. During their time on Java and Sumatra in 1945-1946, for example, the British had also engaged in excessive violence. 'Throughout the [British] occupation, burning of villages, even towns, and executions of prisoners became a matter of routine', concluded the British historian Richard McMillan.[31] British reprisals against the Indonesian population had been raised briefly at the end of a summit between British and Dutch government representatives on 27 December 1945. On that occasion, the Dutch Minister for Overseas Territories had asked for a guarantee that this would not happen again, to which the British had replied that instruc-

In front of the window, an American military observer from the Committee of Good Offices. Klero (Central Java), February 1948. Source: Van Krieken, National Archives of the Netherlands/Dienst voor Legercontacten.



tions had been issued that 'that no further villages were to be burned without express authorization from London'.[32] A more common Dutch complaint, however, was that the British had failed to crack down sufficiently on the Republic. During a Security Council debate about the British military actions in Indonesia, held in February 1946 at the initiative of Ukraine, the Dutch Foreign Minister E.N. van Kleffens declared that British soldiers had failed to carry out their duties sufficiently, not because they had used excessive violence, but because they had not acted forcefully enough: 'We thought sometimes that, carrying out that task, the British troops erred, but the one way in which we thought they erred was on the side not of excess but of extreme forbearance.'[33]

On 23 December 1948, Dean Rusk, head of the State Department's Office of United Nations Affairs, wrote to the American representative at the UN that it was impractical to base American foreign policy primarily on ideology or moral criteria. Although the Netherlands was again in the wrong for unleashing a major military offensive, he did not believe that Washington should respond to that step with sanctions. Rusk wanted to prevent the role of 'world policeman either in [the] military or political sense', and thereby responsibility for righting all of the world's wrongs, from falling on America's shoulders. Moreover, every country had its faults, including the United States. 'For us to insist', Rusk emphasized to the representative, 'upon full compliance with highest standard of conduct as price of our association with other gov[ernmen]ts and peoples would lead us quickly into position of not too splendid isolation. [...] In [the] same way others might have in fact broken with us.'[34]

Crossing the line

The question of whether extreme violence was a structural aspect of Dutch warfare in Indonesia is of evident importance. However, focusing on that violence – on whether it was incidental or structural in nature – should not obscure the wider political question of the legitimacy of the use of military force in any form. The failure to address this broader context in the reconstruction might give the impression that, had the extreme violence not occurred, the Dutch military deployment in the archipelago would not have been that problematic after all. Yet the political decision to build up an enormous (by Dutch standards) military force overseas, which in the long term would form a barely sustainable burden for the Treasury, had consequences for the further course of a conflict that turned on the question of the kind

of state that the future entity of Indonesia would eventually become. After all, the extreme violence on the Dutch side would not have occurred – or at least, it would have occurred on a much smaller scale – in the absence of the decision to deploy military means to resolve a political conflict.[35]

With a few exceptions, the oft-repeated Dutch arguments defending the decision to use military force, namely that nothing could be achieved through further negotiations with the Republic and that it was impossible to quell the violence on the Indonesian side in any other way, met with little sympathy at the international level. In the Dutch view, demarcation-line violations by the Indonesians were irrefutable evidence of the Republic's unreliability, whilst London and Washington were convinced that the violence could only be ended through a negotiated agreement with the Republic. From that last perspective, the Republic was not the problem, as the Dutch government claimed, but the key to a solution.

The British and Americans, along with many other members of the Security Council, thus believed that there was no legitimate reason to break off the negotiations. In their view, the Netherlands should not focus on violently combating real and alleged violations of previous agreements. In the view of the international mediators, that would only be a form of symptom control. Instead, the Dutch government should focus on finding a constructive solution to the most important problem, namely the failure to conclude a political agreement. In this context, could the decision to engage in armed conflict, even if it would have been conducted entirely within the framework of the laws of war, not in itself be qualified as extreme and highly disputable? This position seems to have been shared, to a greater or lesser extent, by the majority of the international community from mid-1947. It follows that the 'police actions', regardless of how they were carried out and regardless of their outcome, were from the outset seen in broad diplomatic circles as a reprehensible use of military force.

We could broaden this vision even further. In theory, the boundaries between 'acceptable' and 'extreme' military violence can be drawn in different ways, but to what extent is the use of violence ever acceptable in humanitarian terms? 'War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it', wrote General Sherman during the American Civil War.[36] Is it not the case that war by definition creates circumstances in which the legal and moral borders that apply in times of peace are quickly exceeded? Will it be possible for the international laws of war to regulate warfare in such a way that this risk can be reduced to an acceptable level?[37]

'[E]conomic recovery, the restoration of law and order and the cessation of human suffering can only be achieved if there is an early overall political settlement', the UNCI wrote to the Security Council in April 1949. Studying international perspectives on the Indonesian War of Independence fuels the idea that in situations of conflict, whilst it is important to keep a sharp eye on the line between 'excessive' and 'regular' forms of war violence, it is even more important to monitor strictly the line between negotiations – however difficult they may prove to be – and the use of military violence.



8.

Beyond colonial guilt ranking

Dutch, British and French extreme violence in comparative perspective, 1945-1962

Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Bart Luttikhuis

Historical comparisons can enhance our understanding of colonial wars. They also enable us to make better sense of the forms of extreme violence that the Dutch, British, French and other troops used during the post-war wave of decolonization. Thorough comparative research into excessive violence in wars – such as those in Vietnam, Algeria, Malaysia and Kenya – has seldom been conducted, however, and thus far the case of Indonesia has rarely been involved in such research. For this reason, a team of international and Dutch researchers was assembled at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS) in the spring of 2019 with the aim of filling this gap. The researchers worked on targeted comparisons dealing with themes

Suspects of the so-called Mau Mau Uprising against the British colonial regime in Kenya were held in this camp at Thompson Falls in 1953. In the background, the camp gallows can be seen where death sentences were carried out. Source: Corbis/Hulton-Deutsch Collection (via Getty Images).

such as the political handling of scandals surrounding extreme violence, the use of heavy weapons, sexual violence and the microdynamics of violence, and as project leaders we looked at the broader comparative context. In this chapter we discuss the main findings of that research.[1]

Why we compare: similarities and causes

The lack of in-depth comparative research on extreme violence in the colonies does not mean that parallels were never drawn or contrasts never identified in the past. Contemporaries already did this, even though they used such comparisons more for political than analytical purposes. This comparative tradition goes back much further than the wave of decolonization. Back in 1901, for example, the liberal parliamentarian Egbert Kielstra exploded in anger when critical Dutch newspapers drew parallels between Dutch atrocities during the Aceh War (1873-1913) and the ruthless British counter-guerrilla war against the rebellious Boers in South Africa. According to Kielstra, a former Aceh officer, the comparison was flawed on all fronts. Under General Johannes van Heutsz, whom Kielstra praised, the Dutch East Indies army had behaved 'infinitely more humanely towards the Acehnese' around 1900 than the British imperialists had towards the Boers, despite the fact that Aceh was 'a land of pirates' while the British had misbehaved towards 'peaceful farmers' — Dutch brethren — and even did not spare the women and children. Kielstra, who in addition to being a veteran and a politician was also a chronicler of the Aceh War, saw more similarities between Van Heutsz and his French contemporary Joseph Gallieni, a famous colonial general who was known for having devised a supposedly enlightened, military-economic-administrative 'oil-spot method' that was a guiding stratagem during the conquest of Indochina.[2]

Kielstra's argument is a unusual example of how comparisons have been used – and abused – in the past. His comparison served the political purpose of justifying a war and rationalizing the methods used in that war. The gigantic number of victims, the destruction and the social disruption in both Aceh and the French colonies were simply overlooked by Kielstra. Moreover, he compared a highly idealized version of both the 'French method' and the Dutch 'Aceh strategy' with the very critical (Dutch) reporting on the ruthless British counter-guerrilla war against the Boers.[3]

Half a century later in 1946, Army Commander General Simon Spoor

also considered the so-called surgical 'Dutch method' of his troops superior and preferable to what he considered the more arbitrary and heavy-handed collective punishment actions by the British during the Allied occupation of Java and Sumatra in the months after the Japanese capitulation. He pointed to the large-scale bombings they carried out in retaliation for the massacres of British Indian soldiers by Indonesians. The Dutch attorney general Henk Felderhof also took a shot at the British. To justify the 'Westerling method' – which was already highly controversial at the time, but according to Felderhof a more targeted method – he criticized the air raids that the Royal Air Force carried out in 1948 on communist rebels in the British colony of Malaysia.[4] By contrast, as early as January 1947, Lieutenant Governor-General Hubertus van Mook internally compared the brutal methods of the Dutch commandos of the Depot Special Troops and those of the detested Japanese occupier, but he did not directly intervene (the political end apparently justified the means).[5] In other words, the three highest colonial officials in Jakarta each compared extreme violence with a certain purpose in mind: in Spoor's case to demonstrate the superior tactics of the KNIL, in Felderhof's case to legitimize mass executions, and for Van Mook to express his moral disgust at the actions of his own troops, even though he continued to turn a blind eye to them.

Historians have also compared wars of decolonization but have tended not to treat extreme violence as a central theme, only addressing it in the margins of a broader examination of decolonization processes or counterinsurgency strategies. In such studies, Anglo-Saxon researchers have also emphasized national differences, often regarding the British 'hearts and minds' approach and minimum force philosophy of the 1950s and 1960s as best practice. This supposedly subtle approach was contrasted with the extremely violent actions of the French in Algeria (1954-1962) and sometimes also the Portuguese in Mozambique (1964-1974) as well as the Americans in Vietnam (1965-1973).[6] The British historian David Anderson later rejected such a comparison by describing it aptly as nothing more than an attempt to establish 'a league table of barbarity'.[7]

The 'debate on excesses' in the Netherlands remained a national affair in which little interest was shown in comparisons. Dutch researchers who did compare atrocities in Indonesia usually did so tangentially and also to determine whether 'we' were better or – more often than not – at least not as bad as the others. In 1988, the historian Loe de Jong was highly critical of the Dutch excessive violence in Indonesia, but he immediately put his

explosive conclusions into perspective by emphatically concurring with the conclusions of Jacques van Doorn and Wim Hendrix. In the reprint of their ground-breaking sociological study *Ontsporing van geweld* [Derailment of Violence], the two veterans of the Indonesian war preceded De Jong by three years in pointing the finger at the more violent colonial 'other' and the overwhelming deployment of firepower by the American armed forces in Vietnam. A comparative chapter was added to the new edition, which the authors themselves characterized as 'very sketchy', but their pioneering work is still of great value.[8] Recent Dutch comparisons of excessive force during the Indonesian War of Independence and other counterinsurgencies also lean towards such 'guilt ranking', with Dutch military operations usually ending up by implication somewhere halfway down the 'league table'.[9]

Traditionally, both contemporaries and historians placed great emphasis on the *differences* between decolonization wars in terms of combat strategy, intensity of violence and extreme violence. We are, of course, not blind to these often-significant differences, but it is precisely by focusing our comparison on extreme violence that we can also reveal similarities and thereby question the exceptionality of extreme decolonization violence. The question then arises whether there is a causal correlation between the intensity of warfare and the frequency of transgressions. This approach makes it possible for us to call into question the cliché 'when you chop wood, chips fly'.[10] Did the lion's share of the misdeeds actually take place in the heat of the battle — that is, during combat operations? Or did they happen on the margins of the actual fighting or even far away from the battlefield?

In order to be able to answer such questions, it is important first to consider definitions and forms of extreme violence. We then move on to compare the different contexts as well as the scale and the intensity of the warfare, after which we address the war violence in relation to violent transgressions, with our quantitative exploration of such transgressions primarily serving to illustrate the complexity – and perhaps even the impossibility – of classifying culpability.

The purpose of this comparative method, in which we emphasize similarities, is to find broad-based explanations. Why did the three main colonial powers – democracies that had recently suffered and had fought against fascism and terror in Europe and Asia – apparently consider it inevitable, logical and to some extent even justifiable to use methods that either clearly crossed the line or lay in the grey area between legitimate war

violence and war crimes?[11] By systematically organizing the many causes that have already been put forward, we strive to build a more causal hierarchy: which factors are structural and which are in fact incidental? And if we do need to put more emphasis on similarities than has been the case so far, is there perhaps a common factor that transcends national cases and that can help us to understand *why* extreme violence was so rampant in these wars?

Definitions and forms of extreme violence

The following comparison focuses mainly on extreme violence: moments in which violence crosses certain legal, normative or political boundaries. It is extraordinarily complicated to delineate in detail exactly what acts or situations should be referred to as 'excessive' or 'extreme violence', 'violent infringements', 'mass violence' or 'war crimes'. In many cases it is analytically problematic to distinguish violent transgressions – a term we use to emphasize their procedural character – from violence considered legitimate in the applicable laws of war. This is especially so in a colonial context in which the legal system itself was a weapon in the hands of the colonial power.[12] Moreover, the normative and legal frameworks as laid down in the Nuremberg principles, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from December 1948, and the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions from 1949 were changing fast,[13] and thus the Netherlands and other colonial powers did not consider them formally applicable to their 'internal' conflicts. Nevertheless, even the Netherlands declared as early as the late 1940s the principles of international humanitarian law to be de facto applicable.[14]

More than the legal frameworks, our approach emphasizes that in most of the cases, all the actors concerned, from commander-in-chief to conscript, were well aware when they or their colleagues crossed a line, for example in cases of torture, executions of prisoners, rape, looting or the burning down of entire villages. This is supported by the diaries of Dutch soldiers that explicitly draw parallels with the practices of the German occupier – in line with Van Mook's comparison with the Japanese. The comparison with the infamous punitive raid by the Nazis on the Dutch town of Putten in September 1944 is particularly striking. Nevertheless, many of these diarists often interpreted or legitimized such acts as 'a necessary evil' in the context of a legitimate war, just like the official sources did.

This implicitly underscores that they were aware that they had crossed an ethical or legal line.[15]

Regardless of the differences in scale and intent, it is striking that Dutch soldiers regularly drew the painful parallel with the Nazis – also known as 'the forbidden metaphor'. Yet this normative frame of reference is not unique. French conscripts in Algeria also compared their actions with those of the Germans, regularly bringing up the French equivalent of the Putten raid that also occurred in 1944: 'How many Oradours in Algeria?' or 'Oradour without a church, French soldiers instead of the SS. Everyone driven out, houses burned to the ground.'[16] And regarding the British in Kenya, in 1957, Kenyan attorney general Eric Griffith-Jones regarded the systematic mistreatment of prisoners in detention camps as 'distressingly reminiscent of conditions in Nazi Germany or Communist Russia'.[17]

Violence becomes extreme, above all else, when it deliberately targets non-combatants: civilians who are not involved in combat operations but also captured fighters or other unarmed suspects. Especially in irregular warfare, the first group is more difficult to identify than the second – are they civilians, or are they guerrilla fighters not in uniform? A complicating factor is the indispensable support for the guerrillas provided by sections of the civilian population, especially in terms of shelter, food and intelligence. In combat operations, it was these groups that were targeted. In the case of atrocities committed in captivity, such as torture or the execution of detainees, it is generally much clearer that a line has been crossed. This applies all the more to what Van Doorn and Hendrix called 'dysfunctional violence' – extreme violence that serves no direct military purpose, such as rape, arbitrary sadistic acts and looting.

The line is more difficult to draw in the case of two other categories of violence that Van Doorn and Hendrix label as 'functional violence': the use of heavy weapons, and deportation and mass internment. The use of heavy weapons as a category is difficult to define, partly because around the time of the Second World War, firepower in the hands of infantrymen – such as light mortars and heavier automatic weapons – had increased enormously. But if we limit ourselves to air weapons and artillery – the most important heavy combat support weapons for ground troops – then it is clear that the effect and proportionality of the firepower deployed were difficult to control but also rarely monitored, especially where civilian casualties were con-

cerned.[18] This is why, in the Dutch debate, historians have suggested that the use of heavy weapons, especially artillery and combat aircraft, may have been responsible for the majority of civilian casualties, especially when the Dutch armed forces increasingly turned to drastic means during the intense counter-guerrilla warfare of 1947 and 1949.[19]

However, this assessment – which can be misunderstood as supporting the claim by Spoor, Felderhof and later also Westerling himself condoning the more selective and therefore more 'humane' character of actions by regular infantry and special forces – is debatable. First of all, the heavy weapons that the Dutch had in Indonesia were relatively limited, although not insignificant. The Dutch air power and artillery capacity were of the same order of magnitude as those of the British in the much smaller conflict in Malaysia. The French in Vietnam and especially in Algeria had many more fighter planes, bombers and guns.[20] Furthermore, the chapter on heavy weapons deployment in this book raises the question whether heavy weapons that fired indirectly were actually deadlier than infantry violence and whether these weapons that generally operated in an integrated manner could in fact be regarded as autonomous.[21]

Forced migration and mass internment were used on a large scale in Kenya, Malaysia, Algeria and the Portuguese colonies. These measures had often been used in the struggle against guerrillas in the past, such as during the aforementioned Boer War where the term 'concentration camps' gained international infamy. Hundreds of thousands of citizens suffered greatly as a result of these brutal, destabilizing but often strategically successful measures. The aim was to drive a wedge between the fighters and the civilians, and to control the latter in order to deny the guerrillas food and other support. The French in Vietnam, like the Dutch in Indonesia, made little organized use of such population and resources control.[22] Nonetheless, the structural way in which these two colonizers frequently used the torching of entire villages as collective punishment or to intimidate those suspected of supporting the guerrillas can be regarded as a cheap alternative. If so, its effectiveness was in fact dubious, for it was precisely the burning down of entire villages that seems to have driven the population into the hands of the guerrillas.[23]

In conclusion, it can be said that most forms of extreme violence in the decolonization conflicts we researched have in common that they took place outside actual battle or on its margins, and that the victims could not defend themselves – they were fighters trying to surrender, prisoners, people who

were not participants in the fight, and unarmed civilians trying to find a safe refuge. We are therefore not referring to direct combat situations where the main preoccupation is to kill or be killed, which are 'almost always distinct from the dark realm of atrocity', as the military historian John Lynn put it in his classic study *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture*.[24]

Different contexts, similar outcomes

As we saw, the justification that 'when you chop wood, chips fly' does not hold up in the case of extreme violence. This is underscored by comparative research into the relationship between acts of war and excessive violence within the various conflicts. For a better understanding of the wars, we must first broaden the scope of the comparison. The different political, social, economic, strategic and international contexts in Indonesia, Vietnam, Algeria, Malaysia and Kenya provide an important explanation for the variations in scale and intensity of the war violence as well as in the nature of the warfare.

When weighing the colonizer's political interests in the colony, we see that the political stakes for the French in Algeria were greater than in all the other wars. This was partly due to the superpower's loss of prestige during the Second World War and the war that France had lost in Vietnam in 1954. Just as important was the fact that *l'Algérie française,* which had more than one million European settlers out of a total population of about nine million, was considered an integral part of the French Republic. The vast majority of the Muslim population in Algeria only had second-class citizenship, just like colonial subjects elsewhere. In having this high percentage of European settlers, Algeria was indeed unique. In the case of Kenya, the substantial presence and political influence of the British colonists have often been cited as an explanation for their tenacity, limited willingness to compromise, and brutality. And yet they only represented 0.2 per cent of the population – substantial by British standards – which was nothing compared to the 13 per cent of the Algerian population that Europeans represented.[25] The seemingly sizeable group of around 300,000 Europeans in the Indonesian archipelago, a large majority of whom were Indo-European, made up less than half a per cent of the total population. But Indonesia did make a greater economic contribution to the metropole than any other European colony: 12 per cent of the Netherlands' pre-war gross national product. Moreover, the 'Chain of Emerald', as Indonesia was sometimes called, was of enormous importance to the geopolitical status

of the metropole – even more important than India as the 'Jewel in the Crown' for the vast British Empire. It is this combination of factors that explains the stubbornness of the Dutch government in both the domestic and international arenas, and consequently its willingness to finance an extremely costly overseas troop build-up.[26]

If we look at the scale and intensity of the military confrontations, it is clear that the British were the most successful in containing uprisings politically, socially and strategically in their relatively small colonies of Malaysia and Kenya. Especially in Malaysia, that success was related to the extent to which the colonial power was willing to accommodate the legitimate grievances of rebellious populations and its success in co-opting local elites and other groups. The resistance in both Malaysia and Kenya was consequently limited for the most part to a single ethnic group. This was one reason the anti-British uprising amongst the rural Chinese did not catch on among the Malay majority or among the more cooperative urban Chinese elite, but this was also due to the more clearly mapped-out path to actual independence. In that respect, the Dutch in Indonesia and the French in Vietnam were more reluctant, not to mention the French in Algeria and the Portuguese in their African colonies. In Algeria and in Portugal's African colonies, the conflicts escalated as a result of far-reaching colonial repression, and the home front simply refused to continue making sacrifices. Revelations of extreme violence, such as the French use of torture in Algeria, helped to undermine the social and hence political will to remain in the colony.

Another factor that influenced the level of violence was foreign interference. If we compare the early revolutionary period in Indonesia and Vietnam, it is remarkable how differently the two seemingly identical British occupations influenced the dynamics of violence. These two cases, which ushered in the global wave of decolonization, reveal other interesting similarities and contrasts.[27] After the sudden surrender of the Japanese on 15 August 1945, a power vacuum arose in both former colonies that neither the British ad interim occupying forces nor the returning colonizers (the Netherlands and France) nor the Indonesian and Vietnamese authorities could fill. In the chaotic power struggle that followed, all parties tried to gain control over the population by means of violence.

But there were also differences. For example, in 1945, during the first phase of the Indonesian Revolution which later came to be known as the *bersiap* period, the Dutch and the Indo-Europeans were much more exposed to extreme violence by revolutionary militant groups than the smaller

French community was in Vietnam. Vietnamese communist leaders, with their relatively high level of organisation, were able to exercise control over the revolution faster than their nationalist counterparts in Indonesia and did not shrink from using coercion and violence against Vietnamese political adversaries. Although the Republican leadership in Indonesia was also to blame for the extreme and possibly more random violence at this stage, Indonesian violence tended to be more bottom-up and driven by local dynamics.

The British occupying forces were unable to stop the violence in Vietnam or Indonesia, but they did change the nature of this violence. The British commander in Vietnam, Major General Douglas Gracey, was reticent, but primarily pro-French and thus facilitated the French in their campaign to recapture their colony in order to restore their colonial and military prestige. His counterpart on Java and Sumatra, Lieutenant-General Philip Christison, put a brake on Dutch attempts to 'restore authority' by actively mediating and keeping in check the already very weak Dutch armed forces and the local militias. The French, who had much more military power at their disposal in 1945-1946, were therefore largely autonomous in their use of force and deliberately used violent intimidation, including with heavy weapons. Dutch extreme violence in this earliest phase usually took place at the initiative of local commanders or groups and was perhaps tolerated but not decreed by the civil-military leadership, which was completely dependent on the British.

On Java and Sumatra, large-scale military action in this phase was limited to the Allied occupying forces, which in 1946 grew to 60,000 mainly British-Indian soldiers, more than double the force in Vietnam. Their approach was initially restrained but culminated in November 1945 in the Battle of Surabaya, in which many thousands of Indonesian fighters and civilians and circa 450 British Indians and Gurkhas were killed. The passive military role of the Dutch changed as their military capacity and degree of organization increased, and as they – just like the French – switched, following a number of actions on a smaller scale, to an overall strategy of reoccupation by means of large-scale offensive operations in 1947 and 1948. In view of the Dutch political and military approach, beginning with the massive 'purges' on South Sulawesi from December 1946, it seems unlikely that they would have pursued a more peaceful line than the French in Vietnam if in the early revolutionary phase the Dutch had had sufficient military resources and the political support of the Brit-

ish occupying forces at their disposal. The context and the process were different, but the violent outcome was the same.

With regard to interference by foreign powers, we can say that direct military support had an escalating effect and diplomatic interference had a primarily de-escalating effect. For example, the military internationalization of the war in Vietnam stood in sharp contrast to the absence of external military intervention in the dismantling of the British Empire. While rebels in Malaysia and Kenya were almost entirely deprived of foreign support, the Viet Minh kept receiving weapons and supplies from abroad from the moment the communists were victorious in China in 1949. This eventually enabled the communists to defeat the French in regular confrontations. The most prominent example is, of course, the Battle of Dien Bien Phu in 1954. This unparalleled culmination of the worldwide decolonization process took place despite the fact that the Americans had supported the French on a large scale from 1949 onwards, amidst mounting Cold War tensions.

By contrast, the Indonesian Republic – like the communists in Malaysia – was deprived of serious foreign military support. At the diplomatic level, however, the Dutch-Indonesian conflict became completely internationalized: first primarily through the interference of the British and then the United Nations (UN), with the Americans in the leading role. Because of their permanent seat and right of veto in the UN Security Council, the British and the French were confronted with much less external interference than the Dutch. In the Netherlands, the loss of the colony has been attributed to this outside interference and especially to American intervention in favour of the Republic in 1949. A comparison with Vietnam, however, suggests that it is much more likely that this interference saved the Dutch kingdom from an even longer guerrilla war, which would have been unwinnable.[28]

The comparative minefield

If we first compare the scale of the conflicts, then the intensity of the fighting, and finally the extent of the excessive violence, we see that the availability of reliable figures decreases with each step we take. Nonetheless, we feel obliged to at least explore this comparative minefield. In doing so, we underline the impossibility of 'classifying guilt', but we would also refute the facile assumption that excessive force is simply inherent to these kinds of 'dirty wars' or '*sales guerres*'.

There are fairly reliable figures that illustrate the scale of warfare, including the size of the deployed force and the military casualties on the colonial side. Yet if we are making comparisons, we also need to weigh and contextualize those numbers. For example, the army of 150,000 soldiers that the Netherlands deployed in early 1949 was impressive, certainly in relation to the 9 million inhabitants of the metropole. But compared to the 70 million Indonesians they had to subdue, this number was modest. The Indonesian archipelago had eight times the population of Algeria, two and a half times that of Vietnam, and twelve times that of Malaysia or Kenya. Having said that, the French did deploy many more troops: at 450,000, the numbers were the highest in Algeria, while some 220,000 soldiers were sent to Vietnam. The British deployed far fewer troops of their own – 40,000 in Malaysia and 12,000 in Kenya – but it was only in the latter conflict that the ratio of troops to the population was comparable to that of the Dutch in Indonesia. That the relationship of the population to the colonial authority was far from straightforward is not only apparent from the fact that these forces consisted to a large extent of Javanese, Moluccan, Malaysian, Gurkha, Algerian, Moroccan, Vietnamese or Laotian soldiers; they were often also assisted by tens of thousands – and sometimes hundreds of thousands – of locally recruited paramilitary auxiliary troops and police units.

The relatively reliable numbers of casualties among soldiers in the service of the Dutch, the French and the British tell us much about the intensity of the combat. For example, the fiercest military confrontations took place in Vietnam and Algeria, which resulted in 90,000 and 25,000 military casualties respectively under French command in the eight years that each of these conflicts lasted. In Indonesia, the Dutch armed forces lost circa 5,000 soldiers in more than four years of fighting, while the British armed forces suffered more than 1,000 casualties in the first year.[29] The fact that in Malaysia 'only' 1,450 soldiers under British command died in twelve years of fighting and 167 during the eight-year conflict in Kenya reveals the relatively low intensity of the military confrontations there. In Kenya, as in all the other conflicts, a significant portion of the victims were from the paramilitary auxiliary troops fighting for the colonial side.[30]

The large differences in combat intensity are also apparent when we compare casualties during specific combat operations. Such casualties were often limited, with the exception of the French in Vietnam, where the Viet Minh had units up to division size with artillery support that decimated entire

units up to brigade size in a number of large regular confrontations from around 1950. The result was hundreds and even thousands of fatalities.[31] The other casualty figures pale in comparison. The British suffered their biggest loss in one fell swoop in Malaysia in 1950 during the infamous Penang ambush, in which 'only' seven police officers were killed. Military losses in other individual battles in Malaysia and Kenya were even lower. The military losses in Indonesia as a result of combat operations remained quite limited, except during the Battle of Surabaya. When twelve soldiers died during a KNIL battalion's advance on Medan in late 1946, this was highly exceptional. Gun battles with circa five casualties did occur but remained striking. For example, in August 1947, five conscripts were killed in Baruhtunggul on West Java in a battle with a very strong unit of the Siliwangi division.[32] The deadliest ambush in Algeria claimed the lives of about 60 Algerian soldiers in French service in 1957.[33] The most iconic ambush there, however, was that of a patrol of 21 French reservists in 1956 near Palestro, in which only one man survived.[34]

How do the casualty figures on the colonial side relate to the fatalities among the Indonesians, Algerians, Vietnamese, Malaysians and Kenyans? Unfortunately, for these crucial data we were forced to make do with extremely rough estimates in which the difference between combatants and non-combatants is difficult to determine. The latter is not only because of the vague distinction between civilians and guerrillas who often operated without uniforms, but also because colonial troops – like their opponents – simply did not always bother to operate as selectively or as 'surgically' as Spoor and other leaders pretended to. And when they purportedly tried to do so during the 'purge' of an Algerian *douar* or a Javanese *kampong*, then the difference between fighter and civilian is almost impossible to trace from the combat reports. Moreover, there were vengeful collective punishments that occurred outside of the direct battles, such as the Dutch and French responses to the aforementioned ambushes near Baruhtunggul and Palestro. On Java, two Dutch soldiers took four random Indonesian prisoners from their cells that same evening and, as a cautionary example, executed them on the edge of a nearby *kampong*. 'This was not revenge but justice,' the corporal in question noted in his diary that evening – the only source we have found for this war crime. In the collective punishment measure that followed 'Palestro', French paratroopers executed 44 Algerians without a trial. After the destruction of their village, most of the residents disappeared into one of the camps that ultimately housed more than two million Algerians.[35]









During a Dutch 'cleansing operation' in Kalibagor in Central Java, a young infantryman of the 1st battalion 3rd infantry regiment (1-3 RI) photographed between 10 and 12 September 1947 the execution of four Indonesians captured by his platoon. On the back of the four photos, he wrote consecutively: 'rampokkers' (a Dutch soldier poses between the tied-up prisoners), 'The fate of rampokkers', 'They chose Merdeka over cooperation' and on the last photo 'Setting a deterrent example for the population.'
Of particular note is that the soldier, who was reprimanded for recording the action, explicitly states that the aim of the massacre was to intimidate the evidently uncooperative people. It is further noteworthy that he criminalizes the victims by speaking of rampokkers (looters) and at the same time politicizes their motives by mentioning their choice for merdeka (freedom). Source: NIMH.

In Vietnam, 300,000 Vietnamese died between 1945 and 1954, according to the most reliable estimates.[36] For Malaysia, the official number of 'insurgents' killed has been determined as 6,711. For Kenya, this number is 11,503, but the more reliable reconstructions of the total number of victims of state violence in this conflict run to at least 20,000. In Algeria, at least 200,000 Algerians died as a result of French violence, although the Algerian state still speaks of 'a million martyrs'. This politicization of such figures – such as the myth of 40,000 deaths resulting from the actions led by Westerling in South Sulawesi – has been described as 'the battle for the death toll'. The enormous discrepancies in casualty numbers are also related to whether or not one includes violence in which the colonizer was not *directly* involved – i.e., whether one includes the victims of the civil wars that were often intertwined with the decolonization processes.[37]

Dutch scholars have put the Indonesian death toll as a result of Dutch violence at around 100,000, with the caveat that this is probably the lower limit. If this estimate is correct, then the ratio of deaths on the colonial side to those on the side of the rebellion is even greater than in all the other conflicts, namely 1:20.[38] A possible explanation for this is the relatively low combat strength of the sizeable Indonesian armed forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) in purely military terms, certainly in relation to the military branches of the Front de libération nationale (FLN) in Algeria and especially the Viet Minh in Vietnam. Moreover, the many poorly armed autonomous Indonesian militias that suffered enormous losses. This discrepancy may also say something about the relatively high number of victims among Indonesian non-combatants, but reliable figures that could support this suggestion are not available.

What do we know about the victims of extreme violence? Most of them were probably undocumented. A rare internal French report from 1955 revealed that more than 9,000 Vietnamese prisoners had been executed, many of them in the years 1952-53. Most of the bodies were never found.[39] Regarding the nine-month Battle of Algiers in which the French successfully suppressed an urban guerrilla campaign, it was found that the colonial authorities had made circa 3,000 prisoners 'disappear'. Most likely they were the victims of torture and murder.[40] One of the few relatively hard figures with regard to executions by soldiers serving in the Dutch military concerns the approximately 3,500 victims of extrajudicial executions during the campaign on South Sulawesi between December 1946 and February 1947. In the biggest known British execution scandal in Malaysia, 'the Massacre of the Batang Kali' of December 1948, British soldiers murdered 24 unarmed Chinese *kampong* residents. The official British position has always been that all these men tried to flee after being arrested, but there is much evidence to contradict this. Despite multiple investigations since the 1950s into what has been called 'Britain's My Lai', none of the perpetrators or those responsible have ever been prosecuted.[41] In this regard, the British handling of misdeeds in Malaysia – and also in Kenya – did not differ from the Dutch response to 'the South Sulawesi affair' or the handling of 'the Rawagede massacre'. In the latter case, after consultations took place between Spoor and Felderhof, the major who was responsible was not prosecuted 'for reasons of expediency'.[42]

The fact that we know so little about the scale of the 'summary' – i.e., unlawful – executions in the various conflicts is partly due to the fact that these often took place on a smaller scale during regular patrols or larger 'purge actions'.[43] Unless revelations were made by chance that caused a national or international outcry, these incidents left no traces in the testimonies and archives other than the obligatory statements along the lines of 'prisoners shot on the run' or 'killed in action'. One of the few convictions for executions in Vietnam – for the murder of twenty prisoners in Dalat in May 1951 by a French police commander – was the result of public outrage. The outcry in Vietnam was fuelled by the Vietnamese Queen Nam Phuong, who came from that region, while in France the communist party used the scandal for its own political purposes. The reason we know quite a great deal about the large-scale massacre by the predominantly conscripted Dutch army soldiers at Rawagede is the uproar it caused, this time at the United Nations. But even in this case, the lack of consensus on the number of men executed – 20

or 150 according to Dutch sources and 431 according to some Indonesian counts – shows once again how difficult it is to arrive at well-documented numbers of casualties.

Comparisons of numbers of victims among non-combatants show that the availability of sources and figures is largely determined by the form this violence took, the place and the context in which a wrongdoing was committed, and often also by chance. The notorious underreporting of sexual violence in the Franco-Algerian and Dutch-Indonesian wars is illustrative in this regard.[44] An interesting paradox arises when we compare the number of cases known from the archives and then consider them in the context of the discourse on wartime rape. Rape in the Algerian war is a topic that was much discussed and highly politicized, partly because of the attention drawn to victims such as Djamila Boupacha by Simone de Beauvoir, the French writer, feminist and anti-war activist. As written in a text that caused quite a commotion in the early 1960s: 'A 23-year-old Algerian liaison officer of the FLN; kidnapped, tortured and raped with a bottle by French soldiers. An everyday occurrence." Algerian leaders also mobilized the image of Muslim women being abused by the colonial exploiter for political purposes.[45]

But in the Indonesian context, the theme of rape was virtually ignored. There were no 'causes célèbres' comparable to Boupacha, and no activist cultural elites. This does not mean we can conclude that there was little or no sexual violence in Indonesia. The paradox lies precisely in the fact that there is even more archive material about Indonesia – although still scarce – than for the Algerian case. Of the 72 now-known rape cases before the Dutch court martial, 53 ended in a conviction. Such archival traces do not mean that rape was more common in Indonesia. What we can conclude is that the extent to which formal investigations were undertaken and punishments meted out – and thus the extent of our knowledge through archiving – is linked to the environment and circumstances in which the abuses took place. In Algeria, apart from in prison, a relatively high level of sexual violence seems to have taken place in the wake of combat operations. Most of the rape cases that came to trial in Indonesia took place in a more 'domestic circle' due to the proximity of *baboes* (female servants) at military bases and posts – conditions that did not exist in Algeria due to the prevailing socio-cultural norms. It is conceivable that this was one of the reasons why quite a few more cases were brought to court in Indonesia.

Torture is also a category of violence on a scale that is difficult to reconstruct. For example, no reliable study was carried out for the war in Vietnam that can tell us anything about the nature and scale of torture. However, there is sufficient evidence, in the form of public protests and scandals, to ascertain a certain pattern, which incidentally matched the pre-war torture practices of the French colonial police. It is also striking, to say the least, that the intelligence service, *Service de documentation extérieure et de contre-espionnage* (SDECE), concluded in an internal evaluation in 1955 that torture had in no way improved the quality of the information obtained.[46] It is all

An unknown witness took this photograph in 1957 of the torture that took place in the isolated French military torture camp Haouch Goutier (Algeria). Source: Photographer unknown, Archives Nationales/La Commission de Sauvegarde des droits et libertés individuels and Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer (ANOM)/Archief Delavignette. (Fabrice Reciputi, Enquête sur deux photos de la torture en Algérie, by Fabrice Riceputi, 2020).



the more painful when one considers that this insight – although difficult to prove – made no difference whatsoever to the many thousands of Algerians who were subjected to torture in the years thereafter. Already at the time, *La Torture* had an iconic status in France with regard to the Algerian War. That image of the war was only reinforced when archival research at the turn of the century showed that torture had taken place systematically throughout most of the conflict – and not only during the infamous Battle of Algiers in 1957. Initially, it was primarily the combination of enormous pressure on military personnel to gather intelligence and the certainty that no punishment would ensue that paved the way for torture on a large scale. But according to French researchers, the torturing of a very significant portion of the detainees, both combatants and civilian suspects, also increasingly came to be used as a strategy to incite fear and to punish the opponent. The rationale behind this most certainly transcended the often-heard excuse of the 'ticking time bomb': violent interrogations under the pressure of an imminent threat of terrorist attacks.[47]

In terms of the Dutch-Indonesian conflict, new research has provided additional evidence of torture during interrogations. In their diaries, soldiers regularly mentioned torture conducted by the intelligence services who, often with the support of locally recruited assistants, systematically tortured and then often killed prisoners. Although the French intelligence services were ultimately far more organized and 'professionalized' than their Dutch counterparts, many of which were local initiatives, there has long been a consensus that the intelligence services in Indonesia were also guilty of systematic torture.[48] Among the British, torture and the general mistreatment – in the name of 'rehabilitation' – of people in detention camps in Kenya were endemic. Recent research confirms that during the British counterinsurgency operations in Cyprus (1955-1959), in Aden (in what is now Yemen, 1963-1967) and even in Northern Ireland in the early 1970s, troops systematically used torture or what was later euphemistically called 'enhanced interrogation methods'.[49]

To conclude this contextual sketch, we draw attention once again to the large variations in scale and combat intensity, with Vietnam after 1949 at the most violent end of the spectrum. However, the comparison shows that there is no clear link between combat intensity and the scale – which in any case can only be reconstructed very tentatively – on which the colonial side executed, tortured and mistreated its adversaries. Violence against civilians and prisoners was used by all parties during all these conflicts. Despite the

relatively limited uprisings faced by the British authorities in Malaysia and Kenya, their coercive measures and collective punishments were large-scale, disruptive and often cruel. Kenya stands out in particular because of the small scale of the fighting on the one hand and the large-scale extreme violence on the other, especially the brutal and degrading practices in detention camps. The Dutch-Indonesian case is also significant in this respect: despite the relatively low number of Dutch casualties, the structural nature of the violent transgressions in more than four years of conflict is evident. Thus, there were clearly more factors at work.

The causes and nature of extreme violence

Violence against civilians and prisoners rarely, if ever, has a single cause or motive. It is almost always the result of multiple factors that reinforce each other and that are also connected in multiple ways.[50] Comparative research can help us to unravel this causal web, helping us to weigh the relative importance of both situational and structural causes of extreme violence. The first category includes failure of leadership, poor training and discipline, troop shortages, mental exhaustion, individual character traits such as sadism, and specific incidents that provoke an act of revenge or a spiral of violence, as well as inadequate intelligence and frustration at the enemy's actions. Structural factors include a colonial tradition and culture of indiscriminate violence, colonial racism and the nature of irregular warfare in general, and possibly also the legacy and 'brutalizing effect' of the pervasive violence of the most recent world war on the generation that fought in Indonesia.[51] Finally, we identified another factor, namely impunity: the combined effect of a dearth of oversight by the government, the military, the justice system and the media, a lack of accountability by the political and military leaders responsible, and a lack of regulation on the use of violence. This impunity, or the very limited willingness to punish, is closely linked to all the other explanations, both situational and structural. We will discuss this in more detail later in this chapter.

The search for causes is complex, partly due to the deep entanglement of explanatory factors. Nonetheless, comparison hones our insight, as is illustrated by the following example. The brutalizing effect of the extremely long deployment of troops in Indonesia has often been presented, and rightly so, as a major cause of frustration and moral desensitization and therefore also of misconduct, the murder of prisoners, torture and carelessness in the use of

firepower in combat situations. The fact that the small country of the Netherlands could deploy 100,000 troops in 1947 and even 150,000 troops in 1949, while it mobilized 'only' 220,000 soldiers for the entire duration of a conflict lasting more than four years, was only possible by repeatedly extending the duration of the deployment of Dutch soldiers.[52] This happened at the instigation of General Spoor, who time and again managed to convince his political superiors of the feasibility of his lofty military ambitions and his ill-thought-out strategy, which was based on a notorious underestimation of the enemy.[53] This extension resulted in psychological pressure and physical exhaustion among the soldiers. Ultimately, the feeling of powerlessness – resulting from the far-reaching dispersion of these troops over an area that was simply too large – increasingly contributed to the use of 'exemplary' violence meted out as collective punishment, in addition to the use of heavy weapons to minimize their own risks. The constant shortage of troops contributed to the military's unwillingness to punish perpetrators within their own ranks and their superiors. Internment or dismissal from office would have meant even fewer experienced personnel, while it was precisely the experienced 'tough guys' who were valued. As an excuse not to punish perpetrators of extreme violence, commanders regularly pointed to the psychological toll taken by the nature of the struggle and of course the prolonged deployment – and so we come full circle.

The control question, however, is whether shorter rotations, higher troop numbers, shorter deployments and a better strategy would have led to less excessive violence. Such 'what if?' questions are often dismissed as an approach that cannot be taken seriously from a scientific point of view, but a comparison with the extremely heavy-handed action by 450,000 French soldiers in sparsely populated Algeria – in all respects a multiple of the Dutch presence in Indonesia – gives sufficient cause for doubt.[54] We could make a similar comparison with the actions of American soldiers in Vietnam, who were sent to the battlefield for one-year tours. In short, there are a confusingly large number of possible explanatory factors. Comparative research can nonetheless help us to weigh the relative importance of causes and thus to create a causal hierarchy.

Why did those who used, decreed or tolerated extreme violence often consider it inevitable, logical or at least defensible? To answer this question, let us look at the political level.[55] A comparison of political information flows and accountability processes in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom in relation to Indonesia, Kenya and Malaysia exposes

the basis of the system of impunity. Time and again in such comparative research, we come across processes of denial, the avoidance or the passing on of responsibility to lower officials or lower 'ranks', and the neutralizing of scandals ('scandal management'). This happened in a slightly different way in each country, but we can discern unmistakable similarities in the general practice and especially the outcome of such processes. The transgressive behaviour and the dilution of moral standards in Indonesia and Kenya were exacerbated by the fact that political and military leaders were unwilling to acknowledge this misconduct and therefore did not tackle it structurally.

