

History Unhinged: World War II and the Reshaping of Indonesian History

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Chapter I.

Introduction

At the very end of World War II, Indonesians declared their independence and immediately launched themselves into the project of establishing a new nation, which above all entailed ensuring that the Dutch did not reestablish their colonial authority. Refuting Dutch claims that the Republic was “made-in-Japan” and should be repressed was an extremely high priority for the leaders of the Republic, like Sukarno and Hatta, who could be easily described as Japanese collaborators. Establishment of the new nation also drew Indonesians’ attention in other directions, as relations with Japan could not be reestablished for more than 10 years. This meant that for most elite Indonesians, the Japanese occupation was something that was just as well forgotten. When, eventually, it was remembered, it was to be remembered selectively. This meant that the writing of the history of 1942-1945 was effectively left in the hands of foreigners for the next two and a half decades.

While the Japanese occupation was of great interest to the Dutch and a small number of other Western Scholars in World War II, only a limited number of studies appeared in Western languages during the first decades after the war. One of the first significant dissertations to be written about the war was written by a Czechoslovakian who escaped from Prague when the Nazis invaded and who was in Indonesia during the war, Harry J. Benda. Building off of his seven years in Indonesia (including approximately two years in internment), Benda’s Cornell University dissertation presented a detailed discussion of colonial era Islamic policy in Indonesia and then explored the Japanese encouragement of Islam during the occupation.¹ His subsequent work included a concern with the military administrations in Indonesia, which he sought to advance by working with Japanese scholars to translate source materials by former administrators and through comparative work with other Southeast Asian nations.² Benda was aided in this endeavor by the U.S. government Department of

¹ Benda’s 1956 dissertation was published in 1958. There were a few works preceding Benda’s dissertation, both wartime and postwar publications which seemingly aimed at supporting the reestablishment of the Dutch colonial state, as well as a very small body of early postwar scholarship like Piekaar (1949) and Aziz (1955).

² These included Benda, Irikura and Kishi (1965), and were followed a generation later by Reid and Oki (1986).

Commerce, which produced a translation of a seminal Japanese study of the military administrations in Indonesia due to concerns about renewed connections between Japan and Indonesia in the late 1950s and early 1960s.³ Following Benda's death in 1971, this line of research was briefly pursued by Al McCoy, Tony Reid and a small group of scholars, then gradually vanished.⁴

A decade later, George Kanahale's Cornell University dissertation (1967) produced a broad overview of the whole occupation, examining the cooperation between Japanese and Indonesians and trying to explain the momentum towards independence in 1945, a theme which resonates with later Indonesian and Japanese scholarship. Utilizing a wide range of written materials and extensive interviews with Japanese and Indonesians,⁵ this classic work has been translated into Japanese, though strangely it has never been published in English.

After around two decades of virtual silence, the first serious Indonesian studies on the Japanese occupation began to appear. The first significant historian to work on this subject was the military historian Nugroho Notokusanto who became notorious for his ideological manipulations of history in the service of the Suharto regime.⁶ Nugroho conducted research in Japan (based at Waseda University) and in Indonesia on the Peta Army and their revolt against the Japanese in Blitar in 1944. Around the time that Nugroho completed his full-length English language study at Waseda, a more general book was published by G Pakpahan.⁷

Perhaps the most commonly covered aspect of the Japanese occupation of Java is the literary-celebrity filled propaganda section and its activities. Wartime intelligence agencies like NEFIS were best able to gather information about this group of Japanese and Indonesians, and were concerned that Japanese had been spreading

³ Waseda (1959) and (1963).

⁴ See, for example, the set of essays about Southeast Asia in McCoy (1980). McCoy was a former student of Benda.

⁵ Similarly Ruth McVey conducted a study of the Nakano School while she was in Japan, but ultimately she decided that it would be impossible for her to bring the project to fruition, and left the project for a new generation of Japan-based scholars.

⁶ On Nugroho and his manipulations of history, see McGregor (2005) and (2007).

⁷ Nugroho Notokusanto published a series of works in English and Indonesia, including one in 1971 and the aforementioned book in 1979. See also Pakpahan (1979).

“radical” anti-Dutch propaganda which destroyed the colonial “peace and order.” An additional advantage to studying “propaganda” was that as films and publications could be collected, generations of scholars had a better chance to access relevant materials than researchers interested in other subjects.⁸ Since many of the Indonesian and Japanese participants were writers, they also left a written record during and after the war. The Jakarta newspaper *Asia Raya* and twice-monthly *Djawa Baroe* were two of the most important materials left behind.⁹

While virtually all works dealing with mobilization of the population have covered the propaganda section to some extent, several works have focused on the propaganda section or its personnel *per se*. Goto Ken'ichi's English language article on one member of the propaganda section appeared at a relatively early date, as did his romantic full-length popular biography in Japanese.¹⁰ Aiko Kurasawa's Cornell University dissertation is an excellent example of this focus on propaganda and mobilization, although she also published an article on the propaganda section itself.¹¹ Sato (1995) followed in a similar study. One of the more interesting recent works on the occupation also focusses largely on the propaganda section; Ethan Mark's 2003 Columbia University dissertation explores the ideologies of Japanese imperialism in the context of Java. Other interesting works in this vein include the more narrowly focused work of Rei Okamoto on the cartoons of Yokoyama Ryūichi (Okamoto 1997).

At least one Indonesian was active in this area as well. As the revolution drew to a close, the literary documenter, H.B. Jassin began to compile, publish, and republish a collection of wartime literature, beginning with his *Gema Tanah Air* (c.1948). Exclusively fractions of short stories or poems, Jassin's work complements the later

⁸ Nonetheless, there is no good collection of Indonesian publications from the wartime era, though the National Library in Jakarta, NIOD in Amsterdam, Cornell University, and Leiden University have passable collections. Some runs of the major Indonesian language newspapers and periodicals have been filmed, but these are difficult to obtain and use.

⁹ *Djawa Baroe* (1943-1945) was subsequently reprinted in Japan in a 5 volume set in 1992. Similarly, a multi-volume set of the Japanese and Indonesian language government notices, *Kanpo*, were republished by the same publisher (Gunseikanbu 1989). Many local government bulletins were not included.

¹⁰ While the full story of Ichiki Tatsuo appeared only in the Japanese book (Goto 1977), the English article (Goto 1976) was also supplemented with a section in a collection of articles (Goto 2003).

¹¹ Kurasawa (1988) and (1987). Her dissertation was subsequently published in Japanese and in Indonesian translation.

work of A. Teeuw (1967) which swiftly dismisses the few longer pieces of literature and neglects the wartime context (see Chapter IV below). Given the lack of scholarship about wartime literature, the works of Jassin are extremely important.

As can probably be discerned from the discussion above, there is a tendency for scholarship to gain a specific character based partially on a national discourse, but even more importantly based on language. Significant differences between scholarly discourse in English, Dutch, Japanese, and to a lesser extent, Indonesian, exist. The largest reason is the language barrier, which is strongest between Japanese and other languages. The language barriers, while recently decreasing with the popularity of Japanese culture and internet tools, are still substantially intact, requiring a long period of study, or collaboration, or both. However, while Japanese have only minor difficulties with older texts, limited numbers of Japanese study about Indonesia and fewer still are interested in Japanese involvement during World War II, reducing the opportunities for such collaborative exchange.

In the last 5 years, there have been several significant advances, most particularly the publication of the *Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War* (Post 2010) which through an international collaborative effort takes significant steps towards opening up new areas of research. Remmelink's fantastic translation of the War History Office's 1967 publication on the invasion of Indonesia (War History 2015) represents another important step forward on the military history of the war, a subject which has been virtually ignored by mainstream historians. However, works like that of Ethan Mark, or of native Japanese speakers like Goto (1976, 2003), Yamamoto (2003, 2011, 2013), and Okamoto (1997) are also important.

This dissertation, though, is not about the Japanese occupation *per se*. Rather, it is concerned with the *absence* or misrepresentation of the Japanese occupation in modern Indonesian history, and by extension in modern Asian studies. World War II is a singularly undocumented period of Indonesian history—or more precisely, it is one of the periods of Indonesian history which is most characterized by stereotypes and assumptions, as opposed to data and analysis. Most commonly, studies of the colonial period end in 1942, or very nearly so, while the studies of the revolution or of independent Indonesia begin in 1945 with a very light historical background covering the occupation period. While some projects are indeed well-designed to end in 1942, or

even simply must end in 1942, it seems there is a systematic problem. Some studies manage to bridge the gap with an intellectual drawbridge hinged on both ends, but the depth of the coverage is often not particularly good, and often the coverage of the war lays very lightly as the author and readers skip across the World War II drawbridge.¹² The paucity of sources on the occupation for researchers who know no Japanese is merely one of the obstacles to inclusion of the wartime period. Even more important are the assumptions that we understand the wartime period, and that there are no sources available, a belief produced by scholar's acceptance of the myth that the Japanese burned all documents at the end of the war to hide their crimes.¹³

Surprisingly, considering the consistent attention to the propaganda section, the publications of World War II in Indonesia are still *terra incognita*, with scholars at best able to consult a few basic newspapers and publications without ever gaining a sense of the overall picture due to the lack of a single good quality collection of publications from the wartime period, or any scholarly survey of the publishing world during these three years. A good survey or discussion of the publications during the war would certainly broaden the scope of future research, but a few catalogs of microfilms and the annotated "preliminary" checklist of John Echols (1963) still provide the only pictures of publication during that period. Local publications like the *Madioen Syuu Ho*, or the *Warta Bodjonegoro-Syuu*, Javanese language newspapers published by the Propaganda section, are completely unknown to scholars, as are a range of other publications, from military training manuals, to air-raid manuals, propaganda-memoirs, and collections of essays. Japanese language publications, whether published in Indonesia, like the daily *Jawa Shinbun* (1942-45), or in Japan like the famous manga artist Yokoyama Ryūichi's lovely *Jakarutaki* (1944), are exclusively consulted by Japanese, if at all.

¹² By way of example, the history of Ambon by Richard Chauvell (1990) and Bill Frederick's (1989) study of the origins of the revolution in Surabaya are two of the more successful efforts to include the Japanese occupation. Robinson's study of political violence on Bali (1995) was somewhat less successful, as was Howard Dick's (2002) "socioeconomic history" of Surabaya, which dedicated a total of only 10 pages to the war and revolutionary periods.

¹³ With the impending arrival and surrender to Allied Forces, like all government militaries, the Japanese military personnel destroyed many documents. This is standard practice followed by the US and most other governments. However, destruction of evidence about the occupation was far from complete, and as is obvious in the cases below, exploration of evidence beyond easily identified items rarely takes place.

Figure 1. *Warta Bodjonegoro Shuu* (1944)

Figure 2. *Jakarutaki* (1945)

Figure 3. *Pasar Malam Semarang* (1943)



Three wartime publications which are representative of categories of publications and have not been utilized in scholarship: A local Javanese newspaper, an illustrated Japanese publication on Jakarta (and Java) during the first months of the occupation, and a guide for the annual festival for Semarang in 1943.

The fact that such a wide range of publications have neither been accounted for, nor utilized in existing research, suggests that existing studies have followed traditional contours or perhaps give the occupation period short shrift without scholars' awareness of these influences. The obvious "necessity" to follow established contours seem to become stronger with each generation of scholarship.

This dissertation seeks to explore and determine the effect of new perspectives on modern history, new perspectives which aggressively include the occupation by not ending histories in 1942 or beginning histories in 1945, and by focusing on subjects that are intrinsically related to the wartime periods.¹⁴ From the outset, however, it is apparent that once the wartime period is included, a clearer view of the continuities, discontinuities and character of change through the 1940s becomes clearer, and a more nuanced, "positive" view of the role of the Japanese and the Japanese occupation is possible, fundamentally reshaping our understandings of this part of Asian history. The individual studies produce different types of results, and are organized here into four research themes (chapters II-V).

¹⁴ Certainly none of these approaches are entirely new, but clearly none of these approaches have become commonplace, nor has there been signs of awareness about what this might do to historical narratives in general.

Chapter Two explores popular Indonesian literary production and politics, looking back and forth across the line between periods, and in the process recognizing a forgotten history of the colonial period as well as of the wartime period.

The Japanese occupation period is conventionally regarded as having caused all cultural and literary production to stop abruptly, leaving a complete rupture of 3.5 years. Examination of publications during the war rather indicates that literary and cultural productions shifted, resulting in prominence of largely ignored writers of the late colonial period and different publishing media. This chapter explores the cases of several writers who seem likely to have played significant roles during the Japanese occupation, reexamining their prewar activities as well as their postwar activities, and exposing a political activist literature of the late 1930s and early 1940s which has been excluded from the canon and history.

The first of these individuals, Abdoe'lxarim M.s., had played a role in the radical leftist movement during the 1910s-1920s, until exiled to Bovel Digoel in the late 1920s. Perhaps the most important Indonesian nationalist figure in the Medan area from 1943 until the end of 1945 due to his effectiveness in addressing mass audiences and communicating with the radical youth, Abdoe'lxarim had been almost completely excluded from history, perhaps because of his apparent abandonment of the nationalist movement in the 1930s as a requirement for his release from internment in Boven Digul, and scholars' general lack of knowledge about developments in Medan during the occupation. In fact, through literary writings, Abdoe'lxarim continued to play an active role engaging the public through more subtle discourse until liberated from Dutch oppression by the Japanese invasion and allowed to play a more explicit role in politics. Following the hint in Abdoe'lxarim's case, the second case focusses on the publisher/author Tamar Djaja, seeking to understand whether the final years before the Japanese occupation were indeed characterized by a political activist literature in Sumatra, or whether other motivations were more critical in West Sumatran fiction publications. Examination of the literary series under his editorship and one of his novels indicates both that as publisher he had to play the role of businessman, but that he also was critical of colleagues who were not serious about their literary production and the meaning for society. The final "case" focusses on a number of politically active individuals, and briefly explores their prewar, wartime and postwar activities, showing

a variety of experience, but also indicating that dedicated political activists produced fiction which, while forgotten in postwar Indonesia, was well-known and popular during the last years of Dutch rule, and in different forms, during the Japanese occupation.

The third chapter examines production of popular knowledge over the long *durée*, highlighting the long-term intensification of interest as a result of Japanese interventions, and reminding us of textual and non-textual elements of history.

Exploring popular understandings of historical figures, this chapter focuses on the case of a Eurasian rebel who was executed in 1721 by the Dutch, and seeking to understand how Indonesians understood this figure by studying the narratives about this figure produced in Malay/Indonesian language publications beginning in 1888. The existence of a monument in North Jakarta—until demolished by the Japanese who wished to eliminate vestiges of colonial authority in 1942—had virtually guaranteed that there would be local stories about this figure, popularly known as “the broken-skin prince.” Japanese authorities provided Pieter Erbervelt with public respect in their publications from 1942-3, showing the skull and monument draped in a flag, and providing a brief historical narrative. A critical event in public perceptions about Erbervelt thus appeared during the Japanese occupation, but the fact that despite Japanese demolition, there was again a monument on the same site in the 1970s and 1980s suggests the importance of rejecting standard periodization and exploring prewar, wartime, and postwar periods.

The political importance of this otherwise “minor” figure from the early 18th century is clear through the struggles over Erbervelt, stories about him, and the monument. Without inclusion of events during World War II, particularly the demolition of the monument and Japanese-encouraged publications, Erbervelt could have been forgotten, or at least would not have become the focus of efforts to reconstruct the monument in material form.

The fourth chapter explores subjects which have been unimaginable due to the failure of scholars to understand the context and to systematically examine materials from the wartime period. The first subject covered is the Japanese women in Southeast Asia during the war. Since the Japanese military was 100% male, the assumption has

been that Japanese women were not present during the war, and that the lack of Japanese women affected the bad behavior of the Japanese military towards local women. High profile women like the literary writer Hayashi Fumiko made their appearance in 1942-3 before local Japanese and Indonesian audiences in person and via the press. Examination of both the press and other sources indicate that there were also a larger number of women who worked as typists or other office workers, teachers and nurses, as well as other individuals who worked as translators, cooks, and in other functions. The second section examines one of the few Indonesian novels which were published during the war, which when remembered, is denigrated as “propaganda.” This beautiful novel of 1945 displays a concern with racial tensions and violence within Indonesian society, and a desire for harmony which resonates well with Indonesian society in the early 21st century. Examination of the novel suggests that its marginalization was probably due to systematic marginalization of everything from this period which did not fit the 1945- nationalist narrative. The third section examines the situation in Timor and surrounding areas, resulting in a better understanding of both the wartime and postwar contexts and highlighting events and processes which have long been forgotten. The final section briefly examines the strange case of the “repatriation” of non-Japanese women to Japan in 1946-47, indicating that different races/nationalities were separated more after the war by the racial policies of the Dutch than by wartime Japanese policies.

The final chapter focusses on subjects which have been discussed regularly, though with little or narrow historical research, subjects the discourses to historical contextualization and consideration of the context of the production of knowledge. In so doing it seeks to demonstrate how postwar historical discourses on the war have been fundamentally ahistorical, shaped by postwar agendas and argues that careful examination of the wartime context and critical reading of the postwar history can reshape these representations. The primary focus in this chapter is on comfort women, the women providing sexual services to the Japanese military in military-authorized institutions, who have been at the center of public conflict over the war since around 1991.

The first section explores the legal situation prior to World War II in Japan, the Netherlands and in Indonesia. This indicates that while Japan was moving towards greater state control over prostitutes and the sexual services provided to the military,

in Indonesia the Dutch moved away from their similar 19th century military-controlled prostitution system and towards a repressive system which allowed prostitution, but did not allow others to profit from prostitution, and thus eliminated the possibility of state control of venereal disease. Thus different trajectories in socio-legal developments guaranteed problems during the war. The second study focusses on research of political prisoners on Buru Island in the 1970s, which was ultimately published in 2000. This study indicates that the political prisoners understood the former comfort women as being victims of postwar society, even more than they had been victims of the Japanese. However, the editors in the 1990s sought to change the narrative to an anti-Japanese perspective which eliminated criticism of the injustices of Indonesian society and utilized the women as symbols of the suffering of all Indonesians at the hands of Japanese. A final section considers East Timor and the construction of its history in Australian memories.

The wide range of cases discussed in this study indicate that serious examination of the war does not merely “fill a gap” by adding a few details to the historical narrative which has been created during the last 70 years. Rather, it leads to the transformation of the history of modern Indonesia, an appreciation of events, people, and social contexts which have been forgotten for 70 years, and an ability to recognize the agency of writers in subjective reinterpretation of the past.

Chapter II.

Changing the Course of Political and Literary History: Perceiving the Reappearance of a Politically Active Literature

The Japanese occupation is conventionally regarded as having caused all cultural and literary production in Indonesia to stop abruptly; Japanese oppression of virtually all activities not directly benefiting themselves resulting in a virtually complete rupture of 3.5 years. A cursory examination of *Djawa Baroe* dispels this myth, as short stories and cultural activities regularly adorned the pages of this military government published magazine. Similarly, the annual cultural review *Keboedajaan Timoer* (1943-45), another innovation of the occupation period, included literature on its pages. The total number of publications issued each year did decrease (not surprising given the context of an ongoing war), private publishers almost completely disappeared, and the ratio of fiction to other types of publications dropped, but a complete break did not occur. Examination of publications during the war rather indicates that literary and cultural production shifted, resulting in the relative prominence of some largely ignored writers of the late colonial period and different publishing media. At the same time, decreasing opportunities to write fiction had a significant impact on the activities of many individuals, but the opportunities brought by the elimination of the Dutch government and the installation of a new Japanese military regime concerned with the pursuit of the war also affected the activities of many residents of Indonesia in a more positive way.

This chapter seems to look back and forth across the line between the colonial period and the Japanese occupation, seeking both to better understand literary production, the writers and their readers, and to learn more about the literary history of Indonesia. Paying special attention to the Japanese occupation, this chapter explores the cases of several individuals who were both politically active and wrote fiction at some time in the 1920s-1940s, reexamining their prewar, wartime, and where necessary postwar activities.

A. Restrictions on Post-1926 Fiction: The Political Work of Abdoe'l xarim M.s. in Colonial and Japanese Occupied Indonesia (1930s-1940s)

One of the most substantial local histories of the 1940s, *Medan Area Mengisi Problemasi*, was written by a team of Indonesian writers and vetrans of the revolution in Medan during in the 1970s.¹ In addition to a detailed narrative, complete with footnoted sources, this 829 page book unusually included carefully compiled, rich supplemental notes (*catatan balik*). Supplemental note number 15 (pp. 704-707) carries a large picture of a certain Abdu'l Xarim Muhammad Soetan and includes an intriguing note about the Japanese occupation period:²

“Pada waktu itu ia sering mengadakan perjalanan keliling melakukan agitasi propaganda. Juga dalam segi ini Xarim M.S. membuktikan kemahirannya membela kepentingan bangsa Indonesia. Pada zahirnya ia berpropaganda untuk Jepang, tetapi dengan permainan kata-katanya ia senantiasa dapat membangkitkan semangat nasionalisme Indonesia serta menambah kesadaran nasional pada rakyat Indonesia dan pada para prajurit *Gyu-Gun*.”

At that time he frequently took trips around engaging in propaganda agitation. In this aspect as well, Xarim M.S.demonstrated his ability to defend the interests of the Indonesian people. On the surface, he propagandized for Japan, but playing with words, he was always able to awaken the Indonesian national spirit as well as add to the national awareness of the Indonesian masses and among the *Gyu-Gun* [self-defence forces] soldiers.

The biographical notes about Abdoel Xarim quickly make clear that he was politically active throughout his life, except for the 1930s, when he was only active in cultural affairs, establishing a periodical and a publisher. In fact, although he is not featured in Teeuw (1967), or in an entire generation of Indonesian writings about literature, Abdoe'l Xarim also wrote literature during the 1930s-early 1940s, his final work being a novelette entitled *Hadji Dadjal* (June 1941) which appeared in the popular literary series *Loekisan Poedjangga* published in Medan only months before the war with Japan erupted.

¹ Medan Area (1976).

² Medan Area (1976: 706).

1. The Author and Publication of *Hadji Dadjal*

Abdoe'lxarim Moehammad Soetan, sometimes referred to as Abdu'l Xarim or Abdul Karim, was a journalist and politician born in Idi (East Aceh) on June 18, 1901 (or 1900). He studied in a kweekschool and took courses to be a “*tekenaar openemer*” (draftsman), joining the Department of Public Works (*Burgerlijke Openbare Werken*) in Langsa in 1914. He became the chairman of the *Vereeniging Inlandse Personeel B.O.W.* union branch in Lho' Seumawe (now Lhoksomawe) and then branch chairman for the multi-racial Nationaal Indische Partij (NIP). In 1920, he was transferred to Padang and then to Kupang (West Timor) in 1921, presumably to remove him from his field of political activity. Due to that transfer, he resigned from the “secure” government position and became NIP commissioner for Sumatra until it was disbanded in May 1923. In 1924, Abdoe'lxarim became the leader of the Langsa PKI branch and then the CC-PKI commissioner for Sumatra. In 1925 he was jailed for 10 days for sneaking away to Penang, as the attorney-general had apparently restricted him to Langsa for several years. He was then in and out of jail, reportedly jailed for 13 months from August 1925 for his political activities, and again in November 1926 for 7 months before being sent to Boven Digoel with his young child.³

Abdoe'lxarim was also active in the press, leading the editorial staff of *Hindia Sepakat* (Sibolga, 1922) and *Oetoesan Rakjat [Ra'iat]* (Langsa: Peroesahaan Samoedera, 1923), a publication appearing 3 times per month. While exiled to Boven Digoel, Abdoe'lxarim would have been unable to be active in the press, but as an individual willing to work, Abdoe'lxarim was included in the cooperative group. He pursued his musical interests and presumably spent time playing the role of father to his young son, Nip. As a cooperative prisoner “willing to work,” he was among the first released and allowed to return home. After returning from Boven Digoel (1932), he lived in Medan, establishing the small printer-publisher “Aneka” which issued some of

³ *Medan Area* (1976: 705-6). The suggestion that Abdoe'lxarim was in prison for a critical 13 month period is contradicted by Ruth McVey's study of the PKI, which mentions him as the Acehnese representative in the fateful January 1926 PKI meeting. This version is again contradicted by a report cited in McVey (1965: 331, 482 notes 37-38) which claims that Abdoe'lxarim was to be sent to a trade office in Penang in August 1926. It is possible that a modification of the dates of Abdoe'lxarim's imprisonment might have been useful for his son, Nip Xarim, a member of the team which compiled *Medan Area Mengisi Problemasi*.

his works and eventually founding *Penjedar* for which he apparently continued to work.⁴ This periodical was published by Indische Drukkerij, which also published *Tjenderawasih* (and published one of Abdoe'lxarim's books). *Penjedar* was led in 1938 by Moehamad Saidt and in early 1941 by Matu Mona (hoofdred.) and Djamaloeddin (red.), with contributors including Seidō Miyatake in Nara.⁵ By September 1941, both the listing of contributors and the name "De Atjeher" had disappeared, and it seems likely that Abdoe'lxarim was either not writing or taking a very low profile. He also occasionally wrote for *Abad 20* from its recreation in 1939-40, apparently until his son left the editorial staff for the Philippines and Emnast became the editor.⁶

Abdoe'lxarim had some experience writing stories, as novelettes had appeared under his name and published by his own publishing house in 1932 [*Ratna Kasihan Melati Deli (Boekoe tooneel dari toedjoeh bahagian)*]⁷ and 1933 [*Pandoe Anak Boeangan*].⁸ Following the publication of those books, he had taken a relatively low profile, issuing some non-fiction historical/biographical works in 1934 [*Abdul Aziz Ibroe Soe'oad, Pahlawan Tanah Arab*] and 1938 or 1939 [*Teukoe Oemar Djohan*]

⁴ Faced with the question of his role, the columns by De Atjeher seemed a logical possibility in that they addressed ostensibly non-political issues, namely education and social issues. Furthermore, a note in De Atjeher's column in issue no. 25, 1938, states: "Ma'loemat: Toean Abdoel'lxarim Ms. sekarang sedang berpergian ke Atjeh. Soerat2 boeat redaksi, djangan diadreskan kepada beliau persoonlijk" [Announcement: Mr. Abdoe'lxarim Ms. is now traveling to Aceh. Letters to the editor should not be addressed to him personally]. This seems to confirm that De Atjeher was his pseudonym, but Anthony Reid's attribution of De Atjeher's writings to H.M. Zainuddin (1979: 36,n.74), presumably on the basis of an interview with H.M. Zainuddin conducted in the 1970s, suggests that Abdoe'lxarim might have had some other unmentioned role in that newspaper.

⁵ Miyatake Seidō [also read as Miyatake Masamichi] published an Indonesian-Japanese dictionary during the war (1st-5th printings, 1942-Oct.1943), a Malay language version of Aesop's fables (Sept.1943), a survey of the languages and literature of the South Seas (1943), and a collection of translated articles by Indonesians which had appeared in *Asia Raya* (1944).

⁶ Mochtar Nasoetion, popularly known by the pen-name Emnast, was educated in a MULO school in Medan, becoming a journalist in 1932. After serving as a reporter for *Sinar Deli* and *Pelita Andalas*, he was the leader of the weekly magazine *Lukisan Dunia* for five years. He also worked for *Abad XX* with Adinegoro, becoming editor in July 1940, and was on the editorial board of *Doenia Pengalaman* in late 1939 and early 1940. During the Japanese occupation he worked for *Sumatora Shimbun* and the monthly *Minami*. He spent four years in the TNI, and after independence joined the North Sumatra Public Education Inspectorate.

⁷ Advertized as the first play published in Sumatra, it sold out in 20 days, according to the advertizement for the forthcoming second edition printed in *Pandoe Anak Boeangan*.

⁸ *Pandoe Anak Boeangan* has become reasonably well known in academic circles since the 1990s (see e.g. Shiraishi 1997 and Rieger 1991:161-3), primarily due to the subject matter (colonialism and political exile) and its style. More recently, it has been included in a volume of stories from the colonial period about Boven Digoel (Pramoedya 2001).

Pahlawan, Panglima Perang Besar di Tanah Atjeh].⁹ The publication of the book on the founder of the Saudi regime is interesting but perhaps not surprising if we consider the popular interest in events in the Arabian Peninsula at that time and the fact that Abdoe'lxarim's brother-in-law Nathar Zainuddin (c.1900-1950) was both a dedicated PKI member and Muslim. Abdoe'lxarim also wrote a book on women in Aceh, *Moetiara Atjeh* [1939], which could have either been a novel with a strong historical and moral message or a non-fiction book.

Most of his publications in serial form after Boven Digoel seem to have been either anonymous articles or possibly columns under a pen-name, although Abdoe'lxarim did write under his own name on music and singing once at the request of a magazine editor, focusing on their use as a means of effectively communicating with the masses and overcoming divisive foreign influences (including Arab Muslim and Western Christian influenced music).¹⁰ His hesitance to write about a subject in which he was not truly expert or had not formally studied is evident not only here, but also in the words of his fictional character, Oemar (see below).

In April 1940, Abdoe'lxarim joined the debate over novels and their value which had raged in several periodicals following the December 1939 meeting of writers and publishers in Medan. He wrote at the request of a reader of *Seruan Kita* who sent him a copy of Emnast's *Tan Malaka di Kota Medan*, asking about its accuracy and value.¹¹ In his article, Abdoe'lxarim strongly criticized the sensationalist selling of a product through utilization of leaders' names, which he saw as originating in Andjar Asmara's Dardanella theater troupe presenting a story about Dr. Sansi. The case at hand involved selling a story using the name of a great man, Tan Malaka. Abdoe'lxarim found this inexcusable, and suggested that someday Emnast write a book about the leader Tan Malaka as a means of making up for his mistake. He was attacked rather viciously in another article published in *Seroean Kita*, with Emnast questioning

⁹ Anthony Reid (1979b) states that Abdoe'lxarim indeed wrote a popular biography of Teuku Umar in 1939. This biography apparently stimulated local interest in Teuku Umar, as well as reactions by Acehnese in the national press, explaining that this figure was not (yet) significant to Acehnese as a hero. Hanzo Hasibo utilizes this publication in his article, "Teukoe Oemar dan van Daalen," *Minami* (1 April 1943), pp.30-31.

¹⁰ "Lagoe dan Njanjian," *Abad 20*, th.IV, no.7 (February 17, 1940).

¹¹ Abdoe'lxarim M.s., "Mempermain-mainkan nama pemimpin. Oentoek mendapat sesoeap nasi," *Seruan Kita*, th.II, no.39 (April 19, 1940): 809.

Abdoel'xarim's loyalty to nationalist causes because, after a four or five year stay in Boven Digoel, he was released and thus must have signed an agreement to stay uninvolved in politics.¹² This was undoubtedly particularly unpleasant coming from a journalist apparently without any strong political convictions and no substantial chance of facing jail or exile.

As Emnast had declared, Abdoel'xarim had undoubtedly signed an agreement to forsake politics and to stay out of trouble in exchange for his family's release from Boven Digoel. The possibility of a one-way ticket back to malarial Boven Digoel must therefore have always hung over his head.¹³ Had Abdoel'xarim given up activism and turned to empty popular writings and hypocritical complaints about others? Coming shortly after this exchange, *Hadji Dadjal* might be considered a reaction to Emnast's attack, but beyond the novel itself we may see evidence of Abdoel'xarim's intentions in his other actions and writings. Indeed, given the track record Abdoel'xarim had from the 1920s when his political commitments led him to resign from government service and resulted in a series of stays in prison, it is difficult to believe that he would suddenly become completely apolitical.

By June 1941, a number of the serial publications of Sumatra born in the boom of 1938-39 had run into difficulties. There was generally a shortage of skilled writers, made worse by the periodic arrest of individuals like Mohammad Saleh Oemar in 1940 and Matu Mona in 1941. There also was a certain amount of disruption caused by debates over the role of novels and appropriate content. This was apparently one of the reasons why Poestaka Islam's apparently successful literary periodical *Doenia Pengalaman* moved to Solo in mid-1940, obtained a new editorial staff, and developed new problems in both subscription rolls and its network of writers.¹⁴ These pressures

¹² Emnast [Mochtar Nasution], "Serangan Tengik dari Abdoel Xarim M.s.," *Seruan Kita* th.II, no.40 (April 26, 1940):837-8.

¹³ This did happen on occasion, as it did to Oeska [Oesman Soetan Kaadilan] who found his Indonesian language true-story narrative of escape from Boven Digoel mangled by censors and still banned, although a former Dutch official, D. van der Meulen, claims to have earlier offered to have it published in unexpurgated form in a Dutch language geographical journal. Oeska's work as a journalist was an invitation to the authorities to return him to Boven Digoel.

¹⁴ Another reason for its move was the promising boom in publications aimed primarily at non-Chinese readers of Java, such as *Bioscoop Romans* and other Kabe publications from 1939-41, which suggested the possibility of challenging the Chinese owned literary periodicals *Tjerita Roman* and *Penghidoepan*.

and the generally sensationalist and mediocre quality of *Loekisan Poedjangga* novels—the periodical in which this novel appeared—may have been factors in the editor Joesoef Sou'yb's decision to accept a social reformist work from a politically risky author. If the government took action, it would probably include the confiscation of all copies of that issue, a financial disaster which struck several periodicals during this period. Of course, the most important consideration was probably the incessant demand for material to feed the presses. In mid-1941, *Tjendrawasih* and *Loekisan Poedjangga* were still appearing bimonthly, thus requiring four novelettes a month in Medan alone. In Fort de Kock (Bukittinggi), *Roman Pergaolan* also appeared twice monthly under the editorship of Tamar Djaja, while additional stories and other types of writings were needed for irregular publications, magazines and newspapers.

Not much is currently known about the distribution of *Hadji Dadjal*, however, Joesoef Sou'yb claimed that in late 1939 or early 1940 *Loekisan Poedjangga* had a circulation of 10,000 books, possibly meaning the total number of books per month. If the distribution were still the same 1½ years later, then around 5,000 copies would have been printed. There would have been six months of undisturbed distribution before communications deteriorated in early 1942. The copy used for this article, obtained in the H.B. Jassin Literary Documentation Center, had been owned by “Bibliotheek ‘Asjik” and approved by Borneo Minseiboe, confirming that copies reached other islands and continued to circulate during the first part of the Japanese occupation. However, Medan publications almost certainly had their best distribution in Sumatra where readers could obtain them through subscriptions, purchases, and borrowing from friends and private lending libraries.

The publication of *Hadji Dadjal* in June 1941 coincided with the beginning of the “unreal” period between the cutting of ties to Japan and the actual war in the Indies. The Netherlands had been occupied by Germany in May 1940 and Europe enveloped in war. Germans and NSB members were interned, but Japanese had not yet departed the Indies in large numbers, although all ships to Japan had already been fully booked for months. This context seems to have had little effect on the writing of *Hadji Dadjal* as the author avoids explicit reference to political issues, but it might have influenced its reception. On the other hand, the establishment of PUSA (All Aceh Ulama Union) in 1939, and its anti-status quo, anti-ulèëbalang (Acehnese traditional elite) stance may have influenced both the writing and its reception in North Sumatra. In fact, the

Medan periodicals *Penjedar* and *Seruan Kita* “became the most widely read journals in Aceh.”¹⁵

Despite the absence of any clear connection between the writing of this novel and the start of World War II, according to *Medan Area Mengisi Problemasi* (1976), Abdoe'lxarim was active in the anti-fascist movement from around 1935 until the end of the Japanese occupation. However, any activity of this kind must not have been apparent to the Dutch authorities as he was imprisoned on December 8, 1941 and sent to Tjimahi. Rather, their concern was that he might cooperate with the Japanese. He was released by the Japanese on around March 10, 1942, and allowed to return to Medan.¹⁶ Abdoe'lxarim's luck continued to improve as Shin'ichi Hayasaki, apparently the final prewar Japanese consul in Medan, was appointed mayor of Medan in 1942, a post which he occupied until the end of the war.¹⁷ Abdoe'lxarim had reportedly initiated secret contact with him before the consulate had closed, a fact which was presumably important for Abdoe'lxarim's selection as the official responsible for price controls in Medan (July 1942), then more appropriately the head of the city publicity department *Balai Penerangan* (Sept. 1942). In early 1943, he was apparently the mayor's assistant for foreigners, which may have brought him into more regular contact with Chinese, including some who were leftists, and of anti-Japanese orientation (*Medan Area*, 490).¹⁸ In May 1943, he was jailed by the Kenpetai because of his Marxist background, but was released within 13 days.

¹⁵ Reid (1979:28). Aceh's close relationship with East Sumatra was strengthened by Medan's role as a large publishing center and the absence of a local publishing industry until the Japanese occupation.

¹⁶ See his essay “Gema Laoetan Tedoeh,” *Minami* th.I, no.1 (Dec,1942), p.58, for an interesting commemoration of the approximately 1000 “little people” who were arrested by the Dutch on December 8, 1941. Not only was his own internment not mentioned, but commemoration of the actions of Japanese soldiers comes only as a careful afterthought.

¹⁷ *Tokyo Nichi-nichi Shinbun*, 13 October 1942. Hayasaki Shin'ichi's name (早崎 真一) is rarely mentioned in writings about the war, or even newspapers, and almost never in its complete form. See http://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kota_Medan (accessed December 27, 2011) and Reid (1979). According to both *Medan Area Mengisi Problemasi* (1976) and Said (1973), S. Hayasaki was a former Medan based trader and a longtime acquaintance. On 11 December 1945, he accompanied the resident (“Governor”) Tetsuzō Nakashima from Medan to Tebing Tinggi on a special train, which was surrounded by around 300 Indonesian youths who demanded arms (*Medan Area* 1976, 623-34).

¹⁸ While knowing Mayor Hayasaki may have been a critical starting point, from at least 1943, Abdoe'lxarim seems to have operated more at the *shū* (regency) level, thus under the authority of Governor Nakashima.

While the Kempeitai's arrest might have been intended to determine if Abdoe'lxarim were a loyal subject of Japan, it may also have encouraged him to play a larger role in Japanese sponsored institutions. From November 1, 1943, Abdoe'lxarim was a member of the *Shū Sangi Kai Sumatra Timur* [East Sumatra Residency Council]. From November 28, 1943 he occupied a key position in BOMPA (Badan Oentoeik Membantoe Pertahanan Asia [Body for Helping the Defense of Asia]), managing its daily affairs and administration, as well as serving on the committee for *Pembangoenan Semangat Barisan Soekarela* [Building the Spirit of the Volunteer Front], presumably from May 1943.¹⁹ Mohammed Said (1973: 157-158) even claims that Abdoe'lxarim was actually the founder of BOMPA, which he had modeled on Sukarno and Hatta's organizations on Java, effected through the assistance of Governor Nakashima and the Bunkaka (propaganda section). Whether or not this is correct, it is clear that Abdoe'lxarim was a—perhaps the—key figure in BOMPA. In addition to this, both Abdoe'lxarim and his son Nip Xarim were apparently on the *Sumatora Shimbun* editorial staff under Adinegoro.²⁰ He was indeed somewhat active in the press, publishing at least 3 special articles in the magazine *Minami* under his own name in 1942-43, including an article about the end of Dutch rule and a lengthy obituary for Tjipto Mangunkusumo.

The series of formal positions, however, does not capture the complex nature of Abdoe'lxarim's activities during the war. Throughout the occupation, Abdoe'lxarim seems to have been an active part of several networks. For example, from 1943, apparently as part of an "Anti-Fascist Movement" involving Abdoe'lxarim and his brother-in-law Nathar Zainuddin, Abdoe'lxarim cultivated contacts within the Kempeitai (Sutan Sulaiman Effendi and Amir Rasjid). Abdoe'lxarim knew Amir Rasjid well since he had been exiled to Boven Digoel with his brother, Abdul Munir, the former secretary of the PKI in Medan. At the time when Abdoe'lxarim contacted him, Amir Rasjid, having served in the Kempeitai, then the propaganda section (Bunkaka), had

¹⁹ *Sendjinkoen dan Tentera Soekarela* (Medan: Badan Penjiaran, [2603]), p.3. For an example of Abdoe'lxarim's own writing during this period (possibly written shortly after his release from Kempeitai detention), see his essay in the same volume, "Arti Soekarela Bagi Kita," pp. 69-79. Abdoe'lxarim's position in BOMPA has been described as chairman, but the *Kita Sumatra-sinbun* of December 13, 1943 mentions him as "Ketoea Pejabat Oemoem" while on February 14, 1944, he is mentioned as being "Setia Oesaha Oemoem" under the "Ketoea Besar" Mr. Moehamad Joesoef and the Assistant, Aboe Bakar.

²⁰ Soebagio I.N. (1987:53).

returned to the Kempeitai (in early 1943). Presumably due to their friendship and his leftwing credentials, Abdoe'lxarim was able to get Amir Rasjid's cooperation. Both during his stint in the Kempeitai and in the Tokkoka Tokai Gunsyu, specifically in the Tokko Bocho Han (Secret Police, Political Section), in which he worked after 6 months of intelligence training in the Singapore Bocho Han Gakko, Amir provided information about investigations and arrests to Abdoe'lxarim.²¹

Abdoe'lxarim's position in BOMPA, the committee for *Pembangoenan Semangat Barisan Soekarela*, as well as his other formal positions resulted in chances for him to travel throughout East Sumatra, as well as to give speeches on radio and to mass rallies. In one speech, reproduced in part in the *Kita Sumatera Sinbun* of 8 September 1944 ("Xarim M.S.: Kewadjiban Berat Menanti Kita"), he expressed himself to the crowd in the following way:

For us, the decision of the Government is a very heavy burden. Before that type of decision was presented, we already had given as much energy as we could, of course now it is like 24 hours in a day are not enough for us. In the past, before the decision was made, every time I spoke in front of a lot of people, with no hesitation I said that the goal of Japan is to give independence to Indonesia. The dream of obtaining independence has filled the desires of the Indonesian people for more than a quarter century. I am sure that in the future, in the whole East Asia, there will not be any people who can beat the Indonesian people in their actions as Japan's friend in life and death.

Bagi kita kepoatoesan Pemerintah itoe adalah soeatoe beban jang amat berat. Kalau doeloe sebeloem kepoatoesan seperti itoe diberikan, kita soedah mentjoerahkan tenaga sebanjak-banjaknja, tentoelah sekarang waktoe 24 djam seolah-olah terlaloe sedikit bagi kita dalam sehari. Dimasa jang laloe, sebeloem kepoatoesan itoe ditetapkan, ditiap-tiap saja berbitjara dihadapan rakjat jg banjak, saja selaloe berkata dengan tiada sangsi-sangsi, bahwa toedjoean Nippon ialah hendak memberi kemerdekaan kepada Indonesia. Tjita-tjita oetoeik memperoleh kemerdekaan soedah lebih seperempat abad lamanja diboelatkan dalam keinginan rakjat Indonesia. Saja yakin, dimasa depan diseloeroeh Asia Timoer tidak ada soeatoe bangsa jang akan dapat melebihi bangsa Indonesia dalam tindakannya sebagai kawan sehidoep semati dengan Nippon.

²¹ *Medan Area* (1976: 489-490). The primary source for this information is clearly Abdoe'lxarim's son, Nip Xarim, who was also involved in these activities. While coming from one source, the information presented seems quite plausible, given the personal relationships, and the individual backgrounds. Presumably contact with Abdoe'lxarim was also useful for Amir Rasjid and Sutan Sulaiman Effendi in their intelligence work, as is suggested by the efforts of Abdoe'lxarim and Amir to throw suspicion off their fellow travelers and onto political enemies.

While lending themselves to more than one interpretation, Abdoe'lxarim's words seem to be highly critical of the Japanese administration; Indonesians must work more than physically possible, Abdoe'lxarim might not say Japanese goal is to give independence to Indonesia anymore, and Indonesians will be Japan's loyal friend (but maybe not now). A pro-Japanese reading is only suggested in the title of the newspaper article with its reference to "duty" and his confidence that "in the future" Indonesians would, in their actions, be Japan's best friends to the very end. That Indonesian nationalist youth would be impressed with his bravery is no surprise.

Key to his prominence not just during the Japanese occupation but also during the early revolutionary period²² were his ability to communicate effectively with the Indonesian population, especially the radical youth, without worrying the Japanese authorities and his abilities as perhaps the best public speaker in East Sumatra. In fact, Dr. M. Amir explained *Sukarno's* popularity by writing 'Anyone who has heard our Bung Xarim M.S. speak must understand the meaning of this contact between leader and people, as if there was a "magnetic field" between them.'²³

This can be perceived as well in a meeting of around 30 September 1945, held in response to a report from the Aneta news service published in *Pewartu Deli* (29 September 1945) claiming that the Sukarno-Hatta government on Java had collapsed and that the two leaders were under house arrest. After Mr. T. M. Hassan explained that the news was false and part of a "war of nerves" and formally announced the Declaration of Independence of 17 August, there was a big round of applause. However,

²² Abdoe'lxarim was active in politics and administration during the revolutionary period as well. Abdoe'lxarim became the deputy head of the Sumatra PNI (1945), as well as founder and chair of the Sumatra PKI (1945-) until the PNI Sumatra leader A.K. Gani demanded that he choose between the two parties in December 1945. (Abdoe'lxarim finally left the PKI in 1952.) He was also a resident assigned to the governor of Sumatra from late 1945 (Reid 1979: 171,173-4). He was retained by the Indonesian government, acting in various capacities until 1951. In independent Indonesia Abdoe'lxarim was less prominent but still active in both politics and journalism, dying on November 25, 1960 as a new member of the MPRS representing North Sumatra and an instructor in the *Akademi Pers dan Wartawan Indonesia* in Medan. For more this and other details of Abdoe'lxarim's life, see Reid (1979), *Medan Area* (1976), especially pages 704-7 and Pramoedy (2001: XIII-XVII).

²³ Reid (1979: 179 n.26) quoting a 1946 Medan publication.

after Abdoe'lxarim gave a speech filled with fire and called upon the youth to defend independence, the audience was pounding on the walls with enthusiasm.²⁴

With this as background, we can now reconsider the 1941 novel *Hadji Dadjal*.

Figure 4. Cover of *Hadji Dadjal* (1941)



2. The Story: *Hadji Dadjal*²⁵

Oemar was a Singaporean street salesman of a drink called *cendol*, however, people who knew Oemar gradually came to call him Dadjal²⁶ because he never went to the mosque and never joined religious activities like visiting the sick, going to the home of the deceased, or attending communal feasts. However, he was eager to participate in any discussions of religion, having obtained an elementary education in the basic tenets of Islam, one which greatly departed from the norm. His opinions were strict interpretations of the Koran, finding no value in the various adat or interpretations of religious figures, and was not concerned about customary practice or what other people said about him as a result.

²⁴ *Medan Area* (1976: 114-116). In the following months, Abdoe'lxarim was founding Co-chair of the PNI-Sumatra and founding Chair of the PKI-Sumatra until faced with an ultimatum to choose between organizations in late 1945.

²⁵ Abdoe'lxarim M.s., *Hadji Dadjal*, Loekisan Poedjangga th.III, no.36 (1 Juni 1941), Medan: Tjerdas (70 pp.).

²⁶ Dajal is an irreligious person who tempts people to engage in bad behavior or to ignore religious tenets. In Islamic discourse it can refer to a creature who exists to tempt humans to evil in the days before final judgment, or in common parlance simply a liar. Christian usage is apparently more in line with a devil. See Echols and Shadily (1994).

Being very thrifty, he saved enough money from seven years of work to stay one year in Mecca. Completing requisite paperwork while selling *cendol*, Oemar only announced his departure to his neighbors a day or two before leaving, itself a significant individualistic divergence from the norm. Oemar took the bare minimum with him, most importantly equipment for selling *cendol*, since he had heard that there was little that Malays could eat or drink in Mecca. He did not engage in pre-departure ceremonies or special preparations, expecting to engage in such studies on the ship or in Mecca.

Upon arrival in Mecca, Oemar immediately experimented with a new *cendol* blend and began to sell. His peddling, abstinence from various pilgrimages, and a number of other issues soon brought him into conflict with the local elites referred to as *sjech*.²⁷ He invariably defended his position with logic and reference to the Koran (but not quotations), rendering him unpopular with the *sjech* and most Indonesians, who simply follow what other people tell them. While selling *cendol*, he continued studying Arabic and Islam with a teacher of similar inclinations, however, conflicts with *sjech* and others who did not follow the precepts of Islam continued. One recurrent problem was with descendants of Muhammad who virtually demanded gifts from Indonesians which they claimed would benefit the giver in accordance with the Islamic mandate to give donations to the poor. This was ridiculed by the narrator, while the practice was attacked with a vengeance by Oemar, who pointed out that only certain groups are legally allowed to receive this type of aid and all others must work. Thus these respected figures were *murtad* (people who had abandoned Islam) and were cheating people.