The fact that more scandals eventually surfaced in the Netherlands than in the United Kingdom was related to the lack of a strict culture of secrecy in the Netherlands such as existed in British political, military and intelligence circles, which had been reinforced during the Second World War. In addition, the more diverse nature of the Dutch media landscape – due to the social and religious stratification of post-war Dutch society – played a role. Finally, interference by foreign powers also caused serious difficulties for the Dutch. For example, it was not until 1959 that a political row of any significance broke out in Kenya. The local colonial police had beaten eleven prisoners to death in the Hola internment camp to set an example. The authorities tried to cover up the facts, but the case became public when the official coroner drew up a scathing report. The British government insisted that the camps were successfully working on the reintegration of the Mau Mau prisoners. The scandal caused the commander of the Hola internment camp to resign. However, he was not prosecuted and the responsible minister, Alan Lennox-Boyd, remained in his post. Prime Minister Harold Macmillan refused to approve the resignation of his Minister of Colonies, in order to prevent 'the Africans' from concluding 'they had got the white man on the run'.[56]

As with the aforementioned massacres in Rawagede on Java and Batang Kali in Malaysia in 1948, there was almost always an excuse not to punish the soldiers involved, even when the incidents caused a political uproar. For example, General George Erskine, the British commander in Kenya, refused to prosecute British military personnel, arguing that it would undermine the morale and in turn the combat capability of the British forces. Contrary to what the oft-cited British 'minimum force philosophy' suggests, commanders were almost always able to use a high level of force without fear of being investigated afterwards, as long as they deemed it necessary

from a military point of view. British soldiers were made aware of this during their training, and the customary 'Act of Indemnity' gave them even more protection. Even the disclosure by both the International Red Cross and an internal committee of inquiry of systematic torture in the last small-scale British decolonization war in Aden in the mid-1970s resulted in only one indictment and not a single conviction. In Kenya, Erskine also let the Kenyan auxiliary forces – known as the Home Guard – off the hook, despite the torture and murders they committed on a large scale, arguing that they held an essential function and that their loyalty was necessary. In the eyes of the responsible military leaders, such unsavoury compromises were inevitable in such bitter wars.[57] Erskine was franker in this respect than General Spoor, who not only publicly condemned torture, executions and looting but also continued to disapprove of it internally in a highly indignant tone – only to send a legitimizing signal by not intervening forcefully or, as in the case of the executions in Rawagede, by not going after those responsible, for reasons of 'expediency'. This hypocrisy was underscored by the rigorous legal approach taken by morally indignant soldiers in their letters and by whistle-blowers or, for example, the three marines who refused to burn down a *kampong* in 1948 as a reprisal measure.[58]

To better understand the causes and motives underlying violent transgressions, it is useful to look at cases where the colonial authorities did actually turn to punishment. The paltry 141 known sentences for violence against Indonesians – out of a total of 220,000 deployed soldiers – were often preceded by a public uproar, usually triggered by a chance complaint from an outspoken individual within Dutch society or an observer (sometimes foreign) from outside of the military organization. But even in such cases, the likelihood of prosecution was small, especially when it concerned 'functional violence'. It is interesting to note that punishment in Indonesia mainly occurred in the case of so-called dysfunctional violence or in the case of individual behaviour that was seen to undermine discipline.[59] This implies that when extreme force served a practical military purpose (or at least was deemed to serve a military purpose) – including 'downing' prisoners who may or may not have attempted to 'flee' – there was almost always no punishment. It is no coincidence that, as far as we can determine, rape and plundering were punished relatively often, for they served no military purpose and were bad for the armed forces' reputation.

Impunity – the lack of control and punishment – is thus the linchpin in the web of causality. This is not to say that extreme violence was an unwant-

ed by-product of military operations or the result of aberrant behaviour by individuals who either deliberately or unintentionally crossed the line. The fact that excessive force went unpunished if it was tactically or strategically useful confirms the view that extreme violence in the conflicts we investigated was in many cases instrumental and made an indispensable contribution to warfare. This holds true not only for the systematic torture used in Algeria or the murderous campaign on South Sulawesi, but also for the use of 'exemplary force' and 'counter-terror' in Malaysia. In the latter case, the British only switched to a more selective use of force after their 'exemplary' violence – violence meant to serve as a deterrent by setting an example – had achieved its goal. It was only after their subsequent strategic success around 1951-1952 – made possible by mass deportations – that the British began to apply violence more selectively, combining this with socio-economic and political measures in favour of the Chinese minority. It was by ignoring this sequence of events in Malaysia, but also by overlooking the Kenya case for a long time, that an all too rosy (self-)image of the British 'hearts and minds' method was able to arise in the historiography.[60]

The fact that violence against non-combatants was used as a strategic weapon by *all* parties in each of the wars researched for this study is also evident from studies on conflict dynamics at the micro-level.[61] If we compare the Indonesian case with revolutionary and counter-revolutionary violence in rural communities in Malaysia, Vietnam, Algeria, and also Madagascar, where the French brutally crushed an uprising between 1947 and 1949, the similarities are once again noticeable, even if the level of violence and forms of violence varied enormously between different regions. The targeted use of force against non-combatants – often civilians who tried to remain uninvolved – was especially widespread in what can be called 'internal border areas'. These were the most disputed 'grey' areas where the power of the colonial state was fragmented – as in large parts of Java and Sumatra – or had never really been re-established, but where the opponent had not been able to establish full authority either. In order to understand who used extreme violence and why, we need to break free from the idea of fixed categories of those who supported the colonizer and the idea of a binary dichotomy between the colonizer and the colonized; we should not overlook the large numbers of locally recruited soldiers in the colonial armies and paramilitary auxiliary troops, for example. In all these conflicts, such categories were fluid and locally determined. Local residents often experienced the decolonization conflicts fought in their communities as civil wars. In such

complex conflicts, all armed parties used violence against the population as a means of enforcing loyalty and in particular of obtaining information, shelter and food – and to ensure that the opposing party did not receive such support.

Conclusion

When we compare extreme forms of violence in decolonization wars, it is principally the similarities that stand out, despite all the variations in context, scale and intensity. To be sure, the decolonization processes and the size and nature of the struggles differed significantly as a result of various political, social, economic, strategic and international forces. But the outcomes were much more in line with each other than has often been suggested. In a sense, each colonial power was trying to square the same circle: to win a war in a country in which it was not considered a legitimate ruler by a large part of the population – often the majority. All the fine words about 'restoring justice and peace', '*maintenir l'ordre*' and 'winning hearts and minds' could not hide the fact that the resistance could not be broken merely by the power of persuasion, the controlling of population centres, the provision of humanitarian aid and selective military violence against armed opponents. Both successful counterinsurgents and the colonial powers who were defeated in the armed struggle or who conceded at the negotiating table after a military stalemate used violence against non-combatants on a significant scale. All parties used extreme violence against captured fighters and civilians suspected of helping the other side, against civilians in collective punishments and coercive measures, or during offensive 'purge' operations.

The scale on which extreme violence was used in each of the decolonization wars is hard to reconstruct and therefore difficult to compare. Our attempt to map the comparative minefield, partly on the basis of the stream of revelations in the past two decades regarding the British and Dutch actions, shows that the sharp and particularly extenuating contrast with the French, who were portrayed as being much harsher, does not hold water. Those in Dutch and British captivity were also tortured and murdered on a scale that few had thought possible so soon after the Second World War. In addition, subjects of the British Empire in Asia and Africa were deported in the hundreds of thousands and sometimes imprisoned, while Indonesians were displaced on a massive scale and became impoverished as a result of the punitive and intimidating torching of villages.

Too many of the misdeeds in the conflicts we investigated took place away from the battlefield or in its periphery, to sustain the argument that extreme violence was primarily related to escalating combat operations. In other words: the excuse that 'when you chop wood, chips fly' does not stand up to scrutiny because the 'chips' often did not fly at the time when the army was 'chopping wood' in a truly military sense. It is also unlikely – and cannot in any case be proven – that most of the casualties among non-combatants were the result of the use of heavy weapons. The truth is considerably more complicated. This picture is confirmed by the skewed balance between the relatively low combat intensity and the nevertheless large scale violent transgressions, especially in the case of Kenya but also in the Dutch-Indonesian conflict.

This brings us to the question of whether the explanatory factors can be organized in a hierarchy and whether there are any overarching, unifying causes both within and between the wars we examined. The fact that violence escalated in similar ways, although not always in the same form and with the same intensity, demonstrates first of all that structural factors were at play here. We mentioned the continuation of colonial traditions of violence, the irregular nature of the conflicts, and the brutalizing legacy of the Second World War, without ranking these factors in any order within this first category. Situational and incidental causes such as poor leadership, troop shortages, reactions to atrocities committed by the enemy, and revenge for military losses are additional but certainly not sufficient explanations. In any case, the frequently heard suggestion that extreme violence was primarily a response to extreme violence by the Indonesian side seems untenable.

Our most important contribution to the debate on the causes and nature of extreme violence is the thesis that, in all the conflicts and across the entire spectrum of causes, the glue that binds the other causal factors together is the institutionalized impunity of the perpetrators and of those who gave the orders, an impunity that stemmed from a culture of condoning and looking the other way. The high degree of certainty that the ministers in Paris, London and The Hague and the generals at headquarters who were responsible would not be held accountable, that officers and troops would be spared punishment, and that those who acted forcefully would be valued rather than punished or even reprimanded – all this made the brutalization of 'ordinary' troops more likely. In effect, brute force was normalized. Extreme violence was tolerated and, moreover, systematically used – by all the parties

involved – for strategic purposes such as intimidation and punishment, as a necessary and inevitable evil in order to win the war. The scale on which this happened in the different conflicts varied and cannot be directly attributable to policy. The fact that impunity was institutionalized, however, was undoubtedly a direct *result* of policies that were initiated and carried out at the highest political and military levels.


"De Centrale"

9.

A guilty conscience

The painful processing of the Indonesian War of Independence in the Netherlands

Gert Oostindie and Meindert van der Kaaij

After the Indonesian War of Independence ended, how did Dutch society look back on the history that has been outlined in the preceding chapters? What place did memories of the Dutch military conduct and the widespread use of extreme violence take in the public domain, and how did politicians attempt to steer this process of reflection and 'processing'? These are the questions that lie at the heart of this chapter, which is based on the research conducted as part of the 'Aftermath' sub-project and resulting monograph, *Een kwaad geweten* [A guilty conscience].[1] The project focused on the question of why it took so long for space to emerge in Dutch society, and in the political sphere in particular, to reflect critically on Dutch military action in

After his revelations about the extreme violence in Indonesia, Joop Hueting was frequently invited to take part as a guest in panel discussions. Here he is speaking at the Pieterspoort political café in Amsterdam. On his left is Vrij Nederland *journalist Joop van Tijn.*

Source: Joost Evers, National Archives of the Netherlands/Anefo.

the Indonesian War of Independence, and the consequences this had for the public, especially the political, 'processing' of that past. In writing this chapter, we made grateful use of previous analyses, particularly Stef Scagliola's *Last van de oorlog* [The burden of the war].[2]

A preliminary observation: it is often suggested that for decades, there was hardly any debate or research in the Netherlands on the war in Indonesia. This is an exaggeration. There were critical discussions and written accounts of the Dutch action at an early stage, albeit mainly focused on its political aspects. Deeply critical accounts were published during the war itself, such as Jacques de Kadt's *De Indonesische tragedie* [The Indonesian tragedy, 1949], with the telling sub-title *Het treurspel der gemiste kansen* [The tragedy of missed opportunities]. Over the decades, the debate gradually became more self-critical, as shown by Ben Bot's famous statement in 2005, on behalf of the second Balkenende cabinet, that the Netherlands had been 'on the wrong side of history'. However, that statement did not refer so much to the violence used by the Dutch armed forces, but rather to the legitimacy of the Dutch intervention. During the war, only incidental attention was paid to the violence, especially its extreme forms. This did not change until Joop Hueting's revelations in 1969, although interest in the issue then peaked and waned for decades, without any substantial change in the positions taken. Only in the past decade a real turnaround seems to have occurred, something that is related to the wider social debate about the nation's colonial past. There is a need for more knowledge and understanding and more space for critical reflection on the past, especially with regard to the 'black pages' in the nation's history. The decision of the second Rutte cabinet to finance this wide-ranging research on the war reflected this broader reorientation.

Armed with this more nuanced picture, we can also formulate the main question addressed in this chapter more precisely: namely, why did this turnaround take so long? Every society struggles with painful episodes from its own history, of course, perhaps because they reveal internal dissension or because they are at odds with a rose-tinted self-image. In the Netherlands, the latter seems to have been a key factor in the relative silence on the war in Indonesia, and thus also in the maintenance of an uncritical image of the war. Growing doubts about the legitimacy of Dutch policy and increasing indications that the Dutch armed forces were guilty of extreme violence – structural or otherwise – were simply too difficult to reconcile with the cherished self-image of the Netherlands as a peace-loving, certainly

non-militaristic nation that had pursued an exemplary ethical policy in the colonies. The population of the Dutch East Indies had suffered not under a Dutch yoke, but a Japanese one.[3]

The Dutch often lacked the courage to take a critical look at the actions of their own administration and army, which from the outset were already perceived by contemporaries – certainly outside the Netherlands – as dubious or downright reprehensible, and which were increasingly described as such. Only with time and the passing of the generations did the space emerge to take distance and a more critical approach. A similar process can be discerned in the public commemoration of the Second World War, which emphasized national unity above all else; an image that proved useful in an era of reconstruction. That national story of oppression and resistance – in which, we should add, the chapter on the Indies hardly featured – put a strong emphasis on mental resilience, solidarity and the fight against the Nazis. It took two decades for the first cracks to form in this picture, and for space to emerge to talk about the collaboration and far-reaching accommodation by large parts of society, the shared responsibility of Dutch institutions for the persecution of the Jews, and how Dutch society had looked the other way and failed to protect Jewish fellow citizens. In this sense, the first commotion about the Dutch use of violence in Indonesia, in the late 1960s, formed part of a broader pattern of protest against national complacency, not dissimilar to today's post-colonial debate about slavery, colonialism, and above all, racism.[4]

This 'Zeitgeist' or collective memory is not an autonomous factor that is disconnected from society, however, and the process of changing it is far from abstract. Social silence and debate are human actions, and these will form the focus of our analysis in this chapter. Assuming that the government plays a key role in the process by which the past takes its place in the public domain, this chapter focuses primarily on political processes and actors; that is to say, on the political situation. The analysis starts from the assumption that in the first decades after the war, politicians aimed for broad silence on the events of the war, and even a cover-up; those who bore political responsibility were thus anxiously sheltered from the storm. From the late 1960s, more space emerged – in fits and starts – for critical social debate, and the political positions shifted somewhat. Although when determining political policy, successive governments took account of new insights into their predecessors' actions and revelations about what were unmistakably violent Dutch 'infringements', at the same time they were wary of offending key

'commemorative communities' in Dutch society: veterans of the Indonesian war and the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities. Time and again, this proved to be divisive.

Although the colonial past forms part of the national history of the Netherlands, there was – and is – hardly any such thing as a widely shared and living collective memory of colonialism in and of itself. This is also true of the Indonesian War of Independence. For many years, this episode was discussed only in limited circles and mainly in private – starting, of course, with the commemorative communities that were closest to the events. Consciously or unconsciously, the veterans of the Indonesian war and the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities each had their own motives for wanting to avoid public debate about the violence. At the same time, the government attempted to spare these groups, which had been more or less left out in the cold in the first few decades after the war, and allow for their feelings when determining political positions and on various ceremonial occasions. This approach was chosen to prevent turmoil and frustration, but also out of apprehension about claims from these groups.[5] This position benefitted the often-fragile relationship with this very diverse 'Indies generation', but hindered open reflection on the war in Indonesia. For many years, government policy remained focused on minimizing the political and social debate, which thereby deepened the persistence of the meaningful silence and the lack of serious attempts to shape a broader process of collective commemoration and reflection.

This chapter will not address the experiences and memories of the above-mentioned groups – the experiences of the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities, for example, both before the war and during the Japanese occupation, and in the decades after their arrival in the Netherlands. It is obvious that these were momentous experiences, whether we are considering the emigration that was also a direct result of the war, of course, or the long period in which these communities in the Netherlands were confronted with a lack of understanding and unwillingness to accept them and their history in the colony as part of what was seen as 'Dutch'. Something similar applies to the post-war experiences of the veterans of the Indonesian war. Many themes in the history of these commemorative communities have already been described at length, and they will not be discussed further here.[6] This chapter is primarily about the memory of the war years themselves and the discussions held about them in the public domain; and it is specifically in relation to this point that these commemorative communities will be

addressed. After all, the growing calls for recognition of the injustice they suffered and their neglect by the Dutch government and society has had a clear impact on that government's position and the social debate about the war and colonialism.

Answering the question of why the debate began so slowly and developed in fits and starts, against the background of the power play between politicians and commemorative communities, inevitably raises the question of dissenting voices. As we shall see, the great majority of these came not from the Republic of Indonesia – at least, not from the governmental circles with which Dutch politics was mostly concerned – but from the Netherlands itself. It was mainly social and cultural circles and institutions that gradually gave more impetus to reinterpreting this history.

The revelations made by the Indies veteran Hueting, who shone a public spotlight on the 'war crimes' theme in 1969, marked the end of a period in which the war and the question of extreme Dutch violence were seldom discussed in public space. Since then, there has been more and more critical debate, but there have been great fluctuations in this trend. Time and again, a critical 'rediscovery' of the war was followed by another shift in focus. As recently as 2017, sociologist Abram de Swaan spoke of 'postcolonial absences' – 'We don't want to know what we know.'[7] In other words, it seems that the now widely accepted critical historical insights into (Dutch) colonialism, into the legitimacy of this particular war and into the Dutch use of violence in this war – three interrelated but analytically distinguishable questions – failed to take root, or hardly took root, in the public sphere. The question is whether the situation today has really changed - and different people have very different views on this.

The veterans of the Indonesian war

More than the Indo-Dutch or Moluccan communities, the Dutch veterans[8] of the war in Indonesia – whom we shall describe as the 'veterans' for reasons of brevity – and their organizations left their mark on the culture of commemorating the period between 1945 and 1949. Around 130,000 soldiers recruited in the Netherlands served in Indonesia, the vast majority as conscripts. In addition, a much smaller number of KNIL military came to the Netherlands, both Dutchmen – mostly in higher ranks – and Moluccans. They returned from a war that had not been won in a military sense and that had ultimately been in vain. Many believed that this was due to the policies of the Dutch government, which had surrendered to interna-

tional pressure; a 'stab-in-the-back' legend that had emerged during the war. What is certain is that they returned to a country that wanted to forget this last colonial war as quickly as possible. Veterans' memoirs are full of bitter memories of wasted years and the ground they consequently lost in Dutch society, and about the complete lack of understanding of their experiences both from their families and from society as a whole. Care for the veterans was minimal; to a great extent, the demobilized soldiers had to figure it out for themselves. Many veterans shared their frustrations about this, regardless of their experiences and possible responsibility for extreme violence. As the decades progressed and more psychological problems surfaced in the form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), this tendency became stronger. Many of the memoirs by veterans are thus expressions of self-pity rather than self-reproach.[9]

While the veterans had to rebuild their lives in civil society, many of them stayed in touch with each other on an informal basis, and some of them presented themselves as spokespersons for the whole group. This took shape in organizations such as the Dutch Veterans Legion (Veteranen Legioen Nederland, VLN) as well as occasional publications in the national press. A 'macho culture' prevailed among the veterans, one that fitted seamlessly with the mindset of 'discipline and asceticism' that formed the backdrop for Dutch post-war reconstruction.[10] This was linked to the mutual pressure to keep silent about the extreme violence, as though it were a code of honour. It was in this context that General Simon Spoor was held in high regard by some veterans, and explicit support was also expressed for Captain Raymond Westerling, whose memoirs attracted a large readership.[11] In the 1950s, there were several incidents of intimidation of journalists or others who had criticized the military conduct, and it comes as little surprise that the same circles were also vehemently opposed to the relinquishment of Netherlands New Guinea.[12]

In the storm of protest that blew up after Hueting's revelations, the majority – although not all – of the veterans responded by dismissing his account in strong terms, and the whistle-blower and his family received threats.[13] High-profile veterans attempted to refute the claim that extreme violence had been a structural or reprehensible phenomenon. This would remain the dominant discourse for decades to come: 'Of course it was a dirty war, but mainly on the enemy's side; what's more, just imagine being in that situation as an inexperienced youth.' The position of the De Jong cabinet – that, despite a small number of 'excesses' that were presented as regrettable

exceptions, the armed forces as a whole had behaved correctly – was entirely consistent with this.

There was a distinct unwillingness to hold individual soldiers to account. It is typical, in this context, that the veterans Jacques van Doorn and Wim Hendrix, in their ground-breaking study *Ontsporing van geweld* [Derailment of Violence, 1970], while paying significant attention to the structural factors that promoted extreme violence, anonymized all specific cases of extreme violence and thus avoided accusations of having 'screwed their mates'. The image of a war that had been lost at the negotiating table was now supplemented, perhaps even supplanted, by an image in which Dutch soldiers with insufficient resources and, above all, inadequate leadership had unwittingly been forced into a 'trap of violence' in impossible circumstances. For their – limited – readership, this reinforced the image of the veterans as the victims of an unsolicited and impossible situation.[14]

The problems and frustrations within the veteran community were long ignored by the government. This only changed from 1985 onwards, largely as a result of active lobbying by the veteran community, especially the association of East Indies and New Guinea veterans (Vereniging Oud-Militairen Indië en Nieuw-Guineagangers, VOMI). In 1987 the largest ever reunion was held in Bemmel, with around 7,500 attendees. In 1989 the Minister of Defence, Wim van Eekelen, apologized for the neglect of the veterans, and the state pledged its support for the National Indies Monument, a private initiative in Roermond. In 1990, the government made a start on a systematic and serious veteran policy, partly with a view to post-war UN missions. The feeling across parliament was that it was high time. A penetrating debate about extreme violence would have been at odds with this belated recognition of the sacrifices that the veterans, many of them conscripts, had been forced to make. In the wave of memoirs published by veterans between 1990 and 2010, the Dutch violence was certainly not a dominant theme.[15]

It is impossible to ascertain whether the high-profile veterans and their organizations were representative of the entire group. What is clear is that there was little space for self-criticism or external critical reflection on their actions during the war. It is equally clear that this approach was effective for many years, in the sense that the debate about extreme violence went in the direction they desired. This was evident in 1987 following the leaking of a draft of Loe de Jong's analysis of Dutch conduct in Indonesia, particularly the extreme violence that had been used in the process. The publication provoked powerful responses, expressed in particular by former KNIL officers


RESPECT
voor onze
VETERANEN

War veterans demonstrate in February 1995 by the law court in Groningen, where writer Graa Boomsma had to appear, accused of having compared in an interview the practices of Indies veterans to those of the SS. Source: Bert Verhoeff, ANP

Carel Heshusius and Frans van der Veen. This caused De Jong not so much to revise his firm criticism altogether, but to moderate his tone. For example, he replaced the term 'war crimes' with the much more cautious 'excesses', and publicly stated that his first version had lacked nuance. All of this was celebrated as a victory by the angry veterans, who had the *De Telegraaf* newspaper as their mouthpiece. Historians or journalists who were nevertheless critical of the military violence had to reckon with intimidation from veterans.[16]

In the mid-1990s, veterans' representatives again put pressure on the government. The visit by Poncke Princen, a Dutch soldier who had defected to the Indonesian army during the war, provoked furious reactions; the protest was initially successful, but Princen was eventually granted a visa. More importantly, partly due to strong lobbying by veterans and the Indo-Dutch community, Queen Beatrix, contrary to previous intentions, did not attend the festivities to mark 50 years of independence of the Republic of Indonesia on 17 August 1995. It would take another ten years for veterans' organizations to drop their open opposition to the 'acceptance' of 17 August as the founding date of the Republic, whereby a step was taken towards a very different interpretation of the war, namely as a colonial-repressive conflict.[17] This acceptance was prepared by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ben Bot, who had himself been interned in the Japanese camps as a child. On 17 August 2005, Bot was present in Jakarta, where he stated that the Netherlands had been on 'the wrong side of history' in that war.[18]

After 1995, around 370 memorials were erected in the Netherlands to commemorate the Dutch military deployment in Indonesia, particularly the Dutch victims; the focus was thus on their suffering. The government's emphasis was on recognizing the veterans' contribution, including the founding of the Netherlands Veterans Institute (2000) and the establishment of national Veterans' Day (2005); the latter, incidentally, has increasingly come to focus on veterans of later conflicts and peacekeeping missions. In 1995, veterans' organizations successfully protested against what they saw as an overly humble framing of Queen Beatrix's state visit, and likewise in 2000 against a suggestion by Prime Minister Wim Kok that the time might have come to apologize to Indonesia.

In 2020 at the presidential palace in Bogor, King Willem-Alexander made the apology for excessive violence that had previously been opposed by the veterans. The VOMI no longer denies that there was extreme violence on the Dutch side, although these circles have been highly critical of research such as that carried out by Limpach; it has also repeatedly been argued that Indonesian violence should be investigated, too. The suggestion that veterans' organizations want to cover up extreme violence is emphatically rejected. As VOMI chair Leen Noordzij has said, 'The veterans do not support a cover-up. Facts are facts.'[19] Nevertheless, the research by KITLV, NIMH and NIOD has been followed closely in veterans' circles. The fiercest criticism, however, did not come from established veterans' organizations but from new, self-appointed agents, especially the former military officer, lawyer and publicist Bauke Geersing, author of a book about Westerling that can be read as a contrarian attempt at rehabilitation, formulated in colonial terms.[20]

The Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities

The number of migrants – some repatriates, some immigrants – from the former Dutch East Indies far exceeded the number of demobilized Dutch soldiers. This group, consisting of around 300,000 Dutch and mainly Indo-Dutch citizens plus some 12,500 Moluccans, was not only larger, but they had also lost much more; possessions, to start with, and ultimately their future in a country they had considered their own. Moreover, many had lost relatives and friends, either during the Japanese occupation or in the subsequent period that gradually became known as *bersiap*, or in the later years of the war. They subsequently arrived in a 'homeland' where Indies Dutch and Moluccans were certainly not welcome, and where there was hardly any interest in their stories.[21]

There was thus much cause for dissatisfaction and resentment, feelings that were constantly expressed in their circles; aptly described by Adriaan van Dis as the Indo-Dutch 'silence with an exclamation mark', a metaphor that found a counterpart in 'Dutch deafness'.[22] Although there was much discussion and writing about 'the war' in these communities, it was the period of Japanese occupation that dominated the collective memory.[23] There was hardly any public debate about or written accounts of what would come to be known as *bersiap* or the war of 1945-1949 in general, let alone extreme Dutch violence. In relation to this, the Indo-Dutch community leader Tjalie

Robinson (a pseudonym for Jan Boon) spoke of the 'typical Indonesian [sic] unwillingness to talk about sad things in the past'.[24] It would take almost three decades for the Indo-Dutch community to start to talk and be heard in the Dutch culture of remembrance. There was an angry response in Indo-Dutch circles to the critical picture that Loe de Jong painted of pre-war colonial society in *Het Koninkrijk*, and again at his description of Dutch military action in 1945-1949; but in the latter debate, the veterans were dominant again.[25]

In addition to striving for support and financial compensation, the efforts of the Indo-Dutch community focused on establishing their place in Dutch commemorative culture through recognition of their suffering during the Japanese occupation. One milestone was the unveiling of the Indies Monument in the Hague in 1988. In the following decades, Indo-Dutch organizations were increasingly successful – but in their own view, never sufficiently – in having their wishes and grievances regarding the war years heard by the Dutch government.[26] Whereas veterans' circles actively sought reconciliation with Indonesian veterans, this proved more difficult in Indo-Dutch cir-

In early 1989, after the death of the Japanese emperor Hirohito, victims of the Second World War in Asia lay flowers at the Indies Monument in The Hague. Source: Rob Bogaerts, National Archives of the Netherlands/Anefo.



cles. Sukarno remained a hated symbol; in 1995, Indo-Dutch organizations, working with the veterans, managed to prevent Queen Beatrix from visiting his grave during her state visit. Ten years later, however, they dropped their resistance to the visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs Ben Bot on 17 August, and to the new image of a war that the Dutch should never have waged. In Indo-Dutch circles, this reluctant acceptance was facilitated by the fact that Bot presented himself as an 'Indo-Dutch chap' and was closely allied with others with Indo-Dutch roots, such as the former chief of the defence staff, General Govert Huijser. Nevertheless, the memory of 1945-1949 remained focused on the community's own experiences and suffering, especially during *bersiap*.[27] The fact that frustration and anger at what is perceived as the Dutch lack of understanding about *bersiap* are still very much alive in Indo-Dutch circles was reflected in recent years in the fiercely critical stance taken by the Federation of Dutch Indos (Federatie Indische Nederlanders, FIN) regarding the research by KITLV, NIMH and NIOD, which they perceive as one-sided.

In Moluccan circles, too, memories understandably revolved primarily around what had been lost and what was widely perceived as the betrayal by the Dutch government: the lack of gratitude for the role of Moluccans in the KNIL and their struggle for colonial order, the dissolution of the KNIL, the order to come to the Netherlands, the unilaterally imposed dismissal from military service, the refusal to include Moluccan military in the Dutch armed forces, and the lack of support for the ideal of an independent Moluccan republic. Without a doubt, the former KNIL soldiers discussed the war and their own role in the extreme violence within their own circles.[28] Until recently, however, these discussions rarely penetrated the public domain.

The political struggle of – part of – the Moluccan community, however, focused first and foremost on a different issue: namely, the founding of their own state, the Republic of the South Moluccas (RMS), with the Republic of Indonesia as opponent. This was where they focused their activism, partly fuelled by frustration at their dire predicament in Dutch society. This frustration affected the young generation of Moluccans that ultimately decided to carry out the violent hijackings and occupations of the 1970s, prompting the Dutch government to make a serious start on a national Moluccan policy.[29] In all of this, the war of 1945-1949 did not provide a theme for political mobilization in Moluccan circles. During the short-lived media storms, such as the royal visit of 1995 or Bot's 2005 statement, the Moluccan community kept silent.[30] Only after 2010 would the

first books be published and first plays performed that created space for critical reflection on extreme violence and the Moluccan role in it; they included the work of Herman Keppy and Sylvia Pessireron, the play by DeltaDua, *Westerling – een broederstrijd* [Westerling – a fratricidal struggle] and the film *De Oost* [The East] by Jim Taihuttu. On the other hand, KNIL veterans, represented by the organization Maluku4Maluku, responded fiercely to such critical reflection on the Dutch conduct, especially the role attributed to Moluccan KNIL servicemen.[31]

Indonesia

If the Indonesian government had frequently drawn attention to Indonesia's suffering or Dutch culpability, the Netherlands might have been quicker to adopt different political considerations and a more self-critical commemorative culture; but this did not happen. Successive Indonesian governments indicated that they saw no need for research and debate about the war and the use of extreme violence on both sides. This view already prevailed at the time of the adoption of the mutual amnesty scheme in 1949, and was subsequently perpetuated by Sukarno. The Republic chose a narrative of triumph and heroism, not victimhood. It was presumably considered inadvisable to embark on a process that would create space for debate about intra-Indonesian violence during and after the war.[32]

This was all the more so during the rule of Suharto, whose assumption of power was accompanied by extreme violence in 1965-1966.[33] Following Hueting's revelations and the *Excessennota* [Memorandum on excesses], the Indonesian government explicitly indicated that it saw no need for joint research, and this message would become a mantra: it is better to leave the painful past behind and look to the future together.[34] This does not alter the fact that Suharto, whose military career began during the War of Independence, responded fiercely to Dutch criticism of his human rights record: 'As a nation born out of a war of independence against its colonial rulers, who deprived us of our basic rights for hundreds of years, we attach great importance to our honour and independence.'[35] That Queen Beatrix did not start her state visit on 17 August 1995 but several days afterwards, thus disavowing the Indonesian view that the Republic was celebrating 50 years of independence, was also taken very seriously by Suharto; the state visit thus became a diplomatic fiasco.[36]

A 'forward-looking' approach to bilateral relations, whereby both states let the past rest, also remained the motto after Suharto's fall in 1998. It was

in these terms that Bot's 2005 statement was welcomed by the Indonesian government. Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda saw further debate about the war as a Dutch issue: 'We have never asked for apologies, in our opinion that is a matter for the collective conscience of the Dutch people.' A spokesman for President Yudhoyono called Bot's words 'a major step forward, which will have a positive influence on Indonesian-Dutch relations'.[37] Behind closed doors, the Indonesian government expressed its displeasure at the lawsuits and court rulings in the Netherlands from 2009, the Dutch apologies for specific cases of extreme violence in 2011, and the call by KITLV, NIMH and NIOD for research on Dutch extreme violence. Only in 2016 did President Widodo declare that 'research can make a positive contribution to the discussion in Indonesia'. This created more space for the Dutch government to take the next step.[38]

Creating and perpetuating silence

The power relations sketched out above formed the political-social context in which successive Dutch governments had to determine, whenever the issue made its unwelcome appearance on the agenda, whether there was a need for further reflection and research on the 1945-1949 war, and in particular with regard to military conduct: the Indies generation frequently stated in no uncertain terms that they saw no need for this, and successive Indonesian governments gave the same signal. Moreover, politicians in The Hague were confronted with their own involvement in the episode, which could prompt much criticism. This applied in the first place to the cabinets that had borne political and thus also military responsibility during the war, cabinets whose leading parties had continued to hold power in The Hague for many decades to come. Later cabinets had to deal with commemorative communities – veterans, Indo-Dutch, Moluccans – who had been ignored for too long and whom they did not want to offend again.

In this interplay of forces, until 1969 successive cabinets opted – without significant protest – to keep silent on the war and the issue of potential war crimes, and to avoid the prosecution of military at all costs. Immediately after the war, Roman Catholic-Social Democratic coalition governments decided not to carry out thorough investigations of what were now known cases of extreme violence, including the actions of the special forces under Captain Westerling in Sulawesi, and to keep the results of investigations that had been carried out as secret as possible, and in any case to prevent them from resulting in the prosecution of the soldiers directly involved or those

who bore higher responsibility for their actions. MPs from the Labour Party (PvdA) that did press for investigations were called to order by their party leaders. For example, Westerling was not prosecuted after his failed APRA coup in 1950, and the scathing Van Rij-Stam report (1954) on the 'South Sulawesi affair' was swept under the carpet. This happened after the third Drees cabinet had discussed the report at length, whereby politicians were well aware that responsibility for this extreme violence lay not only with the servicemen who were directly involved, but also with those who bore final military, legal and ultimately also political responsibility. Prime Minister Willem Drees later stated that he had only been informed about several 'excesses', and that he had been in favour of prosecution with regard to Sulawesi and of publishing the Van Rij-Stam report; this was far from the truth.[39]

To the extent that there was space for critical reflection, this mainly concerned the political dimension; but in this respect, too, the main tendency was to avoid looking back. For example, in 1956 there was little resistance to the decision to shelve the East Indies part of the research by the parliamentary inquiry on government policy in the Second World War, because it was all now considered past history;[40] the only objections came from reactionary colonial factions, namely the former Minister of the Colonies, Charles Welter, and also the Communist Party (CPN), now marginalized in the context of the Cold War. In 1958, Drees remarked at the council of ministers that 'the history of the Indonesian question has to be written in one way or another', but at the same time he wished to limit 'these activities as much as possible.[41] On the death of Sutan Sjahrir (1966), various Dutch leaders reflected critically and even reproached themselves for their own political failures. *Trouw* editor-in-chief Sieuwert Bruins Slot – in the period 1945-1949 still an outspoken supporter of cracking down on the Republicans – wrote: 'On the death of Sjahrir, one can rightly call for attention to what the Dutch regime did to him before the war [...], but we, for our part, cannot avoid acknowledging that we were wrong at the time.' He did not discuss the Dutch use of violence, however.[42]

After Hueting's revelations, the policy of covering up the past could no longer continue unabated. Successive cabinets chose to pursue a cautious line of tightly-controlled openness, rather than make a clean break with previous policy. At the time of the revelations, the Labour Party led by Joop den Uyl, who had also been very critical during the war, was in opposition. Whereas the Labour Party now insisted on more research and openness, the centre-right cabinet, with the Catholic (KVP) politician and former naval

officer Piet de Jong as prime minister, attempted to play down the matter. More than in the past, concern about causing an uproar among the veterans was a key motivation. De Jong personally adjusted the conclusions of the *Excessennota*, which had been compiled and written by a civil servants' committee over several months, presenting matters in a better light. Among other things this led to the cabinet position – supported by a parliamentary majority – that, in spite of acknowledged and regrettable 'excesses', 'the armed forces as a whole behaved correctly in Indonesia'.[43] This questionable opinion has not been revised by the government since.

The parliamentary debate about the *Excessennota* in July 1969 focused on two questions. First, there was the question of whether the military who were responsible for 'excesses' should still face prosecution. This suggestion was rejected by the ruling parties, with KVP leader Norbert Schmelzer stating that his party saw no need for a 'cheap hunt for scapegoats'; all of the other parties followed his example. The second question was whether a further investigation was needed. Opposition leader Den Uyl believed that this was indeed the case, and he insisted in vain on a parliamentary inquiry. In doing so, he broke with the Labour Party's previous line, which was that an investigation would not be expedient; in the meantime, however, a fierce debate had arisen within the Left about Vietnam and the struggle in the Portuguese colonies, which almost inevitably raised questions about the Netherlands' own last colonial war. Nor could a majority be mustered for a left-wing motion calling for a broad investigation by a 'group of academic experts'; it merely resulted in a commitment to publish the sources.[44] The first results of this, the *Officiële bescheiden* [Official documents], were published in 1971, but the last volume was only published in 1996, much later than announced at the time. Historian Elsbeth Locher-Scholten has aptly described the *Officiële bescheiden*, which played almost no role at all in the debates about Dutch extreme violence, as a 'lightning rod'.[45] The *Excessennota* ceased to be a matter of parliamentary interest; it was only in 2008 that the memo was again referenced in the House of Representatives, following the lawsuit on behalf of the widows of Rawagede.[46]

The question of the prosecution of servicemen who had committed crimes remained on the political agenda for some time, albeit largely under the radar. This was related to the cabinet's decision in 1971 to declare that the general period of limitation, which until then had been 25 years, was no longer applicable in the case of 'war crimes and crimes against humanity'. This decision was prompted by the desire to continue to track down, pros-

ecute and try German and Japanese war criminals for an indefinite period. Similar decisions were also taken in other countries. During the preparation of this law, the council of ministers explicitly discussed the fact that the suspension of this period would not apply to Dutch soldiers who had been involved in the use of extreme violence in Indonesia; there was a desire to spare Dutch veterans the uncertainty – or worse. Incomplete and even incorrect information was shared with parliament. It was suggested, for example, that on the basis of the mutual amnesty declaration of 1949, soldiers from the Dutch armed forces could no longer be prosecuted. The fact was concealed that, according to regulations that were still in force, the limitation period for the KNIL was already in place, but that this did not apply in full to the Royal Netherlands Army (KL); as Cees Fasseur, the lead author of the *Excessennota*, had already informed the cabinet, this meant that some named KL officers could still be prosecuted. The same Fasseur claimed that he had kept one of his most important sources, the Van Rij-Stam report, at home for many years to prevent 'the names of many Dutch soldiers, who had never been convicted and whose actions in the East Indies had been the subject of judicial investigation', from being seen by 'archive staff who might be lacking in discretion'.[47] Furthermore, the government used the opportunistic argument that there was too little evidence and that this would lead to arbitrariness; in fact, this was a reward for underreporting and insufficient research during the war and the deliberate cover-up that followed. The Council of State reacted critically, but parliament toed the line.[48]

In that same year of 1971, Queen Juliana paid a state visit to Indonesia, where Suharto welcomed her with due ceremony. During the preparations for the visit, it already became clear that neither government felt any need to reflect on the war. The subject thus remained off the agenda during a state visit that was widely praised as being extremely successful and as marking a new beginning in bilateral relations. In her speech at dinner, Juliana referred only in general terms to 'the conflict situation, which we had to live through in a political sense'.[49]

Afterwards, it was not difficult for successive cabinets to avoid discussing the subject. The first critical publications, such as Willem IJzereef's study on extrajudicial executions by the special forces in Sulawesi (1984) and Petra Groen's dissertation, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen* [Marching routes and wrong turns, 1991], on the failure of Spoor's strategy, only struck a chord in small circles. The situation was completely different when it came to the heated debates, mentioned above, about the highly critical draft of Loe de

Jong's analysis of the war and Dutch 'war crimes'. De Jong moderated his language; the second Lubbers cabinet avoided getting involved in the debate; and parliament did not press the issue.[50]

Interest in the war was reignited in the mid-1990s, initially following the uproar surrounding the granting of a Dutch visa to Poncke Princen, a Dutch soldier who had defected to the Republican side at the time, and subsequently surrounding Queen Beatrix's state visit to Indonesia in 1995. It is no coincidence that it was precisely at this time that the press again published reports of several cases of extreme violence that were not in themselves entirely new, such as Rawagede, on which the channel RTL-5 made a television documentary. This prompted parliamentary questions and fresh debates, but the government – the third Lubbers cabinet and then the first Kok cabinet – repeatedly stated that it did not wish to investigate the actions of its predecessors. In 1995, the Kok cabinet again chose to suppress the issue. After the parliamentary press received anonymized information about extreme violence, Minister of Justice Winnie Sorgdrager cited, in response to questions, the decision of 1971 regarding the statute of limitations, and neither the press nor politicians pushed any further.[51]

Typical of this time were the heated discussions within the government regarding Queen Beatrix's state visit, which had initially been planned to start on 17 August 1995. In the end, neither the third Lubbers cabinet nor the first Kok cabinet dared take this step, with an eye to fierce resistance from veterans' circles and the Indo-Dutch community. Minister Jan Pronk spoke without reservation about the 'colonial war' and 'war crimes', but he received no support from the other parties or from his own Labour Party. Although the lack of willingness to make a gesture on 17 August and to have an apology from the Queen (who had reportedly been willing) did prevent further commotion in the Netherlands, this rebounded on the countries' bilateral relations.[52] The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hans van Mierlo, was almost alone in his jubilant assessment of the visit. 'The postcolonial traumas have finally been expressed', he declared in an interview. This was very premature. However, his statement that 'at that time, in 1947 and 1948, we were somewhat out of step with world history', paved the way for Ben Bot's metaphor ten years later.[53]

It is striking how quickly the political and social debate that arose in 1995 about Dutch extreme violence ebbed away once more. When in 2000, following Japan's apologies, Prime Minister Kok also considered making a Dutch statement of regret to Indonesia, he backed out under pressure from

the veterans' lobby, seconded by the widow of General Spoor.[54] It was not the Dutch violence, but the acknowledgement of the suffering of the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities that begged attention. In December 2000, these discussions resulted in *Het Gebaar* ('the gesture'): the government's granting of 350 million guilders to be paid to individuals and 35 million guilders for collective causes, 'in retrospect recognition of the excessive formality and bureaucracy and the presumed deficiencies of the East Indian redress in combination with the other problems facing the victims of persecution after the Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies, especially their hostile treatment by Indonesians who were striving for independence'.