During his residence in Mecca, a friend from Singapore died, leaving a wife and two children. The local *sjech* pressured the family to sponsor a ceremony and prayers to ask Allah to show mercy to the deceased. The money for organizing this ceremony would go to the *sjech*. Oemar attacked this proposal in the strongest terms as it would neither benefit the deceased [for scriptural reasons] nor was it legal to use money from the deceased's estate before his debts were paid. Even after settlement, the remaining

²⁷ As they appear in this novel, the *sjech* seem to be somewhere between local administrators, government officials, landlords and tour organizers. Foreigners resident in Mecca seem to have been associated with one *sjech* to whom they paid various fees, turned to for advice, and with whom they may have lived. These are possibly the pilgrimage *sjech* referred to by Deliar Noer (1973:64,224,229), many of whom came to recruit pilgrims willing to be under their care.

money rightfully belonged to his widow and children. This conflict brought Oemar before one of the chief religious legal specialists in Mecca. The *kadhi* was unable to take action because to support the *sjech* would violate Islamic law (as Oemar was right in his interpretation) while supporting Oemar's position would result in the judge being attacked by the local elite for endangering their means of livelihood. Oemar then began to guard this family, escorting them on their pilgrimage to Medina, and eventually marrying the widow at the recommendation of his *sjech*.

After eight years, Omar and his wife returned to Singapore by way of Egypt where they deposited her two children in a school. Upon arrival, the well-respected Oemar found a new vocation managing a small shop while promoting Islam and a religious educational foundation.

3. *Hadji Dadjal* and Revolutionary Social Critique

The simple plot is barely sufficient even for this small novelette, and certainly unsatisfactory for literary critics or connoisseurs of literature. In terms of character development, this story is also far from achieving the goals of Western literature. Oemar, the only character to receive substantial attention, does not change substantially in terms of inner characteristics; he begins and ends as Dadjal. What changes is the depth of his knowledge of Islam and Arabic, while he obtains experience, a wife, children, money, a new profession, and even becomes a *hadji*. Oemar is happy but indifferent—he was happy without these things and did not particularly seek them. Other characters are simply arranged around Oemar and change as necessary to validate his position, motivate the story, etc. In fact, arguments about behavior and Islam fill the novel; the plot simply serves as the framework on which to hang a series of “situations” and redundant explanations or critiques. Some are entertaining, and readers may have experienced a vicarious enjoyment of Oemar's rips into Arabs. Readers would also have recognized the author's moral points, an attractive characteristic in Indonesian literature of the time, and even more so in post-debate Sumatra. Despite the literary weakness, is it possible that this book could have been a serious effort at social and political activism?

Abdoe'lxarim associates his main character and themes with the radical modernist Islam originating in Egypt, enrolling Oemar's foster-children in religious

schools there rather than in Mecca or Singapore, and providing a long discussion of education in Egypt and Indonesia at the end of the book.²⁸ Oemar's refusal to accept the interpretations of others about Islam does parallel positions of some other Indonesian modernists who sought to eliminate accretions of legends and customs while denying the authority of any of the main schools of interpretation/law.²⁹ He denies the validity of the interpretations of others—only trusting “Allah and Rasul,” and thus rather than tying himself more tightly to canonized interpretations of the Koran and perhaps the Hadith, he is free to interpret them, essentially following the practice of *ijtihad*. This allows many changes, including the possibility of a communist Islam (not directly implied here with the individualistic Oemar, but perhaps compatible with the materialist class-based critiques).

The novel also provides indications of what beliefs and practices are acceptable. Among the objectionable practices are *ziarah* to graves of holy men to request favors, as it is unlikely that dead people can provide assistance, given that granting requests is God's domain (pp.12-13). Oemar himself only goes to pay respects to Muhammad at his grave. A range of reprehensible behavior, like engaging in usury or attacking pilgrims, is blamed on poor understanding of *tobat*. Rather than carte blanche to behave immorally, *tobat* requires both a sense of deep regret and the commitment to never engage in such proscribed behavior again. Oemar also repeatedly expresses distaste for quick, slurred prayers, insisting on the importance of careful, respectful speech when addressing God, not unlike the modes of speech one would use to address a ruler.

The individual critiques and complaints about Islamic practice does not simply follow a pattern set by other Islamic media, but rather these mostly familiar critiques are displayed for another purpose. Indeed, Abdoe'l-xarim does not seem to want his readers to follow a formula, but rather logic and common sense. The lack of individual thought and understanding by the vast majority of the populace is thus a recurring theme. This complaint could probably be appreciated by those with European

²⁸ For a description of the modernist Islamic Manar Movement which was circulating in Medan in 1940, see Amir (1923). That Oemar himself was able to pursue his studies did indicate to readers that Mecca had some modernist scholars, a point which has been emphasized by Michael Laffan (2003).

²⁹ On this point see Federspiel (2001: 27).

education, and in fact, it could be argued that Oemar's dislike of (incoherent) attitudes and behavior is a primary focus of the novel. This unacceptable lack of individual agency and thought is conveyed in a debate prior to Oemar's departure from Singapore:

I don't want to debate with you because I know you do not have knowledge;³⁰ but I hope that there will come a time when God will show the correct way to you with you knowing the truth and thinking about it yourself. That is the reason why each time in exchanging questions and answers with you, there is always an argument, because you think with the brain of others, speak with the mouth of others and hear with the ears of others. But I think with my brain, speak with my mouth, and hear with my ears.

Akoe tidak soeka berbantah dengan kamoe karena akoe tahoe kamoe tiada ber'ilmoe dan berpengatahoean; tetapi akoe harap kelak ada soeatoe masa, Toehan akan menoendjoekkan djoega djalan jang benar kepada kamoe dengan kamoe ketahoei sendiri kebenarannja dan kamoe pikiri. Itoelah sebabnja saban kali bersoal djawab dengan kamoe, sabankali terdjadi perbantahan, lantaran kamoe berpikir dengan otak orang, berkata dengan moeloet orang dan mendengar dengan telinga orang. Tapi akoe berpikir dengan otakkoe, berkata dengan moeloetkoe, dan mendengar dengan telingakoe. (pp.7-8)

In the picture presented by Abdoe'lxarim, the Islamic masses, especially Indonesians, tend to follow customs as determined by others rather than thinking about what the Koran dictates or what logically must be the case. Accordingly, the need for critical, logical thought both for religious reasons and to ensure one's safety is emphasized throughout the text. In particular, the author singles out things determined by *moepakat* or consensus for special criticism, presumably because this process silences criticism and discourages individual thought (p.17).

Even if Oemar's fellow Muslims are aware of what is right, they are mute, and only Oemar dares speak the truth without concern for himself; he speaks straight. This is a second theme, the importance of acting out one's beliefs regardless of the consequences in this life. Oemar's insistence on going against customary practices and following a strict interpretation of the Koran even results in a summons to appear before local authorities to defend his words. When resulting in financial benefits like avoiding donations to the descendants of Mohammad (*sajids*), Oemar compensates by

³⁰ *Ber'ilmoe* indicates possession of both an esoteric type of knowledge as well as a type of "scientific" knowledge which is in some way productive; it does something. *Berpengatahoean* on the other hand indicates more factual knowledge. In any case, the difference between these terms seems to defy translation.

tithing to the poor, thereby ensuring that the recipient is eligible for such aid according to Islamic law. Oemar also restricts himself, for example in refusing appointment as a teacher on the public acclaim of students, preferring the model of western education where one who knows more gives an examination and grants the degree. This theme of giving voice to one's beliefs and acting them out—even by not doing something—reappear throughout the text.

Moral themes and the frequently repeated behavioral guidance offered by Abdoe'lxarim to his readers indicate a relationship between the world of religion, Islam, and the context of living in 20th century Netherlands East Indies society. Indeed, the criticisms of Indonesians on religious issues are critical to Abdoe'lxarim, especially as the criticisms apply indirectly to secular issues as well. To mention only one example, the religious elite (*lebai* and *kijai*) are attacked for using God as a tool to acquire money, rather than praising God (p.30), essentially the same critique as Abdoe'lxarim had once leveled at the Medan journalist Emnast (see below).

Just as secular and religious critiques are related, those specific to Saudi Arabia are very likely not meant to be taken in an exclusively literal manner; rather critiques of the *sjech*, *sajid*, and other Arabs seem to serve multiple purposes. First, they explicitly reject the common belief that the *sajid*, *sjech* or other Arabs including the Badui tribesmen are good by virtue of birthplace and genealogy. Behavior is essential. Second, they are critiques of those in power anywhere, as practices which are beneficial to power-holding classes, however illegal or immoral, tend to be maintained and enforced. The essentially materialist critique of the vested interests of *kadli* [religious judges] on page 28 provides a relatively clear example. These thus double as critiques of government administrators in Indonesia, both Dutch and native Indonesians, although they are never mentioned. Third, the critiques both warn Indonesians that they might be cheated and ridicule them for being suckers.³¹

³¹ There was an Indonesian organization dedicated to criticizing the *sjech*, and significantly the Saudi government and its more corrupt predecessors were dependent on Indonesian pilgrims for a substantial portion of their revenue until the discovery of oil in the 1930s or 1940s. See Nagazumi (1980) and Laffan (2003). The motivation to critique Arabs may also have had roots in the betrayal of Indonesian pilgrims in 1927. Eight Indonesians were arrested at the request of the Dutch counsel van der Meulen, held in miserable conditions in Saudi jails for at least two weeks, and then sent back to the Indies where most of them were probably exiled to Boven Digoel.

The religious and social critiques demand thorough questioning of behavior, customs, and the basis of authority in general, as well as the application of rational thought to new contexts. This is potentially revolutionary in its repercussions and very much in line with what the ethici and the colonial state wanted (except *not* in its particular blend with Islam and *with* an added element of subservience). The presentation is not intended to simply critique, but offers direction for social change which is to be driven by understanding, knowledge, fear of God, and simple embarrassment of not-so-progressive members of society. The novel also suggests the possibility of changing society through these understandings and the determination to act and speak in a manner consistent with one's beliefs. Fear of God and the desire to behave correctly become primary driving forces of change, while public embarrassment if challenged openly about mistakes and hypocrisy also becomes important to prevent social inertia from blocking reform. The establishment of the *Perserikatan Persatoean Oelama-Oelama* (PPOO)³² and the support of like-minded individuals as a result of Oemar's efforts validates this program for social change.

The drive for social change through language—the public challenge and correction of incorrect behavior—is manifested in the almost shocking rudeness of the text and is replicated on a variety of linguistic levels. Even the use of *kamoe* at times is direct and sharp compared to the *toean* used consistently throughout this text, reinforcing the sense of brave and perhaps rude challenges to wrongdoing. Using one of the strongest words available, Oemar does not hesitate to declare anyone *kafir* [an unbeliever] (e.g. pp.33-4, 38). Discussing a *sjech* who had essentially engaged in usurious loans at 50% return over a 3-4 month period, Oemar uses a narrative device of plural “gods” to validate his opinion that the *sjech* does not worship the same god and is *kafir*:

But Mr. Sjech, it might be that his god Allah is that slow and dumb, doesn't understand that that is a cruel act of taking interest. Thus he has a stupid God, perhaps his God is just some stone statues, so doesn't understand all this. My God can't be fooled in that manner because my God knows everything.

Tapi toean Sjech, boléh djadi dia poenja Toehan Allah ada begitoe bebal dan bodoh, tidak mengerti bahwa itoe adalah perboeatan makan riba jang kedjam. Maka dia poenja Toehan jang bebal, barangkali Toehannja

³² There is a certain similarity to the name Persatuan Ulama Seluruh Aceh (PUSA) which spearheaded the revolutionary social change in Aceh during this period.

adalah patoeng-patoeng batoe sadja, djadi tak mengerti itoe semoea. Saja poenja Toehan, tidak bisa dibikin bodoh begitoe roepa, kerna Toehan saja mengetahoei itoe semoea. (p.33)

The author seems to be trying to either shock the reader into rethinking his or her beliefs or to replicate the intimidation of face to face confrontation and thus force behavioral change. At least at times the language is extremely *kasar* [crude, rough], thus in a certain sense must be called revolutionary. For example, one chapter begins by noting that “orang bodoh jg baroe sampai ke Mekkah, dan beloem mengerti tipoe moeslihat sjéh² dan lintah darat di sana, mémang akan mendjadi koerban dari beroepa-roepa hal” [stupid/innocent people who just arrived in Mecca and do not understand the strategies of the *sjech* and leaches there will become the victims of a variety of things], hardly something which *haji* wish to hear about themselves nor the traditional picture of Arabs (p. 10). Similarly but characteristically, “Sjech jang memang boeaja ini” [This *sjech* who is really a crook] juxtaposes a rude word with a reference to a normally respected, Arab, Islamic figure (page 13). The author clearly hopes, exemplified by sections of his story, that such “*sjech*” will try to behave in an appropriate manner if regularly challenged. This appears explicitly with the narrator mentioning the *sjech*'s care to provide no grounds for Oemar's attacks during a pilgrimage to Medinah (p.44), but also in the improving attitudes of *sjech*. After being challenged, the *sjech* Arsjad, allowed Oemar to do as he pleased because “he now understood that Oemar was not someone who could be cheated (diboeajai)” (p.13).

The desire to change the understandings of the readers is manifested in a number of places, some of which have already been mentioned. The primarily Malay and Acehnese audience imagined themselves to be very good Muslims, thus the critiques relate to Islam, however they are equally applicable to other aspects of the modern, colonial world: “Therefore we came here not to suddenly be transformed into Arabs or to imitate the clothes of Arabs, but rather to fulfill Islamic obligations (*roekoen*) by becoming a *hadji*. It is not our skin that becomes *hadji*, but ourselves, our heart and spirit which is sure of the Islamic religion. It's much better if the money which is used for buying those [Arab] clothes is used by you for study rather than for display” (p.18). A few lexical changes yields a more conventional nationalist critique and exposes the underlying structure: “Therefore we came here not to suddenly be transformed into Europeans or imitate the clothes of Europeans, but to fulfill the demands of the modern world by getting a modern education. It is much better if the

money which is used for buying those [European] clothes is used for study rather than display.” By 1941, no Indonesian would want to explicitly follow Hanafi of *Salah Asoehan*, even if in practice some did behave in that way.³³

The behavior of Oemar is clearly shown to be correct, not just in the logic which almost never fails, his victories in debating, and in the happy ending, but also in various small points scattered throughout the book. For example, his strategy of earning money while studying despite the initial challenges to him, is shown to be the correct attitude:

His Arabic became better and skilled. The conditions for Oemar in Mecca was very different from his friends, his knowledge grew and his money as well. So for him the world was alright and the afterworld secure!

Bahasa ‘Arabnja semakin mahir dan baik. Keadaan Oemar di Mekkah berbéda djaoeh dari teman-temannja, ‘ilmoenja bertambah dan wangnja poen demikian. Djadi bagi dia doenia boléh achirat dapat! (p.19)

With the readers of *Hadji Dadjal*, we can even conclude that if “achirat dapat,” logically Oemar’s interpretations met the approval of or were at least not offensive to Allah. Speaking the truth and radically challenging those who are wrong even at the expense of social unity and “peace and order” must also be the correct way to a new Islamic society. This is indeed how the story concluded, with his religious foundation helping to change “Singaporean” society.

In this novel, Oemar is shown being rejected by many elements of society, while the narrator criticizes large sections of all populations mentioned. If the goal was to make readers behave like Oemar, either through example or through thinking as an individual, those individuals would have indeed had problems living comfortably in Indonesian society. On the other hand, the existence of people who either accept Oemar’s arguments or who are of similar orientations, as well as the idyllic ending with both personal happiness and public respect for Oemar and the successful functioning of a modern(ist) Islamic school in the local community, seem somewhat

³³ In at least some ways Abdoe’lzarim could be characterized as guilty of this with his passion for music (including jazz), his bourgeois approach to Marxism, characterized by his own explanation of the meaning of the letters M.s. in his name (Mau Senang [want to enjoy himself]), and perhaps in his eclipse during the “anti-corruption” backlash which followed the social revolution in East Sumatra in 1946.

contradictory. These were intended to give the reader a sense that if they followed this modern route they would not be alone; at least in the long run as more conservative individuals became increasingly uncomfortable. The happy ending and encouragement through vague references to other believers seems to be the sugar coating to make the (frequently repeated) medicine go down. However, this seems to suggest that this text at least had revolutionary pretensions which would affect traditional social relations, religious beliefs, educational practices, and relations with the government. In perhaps more than simple coincidence, these were all to change dramatically, and violently, over the next five years (1941-1946) in the areas most directly targeted by Abdoe'lxarim, East Sumatra and Aceh. This novel's ability to actually change the readers by itself is, of course, another matter.

Nonetheless, it is here that Abdoe'lxarim's attention to cultural and religious issues are inherently political, political in perhaps a more radical way than the efforts of many of the most dedicated Indonesian nationalists. I would suggest that this work can even be considered revolutionary in the sense that it was intended to take a member of the target social group and make him or her unable to live in that social environment again. This is perhaps similar to Hayden White's suggestion that "art and literature become 'revolutionary' or at least socially threatening, not when they set forth specific doctrines of revolt or depict sympathetically revolutionary subjects, but precisely when they project – as Flaubert did in *Madam Bovary* – a reading subject alienated from the social system of which the prospective reading subject is a member" (White 1990:87). Nonetheless, Abdoe'lxarim did see the creation of a new society where these modern, Islamic subjects could once again live as part of a community. This is even clearer in light of Abdoe'lxarim's appeal to the Japanese authorities in July 1942 on the creation of an Islamic high court for Sumatra.³⁴

Abdoe'lxarim's ability to shift his activities to a different field of activity while maintaining some degree of intellectual and moral integrity can be perceived in this work as well as the other works that he published. However, during the Dutch colonial period "politically sensitive" subjects would have provided a one-way ticket back to exile in the tropical disease-ridden Boven Digoel. As a result, Abdoe'lxarim wrote in a special way to disguise his true meaning from the sophisticated eyes of the Netherlands

³⁴ Special thanks are due to Yasuko Kobayashi for sharing this information.

East Indies authorities, perhaps even more than many Indonesians did during the Japanese occupation. Thus the setting was outside Indonesia, *hadji's* were ridiculed for their beliefs, Arabs criticized for their failure to protect Indonesians, already replaced Islamic leaders in Mecca and elsewhere called crooks and their hypocrisy exposed, while nowhere is the hand of the Dutch state or politics *per se* apparent. However, to accept that this publication was not also about Indonesia is naive.³⁵ Abdoe'lxarim clearly intends his discussions of Islam, Saudi Arabia and Singapore to be taken *in part* as metaphors for secular issues and the Netherlands Indies. Not only did Abdoe'lxarim make clear his Universalist pretensions, but many of the critiques apply to government civil servants in Indonesia as well, and some people criticized were from or even in Indonesia. However, most importantly, if implemented, the types of changes in thinking and behavior presented in this novel would have amounted to a revolt against the Dutch state which was kept in place through massive ignorance, self-interest and hypocrisy.

While neither sophisticated in its Islamic message nor in its presentation of Islamic signs (such as quotes from the Qu'ran), it is unlikely that readers of a pop novel would have appreciated such sophistication. Thus while it is likely that Abdoe'lxarim was not as committed to Islam as *ulama* like Hamka, the issue of religious sophistication provides little reason to doubt the sincerity of the author's commitment to a reformed Islam.

Abdoe'lxarim's arguments are not the same as those presented in radical Islamic discourse in Indonesia, but he does seem to have borrowed part of its radical flavor and strategies, while making simple critiques on contemporary practice which were similar to, but not the same as those of the reformist elite. In a number of cases, the critiques were drawn from inequitable socio-economic relations and then followed by a validation found in an interpretation of Islam. One simple illustration of this is Dadjal's refusal to accept the opinions of others (p. 4). The author actually asserts that most of the religious elite is sleazy, making it impossible to accept their interpretations,

³⁵ It may also be naive to assume that the colonial government felt this way, since in the 1920s they had been extremely concerned about the Russian consul spreading propaganda among Indonesian pilgrims and two organizations for Indonesians with similar goals. For more information, see Nagazumi (1980) and Laffan (2003). The Dutch consul in Jeddah during the 1920s, D. van der Meulen, became a local official in two different jurisdictions in Sumatra during the 1930s (Meulen 1981).

and thus mandating a return to Rasoel and Allah. This is quite different than a general critique of *taklid* (strict adherence to one of the major juridical traditions) and *bid'ah* (new innovations) in matters related to worship which are common elements of modernist Islam.

While this novel definitely has radical ramifications, there were a number of groups of Islamic activists in Sumatra who were similarly radical. The uncompromising Persis from the 1920s attacked others for being *kafir* (unbelievers), as well as the fiery left-leaning Islamic teachers of the Thalawib in around 1924 engaged in a similar discourse, while the Aceh discourse (of which Abdoe'lxarim was a close observer if not participant), was also strident. However, for readers who read exclusively novels, this work may have come as a shock, while for other readers it may have subtly affected their thinking about certain well-known social and religious "problems." *Hadji Dadjal* needs to be read as an effort to reach audiences which were either not politically motivated or were very passive in their orientation to religion and politics. It is neither an average political tract written for politically active groups nor simple amusement.

The message to fear God, not other people, to act out one's own beliefs including by speaking, and essentially to act "berani karena benar" [brave because right] bear an uncanny resemblance to the Sarekat Islam of the 1910s and Java. Abdoe'lxarim's environment, the heavily Islamic areas of Sumatra and the internment camp of Boven Digoel, effectively left him in a situation similar to Haji Misbach, who, like Rumpelstiltskin, missed the division of the Sarekat Islam and PKI in the early 1920s and ultimately choose the PKI as his vehicle for radical religious activity. Abdoe'lxarim in the early 1940s seems to have carried his Islamic and radical "Marxist" politics into the domain of the popular novel, and to the wider public. His novel almost certainly continued to circulate in local communities during first years of the Japanese occupation, while his voice came to be heard directly in the Medan area during the final two years of the occupation and first months of the Republic.

Abdoe'lxarim's activities during the Japanese occupation provide the key which connects both the pre-1926 and early revolutionary periods, calling us to seriously reconsider the meaning and importance of the small novelette of 1941, and to recognize Abdoe'lxarim's consistent political activity.

B. Social Novels: Tamar Djaja and the Publishing Worlds of Bukittinggi (1939-1941)

Examination of the case of Abdoe'lxarim makes it abundantly clear that some authors who were at first glance “not political” during the late colonial period and the Japanese occupation may have been engaged in more than churning out dime novels to make a quick profit. In this context, we may examine a rather different case to see if our perspectives on other authors and other fiction require reconsideration.

On around September 20, 1940, the Bukittinggi publisher, Penjiaran Ilmoe put out another issue of its twice monthly literary publication, *Roman Pergaoelan*. This issue presented a novelette by Romanita entitled *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver*. A story explicitly labeled fictive, the name in the title itself must have felt familiar, drawing readers to read more about the writers who presented them with entertaining, and frequently provocative or sensational stories several times each month. Undoubtedly, many readers were gratified by the story of this fictional character transforming himself from an unemployed Bukittinggi youth with a little Dutch language education to a journalist and founding editor of the first literary publication in Medan. However, the reader is gradually shown the bad side of the main character, A. Dahri, with periodically reappearing arrogance, violation of his father's advice and the final damning thoughts of his accepting wife. As the noose tightened around Dahri, many readers must have concluded that it was indeed a fictionalized portrait and critique of A. Damhoeri, also known as Aria Diningrat. However, along the way the reader would have learned a little of the strengths and problems of Medan and Minangkabau publishing at that time, and the importance of these little stories which were so entertaining. The author also hoped that they would even have learned more about ethics.

Today, the context of these publications, the identities of the authors and publishers, their goals, and even names are largely unknown. Most of the handful of writings which refer to the publisher Penjiaran Ilmoe (Pe'il), *Roman Pergaoelan*, or the authors of this era simply mention these names; *Roman Pergaoelan* from Bukittinggi thus regularly appears in lists of the literary periodicals published in Sumatra in the 1930s and 1940s. A very few works, including the studies of Rieger (1991), Rivai (1963),

Roolvink (1959), and Soenoto (1980) present useful (if not always reliable) information, but are motivated by different, national concerns and thus fail to identify the particularities of each publication and the local contexts. The few significant exceptions include recent works like Indonesian language publication by Sudarmoko (2008) which focuses on this series, a few of my publications.³⁶ Nonetheless, given Romanita's relatively explicit efforts to inform and instruct readers, this novelette potentially provides an unusually effective entry into the world of these novels, the authors, and their readers.

In an effort to provide some of the context necessary to understand these individuals and their texts, as well as the societies in which they functioned, this section will present some brief comments about the development of the vernacular press in the Bukittinggi area, *Roman Pergaoelan* and its relationships with the publishing worlds of Sumatra and the Indies as a whole, the publisher/editor and most prolific author of *Roman Pergaoelan*, and this intriguing novel itself. To explore this we shall begin in Bukittinggi, or Fort de Kock as it was named by the Dutch, the initial setting and place of publication of *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver*, and the seat of the 25th Army and the Japanese military government for Sumatra in 1943-1945.