The year 2005 brought yet another anniversary – it was now 60 years since the *Proklamasi* – thereby igniting the debate about the war. This time – for the first time – it was a prominent Christian Democrat (CDA) politician, Minister of Foreign Affairs Ben Bot, who gave impetus to the debate, as he now considered the war 'unfinished business'.[55] Although some of his colleagues still had concerns about the commotion that could be expected among the veterans and the Indo-Dutch community, the entire Balkenende II cabinet eventually supported his gesture. Thus, in Jakarta on 17 August 2005, he was able to express the Netherlands' political and moral acceptance of the legitimacy of the declaration of independence, and to express 'profound regret for all that suffering'. These statements were preceded by intensive consultations – this time out of the public eye, unlike in 1995 – with representatives of the veterans' and Indo-Dutch communities, and it was again emphasized that the veterans were not to blame. Bot hoped, as he wrote in his memoirs, that this would be the final chapter; but things turned out differently.[56]

In 2008, the now iconic massacre in Rawagede (9 December 1947) assumed a new significance when the Committee of Dutch Debts of Honour (Stichting KUKB/Nederlandse Ereschulden), founded by Jeffry Pondaag, filed a lawsuit against the Dutch state on behalf of the relatives. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Maxime Verhagen, initially attempted to get the genie back into the bottle with his statement that this was all past history and that the statements by his predecessor, Bot, had drawn a line 'under this part of the collective history'.[57] However, the court's ruling in 2011 – that the Dutch state could not invoke the statute of limitations and that some form of reparation had to be granted for established crimes – forced the government to take a different tack. The second Rutte cabinet ultimately accepted liability, paying compensation of 20,000 euros to the widows of victims of 'summary

executions', and apologizing, not only for Rawagede, but also Sulawesi and actions elsewhere. Prime Minister Rutte emphasized, however, that this gesture should not be taken as a general apology for the 'police actions' or as a break with previous Dutch policy.[58]

The symbolic value of this legally enforced U-turn was enormous; for the first time, the state accepted moral responsibility for extreme violence by its own armed forces and recognized that it would be unreasonable and unfair to invoke the statute of limitations. The consequences in practice, however, were limited. Since 2013, claims have been submitted on behalf of 61 Indonesian widows, 31 of which have been granted.[59] In court cases after 2011, lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld tried to widen the scope of the claims by extending eligibility to claims by children, and by making the state prosecutable for torture and rape as well as executions. This had limited success. It is clear that since 1949, only a tiny fraction of the victims of Dutch extreme violence or their relatives have received any compensation. Moreover, there is no prospect of prosecuting the perpetrators, only a few of whom are still alive. It is also significant that there has been no rehabilitation to date of those who refused to serve in the Dutch East Indies.[60]

It is likely that the initial rejection of a broader historical investigation by the first two Rutte cabinets – following the line taken by their many predecessors – was mainly motivated by concerns about potentially upsetting the veterans' circles and the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities. There were also concerns that more research would lead to more financial claims and lawsuits, whilst the Indonesian government's dismissive attitude to new historical research was also a factor. When, in late 2016, the cabinet nevertheless decided to fund a broad research programme, partly under the influence of the media storm around Rémy Limpach's *De brandende kampongs van generaal Spoor*, concerns about the veterans were explicitly mentioned: 'The cabinet realizes that a follow-up investigation may cause distress to the group of Indies veterans, but considers it important that further research should also pay attention to the difficult context in which Dutch soldiers had to operate, the violence on the Indonesian side [...] and the responsibility of political, administrative and military leaders.'[61] The cabinet's concerns about the veterans and Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities were also reflected in the emphatic statement that *bersiap* would be covered by the research and the allocation of extra resources to the 'Witnesses & Contemporaries' project, which would allow key communities to tell their stories.[62]

The Dutch government thus switched track, at least as far as research funding was concerned. Whether this will lead to a revision of the government's position of 1969 remains to be seen. What is clear, however, is that this is not something that the third Rutte cabinet explicitly wishes to anticipate. For the time being, the apology made by King Willem-Alexander in Bogor in March 2020, 75 years after the declaration of independence, was formulated in relatively general terms: 'In line with earlier statements by my government, I would like to express my regret and apologize for excessive violence on the part of the Dutch in those years.'[63] On the other hand, the fact that the king offered this apology in this very place in a year of commemoration suggests that he – and/or his government – did not regard the extreme violence merely as an incidental phenomenon.

A SHOCKING AND AMBIVALENT REDISCOVERY

In summary, it took many years for a political debate about the legitimacy of the military intervention and, in particular, the extreme violence to gain traction. Successive Dutch governments initially suppressed this debate, then reluctantly created more space for it, but they always tended to play down the issue as much as they could. Initially the priority was to distract from or cover up the government's own actions, and later, increasingly, to spare the Dutch citizens who were seen as the main victims of the story: the veterans and the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities. The approach taken by Indonesia made it easier to maintain this course for so long.

How was this possible? Were there no other voices? There were very few in politics; the only party that consistently agitated against the war, the CPN, had other priorities after 1949 and eventually collapsed. Of all the parties that were directly involved during the war, only the Labour Party developed a somewhat self-critical tradition, but until recently concern for the veterans weighed more heavily there, too. In fact, this latter factor was true of all parties until around 2010, although left-wing parties were generally positive about research. The CDA, the heir of the denominational parties that prevailed at the time, only engaged in critical reflection once Ben Bot took office.

And what of the world beyond politics? The most critical voices came from the press – but aside from sporadic exceptions during the war, they only started to sound in 1969. Prior to that, the press, reflecting the social and political segregation within Dutch society at that time ('pillarization'), was extremely submissive; and if critical views were expressed, intimidation

from veterans or fearful self-censorship was never far away. It is significant that Hueting had already tried in vain to draw attention to his experiences in 1956 (*Propria Cures*), 1957 (NRC) and 1958 (*Het Parool*); the press dared not respond, partly because the media landscape was still so highly segregated and the major parties expected 'their' newspapers to toe the line, and partly for fear of angry veterans. If the press did publish on Indonesia, it was usually critical about what had happened *after* 1949, in particular in Netherlands New Guinea.[64]

The fact that Hueting finally got a hearing had everything to do with the process of 'depillarization' and the political parties' weakening grip on the leading media. *De Volkskrant* newspaper, which had published the controversial interview in December 1968, was no longer the mouthpiece of the KVP, and the VARA television broadcasting company had wrested itself from the Labour Party's clutches.[65] In the media storm that subsequently flared up, there was a certain dichotomy in which the 'Left' reported critically and the 'Right', in particular *De Telegraaf*, presented itself as the protector of veterans' interests. But in practice, the press quickly lost interest; neither in the articles about the statute of limitations in 1971, for example, nor in the reporting on Juliana's state visit in the same year was the link made with the 'excesses' that had so recently provoked so much controversy.[66] It was not until 1987 that the media storm was whipped up again, as a consequence of the commotion surrounding volume 12 of Loe de Jong's *Koninkrijk*, with *De Telegraaf* playing a major role as the mouthpiece of the veterans. The storm did not last long then, either. The same period saw the publication of memoirs by key political figures, including Drees; their silence on their own knowledge of the extreme violence was hardly noted by the press.[67]

That is not to say that the media simply forgot about the war; on the contrary, more attention was paid to it after 1969 and certainly from 1995, especially on television. The most notorious cases were covered in the process, but the framing shifted, with more and more compassion being shown to the veterans who had been put in an impossible position by the politicians, and who looked back on the episode with resentment and sometimes feelings of trauma. Although increasingly critical questions were thus asked about the nature and legitimacy of the war, and the war was described more often as a 'black page' in history, the Netherlands' 'own' citizens who were generally seen as victims – both the veterans and now also the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities – continued to be treated and approached with great caution.[68]

The right-wing press left its readers in no doubt as to where its loyalties lay: *De Telegraaf*, for example, campaigned vehemently against the arrival of Poncke Princen, and the newspaper continued to speak for the veterans and the Indo-Dutch community. Nevertheless, a shift could be perceived, certainly from the late 1990s, towards paying more critical attention to Dutch military action in the war. Thus, two frames emerged in parallel: one in which the war was a violent black page in history, and one in which the veterans were victims. When it came to the latter, self-censorship also played a role for many years: one explosive interview from 1969, in which Captain Westerling spoke extensively and unreservedly about his methods, was shelved until 2012. 'No one wanted to broadcast it, all the broadcasters refused', explained cameraman Joep van der Busken, who had kept the tape at home all that time.[69]

One substantial change in the development of the commemorative culture was that television played an increasingly important role. This was already clear from the impact of Hueting's revelations in 1969, and it was a pattern that would repeat itself. In the years up to 1990, 70 documentaries were broadcast on Dutch television about the East Indies and Indonesia, 28 of which were exclusively about the 'police actions' and the violence that was used.[70] The tone of many of these broadcasts was critical; moreover, stories were told that brought the violence directly into people's living rooms. They included long documentaries such as *Indonesia Merdeka!* by Roelof Kiers (1976) and the six-part series *Ons Indië voor de Indonesiërs* [Our East Indies for the Indonesians, 1985] by Gerard Soeteman and Jan Bodriesz, as well as shorter reports about specific cases of violence, such as Rawagede (RTL-5, 1995).

Other social domains maintained many years of silence on the extreme violence. It was only in 1995 that the Council of Churches in the Netherlands issued a statement of regret about the accommodating role it had played in the war and the way the latter had been fought; in the same year, the Dutch Catholic bishops described the failure to accept 17 August as a 'tragic mistake'. This was all new; in previous decades, it was only in exceptional cases that critical voices had been heard from the churches and repatriated clergy.[71]

It also took many years for the field of academia, particularly historians, to pay critical attention to the war of 1945-1949 and the extreme violence in particular.[72] In this domain, too, there was initially a tendency to turn the page quickly. After 1950, colonial history was pushed to the margins in all Dutch universities, and Dutch military historiography was in its infancy in

any case. Only in the late 1950s were proposals made to document the episode through archival research and interviews with those involved. It took another ten years – until 1968, and thus before Hueting had made his revelations – for the cabinet to decide to fund a source publication; this was carried out under the auspices of the State Commission for National History (Rijkscommissie voor Vaderlandse Geschiedenis) by a former East Indian official, S. van der Wal.[73]

As mentioned above, in the debate prompted by the *Excessennota* in 1969, the Labour Party and the Democrats 66 party demanded an in-depth historical investigation, which would have undoubtedly yielded results and more fuss in the course of the 1970s. Prime Minister De Jong – who, according to Fasseur, wanted to avoid the appearance of a cover-up – was prepared to make extra resources available for an investigation that would also address the 'excesses problem'. Parliament did not insist, however, and so a small team of historians of a conservative persuasion provisionally embarked on their archival research, ultimately publishing very few incriminating military documents. In 1987 Den Uyl, who in 1969 had already expressed his concerns about an 'academic cover-up' of extreme violence, again inquired about an historical investigation. Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers referred to his predecessor De Jong, who had expressed doubts as to whether historical research was a governmental task. Lubbers agreed with the statement that 'the writing of history should be left to those who felt called upon to do it'; and Den Uyl and the rest of parliament left it at that.[74]

When it came to the writing of history in universities and institutes, silence reigned. Van Doorn and Hendrix – themselves sociologists – left their research untouched until after Hueting's revelations; they were the only ones to focus on the extreme violence. Loe de Jong wrote only one chapter about it, and he himself operated independently of an academic institution. It was only with great difficult that history student Willem IJzereef found a publisher for his study *De Zuid-Celebes affaire* [The South Sulawesi Affair] in 1984, and the book subsequently received little attention; he had to gain advance permission from Prime Minister Lubbers to publish his findings. Petra Groen of the military history department of the Koninklijke Landmacht (KL), a predecessor of the NIMH, published a deeply critical analysis of General Spoor's military strategy in *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen* (1991), but the book did not focus on extreme violence. As mentioned above, the *Officiële bescheiden* played no role in the debate about extreme violence. Fi-

nally, archivist and history student Harm Scholtens was unable to find a publisher for his thesis on Rawagede (2008).[75]

In recent decades, more space has emerged for colonial history in universities and research institutes. More resources have been made available for research too, because the government has also considered this an important part of the gesture of recognition made to the veterans and the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities. As a result, much more is now known about the colonial dimension of this history and its consequences for the postcolonial Netherlands, but much less about the impact of this history on Indonesia itself, especially in 1945-1949. Fasseur, for decades the most prominent historian in this field, remained true to his governmental leanings; in 1995 he argued that it would not be feasible to hold court cases on possible reparations, because 'then every Indonesian would be able to file a claim. Rawagede was just one incident in a whole series. I can name 50 other such villages'.[76] Evidently, no one thought to ask him to name them, and he himself certainly gave no impetus to further research in this area.

In history education too, the war and certainly the extreme violence remained a blind spot for many years. Until 1970, schoolbooks neither mentioned nor condoned the episode. Only from the late 1980s was more written, and the phrase 'war crimes' was used for the first time with reference to the Westerling method. Since 2000 there has been a turnaround and the tone has become much more critical, although the dominant perspective is still Dutch. The war also became part of the canon of Dutch history that was presented in 2006, which likewise contributed to its new framing as a nadir in the nation's history.[77] This does not alter the fact that the official curriculum continues to pay only very limited attention to colonial history in a general sense, and to this last colonial war in particular.

To summarize: when the war of 1945-1949 was finally rediscovered, thanks in part to government support, historians paid significant attention to its diplomatic and political aspects, and only much later to how war had been waged and to Dutch extreme violence. After 2000, the spotlight – also in part due to government subsidies – was mainly on the veterans and the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities; only recently did the war as such come back into focus.[78] In that sense, the criticism directed at the historiography produced by Dutch universities, but also at KITLV, NIMH and NIOD – 'Why didn't these institutes embark on their own research much earlier?' – is not unfounded. The fact is that the research on the extreme violence has gained momentum in recent decades and has become much more critical in

tone than ever before, in a broader context in which more attention is paid to themes such as postcolonialism, the rise of the international legal order, human rights and transitional justice.[79]

It is equally striking that – unlike in many other countries – so little criticism of the war was expressed by public intellectuals and in the cultural sphere. Until 1969 hardly any literary works were published about the war, aside from Lucebert's exceptional poem 'Minnebrief aan onze gemartelde bruid Indonesia' [Love letter to our tortured bride Indonesia, 1949], *Oeroeg* (1948) by Helle Haasse, and perhaps also *Ik heb altijd gelijk* [I'm always right] by Willem Frederik Hermans. Among these, only the 'minnebrief' took violence as its theme. Many 'silent' years passed between Graa Boomsma's novel *De laatste typhoon* [The last typhoon] and Rudy Kousbroek's critical reflections in *Het Oostindisch kampsyndroom* [East Indies camp syndrome], both from 1992, and Alfred Birney's award-winning novel *De tolk van Java* [The interpreter of Java, 2016]. As mentioned above, it is only in recent years that extremely critical books have been published in Indo-Dutch and Moluccan circles, as well as plays such as *Westerling – een broederstrijd* (2018) and films such as *De Oost* (2021).[80]

In 1991, the Royal Dutch Army Museum in Delft was the first to produce an exhibition about the war that approached the conflict from the perspective of the common soldier, although the issue of extreme violence was not raised.[81] Several years later, there was an exhibition of the work of two photographers – Cas Oorthuys and Charles Breijer – who captured the early years of the Indonesian Republic, but it, too, did not portray the violence.[82] After 1995, exhibitions were held here and there in the Netherlands of photos that had been taken by serving soldiers, showing the dark side of the war. The Rotterdam-based conscript Fer Fontijn, for example, had been troubled for 50 years by the photos he had taken of revenge actions. He dared not publish them earlier for fear of the response from other veterans, 'because I had broken the code'.[83] Only much later was this followed by permanent exhibitions in Bronbeek ('Oorlog!' [War!], 2015) and the National Military Museum that did pay attention to the war violence, as well as the temporary exhibition at Amsterdam's Resistance Museum entitled 'Colonial war 1945-1959: Desired and undesired images' (2015), and the extremely critical exhibition 'Dossier Indië' [Indies dossier] at Wereldmuseum Rotterdam, which did indeed underline the violent nature of the entire colonial system (2019).

Besides the specific groups mentioned above, how involved were the

'Dutch people'? Probably not so deeply at first, partly because the war had taken place so far away, and in time because censorship and framing meant that almost no critical image of the war emerged, followed by decades of near-silence and its almost total neglect in education.[84] All of the commotion surrounding Hueting's revelations appears to have affected mainly those directly involved. It would be fair to say that these groups had traumatic experiences and perhaps even permanent trauma. A survey of viewers of the three broadcasts of *Achter het Nieuws* [Behind the headlines] about Hueting showed that the viewing numbers and ratings hardly deviated from the average; if a raw nerve had been hit, then it belonged to a very limited section of society.[85] The latter consisted mainly of minorities, who were then (and now) poorly known and understood. Twenty-five years later, around

In 2011, ambassador Tjeerd de Zwaan (left) offers his apologies on behalf of the Netherlands for the massacre carried out by Dutch soldiers in Rawagede in 1947. Shortly beforehand, lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld (centre) had won the lawsuit brought by bereaved relatives against the Dutch State. Source: Romeo Gacad, AFP.



the time of Beatrix's state visit and the (now-old) news about Rawagede, a clear majority – according to an opinion poll – rejected the notion of a national debate about the Dutch military action; opinions were strongly divided on apologizing to Indonesia.[86]

And what about activists? They existed, of course, but they tended to focus on human rights violations under Suharto or the frustrated Moluccan ideals of the Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS), rather than Dutch war crimes. This picture changed substantially only after the fall of Suharto, particularly with the founding of the KUKB by Jeffry Pondaag in Indonesia in 2005, which subsequently became a foundation in the Netherlands in 2007. Since then, other anti-colonial activist groups have been founded with strong substantive links to Pondaag, such as Histori bersama and De Grauwe Eeuw, the anti-poles of lobbying groups such as Aurore, the Indo-Dutch Federation (Federatie Indische Nederlanders, FIN) and Maluku4Maluku. From their diametrically opposed starting points, both poles take an extremely critical view of the research by KITLV, NIMH and NIOD.[87]

Conclusion

Reflecting on the past seven decades, it can be stated that an open and critical debate about Dutch military action in the Indonesian War of Independence was a long time coming, and that even then the discussion only developed in fits and starts. This slow and hesitant preamble to what could be described as the self-critical 'processing' of the war can be explained by a number of circumstances, and it is by no means exceptional from an international perspective.[88]

The commemorative communities in Dutch society that were most affected by the war initially had different priorities and felt ignored by the Dutch government. That government, in turn, was from the outset keen to steer the episode towards as quiet a conclusion as possible. At first, there was a tendency to look back as little as one could. In practice, this resulted in no one being acknowledged; the fact that it took so long for East Indies/Indonesia memorials to be added to the thousands of memorials to the Second World War, regardless of whether they concerned the 1942-1945 period or the 1945-1949 period, is typical in this regard.[89] Nor did the increasing recognition of these groups in later years automatically mean that more attention was paid to the Dutch violence; on the contrary. The government policy that was eventually pursued in the 1980s to appease the diverse 'Indies generation' – veterans and 'repatriates', the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan

communities – required a completely different focus from that of Dutch war violence. Indeed, this suited successive governments, given the transferable responsibility for the actions of their predecessors.

The long concealment and 'covering up' of the war had negative consequences for later and thus also present-day research into the war of 1945-1949. What is certain is that little was documented during the war that would have facilitated the prosecution and punishment of war crimes – and in the last phase of the war and later much possibly incriminating material was destroyed.[90] No wide-ranging debriefing took place at the time that could have resulted in research collections. Furthermore, the creation, disclosure and academic use of interview collections in the Netherlands and Indonesia got off to a late start.

This, too, meant that much potential documentation was irrevocably lost. The low level of interest in this history, which for decades was repeatedly 'rediscovered' in fragmented form, reveals the lack of national self-criticism. The fact that this episode was primarily associated with several specific communities made it easier to deny and relativize these events, and to perpetuate the prevailing rose-tinted national self-image. This, too, contributed to the tenacity of 'postcolonial absences'. This now appears to be changing further, however, as shown by the great interest in the media and elsewhere in recent literary non-fiction publications such as Martin Bossenbroek's *De wraak van Diponegoro* [Diponegoro's revenge, 2020] and in particular the best-seller *Revolusi* (2020) by David van Reybrouck, as well as Alfred Birney's faction bestseller *De tolk van Java* [The interpreter from Java] (2016) and Jim Taihuttu's film *De Oost* (2021).

The slow tempo and varying nature of the processing – or at least of self-critical debate – were also facilitated by the dearth of strong dissenting voices. In the Netherlands, the most important political parties were themselves involved in this history, and thus bore a responsibility for which it was difficult to account. The media was extremely submissive until well into the 1960s, whilst in other public domains – churches, academia, culture – there was a similar tendency to avoid these thorny issues. This did change, but slowly, with varying levels of intensity and ambivalence. The whole process of silence and concealment was also facilitated by the fact that the political leaders of the Republic of Indonesia, reflecting their own domestic priorities, never publicly insisted on an investigation into Dutch war violence, and indicated in private that they considered critical reflection inopportune. As a result, almost no joint Indonesian-Dutch research was carried out on the war violence.

Joint research was undertaken as part of the broader research programme that forms the basis for this book, although the Indonesian research did not focus primarily on Dutch war violence, but on other aspects of the Indonesian War of Independence. Of course, that is not to say – although it is often suggested otherwise – that there are no longer any sad or bitter memories of this violence in Indonesia, and no feelings of anger or hatred. Indonesian grief, in particular, was given a literal face in Dutch TV documentaries from the 1990s and in the later court cases, because the victims and their relatives were able to tell their stories for the first time. That, in turn, generated significant attention in the media, which created more space for Indonesian voices. The process has been slow, however, and is by no means complete. The Indies commemoration of the end of the Second World War, held each year on 15 August, still focuses primarily on the *European* suffering during the Japanese occupation, not the mass suffering during the Japanese occupation of the Indonesian majority of what the Netherlands then considered to be an inseparable part of the kingdom. And at the annual Dutch commemorations of those who fell in the War of Independence, the dead from their own armed forces are commemorated, not those on the Indonesian side, who were perhaps twenty times their number.

Where does the balance lie today? Without a doubt, the image of the Indonesian War of Independence is changing in the Netherlands, not only in relation to the legitimacy of the war but also the manner in which it was fought by the armed forces, upon the orders of the military and political authorities. The perspective is more critical than it was; more critical, even, than the assessment of colonialism in a broader sense.[91] It is plausible that this new picture will become more deeply rooted in the coming years, in education and in the cultural sphere, but also in political statements. More space has emerged for this. Nevertheless, it will take great efforts from all sides for the commemoration of this history to become a truly joint undertaking.

The picture is thus in flux; but in the meantime, the question remains as to how deep the reconsideration really goes. The official Dutch acknowledgement of and apologies for specific cases of extreme violence were initially enforced by court rulings. Moreover, these rulings related to specific events in the colonial past, not Dutch colonialism in a broader sense. From that perspective, these limited and forced gestures are still a far cry from the German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*; a process, often commended as

exemplary, in which responsibility for past crimes is accepted not only by political and social institutions, but also by broad layers of society in both a political, financial and legal sense, and enshrined in a national culture of remembrance.[92]

IV.

CLOSING REMARKS

Conclusions*

On 17 August 1945, two days after the Japanese surrender that brought an end to the Second World War in Asia, Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta declared Indonesia an independent state. This step was not recognized by the Netherlands, because the latter considered itself to be the legitimate authority and wanted to retain control over Indonesia's future. Indonesia thus had to be brought back under control. In the wake of British and Australian troops, the first Dutch military personnel and officials arrived in Indonesia to prepare for the return of colonial rule, followed by larger troop dispatches. The clashing ambitions of the Netherlands and the Republic led to four years of bitter conflict and tough negotiations, with many casualties, especially on the Indonesian side. In recent decades, there have been increasing and stronger indications that the Dutch armed forces used extreme violence in their operations, on a larger scale than was officially admitted by the Dutch either at the time or later.

Partly because of the often high level of violence, the war that the Netherlands fought in the former colony had enormous consequences, particularly for the Indonesian population. First and foremost, the effects

* This conclusion was written by the programme leaders and the editorial board, in consultation with the programme council of Dutch researchers.

were high numbers of dead and wounded, as well as all the devastation and misery brought by a protracted war, the extent of which is difficult to determine.[1] It is impossible to give precise figures for the number of Indonesian casualties as a result of Dutch military action. It has long been assumed that 100,000 died, but this figure cannot be substantiated with accuracy. According to Dutch sources, however, there were at least 46,000 casualties during and in the seven months following the second Dutch offensive, Operation Kraai, alone. We also know that the casualty ratio in the fighting between the Netherlands and the Republic was generally extremely unequal. The fact that many Indonesian civilians as well as fighters were killed can be inferred from the sources, which, though numerous, are fragmentary and incomplete, as well as from the many memorial plaques, burial fields and monuments to the victims of the War of Independence in villages and towns throughout the country. Finally, demographic calculations for the period 1940-1950 suggest excess mortality in the millions, although it is not clear what proportion of the deaths should be attributed to military violence. By contrast, the number of victims on the Dutch side can be established fairly accurately, both in terms of the number of soldiers who died in the war and the Europeans, Indo-Europeans and Moluccans, as well as Indonesians in Dutch service, who died as a result of the violence in the first phase of the Indonesian Revolution, known in the Netherlands as the '*bersiap* period'.

The desire for greater clarity about this history of war and violence ultimately led to this research programme. The primary aim of the research was to provide a more detailed analysis of and explanation for the nature of the Dutch military action in Indonesia in the years 1945-1949, paying ample attention to the historical, political and international context, as well as to the political and social aftermath of the war. More specifically, the programme focused on the use of extreme violence by the Dutch armed forces and its consequences, and the extent to which political and legal responsibility was taken for this extreme violence both at the time and later. These questions formed the basis for the selection of the various sub-projects, the key findings of which are summarized in the preceding chapters.

In the introductory section of this book, it was explained that when designating or describing different forms of violence, we would use concrete terms wherever possible. Generalized and loaded terms such as 'inordinate', 'excessive', 'illegitimate' and 'disproportionate' violence, and also 'war crimes', would only be used when accompanied by further explanation. This choice

– the result of lengthy and intensive discussions between the researchers involved – stemmed from an awareness that, whilst they convey an intuitive sense of unacceptability, these terms are far from unambiguous because they can be associated with a wide range of legal, political and moral norms, some of which are enshrined in national and international laws and treaties, which in turn were and are subject to various interpretations. The latter point was an important reason to avoid legal considerations; yet, as explained in the introductory chapter, there is much to be said for the claim that the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law were applicable during the Indonesian War of Independence, or at least were deemed so, including by the colonial authorities themselves, and that the actions of the Dutch armed forces could and can be measured against these rules.

In this programme, the term 'extreme violence' functions as an overarching concept, as an indication of violence that was mostly used outside or at the margins of direct, regular combat situations. This violence was directed against civilians or against servicemen or fighters who had been disarmed after their capture or surrender, and usually occurred in the absence of direct military necessity or without a clearly defined military objective. Such violence could take all kinds of forms, such as torture, executions without trial, abuse, rape, looting, violent reprisals such as burning down *kampongs* or shooting civilians, or mass detention. Extreme violence also occurred within regular combat operations. For example, it could involve the use of heavy, but also light weaponry, whereby the risk of civilian casualties was ignored or taken for granted, or battles or operations in which soldiers fired at attackers more intensively and for longer than necessary. The primary function of the concept of 'extreme violence' is thus to describe the mode of warfare, but it also creates possibilities for considering the impact of the violence on the victims, and the political and moral aspects – however difficult they may be to define – of this violence. After all, these forms of violence contravened everything that contemporary Dutch political and military leaders claimed to stand for, certainly to the outside world, and they clashed with widely held moral values, not infrequently those of the perpetrators themselves. A number of the sub-projects reveal how fluid the different forms of violence were, and the extent to which the use of extreme violence was bound up with the nature of the war, the chosen strategy, and the dynamics of the violence.

As explained in the third introductory chapter in this book, the existing historical literature identifies a considerable number of factors that contrib-

uted to the large-scale use of extreme violence by the Dutch armed forces: an unrealistic and therefore risky strategy with insufficient resources, based on an underestimation of and contempt for the adversary, which lowered the threshold for extreme violence; the often indifferent and opportunistic attitude of the political and the civilian and military judicial authorities, which facilitated a practice of secrecy and impunity; the quality and the prevailing culture of the armed forces, in terms of inadequate leadership at various levels, inexperience, an overly one-sided focus on conventional warfare, and insufficient education, training, communication and discipline; the inadequate, opportunistic and sometimes irresponsible selection of troops and auxiliaries; and continuity in the harsh administrative and military traditions rooted in colonial prestige, passed on via the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) to the Royal Netherlands Army (KL) and the Marine Brigade.

This research programme built on these insights, focusing – as explained above – on a more detailed analysis and explanation of the Dutch military action, specifically the use of extreme violence and its consequences, and the extent to which political and legal authorities took responsibility for the violence. This concluding chapter sets out the key findings of the various sub-projects with regard to several central themes, followed by some general observations in relation to the main questions addressed by the programme.

Perspectives

Although the leading questions addressed by this research programme stemmed from Dutch scholarly and social debates and most of the projects were conducted by Dutch historians, the programme also aimed to create a history that captured multiple voices, based on the rich variety of perspectives in the Netherlands and Indonesia. Among other things, this ambition was reflected in the joint discussions between Dutch and Indonesian researchers on the use – or the avoidance – of specific terms and concepts, for these are closely linked to perspectives, as explained in the first chapter of this book. Furthermore, an attempt was made – with varying success, certainly when it came to Indonesian voices – to allow the different perspectives to resonate in every part of the research, in the selection of sources, themes and views.

Two projects were explicitly devoted to this attempt to incorporate multiple voices and perspectives: Regional Studies and Witnesses & Contemporaries. Although both were based on collaboration with Indonesian his-

torians, they otherwise differed greatly in design. The collaborative project Regional Studies focused on historical research into local and regional developments in Indonesia at the time of the War of Independence, based on a number of connecting themes. Witnesses & Contemporaries functioned as a 'front office' to which people could bring their stories, suggestions and experiences relating to the War of Independence. By gathering personal stories, the project, which worked with the other sub-projects in several ways and at different times, highlighted the great variety of experiences and memories in both the Netherlands and Indonesia. In doing so, Witnesses & Contemporaries emphasizes the human dimension of the story: how people experienced the events, and how they processed and continue to process them in both personal and collective memories and the culture of remembrance. The focus on micro-histories reveals the continuum of violence and individual perceptions of violence, as well as showing how positions and loyalties are subject to change in constantly shifting contexts. The outcome is a kaleidoscope of experiences and emotions, sometimes strikingly similar, more often very different or even contradictory, not only to each other, but often also to prevailing images in history.

Regional studies: revolutionary worlds

One important aim of the programme was to situate the actions of the Dutch armed forces during the Indonesian War of Independence in their historical, political and international context; and that context was primarily formed by the revolutionary developments in Indonesia.

The image of a single war against the Republic and its army has persisted in the Netherlands, but the reality was much more complicated. Not only were many other armed groups involved in the conflict with the Dutch, but the Indonesian Revolution was a multiform phenomenon in which political, religious, social and regional conflicts were fought out, sometimes armed, sometimes in parallel to or as part of the war with the Netherlands. These developments are best studied at the local and regional levels, as this also opens up other perspectives on movements, communities and individual citizens with their own ideals and fears, in situations where strategic and sometimes also existential choices were unavoidable. The key terms in this analysis are legitimacy, violence and loyalty.

The *Proklamasi* gave the process of Indonesian state and nation-building a concrete form – the Republic. This has always been emphasized in the collective memory and in the politics of remembrance. Nevertheless, there was

no single revolution, not least because no one really understood or could foresee the end point that lay ahead. There were grand and stirring ambitions that were consonant with the pre-war desire to achieve full independence for Indonesia. There was also the complex everyday reality, in which some people – simply in order to survive – adopted various small, sometimes even personal ideals that together added up to form 'the' revolution.

In order to further our understanding of the dynamics of violence, it is important to consider the function of violence, and thus its fluidity and ambiguity. First, taking this approach contradicts the assumption that Indonesians, Chinese, Dutch, Indo-Europeans and others were exclusively either victims or perpetrators; these categories were often muddled. Moreover, approaching violence in terms of functionality also reveals what was achieved by exposing civilians to violence: it was used to force civilians to grant their support to either various Indonesian or Dutch troops. Everyday violence in addition became a 'meaningful' way for civilians – and fighters – to ensure their own safety. But of course, violence could also be dysfunctional and there were also other ways to win over the population.

Non-fighting individuals and communities also formed part of these revolutionary worlds. They often found themselves at the end of the chain of violence, and thus rapidly became the victims of mutually exclusive parties that were fighting for power and legitimacy. The perpetrators included Dutch soldiers, Indonesians and Chinese fighting under the Dutch flag, but also militant youths (pemuda), soldiers from the Republican army and, for example, communist and Islamic armed groups. Violence was a means to bind local or regional communities – Indonesians, Chinese, Indo-Europeans – to a particular programme and force them to grant their loyalty and support, thereby undermining the position of other parties.

State-building was not only a goal, but also a weapon in the conflict. The idea was that if a single authority could rule over the population and thus gradually acquire legitimacy, another authority would be unable to do so – and would lose its grip on the population or fail to become established at all. This conclusion also relates to the federalization of Indonesia initiated by the Dutch administration – the division of Indonesia into autonomous federal states, each with their own government. The federal state of East Indonesia *(Negara Indonesia Timur)* was formed by the Netherlands in this context, as well as smaller autonomous regions (*daerah*) on Sumatra and in West and East Java. The Republic, viewed by the Dutch as one of the intended federal states, opposed this form of state-building. The Republican interpretation

of sovereignty envisaged a unitary state under Indonesian leadership, with authority over the whole of Indonesia. The Republic was thus not prepared to allow other forms of authority to compete with its own, and was willing to fight for this.

Even within its own territory, however, the Republic was not the only authority that sought power and influence. In West Java, the Islamic movement *Darul Islam* sprang into the gap left by the Republic when Republican troops withdrew in January 1948 as part of the Dutch-Indonesian Renville Agreement. Moreover, the Republic's authority was constantly threatened from within. The heterogeneous but nationalistic pemuda movement demanded a forward-looking, uncompromising position from the Republic, built on *perjuangan (*struggle) and total independence. This was at odds with the views in the political heart of the Republic, Yogyakarta, which left room for diplomatic negotiations with the Dutch. The Republican leaders wanted to demonstrate an organized state whilst simultaneously warding off a federation, while the pemuda insisted on the overthrow of both colonial structures and local Indonesian traditions.

In areas where more than one of these nascent authorities operated, often border areas, the residents lived between two or more parties that each demanded support and, if necessary, attempted to extract it by force. Local communities developed a strategy that involved shifting and multiple loyalties. This could bring temporary benefits. First, showing support to those in power at any time offered a chance to escape the violence that, in the absence of such support, would almost inevitably follow. Second, these connections – however short-lived they might be – also brought opportunities: benefits in the form of access to food, clothing and so forth. Moreover, showing loyalty offered a chance to gain personal influence or secure interests. For example, Chinese or Indonesians joined armed groups under Dutch supervision in order to protect their own communities, and Indonesians joined pemuda armed groups in order to assert themselves or protect their villages or families.

When a single authority succeeded in asserting itself in a certain area for a longer period, loyalty to other authorities usually decreased or even seemed to disappear altogether. Such a demonstrative transition signified obedience to the new authority and prevented revenge for earlier 'collaboration'. For example, Republican chiefs whose *desa* suddenly found themselves in Dutch territory after military action often remained in their posts, but under Dutch authority – which, one should add, was often in line with tra-

ditional power structures at the local level. For similar reasons, police agents and officials 'deserted' from the Dutch to the Republican side, and officials and politicians from autonomous federal areas maintained contact, openly or otherwise, with representatives of the Republic. A pragmatic – perhaps opportunistic – stance was often unavoidable.

For the Dutch administration and the Dutch armed forces, but equally for their Republican adversaries, such shifts in loyalty often came as an unpleasant surprise, because they thought they had a 'grip' on the population. However, the Republic – with its message of *merdeka*, which eclipsed the Dutch promises – prevailed. It did not become clear until the end of the war how far the balance had tipped against the Netherlands: whilst support for the Republic had only grown, local support for the colonial government had largely evaporated.

Bersiap and the violence in the first phase of the Indonesian Revolution

In the Netherlands, the months between October 1945 and March 1946 are known as 'bersiap'; a period that Indies-Dutch and Moluccan communities in the Netherlands remember as being characterized by widespread, irregular and often extreme Indonesian violence against Indo-European, Dutch and Moluccan citizens. These events in the first months after the Japanese surrender are often viewed in isolation in the Dutch and English historiography, but in order to deepen our understanding of this period, it is necessary and also more meaningful to see them as the first phase of the Indonesian War of Independence.

The outbursts of extreme violence against Indo-Europeans, Moluccans and Dutch should not be viewed as isolated phenomena, but placed in the context of what German historian Christian Gerlach calls an 'extremely violent society', a concept that may be applied to large parts of Indonesia in this first phase of the revolution. The violence also continued after March 1946, we should add, although it unfolded very differently in different communities. This becomes clear when we also consider the violence against civilians and captured fighters outside Java and Sumatra, and against communities and parties other than Indo-Europeans, Dutch and Moluccans.

Violence by Indonesian pemuda was directed against Indo-European, Moluccan and Dutch civilians, as well as against Indonesian civilians who were seen – rightly or wrongly – as representatives of the colonial administration. Other groups and individuals whom Indonesian armed groups

considered a threat to Indonesian independence were also potential targets. Pemuda also murdered, tortured and mutilated Japanese and British captured soldiers, and Chinese and Japanese civilians. The violence was perpetrated by multiple parties. Japanese, British and Dutch troops and armed groups on the Dutch side contributed in turn, shooting indiscriminately at unarmed and armed Indonesian civilians and executing prisoners without trial.

In short, the extreme violence against civilians and captured fighters in this period took place along socio-economic as well as 'ethnic' lines. Indonesia could be described as an extremely violent society, as defined by Gerlach: a society in which different communities fall victim to omnipresent physical and non-physical violence, committed by multiple parties and social groups, often in collaboration with official organizations. The reasons for this violence varied widely, from political, social and religious motives to punishment for (alleged) collaboration and opposition to the revolution. Furthermore, there were personal, criminal and opportunistic motives for the violence that had little to do with anti-colonial or political motivations.

The violent nature of this earliest period of the revolution is revealed by the casualty numbers for the various population groups. The groups that probably suffered the most civilian casualties in this period – the Indonesians and the Chinese – are also the least well-documented. Unfortunately, sources on the Indonesian and Chinese victims are scarce, but it is estimated that there were many tens of thousands of victims. Large-scale violence by the British, especially during the second phase of the Battle of Surabaya in November 1945, claimed thousands of Indonesian lives, including those of many civilians. In the same period, hundreds of Japanese civilians and dozens of captured Japanese soldiers were also killed.

Based on our own research – which drew on the Netherlands War Graves Foundation's database of victims and lists and files containing names from various archives – into the victims on the Dutch side between 17 August 1945 and 31 March 1946, including Indo-European, Moluccan and Indonesian fatalities, we arrived at a substantiated figure of 3,723 fatalities on the Dutch side, 1,344 of whom certainly died as a result of the violence. If we add the 2,000 missing persons who were still registered in December 1949, and the more than 125 people who died, who were found in the sources used but whose date of death is unknown, and who therefore cannot be included as victims, then we arrive at a substantiated estimate of almost 6,000 fatalities. This number is very similar to earlier estimates, and contradicts the estimates of 20,000 or even 30,000 victims that have

circulated in the past two decades, based on unsubstantiated assumptions and extrapolations.

More recently, it has been suggested that the violence during the earliest phase of the Indonesian Revolution was an important reason for the Dutch military intervention. The sources from the years 1945-1949 reveal a different picture: 'bersiap violence' was not the reason for the reoccupation of Indonesia or for the dispatch of Dutch troops. In military and government communications and in the media, attention was paid to this violence, but in the form of rather sporadic reports of acts of violence committed by individual '*rampokkers*', '*peloppers*' and extremists in irregular actions. It was clearly indicated that this violence was not random, but that it was mainly perpetrated against groups that were suspected of opposition to independence, or that were associated with traditional or colonial authority: Indo-Dutch and Europeans, but also British Indians, Japanese, Chinese and, above all, Indonesians. However, these reports do not reflect the idea of 'bersiap' as a deliberate campaign against one clearly defined community. The concept of bersiap as targeted Indonesian violence against Indo-Europeans, Moluccans and Dutch was only developed in the Dutch culture of remembrance from the 1980s onwards. This narrative has become increasingly dominant in recent years, along with rising estimates of casualties, which are sometimes even framed in terms of genocide. At the same time, the '*bersiap* period' often featured in veterans' and Indo-Dutch memoirs as a retrospective justification for the deployment of Dutch troops in Indonesia and the Dutch use of force against Indonesians.

Extreme violence by the intelligence services

In the district court of The Hague in 2014, the 86-year-old Javanese Yaseman testified to having been mistreated by the Dutch intelligence service during his imprisonment in 1947. As well as being tortured with electricity and subjected to waterboarding, he had been struck on the head with a stick and burned with a cigarette. Yaseman's experience was by no means exceptional. Countless harrowing stories are documented, including testimonies by Dutch administrators, public prosecutors and (intelligence) servicemen themselves, about a whole range of gruesome torture practices. Furthermore, it is documented how some intelligence and security services pursued a reign of terror in places such as Salatiga and Payakumbuh. These tragedies, virtually unknown in the Netherlands, are illustrative of the enormous physical and psychological impact of such terror on the local population. Mass arrests, which were frequent-

ly led by the intelligence services, and the associated internment caused great suffering and uncertainty for those involved and their families.

These are not isolated cases, as mentioned above. This research has shown that the intelligence services, whose regular staff accounted for only some 2.5 to 3 per cent of the armed forces, made systematic use of torture and played a disproportionate role in the extreme violence used by the Dutch during the Indonesian War of Independence. The precise extent of these practices cannot be determined, in part due to the fragmentary nature of the sources and demonstrable underreporting. The fact that the intelligence services in particular used extreme violence on a large scale was partly due to the specialized nature of their work – the interrogation of prisoners – and the leading and guiding role they played in the chaotic counter-guerrilla war, in which information was crucial.

Whereas in so-called 'regular' armed confrontations, the better-armed and often better-trained Dutch armed forces had the advantage, the opposite was true in the vicious intelligence battle. No matter how much the Dutch services tried to chart the strength and movements of the adversary and to bring an end to enemy infiltration and espionage, they repeatedly failed. The services, which were frequently amateurish and struggled with staff shortages and language difficulties, had to cover an enormous area, certainly after the territorial expansion following the two 'successful' Dutch offensives. They had to operate in an enormous, often unfamiliar territory, whilst the more finely tuned Indonesian intelligence apparatus, like the army, could rely more heavily on local people, who played such a crucial role in guerrilla warfare. Moreover, Dutch military and civilian institutions were often infiltrated by enemy agents. The battle was vicious, as mentioned above: Indonesian counter-intelligence also used extremely violent methods, as shown by the liquidation and intimidation of countless alleged collaborators and spies in Dutch service.

In order to fight the Indonesian guerrillas, the Dutch army was highly dependent on information from the intelligence and security services. To gather this information, systematic use was made of ill-treatment and torture, in the knowledge of the army command and subordinate commanders. After interrogation, prisoners were not infrequently killed. Nevertheless, the quality of the intelligence often turned out to be poor, which could have the indirect effect of promoting extreme violence throughout the armed forces; for example, when infantry units vented their frustration on prisoners and civilians or their property after the umpteenth failed operation.

Furthermore, torture was often used to force confessions from detainees so that they could be brought to trial.

The intelligence services, which were dominated by KNIL personnel and the KNIL mindset, also relentlessly hunted down individuals whom they considered to be 'gang leaders'; clandestine operations that often took place at night, in civilian clothing, and behind the demarcation lines. In addition, the services more or less openly pursued a reign of terror in areas that were seen as troublesome, with the aim of suppressing the Republican resistance through the use of terror and collective intimidation of the local population. In addition to murder and torture, this intimidation frequently included arbitrary mass arrests. The KNIL had left its mark on these intelligence-service practices: intimidation and deterrence formed the military-psychological pillars of the traditionally heavy-handed KNIL operations to suppress potentially rebellious Indonesian masses.

A broad coalition of parties bore direct or indirect responsibility for the widespread and disproportionate share of extreme violence by the intelligence services. At the senior administrative level, politicians and administrators held considerable responsibility, because despite receiving information about the systematic use of extreme violence by the intelligence services, they failed to keep the latter in check. Even greater responsibility was borne by the army leadership, to whom the services were directly subordinate. Among the middle ranks, substantial responsibility was borne by the commanders of the brigades, battalions and companies to which intelligence units were attached and by intelligence officers. These officers gave the services or soldiers a free hand, so long as they received what was deemed to be crucial intelligence, whilst turning a blind eye to predictable acts of extreme violence. The personnel at the lowest level – mainly interrogators and Indonesian and non-Indonesian support staff – also bear some of the blame, of course: they, too, always had a choice.

As far as punishment was concerned, intelligence service personnel and their superiors almost invariably emerged unscathed, because military interest – or, more precisely, the primacy of warfare – prevailed. Although the army leadership, deputy commanders and the military justice system knew all too well that torture was taking place, they often helped to conceal it and intervened inconsistently, if at all. Apparently they *wanted* torture to be used. Anyone who wanted to raise the issue or challenge the cover-up could expect opposition and sometimes even threats.

When intelligence servicemen looked back in reports and memoirs on their actions inside and outside the interrogation chambers, they – like their fellow soldiers – tended to link these to what they saw as 'military necessity'. The problem with this reasoning is that 'military necessity' is an elastic concept that can serve not only to justify one's own actions, but also – usually successfully – to prevent investigation. From the highest echelons to the lowest, the torture of prisoners, particularly as part of the vicious and secretive counter-guerrilla, was considered an essential means of extracting supposedly crucial intelligence and thereby limiting the losses on one's own side. Looking back, some of these soldiers described balancing ethics against 'necessity' as a dilemma. In doing so they acknowledged, sometimes with reference to international humanitarian law, that their actions – even according to contemporary frames of reference – had been both legally and morally beyond the pale.

The myth of targeted and small-scale action

The use of heavy weapons, such as artillery, attack aircraft and naval gunfire, could have dramatic consequences, not least for the civilian population. One such case was the shelling of Karanganyar (Central Java) in October 1947, which probably resulted in hundreds of deaths. By using this 'technical violence', often to support the infantry, the Dutch armed forces attempted to minimize the risks to their own troops, and were thereby prepared to accept the risk of large numbers of civilian casualties. The shelling and bombing certainly had a massive psychological impact, too; intimidation was a standard part of Dutch warfare.

Although naval and field artillery were commonly deployed in colonial wars and were a traditional component of the regular arsenal of the KNIL and the navy, their deployment during the Indonesian War of Independence was not only a colonial phenomenon, but also an outcome of the Second World War. Many soldiers who operated heavy weapons had been trained by the Allies during or after the war. Many of them had also gained active combat experience in the European theatre of war or in the battle against Japan, in which artillery support had played a dominant role. The Dutch 'combined actions' during the Indonesian War of Independence reflected a tactic that had been perfected in the preceding period.

In many cases, it is impossible even to approximate how many victims were claimed by this specific form of violence. A contributing factor is that due to the longer fire distance, the effect of the deployment of artillery and

aircraft was often indistinguishable from the violence used by the infantry, such as rifle, machine gun and mortar fire. The frequent use of 'technical violence' by Dutch troops is at odds with the myth cultivated by Army Commander General Spoor that Dutch soldiers acted in a small-scale, targeted fashion: 'police actions' extolled as the 'Dutch method'. In practice, Dutch action was rather characterized by an inability and an unwillingness to distinguish between civilians and fighters, with the use of (technical) violence creating a high risk of disproportionate damage and civilian casualties. *Kriegsräson* prevailed.

The two phases that followed the Dutch 'police actions' and that were largely characterized by guerrilla warfare were the most intensive months for the artillery. The air forces were regularly deployed during these periods, too, although the number of 'violence sorties' clearly peaked during the two major Dutch offensives. The use of heavy weapons was mainly limited by shortages of material, personnel and ammunition, as well as logistical challenges. To a lesser extent, political considerations played a role. Harsh military actions could provoke international criticism and thus boost the Republic's cause. The use of aircraft in particular was politically sensitive, and this sometimes led to restraint. Political agreements and the consequent international monitoring did limit the use of artillery to some extent, but the Dutch armed forces were regularly able to circumvent these restrictions, for example by operating only when there were no United Nations observers around.

Legal considerations did not play a major role in the use of technical violence; the use of heavy weapons was not scrutinized by the military justice system. International law in this field was hardly developed at the time, either. Those who were involved at all levels did reflect on the risk to civilian lives and the ethical aspects of the deployment, however, and most appear to have accepted this risk. This does not mean that no one cared about the consequences, as shown by later testimonies; the effects of bombardments do not need to be *seen* in order to be understood and felt. Responsibility is thus also borne by the military personnel who were directly involved in this violence, although it was ultimately the senior commanders who made decisions on the deployment of heavy weapons.

Impunity and ruthlessness

In large parts of the archipelago during the revolution, Dutch emergency laws provided the legal framework in which administrative and legal measures were taken. On the question of whether international humanitarian law

was applicable, the Netherlands took a dual stance: although it maintained to the outside world that humanitarian law did not apply because the Netherlands did not recognize the sovereignty of the Republic, humanitarian law did serve as a guide for action in the instructions and admonitions issued by the Dutch armed forces, albeit selectively. In practice, however, these principles were easily abandoned – and, ultimately, almost everything necessary to defend Dutch interests was considered justified.

This is shown by the almost total failure to punish the extreme violence perpetrated by Dutch military in the context of what was considered to be military action. The partisan military-judicial system punished only some 400 possible cases of extreme violence (in addition to the hundreds of cases of looting). A careful analysis of the judgements by the courts martial shows that the military justice system, under pressure from the military authorities, often neglected to punish 'functional violence' such as the killing of prisoners, the use of torture in interrogations and the torching of *kampongs*. Those who committed crimes that were not considered to be functional ran a slightly higher risk of (relatively severe) punishment. These were often individual actions of an unusually cruel nature or that were committed openly, such as rapes or killings in public places such as markets. Even when it came to these crimes, however, judges showed a high degree of understanding for the servicemen and their position, and military interests were the primary concern.

At every step in the legal proceedings, and thus at all levels, forces were at work to hinder or prevent prosecution. Responsibility for punishing or not punishing violence committed by Dutch soldiers was borne by every link in the chain of military justice, starting with the commander responsible, who had to report potential crimes, via the judge advocates up to members of the court martial and the High Military Court. The Army Commander in particular bore significant responsibility, as he had the last word on whether to prosecute servicemen, and he also had to approve the verdicts.

The actions – or failure to act – of the military justice system in Indonesia had direct consequences for the use of violence on the Dutch side. In operational terms, failing to punish or punishing belatedly had the advantage of maintaining troop strength and morale in the field for as long as possible. In addition, virtual impunity for extreme violence or serious crimes that were thought to play a functional role in the conflict allowed perpetrators to cross the line on multiple occasions. The actions of the justice system therefore had little preventive effect.

Whilst the Dutch (military) justice system left Dutch servicemen virtually unpunished, the law was used actively against Indonesians who had turned against the colonial authority. Not only were severe sentences frequently pronounced, but during the war the Dutch authorities also resorted to the established colonial measures of internment and exiling of political opponents. In addition, all kinds of resistance against Dutch authority were criminalized, meaning that harsh punishments could be imposed. Tens of thousands of Indonesians were detained in overcrowded internment camps and prisons. Several hundred of them were sentenced to death. Illustrative of the instrumentalization of law as a weapon is the establishment of the special courts martial, which consisted of a single military judge who had to administer fast-track proceedings; important legal principles were thereby jettisoned in a bid to eliminate the Indonesian opposition. On paper this prevented extrajudicial executions, but in practice it resulted in the legalization of many executions by the justice system.

The impact of the judicial action on the Indonesian population cannot be gauged with precision, but it can be said with certainty that internees and prisoners had to endure much physical and mental hardship. The large-scale internment and punishment of Indonesians who were suspected of resisting Dutch colonial rule resulted in a temporary numerical weakening of the Republic's armed forces. On the other hand, the harsh punishments and measures are likely to have motivated rather than deterred opponents. Prisons and internment camps gave Indonesians an opportunity to unite, share nationalist sentiments and plan new actions. The relatives of internees or convicted Indonesians were also affected by the actions of the justice system. Not only did they lose breadwinners, but they also lived in fear and uncertainty about their fate.

When Dutch soldiers were tried, the Indonesian sense of justice was almost completely ignored. Although Indonesian victims were sometimes put forward as witnesses, this was largely done in order to wind up cases or to justify harsh punishments when the perpetrators were accused of harming innocent Indonesians. Even more often, statements by Indonesians were not even taken into account. When weighing up whether to prosecute, not only the feelings and interests of the Indonesians, but also basic legal principles – such as providing (able) counsel and an orderly report, as well as the omission of coercive measures in order to obtain confessions from 'suspects' – were subordinated to those of the Dutch military organ-

ization. By contrast, in the case of European victims, such as during the bersiap murders, significant attention was paid to the suffering and impact of the deeds.

Army Commander General Spoor insisted to the outside world that all crimes committed by Dutch military were being or would be severely punished. That mantra was repeated by veterans for years, and it also appeared in the *Excessennota*, along with the incorrect conclusion that hardly any cases had been dropped. The possibility of refuting these claims was made more complex, deliberately or otherwise, by the extremely concise and vague manner in which the data and findings on the courts-martial were presented in appendices 5-7 of the *Excessennota*. However, an examination of the original sources reveals that whilst some cases were flagged, the organs of the (military) justice system actively turned a blind eye in practice, and in so doing formed a key pillar of the policy of condonation.

Violence, information and responsibility

Dutch politicians, administrators and military leaders were remarkably tolerant of the violence used during the war with the Republic. Waging war and condoning large-scale violence were political choices. We cannot understand these choices without considering the way in which information about and knowledge of the violence were disseminated, restricted and manipulated.

Many of the extreme forms of violence took place during patrols, purges and punishments. In reporting to the higher echelons, the precise course of events during these actions – more specifically, the unpleasant details – tended to be concealed. The primary responsibility for providing information to the colonial government in Batavia/Jakarta and politicians in The Hague lay with the army, in particular Army Commander General Spoor and his successor, Buurman van Vreeden. They monopolized the reporting and attempted to influence top officials in Indonesia and the cabinet in The Hague. The nature of the violence used by Dutch troops was often concealed in the reports to the Dutch government, whilst the violence used by the opponent was highlighted and invariably presented as terroristic, extremist and illegitimate. The reports did not provoke critical questions as such in The Hague, but rather confirmed what people already believed: that an opponent which was considered to be unreliable was acting aggressively and ruthlessly.

As a rule, Batavia only informed the minister responsible about specific issues when questions were asked by the media and critical MPs, and the minister asked Batavia for clarification. The reactions of the colonial administration and army in Indonesia thereby assumed the character of scandal management. The army leadership systematically questioned accusations, discredited whistle-blowers, and underscored the necessity and the – expected – success of the military action. Although reports of extreme violence began to circulate more frequently in 1949 in particular, the judicial and civilian authorities were not willing to counter it. As only a few 'scandals' came to light, a situation arose in which atrocities could be presented as incidents and 'excesses', thus not only as violations of the law of war, but also as exceptions in a war that had as a rule been conducted correctly.

Condonation of violence was also facilitated by the fact that military objectives dominated decision-making, in line with the politically determined goal. On the Dutch side, the importance of restoring peace and order was widely endorsed; for that reason, the war was presented as inevitable. The colonial administration in Batavia, politicians in The Hague and most Dutch administrators in the archipelago internalized, consciously or unconsciously, the military terminology and way of thinking. Moreover, the war was waged in a system of authoritarian colonial power relations from which effective control mechanisms were absent. Indeed, the civilian administration recognized the primacy of the army in both its actions and its reporting.

The Indonesian population had only very limited access to justice and the authorities. The residents of affected villages and families did complain to Indonesian administrators, and the latter often put pen to paper to report acts of violence to the Dutch authorities. Action was rarely taken in response, however, because the military authorities – and not only they – refused to investigate or actively obstructed investigations, unless a case threatened to escalate, with possible negative effects in the Netherlands or the international community. The Republican authorities frequently raised cases at the United Nation's monitoring commissions, whilst the Dutch tended to dismiss this as propaganda. Nevertheless, Republican politicians and representatives do not appear to have wished to highlight Dutch violence on a repeated or systematic basis, because political objectives prevailed and they were aware that Republican troops were also frequently guilty of violence against civilians and public officials.

Dutch politicians and administrators claimed to stand up for 'well-meaning' Indonesians, but a policy of 'good intentions' degenerated into the 'dirty'

maintenance of public order. The image of the enemy was determined by racist and criminalizing images and language. In the end, the geographical and in particular the moral distance ensured that politicians in the Netherlands followed developments at a safe distance and accepted only marginal control of the armed forces. We call this phenomenon 'colonial dissociation'. One part of this dissociation was the tradition that politicians in The Hague maintained a great distance from decision-making in the colony.

In the Netherlands, the conflict with Indonesia was the subject of a domestic political struggle. Concerns about the level of violence soon threatened to become politicized, and those responsible thus preferred to push them into the background. Critics of the violence were told that the violence could not be ended until a settlement with the Republic had been reached. Sooner or later, all of those responsible – the army leadership, senior officials in Jakarta/Batavia, the cabinet in The Hague, the MPs who were most involved – became aware of what happened during the war; namely, that extreme violence had been used on a frequent basis. They knowingly failed to take effective action to investigate the military violence and to control and punish transgressive actions. The 'cover-up' thus had the character of a collectively designed process. Thus, not only were the armed forces answerable for the consequences of the violence for the severely affected population of Indonesia, but also all those who were politically responsible.

Bending under international pressure

Whilst there were few forces in Dutch political, military and social institutions that exerted a moderating influence on the use of violence, international pressure did have this effect, albeit to a limited extent. It took a long time for the Netherlands to fully realize that support for colonialism had declined sharply, including in the West, and that the Cold War, though still young, was starting to create a new dynamic in global relations. Dutch diplomats, politicians and military leaders retained an overly rosy image of their actions in Indonesia, their international position, and the support they could expect from Western allies. One faulty assessment piled on top of another. The Netherlands did not want to accept that not only India, Australia and many other countries, but also their closest allies, the American and British governments, disapproved of the large-scale, aggressive military policy, despite their initially ambivalent attitude to the Republic. Their allies' priorities were focused primarily on their own geopolitical interests, and support for a colonial war in Indonesia was at odds with these. Things were

different in the case of France, which, as a result of the war in Indochina, had interests that were similar to those of the Netherlands. The two countries therefore supported one another, though with some caution.

One important thread running through international involvement in the Indonesian-Dutch war was the call for the warring parties to refrain from using force and to resolve their differences peacefully. British and later also American pressure – with the cessation of Marshall Aid as a potential 'stick' in the background – forced Dutch politicians to negotiate and make what were perceived as painful concessions to the Republic. In particular, the two military offensives pursued by the Netherlands could not count on international support; in fact, the reverse was true and they had to be stopped prematurely, to the frustration of the Dutch. In that sense, international intervention had a moderating and ultimately decisive influence on the conflict.

The leaders of the Republic were aware that the internationalization of the conflict could work to their advantage, and they therefore actively promoted it. They invested in diplomatic relations and attempted to build an image of the Republic as a reliable and sound new state. Although the vast majority of countries did not formally recognize the Republic until after the transfer of sovereignty on 27 December 1949, many countries – and also the Security Council of the United Nations – had already recognized the Republic *de facto* as the representative of the Indonesian people and thus as an interlocutor.

After the departure of Japanese, Australian and British troops in late 1946, there was no longer any direct military involvement by third parties in the Indonesian-Dutch war. Yet at the same time, from mid-1947 the war was internationalized in the sense that the United Nations sent observers to the conflict area and the United States in particular started to play a mediating role, whilst Washington also stepped up pressure on both countries to reach an agreement at the negotiating table.

The pressure on the Netherlands included an arms embargo – for deployment in Indonesia, at least –imposed separately on the Netherlands by Great Britain and the United States. At the same time, the patchy way in which the two countries upheld the embargo suggested a wish to avoid alienating the Netherlands as a (potential) ally in the rapidly developing confrontation with the Soviet Union in Europe.

One should add that the desire of the United Nations and the United States in particular to resolve the Indonesian-Dutch conflict as rapidly and peacefully as possible also meant that it was considered inexpedient to pay

too much attention to complaints about extreme violence from both sides. The fear was that focusing on this issue would only drive the warring parties apart, which might adversely affect the negotiations. This was one of the reasons why many of the incidents of extreme violence reported by both parties remained unknown or unmentioned for a long time.

Dutch violence in comparative perspective

In order to help us interpret and explain Dutch military action in the Indonesian War of Independence, we compared the conflict in Indonesia with French and British wars of decolonization. After all, in the wake of the Second World War, the two biggest colonial powers faced large-scale armed opposition to their attempts at reoccupation – such as in Vietnam (1945-1954) – and during uprisings in colonies where they still exercised effective authority, such as Algeria (1954-1962), Kenya (1952-1960) and Malaysia (1948-1960). In our search for parallels and contrasts – comparison entails both, after all – many similarities emerged, especially when we focused on the nature and causes of the most extreme forms of violence.

Every colonial power believed that it had the right to prevent by force the loss of its colonies, or, in the longer term, to administer decolonization on its own terms. Nevertheless, the political processes differed considerably. The British were more effective at containing their relatively small-scale conflicts, as they were quicker to recognize that the colonial period was over, but also due to their more successful policy of divide and rule. The Netherlands and France allowed the conflicts to escalate, with the Vietnamese population additionally bearing the brunt of the high degree of internationalization of the conflict in the context of the Cold War, in the form of considerable Russian, Chinese and American support. As in Indonesia, the efforts of the former colonial power to retain close ties to Vietnam in a federal state were no match for nationalism, whether France deployed violent or non-violent means. In the settlement colony of Algeria, a break with France in any form whatsoever was completely taboo for the French throughout almost the entire conflict, leading to a violent escalation of the war.

Comparisons at the level of military action have been made in the past, but both contemporaries and later analysts tended to emphasize the contrasts in the ways in which colonial powers fought 'their' wars. The aim was to determine who had been more effective and who had acted more ruth-

lessly. The French in Algeria usually topped this 'league table of barbarity', not least because it became widely known during the war that the French had been guilty of torture – in particular – on a large scale. However, recent research has emphasized that torture was also used in British and Dutch prisons and that many captives were murdered. Despite this, since the 1950s the British method has been presented as a supposedly enlightened 'hearts and minds' approach. On the whole, a more negative assessment is made of the Dutch actions and associated 'excesses'.

In this research project, we rejected such classifications of blame and concluded that – despite differences in political context, the scale of the wars and the intensity of war violence – when we focus on the nature and causes of extreme violence, it is the similarities that prevail. Without exception, the three colonial great powers came to realize that this battle could not be won without considerable military effort, and without coercion and intimidating, collective, punitive violence. The intensity of the conflicts varied significantly, but contrary to the common excuse – 'when you chop wood, chips fly' – the degree of excessive violence was not proportional to the intensity of the warfare. For example, the relatively high casualty numbers among Kenyans and, in a certain sense, among Indonesians, are difficult to relate to the intensity of the combat alone; this was *relatively* low in these conflicts, when measured against military casualties on the colonial side.

The prevailing similarities can largely be explained by the fact that many of the atrocities took place far from the battlefield or on the margins of the actual conflict. Such atrocities included executions, torture, mass internment and forced deportations, and the punitive torching of homes, neighbourhoods and villages. Moreover, recent historical research has debunked the myth-making about the minimal use of force by the British, a myth that was perpetuated by ignoring the now-infamous Kenyan case and by emphasizing the later, less violent phase of the war in Malaysia. Analysts often overlooked the fact that this latter phase only began after a strategy of 'counter-terror', forced mass deportations and exile had done their work. In short, the overly sharp and extenuating contrast with many aspects of the French action in particular does not hold.

If we turn our comparative focus to the causes of the excessive violence, then we see that the institutionalized impunity that stemmed from the policy of condonation was not only characteristic of the Dutch situation, but also forms the connecting factor in explaining the structural character of British and French extreme violence. It was precisely this institutionalization

that played an important role in the continuation or even the crystallization of certain practices. In all of the colonies and metropoles, the perpetrators, those giving orders, those turning a blind eye and those condoning action were at all levels spared punishment or seldom held accountable. The above-mentioned 'colonial dissociation' certainly played an important role for the British and for the French in Indochina, too. Impunity should be considered in the context of the strategic thinking behind the deployment of violence against non-combatants, however; for if anything becomes clear from the comparison, it is that the dynamics of violence in every one of these conflicts were such that all colonial powers – like the armed groups they were fighting – deployed targeted, intimidating and punitive violence against the civilian population on a considerable scale in their bid to win the war.

From cover-up to painful recognition

Successive Dutch cabinets proved unwilling, or barely willing, to take responsibility for the political and military actions of the Netherlands in the Indonesian War of Independence. Both during and after the war, the administrative reflex was invariably to avoid any serious investigation of the indications of extreme violence or, when it was impossible to ignore the facts, to keep the latter out of the political debate as much as possible. Another practice from the war years was thus continued: the failure to actively document incriminating facts, or the destruction of evidence. This evasive policy was pursued for twenty years with little protest, until the commotion that arose in 1969 around the television interview with war veteran Joop Hueting, who spoke frankly about war crimes committed by Dutch servicemen, himself included. Since then there has been tension between, on the one hand, the tendency to justify and hush up this history and, on the other hand, the pursuit of critical reflection, political and journalistic engagement and, more recently, the postcolonial debate, and the balance has slowly, in fits and starts, started to tip the other way.

This development can also be traced in official, ceremonial events. Whereas Queen Juliana spoke upon the transfer of sovereignty in 1949 of the 'failure of generations,' whereby all parties were thus to blame, in 2005 the Dutch government acknowledged its culpability with the metaphor of the Netherlands having been 'on the wrong side of history'; and finally, in 2020, 75 years after the declaration of independence on 17 August 1945, King Willem-Alexander offered his apologies during a state visit to Indonesia for the 'excessive violence' on the part of the Dutch.

The assessment of the military action in the political arena has always been ambivalent. The potential criminal prosecution of war crimes was deliberately avoided for political reasons and is no longer a prospect today. The position taken by the government in 1969, that the armed forces as a whole had behaved correctly, has never been officially revised. Apologies and compensation for Indonesian victims – the size and scope of which has remained a matter of debate – only followed in 2011 after a mandatory court ruling, not out of free political choice.

There are a number of answers to the question of why the duty of accountability – including later punishment, for example through the exclusion in 1971 of war crimes committed in Indonesia from the statute of limitations – was evaded for so long. First, incumbent governments, certainly in the first decades after the war, did not wish to leave their predecessors in the lurch. This was not without reason, for there was a high degree of continuity between the parties and individuals who were politically responsible during and after the war. Moreover, there was a fear of legal and financial liability and reputational damage. The fact that for domestic reasons political leaders in the Republic of Indonesia never insisted on an investigation into Dutch war violence, and privately indicated that they would consider critical reflection inopportune, made it easier to maintain this stance.

Another important reason for putting this painful history of extreme violence to rest was electoral: there was little to be gained, only much to be lost, from critical self-reflection. More important in a political sense was the 'Indies generation', made up of more than 300,000 (Indo-)Dutch, Moluccan and Indo-Chinese immigrants and their descendants, plus another 125,000 veterans. Little attention – much less sympathy – was initially given to the fortunes of these very diverse groups, but this changed in the 1970s. Since then, there has been talk of 'obligations' to this 'Indies generation' and much energy has been put into improving what are seen as 'delicate relations'.

As a result, these groups, particularly veterans' organizations, have been able to make a significant mark on the way in which the war, especially the question of Dutch extreme violence, has been publicly commemorated and discussed. Successive cabinets have repeatedly and demonstrably inclined their ears to voices from this corner. Although these circles do not deny that regrettable 'excesses' took place, in their view they should not be attributed to the armed forces as such, even less so to individual soldiers, but primarily to politicians in The Hague. That a critical investigation or judgement

could also have a negative effect on support for ongoing military missions also seems to have played a role in these considerations, both politically and among military leaders.

From an international comparative perspective, this story is far from exceptional. When it comes to the belated and limited openness about and painful handling of the often bloody reality of Dutch decolonization policy, the Netherlands does not differ substantially from other former colonial states. Elsewhere, too, recognition progressed in fits and starts, veterans and postcolonial migrants maintained a strong voice in debates, and governments hesitated about the wording and consequences of acknowledging their own countries' war violence. There are notable differences, however, in the attitude of the former colonies when it comes to matters such as political reconciliation and claims for damages; and in that sense, comparatively speaking, Indonesia has certainly not made things difficult for the Netherlands.

In Summary

In this concluding section, we return to some of the themes that lie at the basis of the research programme, starting with the question of the way in which war was waged and the actions of the Dutch armed forces, as well as explanations for this, focusing on the level of violence and the forms of extreme violence that accompanied their deployment. Closely linked to this is the question of who was responsible for the extreme violence, and the extent to which responsibility was taken for it at the time and later.

The war that the Netherlands fought in Indonesia was in many respects a colonial phenomenon that formed part of a tradition of violent oppression, racism and exploitation. The political and military conflict between Indonesian nationalists and the Netherlands was fuelled by a clash of world views. Indonesian Republicans demanded an independent place in the post-war world order and held on to the will to determine their own fate; Dutch politicians, military and civil servants in Indonesia *and* the Netherlands allowed themselves to be guided by colonial impulses. Notions of their own superiority formed an important source of the Dutch desire to guide and control Indonesia. Indonesians thus confronted a state that wanted to impose its will on them, driven by economic and geopolitical motives and a belief in its continuing mission in the 'East' and its own indispensability. The decision to reoccupy Indonesia militarily and administratively was taken long before the end of the Second World War,

but its implementation was delayed by the major organizational problems afflicting the liberated Netherlands. In the final months of 1945, the desire to dispatch troops overseas may have become more urgent due to the widespread, irregular and fierce violence in the first phase of the Indonesian Revolution.

In the course of the war, the Netherlands did make concessions – on paper, at least – towards the partial dismantling of the former colonial state. The Dutch reluctantly recognized *de facto* the authority of the Republic in the area that it occupied, but they continued to aim for 'decolonization' in their chosen direction, a direction that was closely aligned with the traditional colonial policy and that capitalized on sometimes strong regional tensions and movements. This entailed the construction of a United States of Indonesia, of which the Republic would be no more than a federal state that would remain permanently tied to the Netherlands in a Union. That would have been a very limited kind of independence.

The extent to which the Netherlands had underestimated the broadly supported Indonesian aspirations for independence became manifest immediately after the Japanese surrender. Indications of widespread support among the population and a readiness to defend independence by force were ignored. The Republic was portrayed as a Japanese fabrication that would collapse as soon as Dutch rule and the army returned. Numerous Dutch sources expressed the belief that the masses were apolitical and that they were actually pro-Dutch, although they often dared not admit this for fear of the 'extremists'.

The Dutch image of the 'enemy' was built on a long tradition of segregation in which the colony's inhabitants were marginalized on racial and cultural grounds in a moral and social order based on Western ideas. The ability of the Indonesians to act constructively and autonomously was downplayed, or sometimes even denied. The Republic was said to be incapable of establishing a stable government, and the anti-colonial resistance was often branded as subversive, excessive and criminal. In the colonial tradition, this image of the enemy distinguished between the 'well-meaning' majority and a small group of 'extremists' who had to be fought. This legitimized taking a harsh approach. From the Dutch perspective, the Republic was an unreliable opponent, including when it came to political-military agreements and treaties. It had to be kept small or broken at all costs.

To achieve this goal, the Netherlands used all possible means, not least the armed forces. For this reason, the government decided to dispatch as

many as 95,000 to 100,000 involuntary conscript troops overseas, a decision that required a post-hoc amendment to the constitution. The objective was to defeat the Republic and its army and eliminate the other Indonesian armed groups, as well as occupy and control the population centres, key economic areas and lines of communication. A military approach was chosen to achieve this end, major components of which had already been used in the colonial past with varying degrees of success. This applied, among other things, to the 'spearhead strategy', the essence of which was that the armed forces, with mobile columns in a rapid offensive, making use of their material superiority and with great show of force, would capture the main enemy 'sources of resistance' and topple the military and political leadership. After this intended 'decapitation', the resistance, under pressure from the intimidating action, would collapse like a house of cards, leaving a single phase of 'pacification' to follow. The tactics used in this strategy – small-scale patrols, purges and the 'restless pursuit' of the opponent – had emphatically colonial roots.

As the Dutch armed forces had many more and better weapons at their disposal, they were able – especially during the two major military offensives – to achieve ostensible successes. However, these proved to be of limited value in a war that from mid-1947increasingly assumed the character of a guerrilla conflict. The attempt to control an ever-larger territory overwhelmed the armed forces, mainly due to the actions of the TNI's effective but also very harsh use of guerrilla tactics, with the broad – voluntarily, but sometimes under heavy pressure – support of the Indonesian population. The Dutch military apparatus was unable to formulate an effective response to this mode of combat, despite some initial successes in winning over the population, or parts of it, in some places. Nothing came of the intended reconstruction of the colonial state and the associated civilian institutions.

This is hardly surprising; the Dutch objective, particularly from mid-1947, of dominating enormous areas and the population determined the nature and intensity of the war, but the method used focused almost exclusively on destroying the enemy, rarely on controlling or winning over the population. That the Dutch armed forces did not succeed in their aim was not only due to limited resources and military doctrine, but also to the lack of vision on the part of the civil and military leadership, and what is described in the third chapter as the 'mental component', which was key to military effectiveness and fell short in almost every respect. Badly trained soldiers were dispatched and led by a cadre with insufficient knowledge, experience,

training and ethical awareness to carry out such an extremely complex and demanding military mission. This was all the more disastrous because it involved a morally complex guerrilla conflict, one that was also massive, intensive and harsh; a people's war in which the distinction between combatant and non-combatant could seldom be made, resulting in increasing violence and the blurring of norms by all parties concerned.

Dutch counter-guerrilla warfare put the emphasis on small-scale patrols of a vast territory, sweeps by larger units, often supported by heavy weaponry, and collective punishment or deterrence of fighters and civilians by destroying homes and food supplies, among other things. These actions were frequently fuelled by fear, panic and distrust among the soldiers and their distrust of the civilian population, which often resulted in the latter becoming the victim. In order to obtain information and force confessions, the intelligence services made systematic use of heavy-handed interrogations and torture. That is not to say that the military action was always violent, of course. The troops provided limited and usually *ad hoc* medical aid and other forms of humanitarian assistance to foster goodwill, and they also helped to rebuild the infrastructure. Relations with the population could – at least ostensibly – be friendly, whilst many patrols and actions took place non-violently, partly as a consequence of the 'invisibility' of the enemy or the relative peace in a certain area.

Responsibility was passed along the hierarchical lines, from high to low. The result was autonomous action and few checks at the lowest operational levels. This great freedom of action at a low level was further promoted by the fact that the troops were dispersed over a large number of small and isolated posts, particularly in the second half of the war. Young and inexperienced officers and non-commissioned officers were thus given too much responsibility for the success of the counterguerrilla and territorial control in their sector, leaving a heavy mark on the way in which the war was fought. Not only the choice of an enemy-focused approach, but also inadequate military leadership at all levels – with the most important failure being the condoning or inadequate punishment of misdeeds – are key explanations for the use of extreme violence by the Dutch armed forces.

When it comes to quantifying the extent and consequences of extreme violence in the Indonesian War of Independence and thus also casualty numbers, it should be noted that the incomplete nature of the Dutch and Indonesian source material makes this impossible. Much was not reported and recorded, and much of what was recorded at the time was later lost or

deliberately destroyed; the post-war process of establishing the truth by holding interviews was limited in nature. It has simply proved impossible to give an approximation of how often extreme violence, broken down into its many forms, occurred. This also applies, as explained above, to determining the precise impact in terms of the dead, wounded and other victims on the Indonesian side, and to making a sharp distinction between military and civilian victims.

From the fragmented quantitative material, however, it can be concluded that the numbers of casualties as a result of military confrontations were distributed extremely unevenly. Against the widely circulated estimate of 100,000 Indonesian deaths, which was discussed at the beginning of this conclusion, there were around 5,300 deaths among the Dutch armed forces. According to Dutch military reports – which, as mentioned above, should be read with caution – for every death in Dutch military ranks there were twenty Indonesian deaths; and if we only count soldiers in Dutch service who were killed by force, this ratio rises to one in 40.

It is impossible to arrive at even a remotely accurate number, but countless and diverse sources provide convincing evidence and indications that many forms of extreme violence were used on a structural basis by units from the KL, the KNIL and the Marine Brigade; and this also happened on the Republican side. Much of that violence took place at the margins or even completely outside the actual combat, such as liquidations, executions without trial and the torching of houses and villages. When capturing, interning and interrogating prisoners and when carrying out reprisals, Dutch soldiers used violence in a structural and sometimes even systematic way, including abuse and torture. It was already known that the special forces (Depot Speciale Troepen, later Korps Speciale Troepen) were given *carte blanche* by the army leadership to use extreme violence, if needs be, to break the resistance and coerce the population into supporting the Netherlands – something that the special forces did on a large scale. The intelligence services likewise took and were granted the space to use extreme violence on a systematic basis. In the many purges and other combat operations, Dutch troops often used considerable firepower, including heavy weapons. In doing so, they regularly put civilian lives at risk, not least to minimize the risk of losses on their own side. However, the scale and the effects of this form of extreme violence cannot be determined with accuracy. In addition to the extreme violence that was considered more or less functional, which was intended to serve a military purpose, there was also

dysfunctional violence, including looting and rape. The former was tolerated or desired and seldom punished; the latter was not usually tolerated, but at any rate punished only sparingly.

In any case, the conflict was characterized by a high level of violence, although with significant differences according to place and time. Moreover, many boundaries were vague and fluid; between combatants and non-combatants, between periods of conflict and cease-fires, and also topographically, in the sense that there were no clear frontlines. In this complex context, it was seldom possible to draw a clear line between 'permissible' war violence and forms of extreme violence. Nevertheless, the military and civilian authorities were aware that the Dutch armed forces systematically crossed the line. This awareness did not result in a willingness to stop such acts.

The picture that emerges from the different sub-projects is of a colonial war that was waged in increasingly vicious and bitter fashion, and that became literally all-consuming. On the Dutch side, achieving a military victory became the guiding principle for a political majority and the administrative and military personnel who implemented this policy, in addition to limiting Dutch losses. Successive Dutch governments paved the way for this, in close consultation with an army leadership that put constant pressure on those who were politically responsible. From high to low, civil servants, diplomats and military, as well as the military and civilian justice systems, largely adhered to the belief that the conflict could and had to be settled by – violent – military means. This also applied to the majority of the media and other civil society institutions.

In Indonesia, the Netherlands waged the war under authoritarian power relations, meaning that in practice the army increasingly dominated the civilian administration. Checks and balances were lacking or were disabled. As critical voices in Dutch society were more or less marginalized, too, also due to active opposition from above – and, in the case of conscientious objectors, severely punished – in the end, in addition to the Republic's successful military strategy of attrition, international pressure was needed to bring the Netherlands to the negotiating table. Although the Dutch government realized after the first quarter of 1949 that the war had become a hopeless undertaking, giving up proved to be a difficult and painful challenge. The Dutch protagonists hardly knew how to cast off their rigid pre-war colonial mindset, as well as their political and economic interests, and had great difficulty acknowledging the failure of the policy pursued since 1945.

With regard to responsibility: the Dutch armed forces *as an institution* were responsible for the violence used, including the extreme violence, but they operated, as mentioned above, in close consultation with and under the responsibility of the Dutch government. Dutch politicians, supported by their constituencies, did not take any responsibility for the war and the extreme violence, however, and they were able to follow this line because there was broad support for the war and because they were subject to little scrutiny. The geographical and in particular the psychological distance played a key role in this, with the Dutch individuals involved at all levels almost automatically applying different standards to the colonies and colonial subjects. They knew that crimes had been committed, albeit via what was often filtered information, yet they turned a blind eye and seldom took action. In practice, this amounted to an acceptance of extreme violence.

The research programme has shown that the actors on the Dutch side – politicians, military, civil servants, judges and others – were collectively and systematically willing to tolerate, justify and leave unpunished extreme violence in order to impose their will on the opponent and win the war. They acted in this way for the sake of the end-goal, convinced of their own rightness and invoking their own good intentions. People at all levels were prepared to cast aside the written and unwritten rules of justice, and with them their own sense of justice. Many sources testify to this, from soldiers in the field to senior administrators. That sense of justice – a moral order – guided people's sense of right or wrong, and reflected their upbringing and education, subjective life experience, and interaction with their own community and society as a whole.

These norms and values were only partly enshrined in rules of conduct and regulations, but they did provide food for thought. It is striking that those involved frequently drew comparisons between their own behaviour or that of their fellow fighters and the criminal actions of the German and Japanese occupiers during the Second World War. That they were nevertheless prepared to cast moral frameworks aside can be explained in various ways: pressure of circumstances or hierarchical relationships, ideological considerations, a colonial mindset, fear, the will to survive, blunted mental capacities or brutalization as a result of wartime conditions. What remained was the devastating impact of the war and the violence, first and foremost on the Indonesians.

With this enormous impact, which has never received much attention in the Netherlands and which continues to have an effect in both Indonesia and in the Netherlands itself, we conclude this book. There were not only

countless, mainly Indonesian dead and wounded to mourn, but also other victims of physical violence, such as torture, rape and detention under inhumane conditions, and of non-physical violence, for example in the form of intimidation; of actions directed against property, such as the burning of *kampongs*, theft and the destruction of goods and food; and of large-scale internment and other repressive measures. In addition to all those who were directly affected, there were many who suffered indirectly or psychologically as a result of the war, including the families of detainees who were held captive for long periods. There were also the socio-economic effects of the naval blockade and, in a broader sense, the cost of delaying the rebuilding of the country by the Republic of Indonesia after the Japanese surrender. Many of these factors were not examined in depth in this research, but they form part of the material and immaterial harm caused to Indonesia by the Netherlands in this last major colonial war.

V.

EPILOGUE

Dealing with the legacies of a violent past

Hilmar Farid

This book contains a series of research studies undertaken by a Dutch and an Indonesian research team, on the use of violence in the period 1945-1949. In his introduction, Gert Oostindie explains why this research was conducted; it arose from fierce debates about the involvement of the Dutch armed forces in the extreme violence perpetrated in Indonesia. As the research questions, the conceptual framework and the methodology were defined in these debates, the relevance of this book will be appreciated more in the Netherlands than in Indonesia. That does not mean, however, that this research is of little significance to the Indonesian discourse on the period in question. We can learn much from the data, analyses and conclusions in this book, not only with regard to the outbursts of violence during the revolution, but also in relation to the violence in the period following independence. In this epilogue, I shall focus on several points that may be of interest from an Indonesian perspective. I shall also address certain issues that the project seems to have overlooked.

In his introductory chapters, Gert Oostindie maps out the Dutch debates that lie behind this project. He notes that after the war, which ended with the

transfer of sovereignty in December 1949, there was hardly any public debate about the violence perpetrated by the Dutch army. The veterans who wrote about this period mainly shared their memories of service in Indonesia, and whilst they occasionally mentioned the violence, they focused on actions by the Indonesian side. It was not until 1969 that Joop Hueting, a psychologist and war veteran, broached in a television interview the extreme violence used by Dutch troops. This was followed by the study by the sociologists Jacques van Doorn and Wim Hendrix, and subsequently by the volumes of Loe de Jong's publication, *The Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Second World War,* concerning Indonesia. Debates about this black page in the nation's history also flared up several times during state visits, both by the Netherlands to Indonesia and vice versa. However, it was the 2011 court case on the massacre in Rawagede that mainly sparked public interest in the use of extreme violence.

From this it can be deduced that 'the extreme violence perpetrated by Dutch troops' continues to haunt the Dutch public and the Dutch government. This legacy of past violence is evidently a blemish on the image of the Netherlands as a democratic, open-minded country that respects human rights. Moreover, we must not forget that the Netherlands was itself a victim of Nazi atrocities and suffered relatively high mortality per capita in wartime Europe. How is it thus possible that such a society became involved in the perpetration of extreme violence in Indonesia, so shortly after it had fallen victim to extreme violence on its own soil? How is it possible that such a country, which is actively involved in the promotion of international human rights and hosts a number of international legal organizations that fight crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide, has not done something similar with regard to the extreme violence committed in the past by its own soldiers? From the Dutch perspective, the legacy of the past is closely intertwined with the country's position in the present day.

For the Indonesian public, the violence used by Dutch troops had been part of the national narrative for much longer, meaning that cases such as the massacres in Rawagede or South Sulawesi, whilst bringing new facts to light, mainly confirmed long-held beliefs. That may be the reason why the public paid so little attention to the handling of the Rawagede case in a Dutch court. The Indonesian government also took a passive stance, and appears to have preferred the maintenance of good relations with the Netherlands to looking into the matter.[1] The national human rights committee *Komnas HAM* (Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia) and various human rights organizations appreciated the Dutch initiative to hold a trial, and

compared it to the slow Indonesian settlement of past cases of violence that took place in Indonesia after independence. The lawsuit on behalf of the victims of Rawagede was filed by the Committee of Dutch Debts of Honour, a non-governmental organization that actively defends victims of extreme violence – the organization itself uses the term 'war crimes' – with the support of Dutch lawyers, without any interference from the government.

Nevertheless, this research project does not merely confirm existing beliefs. 'That there was no single war' is a key conclusion, one that will lead, I believe, to new debates in Indonesia. After all, the extreme violence was not only perpetrated by Dutch troops, but also by Indonesian soldiers and armed groups; and not only in combat against an armed enemy, but also against unarmed civilians, mainly Indo-Europeans and Chinese, and those who were suspected of sympathizing with the Dutch. That fact that the research paid attention to violence perpetrated by Indonesians, although it was not the main focus, provoked criticism from various quarters in Indonesia.[2] Indeed, Indonesian historians have yet to carry out a comprehensive investigation of the violence committed by Indonesians – but that does not mean that the problem has never been discussed. The short stories 'Surabaya' by the author Idrus and 'Dendam' (Revenge) by Pramoedya Ananta Toer revealed the dark side of the revolution, in which Indonesians committed acts of extreme violence against fellow citizens. From the 1950s onwards, films appeared that were critical of the Indonesian armed groups that were involved in extreme violence, including rape, against their Indonesian compatriots. The fear that this research would tarnish the Indonesian image is therefore completely unfounded.

Much more important than the question of whether or not there has been a response from the present-day Netherlands or Indonesia to these revelations of extreme violence, is the question of the direction of the debate. To what end are we investigating and discussing violence that took place more than 75 years ago? What can we really learn from this historical period, not only to do justice to the victims, but also to create a better life for the future? Although these questions may lie beyond the scope of this research, I think that it is important that we reflect on them together.

On concepts and sources

When researching violence in history, we always struggle with the question of which concepts to use, and this project is no exception. After Hueting used the term 'war crimes' in a television interview, he was immediately

bombarded with fierce criticism from fellow veterans. After this, concepts such as 'disproportionate' and 'excessive violence', as well as 'violent infringements', tended to be used. The latter concept was also used by King Willem Alexander in his speech at the palace in Bogor in March 2020. This is by no means a straightforward matter, of course, given that every concept has certain political and legal implications. When we describe the use of force by Dutch servicemen as a 'war crime', for example, that is very problematic, because it puts the Netherlands in the same category as Nazi Germany or Japan in the Second World War. And when this concept is used in judicial processes, the question arises as to whether a Dutch judge can handle such cases – for are war crimes not classified as international crimes? The same applies to the use of the term 'genocide', which has serious political and legal implications. The public reactions in the Netherlands and Indonesia would be very different if all kinds of concepts were strictly applied.