1. The Development of the Press in Bukittinggi

Like many Minangkabau towns, 19th century Fort de Kock³⁷ was a Dutch administrative center which served as a collection point for the most important local crop, coffee. The train from Payakumbuh passed through Fort de Kock on its way to Padang Pandjang (a junction) and Padang, the main port and administrative center in West Sumatra. Fort de Kock was also the most important train station in Agam, and thus the main link between the Danau Maninjau area, other rural Agam communities,

³⁶ Special thanks are due to Sudarmoko for generously providing a copy of his informative and well-crafted book. The a few works focusing on Medan publications include the reproductions of stories in *Matu Mona* (2001) with its introductions by Harry Poeze and Soebagio I. N., Pramoedya (2001) with his brief notes, as well as harder to find works like Nobuto Yamamoto's articles on colonial surveillance, his dissertation on the same subject which remained inaccessible for 5 years following its completion, and my article on *Hadji Dadjal* (Horton 2012) as well as several presentation papers.

³⁷ As Bukittinggi carries a double meaning, exclusively the town called Fort de Kock during the colonial period and the surrounding rural areas, Fort de Kock will be used to designate the town proper, while Bukittinggi will be used in a more conventional ambiguous sense.

and Padang, although direct land routes from coastal towns like Pariaman to Maninjau required only one day of walking (Kato 1980). The administrative and social structure of core Minangkabau rural areas (*alam*) and the newly formed urban areas was rather different. Rural areas were theoretically administered in accordance with the consensus of the *penghulu*, the traditional elite who were descendants of the original settlers on their mother's side, although the Dutch imposed *tuangku laras*, an 19th century institution modeled after the Javanese regent, and interference in the *penghulu* system did change the situation substantially (Abdullah 1971). In urban areas, all natives were subject to a *penghulu dagang*, as they were seen as essentially living in non-traditional areas (thus in the *rantau*). Despite the presence of *adat* religious officials in Minangkabau villages, substantial religious decisions were made by independent religious teachers, insuring a somewhat dual system of *adat* and religious authority.

Bukittinggi was one of the earliest and most important educational centers in the Indies from the 19th century, with Fort de Kock hosting an important *kweekschool* (teacher training school) also known as the *sekolah radja* from the mid-1850s, a Dutch school, as well as various native schools. The early 20th century creation of the *volkschool*, three year native language government schools established by and funded at the initiative of the *nagari* (village) rather than imposed by government officials, helped to create an explosion of western education in the countryside (Abdullah 1972).³⁸ These schools required printed texts, many of which would be easiest printed locally, offering a new and growing business opportunity. However, even more significantly, the presence of schools resulted in a larger public literate in roman script Malay language. It is in the years following this development that the Bukittinggi vernacular press developed. The presence of teachers and the Dutch school in the area also meant a relatively large number of Dutch language readers as well.

The early years of the press in West Sumatra were dominated by Padang, the capital of West Sumatra.³⁹ When the first printer appeared in Padang is unclear, but

³⁸ For a wonderful description of cultural perseverance in the midst of school expansion and other changes during this period, see Jeff Hadler's recent book, *Muslims and Matriarchs* (2008).

³⁹ Adi Negoro (1949) has a somewhat different opinion, choosing Tapanoeli as his primary focus and mentioning the three areas in Sumatra where the public reportedly liked to read newspapers: East Sumatra (ie. the Medan area), Tapanoeli and Palembang. The absence of Minangkabau or West Sumatra from Adinegoro's list is an interesting problem.

1865 witnessed the first short-lived Malay language periodical, *Bintang Timor* (Adam 1995). The short life of Bukittinggi publications is a recurring theme of the 19th and 20th centuries. Even Padang with its multi-ethnic trading community, administrators, ever improving communication with the hinterlands and neighboring territories was none too secure for the vernacular press, with newspapers generally disappearing after a short period in print. The pioneers of newspaper and printing businesses were members of the Chinese and Eurasian populations, due largely to the need for large outlays of capital. This gradually changed as Sumatrans entered the field of journalism.

Dja Endar Moeda, a South Tapanoeli Batak, was an editor for *Pertja Barat* (in around 1894-5) and in 1900 was on the editorial board of *Insulinde* and *Tapian na Oeli*, all issued in Padang. First acquiring some shares of Insulinde Press, in 1905 he was able to purchase the press and establish the first native publishing house in Sumatra, focusing his efforts on the newspaper *Pertja Barat*. By 1906 he began to publish another periodical in Aceh, and then in around 1910 established the *Sjarikat Tapanoeli* in Medan, a publishing venture which he soon left, but which lasted far beyond his other publishing ventures.⁴⁰ Another important early Minangkabau figure was Dt. St. Maharaja.⁴¹ His active involvement in the press and efforts to reform society by finding common cause with religious reformers against the Padang aristocrats helped to stimulate further changes. Dt. St. Maharadja's activities included helping to create handicraft schools as well as special women's schools. The subsequent collection of capital was sufficient not just to found publications like *Oetoesan Melajoe*, *Al-Munir*, or the women's magazine *Soenting Melajoe* (1912-) led by his daughter Zubaidah Ratna Djuita and the pioneer educator Rohana, but also to establish a Minangkabau owned printing house in 1912 which he hoped would free native publishers from dependence on Chinese owned printers. The publications emanating from Padang as well as the ideas circulated via those periodicals were of particular significance in the first decades

⁴⁰ Adam (1995). Sjarikat Tapanoeli's activities continued at least until the Japanese occupation in 1942 when substantially independent publishers were not allowed. Some of this publisher's more notable publications in the late 1930s were the newspaper *Pewartu Deli* and the magazine *Abad 20*. For additional information, see "Memperkenalkan N.V. Handel Mij & Electriche Drukkerij 'Sjarikat Tapanoeli,'" *Abad 20*, th.III, nos.15-18 (13 Mei 1939-[3 June 1939]. Dja Endar Moeda's various efforts to establish a newspaper in Aceh all failed, as did the attempts of several others around the same time, leaving Aceh largely dependent on Medan for interactions with the world via print media.

⁴¹ A *perantau* resident of Padang for much of his life, Datuk Sutan Maharadja was a leader of the modernist reformist opposition to the Padang aristocracy and a journalist from around 1906. For interesting descriptions of his life, see Abdullah (1972) and Adam (1995).

of the 20th century for Minangkabau areas and probably to a more limited extent in parts of other Sumatran communities.⁴²

Following closely on Dt. St. Maharadja's activities in Padang, in 1913 Sjech Muhammad Djamil Djambek⁴³ established the Tsamaratoel Ichwan [product of brothers], a socially oriented organization which owned a non-profit print shop for the publication of Islamic books and brochures.⁴⁴ The printing press was undoubtedly underutilized, and rather quickly the acceptance of outside printing orders was considered. The first vernacular language periodical published in Fort de Kock, *Saudara Hindia*, appeared in 1913 as well, but it is unclear whether it was issued from the Ts. Ichwan press (Adam 1995:190). Within a few years, Ts. Ichwan became a commercial venture, after which Djambek was no longer associated with it. It was then printing an ever wider range of materials for itself as well as for other publishers, including not only religious books, but newspapers, novels, etc.

The fact that an Islamic teacher in Bukittinggi and a social reformer allied with Islamic reformers in Padang played an important role in the initial establishment of the native press in Sumatra was no coincidence. In fact, political and Islamic movements were important in the development of the press in West Sumatra, if only because they represented moments when larger amount of capital could be collected relatively easily (especially when the cause was linked to education), and where financial risk was not considered as much as the ability to spread ideas through the print media. As the *volkscholen* were developing in the 1910s, efforts to modernize Islamic education had begun in some of the local schools in the area. The use of a graded system, standardizing of the curriculum, teaching of Arabic, and teaching of secular subjects were some of the modifications attempted at various moments.

⁴² The impact of the press on Bukittinggi can be seen indirectly through the more detailed description of the development of the Sumatran press. Adam's work (1995) not only serves that purpose but also includes tantalizing information on the ownership of some newspapers and printers.

⁴³ Djambek was one of the four major orthodox reformist students of the Minangkabau imam of Mekah, Sjech Achmad Chatib, who helped to develop the modernist Islam of early 20th century Indonesia. Djambek was resident in Bukittinggi until his death in 1947. For more information on Djambek, see Noer (1973), especially pp. 35-37, and Tamar Djaja (1966).

⁴⁴ In 1937 (and probably much earlier), Ts. Ichwan had a book store as well as the publishing and printing businesses.

The 1910s also witnessed the development and expansion of modern-style Islamic education, with graded classes, secular subjects (including eventually English and Dutch) and new strategies of teaching Arabic language rather than simply the reading and interpretation of religious texts. The Padang Pandjang/Bukittinggi area was one of the most important areas. A critical starting point was the return and establishment of various teachers educated in the Middle East, however, it was the students of these teachers who radically changed the situation.

The Islamic schools of Padang Pandjang, especially the Soematera Thawalib which had been born out of a student cooperative in the late 1910s, provided further impetus for Islamic oriented publication in the area. As Hadler has observed looking back over a lossely defined part of the early 20th century, “every ideological and social movement of the pergerakan had its organ” (Hadler 2008: 144), but far from a complete collapse, there was a major transformation of publishing that took place with the exodus of important journalists and other public figures to Medan and Boven Digul. Publishing in the Bukittinggi area in the 1930s was dominated by the graduates of the Thawalib schools, particularly those who matured after the elimination of the more radical “Islamic communists” like Nathar Zainuddin in around 1926. Thus the Permi and Muhammadiyah were the central political forces among this group, which is reflected in the publications of the period in various ways. The history of the development of the Minangkabau press, with its relationships to Islamic modernism, education, and journalism left lasting marks on local publishing, including on literary publication.

2. Tamar Djaja

The founder and editor-in-chief (*pengemoedi*) of *Roman Pergaoelan* was a young native of Bukittinggi named Tamar Djaja.⁴⁵ Born in March 1913 in Bukittinggi, Tamar Djaja had obtained an education in the Islamic Dinyah School in Padang, the Thawalib schools in Maninjau, Parabek, and Padangpanjang, and the Islamic College in Padang. The young Tamar Djaja had engaged in a variety of activities, including the sale of batik cloth in the Bukittinggi area in around 1930, working as an agent for a business

⁴⁵ Tamar Djaja was eventually the father of 8 children, so we can assume that at this time he was probably already a father.

in Amuntai, South Borneo in 1936, but from 1934 was also the editor-in-chief of the periodical *Pahlawan Moeda*,⁴⁶ a locally published journal most likely aimed at the students, teachers and graduates of various Islamic schools like those from which Tamar Djaja himself graduated. His own education seems to have been rather important in his subsequent career, as he studied in the Sumatra Thawalib of Padang Panjang during the post-communist phase, and by the 1930s his former classmates would have been the those filling Muhammadiyah and Permi (Persatoean Moeslimin Indonesia), of which Tamar Djaja was a board member.

According to Roeder, Tamar Djaja's full name was H. Tamburrasjid Tamar Djaja, Gelar St. Rais Alamsjah. The separate use of Tamar Djaja and St. Rais Alamsjah was probably not a secret to much of the public in the 1930s, although it has mystified some academics (see e.g. Klooster 1985: 41, who assumes that Tamar Djaja was thus a pseudonym). The Minangkabau title St. Rais Alamsjah may have been used for more formal, business purposes and appeared frequently in mentions of the publishing house. Indeed, local Bukittinggi residents may have been required to use the title when dealing with him directly.

The publishing house Penjiaran Ilmoe and its sister publishing house Bintang Kedjora seem to have been expansions of Tamar Djaja's business efforts and his heretofore marginal involvement in publishing; that is to say that the founding of the journal was at least in part a business decision, one which Tamar Djaja took great care to protect through his efforts at improving the content (including of his own writings), ensuring reliability of publication, and distribution.⁴⁷ Of course, he probably felt, in keeping with the times, that there were important issues at stake in the establishment of a Bukittinggi-based literary series, not the least of which was to prevent the ethnic Chinese from dominating the writing and publishing of popular stories, and to "de-

⁴⁶ The dates of his editorship are unclear since Roeder claims that Tamar Djaja had been editor until 1945, something which is scarcely plausible given the Japanese policy of restricting the number of publications and amalgamating existing publications under new names. Similar, a reference in Romanita (1940) seems to suggest that this relationship to a journal named *Pahlawan Moeda* in Padang (not Bukittinggi as Roeder claims) was already in the past.

⁴⁷ Sudarmoko (2008) has found that the second publisher was established as an insurance policy against closure of the publishing house by colonial authorities in the event of a "press offence" (*delict*).

sinify” the Malay language used in the press. These were points which Tamar Djaja explained in a 1955 article, but which found expression much earlier as well.

Before the establishment of *Penjiaran Ilmoe* and *Roman Pergaolan*, Tamar Djaja had primarily written in newspapers or magazines, but from 1940 he began a project which was to have significance not just for his business but for the development of post-colonial Indonesian society: the writing of biographies and hagiographies of the important figures in Indonesia and eventually the “heroes” of Indonesian history. It was in the middle of this project that *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver* was penned and published.

Figure 5: Cover of *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver* (1940)



3. *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver*

The story opened in a house in Fort de Kock where, late at night, a youth (A. Dahri) discovered that a hometown neighbor who had not received a Western MULO education—rather being educated in the Islamic Thawalib Padang Pandjang—was active as a writer for various periodicals as well as being active in other public forums. Surprised and even shocked by the writing ability of this “prayer school boy,” Dahri decides to devote himself to becoming a writer.⁴⁸ He then spent the pocket money given to him by his father on paper and stamps, learning to write poetry (*sja’ir* dan *mada sloka*) in beautiful language and sending them to magazines in Padang instead of going out with friends on weekends. Finally, his father asked him why he is always in his room, and being reassured that his son is not sick

⁴⁸ It is possible, but far from established, that Tamar Djaja was this “friend,” as not only were the both from the Fort de Kock area, but were also part of the minuscule educated elite who engaged in writing. The information about the friend does roughly match Tamar Djaja’s background in terms of his education and activities in the early and mid-1930s. It is also possible that it was another of Tamar Djaja’s friends.

but just trying to be a writer, gave him some advice about being a journalist and writer, which he had also done when he was younger. The key was, he said, to always be “zakelyk” [professional, down to business] and not to write in an insincere form [roepa jang tiada djoedjoer], particularly since “a smart writer is not a person who is good at insulting others, criticizing wildly [tiada keroean], and writing baseless things [jang serampangan]” (p. 17).

Following this discussion, Dahri was more inspired to write, initially writing articles about local events for daily newspapers in Padang. As a result of his success, he became more and more impressed with himself, and eventually arrogant in dealing with others. His way of dress changed, he threatened to write bad things about people if they crossed him, and with the receipt of a press card, he used it at every opportunity to get free entry into soccer games and movies. Finally one day the PID summoned him in connection with an article which he had written and which violated press laws [kena delict]. He declared that he was not responsible, and that the editor of the newspaper was responsible, whereupon the case went to trial in the landaraad in Padang with both the editor and Dahri as defendants. Dahri vowed that if he was to go to jail, he would make sure the editor was jailed as well, since the editor should have taken responsibility, according to his way of thinking. They were both given 6 month sentences, but given a few days to decide if they would appeal, pay a fine, or go to jail. The editor decided to go to jail, but Dahri, not having the money to pay the fine, went to ask the director of the newspaper *Perasaan Oemoem* (Padang) how he could appeal. The director was rather angry with him, and they had an argument in which it was clearly stated that Dahri needed to go to jail to learn about journalism.

Before going to jail, Dahri wrote a letter to his girlfriend, a young woman active in the political movement, telling her that he was going to jail for 6 months. Upon his release, he expected a hero's welcome, but while other friends appeared to welcome him back, she was not present, only later sending him a letter. The letter stated that when she had learned the details of the case, she realized he had betrayed the editor by not taking responsibility for his own writing. While the editor possibly could have taken responsibility for the article, her relationship was with Dahri, and she saw a big gap between the two of them, and therefore she would go her own way.

Devastated, Dahri decided to go to Medan, the center of writing and publication at that time. After Dahri explained his motivations to his parents, his father gave him a long lecture about how he should neither become stuck up nor to grovel before others. This advice was different than that traditionally given by fathers when their sons were leaving to go on a *rantau*, but as each person has different skills and abilities, all should be respected, but not to excess. Advice received, Dahri departs for Medan.

In Medan, Dahri began to write for various newspapers. Unlike the situation in Padang and other places, writers were given a small honorarium, making it possible to improve the writing quality. Dahri, became very skilled at this work. One day toean Djaminal,⁴⁹ the head of the magazine *Pandji Agama* and Dahri had a discussion about a magazine which was to be an entertainment only magazine with some popular knowledge.⁵⁰ Dahri suggested instead the creation of pocket-size detective and romance novels, as no one from “their own people” had published such a magazine yet. Most of the youth were rather reading *Tjerita Roman* and *Penghidoepan* which were published by the Chinese. He himself admitted to being a subscriber. The language, the two agreed, would thus depart from the “Chinese Malay style” and would help to bring to life older art. Djaminal assented, but as Djaminal was not accustomed to writing stories, Dahri declared that he would be able to fill the publication for the time being and that others would quickly provide stories if there were fair compensation. The periodical which was subsequently born was called *Roman Penghidoepan*.⁵¹ With the publication of the journal, a range of jobs and business opportunities for native Indonesians appeared, including owning bookshops and libraries or even having a publishing house. As the journal gained popularity, the language used in other publications changed from a mix resembling Chinese Malay to a much more pure language. Additionally, those who had previously not read and gradually lost their literacy began to read again. The most important thing, it was noted (p.54) was that the stories not become trash or immoral (*tjaboel*) so that they could function as educational materials.

⁴⁹ Presumably A.M. Pamoentjak, an Islamic figure who was active in providing explanation of Islamic issues in the Medan press during the 1930s. However, the name is also close to Djamaludin Adinegoro (see below).

⁵⁰ Doenia Pengalaman eventually did found an illustrated magazine, *Poernama*, in January 1940.

⁵¹ The publication is clearly *Doenia Pengalaman*, published October 1938-1941.

Becoming increasingly well known, Dahri specialized in romantic stories, his writing activity presumably affecting his character. He was not bothered by critiques that some of the stories were perhaps unnecessarily titillating, abandoning friends who were critical and seeking out new sycophant friends instead. Additionally, the responsibility to produce stories when no other story was available caused Dahri to borrow from older publications. This he confesses to his new wife, a divorcee who had lived not far from his house and cleverly captured his attentions. Despite morally ambivalent picture painted of Dahri's wife, when Dahri admitted harshly criticizing another author for plagiarism (writing under a pseudonym), she offers constructive criticism and clearly expresses her belief that he is being hypocritical. In fact, Dahri was angry at this writer (identified as Mata-Merah) for having written in a review that Dahri's novel "Menanti Kekasih Diperantauan" was both illogical and profane (*tjaboel*). In the end, despite her damning words, Dahri's wife is willing to accept her husband, but Dahri is consumed with anger for being criticized, showing ever more clearly the pettiness and weakness of his character.

4. The *Real* Dahri

While it is certainly possible that readers could have agreed to general moral messages of the novel to take responsibility, not to be hypocritical, and to be willing to accept criticism without seeing the novel as "fact," the message is much stronger when the story is "true." Indeed, the author takes great pains to indicate to readers that this is a true story, and that he personally knows about "Dahri." Furthermore, if we can rely on his narrative as being a consciously semi-non-fictional account, then we can utilize the novel to contribute to our woefully incomplete knowledge of this marginal time and place.

The association of A. Dahri to Adam Damhoeri begins with the "coincidence" of names. Adam Damhoeri's name can be abbreviated two ways to produce this character's name, A. Da'h'ri, or Ada'h'ri. As Adam Damhoeri was also utilizing a similar sounding pseudonym, Aria Diningrat, readers familiar with the novels of this period could not fail to associate Adam Damhoeri with this story. However, what we know about Damhoeri also matches the story.

Adam or Ahmad Damhoeri was born in Batu Payung. Kabupaten Limapuluhkota, Payakumbuh, Sumatra Barat on August 31, 1915. In the 1930s, he was sentenced to jail for 4 months in connection with “Timur Tanah Airkoë” which according to one source was supposed to be published in *Persamaan* in Padang under a pseudonym,⁵² but was published under his real name. This clearly parallels the case in this novel. Like Dahri, Damhoeri was apparently able to live on proceeds of his writings from the time he moved to Medan in the late 1930s. These writings were primarily prose fiction, published both in book form and in newspapers and magazines. In 1935, his story *Mentjari Djodoh* had been published by Balai Pustaka, going through three printings by 1939, but he had also published prose stories and poetry in *Pandji Poestaka* as early as 1932. This involvement with “a large publisher” was mentioned in the novel as well. The novel “Menanti kekasih diperantauan” (Awaiting the sweetheart in a foreign land) seems to correspond to “Menanti Soerat dari Rantau” (Awaiting a letter from a foreign land), which seems to have been published around 1939. Critically, Damhoeri was also the founding co-editor of the literary series Doenia Pengalaman under the name Aria Diningrat.⁵³

While this should suffice to establish that the A. Dahri was modeled upon Adam Damhoeri and that this book was intended as a critique of Damhoeri, Romanita apparently utilized other “real” characters and publications as models for this novel. For example, Tamar Djaja had been the editor of *Pahlawan Moeda* and thus could have been “Mata-Merah” [Red Eye], although the name Mata-Merah sounds very similar to that of the Medan author “Matu Mona,” known for writing the “Patjar Merah” (Scarlet Pimpernel) stories. Djaminal’s name suggests Djamaluddin, a journalist who did sometime write novels, and served as editor of *Pewartu Deli* (1931-) as well as several other magazines like *Abad XX*, *Penjedar*, and the literary journal *Tjendrawasih* (Medan), but Dahri’s activities seem closer to those of A. M. Pamoentjak. The name *Roman Penghidoepan* was a combination of the names of the Sino-Indonesian literary journals *Peng(h)idoepan* and *Tjerita Roman*, and similar to that of the Bukittinggi

⁵² Note the similar sounds of the *Perasaan Oemoem* of the novel and *Persamaan* of Padang.

⁵³ If this is still insufficient to establish the intent of Romanita to accurately describe Adam Damhoeri and his faults, A. Dahri’s inability to carefully select a wife (and inability to appreciate her sincerity) matches Adam Damhoeri well, as seems to have had marital problems, eventually marrying nine times! While the future was still unknown, it is clear now that Romanita was extremely perceptive—and probably a good judge of character.

literary series, but seem to have been meant to describe *Doenia Pengalaman* (see below).

These and a myriad of other similarities with the real world suggest that descriptions in this story need to be taken seriously, although names and events were modified, presumably to protect the author against *persdelict* charges. As readers, we can thus tentatively use the novel to understand the context of publication in Sumatra, with a Bukittinggi twist.

5. *Roman Pergaoelan* and the Publishing Worlds of Sumatra and the Indies

The literary series in which *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver* was published was *Roman Pergaoelan*, one of a number of pocket-format story periodicals which appeared following the innovations of Sino-Javanese publishers in the mid-1920s.⁵⁴ Chinese publications, especially the serial publications like *Tjerita Roman* and *Penghidoepan*, provided models of profitable ventures. With substantial subscriber lists, the risks involved in printing were reduced and distribution assured, as long as they could be carried by post. Their stories were read by both Chinese and non-Chinese throughout the Indies, although not always without resentment or jealousy of the Chinese publishers. This was clearly described in *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver*, but also described in very similar terms 15 years later by Tamar Djaja (1955b).⁵⁵ However, the publication of the *Roman Pergaoelan* literary series in mid-1939 had a number of other precedents as well. Islamic reformist fiction had been published in the Bukittinggi area for some time, although inconsistently and as individual titles. One such example is Hamka's first Minangkabau language novel that was published in 1928 through an arrangement with the director of the Ts. Ichwan, Dt. Manggulak Basa. With two print-runs of 1,500 copies each in a three month period, printing costs of /0.05 per book, and a selling price

⁵⁴ Both of the first known publications of this sort were edited by Oey Tjaij Hin: *Boekoe Boelanan* issued by H. Prange Co. (Batavia, 1895-6) and *Boekoe Roepa-Roepa Tjrita Salinan dari Bahasa Tjina dan Sebagianja di Keloearkan Minggoean* (Batavia, 1900-1). These were both short-lived and quickly forgotten. The publications of the 1920s can thus be seen as the historically significant innovators. See Salmon (1981).

⁵⁵ This was certainly true for at least the 1930s. Ki Soeharto, the head of the Taman Siswa Museum, upon seeing the covers of two issues of *Tjerita Roman* which he had read in the 1930s while teaching in a Taman Siswa school in East Java, could still accurately describe their plots (interview 1992). Balai Poestaka was also exceptionally concerned with the competition of Chinese publishers, especially *Tjerita Roman* and *Penghidoepan*. This concern developed both out of the disappointing results of the Balai Poestaka lending libraries and sales during these years and the results of a couple-month tour of Java in the mid-1930s.

of /0.35, there were indeed profits to be made (Hamka 1951: 10). Balai Poestaka's continuous publication of Malay language fiction by Minangkabau authors served as another precedent. As mentioned earlier, other works, especially on Islam and political subjects, were published in Bukittinggi in the 1920s and 1930s, but it was the appearance of Medan literary periodicals in 1938 and 1939 which triggered the founding of *Roman Pergaoelan*.