It was for this reason that the researchers unanimously decided to use the term 'extreme violence'. The authoritative study by the German historian Christian Gerlach, who investigated the use of mass violence in the twentieth century, provides key reference material in this respect.[3] The concept was developed in response to the concepts of 'state violence' and 'genocide', which focus on mass violence committed by one party against another. In Gerlach's view, this precludes an integral consideration of extreme violence committed by both parties, whereby the perpetrator of violence can simultaneously be the victim. According to this book's researchers, due to its multi-causal nature, this approach offers an effective framework for understanding the totality of the extreme violence perpetrated during the revolution. Violence was not merely committed by one group against another, but also by different parties against each other. The Indonesian side – which consisted of various armed groups, in addition to the regular army – was also involved in extreme violence, including mass executions, against fellow Indonesians.

Whilst I agree with this approach, at the same time I think that we should pay extra attention to Gerlach's warning that 'mass violence cannot be viewed as a freak event, inexplicable or occurring outside of history [...] it requires broad contextualization'.[4] The fact that the concept of extreme violence emphasizes the many facets of the violence perpetrated during the revolution should not lead us to overlook the main cause of the wave of violence: namely, the return of the Dutch, who wanted to restore colonial rule. The violence was not unexpected at that time. And, as the researchers have shown, the Dutch realized in the course of time that they could only achieve

their goal by intensifying the use of force. The concept of extreme violence should therefore not preclude the aspects of intentionality and premeditation that are usually to be found in the conventional definition of genocide; for this is what happened, for example, in the case of the special forces led by Westerling in South Sulawesi.

This brings us to the matter of the use of sources. The argument that the extreme violence during the revolution had a multi-causal nature should be supported with reference to a variety of sources. For example, the contribution by Esther Captain and Onno Sinke about violence during the early phase of the revolution, the so-called *bersiap* period, shows how the concept of extreme violence is used to understand this exceptionally complex and near-chaotic period. However, the sources they use in their contribution mainly consist of reports and testimonies from the Dutch military and secret services. Indonesian voices and points of view are present in the newspaper articles and some of the memoirs consulted, but in terms of numbers and depth, there is an imbalance with the Dutch sources. Testimonies by Indonesians are included in the form of interviews – or rather, interrogations – carried out by NEFIS officers. Although the researchers are aware of the biased character of these sources, it is a pity that such an extensive investigation did not make greater use of the numerous testimonies on the Indonesian side.[5]

The lack of balance in the use of sources is also evident in the handling of the Indonesian response to the violence perpetrated by the Indonesian side. The researchers tended to focus on official publications, including *Indonesia in the Course of History* [*Indonesia dalam Arus Sejarah*], a series that no longer plays an important role in modern-day historical discourse in Indonesia. Other official publications, such as the *National History of Indonesia* [*Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*], no longer function as a 'master narrative', as they did during the New Order [*Orde Baru*].[6] These days, numerous studies published by institutions of higher education and local research institutes consider all kinds of aspects of the revolution in Indonesia, including the violence committed by Indonesian armed groups, and these studies are in fact highly critical of the official historical narrative. A no less important source, certainly in the digital age, is that of the online publications by historia.id and tirto.id, which pay particular attention to topics relating to violence in history, both during the revolution and in its wake. Such publications are much more influential in shaping present-day historical discourses in Indonesia, and it is therefore very regrettable that they completely escaped the researchers' attention.

Anatomy of the violence

One very valuable contribution by this research is the anatomy of extreme violence perpetrated during the revolution. The researchers carefully mapped out the various forces involved in the extreme violence on both the Dutch and the Indonesian side, and thus avoided the generalization that there were just two parties. In reality, all of the parties involved were made up of various ranks with different backgrounds, motives and levels of involvement. The methods of violence also differed, from summary executions to technical violence based on artillery and other heavy weapons.[7] We also gain a picture of the conflict area with its extremely fluid, partly overlapping territories, and how it changed constantly as the demarcation lines moved, power shifted and the intensity of the conflict changed. If there is one concept that encompasses all of this, it is that of the integral and permanent absence of authority. The Dutch side, which was better organized and had better equipment and weapons, was frequently unable to keep an effective check on its own troops, let alone control the situation as whole. The same was true of the Indonesian side, which consisted of different forces and armed groups with a more varied chain of command.

In this book, Gert Oostindie and Rémy Limpach provide a detailed account of the military powers involved in the war: namely, Indonesia, Britain and the Netherlands. They reveal the differences in the leaders' visions of the policy to be pursued during the war and specific strategies and operations; differences between official policy on the one hand, and orders and the implementation of operations in the field on the other hand; and the interrelations between the different armed forces that were present. There is a need for additional research to complement the geography of violence during the revolution, but a number of the findings in this book can help us to understand why extreme violence was committed in a particular place and particular time, for example, and not in another place and another time. Furthermore, this research shows that the extreme violence was not always planned and orchestrated centrally, but that it seems to have been a confluence of complex and multi-causal events.

Mapping out the military powers also reveals that the war took place between two force fields that were asymmetrical or out of balance. On the one hand, there was the Dutch military, which was well-organized, despite consisting of different parts. On the other hand, there was the Indonesian military, which not only lacked a strong single chain of command, but also

consisted of divisions that contested each other. The British army – which represented the power of the Allies and was supposed to play a mediating role – favoured the Dutch armed forces, especially after the escalation of extreme violence on the Indonesian side. The Japanese army, the losing party, was divided. Some Japanese fought on the Indonesian side, others were mobilized by the British and became part of the security forces. In several cases, Japanese were also involved in the use of extreme violence against Indonesians and fell victim to extreme violence in turn. The structure of the chains of command was closely related to the issue of responsibility, which will be addressed below.

The picture of the military forces becomes even more complicated when we consider ethnic differences and political orientation. The Dutch side consisted of an army that had been dispatched directly from the Netherlands, as well as Dutch and Indo-Europeans who were already in Indonesia – many of whom had just been released from Japanese internment – a large group of KNIL soldiers from different Indonesian regions, and a number of irregular troops, including criminals who committed acts of extreme violence during *bersiap*. There was a great difference between the Dutch servicemen who came directly from the Netherlands and Dutch soldiers who had served in the KNIL for longer, including before the war. The latter had suffered deeply during the Japanese internment and were fiercely opposed to Indonesian nationalist movements. There were also conflicts and divisions within the ranks of the KNIL between those who were loyal to the Netherlands and those who were on the side of the Republic. The irregular troops who were later recruited by General Spoor from 1947, and would prove ineffective militarily, even gave rise to new problems. Nevertheless, the Dutch chain of command was more solid, and the various incidents that threatened unity were tackled with disciplinary measures.

On the Indonesian side, the composition of the armed groups was also influenced by ethnic diversity. The regular Indonesian army was a multi-ethnic organization from the very start. The leaders of the army units were chosen for their education, military experience and other capacities, not for their ethnic origin. Within the soldiers' ranks, however, groups emerged based on ethnic origin, because interregional mobility was still very limited at that time. The majority of West Javanese troops were of ethnic Sundanese descent, for example, for reasons of availability. No single army unit was formed on the basis of ethnic origin, however. The situation was very different in the case of armed groups such as the people's militias (*laskar*) and

combat groups (*badan perjuangan*) formed on the basis of ethnic origin, such as the Kebaktian Rakyat Indonesia Sulawesi; or on the basis of religious belief, such as the *Laskar Hizbullah*; or on the basis of political orientation, such as *Pesindo*. Even though the leaders of the Republic opposed sectarianism in the fight for independence, at the lower levels, differences in race, ethnicity and religion were a key factor in the increasing animosity towards those who were considered different.

In order to understand how all of these differences played a role in the waves of extreme violence, the chronology of the events is of utmost importance. Although yet more research is needed to establish a comprehensive chronology, this research provides a relatively good picture that keeps us from making generalizations or from assuming that the cases of violence were sudden outbursts; an impression that is often given by the narrative of *bersiap,* which took place between August 1945 and March 1946. The chapter by Captain and Sinke in this volume helps us to identify the causal connections, on the one hand, between the arrival of the British and Dutch troops and the release of internees from the camps – including c. 10,000 KNIL soldiers who 'shot at everything they considered suspicious' – and, on the other hand, the response of the Indonesians, especially Indonesian youths (*pemuda*). Unfortunately, the authors found too few sources on the Indonesian side to be able to understand this era in its entirety. For this reason, I think it relevant here to quote the testimony of the novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer, who was staying in Jakarta at that time:

> The English army began to release European internees from the Japanese camps in the Jakarta region. They armed some of the former internees, and the latter started shooting at the people. The Japanese soldiers did that, too. The *pemuda* in Jakarta began to oversee order in their own neighbourhoods. This period is usually known as the '*jaman siap*', the '*siap* time'. The '*siap*' cry resounded in the neighbourhoods where soldiers and former internees ran amok.[8]

This does not mean, of course, that extreme violence during the *bersiap* period was merely a reaction to or self-defence against provocation. In order to obtain a more balanced and comprehensive picture, however, we would do well to listen more to the voices of individuals such as Pramoedya. In the same way, we gain a better understanding of the *aksi daulat*, a sovereignty movement that emerged during the 'social revolution' on Java and Sumatra,

when the voices of the perpetrators and victims are represented in full and not only taken on the basis of information from the army, the police or the courts. Fear, suspicion and misunderstandings are an integral part of such a conflict, one that has so many sides. Basing our chronology on information from multiple sources will preserve us from erroneous analyses and conclusions.

In their chapter about the 'revolutionary worlds' that emerged from the diverse revolutionary developments, Roel Frakking and Martijn Eickhoff discuss the complexity of the revolution. The greatest challenge is subsequently to interpret the interrelations between the various events and the world-in-revolution. Gerlach's approach is helpful in this respect. He argues that violent events cannot be studied in isolation, detached from history. He goes on to write:

> one should inquire into the entire social process of which mass violence is only a part, the relationships between structural and physical violence, between direct violence and dynamic shifts in inequality, and between social groups and state organs. As a historian, I seek to complement the dominant political histories in the field by a social history of mass violence.

This means that we cannot view the period 1945-1949 in isolation from the preceding colonial period. The social history of mass violence existed long before the 'outbursts of extreme violence' during the revolution.

In other words, it is imperative that we emphasize that the extreme violence did not start in August 1945. In various parts of this book, the researchers show that violence was inherent to the colonial system. Both physical and symbolic violence were among the methods used by the colonial ruler to gain and maintain power. The colonial wars throughout the nineteenth century in all parts of the archipelago, the penal sanctions on the plantations on Sumatra, and various forms of violence and other cases of unlawful action created a social landscape that became fertile ground for outbreaks of extreme violence in subsequent periods.[9] The Dutch policy of re-installing an inherently violent colonial system and dispatching military troops in order to achieve that goal therefore formed the main cause of the series of extreme acts of violence. If extreme violence, war crimes and genocide cannot be tolerated on humanitarian grounds, then the colonial system itself cannot be excused, either, because it relied on such practices throughout history.

The question of responsibility

In his introductory chapter, Gert Oostindie traces the shifts in the attitudes of the Dutch government and the Dutch public over time. He shows that when the mass violence became public, Dutch servicemen felt that their honour and reputation had been sullied, and this also had political significance. After all, the veterans had considerable influence on the government. Through their access to the royal family and senior government officials, military leaders formed part of the social and political elite. They actively prevented discussions about the extreme violence from surfacing. The politicians handled this problem with great caution, because they had every interest in maintaining good relations with the veterans, certainly in view of their considerable share of votes in elections. Disclosing the use of extreme violence, let alone settling it in the courts, would undoubtedly stir up the establishment.

When the debate about the use of extreme violence came to the fore and could no longer be concealed, the Dutch government sought a new way out of this dilemma. A committee was established to investigate the available data, resulting in the *Excessennota* (1969), which was drawn up on the basis of governmental archives. According to Rémy Limpach, the concept of 'excesses' was deliberately chosen at the time in order to give the impression that extreme violence had not been used on a large scale, and that its use had not been systematic. It indicated that the violence was neither planned in advance, nor was it part of government policy. Responsibility for the use of violence thus lay with the perpetrators in the field, not with the commanders, let alone the policymakers. The Dutch government held firmly to this line for many years; until the courts ruled that the Dutch state should pay reparations to the families of the victims. The truth came out, and regrets and apologies were expressed, but the question of responsibility remains unanswered.

The situation in Indonesia, by contrast, is quite different. From the outset, people were in no doubt that the armed struggle against Dutch colonialism was a 'just war'.[10] The Preamble to the Constitution emphatically states that 'colonial rule must be abolished throughout the world, because it is not in keeping with human dignity and justice'. This formed the basis on which the Indonesian Republic was founded. The extreme violence used during *bersiap* was not part of the struggle for independence, and the leadership publicly condemned such actions from the start. Sukarno and Hatta themselves repeatedly called on the people to hold back and refrain from using violence.

In his work *Perjuangan kita* [Our struggle], Sutan Sjahrir denounced the violence against Indo-Europeans and Chinese, and he criticized the leaders of the Republic who were unable to contain the situation. The leaders at the highest levels realized that the failure to keep the waves of violence in check would be deeply detrimental to the course of events in the Republic. They wanted to show the world that the struggle for independence was grounded in human dignity and, even more importantly, that they had the struggle for independence under control.

This does not mean, of course, that Indonesia handled the issue of the extreme violence well. The leaders of the Republic repeatedly looked the other way when armed groups committed violent acts against civilians and prisoners of war. In many cases, they realized that they lacked sufficient power to discipline the perpetrators of the violence. The lawsuits brought against those who had committed violent acts, such as the case of the social revolution on Central Java, were held not to give the victims their due, but to consolidate the Republic's power by condemning those who had exceeded their authority.[11] However inadequately this may have been handled, it cannot be said that the leaders of the Republic ignored or covered up extreme violence. Tackling extreme violence was part of the fight to consolidate the ranks of the revolutionary groups. Moreover, certain artists, especially writers and filmmakers, explored the moral dimensions of extreme violence in their work.

The legal handling of extreme violence proved to be more complex than it had first seemed. After the Second World War, the victors condemned the losers: the Nazis at the Nuremberg Trials, the Japanese at the Tokyo Tribunal. The extreme violence committed by the Allies, including the rape of tens of thousands of German women in the early phase of the Allied occupation of Germany, was never brought to trial. The law took effect only for the losers of the war. In the case of the extreme violence in Indonesia at the time of the revolution, no tribunal such as that in Nuremberg or Tokyo was held, because the outcome of the war was decided in negotiations. In this case, the later lawsuits in the cases of Rawagede and South Sulawesi functioned more as truth-finding than as enforcement of law. But is there indeed a court that can administer justice in historical cases of extreme violence?

Legacies of a violent past

After the transfer of sovereignty in December 1949, the Netherlands focused on national reconstruction. The aid from the United States made a

major contribution to this effort, and the country enjoyed unprecedented economic growth in the 1950s. Indonesia made much less progress in the interim, partly because the outcomes of the Round Table Conference proved to be very disadvantageous. At that conference, the Netherlands succeeded in fully protecting its own commercial interests, so that it could operate once more as it had done in the colonial period. The Indonesian government was obliged to consult the Netherlands when deciding on monetary and fiscal policies that might affect Dutch economic interests. Indonesia was also obliged to take over the colonial government's debts, including debts incurred by the Netherlands during the war with Indonesia, excluding military expenditure. During a two-year transition phase, Indonesia likewise had to pay 17,000 Dutch civil servants in accordance with European salary scales. As Howard Dick writes, all of these steps meant that 'the Netherlands was able to liquidate its colonial establishment largely at Indonesia's expense',[12] and could focus on the national economy.

This was not the only colonial legacy with which Indonesia was saddled, however; under pressure to secure power rapidly and achieve a functioning government, Indonesia took over the colonial governmental institutions and the judiciary. Some of them remain in place today. The original proposition of the revolution – to bring radical change to the colonial system – was transformed into a transfer of power from the colonial rulers to the Indonesian national government. With such an institutional structure and legal apparatus, the government's steps to carry out the liberation mission as prescribed in the Preamble to the Constitution of 1945 became more and more complicated; not to mention the clashes in various regions, armed uprisings supported by the United States, and political differences among the Republican leaders. As a result, safeguarding stability came to be more important than wholesale reform of the colonial system. As part of this development, the role of the military became increasingly prominent, which in turn was a factor that heavily influenced the maintenance of the existing system.

The extreme violence during the revolution is an important part of this colonial legacy. If lawsuits on cases of extreme violence are conducted without due consideration of the historical background, they run the risk of blurring the relationship between such cases and the inherently violent colonial system. They also have the potential to create new injustices, because there are many other cases that will never be tried. In studies of the legacies of past violence, we encounter the idea of historical justice. Extreme violence forms part of a complex history, and there is no simple solution. Many countries

in the world today – mostly countries that have lived under authoritarian regimes – continue to struggle with this issue, from Guatemala and South Africa to Indonesia. Lying at the heart of the attempts to overcome this legacy is the revelation of the truth; and that is surely this research project's most important contribution.

This research can be seen as an attempt to 'right past wrongs', analogous to the movement to restore European museum collections that were acquired by force, or to topple statues and monuments that symbolize colonial power. They are all expressions of the effort to keep historical justice alive, and they are extremely important: not only as a way to correct what happened in the past, but also as fuel for imagining a better vision of the future.

Notes

1 **1. Background, guiding principles and methodology**

1 The armed clashes in New Guinea in 1962, even if involving deaths and injuries, are considered to constitute a low-intensity conflict, which is sometimes referred to as 'the Netherlands' last small colonial war'.

2 The acronyms stand for the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, KITLV-KNAW), the Netherlands Institute for Military History (Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie, NIMH), and the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies, NIOD-KNAW).

3 In a later formulation from early 2017, the research was to be about 'the most important questions about decolonization policy, violence, and war — with a focus on (accounting for) the Dutch military conduct – [will be] answered, with close attention given to the historical, political, and international context and the legacy of the war'. This and other documents related to the study can be found at NIOD, archive Research - ODGOI [archive number to be determined after inclusion of the collection in the NIOD archive in 2022],

4 The number of Indonesian victims is calculated on the basis of Dutch military documentation, see Christiaan Harinck, Nico van Horn and Bart Luttikhuis, 'Wie telt de Indonesische doden?', *De Groene Amsterdammer* 141:30 (2017). The most recent estimates are given by Rémy Limpach, '"Ze vielen als gemaaid koren". Een beschouwing over de verliescijfers in Indonesië, 1945-49', *Militaire Spectator* 1 (2022). Estimates of the number of civilian casualties during the *bersiap* period range from 3,000 to several times this amount; see the chapter by Esther Captain and Onno Sinke in this book. The number of deaths as a result of internal strife among the Indonesians is unknown but is somewhere in the tens of thousands.

5 Speech by Foreign Affairs Minister Bot on 15 August 2005, at *Stichting Herdenking 15 augustus 1945*.

6 Letter from Prime Minister De Jong to the Lower House of Parliament, 29 January 1969; *Handelingen Tweede Kamer*, 1968-1969, appendix 10.008, no. 1.

7 See the chapter by Gert Oostindie and Meindert van der Kaaij in this book; also Maurice Swirc, 'Gelijke monniken, gelijke kepie gaat niet op', *De Groene Amsterdammer* 39 (2019).

8 Stef Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog. De Nederlandse oorlogsmisdaden in Indonesië en hun verwerking* (Amsterdam 2002); see also, for example, Peter Romijn, 'Myth and Understanding: Recent Controversy

about Dutch Historiography on the Netherlands Indonesian Conflict', R.S. Kisner (ed.), The Low Countries and beyond (New York 1993) 219-229; Stef Scagliola, 'Cleo's "unfinished business". Coming to Terms with Dutch War Crimes in Indonesia's War of Independence', *Journal of Genocide Research* 14:3-4 (2012) 419-439; Martijn Eickhoff, 'Weggestreept verleden? Nederlandse historici en het Rawagededebat', *Colofon* 194 (2013) 53-67; Chris Lorenz, 'De Nederlandse koloniale herinnering en de universele mensenrechten. De casus "Rawagede"', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 128:1 (2015) 109-130.

9 This was the Dutch-language commercial edition of the author's 2015 dissertation from the University of Bern; by this time Limpach had started working for the NIMH.

10 Piet Kamphuis, Gert Oostindie and Marjan Schwegman, 'Onderzoek geweld in "Indië"', *de Volkskrant* 19 June 2012.

11 Research proposal by KITLV-NIMH-NIOD, 26 September 2012. NIOD, archive Research - ODGOI [archive number to be determined after inclusion of the collection in the NIOD archive in 2022].

12 The cabinet decision was made on 2 December 2016, the decree on implementation and financing on 23 February 2017, and the subsidy decision on 20 July 2017.

13 The term 'co-financing' is used here, given that the institutes themselves also made funds available for the research both in the period 2012-2016 and throughout the duration of the research programme (2017-2021).

14 From the article in *de Volkskrant*, 19 June 2012: 'Such a study can also give us more insight into the circumstances under which soldiers may lose their self-control as well as which soldiers are most at risk in this respect. This is particularly important for the selection, training, and the conduct of our soldiers, now and in the future. [...] This kind of [research] is also important for our understanding of current and possibly future Dutch military deployment in crisis areas.'

15 By the end of this book, we list the full composition of the research teams as well as the various forums that were involved.

16 Upon stepping down as director of NIOD on 1 September 2021, Frank van Vree continued his role in the research programme as programme director. Gert Oostindie also continued his role within the research programme after retiring on 1 January 2022.

17 The Scientific Advisory Board gave its advice, but the responsibility for the content of the text lies with the directors of the research programme and the authors.

18 See, for example, the open letter by Jeffry Pondaag and Francisca Pattipilohy (November 2017) on https://historibersama.com/. See also note 2 of this chapter.

19 See P.M.H. Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen: Het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië 1945-1950* (The Hague 1991); Jaap De Moor, *Westerling's oorlog: Indonesië 1945-1950: De geschiedenis van de commando's en parachutisten in Nederlands-Indië 1945-1950* (Amsterdam 1999); Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, 'The Civil and Military Dimensions of Dutch Counter-insurgency on Java, 1947-1949', *British Journal for Military History* 1:2 (2015) 67-83; and Rémy Limpach, *De brandende kampongs van Generaal Spoor* (Amsterdam 2016).

20 See e.g. Henk Schulte Nordholt, 'War Crime Study, Covering Up or Opening up the Past?', *The Jakarta Post*, 9 August 2018, and Selamat Ginting, 'Menggugat Proyek Sejarah Belanda', *Republika*, 8 March 2019.

21 The parallels with the Srebrenica study carried out by NIOD are clear. See Hans Blom et al., *Srebrenica: een 'veilig gebied', reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een safe area* (Amsterdam 2002) 49, for the guiding principles of the NIOD researchers: 'The researchers wanted to avoid taking on the role of the executioner, precisely because of the pressing political questions on the topic. Playing that role was not their job. After all, the assignment was to carry out a historical scientific study, which invariably involves an analytical-explanatory assessment. Political verdicts should be formed and formulated in the public and political arena.' Michiel Baud and Frank van Vree, 'Geschiedschrijving, politiek en moraal', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 116 (2003) 64-77,64, are extremely critical about what they characterize as the 'anxiousness with which the authors have tried to circumvent [...] moral and political positions'. On the complexity of making legal moral judgements about the colonial past, see for example A.H.M. De Baets, 'Historical Imprescriptibility', *Storia della Storiografia* 59-60 (2011) 128-149 and W. de Haan, 'Knowing What We Know Now: International Crimes in Historical Perspective', *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 13:4 (2015) 783-799.

22 See also NIOD, archive Research - ODGOI. See also note 2 of this chapter. f

23 For more on this, see the chapter by Gert Oostindie and Meindert van der Kaaij in this book.

24 An example of this is the opening sentence of Sutan Sjahrir's brochure *Onze strijd* [Our Struggle], written in October 1945: 'Now that the Indonesian Republic has been in existence for two months...', see Sutan Sjahrir, *Onze strijd* (Amsterdam 1946).
25 On this subject, see the following chapter.
26 S. Meuwese, J. Pen and T. Roos, 'Toepasselijkheid van het oorlogsrecht in de Nederlands-Indonesische Oorlog', *Nederlands Juristenblad* 96:31 (2021) 2586-2592.
27 See the chapter by Esther Zwinkels in this book.
28 Taufik Abdullah et al. (ed.), *Indonesia dalam arus sejarah. 6: Perang dan Revolusi* (Jakarta 2012), 202-210. See also Abdul Wahid, 'The Untold Story of the Surabaya Battle of 1945', *The Jakarta Post*, 12 November 2013.
29 Emphasis added. Letter from the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence and the State Secretary of Health, Welfare, and Sport to the Lower House, 2 December 2016;NIOD, archive Research - ODGOI.

2. The Netherlands and Indonesia 1945-1949. The political-historical context

1 This chapter was written on the basis of the existing Dutch and English-language historiography. For an overview of the most important works used per theme, see 'Further reading' in this volume.
2 With the exception of Papua (New Guinea), which was extremely difficult to access.
3 P.M.H. Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie: Opkomst en ondergang van Nederland als koloniale mogendheid 1816-2010* (Amsterdam 2021); Piet Hagen, *Koloniale oorlogen in Indonesië. Vijf eeuwen verzet tegen vreemde overheersing* (Amsterdam 2018) 26, 885-906; G.J. Knaap et al., *Oorlogen overzee. Militair optreden door compagnie en staat buiten Europa, 1595-1814* (Amsterdam 2015).
4 Until 1872, Elmina in what is now Ghana also belonged to the Dutch Empire.
5 Quoted in Loe De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog. 1* (The Hague 1969) 179. De Jong called this 'a truly monumental disregard of the real situation'.
6 Ethan Mark, *Japan's Occupation of Java in the Second World War. A Transnational History* (London 2019) 2; David Van Reybrouck, *Revolusi. Indonesië en het ontstaan van de moderne wereld* (Amsterdam 2020) 247, 290.
7 For more information, see the next chapter.
8 Quoted in De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog. XI (a, b, c): Nederlands-Indië* (The Hague 1984-1986), *XI*, 491 and *XI b*, 1027, and Tom van den Berge, *H.J. Van Mook: 1894-1965. Een vrij en gelukkig Indonesië: biografie* (Bussum 2014) 204, respectively.
9 De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, *XI c*, 635, 650.
10 The former KNIL captain Raymond Westerling staged a bloody but failed coup against the Indonesian state on 22-23 January 1950 with several hundred KNIL soldiers. This 'APRA coup' took place without the knowledge of the political and military authorities in The Hague, but the latter were actively involved in the cover-up. 'APRA' stood for *Angkatan Perang Ratu Adil*, the Just King Legion.
11 On this subject, see the next chapter.
12 In February 1945, SEAC founded the organization RAPWI (Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees); in July 1945, Indonesia was added to SEAC's field of activity and with it the RAPWI.
13 See the chapter by Esther Captain and Onno Sinke in this book.
14 On the eve of the Second World War, Indonesia had about 70 million inhabitants and the Netherlands 9 million.
15 'It is a privilege to perform this transfer of sovereignty before history, or rather before God, who alone knows why this union in freedom was not achieved earlier nor later, and who knows of the failure of the generations [...].' Quoted in Loe De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog. XII* (Leiden 1988) 982.
16 De Jong, *Koninkrijk*, XII, 982; Herman Burgers, *De garoeda en de ooievaar. Indonesië van kolonie tot nationale staat* (Leiden 2010) 449, 656; Hans Daalder, *Vier jaar nachtmerrie de Indonesische kwestie 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 2014) 381-385; John Jansen van Galen, *Afscheid van de koloniën. Het Nederlandse dekolonisatiebeleid 1942-2012* (Amsterdam 2013) 266-268; J.J.P. de Jong, *De terugtocht. Nederland en de dekolonisatie van Indonesië* (Amsterdam 2016) 281-282; Hans Meijer, *Indische rekening. Indië, Nederland en de backpay-kwestie 1945-2000* (Amsterdam 2005).
17 See Jeroen Kemperman's contribution in this volume for more information.

1 **3. The war in Indonesia 1945-1949. The military-historical context**

1 This chapter is mainly based on the synthesis in the recent NIMH book, P. Groen et al. (ed.), *Krijgsgeweld en Kolonie. Opkomst en ondergang van Nederland als koloniale mogendheid 1916-2010* (Amsterdam 2021) supplemented by some recent studies. For an overview of the most important titles for each theme, see the 'Further reading' section of this publication.

2 L. van Poelgeest, 'Figuranten op het Indische toneel. De Japanners in Nederlands-Indië 1946-1949', E. Touwen-Bouwsma and P. Groen (eds), *Tussen Banzai en Bersiap. De afwikkeling van de Tweede Wereldoorlog in Nederlands-Indië* (The Hague 1996) 95-107.

3 R. Limpach, '"Ze vielen als gemaaid koren". Een beschouwing over de verliescijfers in Indonesië, 1945-49', *Militaire Spectator* 1 (2022).

4 R. Limpach, *De Brandende Kampongs van Generaal Spoor* (Amsterdam 2016), 778.

5 Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie,* 333-334.

6 See Rémy Limpach, 'Information costs lives', this book.

7 Schilling, Memorandum, 25-11-1945, in P.J. Drooglever, M.J.B. Schouten and S.L. van der Wal, *Officiële bescheiden, betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen 1945-1950* ('s-Gravenhage 1971-1996), II, 164-165; Petra M.H. Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië 1945-1950* (Den Haag 1991) 46-50, 278.

8 Quoted in Groen, *Marsroutes*, 285-287.

9 T.B. Simatupang, *Het laatste jaar van de Indonesische vrijheidsstrijd 1948-1949. Een authentiek verslag door de voormalige chef-staf van de indonesische strijdkrachten* (Kampen 1985) 59; also 34, 74, 115-116, 130-134.

10 R.J.J. Stevens, 'Manipulatie van informatie? De rol van de Nederlandse militaire inlichtingendienst in Indonesië ten tijde van het Nederlands-Indisch conflict 1945-1949' *Parlementaire Geschiedenis van Nederland na 1945: Politieke Opstellen* 11-12 (Nijmegen 1992) 149-168.

11 Christiaan Harinck and Jonathan Verwey, 'Wie kwamen, wie zagen, wie schreven?', https://www.kitlv.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/C.H.C.-Harinck-J.-Verwey-Wie-kwamen-wie-zagen-wie-schreven-voor-de-KITLV-website.pdf (2015) 6; Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog*, 295-296. The figures in this section are from Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie*.

12 On paper, the size of a division was 20,000 men (not more than 15,000 men in practice), of a brigade, 3,000; a regiment, 2,000-3,000; a battalion, 800; a company, 125-190; a platoon, 36; and a squad, 12.

13 For more on this, see chapter I.2.

14 On the blockade, see Martin Hoekstra, 'De Republiek in een wurggreep: De Nederlandse marineblokkade tijdens de Indonesische Onafhankelijkheidsoorlog (1945-1949)', Research master's thesis (Leiden 2018).

15 Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld*, 166, 208-217, 221-225; Christiaan Harinck, *'Zoeken, aangrijpen en vernietigen!' Het Nederlandse militaire optreden in Indonesië, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 2022).

16 This is discussed in more detail in the chapter by Esther Zwinkels in this volume.

17 For the 'APRA coup', see the previous chapter. The failed uprising in Makassar in April of that year by some 800 Indonesian, mostly Moluccan KNIL soldiers led by Captain Andi Aziz and the proclamation of the Republic Maluku Selatan on 25 April 1950 also fall outside this framework, as does the bloody battle between former KNIL soldiers and Indonesian troops in Makassar in early August 1950, prior to the evacuation of the KNIL. In addition, between 1950 and 1962 an armed low-intensity conflict took place in Papua/New Guinea between Indonesian and Dutch armed forces.

18 The figures relating to *bersiap* are analysed in more detail in the chapter by Esther Captain and Onno Sinke, this volume.

19 Richard McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia 1945-1946: Britain, the Netherlands and the Indonesian Revolution* (New York 2005); Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 225-243.

20 See chapter I.2.

21 Simatupang, *Het laatste jaar*, 108.

22 Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie,* 336.

23 Quoted in Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie,* 341.

24 See the chapter by Gert Oostindie and Meindert van der Kaaij in this book.

25 J. van Doorn, W. Hendrix, *Het Nederlands-Indonesisch conflict: Ontsporing van Geweld* (Amsterdam 1985) 313. See the contribution by Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Bart Luttikhuis in this book.

26 Limpach, 'Ze vielen als gemaaid koren'. The concept of 'asymmetric warfare' is not used, because it can

evoke the image of superior, late-colonial European warfare versus an opponent that is less developed in every respect. In open combat situations, there was indeed an asymmetry in favour of the much better-armed Dutch units. On this, see for example Abdul Haris Nasution, *Fundamentals of Guerrilla Warfare* (New York 1965); Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie*, 316; NIMH, 57, 3293, Diary A.T. Hendriksen, 1 August 1946; B.H. Erné, *Bren naar voren, partisanen! Het O.V.W. bataljon 1-12 R.I. op Java* (Groningen 1949) 70; G.P. Birney, *De marinier uit Soerabaja* (2007) 330-331, 354; G. Janssen, *Dorp en dessa. Verhaal van een dorp in Brabant en zijn jongens-soldaten in de vrijheidsstrijd van Indonesië 1945-1951* (Reusel 1998) 206. On the other hand, when it came to other aspects of the war, there was an asymmetry in favour of the Indonesian armed forces: for example, more popular support, the intelligence position, knowledge of the language, culture and terrain, and morale.

27 Stan Meuwese, 'Geersing legitimeert standrechtelijke executies van Westerling', *Militair Rechtelijk Tijdschrift* 113:2 (2020).

11 The human dimension

1 Translated as: 'Corps of the Uprising of the Indonesian People'.

2 NIOD, archive Research - ODGOI, Witnesses & Contemporaries collection [archive number to be determined after inclusion of the collection in the NIOD archive in 2022], IN18001 interview 16 January 2018.

3 Interview 25-07-1997, Collection Stichting Mondelinge Geschiedenis Indonesië (SMGI) 1095,1, (https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/oralhistoryarchive-smgi); F. Steijlen, *Memories of "The East": abstracts of the Dutch interviews about the Netherlands East Indies, Indonesia and New Guinea (1930-1962) in the Oral History project collection* (Leiden 2002) 63-4.

4 By narratives, we mean interpretative stories that reflect norms, values and beliefs.

5 Peter Hühn, Jan Christoph Meister, John Pier, Wolf Schmid, *Handbook of narratology* (Berlin 2014) 353-63. On multiple perspectives in the context of the research programme, see NIOD, archive Research - ODGOI.

6 For a more detailed account of the methodology and results, see: Eveline Buchheim, Satrio Dwicahyo, Fridus Steijlen and Stephanie Welvaart, *Sporen vol betekenis. In gesprek met 'Getuigen & Tijdgenoten' over de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog/Meniti Arti. Bertukar Makna Bersama 'Saksi & Rekan Sezaman' tentang Perang Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Amsterdam 2022).

7 For example, the interview collection of the foundation for Indonesian oral history, Stichting Mondelinge Geschiedenis Indonesië (SMGI) (https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/oralhistoryarchive-smgi); the Dutch veterans interview collection (ICNV) (https://www.nlveteraneninstituut.nl/); the collection *Erfgoed van de oorlog, Getuigenverhalen* [War heritage, witnesses' stories] (https://doi.org/10.17026/dans-22t-hrun); the interview collection of ANRI (Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia) in Indonesia; the collection of interviews with 235 missionaries who worked in Indonesia, Katholiek Documentatie Centrum (KDC) in Nijmegen; and finally, the collections of NIOD, the KITLV/Leiden University Library, the NIMH and Bevrijdingsmuseum Zeeland.

8 A.L. Stoler, 2008. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton 2008).

9 Email from F.S. to Witnesses & Contemporaries, received on 7 October 2020.

10 Email from C.v.E. to Witnesses & Contemporaries, received on 15 September 2017.

11 Email from M. Ferares to Witnesses & Contemporaries, received on 28 February 2017. Mr Ferares wrote *De revolutie die verboden werd; Indonesië 1945-1949* [The revolution that was forbidden; Indonesia 1945-1949]; see also https://iisg.amsterdam/en/blog/book-blog/revolution-was-forbidden, consulted on 11 May 2021.

12 NIOD, archive Research – ODGOI, Witnesses & Contemporaries, IN18006.

13 Ibidem, IN18002.

14 Ibidem, IN18003.

15 The participants in the witness seminar held on 6 March 2018 were Ami Emanuel, Robert Schabracq and Connie Suverkropp.

16 NIOD, archive Research – ODGOI, Witnesses & Contemporaries, IN18005.

17 For the history of Payakumbuh, see also Buchheim et al., *Sporen vol betekenis*, as well as Rémy Limpach, *Tasten in het duister. Inlichtingenstrijd tijdens de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 2022).

18 See essay about Dutch monuments in *Sporen vol betekenis*.
19 The term 'cultural archive' was originally introduced by the literary scholar Edward Saïd, one of the founders of postcolonial studies. Wekker sees the 'cultural archive' as a repository of memories that are stored in all kinds of places. In people's minds and hearts, for example, but also in popular culture, in everyday knowledge, in rules, and all of this on the basis of years of colonial rule. It is a direct consequence of the paternalistic ideas and racist stereotypes on which colonial relations were built.
20 See, for example, the multiple voices recorded in G. Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië* (Amsterdam 2015).
21 NIOD, archive Research – ODGOI, Witnesses & Contemporaries, PR18012.
22 In memory studies, the many and complex connections between individual memory and collective memory have received a lot of attention in recent years. For an overview, for example, see A. Erll, A. Nünning, and S.B. Young, *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin 2008).
23 NIOD, archive Research – ODGOI, Witnesses & Contemporaries, IN18010.
24 NIOD, archive Research – ODGOI, Witnesses & Contemporaries, IN18003.
25 NIOD, archive Research – ODGOI, Witnesses & Contemporaries, IN21004.
26 As contained, for example, in the album in the NIOD archive with inv.no: BC622/A5545.
27 NIOD, Collectie Viergever, bc 901.
28 NIOD, Collectie van Eersel, bc 631.

111 1. 'Hatred of foreign elements and their "accomplices"'

1 Special thanks to the editorial board and to Robert Cribb, Petra Groen, Jan Hoffenaar and Henk Schulte Nordholt of the Scientific Advisory Board for their critical comments and valuable suggestions on earlier versions of this chapter. We would also like to thank our interns and research assistants for their valuable assistance and pleasant collaboration during the research. In Indonesia: Muhammad Alif Ichsan, Oktoriza Dhia, Tia Farahdiba and Antonia Asta Gaudi. In the Netherlands: Bastiaan van den Akker, Maarten van den Bent, Nuranisa Halim, Thirza van Hofwegen and John Soedirman. For translations: Tia Farahdiba, Taufiq Hanafi and John Soedirman. For data on the number of victims: Chrissy Flohr, Ron Habiboe, Marijn Versteegen and Daanjan Wisselink.
2 Esther Captain and Guno Jones, *Oorlogserfgoed overzee. De erfenis van de Tweede Wereldoorlog in Aruba, Curaçao, Indonesië en Suriname* (Amsterdam 2010) 156-157.
3 Johan Fabricius, *Hoe ik Indië terugvond* (The Hague 1947) 71.
4 Mestika Zed, Mukhlis PaEni, 'Masa Bersiap' Taufik Abdullah, A.B. Lapian (ed.), *Indonesia dalam Arus Sejarah VI, Perang dan revolusi* (Jakarta 2012) 204.
5 Anton Lucas, *One soul, one struggle. Region and Revolution in Indonesia* (Sydney 1991) 113.
6 Taomo Zhou, *Migration in the Time of Revolution. China, Indonesia and the Cold War* (Ithaca and London 2018) 19.
7 Mestika Zed, Mukhlis PaEni, 'Masa Bersiap', Abdullah and Lapian, *Indonesia dalam Arus Sejarah*, 202.
8 Ibidem, 204; Abdul Wahid, 'The untold story of the Surabaya battle of 1945' in *The Jakarta Post*, 12 November 2013. For a further explanation of the term *bersiap*: Esther Captain and Onno Sinke, *Het geluid van geweld. Bersiap en de dynamiek van geweld in de eerste fase van de Indonesische Revolutie, 1945-1946* (Amsterdam 2022).
9 Benedict Anderson, *Java in a Time of Revolution. Occupation and Resistance 1944-1946* (Ithaca/London1972) 39-48.
10 Rémy Limpach, *De brandende kampongs van generaal Spoor* (Amsterdam 2016) 52.
11 Furthermore, there were trained members of the *Heiho* (Indonesian auxiliary soldiers), the *Keibodan* (with 1.2 million members on Java in 1945) and *Bogodan* (with 700,000 members on Sumatra), a kind of auxiliary police or civil guard. See: Mary van Delden, *De Republikeinse kampen in Nederlands-Indië oktober 1945-mei 1947. Orde in de chaos?* (Kockengen 2007) 84-85; H.W. van den Doel, Afs*cheid van Indië. De val van het Nederlandse imperium in Azië* (Amsterdam 2000) 66.
12 Van Delden, *Republikeinse kampen*, 85.
13 Robert Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries. The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution 1945-1949* (Jakarta 2009; first edition 1991) 50; Abu Hanifah, *Tales of a revolution*, Angus and Robertson (Sydney/London 1972) 174-183.
14 See e.g.o.: Harriët Salm, 'Wie zijn de daders, wie de slachtoffers?' *Trouw*, 20 June 2019; Robbert de Witt, 'De eindeloze strijd om Indië' *Elsevier Weekblad*, 6 March 2021.

15 See: Robert, Cribb, 'The brief genocide of Eurasians in Indonesia, 1945/46', D. Moses, ed., *Empire, colony, genocide. Conquest, occupation, and subaltern resistance in world history* (New York/Oxford 2008) 424-439, specifically 436; William Frederick, 'The killing of Dutch and Eurasians in Indonesia's National Revolution (1945-1949): a "Brief genocide" reconsidered', *Journal of Genocide Research* 14-3/4 (2012) 359-380, specifically 376; Remco Raben, 'On genocide and mass violence in colonial Indonesia', *Journal of Genocide Research*, (2012) 14-3/4, 485-502, specifically 492. This is discussed in more detail Captain and Sinke, *Het geluid van geweld.*

16 Herman Bussemaker, *Bersiap! Opstand in het paradijs. De Bersiap-periode op Java en Sumatra 1945-1946* (Zutphen 2005).

17 We have based our research on literature studies in Dutch, Indonesian and English-language publications as well as archival research, including at the Australian War Memorial (AWM), the Dutch National Archives (NA-HaNA), the Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH), the Netherlands Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD) and Dutch and Indonesian newspapers. See: Captain and Sinke, *Het geluid van geweld*.

18 Following Harry Poeze and Mary van Delden, see also: Harry A. Poeze, 'Walking the tightrope: internal Indonesian conflict, 1945-1949', Bart Luttikhuis and Dirk A. Moses, (eds), *Colonial counterinsurgency and mass violence. The Dutch empire in Indonesia* (London/New York 2014). Also *Journal of Genocide Studies*, 176-197 and Mary van Delden, 'De andere kant van de Bersiap', as a series of articles in *Pelita Nieuws*, 2017.

19 In addition to the term extreme violence, we will use words such as atrocities, excessive violence and ruthless violence as synonyms for these forms of violence in order to avoid too much repetition.

20 Christian Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies. Mass Violence in the Twentieth-Century World* (Cambridge 2010).

21 Marieke Bloembergen, *Uit zorg en angst. De geschiedenis van de politie in Nederlands-Indië.* (Amsterdam/Leiden 2009); Henk Schulte Nordholt, *Een staat van geweld* (Rotterdam 2000).

22 Henk Hovinga, *Eindstation Pakan Baroe 1943-1945. Dodenspoorweg door het oerwoud* (Amsterdam 1996); Remco Raben, 'Arbeid voor Groot-Azië. Indonesische koelies in de Buitengewesten, 1942-1945', *Oorlogsdocumentatie '40-'45. Negende jaarboek van het Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie* (Zutphen 1998) 81-111.

23 Elly Touwen-Bouwsma, 'Japanse legerprostitutie in Nederlands-Indië 1942-1945', *Oorlogsdocumentatie '40-'45. Vijfde jaarboek van het Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie* (Zutphen 1994) 31-45.

24 Zhou, *Migration in the time of revolution,* 19.

25 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 265-270. For more on Westerling's operation and his Depot Special Forces, see: 270 et seq.

26 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 187-188 and 194; S.M. Jalhay, *Allen zwijgen. Van merdeka en Andjing-Nica tot APRA* (Hillegom 1989) 93, 103-104 and 138.

27 See for example: 'Belanda memboesoekan di mata internasional', *Merah-Poetih,* 18 October 1945. The name 'NICA' was used interchangeably for civilians and soldiers and for both KNIL soldiers and British Indian soldiers.

28 Anderson, *Java in a time of revolution*, 121-122 and 130-131. See also: Lucas, *One soul, one struggle*, 95.

29 Abu Hanifah, *Tales of a revolution* (Sydney/London 1972) 178.

30 No author, 'Table showing the principal events and incidents since the cessation of hostilities', no date, NIOD, Indische Collectie (IC), inv.no 1942; Anderson, *Java in a time of revolution*, 148-149.

31 Mary Somer Heidhues, 'Anti-Chinese violence in Java during the Indonesian Revolution, 1945-49', Luttikhuis and Moses, *Colonial counterinsurgency and mass violence,* 156-161; Zhou, *Migration in the time of revolution*, 19.

32 Frederick, *Visions and heat*, 242; Bussemaker, *Bersiap!*, 216.

33 Witness statement H.R.H. van Affelen of Saemsvoort, recorded by J.W.F. Meeng, 26-11-1947, NL-HaNA, Netherland Forces Intelligence Service [nefis] and Centrale Militaire Inlichtingendienst [CMI] in The Netherlands East Indies (henceforth NEFIS/CMI) . 2.10.62, inv.no 2039; Testimony L. Sinsu-Andries, recorded by J.W.F. Meeng, 29-11-1947, NL-HaNA NEFIS/CMI 2.10.62, inv.no 2039.

34 Testimony F.H.H. Holtkamp, recorded by J.W.F. Meeng, 25-10-1947, NL-HaNA NEFIS/CMI 2.10.62, inv. no 2039.

35 Testimony L. Sinsu-Andries, recorded by J.W.F. Meeng, 29-11-1947, 2, NL-HaNA NEFIS/CMI 2.10.62, inv.no 2039.

36 Frederick, *Visions and heat*, 242.
37 Mary van Delden, *Bersiap in Bandung. Een onderzoek naar geweld in de periode van 17 augustus 1945 tot 24 maart 1946* (Kockengen 1989) 132.
38 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 145.
39 Bussemaker, *Bersiap!*,137-38.
40 Van Delden, *Bersiap in Bandung*, 136.
41 Report M.R. Vrijens, 6-8-1947, NL-HaNA NEFIS/CMI 2.10.62, inv.no 2035.
42 Report M.R. Vrijens, 6-8-1947, NL-HaNA NEFIS/CMI 2.10.62, inv.no 2035. According to Nasution, however, the Indo-Europeans were murdered in prison. Abdul Haris Nasution, *Sekitar Perang Kemerdekaan Indonesia*, 1, (Bandung 1977) 345.
43 Bussemaker, *Bersiap!*, 86-87, 112-113, 129 and 204; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 183-184 and 186-187.
44 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 188 and 194.
45 Richard McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia 1945-1946. Britain, the Netherlands and the Indonesian Revolution* (London/New York 2005) 22-23 and 63.
46 J.A. de Moor, *Westerling's oorlog. Indonesië 1945-1950* (Amsterdam 1999) 99-107; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 184 and 232.
47 McMillan, *British Occupation of Indonesia*, 70; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 238-239.
48 Ibidem.
49 Excerpt from letter A.J.L. to J.L. 20 November 1945, NIMH, 509, inv.no 219.
50 Anthony Reid, *The blood of the people. Revolution and the end of traditional rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur/Oxford 1979) 166.
51 Ibidem 165-168.
52 Ibidem 168.
53 Takao Fusayama, *A Japanese memoir of Sumatra, 1945-1946. Love and hatred in the liberation war* (Ithaca/New York 1993) 70-76. This reading is confirmed by a Dutch source: Commanding Officer Amacab, half-monthly reporting period 1-15 January 1946, 5-2-1946, NL-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no 725, 13. Indonesian sources also mention dozens of Japanese casualties in this period: Legiun Veteran Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Utara, *Veteran Pejuang. Kemerdekaan dan Legiun Veteran R.I. Sumatera Utara*. Legiun Veteran R.I. Sumatera Utara (Medan 2001) 178; Biro Sejarah, *Medan Area Mengisi Proklamasi* (Medan 1976) 620.
54 Fusayama, *A Japanese memoir,* 70-76. This reading is confirmed by a Dutch source: Commanding Officer Amacab (name illegible), half-monthly reporting period 1-15 January 1946, 5-2-1946, NL-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no 725, 13. Indonesian sources also mention dozens of Japanese casualties in this period: Legiun Veteran Republik Indonesia Propinsi Sumatera Utara, *Veteran Pejuang Kemerdekaan dan Legiun Veteran R.I. Sumatera Utara*. Legiun Veteran R.I. Sumatera Utara (Medan 2001) 178; Biro Sejarah, *Medan Area Mengisi Proklamasi* (Medan 1976) 620; C. Brondgeest, 'Rapport van Sumatra No. 1', 26-12-1945, NL-HaNA NEFIS/CMI, 2.10.62, inv.no 715.
55 Anderson, *Java in a time of revolution*, 334-335; See also Harry A. Poeze, 'Walking the tightrope', Luttikhuis and Moses, *Colonial counterinsurgency and mass violence*, 180-181.
56 Michael van Langenberg, 'East Sumatra: accommodating an Indonesian nation within a Sumatran residency', Audrey R. Kahin, ed., *Regional dynamics of the Indonesian revolution. Unity from diversity* (Honolulu 1985) 113-143, specifically 123-124. Poeze, 'Walking the tightrope' Luttikhuis and Moses, *Colonial counterinsurgency and mass violence*, 186-187; M.M. Steedly, *Rifle Reports. A Story of Indonesian Independence* (Berkeley CA 2013) 148-149.
57 Van den Doel, *Afscheid van Indië*, 126-127 and 130-131.
58 Lucas, *One soul, one struggle* 69-70, 95-96, 105-106, 139-140, 182 and 253-254.
59 Rapport M.R. Vrijens (buitenkantoor NEFIS Cirebon) 01-08-1947, NL-HaNA NEFIS/CMI 2.10.62, inv. no 2037; no author, 'Het drama van Balapoelang. Hoe het recht van een ieder om vrij te leven door de Republiek verkracht werd', *Algemeen Indisch Dagblad*, 19 August1947.
60 William H. Frederick, 'The aftermath', Peter Post et al., (eds), *The encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War* (London/Boston 2010) 46-60, specifically 47.
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111 2. Revolutionary worlds

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111 **3. 'Information costs lives'**

1 This chapter is a summary of my forthcoming book in Dutch, *Stumbling in the Dark. The Battle for Intelligence in the Indonesian War of Independence, 1945-1949* (to be published in 2022). With thanks to my colleagues in this research programme, Florine van Berne, Wim Dechering, Karel Kraan, Camiel Raaijmakers and, in particular, Tico Onderwater.
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111 4. The myth of the 'Dutch method'

1 This article is based upon the forthcoming monograph *Grof geschut. Artillerie en luchtstrijdkrachten in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 2022). The monograph is also to be published as *Iron fist. Artillery and air power in the Indonesian war of independence, 1945-1949*.
2 The organization of the Dutch artillery was modelled after the British Army, albeit with slightly different terminology. The Dutch called a battery an *afdeling*, and a troop a *batterij*. To prevent confusion, English-language nomenclature is used in this chapter.
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6 The shelling was recently highlighted by Ravie Ananda, who wrote about it on his weblog, *Wahyu Pancasila*, 20 May 2013, kebumen2013.com/mengenang-peristiwa-canonade-candi-karanganyar-kebumen-1947, and Conrad Woldringh, *Roeien & Reizen*, 20 December 2016, woldringh-naarden.blogspot.com/2016/12/the-cannonade-of-candi-indonesia-on.html (both accessed 1 March 2021); the operation was then briefly mentioned in Harinck, Van Horn and Luttikhuis, 'Wie telt de Indonesische doden?', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 30 July 2017.
7 *Nota betreffende het archiefonderzoek naar de gegevens omtrent excessen in Indonesië begaan door Nederlandse militairen in de periode 1945-1950* (1969).
8 Jacques van Doorn and Wim Hendrix, *Ontsporing van geweld: het Nederlands-Indonesisch conflict* (4th edition, Zutphen 2012) 242-245; Rémy Limpach, *De brandende kampongs van generaal Spoor* (Amsterdam 2016) chapter 5.
9 See the forthcoming monograph *Grof geschut. Artillerie en luchtstrijdkrachten in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 2022). The monograph is also to be published as *Iron fist. Artillery and air power in the Indonesian war of independence, 1945-1949*.
10 Doctrinecommissie Koninklijke Landmacht, *Leidraad vuursteun* (2002) 15. This chapter will use the terms 'heavy weapons', 'auxiliary weapons' and 'support weapons', which were also used in the years 1945-1949.
11 Van Doorn and Hendrix, *Ontsporing van geweld*, 206-212; for a historiographical overview, see the forthcoming study on technical violence by Harmanny, *Iron fist*.
12 The meta-level – the international comparison – is addressed in Azarja Harmanny and Brian McAllister Linn, '"The normal order" of things: contextualizing "technical violence" in the Netherlands-Indonesia war', Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Bart Luttikhuis (eds), *Empire's violent end: comparing Dutch, British and French wars of decolonization 1945-1962* (Ithaca 2022); on the importance of micro-level studies, see Peter Romijn, 'Learning on "the job": Dutch war volunteers entering the Indonesian war of independ-

ence, 1945-46' *Journal of genocidal research* 14:3-4 (2012) 317-336, specifically 319; Roel Frakking and Martin Thomas, 'Indrukken van de microdynamiek van revolutionair en contrarevolutionair geweld. Bewijs uit laat-koloniaal Zuidoost-Azië en Afrika vergeleken', *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review* 135:2 (2020) 111-31.

13 NIMH, Sweep, 445; idem, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6-RVA in Indonesië, 1946-1949'; Ton Schilling, 'Brug naar de zon. "Het Eiland" van het Leger-Hospitaal in Batavia', *Katholieke Illustratie*, 23 June 1949.

14 See, for example, Stephen Biddle, *Military power: explaining victory and defeat in modern battle* (Princeton 2006); John Ellis, *Brute force: allied strategy and tactics in the Second World War* (New York 1990).

15 See also Azarja Harmanny and Brian McAllister Linn, "Technisch geweld" in de Nederlands-Indonesische oorlog. Zware wapens in de periode van dekolonisatie' *BMGN* 135:2 (2020) 93-110, specifically 101.

16 *Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen 1945-1950*, samengesteld door S.L. van der Wal (1978), P.J. Drooglever and M.J.B. Schouten (*NIB*), II, no. 204, Idenburg to Van Mook, 20 December 1945; Jaap de Moor, *Generaal Spoor: triomf en tragiek van een legercommandant* (Amsterdam 2011) 179; Petra Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie. Opkomst en ondergang van Nederland als koloniale mogendheid, 1816-2010* (Amsterdam 2021) 146.

17 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6-R.V.A.', 3.

18 NL-HaNA, 2.13.126, Mariniersbrigade in Nederlands-Indië, inv.no 151, cdt. MB to cdt. Marine Corps, 5 April 1946; M.R.H. Calmeyer, *Herinneringen. Memoires van een christen, militair en politicus. Ingeleid en bewerkt door J. Hoffenaar* (The Hague 1997) 394.

19 R.E. van Holst Pellekaan and C. de Regt, *Operaties in de Oost: de Koninklijke Marine in de Indische archipel (1945-1951)* (Amsterdam 2003) 350; Ger Teitler, *Vlootvoogd in de knel. Vice-admiraal A.S. Pinke tussen de marinestaf, Indië en de Indonesische revolutie* (Assen/Maastricht 1990) 107.

20 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 48; NIMH, *Dekolonisatie*, 1053, Oorlogsdagboek Infanterie V KNIL.

21 Petra Spaan and Henriëtte van Reijsing, 'Tweede Generatie Indië-Gangers', *2 Vandaag* (TROS, 21 December 1996).

22 Ben Bouman, *Succes in een verloren oorlog: het 6e Regiment Veldartillerie en zijn Speciale Troepen in de onafhankelijksstrijd van de Republiek Indonesië, 1946-1949* (Nijmegen 2015) 55, 87, 114; Jan Hoffenaar et al., *Vuur in beweging: 325 jaar veldartillerie, 1677-2002* (Amsterdam 2002) 104. A troop (Dutch: *batterij*) was a unit with most often four artillery pieces . Most artillery batteries in Indonesia had two battle troops.

23 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6-R.V.A.', 29.

24 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 777, 'Ervaringen Politionele Acties', chapter III - Artillerie.

25 Hoffenaar et al., *Vuur in beweging*, 104-106, 124-125; Otto Ward et al., *De militaire luchtvaart van het KNIL in de na-oorlogse jaren 1945-1950* (Houten 1988) 279; Van Holst Pellekaan and De Regt, *Operaties in de oost*, 355; Carel Heshusius, *KNIL cavalerie 1814-1950: geschiedenis van de cavalerie en panstertroepen van het Koninklijk Nederlands-Indische Leger* (The Hague 1978) 82.

26 NL-HaNA, 2.13.132, Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië (hereinafter SNI), inv.no 268, Brigade Artillery Report, 20 July - 1 October 1947.

27 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1240, Diary of (KNIL) second lieutenant P.E. van Mourik, 1-3 RI.

28 NIMH, Sweep, 445, Letter 3 August 1947; HCKVA, 106-1, Action Report E-Battery 3-6 RVA from 21 July 1947.

29 *Het Parool*, 22 July 1947.

30 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 331, Interview with lieutenant general S.H. Spoor; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 405-406.

31 Peter Dennis, *Troubled days of peace: Mountbatten and South East Asia Command, 1945-46* (Manchester 1987) 126, 134.

32 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 206-207.

33 Darto Harnoko, *Perang Kemerdekaan Kebumen tahun, 1942-1950* (Yogyakarta 1986) 36.

34 NIMH, Sweep, 445, Letters of 2 September and 28 October 1947, 2 July, 1 August and 30 September 1948.

35 Abdul Haris Nasution, *Sekitar Perang Kemerdekaan Indonesia*, Jil. 6, *Perang gerilya semesta* (Bandung 1978) 140.

36 Wiyono, *Sejarah revolusi kemerdekaan 1945-1949 Daerah Jawa Tengah* (Jakarta 1991) 115; NIMH, Sweep, 445, Letters 18 and 26 December 1948; idem, Dekolonisatie, 989, Battle Report 3-6 RVA; also in J.K.M.

Bottema, 'De Nederlandse artillerie in Nederlands-Indië. De artillerie van de 7 December Divisie', *Sinte Barbara* 26:2 (1974) 35-41, specifically 40; NL-HaNA SNI 2.13.132, inv.no 692, gevechtsverslagen van de commandant V-Bataljon Infanterie W- en T-Brigade aan de Colonne IV, 4 Genie Veldcompagnie en 3-6 Regiment Veldartillerie op Midden-Java, 19-22 December 1948.

37 Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, Jakarta (ANRI), Kementerian Pertahanan (Kemenhan), 1352, Laporan Singkat Keadaan Kebumen dan Karanganyar, sampai tanggal 29-9-1947; Fuad Yogo Hardyanto, 'Perang mempertahankan kemerdekaan di Kebumen tahun 1945-1950' (thesis Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta 2010) 64-68.

38 Abdul Haris Nasution, *Fundamentals of guerrilla warfare* (New York 1965) 20-21; NIMH, Sweep, 445, letter 15 October 1947.

39 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 37.

40 Dallinga gave a number of examples of this. Ibidem, 35-38, 43.

41 Sjoerd Lapré, *Het Andjing Nica, bataljon (KNIL) in Nederlands-Indië (1945-1950)* (Ermelo 1987) 99.

42 Agoeng Wijaya, Arif Zulkifli and Wahyu Dhyatmika, *Soedirman: seorang panglima, seorang martir* (Jakarta 2012) 30-31; NL-HaNA, 2.22.21, Afscheid van Indië, inv.no 990, Perintah Siasat Nomor 1/1948.

43 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 83.

44 Literally 'dogs of the Nica' (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration), an Indonesian pejorative that was embraced as a badge of honour.

45 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 46, 83.

46 Kloeten et al., *His Story*, 193; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1053, 2nd Quarter 1949.

47 See graph in Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie*, 327.

48 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 88; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1053, 3rd Quarter 1949.

49 Petra Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen: het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië 1945-1950* (The Hague 1991) 246, Appendix 5.

50 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1053, 2nd Quarter 1949.

51 Lapré, *Andjing Nica*, 25, 327.

52 NIMH, 532, Van Santen, 67, Bevelschrift voor de zuivering van Karanganjar e.o.; NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1298, Commandementsorder Nr. 14, Bandung, 1 May 1947; NIMH, Sweep, 445, letters 23 October 1947 and 16 March 1948.

53 Interview Ahmet Suwito; Ikatan Keluarga Resimen XX Kedu Selatan, *Gelegar di Bagelen: perjuangan Resimen XX Kedu Selatan 1945-1949 dan pengabdian lanjutannya* (Purworejo 2003) 165; Thom Verheul, 'Tabee Toean: op patrouille in Nederlands-Indië' (NCRV 1995).

54 NIMH, Van Santen, 67; W.A. Schouten and H.B. Evers, 'Het gebruik van de artillerie, ingedeeld bij de V-Brigade gedurende en na de politionele actie' *Militaire Spectator* 4 (1949) 225-236, specifically 235.

55 NIMH, Van Santen, 67; idem., 71, Gevechtsverslag zuivering Karanganjer.

56 Lapré, *Andjing Nica*, 99.

57 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 40; NIMH, Van Santen, 71.

58 HCKVA, 106-1; NL-HaNA SNI 2.13.132, inv.no, 2277, War Log 3-6 RVA; NIMH, Van Santen, 67, Artilleriebevel.

59 NIMH, 445, Letter 23 October 1947; Verheul, 'Tabee Toean'; Ikatan Keluarga Resimen XX, *Gelegar di Bagelen*, 166.

60 Verheul, 'Tabee Toean'.

61 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1053, 3rd Quarter 1947; interview Ahmet Suwito; Verheul, 'Tabee Toean'.

62 HCKVA 106-1, Actieverslag; NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten, 1298, Diverse telegrammen en notities over Karanganyar; 3064, Stafkwartier V-Brigade; 3078, Actiebevelen voor de herdislocatie, hergroepering, bezettingen, verplaatsingen in de gebieden en sectoren van de brigade, 1947.

63 Lapré, *Andjing Nica*, 51, 137; Kloeten, *His Story*, 154-155.

64 Hugo Klooster, *Bibliography of the Indonesian Revolution* (Leiden 1997) 46-51.

65 Nasution, *Perang Kemerdekaan, jilid 6*, 163; Wiyono, *Jawa Tengah*, 102; *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, 22 October 1947.

66 Harnoko, *Kebumen*, 40; T. Wedy Utomo, *Kisah-kisah Perjuangan Perang Kemerdekaan 1945-1949, Jilid 1* (Semarang 1985) 137; Ikatan Keluarga Resimen XX, *Gelegar di Bagelen*, 166.

67 NL-HaNA, Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service and the Central Military Intelligence in the Dutch East Indies NEFIS/CMI 2.10.62, inv.no 7248, Nefis doc. No. 4446, Extract III c, Kementerian Pertahanan V, Weekoverzicht Gevechtsfront Midden-Java ddo. 18-10 24-10-47.

68 Piet de Blaauw and Harry van de Westelaken, 'Reportage: de oorlogsmisdaden van Nederland in voormalig Nederlands-Indië', *Altijd Wat* (NCRV, 19 November 2013); correspondence Ravie Ananda, 6 February 2018.
69 NIMH, Sweep, 445, letter 23 October 1947.
70 ANRI, Sekretariat Negara, 400, Organisasi Kepolisian Kebumen, Laporan dari Kebumen, 11 November 1947.
71 *NIB*, 11, no. 260, Report October 1947; 658, no. 354, Lt-GG to Minog, 18 November 1947; *NIB*, XII, no. 110, Army Commander to Lt.-GG, 15 December 1947.
72 NIMH, Sweep, 445, letters 16 and 25 November 1947; NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1053; NIMH, Van Santen, 71; NL-HaNA SNI, 2.13.132, inv.no 3064, Korpsgeschiedenis V-Brigade.
73 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 43.
74 Rieks Venema, *Losse flodders 2-12 R.V.A.: artillerie herinneringen Midden-Java '47-'50* (Assendelft 1994) 53, 97; NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 43.
75 See e.g. NL-HaNA SNI, 2.13.132, inv.no 2790, Brief van het Hoofdkwartier U-Brigade met een overzicht van de toegepaste vechtwijze in het gebied rond Batavia, 1946; Marinus Muller, *Mijn tijd in Indië* (n.p. 1999) 36.
76 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1037, Korpsgeschiedenis 3-11 RI, Combat Report 8 January 1948.
77 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 989, Staff T-Brigade, Combat Report 3-6 RVA.
78 Hilma Bruinsma, 'Taboe in het theemeubel', blog 89 puntaal.nl/taboe-in-het-theemeubel (accessed 3 March 2021).
79 Hans Smits, 'De dingen waar je over zwijgt. De tien verloren jaren van de Indië-veteranen', *Vrij Nederland*, 11 January 1992.
80 Venema, *Losse flodders 2-12 R.V.A.*, 74-75.
81 Stathis Kalyvas, *The logic of violence in civil war* (Cambridge 2006) 89, 148-149; Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Bart Luttikhuis, 'Extreem geweld tijdens dekolonisatieoorlogen in vergelijkend perspectief, 1945-1962', *BMGN* 135:2 (2020) 34-51, specifically 41.
82 Kalyvas, *Violence in civil war*, 147; Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Bart Luttikhuis, 'Introduction: beyond the league table of barbarity', in idem (eds), *Empire's violent end*.
83 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 113, 390; NL-HaNA SNI, 2.13.132, inv.no 475, Rapport inzake gewelddadige optreden van Nederlandse troepen en rapport inzake een vermeende Nederlandse bestandsschending; Smits, 'Verloren jaren'; NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 39, 46.
84 NIMH, Van Santen, 3, Verlieslijst Infanterie V.
85 Smits, 'Verloren jaren'; Kloeten et al., *His Story*, 189; J.M. Kolff, *De belevenissen van onze gemobiliseerde verwanten, verzetslieden en de oorlogsvrijwilligers 1939-1950* (n.p. 1955) 91-92; Lapre, *Andjing Nica*, 90-106; NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 67-68.
86 Correspondence Lt. Gen. TNI AD b.d. Sayidiman Suryohadiprojo 16 July 2019; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 395; Bouman, *Succes in een verloren oorlog*, 87, 114; Venema, *Losse flodders*, 14, 51.
87 Schouten and Evers, 'Artillerie', 232; Trevor Dupuy, *The evolution of weapons and warfare* (New York 1990) 332.
88 NL-HaNA SNI, 2.13.132, inv.no 2277, 1st Quarter 1949; 3064, battle report; V. van Arcken, *Tactiek, deel VI: het tactisch aspect van de strijd op Java en Sumatra 1945 tot...* (Bandung 1948); Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 393-394.
89 For more on this type of portrayal, see Lawrence Keeley, *War before civilization: the myth of the peaceful savage* (New York 1997) 54.
90 Interview Kabul Waluyo, Patuk, 27 February 2020 (translation Bambang Widyonarko); interview Warsito Redjo, Gading, 23 February 2020 (translation idem); NL-HaNA SNI, 2.13.132, inv.no 139, 1, 2, and 3 Field Artillery Battery, 1946.
91 Dupuy, *Weapons and warfare*, 287; Richard Gabriel and Karen Metz, *A short history of war: the evolution of warfare and weapons* (Carlisle Barracks, PA 1992) chapter 6.
92 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, 1441, 1st Quarter 1949.
93 Ariane van der Eerde and Almar Tjepkema, 'In Oorlog Met Onze Kolonie', *Het sprookje is uit* (NOS, 12 December 1989).
94 Smits, 'Verloren jaren', 48.
95 NIMH, Sweep, 445, letters 7 August, 7 and 25 November 1947.
96 NIMH, Sweep, 162, 'Mannen van 3-6 RVA', 88.

97 Bruinsma, 'Taboe in het theemeubel', blog 89.
98 Frans Hazekamp, *Twee broers, twee luitenants in Indië: verslag van de militaire diensttijd van de broers Frans en Ted Hazekamp in Engeland en Nederlands Oost-Indië 1945-1950* (Baarn 2008) 140.
99 In 22 of the 29 passages labelled as 'technical violence' in the NIMH Diary Project of Dutch military personnel in Indonesia in 1945-1949, the diarist identified 'reducing risks' as their motivation. See also Schoonoord, *De mariniersbrigade 1943-1949: wording en inzet in Indonesië* (dissertation University of Amsterdam 1988) 125; Stef Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog: de Nederlandse oorlogsmisdaden in Indonesië en hun verwerking* (Amsterdam 2002) 80-100; Gert Oostindie with Ireen Hoogenboom and Jonathan Verwey, *Soldaat in Indonesië 1945-1950: getuigenissen van een oorlog aan de verkeerde kant van de geschiedenis* (Amsterdam 2015) 220-229; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 113, 391-399, 700-703; Bart Luttikhuis and Christiaan Harinck, 'Voorbij het koloniale perspectief: Indonesische bronnen en het onderzoek naar de oorlog in Indonesië, 1945-1949', *BMGN* 132:2 (2017) 51-76, specifically 74.
100 See, among others, Yuki Tanaka and Marilyn Young (eds), *Bombing civilians: a twentieth-century history* (New York 2009).
101 'Debate on *De brandende kampongs van Generaal Spoor* by Rémy Limpach, with Bart Luttikhuis, Abdul Wahid, Robert Cribb, Harry Poeze', *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 173:4 (2017) 559-79.
102 Tamar Meisels, *Contemporary just war: theory and practice* (New York 2018) 78-82.
103 Michael Walzer, *Just and unjust wars: a moral argument with historical illustrations* (London 1977) XIX, 144; Judith Gardam, *Necessity, proportionality and the use of force by states* (Cambridge 2004) 1-22.
104 Walzer, *Just and unjust wars*, 155.
105 Martin Shaw, *The new Western way of war: risk-transfer war and its crisis in Iraq* (Cambridge 2005) 88.
106 See, among others, Van Doorn and Hendrix, *Ontsporing van geweld*; Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië*; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*.
107 See, for example, Cornelius Friesendorf, 'British operations among the people and civilian risk', *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 30:3 (2019) 615-40.
108 John Keegan, *The face of battle: a study of Agincourt, Waterloo, and the Somme* (New York 1976) 275-292; Dierk Walter, *Colonial violence: European empires and the use of force* (New York 2017) 31, 47-48.
109 Patrick Porter, *Military orientalism: Eastern war through Western eyes* (London 2009) 81; Christiaan Harinck, 'Beschoten en beschreven. De Indonesische tegenstander in de Nederlandse militaire vastlegging, 1945-1949', *Leidschrift* 31:3 (2016) 19-38, specifically 34.
110 Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie*, 154; see also Petra Groen, 'Colonial warfare and military ethics in the Netherlands East Indies, 1816-1941', *Journal of Genocide Research* 14:3-4 (2012) 277-296, specifically 289, and Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 708.
111 Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, 'The Use and Abuse of the "Dutch Approach" to Counter-Insurgency', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 36:6 (2013) 867-897.
112 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 779.

111 5. The law as a weapon

1 I am grateful to my colleagues in the research programme, Wim Dechering, Stan Meuwese, Karel Kraan, Pia Potter and Herman Roozenbeek, for their contributions to this research.
2 National Archives of the Netherlands, The Hague (hereinafter NL-HaNA), Attorney General of the Dutch East Indies (Procureur-Generaal Nederlands-Indië, hereinafter PG), 2.10.17, inv. no. 1323, Pencil annotation 'vdL' [public prosecutor Van der Laan] to PG, 27 March [1947].
3 For a description of extreme violence, see chapter 1 and the Interim conclusions.
4 Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Bart Luttikhuis, 'Extreem geweld tijdens dekolonisatieoorlogen in vergelijkend perspectief, 1945-1962', *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 135:2 (2020) 34-51, 46, 50.
5 C.F. Rüter, *Enkele aspecten van de strafrechtelijke reactie op oorlogsmisdrijven en misdrijven tegen de menselijkheid* (Amsterdam 1973) 166; R.P. Budding, *Beheersing van geweld. Het optreden van de Nederlandse landstrijdkrachten in Indonesië 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 1996) 65.
6 Rémy Limpach, *De brandende kampongs van Generaal Spoor* (Amsterdam 2016) 487-496, 770.
7 The term 'Dutch military personnel' refers to members of the Dutch armed forces, including the KNIL and the Royal Navy.
8 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 509-530; Remco Raben, 'Zonder vorm van proces', *Historisch Nieuwsblad* 10 (2014) 32-39.

9 Budding, *Beheersing van geweld*, 43; Hans Abma, 'Doodstraf Nederlands-Indië', *VU Magazine* 20 (1991) 23-28, 23.

10 Certain aspects were addressed in the *Militair-Rechtelijk Tijdschrift* (hereinafter MRT), *Tijdschrift van het Recht* and appendix 8 of the *Excessennota*: Kamerstuk 10 008, no. 3. session 1968-1969, memo on archival research into data concerning excesses committed by Dutch military personnel in Indonesia between 1945 and 1950 [published in 1995 with an introduction by Jan Bank]. Investigation and enforcement also form part of the criminal justice chain, but we only address them briefly here.

11 Nico van Horn, 'De Excessennota na een halve eeuw. Een bestandsopname', *Leidschrift* 31:3 (2016), 79-94.

12 In the forthcoming monograph Esther Zwinkels, *The Harsh Sword of Lady Justice. Law and Impunity in the Indonesian War of Independence, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 2022) [the translated edition of: *De klewang van Vrouwe Justitia. Recht en onrecht in de Indonesische Onafhankelijksheidoorlog, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 2022)] the Indonesian perspective is addressed in more detail, along with topics not considered here, such as the amnesty scheme and the administration of justice by the Republic. The figures and findings set out in this chapter are explained and substantiated in more detail in the monograph, based on archival material, egodocuments, interviews, documentaries, newspapers and the scholarly literature.

13 In order to address the subject of this chapter, we have taken the law as it was considered applicable by the Dutch authorities as our starting point. This does not alter the fact that the status of the Republic of Indonesia and the applicability of international agreements, treaties and declarations on the conflict should be matters of debate. See Stan Meuwese, Jurjen Pen, Theo de Roos, 'Toepasselijkheid van het oorlogsrecht in de Nederlands-Indonesische oorlog', *Nederlands Juristenblad* 96:31 (2021) 2586-2592.

14 It was only with the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Supplementary Protocol II of 1977 that some rules on non-international conflicts were enshrined in treaties: Liesbeth Lijnzaad and Marten Zwanenburg, 'Internationaal humanitair recht', Nathalie Horbach, René Lefeber, Olivier Ribbelink (eds), *Handboek internationaal recht* (The Hague 2007) 553-589, 561. As noted in chapter I.1, however, a strong case can be made that the core rules of international humanitarian law already applied during this conflict, or that they were in any case declared applicable by the Netherlands; see further the section below on the humanitarian law of war as a guide.

15 Bt. GG 10 May 1940 no. 12, Staatsblad van Nederlands-Indië (hereinafter Stbl. NI) 1940, no. 134.

16 The military government that came to power when martial law was invoked.

17 Regulations on the State of War and State of Siege (SOB), Stbl. NI 1939 no. 582.

18 These measures were not imposed solely on the basis of martial law.

19 W.C. Nieuwenhuyzen, 'De regeling op den staat van oorlog en beleg in Nederlandsch-Indië', *Militaire Spectator* 69 (1900) 772-789, 774-781.

20 Henk Schulte Nordholt, *Een staat van geweld* (Rotterdam 2000) 8.

21 As the supreme commander of the army and navy in Indonesia (I.S. art. 31 and 32, Stbl. NI 1925 no. 447), the (lieutenant) governor general was authorized to instruct the army commander general (CLG) to make, amend or revoke provisions: Netherlands Institute of Military History (hereinafter NIMH), 513, Spoor, inv. no. 233, Course material SOB, 1943-1944.

22 SOB Regulations, art. 37. The powers under emergency law were a matter of debate, both at the time and today: J.P. Loof, *Mensenrechten en staatsveiligheid: verenigbare grootheden? Opschorting en beperking van mensenrechtenbescherming tijdens noodtoestanden en andere situaties die de staatsveiligheid bedreigen* (Nijmegen 2005) 19-110.

23 NL-HaNA, Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië (hereinafter SNI) 2.13.132, inv. no. 1313, Colonel De Vries to CLG, 22 August 1947.

24 Idem, Pencil annotation Spoor on letter Colonel De Vries to CLG 22 August 1947; Idem, Head of Political Affairs Office (Van Lier) to CLG, 26 August 1947.

25 SOB Regulation, art. 6 and 7.

26 The Netherlands considered all of the kingdom's residents – including Indonesians – to be Dutch subjects and subject to Dutch authority. Not all subjects had the status of Dutch citizens, however.

27 The situation beyond these two main islands was less clear. On 15 July 1946, for example, the State of Siege was revoked in the regions of Borneo and the Greater East, and the State of War came into force in parts of Kalimantan and Bali, and from 11 December 1946 also in parts of South Sulawesi; see Stbl. NI 1946, nos. 71 and 139. Moreover, orders also provided that in areas where the state of emergency was no longer in force, certain measures taken by the Military Authority could remain in force for longer; see

Stbl. NI 1946, no. 66; 1947, no. 118; 1948, no. 146; and 1949, no. 181.

28 Matthew Groves and Alison Duxbury, 'The reform of military justice', Alison Duxbury and Matthew Groves (eds), *Military Justice in the Modern Age* (Cambridge 2016) 1-12.

29 The Dutch *WvS* (1881) applied to the KL and the KM; the *WvS* for the Dutch East Indies (1918) applied to the KNIL.

30 The Dutch *WvMS* (1923) applied to the KL and the KM; the *WvMS* for the Dutch East Indies (1934) applied to the KNIL. There was also a military disciplinary code (Wet op de Krijgstucht, WKt) for the KL (1903) and the KNIL (1934).

31 Cathryn Corns and John Hughes-Wilson, *Blindfold and Alone: British Military Executions in the Great War* (London 2005. 1st edition 2001) 39-41.

32 NL-HaNA, Procureur-Generaal bij het Hooggerechtshof van Nederlands-Indië (hereinafter PG), 2.10.17, inv. no. 1326, Spoor, 13 April 1949. This applied in particular to the KNIL, because KNIL judge advocates were answerable to the *advocaat-fiscaal* (prosecutor) of the high military court (HMG), a role fulfilled by the attorney general in Indonesia. Judge advocates for the KL were officially answerable to the HMG in the Netherlands.

33 E. Bonn jr., 'Het Openbaar-Ministerie in Indonesië van 15.8.1945 tot 27.12.1949', *Tijdschrift voor Strafrecht* LX (1951) 111-124, 111.

34 The KL's field court martial (KRV KL) was based in Jakarta, with chambers where justice was administered in Surabaya, Bandung, Semarang and Medan, among others; the KNIL's field courts martial (KRV KL) were based in Jakarta and Makassar and administered justice in Bandung, Semarang, Surabaya and Palembang, among others; and the KM had a naval court martial (*zeekrijgsraad*) in Jakarta and later in Surabaya, where a separate court martial for the Marine Brigade also operated for several months.

35 'Regtspleging bij de Landmagt' (for KL) and 'Regtspleging bij de Zeemagt' (for KM). The revised military judicial procedure of 1945 (*Herziene Rechtspleging bij de Landmacht*, HRL) applied to the KNIL: Stbl. NI 1945, no. 112. Due to the 'state of war', the procedure of the KL's courts martial deviated from that of courts martial in times of peace.

36 Bonn jr., 'Openbaar Ministerie'. At the KNIL, the judge advocate was not a soldier; at the KL, the judge advocate was a reserve officer in many cases.

37 Bt. Lt.-GG, 22 September 1945 no.2, Stbl. NI 1946 no. 135.

38 VMG 522, 24 March 1948.

39 VMG 505, 31 May 1946; NL-HaNA, SNI 2.13.132, inv. no. 3551.

40 H.H.A. de Graaff, *De militair-rechterlijke organisatie en haar verband met de bevelsverhoudingen bij de landmacht 1795-1955* ('s-Gravenhage 1957) 374.

41 Bt. CLG nr. Kab/312, 31 May 1946; NL-HaNA, SNI 2.13.132, inv. no. 3551.

42 HRL NI, art. 15.

43 Arie J. van Veen, *Militaire Politie in Nederlands-Indië 1945-1951* (Amsterdam 1997) 105-113.

44 Ibidem, 107.

45 M.P. Plantenga, 'Krijgsraden bij troepen te velde', *MRT* XLV (1952) 145-197, 146.

46 Ed., 'Krijgsraad te Velde K.N.I.L. te Batavia', *MRT* XLIII (1950) 99-103.

47 Museum Bronbeek Arnhem, 2002/05/03-1, Typescript 'Juridische zaken', J.W. Keiser, 1947.

48 NL-HaNA, PG 2.10.17, inv. no. 64, AM KRV KL (Van Leeuwen) to CLG, 31 December 1947.

49 NL-HaNA, General Staff (Generale Staf/Staf van de Bevelhebber der Landstrijdkrachten, hereinafter GS NL) 2.13.196, inv. no. 2837, AM KRV KL Jakarta (Van Leeuwen), 2 October 1947.

50 NL-HaNA, GS NL 2.13.196, inv. no. 2837, Minister for War (Fiévez) to Minister for Justice, 7 August 1947. In order to guarantee legal knowledge and experience, the army established a separate legal service in the Netherlands in 1949, the Militair Juridische Dienst: De Graaff, *De militair-rechterlijke organisatie*, 355-356.

51 Plantenga, 'Krijgsraden', 146.

52 Bonn jr., 'Openbaar Ministerie', 111.

53 NIMH, 509 Dekolonisatie van Nederlands-Indië (hereinafter Dekolonisatie), inv. no. 1574, s' Jacob to Tak Labrijn, 12 October 1948.

54 NL-HaNA, GS NL 2.13.196, inv. no. 2837, De Graaff to Van Leeuwen [private], 24 November 1947; ibidem inv. no. 2837, Chief GS (Kruls) to president KRV KL NI, 4 November 1947.

55 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, inv. no. 1574, Tak Labrijn to Lt.-GG, CLG, etc., 3 September 1948.

56 See *The Harsh Sword of Lady Justice* for an explanation of these considerations with reference to actual cases.
57 S.A. Lapré, *Ned. Indië 1940-1950 in kort bestek: en enkele gevolgen, o.a. de coup-Westerling en het Zuid-molukse verzet* (Ermelo 1989) 164-166.
58 Career considerations were also a factor in the attorney general's advice not to prosecute the responsible commander for the executions in Rawagede.
59 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, inv. no. 1574, AM KRV KL (Van Leeuwen) to CLG, 31 December 1947; the then adjutant battalion commander A.J.A.C. Nooteboom discussed the settlement of rape, Tessel Pollmann, *Bruidstraantjes en andere Indische geschiedenissen* (Meppel 1999) 108. The issuing of disciplinary penalties for rape is also recorded in the registers of the courts martial, including: NL-HaNA, Krijgsraden (te Velde) in Nederland, Europa, Canada, Australië, Nederlands-Indië, Nieuw-Guinea en het Verre Oosten (hereinafter KRV) 2.09.19, inv. no. 230, Weekly case register Jakarta 1947-1949. Certain crimes could be dealt with as disciplinary offences for practical reasons, as will be explained further below.
60 NL-HaNA, PG 2.10.17, inv. no. 1326; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 660-661.
61 B.P. Pieters and A. Vermeer (eds), *Inleiding humanitair oorlogsrecht* (The Hague 2011) 53.
62 Pollmann, *Bruidstraantjes,* 113.
63 Rüter, *Enkele aspecten*, 23-24. Structural criminality is criminality that is not committed incidentally, but multiple times, and emerges as the result of certain structures.
64 Idem, 26-27.
65 Pollmann, *Bruidstraantjes*, 112, 114.
66 See comments in the margin in dossiers, for example: NL-HaNA, PG 2.10.17, inv. no. 1308.
67 NL-HaNA, GS NL 2.13.196, inv. no. 2837, AM KRV KL Jakarta (Van Leeuwen) to head squad G6 GS (De Graaff), 30 October 1947.
68 Interview collection Dutch war veterans (ICNV), Interview 555, R.W. Asser, 22 February 2006.
69 Chinese who had settled in Indonesia, known as *peranakans*, were viewed by the Chinese government as Chinese citizens.
70 NL-HaNA, Mariniersbrigade in Nederlands-Indië (hereinafter MB) 2.13.126, inv. no. 1729, Report S-2 MB (Nypels), 20 November 1947.
71 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 627, 641-643.
72 NL-HaNA KRV, 2.09.19, inv. no. 49, Opening session KRV KNIL Jakarta, 28 February 1946. Words are underlined in the original.
73 At the time of the Aceh War, the general line at the KNIL was that the law of war did not apply to 'uncivilized peoples', but that it should be followed 'in principle'. Military necessary, however, would always be the deciding factor: P.M.H. Groen, 'Een moordgeschiedenis: koloniale oorlogvoering en militaire ethiek rond 1900', J. Thomas Lindblad and Willem van der Molen (eds) *Macht en majesteit. Opstellen voor Cees Fasseur* (Leiden 2002) 43-64, 50-56, 61-62.
74 Directoraat Centrale Opleidingen (DCO), *Uittreksel uit de bepalingen uit het conventionele oorlogsrecht* (Bandung 1948).
75 NL-HaNA, SNI 2.13.132, inv. no. 2898, Chief GS (Buurman van Vreeden) to division and troop commanders, 18 December 1946.
76 Meuwese, 'Toepasselijkheid'.
77 Stbl. NI 1946, no. 44, 'Ordonnantie begripsomschrijving oorlogsmisdrijven', 1 June 1946.
78 Supplement to Stbl. NI, no. 15031.
79 In the public domain, the term 'war crimes' has a broader meaning than this formal-legal one alone, but to avoid confusion I do not use the term here to refer to violent crimes committed by Dutch soldiers.
80 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 549.
81 The on-board training and the several weeks of supplementary training from departments did not devote any time to the law of war or criminal law. See, for example: NL-HaNA, SNI 2.13.132, inv. no. 2902, C-IDiv (by order of head Operations dept., De Jong), 30 August 1946; Idem, C-IDiv (Chief Staff, Holle) to commanders, 8 November 1946; Idem, Territorial/Troop commander W-Java (by order of Chief Staff, Holle), 7 September 1948.
82 *Handboek voor den soldaat. Deel I* (Breda 1940); *Voorschrift voor de Uitoefening van de Politiek-Politionele Taak van het Leger (hereinafter VPTL)* (no location 1945).
83 *VPTL* (Batavia-Centrum 1937) 32.
84 See various orders: NIMH, 516 Lentz, Operational orders C III Inf. Brigade Group.