The appearance of *Doenia Pengalaman* was an inspiration for writers and publishers throughout Sumatra and to a more limited extent elsewhere in the Indies. The following year (1939), three other non-Chinese literary periodicals were founded in Medan alone, with additional periodicals appearing both in Padang and Fort de Kock. 1940 saw at least ten titles in publication and 1941 a more geographically diverse nine titles. Nevertheless, Medan remained the major publication center for literary periodicals, novels, and other periodicals until the beginning of the war in early 1942, dominating not just North and East Sumatra, but the whole of Sumatra and influencing other areas in the Indies. *Roman Pergaoelan* was thus published in a marginal town for the press and literary activity and show characteristically tenuous links with the center in Medan and substantial distance from both Medan and Batavia.

Like most of the other five similar publications issued in Medan and Padang during 1939, *Roman Pergaoelan* purported to present more than just entertaining fiction twice a month, carrying the explanatory subtitle "History-Politik-Detective-Romans," although there was a voyeuristic tendency to examine social problems like those of prostitution. In 1940, one issue was entirely devoted to a non-fictional subject: a travelogue of Tamar Djaja's 1938 trip to Batavia and Bandung. This travelogue also addressed through description and commentary such social problems as widespread poverty, prostitution, attitudes to education and Islam, the nature of the *pergerakan*, and in a very explicit concluding discussion, the moral issue of pre-marital love, which the author felt was inappropriate (Tamar Djaja 1941b). Nevertheless, the vast majority of contributions published were popular-style fictional stories written in fairly standard Malay/Indonesian of the period, with only limited local Minangkabau influences.

The role of Tamar Djaja as editor-in-chief of *Roman Pergaoelan* was substantial not only in that he selected and edited works submitted by others, but also because, for

whatever reason, he wrote a substantial minority of the novels appearing in the series (at least 11 lead novels, one travelogue and one short story under his own name in 56 issues). *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver* sheds light on this point as well, as the director demands that Dahri (the editor) prepare a story on short notice when other stories are not available. Tamar Djaja was the responsible editor-in-chief, while other editors were often outside of Sumatra or even in jail, and he was thus *Roman Pergaoelan's* author of last resort, although too many contributions would make *Roman Pergaoelan* look like a one-man show. For this and a variety of other reasons, we may even suspect that he was the author of four or five novels and one short story under the pseudonym Romanita, including *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver*.⁵⁶

While Bukittinggi was not a national center of commerce and communication like Medan, it did have a strong relationship with other parts of the Indies. The role of Bukittinggi as a center for Islamic organization in the 1920s-30s, as well as a critical area for Islamic oriented education meant that there were a large number of potential readers and writers in the area. While these readers were probably insufficient to support *Roman Pergaoelan* and the printing of approximately 6,000 copies each month by themselves, many other individuals were part of an Indies-wide network, whether Minangkabau *perantau* or others who had come to the schools of Bukittinggi.

The existence of networks of traders, teachers, and *perantau* who were connected to *Roman Pergaoelan* is clear, as several wrote from Borneo, while paid Lebaran greetings were received from throughout Sumatra (with a significant number from Aceh). Martha (Maisir Thaib) was listed as an editor although he was in Borneo in 1940, and it was not unusual for contributions to be sent from outside Sumatra. Furthermore, the stories of Tamar Djaja and Romanita always seemed to carry an element of personal connections; for example advertisements for a business in Tasikmalaya in *Roman Pergaoelan* th.III, no.40 appeared with a mention of Tasikmalaya in that issue's story. Places visited by the author tended to appear regularly.

⁵⁶ These include the similarities of Tamar Djaja's writing in 1955 with parts of Romanita's text, the likelihood that Tamar Djaja was acquainted with Adam Damhoeri long before he became a famous author, Tamar Djaja's slightly senior status, and the claim of Roeder that Tamar Djaja had penned 16 novels between 1930-1947, a number which is easiest to account for by including Romanita's works. Furthermore, the pseudonym Romanita only appears in works published in *Roman Pergaoelan*.

Not surprisingly, the setting of this novel raises another issue—the “debate” over the publication of fiction which took place in the months preceding and following the December 1939 meeting in Medan. The debate focused on whether the publication of novels could serve a positive role in Islamic society, or whether they were merely bad influences, notably being immoral (*tjaboed*) with titillating love scenes, or grotesque and gruesome horror stories with the dead coming to life. These were generally seen to be un-Islamic, although written and published by Muslims, even under the auspices of Islamic publishers like Poestaka Islam in Medan. Some were translations, however, and some were plagiarized. Many of the “contributions” to the debate which appeared in the press were vindictive attacks, and only a few serious articles appeared discussing how novels could be Islamic, socially constructive, and still entertaining.⁵⁷ In *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver*, the critical role that Minangkabau authors played in Medan publications is highlighted for us, as is the importance of conflict between (primarily Minangkabau) authors and publishers in the collapse of publications. Readers are likely to blame Adam Damhoeri for the sensational collapse of *Doenia Pengalaman* amid accusations of immorality and the sudden departure of both Adi Diningrat and the recently arrived Minangkabau Joesoef Sou’yb.⁵⁸

During Dahri’s period in Medan, the publications of Bukittinggi and Padang seem strangely distant, hardly even mentioned in this narrative. While the networks of authors were largely separate in real life, they shared a formal commitment to society and Islam, as well as a significant portion of their readership, as advertisements for books throughout these years clearly indicate. This seems to suggest rather that the author meant to distance Bukittinggi publications and *Roman Pergaolan* in particular from the problems of A. Dahri and Medan.

⁵⁷ For a discussion of one novel and other contributions by Abdoe’lkarim Ms., see my “Hidden Politics in Colonial Indonesia: The Islamic Novelette Hadji Dadjal (1941).”

⁵⁸ Mounting criticism of *Doenia Pengalaman*’s publisher Poestaka Islam and the periodical itself for unwholesome works incompatible with Islamic mores, as well as the seizure of one issue at the German-owned printer after the invasion of the Netherlands, resulted in a crisis for *Doenia Pengalaman*. By no later than September 1940, probably in July or August, *Doenia Pengalaman* had moved to Solo, retaining only one member of its “board of editors” as a member of the “board of writers.” Instead it picked up residents of Solo: Asmara Asri, Merayu Sukma and Muhd. Dimiyati.

The novel *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver*, in providing a fictionalized narrative of the literary chaos of 1939-40 and in detailing the concerns and problems of the writers and publishers of popular fiction, has left us with a valuable portrait which can help us to better understand the character of individuals involved in the events of the time. The location of the publisher and presumably the author in a marginal position with respect to the publishing hub of Medan gives us an interesting “decentralized” view. The distance from Medan is particularly apparent here, and while perhaps “politically suspect” for its sensational nationalist titles, the apparent lack of an immorality problem and greater moral integrity must have reflected well on *Roman Pergaoelan*.

While the Islamic character of this novel was very low key—the case of some other *Roman Pergaoelan* novels as well—it is not non-existent. Rather there is a particular brand of Islamic reformism with social activism, but only limited political involvement, in the pages of the stories published by Pe'il and *Roman Pergaoelan*. In fact, although the editor/writer Tamar Djaja's activities during the Japanese occupation are unclear in part because private publishing and fiction writing in Sumatra was largely eliminated, his activities during the revolution and first six years of full independence show a long-term commitment to Islam and nationalist politics.

In 1945, Tamar Djaja was concurrently a member of the board of “Indonesian Youth Generation” and the “Information Chairman” of the KNI. In around 1947, he was chief editor of *Genderang Sjahid* weekly, “Information Chairman” for the West Sumatra branch of Masjumi, the chief editor of the weekly *Berdjuang*, and the Head of the government Information Office. In 1950, he seems to have moved to Jakarta, becoming the Central Information Head of Masjumi, the chief editor of *Suara Masjumi* and *Kursus Politik* (magazines), all according to Roeder (1971). During the postwar period, Tamar Djaja seems to have been active in various institutions related to Islam and the press primarily on Java, such as working as a chief of the Publications Section of the Department of Religion in 1953-1956, being a member of the editorial boards of *Aliran Islam* (Bandung) in 1956, *Al Islam* (Medan) in 1953, *Anti-Komunis* (Jakarta) in 1956, *Nasehat Perkawinan* (Jakarta) in 1974-1978, and being the editor-in-chief of *Daulah Islamiyah* (Jakarta) in 1956. He was also a columnist for several newspapers (Roeder, 1980).

Tamar Djaja's contribution to Indonesians' understanding of their past is unparalleled as he can be seen as the founding father of Indonesian national "hero worship." However, if we were to only look at such historical publications, we would not recognize his efforts in spreading popular knowledge about Islam, and his efforts in the publishing world. In his roles as publisher, writer and activist, Tamar Djaja contributed to local and national affairs in subsequent years, and these publications reached many youth in the final years of colonial rule (and possibly for many years thereafter). If known, Tamar Djaja's activities after the Japanese restricted private publishing could provide important information, however, regardless of his activities during the war, the long-term picture of Tamar Djaja's activities shows a partially hidden "political" meaning in his prewar fiction and more explicit politicization by 1945.

C. Romanschrijvers and Wartawan Ksatria: Politics and Fiction Writers for the Sumatran Press of the 1930s-1940s

If examination of the activities during the 1920s-1940s in the previous sections demonstrated that two authors and their works should be considered political, and that the Japanese occupation corresponded with the politicization of their activities, is it possible to extend this analysis to other writers? How much variation can be expected? As always, lack of information about publications and authors, especially during the Japanese occupation, make this difficult to determine. This section will present contextual information about publication of fiction during this decade and briefly survey the activities of some other Sumatran writers during the long decade beginning in around 1938.

By 1939, critical voices were being raised about the frivolousness and violations of Islamic mores which often appeared in the novels, and asking whether it was appropriate to write and publish novels; significantly, was it even possible for novels to serve any positive purpose at all? The primary medium for these questions were sometimes rather nasty columns in various Indonesian newspapers.⁵⁹ With the meeting of interested publishers and writers in December 1939 in Medan, a conclusion was very nearly reached that writing and publish novels could and should be a positive influence on society. Nonetheless, just as frivolous and tasteless publications continued, the criticisms and rancor continued for some time, contributing to the difficulties of *Doenia Pengalaman* and other literary periodicals, and providing the background for the next decade.

⁵⁹ See the discussion of some of these articles in Section A above.

Table 1. Privately Published Non-Chinese Literary Periodicals by Year (1938-1941)⁶⁰

| Privately Published Non-Chinese Literary Periodicals by Year (1938-1941) | | |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| <u>1938</u> | | |
| Doenia Pengalaman, Madjallah Roman-Detective Popoeler | Medan | 1/month |
| <u>1939</u> | | |
| Doenia Pengalaman, Madjallah Roman-Detective Popoeler | Medan | 2-3/month |
| Goebahan Maja | Medan | |
| Loekisan Poedjangga | Medan | 2/month |
| Moestika Alhambra | Medan | 2/month (?) |
| Roman Indonesia | Padang | 1/month |
| Roman Pergaoelan (History-Politiek-Detective-Romans) | Fort de Kock | 2/month |
| <u>1940</u> | | |
| Doenia Pengalaman, Madjallah Roman-Detective Popoeler | Medan | 3/month |
| | Solo | 3/month (irr.) |
| Doenia Pergerakan | Solo | |
| Loekisan Poedjangga | Medan | 2/month |
| Moestika Alhambra | Medan | 2/month (?) |
| Poedjangga | Medan | |
| Roman Indonesia | Padang | 1-2/month |
| Roman Indonesia | Malang | |
| Roman Pergaoelan (History-Politiek-Detective-Romans) | Fort de Kock | 2/month |
| Roman Purnama (Malang) | Malang | |
| Tjendrawasih | Medan | |
| <u>1941</u> | | |
| Doenia Pengalaman, Madjallah Roman-Detective Popoeler | Solo | 3/month (irr.) |
| Doenia Pergerakan | Solo | |
| Loekisan Poedjangga | Medan | 2/month |
| Mizaan Doenia | Gorontalo | 1/month |
| Poernama (Solo) | Solo | |
| Roman Indonesia | Padang | 1-2/month (?) |
| Roman Pergaoelan (History-Politiek-Detective-Romans) | Fort de Kock | 2/month |
| Roman Purnama (Malang) | Malang | |
| Tjendrawasih | Medan | |

⁶⁰ These exclude publications of the Jogjakarta based publisher Kabe, which began to actively publish movie-novels, detective stories, and other popular publications largely by non-Chinese authors and for mostly non-Chinese audiences around 1940. These are not technically literary periodicals, though similar in several ways.

With the shortage of paper and breakdown of transportation preceding the Japanese invasion, the history of these periodicals almost ends in early 1942, but faint echoes of this literary boom continue following the Japanese occupation until the second departure of the Dutch in 1949-50 again opened up a range of new possibilities. Perhaps because these privately published literary periodicals were neither one of the government publisher Balai Pustaka's projects, nor connected to the small-circulation *Poedjangga Baroe* with its literary aspirations, or perhaps because of its explicitly base orientations of Islam, politics and profit, or even due to being hidden in the shadow of the looming Japanese occupation, these publications were virtually unknown until around 2000.

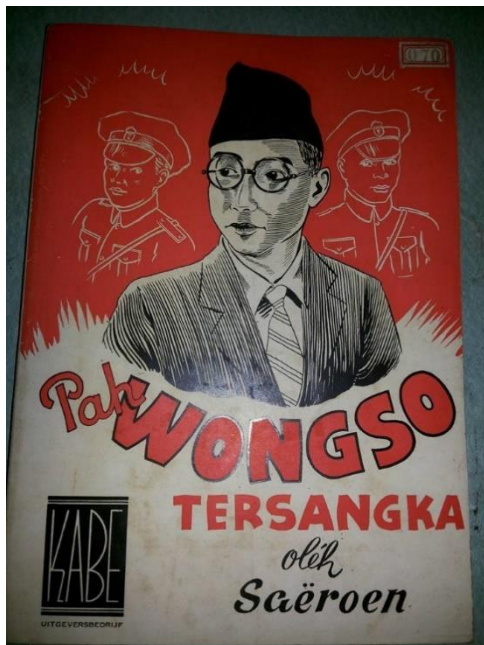


Figure 6. Cover of Saëroen's *Pak Wongso Tersangka*

Cover of a story by Saëroen⁶¹ based on a real case (personal collection). While not discussed in this section, the name Saëroen, a journalist convicted and jailed for working with Japanese to establish a new newspaper, would certainly have attracted readers looking for political sensation.

The dark silence of the Japanese occupation and then almost entirely new context of the revolutionary era are two of the most dominant features of this decade. During the last 15 years, our knowledge of the Japanese occupation and of popular publications in Indonesia has grown exponentially, allowing us to go beyond mere stereotypes handed down over generations, and it is thus possible that the Japanese occupation and the revolutionary period could be used as keys to better understand the colonial era, and the people who lived there, as well as the critical context for postwar developments, including the development of social-realism in Indonesia.

⁶¹ On Saëroen and his film career, see Woodrich (2015).

If the ideal of popular literary writing was to serve a useful social purpose while entertaining the reader, as the *pergerakan* or nationalist movement with its modern forms of activity and the titillating danger of colonial authorities intervening was an ideal element. In some ways very consistent with Indonesian society in the 1910s and 1920s when the Sarekat Islam, the PKI and a handful of other political organizations along with the press set a significant part of Indonesian society in motion. A significant minority of the publications in the literary series of Sumatra from the late 1930s did carry political themes, or were explicitly set in the nationalist movement. This was a selling point for some novels, both due to the popularity of such settings, and the aforementioned sense that these novels—like Islamic themed novels—were more than simple entertainment.

If indeed the novels did have some nationalist-political meaning, then, as in the cases of Abdoelxarim and Tamar Djaja, the authors of these publications would almost certainly have had some political engagement outside the confines of the fictional world they created. While virtually forgotten in Indonesia today, and even by historians and literary scholars, writers such as Mahals, Martha, Matu Mona, Mohammad Saleh Oemar, Roestam St. Palindih, and Djamaloedin Adinegoro were very popular in their day and often addressed political or nationalist issues in their writings.

In the pages below, I will briefly introduce several of these individuals and their activities, as a first step to consideration of their lives and fiction.

1. Mohammad Saleh Oemar (1909-)⁶²

Another prolific writer to fill the note page of *Medan Mengisi Proklamasi Kemerdekaan* (1976: 758-61) was Muhammad Saleh Umar (MSO). Unlike Abdoelxarim, M. Saleh Oemar was able to remain politically active in Gerindo until the Japanese occupation, resulting in a different career track, but during the late 1930s, his literary production relatively high, and his involvement during the occupation remained significant. MSO wrote both prose and poetry. For fiction, following his

⁶² Also known as MSO, Mr. X. and Surapati. Significant sources of information about MSO include *Medan Area* (1976: 758-761); Lazuardi, "Mengenang Surapati Seorang Sastrawan dan Pejuang", *Mingguan Merdeka*, IV: 372336 (11 Februari 1990), p.7; PDS HB Jassin form; Reid (1979); Rieger (1991: 123, 223); Rivai (1963); Kratz (1988).

arrest in 1938, he used the name of his fifth son, Surapati, who had passed away. The name Surapati/Surapaty became well-known—his work included publications like *Darah Atjeh* [Acehnese Blood] (Loekisan Poedjangga, November 1, 1940), *Letoesan Bom di Solo* [Explosions of a Bom in Solo] (Doenia Pengalaman, November 1, 1940), and *Rahsia Pembongkaran* [Uncovering Secrets] (Roman Pergaoelan, 1941) as well as works which could be non-fiction like *Pahlawan Banten* [Hero of Banten], *Indonesia Djadi Reboetan* [Indonesia becomes the Focus of a Struggle], and *ABCD Front* published in Tjendrawasih.

Mohammad Saleh Oemar was born on March 29, 1909 in Pangkalan Berandan, Langkat, Saleh Umar was the son of a *khadi* and father of 11 children. As a child, he studied in a 5 year *vervolgsschool*, took 2 years of English classes, and studied in an Islamic school in Tanjung Pura (but did not finish the course of study). From age 18 (±1928) he was active as a reporter, but after receiving a 1 year or *f30* sentence for attending a closed meeting, he became more active in politics, helping to found the PNI-East Sumatra branch and Partindo-East Sumatra branch (1932). Following the banning of Partindo in 1939, he was a founding leader of the local branch of Gerindo with M. Djoni. He was an active journalist from around 1928. He was the initial editor-in-chief of *Poernama*, a popular magazine published three times per month by Doenia Pengalaman from January 1940, but was jailed on February 25, 1940. On 28 August, 1941, he joined the staff of *Penjedar* as an editor (on 28 August 1941), a few weeks prior to the arrest of Matu Mona in September 1941, and soon replaced Matu Mona in all his capacities.

Throughout the last years of the Netherlands Indies and in the first years of the revolution, MSO also publishe a number of non-fiction works related to politics and poltical activity, such as his *Pendjadjahan Sekedar Sedjarahnja* (c.1939), *Sampah Masjarakat* [Trash of Society] (1937) with M. Djoni, *Semangat Desa* [Village Spirit] (c.1946), *Tjara Berkoempoel dan Rapat dalam Staat van Beleg* [The way to gather and formally meet during a State of Seige] (c.1941), and *Tjara Pidato* [Way of Speaking] (c.1941). Besides the possibility of utilizing his fiction for political activities, MSO was probably also under pressure to earn money to support his family. He had married in 1930, and by 1956 he had sired 11 children, of whom two had died.⁶³

⁶³ The eldest two were studying in China in 1956.

During the Japanese occupation, M. Saleh Oemar was involved with Bunka-ka [Cultural Section] in Medan, but also led the “Talapeta” peasant youth organization and the “Kaidjo Zikeidan” [kaijō jikeidan] seamen’s organization aimed at guarding the coast. The *sandiwara* group “Ginsei Gekidan” almost exclusively used his stories, while he was personally active in “Barito” and “Yamato.” However, his arrest and torture apparently at the instigation of the former Dutch police agent Tengku Arifin reduced his public prominence until 1945.⁶⁴ Some of the stories he wrote during the war were re-issued in 1950, but with unspecified modifications and an explicit “revocation” of previous versions, making it hard to determine what he had written during the war.⁶⁵

During the revolutionary period, M. Saleh Oemar was politically active, serving as Vice Resident of East Sumatra (1946-) and as Wakil Ketua DPR Sumatra Timur (1946-). In November 1945, MSO was part of a group of five journalists, including Wahab Siregar and Udin Siregar, who founded *Mimbar Oemoem*, a politically oriented periodical.⁶⁶ He was also the head of the East Sumatra branch of the PNI from November 1945. In 1950 was a member of DPRS, and in 1955 was elected to the DPR as a PNI representative.⁶⁷ While he wrote at least one post-Independence poem published in *Zaman Baru*⁶⁸ and a book of poetry related to the revolution,⁶⁹ for the most part he was engaged in formal political activity after 1945.

2. Martha (Maisir Thaib) (c.1920-)

One of the names which appeared on several dramatic covers of *Erpe (Roman Pergaolan)* [Social Novels] in 1939 and 1940 was a young man writing under the name Martha. If he had intended his real name, Maisir Thaib, to be a secret, this ended with

⁶⁴ See Reid (1979) and *Medan Area* (1976).

⁶⁵ See, for example, his *Diriku Tak Ada*. “Copy karangan ini jang dikeluarkan atau diberikan oleh MS Umar (Surapati) di Zaman Djepang atau Republik Indonesia dan R.I.S. dengan ini dinjatakan ditjabut dan DILARANG DIMAINKAN.” This demand was made by his wife, Siti Zahara, and his children.

⁶⁶ *Mimbar Oemoem* was based first in Medan, and then in Tebingtinggi.

⁶⁷ See Reid (1979); and *Medan Area* (1976) for details.

⁶⁸ Kratz (1988).

⁶⁹ *Seratus Hari: Sadjak Falsafah Baru, tjiptaan ditengah medan perang* [One Hundred Days: New Philosophical Poems, created in the midst of a battlefield] published in Medan in 1947.

his arrest in Rantai, South Borneo in connection with the publishing of one of his novels, *Leider, Mr. Semangat*.

Maisir Thaib was probably born on January 7, 1920 in Penampoeng in Sumatra's West Coast.⁷⁰ He attended a "Malay school" from 1926, and then to the Thawalib Parabek school until moving to Soengajang, after which he entered the Normaal Islam (P.G.A.I. or teacher's school) in Padang from which he graduated in 1938. Trained to be a modern-style Islamic school teacher, he was also active writing, an activity which he knew could provide a substantial income. In 1938, he published advertisements for a book on health, leading readers to believe that the book had already been published. In fact, he used the income from the first sales to print the book, with later sales helping to fund his education.⁷¹ In 1939, he was writing for the newspaper *Sinar* in Medan and probably other periodicals, but in 1940 he became the director of the "Pondok Modern" school in Ponorogo (Java) before moving to Rantau, where he became the director and teacher at the "Pondok Modern" there.

In addition to his activities as a journalist, he was a regular writer for *Poernama* and *Roman Pergaoelan* (Erpe), and was at least in name, a member of the editorial staff for Erpe while in Java (1939). This would have provided him with copies of Erpe, but probably no income and no additional work. On the other hand, Maisir Thaib had a good sense for the sensational, and at least two of his novels were banned, in quite dramatic fashion. The first of these, *Oestaz A. Ma'sjoek (Goeroe jang Mempertopeng Agama)* (*Roman Pergaoelan* th. II, no. 15) went through three printings—the third apparently 10,000 copies—before the Islamic association Perti made a decision to burn all the copies they could get, say prayers cursing the publisher and author (as well as Hamka who wrote another book they disliked) for a full month, and protest to the authorities.⁷²

⁷⁰ Some sources claim that he was born in mid-1921. On Maisir Thaib, see the notes in *Roman Pergaoelan*, including in Suara Sutji (1940) and Romanita (1941); *Penjedar* (1941: 349-50); A.A. Navis (1987); and most importantly Maisir Thaib (1992).

⁷¹ On this case, see his autobiographical *Menempuh Tujuh Penjara: Pengalaman seorang perintis kemerdekaan generasi terakhir* (Maisir Thaib, 1992). Thanks are due to Jeff Hadler for providing a copy of this book.

⁷² Tamar Djaja 1955: 208-9. See also Sudarmoko 2008.