85 NL-HaNA, Regeringsonderzoek naar wandaden in Nederlands-Indië in 1945-1949, 2.13.160, inv. no. 4, Routine order no. 5, 21 July 1947.
86 *Excessennota*, appendix 11.
87 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 617.
88 Judgement ZKR and sentence HMG, printed in *MRT* XLI (1948), 326-340; B.V.A. Röling, 'Brandstichtingsaffaire', *MRT* XLII (1949), 219-223; *Vrij Nederland*, Anne-Lot Hoek, 'Jongens, laten we dit huis sparen', 23 June 2012, 38-41.
89 NL-HaNA, Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken: Bureau Statische Archieven Overzeese Rijksdelen 2.04.53.20, inv. no. 35, memo on the psychological climate, F.J.E. Hogewind, 4 May 1969. The memo was written for the *Excessennota*, but not included.
90 On 5 of the *Excessennota,* however, there is a reference to 141 cases. This difference is probably explained by the erroneous inclusion of cases of looting by the navy.
91 Gert Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië, 1945-1950. Getuigenissen van een oorlog aan de verkeerde kant van de geschiedenis* (Amsterdam 2015) 10.
92 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 45.
93 Archive research KITLV [2012-2016].
94 See *The Harsh Sword of Lady Justice* for more a more detailed explanation and substantiation.
95 NL-HaNA, GS NL 2.13.196, inv. no. 2837, AM KRV KL (Van Leeuwen) to head squad G6 (De Graaff), 30 October 1947.
96 At the KM: KB 22 October 1942, Stbl. NL C65. At the KL: KB 27 July 1944, Stbl. NL E53.
97 NL-HaNA, GS NL 2.13.196, inv. no. 2837, Circular AM KRV KL (Van Leeuwen), 30 October 1947. Further research is required to draw any conclusions about the scale on which this may have taken place.
98 Based on the number of cause numbers in the cause lists of the courts martial. Not all cause numbers were in use..
99 NL-HaNA, KRV 2.09.19, inv. no. 263, Weekly case register Semarang 1946-1948, aud.nos. 292-591; idem, 246, Weekly case register Surabaya 1947-1949; idem, 229 and 230, Weekly case registers Jakarta 1947-1949. These figures do not include the cases that were referred to a different court martial; in Jakarta, more than a third of the cases.
100 NL-HaNA, KRV 2.09.19, inv. no. 230, Weekly case register Jakarta 1947-1949.
101 *Excessennota*, appendix 6, 3.
102 NL-HaNA, KRV 2.09.19, inv. no. 230, Weekly case register Jakarta 1947-1949. These reasons cannot be derived from the registry, but they can be gleaned from the dossiers of the attorney general.
103 'Installatie van de Kamer van het Hoog Militair Gerechtshof in Indonesië', *MRT* XLIII (1950) 388-400, 397.
104 Ibidem. These figures come from the HMG and concern the period 1946-1949, and are also mentioned in appendix 8 of the *Excessennota*. However, they do not correspond to the figures in appendix 6 of the memo. Temporary courts martial tried at least 22 KNIL cases. Further details and substantiation can be found in *The Harsh Sword of Lady Justice*.
105 *Excessennota* appendices 4, 6. Although the term is avoided in the rest of the memo, it is mentioned in this appendix on the archival research.
106 The full description in appendix 6 reads: '[...] offences, which may nowadays fall within the scope of the Wartime Offences Act (Act of 10 July 1952, Stb. 1952, 408), insofar as they were perpetrated by Dutch servicemen in Indonesia in 1946-1950, in particular whereby abuse was made of power, opportunity or means to benefit the accused as a serviceman, and whereby civilians (regardless of whether they belonged to the resistance force) were involved as the injured party'.
107 Based on my own research and archive research by KITLV.
108 The death penalty in peacetime was abolished in the Netherlands in 1870, but it continued to exist in the law of war and military penal law until 1983. The death penalty was maintained in the colony (in both the WvS and WvMS).
109 The death sentence given to A.P.H. Orval was implemented, and W.J. Syaranamual was shot 'as he fled' before the execution could be carried out. *Excessennota*, appendix 7, III-8 and III-34.
110 J.A.A. van Doorn and W.J. Hendrix, *Ontsporing van geweld: het Nederlands-Indonesisch conflict* (4th edition, Zutphen 2012), 301.
111 See, for example, the judgements of KRV Jakarta, in which article 38 was applied as grounds for exclusion from punishment: judgements published in *MRT* 1952 and the *Excessennota*, appendix 7, I-18 and I-31.

112 Art. 38 Ned. WvMS (1923) and art. 32 Ind. WvMS (1934); C.A. Weststeijn, 'Het nieuwe artikel 38 Wet Militair Strafrecht. Een onderzoek naar de wenselijkheid en de functionaliteit van het nieuwe artikel 38 MSr in relatie met het huidige (internationale) militair strafrecht' (Law master's thesis, Tilburg University 2012).
113 NL-HaNA, KRV 2.09.19, inv. no. 178, Trial of Kokubu Shigehiko.
114 Ibidem, inv. no. 67, Trial of A.A. Gilles; *Excessennota*, appendix 7, III-44. According to testimonies, the heads were never actually displayed.
115 NL-HaNA, KRV 2.09.19, inv. no. 42, Trial of W.P. Manshanden; *Excessennota*, appendix 7, I-28.
116 *Het Dagblad*, 'Roofmoordenaar werd tot doodstraf veroordeeld', 26 August 1947; Idem, 'Ex.-M.P.-er ter dood veroordeeld', 22 April 1948; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 500.
117 NIMH, Dekolonisatie, inv. no. 1574, AM KRV KL (Van Leeuwen) to CLG, 31 December 1947; NL-HaNA, SNI 2.13.132, inv. no. 2898, Circular on behalf of Adjutant General, head of IIIC (Van Gorkum), 22 January 1948.
118 NL-HaNA, GS NL 2.13.196, inv. no. 2837, Memo AM KRV KL Jakarta (Van Leeuwen) to CLG/legal advisor, 30 October 1947.
119 NL-HaNA, KRV 2.09.19, inv. no. 109, Judgements various TKRs.
120 See *The Harsh Sword of Lady Justice* for a more detailed explanation of the differences between the different parts of the armed forces.
121 R. Cribb, 'Convict Exile and Penal Settlement in Colonial Indonesia', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 18 (2017).
122 Internment was based on art. 20 and art. 36 SOB in areas where the SOB was in force, and on the Governor General's 'exorbitant rights' for the rest of the archipelago: art. 45-48, *Regeringsreglement*.
123 In the sources, the term 'prisoners' (*gevangenen*) tends to be used indiscriminately to refer to internees, detainees and convicts.
124 NL-HaNA, PG 2.10.17, inv. no. 125, documents SOB Bali and Lombok; NL-HaNA, PG, inv. no. 136, PG to Adjutant General, 5 June 1946; NL-HaNA, Algemene Secretarie van de Nederlands-Indische Regering (hereinafter AS) 2.10.14, inv. no. 3287, 'Nieuwe algemene regeling', 9 April 1947.
125 NL-HaNA, AS 2.10.14, inv. no. 3287, CLG (Spoor) to Lt.-GG, 29 August 1947.
126 VMG 517, 24 September 1947.
127 NL-HaNA, AS 2.10.14, inv. no. 3287, PG (Felderhof) to Representative PG Recomba East Java, 6 November 1947.
128 P.M.H. Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië 1945-1950* ('s-Gravenhage 1991), Appendix 16, 264.
129 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 520.
130 Idem, 529-541.
131 Pramoedya Ananta Toer, trans. A. van der Helm, *In de fuik* (originally published as *Mereka jang dilumpuhkan* 1951; Breda 1994).
132 NL-HaNA, PG 2.10.17, inv. no. 1273, Detainee guidelines, East Java, 10 May 1948.
133 This, too, was done on the basis of art. 20 and art. 36 SOB.
134 NL-HaNA, PG 2.10.17, inv. no. 1278, Report Representative PG in Yogyakarta (Bieger), 17 January 1949; ibidem, inv. no. 1337, Appendices report AM TKR Surabaya (De la Parra), 28 June 1947.
135 NL-HaNA, SNI, 2.13.132 inv. no. 435, Head Office Political Affairs (Van Lier), 7 May 1948.
136 See, among others: NL-HaNA, KRV 2.09.19, inv. no. 80, Judgements TKR Surabaya; *Nieuwe Courant*, 'Doodstraffen voor de Bronbeek-moordenaars', 23 July 1948. Alleged *bersiap* killers were sometimes executed without trial, without any consequences; see, for example: Henk van Maurik, *Djokja achter de horizon* (Nijmegen 1949) 206.
137 Ordinance temporary extraordinary provisions of criminal law, Stbl. NI 1945, no. 135.
138 Art.169 WvS NI NL-HaNA, SNI 2.13.132, inv. no. 2898, Circular PG (Felderhof), 30 July 1948.
139 Regulations 5/1946 (for East Java), 5 February 1946. See also Ordinance temporary special criminal provisions, Stbl. NI 1948 no. 17.
140 NL-HaNA, PG 2.10.17, inv. no. 122, Hawthorn Proclamation, 13 October 1945. Similar proclamations were applicable in other areas.
141 NL-HaNA MB, 2.13.126, inv. no. 662, Bt. 12 January 1948 no. 7 (Stbl. NI 1948 no.17). The maximum sentences were set at ten years at that time.
142 VMG 514, 19 July 1947.

143 In *The Harsh Sword of Lady Justice*, these and other courts are examined in more detail.
144 L.A.E. Suermondt, 'Vergeten rechtspleging. De bijzondere krijgsgerechten in het voormalige Nederlands Oost-Indië 1948-1949', *MRT* XCIII (2000) 116-155.
145 Various reports in archives and egodocuments, including: Rein Posthuma, *Arts in verzet* (Midwoud 2010) 111-113; NL-HaNA, SNI 2.13.132, inv. no. 1313, Head Office Political Affairs (Van Lier) to CLG, 26 August 1947.
146 VMG 522, 5 March 1948; NL-HaNA, PG 2.10.17, inv. no. 1273, Circular PG (Felderhof), 13 February 1948.
147 NL-HaNA, PG 2.10.17, inv. no. 1117, Report [Central Java] Bieger, 12 December 1948.
148 See, for example: NL-HaNA, MB 2.13.126, inv. no. 1702, Register BKG.
149 Research newspaper collection of the National Library of the Netherlands: www.delpher.nl; archival research. The same assessment was made by historian Willem IJzereef on the basis of his archival research: *de Volkskrant*, 'Een handgranaat was al genoeg voor de doodstraf', 25 April 1989. See also Van Doorn and Hendrix, *Ontsporing*, 110-111.
150 NL-HaNA, KRV 2.09.19, inv. no. 79, Trial of Supardan.
151 Ibidem, inv. no. 60, Dossier Nordmann; ibidem, inv. no. 195 Register KRV KNIL; *Excessennota*, appendix 7, III-21-23-24 and 25; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 502-503.
152 NL-HaNA, AS 2.10.14, inv. no. 3737, Dir. Justice (Gieben) to Lt.-GG and PG, 7 July 1947; ibidem, inv. no. 4722, Telegrams ordering suspension sentences, December 1948.
153 See, for example: NIMH, 528 Aan- en Afvoertroepen (AAT), inv. no. 37, Diary L.P.J. Dijkema, 31 January 1949.
154 NL-HaNA, SNI 2.13.132, inv. no. 3551, Lists judgements KRV; NIMH, 526 Veldhuizen, inv. no. 11 Diary Th.A.M. Veldhuizen, 14 May 1948.
155 NL-HaNA, AS 2.10.14, inv. no. 4619, Dept. Justice (Gieben) to president, AMs, public prosecutor TKR and KRV, 26 June 1946; 'Krijgsraad te Velde K.N.I.L.', 99-103.
156 Soegih Arto, *Indonesia and I* (Singapore 1994) 132.
157 Sukirman A. Rachman, 'Sejarah revolusi kemerdekaan', *Laporan penelitian sejarah dan nilai tradisional Sulawesi Selatan* (Ujung Pandang 1996) 1-54, 37; Leiden University Library, DH 973 Lambers, inv. no. 11, Lambers to Felderhof, 17 October 1946; Pramoedya, *In de fuik*.
158 NL-HaNA NEFIS/CMI 2.10.62, inv. no. 6226, C Bambu Runcing to MP Jakarta, 27 July 1948; A. Mannaungi, *Corat coret masa revolusi: memoir H.A. Mannaungi* (Pare-Pare 2002) 146.

111 **6. Silence, information and deception in the Indonesian War of Independence**

1 This chapter provides an overview of the conclusions that are reflected in the monograph by Remco Raben and Peter Romijn, with the help of Maarten van der Bent and Anne van Mourik, *Talen van geweld. Stilte, informatie en misleiding in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949* [Languages of Violence. Silence, Information, and Deception in the Indonesian War of Independence, 1945-1949] (Amsterdam 2022), which is incorporated into the series that is part of the research programme 'Independence, Decolonization, Violence, and War in Indonesia 1945-1950'. For more detailed source references, please refer to this book.
2 Bruce Rocheleau 'Politics, Accountability, and Information Management', George Kelley (ed.) *Selected Readings on Information Technology Management: Contemporary Issues* (Hershey and New York 2008) 323-357.
3 Huw Bennett and Peter Romijn, '"Liever geen onderzoek". Hoe schandalen over koloniaal geweld in de Britse en Nederlandse politiek onschadelijk gemaakt konden worden (1945-1960)', *BMGN Low Countries Historical Review* 135:2 (2020) 52-71.
4 This began already during the war; during the investigation in 1969 that led to the 'Memorandum on excesses' [*Excessennota*], the chairman of the commission, E.J. Korthals Altes, tasked the members of the 'coordination group' with looking into what was known about the misconduct of Dutch troops at each of their own ministries. The results can be found National Archives (NL-HaNA), The Hague (NL-HaNA): access no. 2.04.53.20 (Ministry of the Interior, section Static Archives of Overseas Territories), inv. no. 32. Also in the archives of the General Secretary of the Dutch East Indies government (2.10.14), inv. no. 3741-3796 and in the archives of the Attorney General of the Supreme Court of the Dutch East Indies (2.10.17), inv. no. 1283-1351 in the National Archives in The Hague. In these archives, all the cases that could be labelled as 'excesses' have been placed in a separate series.
5 Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain. Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton and Oxford 2009) 139.

6 *Nota betreffende het archiefonderzoek naar de gegevens omtrent excessen in Indonesië begaan door Nederlandse militairen in de periode 1945-1950*, published as: Jan Bank (ed.) *De Excessennota* (The Hague 1995).
7 Soekarno, *Indonesië klaagt aan! Pleitrede voor den landraad te Bandoeng op 2 december 1930 gehouden door Ir. Soekarno* (Amsterdam 1931) 36.
8 Lieutenant Colonel J.F. Warouw to various commanders, 14 April 1949, NL-HaNA, General Secretary 2.10.14, inv. no. 3753.
9 G. Nijpels, 'Oorlogsgebruiken in onzen strijd met minder beschaafden', *Orgaan der Vereeniging ter Beoefening van de Krijgswetenschap 1904-1905* (The Hague 1905) 587-698.
10 Petra Groen, 'Een moordgeschiedenis. Koloniale oorlogvoering en militaire ethiek rond 1900', J. Thomas Lindblad and Willem van der Molen (eds), *Macht en majesteit. Opstellen voor Cees Fasseur bij zijn afscheid als hoogleraar in de geschiedenis van Indonesië aan de Universiteit Leiden.* Semaian 22 (Leiden 2002) 43-64, esp. 54-60; Handelingen Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal 1907-1908 appendix B 106-108; Petra Groen et al., *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie. Opkomst en ondergang van Nederland als koloniale mogendheid 1816-2010*. Militaire geschiedenis van Nederland 6 (Amsterdam 2021) 120, 213-217.
11 Sartono Kartodirdjo, 'Agrarian Radicalism in Java: Its Setting and Development', Claire Holt (ed.), *Culture and Politics in Indonesia* (Ithaca 1972) 71-125; Robert E. Elson, 'Cane-burning in the Pasuruan Area: An Expression of Social Discontent', *Between People and Statistics. Essays on Modern Indonesian History Presented to P. Creutzberg* (The Hague and Amsterdam 1979) 219-233.
12 Bob de Graaff, '*Kalm te midden van woedende golven'. Het ministerie van Koloniën en zijn taakomgeving 1912-1940* (The Hague 1997) 241.
13 Alastair M. Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations* (Westport 1960) 171-195; see also the contribution of Jeroen Kemperman in this volume.
14 Minutes of the Council of Military Affairs of the Kingdom, 31 July 1946, NL-HaNA, Archives Council of Ministers, access no. 2.02.05.02, inv. no. 997.
15 Remco Raben, 'Zonder een vorm van proces. Indonesiërs in Nederlandse kampen', *Historisch Nieuwsblad* 10 (2014) 33-39.
16 Vice-Admiral Pinke to Van Mook, 12 September 1946, NL-HaNA, Council of Ministers 2.02.05.02, inv. no. 1073.
17 This was the position represented by the Commission-General in a letter to Minister Jonkman, 15 January 1947, NL-HaNA, Council of Ministers 2.02.05.02, inv. no. 1073.
18 Petra Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië 1945-1950* (The Hague 1991) 259 (appendix 12).
19 This was also the finding of J.A.A. van Doorn and W.J. Hendrix in their book *Ontsporing van geweld. Het Nederlands-Indonesisch conflict* (Rotterdam 1970) 215.
20 Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen*, 261-262 (appendices 13 and 14), Groen gives the official numbers of those killed in 1949 from the official reports of the Dutch troops.
21 This is confirmed in a very different context for the reports on Tanjung Balai on 4 August 1947, where according to Dutch reports 300 'adversaries' were killed, but according to Indonesian sources the Dutch troops had killed 300 'inhabitants' in a wild shooting spree. See Bart Luttikhuis and C.H.C. Harinck, 'Nothing to Report? Challenging Dutch Discourse on Colonial Counterinsurgency in Indonesia, 1945-1949', Philip Dwyer and Amanda Nettelbeck (eds), *Violence, Colonialism and Empire in the Modern World* (Palgrave Macmillan 2018) 265-286, esp. 269-270.
22 Battle Report Operation Shark, 5 March 1949, 4, NL-HaNA, Algemene Secretarie van de Nederlands-Indische Regering (hereinafter AS) 2.10.14, inv. no. 3753.
23 Willem IJzereef, *De Zuid-Celebes affaire. Kapitein Westerling en de standrechtelijke executies* (Dieren 1984) 142. Compare the statement of High Representative of the Crown Tony Lovink about 'retaliating terror with terror' on South Sulawesi, Lovink to Van Maarseveen, 19 July 1949, NL-HaNA, Archives of the Ministry of Colonies: East Indies Archive, access no. 2.10.36.15, inv. no. 76.
24 Note assistant-wedana Trowulan Margono to *wedana* of Mojokerto: 'Serangan2 terhadap desa Modongan, Bitjak dan Balongwono oleh Mariniers', 5 June 1949, NL-HaNA, Archive Marine Brigade Dutch East Indies, access no. 2.13.126, inv.no 637; the file also contains official reports from eyewitnesses. The data was confirmed in a conversation with Bp. Sudardji, dusun Wates Lor, desa Balongwono, 24 August 2019.
25 See for example Prayoga Kartomihardjo, Prapto Saptono and Sukarsono, *Monumen perjuangan Jawa Timur* (Jakarta 1986) 132-137. Our research trips in the regions around Bojonegoro and Mojokerto in

East Java and around Yogyakarta showed how each village has its experiences and memories of violent action by Dutch patrol units. See Remco Raben, 'The Hyper-local Indonesian Revolution. Stories and Sensations from around Bojonegoro and Mojokerto', NIOD, archive Research - ODGOI.

26 G.C. Zijlmans, *Eindstrijd en ondergang van de Indische bestuursdienst. Het corps binnenlands bestuur op Java 1945-1950* (Amsterdam and Dieren 1985) 216-217.

27 Letter from W. Schols to P.J. Koets, 7 August 1947, NL-HaNA, Archive P.J. Koets, access no. 2.21.100, inv. no. 31.

28 Zijlmans, *Eindstrijd*, 213; see also Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, 'The Civil and Military Dimensions of Dutch Counter-Insurgency on Java, 1947-49', *British Journal for Military History* 1:2 (2015), bjmh.gold.ac.uk/article/view/614.

29 A.W. Reijgwart (ed.), *1-15 R.I. De Blijvertjes. Onbewust voorloper van de Mobiele Luchtbrigade* (Hengelo 2002) 222-223.

30 Interview with Bp. Bibit, dukuh Srontakan, desa Argomulyo, kabupaten Bantul, 19 February 2020; interview with Bp. Sumaryamtono, dukuh Samben, desa Argomulyo, kabupaten Bantul, 12 February 2020. See also Sudrajat and Harianti, 'Tragedi Setu Legi: Sebuah kajian lisan' (thesis Jurusan Pendidikan Sejarah, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, n.d.); 'Desa Argomulyo kecamatan Sedayu kabupaten Bantul' (anonymous typoscript, n.p. n.d.; private collection). The monument in Sedayu reports, apart from the soldiers who were killed, 102 (not 104) *rakyat pejuang*, fighters of the people, which is more a claim to call everyone a resistance fighter than a true reflection of the nature of those killed. The Somenggalan memorial cemetery in Sedayu for locals who were killed in the independence war also contains the graves of children, women and the elderly.

31 Rémy Limpach, *De brandende kampongs van Generaal Spoor* (Amsterdam 2016) 207.

32 NL-HaNA, Archive of H.J. van Mook, access no. 2.21.123, inv. no. 371-388; Tom van den Berge, *H.J. van Mook 1894-1965. Een vrij en gelukkig Indonesië* (Bussum 2014).

33 Letter from Koets to Van Mook, 6 December 1948, NL-HaNA, P.J. Koets 2.21.100, inv.no. 30.

34 Zijlmans, *Eindstrijd*, 183 and 213.

35 Questionnaire P.A. Lanting, 8, University Library Leiden (hereafter: UBL), G.C. Zijlmans Collection, access no. H 1201, file 134.

36 IJzereef, *De Zuid-Celebes affaire*, 91.

37 Report and interview of A.M.H. Holland, UBL, Zijlmans Collection H 1201, file 134; Zijlmans, *Eindstrijd*, 216.

38 See for example: Telegram army commander to troop commanders on Java and Sumatra, 10 April 1949, NL-HaNA, General Secretary 2.10.14, inv. no. 3760; see also the contribution by Esther Zwinkels in this volume.

39 Muhammad Yuanda Zara, *Voluntary Participation, State Involvement: Indonesian Propaganda in the Struggle for Maintaining Independence, 1945-1949* (dissertation University of Amsterdam 2016).

40 Interview with Bp. Sumaryamtono, dukuh Samben, desa Argomulyo, kecamatan Sedayu, 12 February 2020. Sudrajat and Harianti, *Tragedi Setu Legi: Sebuah kajian* lisan (thesis Jurusan Pendidikan Sejarah, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, n.d.) 11-12; 'Desa Argomulyo kecamatan Sedayu kabupaten Bantul' (anonymous typoscript; private collection). Weekly operative report no. 3, 26 March 1949, NL-HaNA, Archive Ministry of Defence, Armed forces Dutch East Indies, access no. 2.13.132, inv.no. 1100.

41 Second interrogation Mardjo Sir, 24 May 1949, NL-HaNA, General Secretary 2.10.14, inv.no. 3753.

42 Lieutenant Colonel J.F. Warouw to various commanders, 14 April 1949, NL-HaNA, General Secretary 2.10.14, inv.no. 3753.

43 Letter from Colonel H.E.M. Bakhuis (Korps Militaire Politie, Centrale Justitiele Afdeling) to attorney general, 23 November 1949, NL-HaNA, Attorney General 2.10.17, inv. no. 1296.

44 Telegram letter from commander of judicial department of the military police V in Surabaya to the commander of military police, 29 August 1949, NL-HaNA, Armed forces Dutch East Indies 2.13.132, inv. no. 3939.

45 See the contribution by Jeroen Kemperman in this volume, as well as J. Kemperman, E. Keizer and T. van den Berge, *Diplomatie en geweld. De internationale context van de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 2022).

46 See the contribution by Esther Zwinkels in this volume, as well as Esther Zwinkels, *De klewang van Vrouwe Justitia. Recht en onrecht in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam 2022).

47 'Progressieve Groep. Beginselverklaring', *Het Dagblad*, 11 March 1946.

48 Beb Vuijk, 'De zuivering van Pesing', *De Baanbreker*, 4 May 1946.
49 H.P.L. Wiessing, 'Eer is teer, dr Drees!', *De Vrije Katheder* 8:11 (March 1949) 2-5.
50 C.L.W. Fock, note to the Prime Minister, 15 June 1949, NL-HaNA, Archives Ministries of General Warfare, access no. 2.03.01, inv. no. 4445.
51 Louis Zweers, *De gecensureerde oorlog. Militairen versus media in Nederlands-Indië 1945-1949* (Zutphen 2013).
52 Zweers, *De gecensureerde oorlog*; Floribert Baudet, *Het vierde wapen. Voorlichting, propaganda en volksweerbaarheid 1944-1953* (Amsterdam 2013).
53 Instructions RVD-Batavia (date 1946), NL-HaNA, Archive Ch.O. van der Plas, access no. 2.21.266, inv. no. 208.
54 Memo Six to Beel, 11 July 1946, NL-HaNA, Ministries of General Warfare 2.03.01, inv. no. 6320.
55 Code telegram Lt GG to Minister of Colonies, situation report 23 January 1947, NL-HaNA, Archive Ministery for the Colonies: Reports Indonesia, access no. 2.10.29, inv. no. 91.
56 Daily overview Operations Office, General Headquarters, 27 January 1947, NL-HaNA, Reports Indonesia 2.10.29, inv. no. 193.
57 J. Schouten (ARP) in Handelingen Tweede Kamer, 11 July 1947, 2081.
58 Antoine Weijzen, *De Indië-weigeraars. Vergeten slachtoffers van een koloniale oorlog* (Utrecht 2015) 56-57, 148, et seq.
59 Gerda Jansen Hendriks, *Een voorbeeldige kolonie. Nederlands-Indië in 50 jaar overheidsfilms 1912-1962* (dissertation University of Amsterdam 2014).
60 See Raben and Romijn, *Talen van geweld*, as well as the introduction by Maarten van der Bent (ed.), *Van Rij and Stam. Rapporten van de Commissie van onderzoek naar beweerde excessen gepleegd door Nederlandse militairen in Indonesië, 1949-1954* (Amsterdam 2022).
61 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 326.
62 Note Van Mook, 27 November 1946 and letter Lt GG to Minister of Overseas Territories, 27 November 1946 (minute), NL-HaNA, General Secretary 2.10.14, inv. no. 3741; see also *Excessennota*, 66.
63 *Friesch Dagblad*, 31 May 1947.
64 Jonkman in Handelingen Tweede Kamer, 11 July 1947, 2064.
65 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 307-310.
66 Van Mook to Jonkman, 21 April 1948, NL-HaNA, Attorney General 2.10.17, inv. no. 1325, folder xiii.
67 Minutes of the Council of Ministers, 23 August 1948, NL-HaNA, Council of Ministers 2.02.05.02. inv. no. 391.
68 *Excessennota*, 58-59; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 320-323.
69 Van der Bent (ed.), *Van Rij en Stam*.
70 Spoor Minutes Council of Ministers , 21 January 1947, NL-HaNA, Council of Ministers 2.02.05.02, inv. no. 389; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 269-270.
71 See, among other things, reporting on this by the Commission-General, 28 January 1947, *Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen 1945-1950.* S.L. van der Wal, P.J. Drooglever and M.J.B. Schouten (eds) (20 vols.; The Hague 1971-1996) (hereafter: *NIB*) VII, 259-261.
72 Van Poll to Beel, personal, 1 February 1947, *NIB* VII, 303.
73 Situation reports from Mook to Jonkman, December 1946-February 1947, *NIB* VI, nos. 310 and 324, and VII, nos. 44, 121, 181.
74 Pieter 't Hoen, 'Duizenden vermoord op Zuid-Celebes door het K.N.I.L.' *Het Parool*, 29 May 1947.
75 'Het gevangenen-transport uit Bondowoso', *Nieuwsblad van het Zuiden*, 6 December 1947.
76 Minutes of the Council of Ministers, 15 December 1947, NL-HaNA, Council of Ministers 2.02.05.02, inv. no. 389.
77 About the Bondowoso affair, see Ad van Liempt, *De lijkentrein. Waarom 46 gevangenen de reis naar Surabaya niet overleefden* (The Hague 1997); Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 543-544.
78 Cabinet Army Commander to Lt GG, 25 March 1948, NL-HaNA, General Secretary 2.10.14, inv. no. 3776.
79 Cabinet Army Commander to High Representative of the Crown, 8 December 1948, NL-HaNA, General Secretary 2.10.14, inv. no. 4732; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 638.
80 J. Buskes, 'Spoor's afgebrande dessa's', *Tijd en Taak*, 14 August 1948 and 12 September 1948.
81 Marleen van den Berg, 'Zendeling met hart voor de zaak. Ds. Hildering en de kwestie Peniwen, 1949', Marleen van den Berg and George Harinck (eds), *Voor de geest en het moreel van de troepen. De kerken en de oorlog in Indonesië, 1945-1950* (Hilversum 2018) 91-108.

82 'Een officier schrijft uit Djokja aan zijn vrienden', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 26 February 1946.
83 *Excessennota*, 106-107.
84 Communication in the Council of Ministers, 11 October 1948, NL-HaNA, Council of Ministers 2.02.05.02, inv. no. 391.
85 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 632-635.
86 *Excessennota,* 106-107; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 632-635.
87 Goedhart in Handelingen Tweede Kamer, 18 February 1949, 1295-1296.
88 For the Van Rij-Stam report, see Van der Bent (ed.), *Van Rij en Stam*.
89 *Excessennota*, 29-30.
90 Van Maarseveen to Goedhart, personal letter, 28 September 1949, NL-HaNA, General Warfare 2.03.01, inv. no. 12014.
91 Petra Groen *et al*. *Krijgsgeweld en kolonie*, 213-217.
92 Raben and Romijn, *Talen van Geweld*.
93 In Dutch penal law, the principle of opportunity allows a public prosecutor to decide not to persecute a criminal act out of considerations derived from the general interest.

111 7. Silence as a strategy

1 This chapter is based on *Diplomatie en Geweld; De internationale context van de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog [Diplomacy and Violence; The International Context of the Indonesian War of Independence]* (Amsterdam 2022) by Jeroen Kemperman, Emma Keizer and Tom van den Berge, which contains a more detailed account of the discussion in this chapter.
2 Sutan Sjahrir, *Our Struggle*, translated by Benedict R. O'G. Anderson (Ithaca 1968) 25.
3 See the definition of the concept of diplomacy at: https://www.encyclo.nl/begrip/diplomatie.
4 Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, *Twenty years Indonesian foreign policy* (The Hague/Paris 1973) 71. Anak Agung, who was born on Bali, was prime minister and foreign minister of the federal state of East Indonesia between 1947 and 1949. After the transfer of sovereignty, he became minister of foreign affairs of the United States of Indonesia.
5 Especially in the various studies by J.J.P. de Jong, but also, for example, in Robert J. McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War: The United States and the struggle for Indonesian independence, 1945-49* (Ithaca/London 1981) and Frances Gouda with Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *American visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia: US foreign policy and Indonesian nationalism, 1920-1949* (Amsterdam 2002).
6 Kemperman, Keizer and Van den Berge, *Diplomatie en Geweld*, 25-34.
7 United States National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter NARA), RG 59, A1 1360, box 2, 'Second phase SWNCC study on Indonesia' (first draft written in SEA), 4 June 1947, 6. See also 10-11.
8 Foreign Relations of the U.S. (hereinafter FRUS), 1948, VI, 600, Acting Secretary of State to the Acting United States Representative at the United Nations (Jessup) at Paris, 23 December 1948. Drafted by Rusk on behalf of Lovett.
9 Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen 1945-1950, samengesteld door S.L. van der Wal (1978), P.J. Drooglever en M.J.B. Schouten (hereinafter *NIB*), IV, 733.
10 NARA, RG 59, A1 1265, box 15, Indonesia - General Correspondence 1946-1947, Kenneth P. Landon (SEA) to Butterworth (FE), 8 December 1947.
11 For a more detailed analysis, see Kemperman, Keizer and Van den Berge, *Diplomatie en Geweld*, 34-40.
12 Based on 'Een vierkantsverhouding in Zuidoost-Azië' by Tom van den Berge, in *Diplomatie en Geweld*, 63-93.
13 FRUS, 1949, VII, 1, 174-176 and 187; NARA, RG 59, Central Decimal Files 45-49, box 2154, Memorandum of Conversation, 'Indonesia and SC action', 18 January 1949; *NIB*, XVII, 124-125, 133-134 (footnote), 139 and 169.
14 This quote is attributed to Charles de Gaulle.
15 Based on 'Under the counter' by Emma Keizer, in *Diplomatie en Geweld*, 95-129.
16 The National Archives in Kew (hereinafther TNA), DEFE 4/5 (92), 'Military assistance to the Dutch', report by the Joint Planning Staff, 16 July 1947, appendix to Minutes of meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 23 July 1947.
17 NARA, RG 59, Central Decimal Files 45-49, box 2158, Department of State, Outgoing Telegram, Acheson to American Consulate Batavia (Cochran), no. 287, 19 May 1949.
18 *NIB*, IV, 445.

19 FRUS, 1947, VI, 959-960 and 971-972. *NIB*, IX, 491.
20 Poeze, *Verguisd en vergeten*, 1, 675; Van den Berge, *H.J. van Mook*, 251; J.J.P. de Jong, *Avondschot*, 55. See also George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca 1952), 227.
21 FRUS, 1947, VI, 1082; FRUS, 1948, VI, 86-87.
22 NARA, RG 59, Central Decimal Files 45-49, box 2150, Graham in Batavia (no. 120) to Secretary of State in Washington, no. 83, 28 January 1948. The revised version of the minutes reads as follows: 'Dr. Graham stated the Committee did not have powers of arbitration and added: "Whatever you are, you are". We are not saying what that is because we don't have the power. You might have in the political discussions negotiations with the Netherlands Government about that.' *NIB*, XII, 824.
23 FRUS, 1948, VI, Consul General at Batavia (Livengood) to the Secretary of State, 21 May 1948, 227.
24 NARA, RG 84, A1 1030B, box 26, Department of State, Intelligence Research Report, 'Developments in the Netherlands East Indies Situation, May 6, 1946 to October 6, 1946', 1 November 1946, 71.
25 McMahon, *Colonialism and Cold War*, 99; TNA Kew, DEFE 4/5 (92), 'Future situation in Indonesia', report by the Joint Intelligence Sub-Committee, 18 July 1947, appendix to Minutes of meeting of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, 23 July 1947.
26 NARA, RG 59, A1 558-CA, box 7, File 'Indonesia 883076', memo from George F. Kennan to Secretary of State and to Under Secretary of State Lovett, 17 December 1948. See also Gouda, *American visions*, 294-296.
27 TNA Kew, FO 371/63602, F 9005, From Batavia to Foreign Office, Mitcheson, No. 500, 3 July 1947.
28 United Nations Security Council (hereinafter UNSC), S/1085, Committee of Good Offices on the Indonesian Question, Fourth interim report of the Committee to the Security Council, 15 November 1948, XII. Repeated by the committee in S/1156, Report dated 26 December 1948 from the Committee of Good Offices on the Indonesian Question, 27 December 1948, 8.
29 NARA, RG 59, Central Decimal Files 45-49, box 2158, Assistant Secretary of State Ernest A. Gross to Senator Warren G. Magnuson, 22 August 1949.
30 For a more detailed analysis, see Kemperman, Keizer and Van den Berge, *Diplomatie en Geweld*, 140-164.
31 McMillan, *British occupation*, 69-75, quote on 70. See also Rémy Limpach, *De brandende kampongs van generaal Spoor* (Amsterdam 2016) 225-243.
32 *NIB*, II, 460.
33 UNSC, Security Council official records, 1st year: 12th meeting, held at Church House, Westminster, London, on Thursday, 7 February 1946, 185, 187. NARA, RG 59, Central Decimal Files 45-49, box 2149, 'Review of previous consideration of the Indonesian case before the Security Council', no date, appendix to document dated 13 June 1946, 3.
34 FRUS, 1948, VI, 598-599, Acting Secretary of State [Rusk on behalf of Lovett] to the Acting United States Representative at the United Nations (Jessup) at Paris, 23 December 1948.
35 Hermann von der Dunk once noted that the traditional Dutch aversion to violence seemed to play less of a role in overseas situations 'where there was no equal opponent to fear and when fortunate trade beckoned'. According to him, the German occupation of 1940-1945 may have reinforced the principled condemnation of violence, but it also brought an 'unswerving law-and-order mindset' to the foreground, which led the Dutch in Indonesia to 'enforce their alleged right, if necessary through the use of violence.' Hermann von der Dunk, '"Toen werd het levensgevaarlijk"; Nederland, oorlog en geweld', in Conny Kristel (ed.), *Met alle geweld; Botsingen en tegenstellingen in burgerlijk Nederland* (Amsterdam 2003) 13-33, q.v. 21 and 29-30.
36 William T. Sherman, *Sherman's Civil War: Selected Correspondence of William T. Sherman, 1860-1865*, eds Jean V. Berlin and Brooks D. Simpson (Chapel Hill N.C. 1999) 708. Sherman does not appear to have done much to reduce the cruelty of his war.
37 Two staff members at Harvard Law School have even argued that 'the laws of war [...] have been formulated, and in fact have served, to legitimate ever more destructive methods of combat'. Chris af Jochnik and Roger Normand, 'The Legitimation of Violence: A Critical History of the Laws of War', in Michael N. Schmitt and Wolff Heintschel von Heinegg (eds), *The development and principles of International Humanitarian War*, London/New York 2016, 49-95, q.v. 51.

111 8. Beyond colonial guilt ranking

1 The preliminary results of the NIAS study appeared in 2020 as a series of articles in the Dutch-Flemish historical journal *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review*. The end result of our project, which included

the more detailed thematic comparisons and a number of additional comparisons, was published as: Thijs Brocades Zaalberg and Bart Luttikhuis (eds), *Empire's Violent End. Comparing Dutch, British, and French Wars of Decolonization, 1945-1962* (Ithaca and London 2022). The thematic approach of the NIAS project was the result of the asymmetry in available data and topics.

2 E.B. Kielstra, 'De Atjeh-oorlog verdedigd', *Onze eeuw*, 1 (1901), 1093-1094; Kielstra, 'De Franschen op Madagaskar', *Onze Eeuw*, 2 (1902) 901-932.

3 Douglas Porch, 'Bugeaud, Galliéni, Lyautey: The development of French colonial warfare', P. Paret (ed.), *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age* (Princeton 1986) 388-402; Petra Groen et al., *Krijgsmacht en Kolonie. De opkomst en ondergang van Nederland als koloniale mogendheid, 1816-2010* (Amsterdam 2021) 97-132.

4 During this campaign on South Sulawesi, Captain Raymond Westerling's commando unit and supporting KNIL troops executed at least 3,500 prisoners between December 1946 and February 1947. Westerling himself also made such a relativistic comparison in his memoirs. Raymond Westerling, *Mijn mémoires*, (Antwerpen 1952) 89.

5 J.A. de Moor, *General Spoor. Triomf en tragiek van een legercommandant* (Amsterdam 2011) 179; Rémy Limpach, *De brandende kampongs van generaal Spoor* (Amsterdam 2016) 230-231, 311, 319, 778-779.

6 For this classic contrasting comparison, see authors such as Thomas Mockaitis, *British Counterinsurgency, 1919-1960* (New York, 1990); John Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife. Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya to Vietnam* (Chicago, 2005); Michael Burleigh, *Small Wars, Faraway Places. The Genesis of the Modern World, 1945-65* (London, 2014), 329. For an earlier emphasis on de-exceptionalizing, see among others: Martin Shipway, *Decolonization and Its Impact. A Comparative Approach to the End of Colonial Empires* (Maldon and Oxford 2008) 140-172. For a critique of cursory comparisons between Vietnam and Malaysia, for example, see among others: Martin Thomas, *Fight or Flight. Britain, France and Their Roads from Empire* (Oxford 2014) 162-163.

7 David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged. The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York, 2005), 6.

8 J.A.A. van Doorn and W.J. Hendrix, *Het Nederlands-Indonesisch conflict: Ontsporing van Geweld* (Amsterdam 1985) 47.

9 See, among other things: Martien Hoogland, 'Nederland moet het optreden in Nederlands-Indië in historisch perspectief plaatsen', *HP de Tijd*, 3 May 2017; J.J.P de Jong, 'Het kantelende beeld van dekolonisatie', *Clingendael Spectator*, 6 February 2018; Loe de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, XII II (Amsterdam 1988) 1015; Limpach also refers to this tendency: Rémy Limpach, 'Zwarte Bladzijden in Nederland, Duitsland, Frankrijk en Groot-Brittannië', *Geschiedenis Magazine*, no. 4 (June 2017) 52-57.

10 L. de Jong, typescript paragraph 'Oorlogsmisdrijven', 1425-1426 as quoted in Stef Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog: de Nederlandse oorlogsmisdaden in Indonesië en hun verwerking* (Amsterdam 2002) 227.

11 Thomas, *Fight or Flight*, 7.

12 See also the chapter by Esther Zwinkels in this volume.

13 The original Geneva Convention on the treatment of prisoners of war dates from 1929.

14 See chapter I.1, the interim conclusions and the chapter by Esther Zwinkels in this volume. See also Boyd van Dijk, 'The Making of the Geneva Conventions: Decolonization, the Cold War, and the Birth of Humanitarian Law' (dissertation, European University Institute 2017); A. Dirk Moses, Marco Duranti and Roland Burke, *Decolonization, Self-Determination, and the Rise of Global Human Rights Politics* (Cambridge 2020); Fabian Klose, *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence: The Wars of Independence in Kenya and Algeria* (Philadelphia 2013); Brian Drohan, *Brutality in an Age of Human Rights: Activism and Counterinsurgency at the End of the British Empire* (Ithaca 2017).

15 Gert Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië 1945-1950. Getuigenissen van een oorlog aan de verkeerde kant van de geschiedenis* (Amsterdam 2015) 82, 138, 156-157, 206, 233, 236, 237, 242. Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, 'Wij vormen hier een soort Duits bezettingsleger'. Ervaringen van een pelotonscommandant op Java', Jan Hoffenaar, Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, and Anita van Dissel (eds), *Wat een vondst. Verhalen uit de Geschiedenispraktijk* (Amsterdam 2021) 202. For the comparison with the German raid on Putten in October 1944, see also: Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 435, 753 and Diary of Sergeant H. Meiners, 28 April 1946, NIMH 806, inv. 930. It is important to note here that all these contemporary comparisons do not take the Holocaust into account and therefore focus on extreme German violence against non-Jewish Dutch people.

16 Raphaëlle Branche, *'Papa, qu'as-tu fait en Algérie?' Enquête sur un silence familial* (Paris 2020) 184, 199.
17 Ian Cobain and Jessica Hatcher, 'Kenyan Mau Mau victims in talks with UK government over legal settlement,' *The Guardian*, 5 May 2013.
18 These paragraphs are based on the sub-studies by Azarja Harmanny and Brian Linn, '"The Normal Order of Things": Contextualizing "Technical Violence" in the Netherlands-Indonesia War', Brocades Zaalberg and Luttikhuis, *Empire's Violent End*, 120-140, and by Christiaan Harinck, '"Bloodshed on a Rather Large Scale": Tactical Conduct and Noncombatant Casualties in Dutch, French, and British Colonial Counterinsurgency', idem, 141-161.
19 Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog*, 56; Jan Hoffenaar et al., *Vuur in beweging: 3325 jaar veldartillerie, 1677-2002* (Amsterdam 2002) 127; Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië*, 146, 163; Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 391-392, 395, 768, caption no. 48.
20 In addition to approximately 160 pieces of artillery, the Dutch armed forces theoretically had 150 to 175 fighter planes. Of these, only a third of them could be deployed due to a shortage of crew and in particular a lack of parts. The French in Algeria had a better functioning air force with 300 to 400 attack aircraft. See Azarja Harmanny and Brian Lynn, '"Technisch Geweld" in de Nederlands-Indonesische oorlog' *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review*, 135, no. 2 (2020) 101.
21 See the contribution of Azarja Harmanny in this book.
22 For a comparative analysis of forced relocation, see: Moritz Feichtinger, 'Strategic Villages. Forced Relocation, Counterinsurgency and Social Engineering in Kenya and Algeria, 1952-1962', Martin Thomas and Gareth Curless (eds), *Decolonization and Conflict. Colonial Comparisons and Legacies* (London 2017) 137-158.
23 We thank Petra Groen for this last contrasting insight added to our comparison of mass burning and organized 'population and resources control'.
24 John Lynn, *Battle: A History of Combat and Culture* (New York 2008) 230-231.
25 See also: Thomas and Curless, *Decolonization and Conflict* (London 2017) 100.
26 Figures for Algeria and Kenya are based on Moritz Feichtinger, '"A Great Reformatory": social planning and strategic resettlement in late colonial Kenya and Algeria, 1952-63', *Journal of Contemporary History* (2016). For some of these broader notions, see also: Limpach, 'Zwarte Bladzijden,' 52-53.
27 These paragraphs are based on the sub-project by Pierre Asselin and Henk Schulte Nordholt, 'Cracking Down on Revolutionary Zeal and Violence: Local Dynamics and Early Colonial Responses to the Independence Struggle in Indochina and the Indonesian Archipelago, 1945-1947', Brocades Zaalberg and Luttikhuis, *Empire's Violent End*, 71-95.
28 Frances Gouda and Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East-Indies/Indonesia: US Foreign Policy and Indonesian Nationalism 1920-1949* (Amsterdam 2002) 305. See: P.M.H. Groen, *Marsroutes en Dwaalsporen: Het Nederlandse militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië 1945-1950* (The Hague 1991) 289-290.
29 We must take into account here that many of these military casualties occurred during the peaks in violence seen in late 1945, and in 1947 and 1949. About half of the Dutch troops were killed and the other half died from accidents, disease and hardships, a ratio that was comparable to other conflicts in tropical areas at the time.
30 For information on these numbers, see: Van Doorn and Hendrix, *Het Nederlands-Indonesisch conflict*, 165; Christopher Goscha, *Historical Dictionary of the Indochina War, 1945-1954* (Copenhagen 2011) 17, 88-89. For more details on the number of casualties, see the contribution by Harinck, '"Bloodshed on a rather large scale"'.
31 Goscha, *Historical Dictionary,* 16; Frederik Logevall, *Embers of War. The Fall of an Empire and the Making of America's Vietnam* (New York 2013) 249.
32 Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, 'In de Oost', Ben Schoenmaker (ed.), *200 Jaar Koninklijke Landmacht* (Amsterdam 2014) 149.
33 Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954-1962* (London 1977) 252.
34 Raphaëlle Branche, *L'embuscade de Palestro* (Paris 2010).
35 Brocades Zaalberg, 'In de Oost'; Branche, *L'embuscade*, 181; Feichtinger, '"A Great Reformatory"', 46.
36 For Vietnam's numbers, see Goscha, *Historical Dictionary*, 17, 88-89.
37 Martin S. Alexander, Martin Evans and J.F.V. Keiger (eds), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-62: Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (New York 2002) 6-7.
38 For this statement and for the figures for Indonesia, Malaysia, Kenya, Vietnam and Algeria, see: Harinck,

'"Bloodshed on a rather large scale"'. See also: Christiaan Harinck, Nico van Horn and Bart Luttikhuis, 'Wie telt de Indonesische Doden?', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, no. 30 (2017).

39 Goscha, *Historical Dictionary*, 81, 165.

40 For a discussion on the reconstruction of such figures for the Algerian case, see: Raphaëlle Branche, *La guerre d'Algérie: Une histoire apaisée?* (Paris 2005) 204-217.

41 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 269, 308; Christopher Hale, *Massacre in Malaya: Exposing Britain's My Lai* (Stroud 2013); 'Malaysian lose fight for 1948 "massacre" inquiry', *BBC News*, 4 September 2012; 'Relatives lose fight for inquiry into 1948 Batang Kali "massacre"', *The Guardian*, 25 November 2015. In the Vietnamese village of My Lai, American soldiers killed between 307 and 504 unarmed civilians, including women and children, on 1 March 1968.

42 De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk* XII II, 1017.

43 Karl Hack, '"Devils that suck the blood of the Malayan People": The Case for Post-Revisionist Analysis of Counter-insurgency Violence,' *War in History* 25-2 (2018) 213.

44 These paragraphs are based on the study by Stef Scagliola and Natalya Vince, 'The Places, Traces, and Politics of Rape in the Indonesian and the Algerian Wars of Independence', Brocades Zaalberg and Luttikhuis, *Empire's Violent End*, 96-119.

45 There are many theories about whether rape was used as a political weapon in colonial struggles and whether racism plays a fundamental role, but empirical research is for the most part lacking. Comparative research shows once again that it is difficult to prove empirically that rape was used as a strategy or that racism – even if it was omnipresent – played an important role. This is underscored by the fact that Algerian and Indonesian troops in the colonial armed forces were just as guilty of rape.

46 Goscha, *Historical Dictionary*, 450-451.

47 Raphaëlle Branche, *La torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie, 1954-1962* (Paris, 2001). See also: Raphaëlle Branche, "The French Military in its Last Colonial War: Algeria 1954-62: The Reign of Torture", S. Tobia and C. Andrew (eds), *Interrogation in War and Conflict: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Analysis* (London, 2014), 169-184.

48 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, and Limpach's contribution to this book. The KITLV database of published egodocuments of 1,362 authors contains 83 references to torture (see also Oostindie, *Soldaat*, 205). The NIMH database of unpublished diaries of soldiers contains 23 references to torture; the total number of references to 'abuse' is 41. For 'systematic', see also the conclusions of the Memorandum on excesses [*De Excessennota*]. Jan Bank (introduction), *De Excessennota. Nota betreffende het archiefonderzoek naar de gegevens omtrent excessen in Indonesië began door Nederlandse militairen in de periode 1945-1949* (The Hague 1995 [1969]).

49 See, among others, Drohan, *Brutality*, 187-194.

50 For example, in his conclusion Rémy Limpach mentions about seventeen factors that promote violence (not counting intrinsic motives such as sadism). Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*; De Moor, *Generaal Spoor*, 354-355.

51 The latter is in line with George Mosse's brutalization theory, developed on the basis of research into the effects among German veterans of the First World War. George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (Oxford 1990). For causal hierarchy, see E.H. Carr's classic *What is History?* (London 1961).

52 See, among others, Limpach, *Brandende kampongs* 748-750.

53 Groen, *Marsroutes*; De Moor, *Generaal Spoor*.

54 Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, 'The Civil and Military Dimensions of Dutch Counter-Insurgency on Java, 1947-1949', *The British Journal of Military History*, 1, no. 2 (2015) 67-83.

55 These paragraphs are based on the study by Huw Bennett and Peter Romijn, 'Not an Afterthought: Accountability for Colonial Violence in the Dutch and British Metropoles', Brocades Zaalberg and Luttikhuis, *Empire's Violent End*, 25-48.

56 Richard Toye, 'Arguing about Hola Camp: The Rhetorical Consequences of a Colonial Massacre' Martin Thomas and Richard Toye (eds), *Rhetorics of Empire: Language of Colonial Conflict After 1900* (Manchester 2017) 187,207.

57 Huw Bennett, *Fighting the Mau Mau. The British army and counterinsurgency in the Kenya emergency* (Cambridge 2021) 89-90, 251-252. The only lawsuit that was filed in Aden – interestingly enough against the only civilian interrogator, and which fell under civil law – led to an acquittal. Drohan, *Brutality*, 144.

58 See the chapter by Esther Zwinkels in this volume.
59 Idem.
60 Hack, "Devils that suck the blood of the Malayan People", 202-281; Huw Bennett, '"A very salutary effect": The Counter-Terror Strategy in the Early Malayan Emergency, June 1948 to December 1949', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32:3 (2009) 415-444.
61 This paragraph is based on the study by Roel Frakking and Martin Thomas, 'Windows onto the Microdynamics of Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence: Evidence from Late Colonial Southeast Asia and Africa Compared', Brocades Zaalberg and Luttikhuis, *Empire's Violent End*, 49-70.

111 9. A guilty conscience

1 Meindert van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten. De worsteling met de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog vanaf 1950* (Amsterdam 2022).
2 This theme is discussed and documented at much greater length in *Een kwaad geweten*. Scagliola's book, *Last van de oorlog. De Nederlandse oorlogmisdaden in Indonesië en hun verwerking* (Amsterdam 2002), mainly covers the period between 1969 and the late 1980s. *Een kwaad geweten* addresses the entire postwar period. This analysis is also based on Gert Oostindie's 'Trauma and the Last Dutch War in Indonesia, 1945-1949' R. Eyerman and G. Scortino (eds) *The trauma of decolonization: Colonial returnees in the national imagination* (New York 2020) 85-109.
3 See, for example, Christ Klep, *Van wereldmacht tot 'braafste jongetje'. Onze militaire identiteit door de eeuwen heen* (Amsterdam 2019); Chris Lorenz, 'De Nederlandse koloniale herinnering en de universele mensenrechten. De casus "Rawagede"', *Tijdschrift Voor Geschiedenis* 128:1 (2015) 109-130; Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog.*
4 The discussion about Afro-Caribbean slavery has acted as an important catalyst for this. Compare Peter Romijn, *De lange Tweede Wereldoorlog: Nederland 1940-1949* (Amsterdam 2020); Gert Oostindie, *Postkoloniaal Nederland. Vijfenzestig jaar vergeten, herdenken, verdringen* (Amsterdam 2009); Gloria D. Wekker, *Witte onschuld. Paradoxen van kolonialisme en ras* (Amsterdam 2020).
5 Jacobus A.A. van Doorn, *Indische lessen. Nederland en de koloniale ervaring* (Amsterdam 1995) 57-77.
6 Jan Hoffenaar, 'Geen woorden maar daden. De terugkeer van de Nederlandse militairen uit Indonesië (1947-1951)', G. Teitler and J. Hoffenaar (eds), *De politionele acties. Afwikkeling en verwerking* (Amsterdam 1990) 79-90; Hans Meijer, 'Zo snel mogelijk gedumpt?' Martin Elands (ed.), *Oost west thuis best? De opvang van uit Nederlands-Indië teruggekeerde militairen 1948-1951* (Doorn 2004) 9-53; Gert Oostindie, with the assistance of Ireen Hoogenboom and Jonathan Verwey, *Soldaat in Indonesië, 1945-1950. Getuigenissen van een oorlog aan de verkeerde kant van de geschiedenis* (Amsterdam 2015) 280-303.
7 Abram de Swaan, 'Postkoloniale absences', *De Groene Amsterdammer* 19 (2017). See also Paul Bijl, 'Colonial Memory and Forgetting in the Netherlands and Indonesia', *Journal of Genocide Research* 14:3-4 (2012) 441-461; and Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog* and 'Cleo's "Unfinished Business": Coming to Terms with Dutch War Crimes in Indonesia's War of Independence', *Journal of Genocide Research* 14:3-4 (2012) 419-439.
8 The Moluccan veterans of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) are henceforth discussed separately; as a separate group, they played a negligible role in Dutch veterans' organizations.
9 Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië*, 303.
10 J.C.H. Blom, 'Jaren van tucht en ascese. Enige beschouwingen over de stemming in herrijzend Nederland (1945-1950)', *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 96:2 (1981) 300-333; Meijer, 'Zo snel mogelijk' 25.
11 Raymond Westerling, *Mijn mémoires* (Antwerp 1952); Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 2.
12 This is all described at length in Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 1, 2, 4, 7 and 8.
13 Scagliola, *Last van de oorlog*, 105-115.
14 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 9, 12 and 13.
15 Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië*, 150-152 and passim.
16 *NRC Handelsblad*, 14 December 1989, 'Indië-veteranen contra onbegrip en dekolonisatietrauma'; Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 15.
17 *NRC Handelsblad*, 27 July 1995, 'Afscheid van Indië een stapje verder'; *de Volkskrant*, 27 July 1995, 'Indië-gangers niet tegen bezoek Bot'; *Trouw,* 13 August 1995, 'Den Haag negeerde zestig jaar een datum'.
18 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 16-18.

19 Telephone conversation with Leen Noordzij on 3 March 2021. See also Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 20-21.
20 Bauke Geersing, *Kapitein Raymond Westerling en de Zuid-Celebes-affaire (1946-1947). Mythe en werkelijkheid: een markante periode uit de geschiedenis van Nederlands-Indië* (Soesterberg 2019). See also https://www.kvbk.nl/auteurs/mr-bauke-geersing, consulted on 1-11-2021.
21 Martin Bossenbroek, *De meelstreep* (Amsterdam 2001); H.Th. Bussemaker, *Indisch verdriet. Strijd om erkenning* (Amsterdam 2014); Oostindie, *Postkoloniaal Nederland*; Henk Smeets and Fridus Steijlen, *In Nederland gebleven. De geschiedenis van Molukkers 1951-2006* (Amsterdam 2006); Wim Willems, *De uittocht uit Indië, 1945-1995* (Amsterdam 2001).
22 Adriaan van Dis, *Leeftocht, veertig jaar onderweg* (Amsterdam 2007) 333.
23 Esther Captain, *Achter het kawat was Nederland. Indische oorlogservaringen en -herinneringen 1942-1995* (Kampen 2002).
24 *Tong-Tong*, 15 February 1971, 'Vrouwen hebben geen ziel'.
25 Loe de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog.* XI en XII (The Hague 1984-1988); Ralph Boekholt and Th. Stevens, *De staat, dr. L. de Jong en Indië. Het proces van het Comité Geschiedkundig Eerherstel Nederlands-Indië tegen de Staat der Nederlanden over deel 11A van 'Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog': 29 maart 1986-10 april 1990* (The Hague 1992); Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 1, 12 and 14.
26 Peter Keppy, *Sporen van vernieling. Oorlogsschade, roof en rechtsherstel in Indonesië, 1940-1957* (Amsterdam 2006); Hans Meijer, *Indische rekening. Indië, Nederland en de backpay-kwestie 1945-2005* (Amsterdam 2005); Hinke Piersma, *Bevochten recht. Politieke besluitvorming rond de wetten voor oorlogsslachtoffers* (Amsterdam 2010); Elly Touwen-Bouwsma, *Op zoek naar grenzen. Toepassing en uitvoering van de wetten voor oorlogsslachtoffers* (Amsterdam 2010).
27 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 15, 17-18.
28 Gert Oostindie and Fridus Steijlen, 'Ethnic "Ferociousness" in Colonial Wars', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 177 (2021) 491-523.
29 Smeets and Steijlen, *In Nederland gebleven.*
30 Fridus Steijlen, *RMS: van ideaal tot symbool. Moluks nationalisme in Nederland, 1951-1994* (Amsterdam 1996); Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 1, 14, 17-18.
31 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 20.
32 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 3-4, 6-7.
33 Katherine E. McGregor, *History in Uniform. Military ideology and the construction of Indonesia's past* (Leiden 2007).
34 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 9, 11, 17.
35 *NRC Handelsblad* 14 February 1992, 'Soeharto haalt uit naar Nederland bij installatie nieuwe ambassadeur'.
36 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 17.
37 *NRC Handelsblad*, 17 August 2005, 'Minister Bot lost "unfinished business" op'. Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 18.
38 Discussions with those involved at KITLV, NIMH and NIOD, inspection of Advice council of ministers regarding 'Cabinet response Limpach study', 1 December 2016. Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 22.
39 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 3-5; see also introduction to the source publication of the Van Rij-Stam report, part of this programme.
40 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 6.
41 *Proceedings of the Senate*, 3 December 1958.
42 *Trouw*, 16 April 1966, 'Het overlijden van Sjahrir'.
43 Introduction by Jan Bank to the 1995 reissuing of the *Excessennota*, *Nota betreffende het archiefonderzoek naar de gegevens omtrent excessen in Indonesië begaan door Nederlandse militairen in de periode 1945-1950* (The Hague 1995) 12.
44 *Proceedings of the House of Representatives*, 2 July 1969. Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 8 and 9.
45 E. Locher-Scholten, 'Een bronnenpublicatie als signaal van koloniaal trauma? Ontstaan en ontvangst van de Officiële bescheiden', *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 111:4 (1996) 473-492, 489.
46 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 9.
47 C. Fasseur, *Dubbelspoor. Herinneringen* (Amsterdam 2016) 144.

48 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 10.
49 *Trouw*, 27 August 1971, 'Soeharto: hoogtepunt van vriendschap bereikt'.
50 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 12.
51 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 16-17 and 19-20.
52 Memorandum Foreign Affairs HM visit to Indonesia, 9 May 1994, Archive Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018.622842, inv.no 23589.
53 *De Volkskrant*, 26 August 1995. By citing those two years, Van Mierlo was probably referring to the two 'police actions'. Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 17.
54 *De Volkskrant*, 25 February 2000, *Trouw*, 25 and 28 February 2000, *NRC Handelsblad*, 2 March 2000. Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 17.
55 Interview with Ben Bot, 11 March 2020.
56 Ben Bot, *Achteraf bezien. Memoires van een diplomaat en politicus* (Amsterdam 2015) 338. Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 19.
57 *Proceedings of the House of Representatives 2008-2009*, Verhagen's response to questions from Van Velzen, 21 January 2008.
58 *Trouw*, 31 August 2013, 'Snel excuses voor executies voormalig Nederlands-Indië'.
59 Email M. van der Kloet (NIMH), 19 April 2021. Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 19-20.
60 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 20.
61 Letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the House of Representatives, 2 December 2016, Handelingen Tweede Kamer 26049, nr. 82. Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 22.
62 See also the introductory chapter in this book.
63 Speech given by King Willem-Alexander in Bogor on 10 March 2020.
64 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 1, 3-4, 7-8.
65 Note that *Het Vaderland* published an earlier interview with Huetings on 25 May 1968: 'Ook oorlogsmisdaden uit Indië-tijd onderzoeken'.
66 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 9-11.
67 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 9, 12.
68 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 9, 12.
69 Interview with Westerling by journalist Joep Nuttinghausen; *Trouw*, 15 August 2013, 'Westerling gaf het in 1969 al toe'.
70 Opinion piece Chris Vos, *NRC Handelsblad*, 30 May 1994, 'Televisie is niet debet aan verdringing van oorlogsmisdaden'; Chris Vos, 'Een open zenuw. Televisie over de koloniale oorlog in Indië 1945-1950', *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis* 2 (1999) 69-99, 84.
71 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 1 and 17.
72 Some early critical voices were heard from different academic fields, including the Indonesia scholar Hans Teeuw (1956) and the lawyer Christiaan Rüter (1971). But the protests from left-wing academics such as Wim Wertheim and Jan Pluvier against Juliana's state visit in 1971 focused on Suharto's violations of human rights in 1965-1966 and later, not on Dutch extreme violence in 1945-1949. Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 7, 10-11.
73 Locher-Scholten, 'Een bronnenpublicatie'.
74 *Proceedings of the House of Representatives*, parliamentary questions from Den Uyl and Knol, response by Prime Minister Lubbers on 14 April 1987.
75 Telephone conversation with Scholtens, 9 March 2021.
76 *Trouw*, 17 August 1995, 'Schadeclaims hebben geen zin'. Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 19-20.
77 Marc van Berkel, *Welk verhaal telt? De oorlogen in Nederlands-Indië/Indonesië 1942-1949 in het geschiedenisonderwijs* (Amsterdam 2017); Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 21.
78 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 22.
79 See for example Bart Luttikhuis and A. Dirk Moses (eds), *Colonial Counterinsurgency and Mass Violence. The Dutch Empire in Indonesia* (London 2014).
80 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 8, 13, 20.
81 *NRC Handelsblad*, 28 December 1991, 'Expositie toont stukje vergeten geschiedenis'; *de Volkskrant*, 30 December 1991, 'Oorlog in Indië was geen sinecure, maar een goede opleiding deed wonderen'.
82 *NRC Handelsblad*, 15 April 1995, 'Twee Nederlandse fotografen hun tijd vooruit in Indonesië'.
83 *Haagsche Courant*, 30 October 1998, 'Voor sommigen doorbreek ik de code'.

84 Gerda Jansen Hendriks, *Een voorbeeldige kolonie. Nederlands-Indië in 50 jaar overheidsfilms 1912-1962* (Amsterdam 2014); Louis Zweers, *De gecensureerde oorlog. Militairen versus media in Nederlands-Indië 1945-1949* (Zutphen 2013).

85 Vos, 'Een open zenuw', 123; Oostindie, 'Trauma'.

86 NIPO research 1995. Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapters 9 and 19.

87 Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, chapter 19.

88 Elizabeth Buettner, *Europe after Empire: Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge 2016); Dietmar Rothermund (ed.), *Memories of Post-imperial Nations: The Aftermath of Decolonization, 1945-2013* (Cambridge 2015); R. Eyerman and G. Scortino (eds), *The Trauma of Decolonization: Colonial Returnees in the National Imagination* (New York 2020); Rémy Limpach, 'Zwarte bladzijden in Nederland, Duitsland, Frankrijk en Groot-Brittannië', *Geschiedenis Magazine* 4 (June 2017) 52-57; Oostindie, *Postkoloniaal Nederland* 207-237.

89 See https://vomi-nederland.nl/monumenten/

90 Limpach, *Brandende kampongs*, 40-41, 314, 320. See also NEFIS, internal letter about destruction of documents (NL-HaNA, NEFIS/CMI 2.10.62, inv.no 589); memo D-CMI Reinderhoff 1-12-1949 about destruction of IVG archives (NL-HaNA, NEFIS/CMI 2.10.62, inv.no 2963); order to destroy field security service documents by means of incineration (NL-HaNA, strijdkrachten, 4744). Before the transfer of sovereignty, archives were incinerated by various army bodies, including the intelligence service and the KNIL's military jurisdiction; cf. statement by judge advocate E. Bonn (NL-HaNA, 2.13.160, inv. 3, Notes interview Korthals Altes with E. Bonn, 10-3-1969).

91 According to recent surveys, the Dutch population is by far the most critical of the Dutch history of slave trading. The view of colonial history as a whole is divided: in an opinion poll of 30,000 respondents (autumn 2021), 35 per cent said that they were proud of that history, 46 per cent said that they were not. The Dutch military intervention in Indonesia was considered by 45 per cent to be 'unjustified', compared to 21 per cent who considered it 'justified'. EenVandaag Opiniepanel, Rapporten Onderzoek Koloniale geschiedenis, 4-9-2021 and 5-10-2021.

92 Lorenz, 'De Nederlandse koloniale herinnering'; Bart Luttikhuis, 'Juridisch afgedwongen excuses. Rawagedeh, Zuid-Celebes en de Nederlandse terughoudendheid', *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review*, 129:4 (2014) 92-105. German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* concerns the Nazi past, of course, not German colonial history, which became part of the public and political debate only much later and much less prominently; see, for example, E. Ames, M. Klotz and L. Wildenthal, *Germany's Colonial Pasts* (Lincoln 2005).

IV Conclusions

1 The following is based on: Rémy Limpach, '"Ze vielen als gemaaid koren". Een beschouwing over de verliescijfers in Indonesië, 1945-49', *Military Spectator 1 (2022)*; Petra Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië, 1945-1950* (The Hague 1991) 262; L. de Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog, XII: Epiloog, tweede helft* (The Hague 1988) 865; Gijs Beets, Nicole van der Gaag and Joop de Beer, *De demografische gevolgen van oorlog en geweld in Nederlands-Indië/Indonesië in de Jaren veertig*, unpublished memo, Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI), December 2021. The NIDI researchers concluded that excess mortality in the period 1940-1950 is likely to have been between 3.3 and 3.8 million. They view this as a lower limit; their calculations indicate that a large proportion of this excess mortality should be attributed to the period of the War of Independence.

V Dealing with the legacies of a violent past

1 'Pemerintah Dinilai Pasif Urus Kasus Rawagede' (Government deemed passive in representing Rawagede case), https://www.jpnn.com/news/pemerintah-dinilai-pasif-urus-kasus-rawagede?page=2. Consulted on 19 December 2021.

2 'Khawatir Sejarah RI Berubah, Sejarawan UI Ini Tolak Riset Belanda' (Fear of change to Indonesian historiography, historians at Universitas Indonesia reject Dutch research), https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3647175/khawatir-sejarah-ri-berubah-sejarawan-ui-ini-tolak-riset-belanda. Consulted on 19 December 2021. Questions were also asked about the independence and political motives of this research. See 'Ada Apa di Balik Niat Belanda Teliti Perang Kemerdekaan Indonesia?' (What lies behind the Dutch plan to investigate the Indonesian War of Independence?). Consulted on 19 December 2021.

3 Christian Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies: Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge 2010).
4 Ibidem, 3.
5 As I understood the covid-pandemic hindered planned workshops in Indonesia and there were problems to access the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, ANRI). In the 1970s the ANRI compiled a series of oral histories, together with a number of witnesses to the Japanese occupation and the revolution. The veterans' organization Angkatan 45 (Batch of '45), which has chapters all over Indonesia, has been very active in collecting oral and written testimonies and memoirs from its members. In addition, there are many memoirs and autobiographies by prominent figures that offer abundant information about this period from an Indonesian perspective.
6 For an overview of the development of the historiography after the New Order, see Gerry van Klinken, 'The Battle for History After Suharto', *Critical Asian Studies* 33:3 (2001).
7 As artillery was used in the guerrilla war, there were very large numbers of civilian casualties. See the chapter by Azarja Harmanny in this book and the contribution by Christian Harinck, Nico van Horn and Bart Luttikhuis, 'Do the Indonesians count? Calculating the number of Indonesian victims during the Dutch-Indonesian decolonization war, 1945-1949', https://imperialglobalexeter.com/2017/08/14/do-the-indonesians-count-calculating-the-number-of-indonesian-victims-during-the-dutch-indonesian-decolonization-war-1945-1949/#more-4951. Consulted on 20 December 2021.
8 Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *Nyanyi Sunyi Seorang Bisu*, 2, 163.
9 See, for example, G. Roger Knight, 'Death in Slawi: The "Sugar Factory Murders", Ethnicity, Conflicted Loyalties and the Context of Violence in the Early Revolution in Indonesia, October 1945', *Itinerario* 41:3 (2017).
10 As far as I know, the leaders of the Republic never used the term 'just war', but I believe that the call for *jihad* in the Battle of Surabaya in November 1945 and the concept of *dharmayudha* from *wayang* (shadow play) come close to the idea of a just war.
11 In the case that is known as the Peristiwa Tiga Daerah (the 'three regions affair'), youths involved in the 'social revolution' were arrested and convicted of planning to stage a 'coup d'état'. See Anton Lucas, *One Soul, One Struggle: Region and Revolution in Indonesia* (Sydney 1991).
12 Howard Dick, Vincent J.H. Houben, J. Thomas Lindblad and Thee Kian Wie (eds), *Emergence of a National Economy: An Economic History of Indonesia, 1800-2000* (Honolulu 2002) 171.

Abbreviations

AFP	Agence France-Presse (French Press agency)
AMRI	Angkatan Muda Republik Indonesia (Young Generation of the Republic of Indonesia)
ANOM	Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer (Overseas National Archives)
ANP	Algemeen Nederlands Persbureau (General Dutch Press Agency)
ANRI	Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia)
API	Angkatan Pemuda Indonesia (Indonesian Young Generation)
APRA	Angkatan Perang Ratu Adil (Just King Legion)
ARP	Anti-Revolutionaire Partij (Anti-Revolutionary Party)
BKR	Badan Keamanan Rakyat (People's Security Agency)
BPRI	Barisan Pemberontakan Rakyat Indonesia (Indonesian People's Revolutionary Front)
CGD	Commissie van Goede Diensten (Committee of Good Offices)
CHU	Christelijk-Historische Unie (Christian Historical Union)
CMI	Centrale Militaire Inlichtingendienst (Central Military Intelligence Service)
COP	Comando Operasi Pertempuran (Commando (post) Combat Operations)

CPN	Communistische Partij van Nederland (Communist Party of the Netherlands)
CSC	Chiefs of Staff Committee
DI	Darul Islam (House of Islam)
DIRVO	Directie Verre Oosten (Far East Directorate)
DST	Daerah Sumatra Timur (Federal State of East Sumatra)
DST	Depot Speciale Troepen (Special Forces)
ESD	Employé Speciale Diensten (Special Services Employees)
FDR	Front Demokrasi Rakyat (Democratic People's Front)
FIN	Federatie Indische Nederlanders (Federation of Dutch Indos)
FLN	Front de libération nationale (National Liberation Front)
FPBH	Field Preparation Barisan Hizbullah
GHB	Gerakan Beroeang Hitam (Black Bear movement)
HAMOT	Harer Majesteits Ongeregelde Troepen (Her Majesty's Irregular Troops)
HMG	Hoog Militair Gerechtshof (High Military Court)
HTB	Hoofd Tijdelijke Bestuursdienst (Head of Temporary Administrative Service)
IAC	Informele Adviescommissie (Informal Advisory Committee)
ID	Inlichtingendienst (Intelligence service)
IPPHOS	Indonesian Press Photo Service
IVG	Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsgroepen (Intelligence and Security Groups)
KITLV	Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde (Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies)
KL	Koninklijke Landmacht (Royal Netherlands Army)
KM	Koninklijke Marine (Royal Netherlands Navy)
KMA	Koninklijke Militaire Academie (Royal Military Academy)
KNAW	Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences)
KNI	Komite Nasional Indonesia (Central Indonesian National Committee)
KNIL	Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger (Netherlands East Indies Army)
KNIP	Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat (Central Indonesian National Committee)
Komnas HAM	Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia (Commission on Human Rights)

KRIM Kebaktian Rakyat Indonesia Maluku (Loyalty to the Indonesian People of the Moluccas)
KRIS Kebaktian Rakyat Indonesia Sulawesi (Loyalty to the Indonesian People of Sulawesi)
KST Korps Speciale Troepen (Special Forces)
KUKB Komite Utang Kehormatan Belanda (Committee of Dutch Debts of Honour)
KVP Katholieke Volkspartij (Catholic People's Party)
Laptur Laskar Pemberontak Turatea (Militia of the Turatea Uprising)
MARID Marine Inlichtingendienst (Marine Intelligence Service)
MARVA Marine Vrouwenafdeling (Women's Marine Corps)
MID Militaire Inlichtingendienst (Military Intelligence Service)
Milobs Military Observers
ML Militaire Luchtvaart (Royal Netherlands Air Force)
ML-KNIL Militaire Luchtvaart KNIL (Royal Netherlands East Indies Army Air Force)
MP Militaire Politie (Military Police)
MRT *Militair Rechtelijk Tijdschrift*
NA Nationaal Archief (National Archives of the Netherlands)
NEFIS Netherlands Forces Intelligence Service
NIAS Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study
NICA Netherlands Indies Civil Administration
NII Negara Islam Indonesia (Islamic State of Indonesia)
NIMH Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie (Netherlands Institute of Military History)
NIOD NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies (NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies)
NIT Negara Indonesia Timur (State of East Indonesia)
NL-NaHA Nationaal Archief Den Haag (National Archives The Hague)
NSB Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging (National Socialist Movement)
OD Opsporingsdienst (Investigative Service)
ODO Opsporingsdienst Overledenen (Deceased Persons Investigation Service)
OM Openbaar Ministerie (Public Prosecution Service)
OSS Office of Strategic Services
OVW'ers Oorlogsvrijwilligers (War volunteers)
Perwani Persatuan Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Association)
Pesindo Pemuda Sosialis Indonesia (Socialist Youth of Indonesia)

PETA	Pembela Tanah Air (Defenders of the Homeland)
PG	procureur-generaal (Attorney General)
PI	Perhimpunan Indonesia (Indonesian Society)
PKI	Partai Komunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)
PNI	Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Party)
PRI	Pemuda Republik Indonesia (People's Youth of Indonesia)
PSI	Partai Sosialis Indonesia (Indonesian Socialist Party)
PvdA	Partij van de Arbeid (Labour Party)
RAPWI	Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees
RIS	Republik Indonesia Serikat (RIS) (United States of Indonesia)
RMS	Republik Maluku Selatan (Republic of South Moluccas)
RS	Regiment Stoottroepen (Storm Troops Regiment)
RTC	Ronde Tafel Conferentie (Round Table Conference)
RVA	Regiment Veldartillerie (Field Artillery Regiment)
RVD	Regeringsvoorlichtingsdienst (Government Information Service)
SDAP	Sociaal-Democratische Arbeiderspartij (Social Democratic Workers' Party)
SDECE	Service de documentation extérieure et contre-espionage (External documentation and counter-espionage service)
SEAC	South East Asia Command
SI	Sarekat Islam (Islamic Association)
SOB	Staat van Oorlog en van Beleg (State of War and Siege)
SOBSI	Sentral Organisasi Buruh Seluruh Indonesia (All-Indonesian Federation of Workers' Associations)
SONICA	Senior Officer NICA
SWPA	South West Pacific Area
TIVG	Territoriale Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsgroepen (Territorial Intelligence and Security Groups)
TKR	Tentara Keamanan Rakyat (People's Security Army)
TNI	Tentara Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian National Armed Forces)
TP	Tentara Pelajar (Student Army)
TRI	Tentara Republik Indonesia (Army of the Republic of Indonesia)
UGM	Universitas Gadjah Mada
UNCI	United Nations Commission for Indonesia
VDMB	Veiligheidsdienst van de Mariniersbrigade (Marine Brigade Security Service)
VHK	Vrijwillig Vrouwen Hulpkorps (Women's Volunteer Auxillary Corps)

VLN	Veteranen Legioen Nederland (Dutch Veterans Legion)
VMG	Verordeningen Militair Gezag (Emergency military orders)
VOC	Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company)
VOMI	Vereniging Oud-Militairen Indië- en Nieuw-Guineagangers (Association of East Indies and New Guinea Veterans)
VPTL	Voorschrift voor de Uitoefening van de Politiek-politionele Taak van het Leger (Regulations on the Army's Political and Policing Duties)
VSI	Verenigde Staten van Indonesië (United States of Indonesia)
VVD	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy)
VWS	Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport (Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport)
WvMS	Wetboek van Militair Strafrecht (Military Penal Code)
WvS	Wetboek van Strafrecht (Penal Code)

Further reading

A selection of works, in Dutch and English, about the Netherlands and the Indonesian War of Independence 1945-1949

In this overview, a large number of titles have been compiled for the benefit of the reader who would like to explore the topics covered in this book in more depth. The list is not exhaustive, of course, and it is offered instead of an overview of all the literature and sources used for the chapters. The latter has not been included, because the chapters are based on individual sub-studies that are being published separately.

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N. Vince, *The Algerian War, the Algerian Revolution* (London 2020)
D. Walter, *Colonial Violence: European Empires and the Use of Force* (New York 2017)

Acknowledgements and organization

Beyond the pale is the concluding work by the research programme *Independence, Decolonization, Violence and War in Indonesia, 1945-1950*. A complete overview of the programme's publications can be found at the back of this book. This concluding work brings together the key findings of the various projects in relation to the main question addressed by the programme. The research programme was implemented by the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV-KNAW), the Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH) and the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust the Genocide Studies (NIOD-KNAW). The latter acted as programme coordinator.

The research programme was carried out in accordance with the guidelines on independent scholarly research set by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). The programme was partly financed by the Dutch government.

The programme had a Scientific Advisory Board consisting of nine members from the Netherlands and abroad. They evaluated and subsequently approved the concluding study on the basis of current standards governing sound scholarly research. As such, they bear no responsibility for the content of the final work or the studies on the individual sub-projects. In addition, the programme established a Social Resonance Group consisting

of representatives of various social umbrella organizations in the Netherlands. The Resonance Group acted as an interlocutor for the researchers in the course of the programme, but it bears no responsibility for the findings.

We asked the Indonesian historian Hilmar Farid, who was not involved in the programme, to write the epilogue, in which he reflects on the research.

The programme is also indebted to the countless other individuals and institutions in the Netherlands and Indonesia who facilitated the implementation of the research in all kinds of ways. They are too many to mention by name, with the exception of the National Archives of the Netherlands in The Hague, which offered the researchers optimal facilitation from the outset and supported the programme wherever possible.

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Photo credits

The selection of photographs in this book is the result of careful consideration, in the knowledge that there are differing views on the display of explicit and upsetting images. The final selection was based on an attempt to achieve balance in relation to respect for the victims and their families, visual evidence, parity and diversity.

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Scientific Advisory Board

The members of the Scientific Advisory Board, which played an independent role in the programme, participated in a personal capacity based on their expertise in the research field. For that reason, the committee included some scholars who were affiliated with the institutes that carried out the programme.

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Henk te Velde	Professor of Dutch History at Leiden University

Social Resonance Group
When determining the subsidy in February 2017, it was agreed that a Social Resonance Group would be set up in the Netherlands, consisting of representatives of various organizations and institutes in the field of commemoration and remembrance. There were intensive consultations with the Resonance Group about expectations regarding the research and its potential impact on groups with a high level of involvement, such as war veterans and the Indo-Dutch and Moluccan communities.

The Social Resonance Group was chaired by Winnie Sorgdrager and had the following members:

Nationaal Comité 4 en 5 mei
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Matthijs Kuipers (from September 2021)

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Stichting Herdenking 15 augustus 1945
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Stichting Indisch Platform
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Stichting Nationaal Indië Monument
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Wim Kemp (from January 2019)
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Stichting Pelita
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Hans van der Hoeven (until November 2020)
Rocky Tuhuteru (from March 2020)

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Gert Oostindie, Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, Eveline Buchheim, Esther Captain, Martijn Eickhoff, Roel Frakking, Azarja Harmanny, Meindert van der Kaaij, Jeroen Kemperman, Rémy Limpach, Bart Luttikhuis, Remco Raben, Peter Romijn, Onno Sinke, Fridus Steijlen, Stephanie Welvaart, Esther Zwinkels, *Over de grens. Nederlands extreem geweld in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949*

Gert Oostindie, Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, Eveline Buchheim, Esther Captain, Martijn Eickhoff, Roel Frakking, Azarja Harmanny, Meindert van der Kaaij, Jeroen Kemperman, Rémy Limpach, Bart Luttikhuis, Remco Raben, Peter Romijn, Onno Sinke, Fridus Steijlen, Stephanie Welvaart, Esther Zwinkels, *Beyond the Pale. Dutch Extreme Violence in the Indonesian War of Independence*, 1945-1949

Abdul Wahid en Yulianti (red), *Onze Revolutie. Bloemlezing uit de Indonesische geschiedschrijving over de strijd voor de onafhankelijkheid, 1945-1949*

Esther Captain en Onno Sinke, *Het geluid van geweld. Bersiap en de dynamiek van geweld tijdens de eerste fase van de Indonesische revolutie, 1945-1946*

Esther Captain and Onno Sinke, *Resonance of Violence. Bersiap and the Dynamics of Violence in the First Phase of the Indonesian Revolution, 1945-1946*

Remco Raben en Peter Romijn, mmv Maarten van der Bent en Anne van Mourik, *Talen van geweld. Stilte, informatie en misleiding in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949*

Remco Raben and Peter Romijn, with Maarten van der Bent and Anne van Mourik, *Tales of Violence. Dutch Management of Information in the Indonesian War of Independence, 1945-1949*

Jeroen Kemperman, Emma Keizer en Tom van den Berge, *Diplomatie en geweld. De internationale context van de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949*

Rémy Limpach, *Tasten in het duister. Inlichtingenstrijd tijdens de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949*

Rémy Limpach, *Stumbling in the Dark. The Battle for Intelligence in the Indonesian War of Independence, 1945-1949*

Azarja Harmanny, *Grof geschut. Artillerie en luchtstrijdkrachten in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949*

Esther Zwinkels, *De klewang van Vrouwe Justitia. Recht en onrecht in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949*

Esther Zwinkels, *The Harsh Sword of Lady Justice. Law and Impunity in the Indonesian War of Independence, 1945-1949*

Bambang Purwanto, Roel Frakking, Abdul Wahid, Martijn Eickhoff, Yulianti and Ireen Hoogenboom (eds), *Revolutionary worlds. Local perspectives and dynamics during the Indonesian independence war, 1945-1949*

Meindert van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten. De worsteling met de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog vanaf 1950*

Eveline Buchheim, Satrio Dwicahyo, Fridus Steijlen en Stephanie Welvaart, *Sporen vol betekenis. In gesprek met 'Getuigen & Tijdgenoten' over de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog / Meniti Arti. Bertukar Makna bersama 'Saksi & Rekan Sezaman' tentang Perang Kemerdekaan Indonesia*

Van Rij en Stam. Rapporten van de Commissie van onderzoek naar beweerde excessen gepleegd door Nederlandse militairen in Indonesië, 1949-1954 (Bronnenpublicatie), ingeleid en bezorgd door Maarten van der Bent

Other publications

Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, Bart Luttikhuis en anderen, 'Extreem geweld tijdens dekolonisatieoorlogen in vergelijkend perspectief, 1945-1962' in: *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review*, Volume 135 nr.2

Thijs Brocades Zaalberg en Bart Luttikhuis (eds), *Empire's Violent End. Comparing Dutch, British, and French Wars of Decolonization, 1945–1962*. Cornell University Press

On 17 August 1945, two days after the Japanese surrender, Indonesia declared its independence. The declaration was not recognized by the Netherlands, which resorted to force in its attempt to take control of the inevitable process of decolonization. This led to four years of difficult negotiations and bitter warfare.

In 2005, the Dutch government declared that the Netherlands should never have waged the war. The government's 1969 position on the violence used by the Dutch armed forces during the war remained unchanged, however: although there had been 'excesses', on the whole the armed forces had behaved 'correctly'.

As the indications of Dutch extreme violence mounted, this official position proved increasingly difficult to maintain. In 2016, the Dutch government therefore decided to fund a broad study on the dynamics of the violence. The most important conclusions are summarized in this book. The authors show that the Dutch armed forces used extreme violence on a structural basis, and that this was concealed both at the time and for many years after. All of this – like the entire colonial history – is at odds with the rose-tinted self-image of the Netherlands.

All of the authors – **Gert Oostindie**, **Thijs Brocades Zaalberg**, **Eveline Buchheim**, **Esther Captain**, **Martijn Eickhoff**, **Roel Frakking**, **Azarja Harmanny**, **Meindert van der Kaaij**, **Jeroen Kemperman**, **Rémy Limpach**, **Bart Luttikhuis**, **Remco Raben**, **Peter Romijn**, **Onno Sinke**, **Fridus Steijlen**, **Stephanie Welvaart** and **Esther Zwinkels** – are or were affiliated with the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), the Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH), or the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies. The editorial team consisted of **Gert Oostindie**, **Ben Schoenmaker** and **Frank van Vree**. The Indonesian historian **Hilmar Farid** wrote the epilogue.

An answer to the question about the nature, extent and context of Dutch violence during the Indonesian War of Independence, 1945-1949

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