According to a note from the editor of *Roman Pergaoelan*, Tamar Djaja, another of Maisir Thaib's novels, *Leider Mr. Semangat* which had been published in the *Roman Pergaoelan* series (July 5, 1940) was confiscated in the Roman Pergaoelan offices on November 11, 1940 and then from agents and readers throughout Indonesia. Maisir Thaib himself was arrested in Rantau (Borneo), held in Kandangan and sent via Surabaya to Bukittinggi, where he was sentenced to 1 year 6 months in prison by the landraad for violations of article 153 bis of the criminal code on March 12, 1941. He was then to be sent to Soekamiskin prison in Bandung. This note clearly identifies Maisir Thaib as Martha. Another note in *Penjedar* seems to suggest that his being jailed was due to his youthful, immature desire to write sensational stories (specifically *Oestadz Asjik Maasjoek* and *Leider, Mr. Semangat*). Curiously his relatively detailed autobiography published in the 1990s does not discuss details of the charges, but rather discusses the jail situation in the various jails through which he passed, and expresses his belief that any substantial defense will merely give the court justifications for jailing him.

While Maisir Thaib was marginally involved with Islamic-oriented nationalist politics, it was not until his incarceration in Sukamiskin in 1941 when he was 22 years old that he had substantial involvement with nationalist politicians, most particularly Nur Alamsyah, of the PNI-Pendidikan in Sumatra. While his publications between 1939-1940 had been sensational and pergerakan oriented, there was little political sophistication; it could even be argued that it was more the flavor of the pergerakan which he was reproducing in his novels, which would be consistent with his argument in his trial that his novel was 100% fictional, and not based on any individual or organization. Curiously, after his "political education" while jailed for persdelict (153bis), his literary career was basically finished.

Once released from jail by the Japanese authorities on April 29, 1942, he returned to Sumatra, and despite an apparent request by Sukarno for him to return to Java and be given something to do for the nationalist movement in PUTERA and Jawa Hokokai, he remained in Sumatra. He published one "fictive" work, a strange historical work on the revolutionary period entitled "The Final Five Minutes of the Netherlands Indies,"⁷³ but most of his subsequent writing and publishing was explicitly non-fiction.

⁷³ *Lima Minit Achir dari Hindia Belanda; fiktif* (Medan, Saiful).

3. MAHALS (Muhammad Ali Hanafiah Lubis) (1914-)

A third author, popularly known as MAHALS, was born in 1914 in Kotanopan in Tapanuli Selatan, and was an activist for Permi and HPII between 1931-3.⁷⁴ He attended a second class government school (5 years) in Kotanopan, and from 1927-1933 studied in two different madrasah, remaining in Bukittinggi (Fort de Kock) until arrested in 1933. He was sentenced to two years in jail by the Landraad in P. Sidempuan in a hearing at Penyabungan court on December 12, 1933 (vonnis no.17, 1933), for a violation of [153] “bis and ter,” specifically a spreekdelict. He was released from the political prisoner section of the Sukamiskin military prison in Bandung three months early due to a reduction of sentences for Wilhelmina’s birthday, thus 1/6/35 (Bewijs van Omslag no.2248 B.I.). After his release worked for *Sinar Deli* and started to use “Mahals” until the Japanese occupation.⁷⁵ During this period, Mahals was also active in Medan’s Badan Pembela Islam which engaged in activities at a local level, like censoring films. He was involved in the debates over novels in Medan in 1939, writing a review of Dali’s *Mr. Das Advocaat* in *Sinar Deli*, and also attended the December 17, 1939 conference, in which context he was referred to as “M.A. Hanafiah Lb,” not his pseudonym like was the case for other writers such as Si Oema. In around 1945, he seems to have been the editor of *Islam Berdjoeang*.

Unfortunately, little is known of his wartime and postwar activities, but his prewar novels were mostly set in the *pergerakan*, like *Marwan Djamal* (1940) and its sequel *Wartawan Ksatria (Marwan Djamal II)* (1940), stories about a journalist and political activist who works with police to fight against criminal activity despite the opposition of his party and others. His concern with the *pergerakan* is evident as well in guides to public speaking he published in 1938 (*Pemimpin Pidato*) and after independence.

⁷⁴ In 1988, Mahals published an autobiographical work, *Sejarah Hidup dan Perjuangan Perintis Kemerdekaan Indonesia Kecamatan Kotanopan, Tapanuli Selatan* (MAHALS 1988), but unfortunately, the microfiche is virtually unreadable. Other useful sources include Rieger (1991: 229) and Tamar Djaja (1939c).

⁷⁵ In October 1939 he was listed as “redacteur” of *Sinar Deli*.

4. **Matu Mona** (Hasbullah Parinduri) (1910-1987)

Hasbullah Parinduri (1910-1987), commonly known by his pseudonym Matu Mona was a well-known journalist and writer from the 1930s-1980s famous for his *Patjar Merah* novels, featuring a thinly disguised Tan Malaka, who the author met in Singapore. Despite the 2001 republication of these novels with a biographical note by the biographer of the Indonesian press, I. N. Soebagio and an introduction by the Dutch historian Harry Poeze, surprisingly little is known about his activities, perhaps in part because his memories of critical events like his 1940 arrest and trial are inconsistent and probably incorrect. However, he was well-known during the 1930s-1940s.

An ethnic Mandailing Kota Nopan born in Medan on June 21, 1910, he studied at St. Anthony's International School in Medan up to 7th grade, and briefly became a teacher before becoming an editor of *Pewartar Deli* (1931-8) and then the editor in chief of the weekly *Penjedar*. *Penjedar* was a periodical founded by Abdoelxarim M.S. and later run by M. Said of the PSII, but probably run by Matu Mona in 1940-1 with the assistance of Atjeher and Djamaloeddin.

While Matu Mona wrote very little fiction while at *Pewartar Deli*, throughout the next decade he was heavily involved with literary publishing. From around 1939, he collaborated in publishing the short-lived literary periodical *Goebahan Maja* with Surapati,⁷⁶ and according to *Pekan Buku Indonesia 1954* lead it during 1939. In 1939, he also traveled throughout Malaya with his close friend Sjamsoeddin Loebis, another sometime fiction writer, but attended the December 17, 1939 conference in Medan on the problems of *roman*. He was the editor-in-chief (*pemimpin*) of the literary journal *Tjendrawasih* (February 1940-1941) which was published in Medan. *Tjendrawasih* also seems to have combined fiction with non-fiction as well, or at least published both political fiction⁷⁷ and some non-fiction, like his own *Perdjoeangan M. Hoesni Thamrin*.⁷⁸ The first issue of *Tjendrawasih* seems to have been his own story about

⁷⁶ Rivai (1963). This periodical seems to have published short stories alongside non-fiction articles. Unfortunately, I have not been able to examine any copies of this series. The two titles which I have identified were both written by Matu Mona.

⁷⁷ Jama Sisu's *Para Dictator: Jang Manakah Ad. Hitler?* (1941).

⁷⁸ *Perdjoeangan M. Hoesni Thamrin*. *Tjendrawasih*, th.II, no.4 (15 Februari 1941). Unfortunately, the copy in the Taman Siswa has the cover attached to a different book (Decha's

girls going sold into prostitution (*T. Hoofdred. Bertindak*), a common theme. In September 1941 he was arrested, sent to Banjarmasin for trial, and imprisoned in Sukamiskin prison on Java with a 1 ½ year sentence⁷⁹ for publishing Hadharijah's *Soeasana Kalimantan* in *Tjendrawasih*, although according to his own recollection it was for writing an article which the Dutch found insulting. He was released from prison with approximately 65 other political prisoners on April 29, 1942.

Matu Mona's imprisonment meant that he found himself on Java during the Japanese occupation. From 1942 he was on Java with a sandiwara group throughout the Japanese occupation, but also wrote several articles for *Pandji Poestaka* in 1942-43, one of which described his experiences from his sentencing in Banjarmasin until his release from Sukamiskin prison,⁸⁰ and in 1944 he may have worked more directly for *Pandji Poestaka*. In 1945 until possibly 1949 he led *Perjuangan Rakjat* in Garut, but was a permanent contributor (*pembantoe tetap*) to *Loekisan Soeasana* from the 2nd issue (April 1946), contributing stories like *Arek Soerobojo* (1946), *Banteng Ketaton* (1947) and *Tjindur Binuang, Saudara Kembar* (1948), but also wrote about political affairs (e.g. *Pembentoean Negara Repoeblik Indonesia*). After the revolution, he worked for the daily *Tegas* 1950-1953 (Banda Aceh), the weekly *Penyedar* 1954-1959 (Medan), and the magazine *Selecta* 1960-1987 (Jakarta), but from at least the 1960s, his literary production dropped.

Matu Mona seems to have been first and foremost a journalist and writer, and thus while participating in public affairs through writing, publishing, and editing, he was not active politically in a traditional sense.⁸¹ During the occupation, he was

Perantaraan 167, part I). Tamar Djaja (1950) is likely a slightly revised edition of this 1941 publication.

⁷⁹ The sentence was handed down on November 14, 1941. Matu Mona, "Kenang-Kenangan," *Pandji Poestaka* 9-10 (2603): 285-86.

⁸⁰ Matu Mona, "Kenang-kenangan," *Pandji Poestaka* 9-10 (2603), pp.285-6.

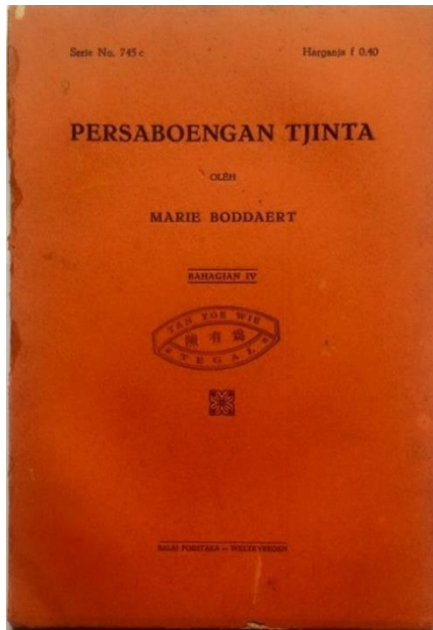
⁸¹ In addition to fiction, Matu Mona wrote biographies of M. Hoesni Thamrin (1941, c.1950, 1952) and W. R. Supratman (c.1940). For general biographical information see Rieger (1991: 227-8), Oshikawa (1990); Soebagiyo (1981: 222-226); Pamusuk Eneste (1990: 10), Rivai (1963), and Poeze (2001). Additional information can be found in Tom, "Matu Mona, Penulis Kawakan Meninggal" *Kompas* (9 Juli 1987); *Ensiklopedia Indonesia* (1985); Jassin (1951); *Penjedar* (1941); Zatako, "Matu Mona, Pengarang Tempo Doeloe Yang Aktif Sebagai Wartawan", *Suara Karya* (XV: 4248 (29 Maret 1985)); Kratz (1988: 316); Matu Mona (2001:xi-xl).

involved in “propaganda,” that is, getting the military government’s messages to the wider public in Java via dramas and publications.

5. Roestam Soetan Palindih (1898-1971)⁸²

An author who worked with the Balai Poestaka for a time as a translator, as well as a journalist and local politician. Born September 10, 1898 (or possibly September 10, 1889) in Kelarasan, Soengai Poear (West Sumatra). Studied in an ELS in Bandung, taking the Klein Amtenaar Examen in around 1913. He then entered STOVIA, but changed direction and instead finished the MULO coursework in 1918. He worked as a clerk for the Ombilinmijnen Sawahloento (1918), worked in a variety of shops, as well as an editor of a number of publications (including some in Padang). He worked for the Balai Poestaka as a translator in 1922 but by 1923 he was apparently working for the newspaper *Neratja* as an editor and as an administrator in the publisher Evolutie. *IPO* in early 1923 listed him as the editor of *Pelita-Penghidoepan*, a “neutraal” periodical published twice a month in Weltevreden. His efforts at translation of literature for Balai Pustaka continued for several years, and included translations of E. Warner’s *Verbroken Boeien* (published in *Pandji Poestaka* in 1926 and as a 2 volume book in 1928), Dumanior and D’Ennery’s *Don Cesar de Bazan* (1928), and a 4 volume novel by Maria Boddaert (1927).

⁸² On Rustam St. Palindih, see Teeuw (1967); *Orang-orang Terkemoeke di Djawa* (1944); *Pandji Poestaka* Th.II (1924: 627); *Ensiklopedia Indonesia* (1985:2526-7); Soebagijo (1977:20); *Jaarboek van Batavia en Omstreken 1927* (1927:117-9); Matu Mona, “Journalisted Indonesia dan Nasibnja,” *Abad XX* (1933: 73-4); *Pekan Buku Indonesia 1954* (1954: 232); *Djawa Baroe* (1944, no.1, pp.32-3). See also the Wikipedia (English) page on Rustam Sutan Palindih.

Figure 7. *Persaboengan Tjinta*.Figure 8. *Patjar Koenig*

Covers of a translation by Rustam for Balai Poestaka and one of his early 1940s novels.

He stood for election to the Gemeenteraad Batavia (“Soetan Palindih”) in the July 1924 elections. In 1927 he was a member of the Batavia Gemeenteraad along with Mohamad Hoesni Thamrin whose death while under house arrest in January 1941 produced rumors of his assassination and served as the basis for a story written under the pseudonym Ketjindoean. In 1927 he was officially listed as a journalist and was a member of the Onderwijs Commissie and the Commissie voor de Begraafplaatsen of the Gemeenteraad Batavia.⁸³ His other jobs included opening a bookshop in Pasar Senen in 1925. Much of the period 1930-1939 seems to have been spent teaching and editing periodicals in Sumatra, but seems also to have held editing jobs in Batavia at the same time. In around 1932-3, he was jailed for around 6 months for publishing something by M. Rasjid from the Netherlands, for which he was judged to be “penghasoet.”⁸⁴ According to the *PBI 1954*, from 1933-1938 he was a member of the Padang Gemeenteraad. He was a contributor (*pembantoe*) to Pirani (Persatoean Pegawai Indonesia Radio Holland dan NIROM) in 1940 (*Pandji Poestaka* 1940: 284). He eventually became known as a writer and director of plays and films. In the final years before the war, he wrote novelizations of *Dasima* ([1941]) and *Panggilan Darah* ([1941]).

⁸³ The claim in *Pekan Buku Indonesia 1954* that he was a member of the Gemeenteraad from 1922-1926 seems to be slightly inaccurate. From 1917-1924, terms for elected members were 6 years, but from 1925 terms were 4 years. If elected in 1922, he should have served until 1928, whereas if elected in 1924 he would have served from 1924-1930 or perhaps 1924-1928.

⁸⁴ See Matu Mona, “Journalisten Indonesia dan Nasibnja,” *Abad XX* (1933:73-4).

During the last months of 1942, he was managing a food store in Jakarta, but he became active working as a screen-play writer for Nippon Eigasha,⁸⁵ writing and directing *Di Desa* and *Di Menara*, though he also reportedly wrote and published *Mimpiku* and *Jatuh Berkait* in 1944.⁸⁶

In February 1946, he was in Jakarta, continuing his efforts in the film industry, and during the late 1940s, published several drama scripts. In independent Indonesia he served as a Kepala Protocol Parlemen and Wakil Ketua Panitia Pemilihan Indonesia, publishing several books on the history of the parliament and the regulations for elections. His activities were varied, however. In *Pekan Buku Indonesia 1954*, he was listed as ‘Ketua Panitia untuk mengusahakan Pembentukan Dewan Perpustakaan Nasional dan Ketua Pengurus Sementara “Perhimpunan Ahli Perpustakaan Seluruh Indonesia.”’

Throughout his life, Rustam St. Palindih was always involved in both literature and the arts, as well as parliamentary government. He seems to have been very effective at staying within the bounds of the acceptable, but his literary works, especially under pseudonyms, may present a different story. The early 1940s was one transitional time, in which he had become more active in writing literature and film scripts, and the Japanese occupation offered an opportunity to expand these activities into film directing as well.

6. Adinegoro or Djamaloedin Adinegoro (1904-1967)⁸⁷

The final writer is Djamaloedin Adinegoro, was a journalist born in Sawahlunto or Talawi as the son of the district chief. Djamaloedin was also closely related to M. Amir and Mohamad Yamin. He studied in STOVIA (1918-25) and then studied journalism in Munich (1925-1930). Upon returning from Europe, he was the

⁸⁵ *Djawa Baroe* (January 1944).

⁸⁶ *Ensiklopedia Indonesia* (1985:2526-7).

⁸⁷ For information on Adinegoro, see Teeuw 1967; *Bunga Rampai Kenangan Pada Balai Pustaka*. Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, 1992; Soebagijo I.N., *Adinegoro: Pelopor Jurnalistik Indonesia*, Jakarta: Haji Masagung, 1987. *Antologi Biografi* 1997; Reid 1971: 27-28; Pamusuk Eneste 1988: 12-13

editor of *Pandji Poestaka* until he left the Balai Poestaka to become the editor-in-chief of *Pewartu Deli* (1931). In 1939-1940, he was also the “leader” of *Abad 20*, usually with another editor assisting him. He was also elected a member of the Medan gemeenteraad in 1938 as *wethouder*.

Adinegoro was interested in literary writing, writing two novels for Balai Pustaka in the 1920s, *Darah Moeda* (1927) and *Asmara Djaja* (1928), and apparently also wrote a story for Tjendrawasih in 1940, *Manoesia Iblis*. He also wrote an article about novels and attended the December 17, 1939 conference in Medan on “roman,” indicating his concern for constructive literary work.⁸⁸ However, most of his works are non-fiction, including a dictionary of modern terms (1928), two travellogues in 1930, one published by a private publisher in Medan, and a 3 volume set published by Balai Pustaka. He also wrote about World War II and practical books on journalism. During the Japanese occupation he was an editor of the *Sumatera Shimbun* and vice-chairman of the East Sumatra Shuu Sangi Kai, but in 1942 found time to compile an Indonesian-Japanese dictionary.⁸⁹ In March 1945, he resigned his positions in Medan and moved to Bukittinggi where he was involved as one of the Indonesian leaders in the first steps towards a Sumatra-wide administration under the Japanese.

In Independent Indonesia, he remained active in the press and in government. An editor of *Mimbar Indonesia*, he also served as a member of Dewan Perancang Nasional, a member of DPRS, the Ketua Dewan Komisaris Badan Penerbit Gunung Agung, and the Presiden Komisaris LKBN Antara. His literary efforts seem to have ended in 1941, however, his relationship to propaganda efforts during the Japanese occupation still remains unexplored.

⁸⁸ [A. N.], “Kitab2 bahasa Melajoe, romans, dll. Penerbitannja, pengaroehnja, djalan oentoek memperbaikinja,” *Pewartu Deli* 20,288 (Sabtoe, 16 Desember 1939).

⁸⁹ *Kamoes Bahasa Indonesia–Nippon dan Nippon–Indonesia*. Medan, 2602.

D. The Vanishing and Reappearing of a Politically Active Literature

The trail of questions and information which was triggered by the sudden burst of political activity of Abdoe'lxarim during the Japanese occupation exposes a political activist literature of the late 1930s and early 1940s which has been excluded from the canon and history.

As aluded to above, a tremendous change took place in the public sphere in Sumatra in 1938: literary periodicals published by native Indonesians, with novelettes written by native Indonesian writers popping up in the three major publication centers of Sumatra. In reality, this was the culmination of a long history, a history involving Chinese-Indonesian literary publications, the government Balai Pustaka publishing house, lending libraries, Indonesian newspapers and magazines, Islam, political parties, and colonial government suppression. An important element of the explosive growth of these periodicals was capitalism and the potential for income and fame, but the demand from readers was certainly critical, and important Islamic figures took a leading role in their publication.

Abdoe'l Xarim's lack of presence in literary histories is almost certainly related to the notion that Indonesian literature must be largely apolitical. It is also possible that MSO and MAHALS are excluded for the same reason. Teeuw's seminal survey of Indonesian liturture effectively plays this out for the colonial period, briefly describing novels by Semaoen and Soemantri (see below) which have "no direct follow-up,"⁹⁰ embracing the large body of Malay/Indonesian works gradually developed by the government publishing house Balai Pustaka and eventually a small number of publications like Poedjangga Baroe, which issued a small print-run journal and literary works, but dismissing the dime novels of Medan and ignoring the mostly Indonesian Chinese authored pop fiction appearing at that time, which were not worthy of consideration. This picture had its own history, however, and it was not always "true" that Indonesian popular literature was apolitical.

Building off of the journalistic roots of the Eurasian and Indies-Chinese press of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a small but vibrant tradition of political activity

⁹⁰ Teeuw (1967: 17).

through literature was born during the 1910s-mid-1920s. Writers like Tirtoadhisuryo and Marco Kartodikromo were some of the more well-known writer-journalists of the 1910s, but Sarekat Islam and Communist Party leaders of the next generation also occasionally wrote fiction.⁹¹ As acknowledged by Teeuw, the founding leader of the PKI, Semaoen wrote a novel entitled *Hikajat Kadiroen* (1920) to explain the tenants of communism to common readers, while a few years later, Semarang journalist and PKI activist Soemantri wrote *Rasa Mardika: Hiakajat Soedjono* (1924), also with the intent of reaching out to the masses.

In addition to the aforementioned novels, most newspapers (both politically oriented and non-political) regularly carried *feulliton* (serialized stories); the pages of *Sinar Djawa*, *Sinar Hindia*, and *Api* were naturally graced with politically inspired literature. For example, “Aliran Djaman atau Seorang Gadison Jang Sengsara” [The Changing Eras or a Girl who Suffered] by Tjempaka Pasoeroean presents a love story set in the *pergerakan* of 1920s Semarang, filled with mentions of insufficient salaries, radical newspapers, meetings, Chinese loansharks, etc.⁹²

It is not always clear whether fiction concerned the Dutch authorities, but certainly newspapers were subject to regular government suppression.⁹³ In some cases, however, novels or other publications were noted in the government overviews of the press, through which the Dutch sought to observe developments in native society.⁹⁴ Developments in the press were so important to the colonial government that there was an additional secret general overview, the *Algemeen Overzicht van de Inlandsche Pers* exclusively for high level officials. However, even the simple fact that the newspapers found it important to include these stories, also suggests that editors found them effective in addressing a popular audience, or minimally, very popular. However,

⁹¹ On Tirtoadhisuryo, see Pramoedya (1985), Shiraishi (1990) and Tirto Adhi Soerjo (2008). On Mas Marco, see Shiraishi (1990) and Marco Kartodikromo (2008).

⁹² Published in *Api* (6 August 1925-10 September 1925, the similarities in style and phrasing suggest that the pseudonym Tjempaka Pasoeroean may have been the pseudonym of the Soemantri, or at least a close colleague.

⁹³ There is a small but significant literature on the censorship of newspapers during this period, including Shiraishi (1990), Maters (1998) and Yamamoto (2011).

⁹⁴ The Indies government published their survey of the Malay and Malay-Chinese press from around 1917, as well as a top-secret overview of the survey. Although the title varied somewhat, as did the scope of the included material, the *Overzicht van de Inlandsche en Maleisch-Chineesch Pers* is generally known as *OPI*.

with the arrest, exile and internment of leftist activists in the wake of the 1926 revolt, a period of peace and order ensued, safe from disturbances of activist literature. In fact, the colonial authorities were so successful in their repression that it became virtually impossible to so much as imagine the existence of a serious politically activist literature.⁹⁵

Curiously, the Indonesian literary canon largely dates from this period of emptiness, the 1920s-1930s, suggesting that “non-political” alternatives may have played a supporting role in the suppression of political literature. In fact, this prewar period is less often remembered for opposition to the Dutch than for the political and cultural development within the native Indonesian elite allowing the reformation of a new elite-based Indonesian nationalist movement. This is reflected in the conventional view of the Japanese occupation and the inevitable comparisons with the postwar period.

During the Japanese occupation there was no *Volksraad*, where Indonesian members protected by parliamentary privilege could publically criticize the colonial government with impunity. Also the Indonesian Press was muzzled far more severely than it had been in the Dutch time. Nor was it possible for Indonesians to play the role of loyal opposition. Any open criticism or opposition to the Japanese military government meant imprisonment, torture and usually death.

Bereft of arms and modern military know-how, the vast majority of Indonesian leaders were unwilling to commit suicide and either elected to cooperate with the Japanese, hoping to be able to steer the situation to their country's advantage, or stayed in the background.⁹⁶

Opposition to the Dutch was thus conceded as irrelevant, while leaders who were allowed to criticize the government were often part of the administration. The mere possibility of opposition is not considered here, much less a politically activist literature.

These politically activist-oriented materials may have been off our radar for several reasons. First, there has been a marginalization of both writings and figures

⁹⁵ Historians have only gradually recognized the importance of the early period of popular activist writers, initially stimulated by the group around Pramoedya in the early 1960s, but later via the translations and commentary of Paul Tickell and later Takashi Shiraishi.

⁹⁶ Penders (1980: 67).

which are not amenable to received paradigms—both related to history writing and the Indonesian literary canon. The case of first generation Indonesian political leaders is particularly illustrative. According to Takashi Shiraishi’s attempt to historicize the early *pergerakan* movements (Shiraishi 1990), Islam, nationalism and communism were closely intertwined in the early 20th century, until the early 1920s partitioning of popular movements in Java into these three ideological streams. That process involved marginalization of certain figures from the *pergerakan* in the minds of scholars as well. A few of the radical Javanese like Marco Kartodikromo of the Sarekat Islam in the 1910s and Sumantri and Semaoen of the PKI in the 1920s have recently received some attention, however their works did not stress Islam and thus can be easily assimilated to one particular radical-nationalist-not-Islamist framework. Other figures and their fiction have been almost entirely ignored, whether *peranakan* Chinese or non-Chinese Indonesian.⁹⁷

Second, part and parcel to this “segregated” view of Indonesian history, post-independence scholars have long accepted government sponsored Balai Poestaka publications as the only fictional works worthy of consideration for several reasons, including the much vaunted literary superiority of Balai Poestaka products and a frequent assumption that there were virtually no other works published, neither of which is convincing given our knowledge of this period and the select group of writers discussed above, several of whom wrote for Balai Pustaka as well as private publishers.⁹⁸ Both the apparently substantial difference in distribution of privately published works before March 1942 compared to Balai Poestaka publications and the more significant continuous publication and promotion of Balai Poestaka works

⁹⁷ Kratz (2000) has endeavored to be inclusive, seeing both Islamic and popular writings as important elements in Indonesian literary development. Nonetheless, his work does not yet resolve this problem. Following the pioneering work of Claudine Salmon in the 1970s and 1980s, and subsequent work of scholars like Myra Sidharta, Thomas Rieger and Leo Suryadinata, there has been a republication boom for *peranakan* authored stories, beginning in 1993 but more intensively after 2000. With very few exceptions, Chinese and non-Chinese works have been separate in both republication and academic discussion. See Rieger (1991) and Siegel (1997) for two of the first few exceptions.

⁹⁸ Established early in the 20th century, the Balai Poestaka was the main government publisher of native Indonesian language books. While there has been increasing recognition of other works since the 1960s, especially pre-Balai Pustaka publications, this period has also seen a proliferation of works oblivious to their presence. Teeuw (1967) notably acknowledges the existence of stories by native Indonesians published outside of Balai Pustaka, that many Balai Pustaka publications lacked any redeeming literary qualities and that private publications did have an attractiveness to their readers. However, his emphasis on Balai Pustaka and Poedjangga Baroe texts and authors is not lost on most readers.

throughout the post-war period have contributed as well to this understanding of which native publications were of importance, much as they have contributed to the marginalization of works written or published by *peranakan* Chinese. As a basis for understanding the 1920s, 1930s, and early 1940s, this assumption is thus somewhat anachronistic; however important it may have been, the dominance of Balai Poestaka was not as absolute as commonly assumed.⁹⁹ Perhaps even more critical for ideological and racial filtering, the substantially successful dominance of Balai Poestaka over literary production for non-Chinese Indonesians during the 20th century involved an insistence that publications be religiously neutral and apolitical.

These literary magazines of the late 1930s and early 1940s like *Loekisan Poedjangga*, *Doenia Pengalaman*, *Doenia Pergerakan*, and *Tjendrawasih* featured “dime novels” by a reasonably wide range of authors. That some authors found themselves jailed for *persdelict* [press violations] or *spreekdelict* [speech violations] suggests there was something that colonial authorities did not like, while literary journals’ popularity, with print runs of up to 5,000 copies, made them as well-distributed as many Balai Poestaka publications and a potentially meaningful media for political work,¹⁰⁰ although only rarely recognized by Indonesians.

The image of the journalist-activist had a relatively strong presence in prewar fiction, but the novelist rarely appeared, and the politically aware novelist was still rarer. Examples of these include the journalist-activists in Tamar Djaja’s *Journalist Alamsjah* (1939), Mahals’ *Marwan Djamal* (1940) and *Wartawan Ksatria (Marwan Djamal II)* (1940), and the novelist in Romanita’s *A. Dahri, Romanschrijver* (1940). In one exception, the main character of A. Karim Halim’s *Fadjar Minjingsing* (1940) composes three novels as part of his Islamic mission to the Dayak.

⁹⁹ This point is clear when considering Balai Pustaka’s concern about private lending libraries in the mid- and late-1930s and their subsequent efforts to stimulate the establishment of new libraries dominated by Balai Pustaka works as opposed to “indecent” Chinese stories. See *Balai Pustaka Sewadjarnja 1908-1948*, pp.29-30.

¹⁰⁰ On the size of literary journal print runs in comparison to *Pandji Poestaka*, see Joesoef Sou’yb’s “Samboetan Kepada: Pandji Poestaka,” *Seruan Kita*, th.II, no.23/24 (5 January 1940): 519; th.II, no.25 (12 Januari 1940): 547-48,557; th.II, no.26 (19 Januari 1940): 574-575, and the discussion below. Unfortunately, Balai Poestaka *Resultaten* for the 1920s detail book loans through the *Volksbibliotheken*, but not sales figures. Balai Poestaka found lending critical for exposing native Indonesians to their publications; significantly, most titles were borrowed fewer than 5,000 times per year, and unpopular titles only a few times.

The insistence on Balai Poestaka fiction being religiously neutral and apolitical was potentially very important given the context of the late colonial period. Specifically, colonial suppression in the jailing or exile to Boven Digoel of many writers in the late 1920s was also of critical significance for the actual production of publications, both because of the frequently permanent disappearance of those writers and the threat that remained over the heads of writers until 1942.

While the discussion above indicates a strong possibility that the novel *Hadji Dadjal* could have been radical in its contents, was it the author's intention to engage in such political activities? Were the stories of MSO, Roestam St. Palindih or Saëroen intended to have such a political impact? A greater understanding of the author and the context for publication of the 1930s-1940s is necessary to understand these works. Once again, the "radically different" Japanese period and the immediate postwar period may be of particular use in perceiving true intentions.

The claim that many Indonesians were really struggling for independence, obtaining military training and experience, as well as promoting nationalism while participating in Japanese sponsored organizations like the Java self-defence force PETA and ostensibly promoting Japanese war-related projects during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia in 1942-1945 is both well-known and widely accepted. Both President Sukarno and President Suharto—and the political, cultural, economic and military leaders of a full generation—are widely known to have been involved in activities sponsored by the Japanese military authorities. Curiously, this acceptance has had little effect on studies of other periods. In exploring Indonesian political and cultural development in the early 20th century, our knowledge of the Japanese occupation can and should encourage reexamination of precisely the materials which seem least political from the not-always-benevolent colonial period (~1942) with its various forms of surveillance and repressive institutions.

Chapter III.

“Political” Histories: Filling in the Historical Gaps in Indonesian Narratives about Pieter Erbervelt

Long before the Japanese occupation began in 1942, historical stories about events and historical figures were circulating in Indonesian society, helping to shape Indonesian understandings of “their” past, and potentially influencing growing nationalist feelings. This chapter explores popular understandings of historical figures by examining the discourse on one particular figure from the early 18th century, Pieter Erbervelt, seeking to understand how Indonesians understood history by studying the narratives about this figure produced in Malay/Indonesian language publications.

Normally, this type of history would stop at the entry of the Japanese, the end of the colonial state, and the destruction of the monument. However, the Japanese occupation was actually a major turning point in the history of the monument and probably the apprehension of this historical figure; the monument reappeared decades after the war, indicating the importance of the monument for Indonesians, and stimulating renewed telling of his story. The case of Pieter Erberfelt suggests the importance of rejecting the standard periodization and tracing productions of knowledge which would have been available to Indonesian audiences before, during and after the war.



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Karena dituduh melakukan perlawanan terhadap Kompeni, Pieter Erberveld ditangkap, diperiksa, diadili dan dijatuhi hukuman mati. Pelaksanaan eksekusinyabenar-benarsangat kejam dan mendirikan bulu roma. Sebelah tangan dan sebelah kakinya diikatkan pada seekorkuda. Demikian pula sebelah kaki dan tangannya yang lain diikatkan pada kuda yang kedua. Kemudian dua ekor kuda yang berdiri bertolakbelakang itu didera. Tentu saja mereka melompat dan berlari ke arah yang berlawanan. Selanjutnya mudah diperkirakan bagaimana nasib tubuh Erberveld. Tubuh itu berbelah, tersobeksobek menjadi dua bagian. Setelah itu kepalanya dipenggal.

Kemudian sebuah tombak ditancapkan pada batok kepalanya dari bagian leher hingga tembus ke ubun-ubun. Selanjutnya kepala bertombak itu dipasang di atas sebuah tembok sebagai peringatan kepada penduduk Batavia agar tidak mencoba-coba melawan Kompeni. Terakhir tengkorak kepala itu disemenkan pada tembok.¹

Peter Erberveld² was born, lived, and experienced a horrific death in Batavia nearly three hundred years ago. Despite his death, he lives on, occasionally being referred to as Pangeran Pecah Kulit³ for the manner of his death and sharing his posthumous nickname with an area in northern Jakarta. Son of a German (Westphalian) burger and a Siamese Christian woman, this Erberveld was accused by the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) authorities of plotting to revolt with Javanese assistance, slaughter the European community, and establish an Islamic state. Consequently, Erberveld and a small number of other individuals were arrested shortly before the revolt was to begin, tortured to obtain confessions of their crimes, and finally executed in April 1722. While the baptisms of Pieter and his siblings, corruption charges against his father, and conflict with VOC authorities over

¹ Opening section of “Perlawanan Pieter Erberveld” in *Jakarta Tempo Doeloe* (1988), p. 35. According to the publication information page, this was “translated and recompiled” from J. J. de Vries, *Jaarboek van Batavia en Omstreken* (Batavia: G. Kolff & Co., 1927), however some information was obtained after 1986 and may have originated in publications mentioned on the short “daftar bacaan.”

² This name appears with variant spellings. Many Dutch sources use “Pieter Erberveld” which matches the monument and in all likelihood accurately represents the most common spelling during the eighteenth century. It is thus used to represent the historical figure constructed by historians. However, I most frequently use Tio Ie Soei’s 1924 spelling, “Pieter Elberveld,” except in contexts where I am talking specifically about a particular version or the largely Dutch historical discourse in general. This may be consistent with the spelling used by Pieter Erberveld’s father. See Pramodya (1982: 334). The orthographic shifts are thus conscious and indicative of somewhat distinct streams of discourse, of which Tio Ie Soei’s is arguably one of the most influential in Indonesia. The orthography of other names used in this paper shift for similar reasons, but while carrying less semantic meaning, hopefully remain comprehensible.

³ The Broken Skin Prince, or the Prince of Pecah Kulit. Despite this self-evident etymology, the name may have originated with a local leather tannery close to this site.

his inheritance have left marks in the archives, it was a monument constructed by VOC authorities that sealed his position in history books and in local Batavian folklore, leaving a visual reminder of the revolt in the form of a whitewashed skull.⁴ Nonetheless, the inapplicable categories of Indonesian nationalisms and Dutch colonialism make the heritage of a rumored conspiracy, led by a non-Indonesian, non-Dutch, Eurasian native of Batavia in the name of Islam, and this man's betrayal to VOC authorities by native Indonesians both fraught with problems and full of discursive possibilities.

Among the most substantive examinations of these events are a standard historical study by L. W. G. de Roo published in 1866 and another less traditional 1938 study written by G. B. J. van Heuven,⁵ which explicitly engaged the fictional elements of a mid-nineteenth-century Dutch-language story by W. L. Ritter. Biographical dictionaries, academic journal articles, and encyclopedia entries primarily composed during the colonial era have also contributed to the availability of historical knowledge on this topic in print, although textbooks undoubtedly played an even more important role in circulating knowledge to a certain portion of the Indonesian public.

One important example is the textbook on Netherlands Indies history co-written by F. W. Stapel and A. J. Eijkman in 1917, which remained in print until at least 1939; the 1939 edition was even translated into Japanese in 1942 with the addition of photographs, including of the Erberveld monument.⁶ This textbook was aimed at MULO and HBS secondary schools,⁷ thus for a highly educated group of Dutch speaking students, and included around one page on Erberveld's revolt. Other contemporary Dutch-language works include F. de Haan's *De Priangan* (especially volumes one and three, published in 1910 and 1912), the *Nieuw*

⁴ Presumably constructed shortly after Erberveld's execution in 1722, the monument remained on the site of Erberveld's residence until the Japanese Occupation. Following the monument's demolition, the inscription was preserved and eventually placed in the courtyard of the main VOC building, now the Fatahillah Museum. The monument was reconstructed on the original site with a new inscription plaque, probably in the early or mid-1970s, then moved to the Museum Prasasti in Tanah Abang in around 1986.

⁵ De Roo (1866) and van Heuven (1938: 417-29, 528-39).

⁶ Eijkman and Stapel (1939) and Eijkman and Stapel (1942).

⁷ For more information about the *Meer Uitgebreiden Lagere Onderwijs* (More Extensive Elementary Education) and the *Hogere Burgerscholen* (High Schools), see van der Veur (1969).

Nederlandsch Biographisch Woordenboek, the publications of E. C. Godee Molsbergen and F. W. Stapel, and the *Encyclopaedië van Nederlandsch Indië*.⁸ Although Erbeveld rates brief mentions in more recent English-language scholarship, such that of C. R. Boxer, S. Abeyeskere, and M. C. Ricklefs,⁹ a serious re-exploration of Erbeveld has been hindered by the loss of archival documents used in the mid-1800s to reconstruct a history of the events of 1721. Given the general lack of well-organized libraries and substantial bibliographical knowledge in Indonesia, these works are all potentially significant in providing source materials for new generations of writers and information to a shrinking Dutch-reading population.

Focusing exclusively on such works not only neglects Malay and Indonesian language materials, but it shows us little about materials circulating to different Indonesian readers, or even more significantly, which works were meaningful or useful to those individuals. According to a census compiled at the high point of Dutch colonial power, in 1930 around 7.4 percent (3,746,225 people) of the native population were counted as “literate” but a mere 0.30 percent (187,708 people) were counted as capable of writing in Dutch.¹⁰ If Dutch language literacy has gradually decreased since 1942, how have Indonesians learned about Pieter Erbeveld or other historical subjects? Dutch-language texts might have been critical in addressing a narrow elite, but they could not have been as instrumental in reaching a wider, more diverse audience. A very few works on Indonesian history do address this general issue, including H. A. J. Klooster’s study of the development of Indonesian history writing, a study which is surprisingly inclusive of nonacademic works in its description of history writers, subjects, and texts, but which does not consider the readers.¹¹ More suggestive in this respect is Oshikawa Noriaki’s exploration of the legends of Tan Malaka and the Malay language “Patjar Merah” novels of 1938-1941.¹² Oshikawa

⁸ De Haan (1910-1912); *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biographisch Woordenboek*, vol. 8 (1930); Godee Molsbergen (1939); Stapel (1930); *Encyclopedië van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 2nd ed. (1917-). De Vries’ *Jaarboek van Batavia en Omstreken* (1927) contains a brief note and a photograph of the monument.

⁹ Boxer (1979), Abeyeskere (1989); and Ricklefs (1993).

¹⁰ On the other hand, 75.2 percent (180,504) of those classified as European were counted as literate, with 72.4 percent (173,089) able to write in Dutch, while 28.9 percent (344,147) of the Chinese population were counted as literate and 3.4 percent (40,095) were able to write Dutch. See *Volkstelling 1930*, vols. VI-VIII (1933-6).

¹¹ Klooster (1985).

¹² Oshikawa (1990).

suggests that some of the novels were surprisingly consistent with Tan Malaka's autobiography, written almost ten years later, and that these novels helped to create and sustain a popular understanding of Tan Malaka that provided his primary source of political support in the 1940s. On the other hand, Margareet van Till's otherwise informative article on the nineteenth-century bandit and folk hero, Si Pitting, unfortunately skirts the issue of reproduction of popular knowledge.¹³ Schools can play a role in spreading popular knowledge, as is apparent in the work by Liesbeth Dolk on Multatuli's novel *Max Havelaar*.¹⁴ In her studies, Dolk calls attention to the shifts in how *Max Havelaar* was presented to society; from its use as a constructive criticism of colonial policy in mid-nineteenth century Netherlands, to its use as an illustration of literary innovation in colonial schools, and to use of its descriptions (as anti-colonial or anti-feudal tools) in Indonesian nationalist literary and historical studies. While these varying interpretations of the novel may not invariably match students' own perceptions, Dolk's study is an important contribution to the literature concerning popular understandings about Multatuli and *Max Havelaar*.

Most Indonesian children do not grow up knowing about Pieter Elberveld in the same way that they know the Javanese *wayang* stories, nor does every adult read a single influential "fundamental" text on Elberveld.¹⁵ As is the case for many other stories—historical or not—Indonesians cannot be exposed to information about Pieter Elberveld through the medium of masterly, classic texts, since there are none that are that well known. A survey of major Indonesian publications shows that, in fact, substantial Indonesian national histories almost entirely exclude reference to Elberveld,¹⁶ and none of the works discussed by Klooster focused on his revolt, which makes the question of the reproduction of stories about Elberveld loom even larger. Therefore oral tales, fragmentary discussions in school or Indonesian-language textbooks, newspaper or magazine articles, pictures, guidebooks, novels, TV dramas, and even minor references must constitute the main sources. Only some of these

¹³ Van Till (1996: 461-482).

¹⁴ Dolk (1993), Dolk (2000).

¹⁵ On the idea of a fundamental text and the disperse knowledge of *wayang*, see the introduction in Sears (1996).

¹⁶ See *Sejarah Nasional Indonesia*, for example, where a one-volume discussion of the forms of traditional states gives way to a discussion of the well-established colonial state of the nineteenth century in the next volume. This change in the organization of the multi-volume history results in the disappearance of the eighteenth century entirely, and a neglect of the VOC and the seventeenth century as well.

leave clear traces for the historian, and fewer still leave consistent conscious memories, but if consumable texts in Indonesian continue to be recycled in print, they are presumably reproduced—perhaps imperfectly—in the minds of Indonesians.

This chapter seeks to trace out the lines of development of Malay and later Indonesian language representations of Pieter Elberveld with one eye aimed at historiographical practice and the use of a textual heritage, but with the other eye on the elusive Indonesian-or Malay-language audiences—what they might have read, learned, or understood of this material. By accounting for some of the consumable texts published at various points in Indonesian history, as well as accounting, even indirectly, for Indonesian audiences and their understandings of history, this work can hopefully contribute to the construction of a more sophisticated history of modern Indonesia. By understanding how texts like these functioned as biographies or histories, for example, the historian can better comprehend the popular conceptions and classifications of what we call historical knowledge, as well as other popular “truths” about the world, and can see how this knowledge is introduced into society and reproduced. The work of constructing a society and history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries out of the raw materials of archival documents, monuments, and romantic stories is of primary importance here, but it seems that consciously or unconsciously writers of Elberveld’s story must have also contributed to the development of the practice of Indonesian history writing and helped to establish customary practices—at least in the minds of an ever-widening public. Thus, an exploration of the marginal Pieter Elberveld may open new opportunities in presenting a more troublesome, but striking, picture whose image—or at least that of Elberveld’s reproduced skull—has reappeared in colonial Netherlands East Indies, Japanese-occupied Java, and independent Indonesia.

A. 1889: The Birth

Pieter Elberveld may have made his first Malay language appearance in the Batavia newspaper *Sinar Terang*, in a serialized story published on January 7, 9, and 11, 1889. This took place in a transitional period in Indonesian history that provided the context for more well-known developments during the twentieth century. Not only were novelties like electric lighting introduced into a few urban communities during the 1880s, but communication between distant areas of Java and beyond was

improved. Most significant was the ever expanding railroad network, which spread rapidly after the first twenty-five km. section was opened for use in 1867, a development that eventually made distribution of printed materials feasible and important. The year 1882 marked the beginning of Steam Tramway service in Batavia as well, accelerating contact within Batavia itself, and may have already brought passengers down the Jacatraweg of North Jakarta. The ravages of the world economy and coffee plant diseases were also shaking the Indies economy, and it was precisely in the period of 1887-1889 when Chinese opium tax farm consortiums began to collapse, reflecting the widespread rural distress. The Malay press was relatively small in the 1880s, but was gradually growing with the Chinese entrance into journalism and the publishing business. The consumption of narrative texts was changing as well. Henri Chambert-Loir has asserted that reliance on professional storytellers was declining in the late nineteenth century, but an audience of literate individuals eager to read stories had not yet developed; studying a Batavian manuscript-lending family, he found most manuscripts were borrowed by people known to the authors and read aloud to audiences.¹⁷ Readers of newspapers probably included both modern-style individual readers and those who read newspapers aloud to an audience.¹⁸

Sinar Terang was a largely Chinese newspaper, first published on June 25, 1888 by a Chinese man named Yap Goan Ho, and edited by a Eurasian named W. Meulenhoff, who had formerly been a clerk in the Department of Public Works.¹⁹ Published Monday-Saturday, the first two pages of each four-page issue were devoted almost entirely to advertisements, although sometimes a brief story was included on page two. Substantial space was devoted to correspondents' reports about robberies, arrests, scandals, and other local events from different places throughout Java and even occasionally overseas. While the readership of *Sinar Terang* was probably located primarily in Batavia, there were agents selling the periodical throughout Java and in Padang (West Sumatra). Eleven of twelve regional agents were Chinese,

¹⁷ Chambert-Loir (1991: 106-7).

¹⁸ Kratz (1977: 3-4). Chambert-Loir (1991) also suggests that it is possible the authors of the Faldi family manuscripts obtained material directly from newspapers or other publications, thus indicating they may have been within this select group.

¹⁹ Meulenhoff had previously edited and published (1885-C.1887) another Malay language newspaper, *Pembrita Betawi*, along with Lie Kim Hok. See Adam (1995: 65, 68). See also the more detailed discussion in Tio (1958: 51-55). Tio Ie Soei claims that W. Meulenhoff was also the founding editor of *Hindia Olanda* (pub. 1887-1897), but he seems unaware of *Sinar Terang*.

suggesting that the readership may have been primarily Chinese.²⁰ Other publications by the same publisher were widely distributed to mostly Chinese readers all over the Indies, including some on Ambon, Sulawesi, and Sumatra.²¹ The content of the paper also suggests a large number of Chinese subscribers, as even on the three pages containing the Elberveld story there were a number of stories or news reports on China. In addition, the paper documented the removal and appointment of distant local native and Chinese officials, the “police roll” and local reports (some written by correspondents with Javanese names). Based on Ahmat Adam’s discussion of newspaper publishing, we can conclude that Eurasians, some Dutch and some “natives,” may have subscribed, but that the native readership would have been very elite, a conclusion which makes sense given the nearly complete absence of Western education for native Indonesians outside of the training schools for traditional elite administrators and *doktor Jawa*. The paper’s circulation must have been relatively large, perhaps reaching five hundred to a thousand people²² at a time when the population of Batavia was approximately 100,000, of which approximately nine thousand were “European” and 27,000 were Chinese.²³

It is unclear how much popular knowledge about Pieter Elberveld was available to either readers of *Sinar Terang* or to the population of Batavia and the Dutch Indies at that time. There must have been at least a few people who knew of him, considering the presence of a monument where his house had stood along the Jacatraweg, with its cement skull mounted on an iron spike as a warning to the citizens of Batavia. As this monument was located along the electric tramway that began service in 1925, it probably was also visible from the earlier steam tramway, whose passengers would have glimpsed it in passing every day. An inscription on the monument in Dutch and Javanese made the purpose clear to people literate in either of these languages. This section of old Batavia was also called Pecah Kulit, virtually insuring that local residents, literate or not, would have known something of

²⁰ Adam (1995: 68-69).

²¹ According to Claudine Salmon and Pramoedya Ananta Toer, the publisher published primarily translations of stories from China. See the discussion of printers, publishers, and booksellers in Salmon (1981) and in Pramoedya (1982: 7).

²² This is my guess, based on figures and estimates about other newspapers provided in Adam (1995: 48-49). Pramoedya suggests that circulations of newspapers around 1900 never exceeded 1,500 copies (1982: 2). This suggests that a circulation of 500-1,000 is a reasonable estimate.

²³ Estimated based on the table in Abeyeskere (1989: 73).

Elberveld's story. We can also assume that, as the monument was located near the old Portuguese church, it was occasionally seen by Batavia's rare nineteenth-century tourists. As mentioned earlier, there had even been a Dutch language history about "The Conspiracy of 1721" published in Batavia in 1866.²⁴ This would have been available to fluent Dutch readers with access to good book collections, but the academic style would have restricted its readership. Potentially more important was a story by W. L. Ritter²⁵ published in a collection of his writings in 1843.²⁶ Simply entitled "Pieter Erberfeld," this was either directly or indirectly the source of the 1889 Malay language story, as the author apparently adapted (or translated and abridged) Ritter's text.

The approximately 2,700-word Malay-language story was entitled "Pieter Erberfeld. Kepala pertemenan soempa djahat di Betawi" (Pieter Erberfeld. Leader of an Evil Sworn Association in Betawi) and was written by someone identified as P. Bh., apparently a correspondent for *Sinar Terang* who resided in Central or East Java at the time.²⁷ The form of the 1889 publication resembles a history, but does not fit what we might expect from a biography; in fact, it was written as a story of the events of 1721. It did, however, provide more bio-data about Pieter Elberveld than a mere story would have offered, and provided a sense of what he was like, what significant things he did, and why he did them.²⁸ This information was definitely

²⁴ De Roo (1866).

²⁵ Willem Leonard Ritter (1799-1862) was an active writer of novels, story books, and "coffee table books" about the Indies during the 1840s-1860s. A former military surgeon, from the mid-1820s Ritter was an administrator on the west coast of Borneo and then the west coast of Sumatra until dismissed for financial irregularities in 1837. He is best known for being a founding editor of the Batavia newspaper *Java Bode* from 1852-1860; he returned to the Netherlands in 1860. For more information, see Joël (1952).

²⁶ Ritter (1843).

²⁷ Two notes written by P. Bh. and published in *Sinar Terang* ("Balepandjang" and "Djokdjakarta," *Sinar Terang* 488, February 10, 1890) show a fair degree of sophistication in his Malay (with a range of "high" literary Malay and less self-conscious Malay) and an interest in administrative affairs. In these notes, the author commented on the new Resident of Jogjakarta and native appointments during his first six months, offered and sought information about peasant welfare and rice prices, and announced the impending departure of the Assistant Resident of Ngawi and the requisite sale of his belongings. Another article in *Sinar Terang* (*Sinar Terang* 466, January 13, 1890) on miscellaneous items of local interest in Surabaya is signed P. Bhr.

²⁸ Henri Chambert-Loir's interpretation of news literature emphasizes the *lack* of descriptions of characters, along with the presence of descriptions of actions and names. I feel that while the characters in this story are not fully developed, there is substantial information on them, although more on the fictional characters than on the historical figures.

more than would have been available orally to most Batavians and may have reinforced their interpretations of the events. This version also had the advantage of being in print, which meant readings would have been nearly identical and likely gave the story some authority vis-a-vis orally transmitted tales, as did other features like the mention of specific dates, specific information about governor-generals, references to specific locations known to residents of Batavia, lists of places probably unknown to many Batavians, a transcription of the inscription on the monument, etc. Being placed between reports from regional correspondents²⁹ and government notices gave the text even more authority and softened the distinction between fiction and nonfiction. The author was also in a position of authority with respect to his subject, addressing Pieter Erberfeld on a first-name basis and dropping the aristocratic title from Raden Cartadrie's name. It was a convincing story, more complete in its explanation of why certain events took place and much more entertaining than Dutch language histories.

A description of and praise for the Governor-general, as well as a description of the situation in Java, frames the story, which can be roughly summarized as follows:

On December 28, 1721, a Javanese nobleman (Raden Cartadrie) and his entourage came to the house of Pieter Erberfeld. A slave woman named Samita let them in. They then went to the courtyard to meet Erberfeld.

Pieter Erberfeld was old, toothless, white haired, big, tall, and not very good looking (an indication of Erberfeld's mixed Javanese/German parentage). Erberfeld was well-dressed, with a cunningness about his eyes. Erberfeld had long since been upset that the VOC would not hire him because he was too wealthy. He had thus slighted the VOC and a merchant named van der Schuur had insulted him in return. Following that incident, he longed for revenge on the Europeans.

Pieter and Cartadrie discussed their plans to kill all Europeans (women and

²⁹ In accordance with the 1856 laws regulating the press, the authors, editors, and printers were legally liable for the content of their publications, and from the 1880s there were a substantial number of cases involving the Malay press. See Adam (1995: 47,151-5). This inspired writers to be somewhat conservative, which could conceivably increase faith in the published word. One of the reports surrounding the first episode of "Pieter Erberfeld" was about a man named Alie who assaulted a woman on the island of Penang. The sensational tone of the Penang account does not differ much from that of "Pieter Erberfeld" Also noteworthy is the presence of *syair* in reports from regional correspondents, a literary flourish not present in the prose narrative of P. Bh.

children specifically included), with reference to a letter sent to the Sultan of Banten asking for assistance. Their conversation was interrupted by trumpets accompanying the departure of the Governor-general. They then continued their conversation. Erberfeld talked about the territory they would rule when they succeeded in killing all the Europeans. He made reference to having left Christianity for Islam, then noticed that it was *megrub*, which the author explains is “6:00 prayer”³⁰ This prayer was to be led by Goeroe Hadji Abas.

After they left to pray, two people who had been eavesdropping stepped out of their hiding places. Sarinah was a slave girl and a daughter of Pieter Erberfeld, while Alie was just a slave. The two were in love, and both very frightened by their master's terrible plan. Alie asked Sarinah to run away and marry him, but she rebuffed his proposal because Erberfeld had always treated her so well. Alie left, and Sarinah rushed to tell Erberfeld that he was in danger. Erberfeld refused to believe there was any danger... no one would believe a slave. Sarinah was not reassured by his confidence and was sent to her mother (who is otherwise absent from the narrative).

That night at 10:00, the governor-general received a message in Arabic script from the Sultan of Banten warning him about the conspiracy. Moments after he started to weigh this news, the prosecutor entered to tell him of the plot, which he had learned of from Alie. They agreed that the Sultan of Banten was probably innocent and not a threat to Betawi since he had warned them. Soldiers were sent to surround Erberfeld's house, and late at night they broke in, much to the surprise of Erberfeld and the twelve leaders staying there.

Erberfeld was taken off, and despite Sarinah's repeated appeals to the prosecutor, was executed in a painful manner along with his co-conspirators, Cartadrie, fourteen other men, and three women, on April 22, 1722. A monument was erected with writing in Dutch, Malay and Javanese warning citizens against such treason.³¹ Sarinah died in grief and was buried.

A comparison of this narrative with some of the Dutch language studies mentioned earlier yields some interesting differences. First, most Dutch scholars

³⁰ This story must have been intended in part for non-Muslims who did not know much about Islam. The author clearly expected Chinese and Eurasians to make up the majority of readers.

³¹ This is an interesting mistake, since there were two distinct inscriptions: the Dutch-language inscription at the top and a Javanese inscription at the bottom. This story could not be accompanied by a photograph due to the lack of such technology, at least in the Indies, but it was also not illustrated with an engraving, which was the most common, but still expensive, means of illustration in the nineteenth century.

specifically identify the unnamed mother of Pieter Erberveld as a Siamese woman (Elisabeth Cornells). She may have been classified as a “native” Christian, although marriage to a European brought European status, and then described in subsequent legends or in documents as such, which could explain why our nineteenth-century writers assume that she was Javanese; it would have been difficult for most readers to imagine a Thai woman. Second, Dutch biographies and histories are preoccupied with Pieter Erberveld’s background—his birth and baptism, family members, the pasts of his parents, and so forth. This Malay-language story was focused instead on Pieter Elberveld’s life, centered around the fatally important events of his last year. (The initial paragraph does present a glowing description of the reigning governor-general, Hendrik Zwaarderoon, but otherwise the story largely concentrates on the protagonist.) Elements of Elberveld’s personal background—for instance, the fact that he had a child born of a slave woman—were integrated smoothly into the narrative. In all likelihood, details of this sort would have been remembered by readers even if they were relatively inconspicuous. The Dutch studies present a very different picture; usually these works discuss Erberveld’s background at length in the first section, with the events of the last few years concentrated into the second part.

Comparisons of the Malay story with Dutch publications also reveal that the character Sarinah, and probably the characters of Alie, van der Schuur, and Hadji Abas, have no historical basis and seem to have originated in the imagination of the author. These characters are important for maintaining both a coherent story and a “biography” of Pieter Elberveld. Among other things, they make him human by giving him a beloved and loving child, and they explain the reasons behind his decision to kill the Dutch and his subsequent capture. Without these characters, the story would be an uninteresting, meaningless list of events. Some of them are relatively simple, such as van der Schuur, who caused Erberfeld to betray the Europeans/Christians and even to see himself as alien to their community. Other characters seem to be introduced in order to reshape other characters who commonly figured in Dutch histories; thus Hadji Abas takes the role of the fanatical religious teacher. The Dutch accepted that Islam and fanatical Islamic leaders were involved in any revolt in the Indies, as recent events in Banten (an uprising in July 1888)³² and the ongoing war in Aceh had demonstrated. Only after the introduction of a religious leader into the narrative could Cartadrie become a secular Javanese leader, a revision that suggests

³² Kartodirdjo (1966).

the increasingly secular native government officials of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Another character, the slave Alie, helps explain how Erberfeld is captured and contributes to the development of the loyal daughter, Sarinah. Both Molsbergen and Eijkman and Stapel³³ mention that slaves reported the plot to the government, but aside from these references, there is precious little to indicate the existence of someone like Alie. A reader's sympathy for this character is limited not so much by Alie's betrayal of his master as by the fact that Alie is mistaken in his jealousy of Erberfeld, who he thinks desires Sarinah sexually. Sarinah is the most interesting character, both because of her position as the one major female character and her importance to the development of her father's character. Her love and loyalty to her father reflect both the humanity and vanity of Erberfeld. Sarinah is seemingly "native," but with enough European blood to be exceptional in beauty and character. Like her father, she is marginal to both the European and native groups, but she pulls Pieter closer to the native group in which she is more at home. Her love for Alie helps provide tension to the story, and her fate would be as important to the reader as Pieter Erberfeld's fate. In fact, her death closes the story.

This story also presented the late-nineteenth-century reader with a wide range of information about life in the days of the Company (VOC). One issue which was well represented is inter-racial relationships. Slaves, who presumably should be "native," were common in the household of Pieter Erberfeld and served a Eurasian master who was the father of one of the slaves.³⁴ In this story, being biologically Eurasian did not ensure a higher status than being Javanese, but if the secretly Eurasian Sarinah was forbidden to marry a native slave, then she was clearly of higher status than her peers.³⁵ However, on the whole her racial background was far

³³ Godee Molsbergen (1939: 78); Eijkman and Stapel (1939). Godee Molsbergen cites a report by the advisor on native affairs, Reykert Heere, stating that he had received reports from a seven- to eight-year-old girl and an underage youth who had been given by their parents to Karta Dria to serve him. This is probably what Eijkman and Stapel refer to as "slaves," a reference which could have provided readers with additional confirmation of the story during the period in which this textbook was in use, 1917-1942.

³⁴ The slaves of Batavia originated in a variety of places throughout Asia and Africa, but not from Java itself—a fact that was probably not known to readers of this story. The *lingua franca* of many slaves, like many other residents of Batavia, was Portuguese. Alie's name and unmarked language use (suggesting Malay to readers) give the impression that Alie was from somewhere in the Indonesian archipelago.

³⁵ As Jean Taylor has shown, VOC officials sought to have their daughters marry other VOC

less important than her role as the subject of the romantic tragedy encapsulated within this story. While the Dutch were clearly in control, intelligent, and able, Eurasians and Javanese were still capable of threatening the regime. Yet it was only when a Eurasian denied his European-ness and turned “native” by joining with the Javanese and practicing Islam that he became a danger to the state; the Javanese *per se* were not dangerous to the state. “Javanese” like the Sultan of Banten could be controlled and were judged to be loyal. The social organization of VOC Batavia was thus characterized as having a European-(Eurasian)-Javanese hierarchy, with that hierarchy complicated by slavery. Erberfeld seems not to have belonged to a special Eurasian category, but at times to be an impure and inferior member of the European class and at other times to be a leader of the Javanese. In fact, in this narrative Erberfeld is represented for the most part as an individual rather than as a representative of a particular social group. Thus, although his character could have been seen in several different ways, he did not really represent a subversive Eurasian *class*. This version of the story of Pieter Erberfeld did, however, reinforce an image of absolute European power vis-a-vis other groups, the treachery of Islam and potentially natives under its influence, and the importance of racial purity.

Many other issues were addressed in the story by bits of information. For example, Javanese, Eurasians, and Dutch lived within the city of Batavia and included non-Christians. The lack of European women in the story is striking, as Erberfeld has no apparent wife, although Dutch records show he was married to a woman of European status. Samita, Sarinah, and the native mother of Sarinah were the only women mentioned, implying that Eurasian and Javanese men could not have had access to European women. While this may have been a fair representation of the eighteenth-century past, it would have had a very different meaning in late nineteenth-century Java as it was experienced by the author and his readers. The absence of women also suggests that rebellion was concentrated almost entirely in the male sphere, despite acknowledgement that three women were executed for their roles in the conspiracy. That information is so marginal, however, that most readers

officials, creating an essential local family network for otherwise “new” personnel. Erberfeld’s actions in this story are consistent with common practice at this time, though fathers’ involvement in daughters’ marriages was more generally restricted to officially acknowledged daughters. See Taylor (1983) or the slightly expanded second edition (Taylor 2009).

would have quickly forgotten it and assumed only men were involved, especially as even Erberfeld's daughter was not punished. All of this material was part of this history and so was available to subscribers of *Sinar Terang* in 1889 to read, retell, enjoy, and learn.

B. 1924: Adulthood

Pieter Elberveld next appeared to Malay-language readers in 1924 in a short novel written by Tio Ie Soei.³⁶ While histories of events in 1721 and biographical notes were published in the interim period, they appeared as formal Dutch studies and English stories that would not have been easily accessible to the Indonesian public, especially to those who read or wrote Malay histories. For example, a distinctive nineteenth-century English story about Elberveld was published in an English-language reader edited by a teacher in the HBS section of the Gymnasium Willem III in Batavia in 1905.³⁷ This would have reached a small number of elite students, mostly of European backgrounds. De Haan's *Priangan* (1910-12) and the second edition of the *Encyclopaedië van Nederlandsch Indië* (1917-) were expensive but broadly distributed Dutch reference books that included some information on Erberfeld, Governor-general Zwaarderoon, and the revolt, but the most widely read Dutch language material was undoubtedly the Eijkman & Stapel textbook for middle schools first published in 1917. These publications did influence late twentieth-century writings about the events, however Tio Ie Soei went back to Ritter's 1843 collection of stories for inspiration in writing his history.

Tio Ie Soei was a *peranakan* Chinese man born in Batavia in 1890, one year after "Pieter Erberfeld" appeared in *Sinar Terang*.³⁸ He was educated in a private Dutch school, but probably did not reach secondary school.³⁹ In addition to Malay, Tio

³⁶ Tio Ie Soei (1924). *Pieter Elberveld (Satoe Kedjadian jang Betoel di Betawi)* was published by De Pertoendjangan in Weltevreden, Batavia.

³⁷ d'Almeida, "Peter Elberfeld's Treason" (1905). This story was originally published in William Barrington d'Almeida, *Life in Java with Sketches of the Javanese*, vol. 1 (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1864), pp. 35-52.

³⁸ Tio Ie Soei died in 1974. For more information about Tio Ie Soei and a list of his writings, see Salmon (1981: 339-341). See also Suryadinata (1995: 195); and Tan (1935: 54).

³⁹ Based on the information provided by Claudine Salmon (1981: p. 339), we can conclude that if Tio Ie Soei began school at age six, it is possible for him to have obtained six years of

Ie Soei is said to have learned Dutch, English, German, French, and Chinese, which certainly would have provided him with the chance to read works written in a more formal style than was used in the Malay press. By 1905, he was working for newspapers in Batavia (including *Perniagaan*), and although he moved around Java and Borneo, he remained in that business until around 1958. His publications ranged from novels to formal biographies (particularly notable is his 1959 biography of the nineteenth-century writer Lie Kim Hok). He also translated stories and biographies into Malay from Chinese and Western languages. His last works resembling novels were published in 1926, making *Pieter Elberveld* one of his later stories, one probably written during a five-year period of vegetable farming and writing in Pengalengan near Bandung.

Tio Ie Soei based some stories on very recent events (“news literature”)—for example his 1925 publication, *Hikajat Pemboenohan Doorman* (The Story of the Killing of Doorman)⁴⁰—but of his stories dealing with more remote history, this novel is most able both to reach an audience and to leave some impression of the events and characters making up that history.⁴¹ The name Elberveld would have meant *something* to many potential readers in the 1920s—whether due to orally transmitted stories or knowledge of the monument—which would make this novel more interesting to its audience. The *Sin Po Wekelijksche-editie* of July 7, 1923 (p. 216) had published a picture of the monument, with the skull and much of the Dutch and Javanese inscriptions clearly visible, and accompanied by a simple explanation in Malay. In addition, as previously mentioned, some Dutch history texts from at least 1917 also discussed Pieter Elberveld. The fact that Tio Ie Soei had made a name for himself as both an author and an editor of a Batavia newspaper would have also helped to attract an audience.

elementary education in an ELS (Europeesche Lagere School, European Elementary School), as well as three years of HBS or other continuing schooling. It is likely that he received less formal education, however, since this would have been an extremely high level of education for this period.

⁴⁰ Tjoa Pit Bak (1925).

⁴¹ Another of these stories, also written under the pseudonym Tjoa Piet Bak (1926), told the story of the half-Japanese daughter of Jacques Specx (VOC Governor-general, 1629-1932). Along with her lover, Sara was punished for a pre-marital love affair by Governor-general Jan Pieterzoon Coen shortly before his death and the arrival of Sara’s father from the Netherlands. For inspiration, Tio Ie Soei again turned to a publication by W. L. Ritter (1845) entitled “Sara Specx. Batavia in 1629.” This was published in *Nieuw Indische Verhalen en Herinneringen uit Vroegeren en Lateren Tijd*, vol. I, issued by the Bataviaasch Genootschap.

The audience for this publication may have been constituted of about half Chinese readers and half “native” residents of major cities in Java, especially Batavia. There are several reasons to suspect that the book attracted a mixed readership. The number of Chinese in Java was small, but a relatively high percentage received some form of primary education, so that a comparatively higher percentage of that group would have been literate in Malay, Dutch, and Chinese, and would have also earned relatively high incomes; they could afford to buy and read books. On the other hand, the number of “native” residents was much larger, and many received some primary education. This is reflected in the statistics on native literacy offered in the 1930 census, which suggest that in 1920 around 6.5 percent of adult, and 3.2 percent of juvenile, males on Java and Madura were literate in some writing system, and that 0.5 percent of adult, and 0.6 percent of juvenile, females were literate. For 1930, the census suggested that 11.4 percent and 7.6 percent of the native males, and 1.3 percent and 1.6 percent of the native females, were literate.⁴² Thus there was a rapidly growing and relatively young potential readership among native Indonesians. Admittedly, the Malay press had developed an ethnic Chinese component that had separated, to some extent, from the Eurasian and “native” press since the late nineteenth century, but the content of this particular story seems to have been aimed at both Chinese and non-Chinese readers. Some prospective native readers might have been hesitant to purchase or read a book by a Chinese author, but the appealing title should have overcome their reluctance. When this novel entered lending libraries, it probably would have reached many Chinese and native Indonesian readers literate in Malay and provided their only substantial basis of knowledge concerning this history, supplemented by stories their elders may have told.

If the reader had not been exposed to Dutch scholarship, which was the case for most Malay readers in the 1920s, this work would surely impress him as authoritative and credible, despite its obvious novel form. The impressions of Pieter Elberveld for readers of primary level education in the 1920s, whether lasting or not, would have been based primarily on their interpretation of this novel. Although Tio Ie Soei apparently did not question the colonial order in his acceptance of Elberveld’s conspiracy as evil (*djahat*), this frame would have been very familiar to all readers.

⁴² *Volkstelling* 1930, vol. V, chapter VIII, p. 83 and vol. VIII, chapter IX, p. 31. See Maier (1993) for an interesting discussion of the problems with the literacy figures in the 1930s census.

Additionally, while things like tone (opinion) are very subjective, minimally a little of the biographical story and relationships between characters might have stuck in the minds of the readers. This knowledge could be passed on by reading the story to others, retelling the story, or reusing the knowledge created in the novel in an entirely different context.⁴³

Figure 10. Illustration from *Sin Po Wekelijksche-editie* 14,1 (July 7, 1923)

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SIN PO



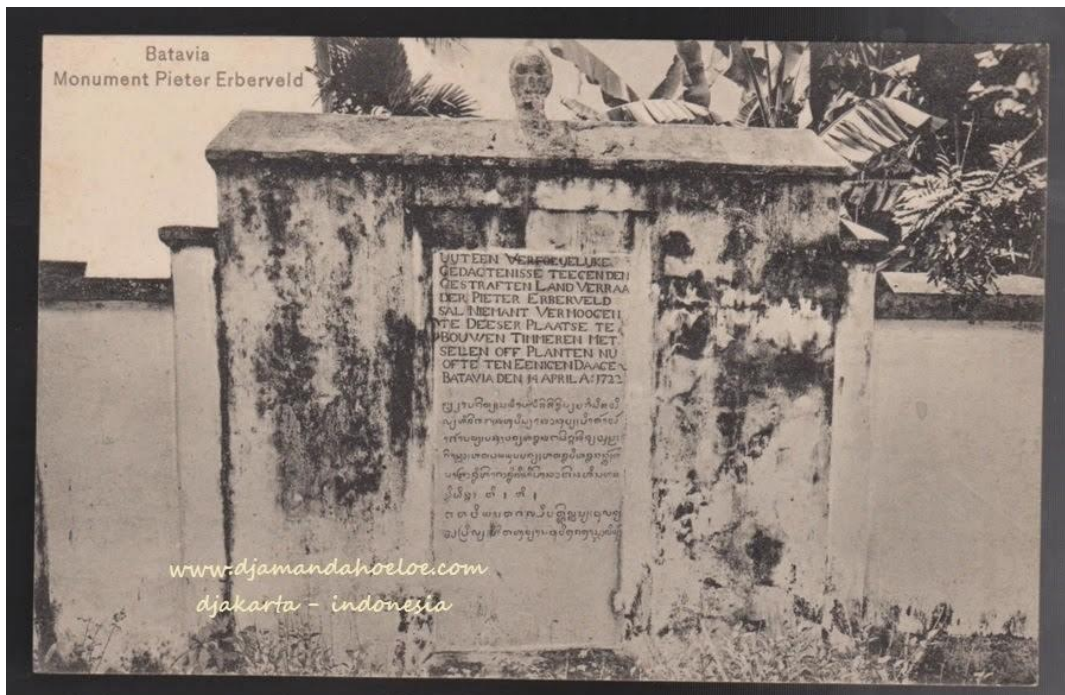
Pieter Elberfeld, toeroenan Duitsch, dengen iboe Djawa, dihoekoem beset oleh empat koeda lantaran kapalaken persakoetoean hianat boeat roeboehken kompeni.

Di koeboerannja tiada boleh didirikan roemah boeat salamanja.

Gambar di atas ada menoendjoek tempat dan pertandaän di mana ia dikoeboer. Petja-koelit ada tempat dimana ia telah dihoekoem.

⁴³ These observations apply to the 1889 version as well as oral retellings, which may have been even more common at that time. Pramoedya (1982), for example, mentions that there were newspaper subscribers who couldn't read themselves and had to have others read aloud to them.

Figure 11. Colonial Era Postcard.



Post card published by Uitgave G.Kolff & Co Batavia no seri 11510, date unknown. Personal collection.

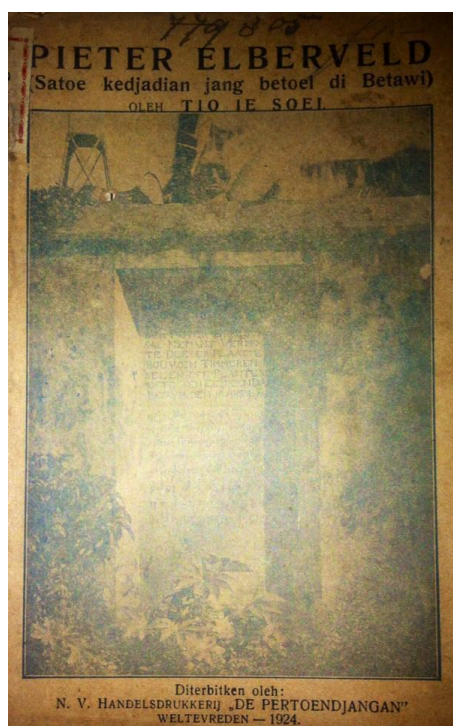
Tio Ie Soei adapted his text from Ritter’s Dutch-language story, meaning that he produced a work very similar to P. Bh’s 1889 version, though it was longer, filling sixty-one (not-very-dense) pages.⁴⁴ Some details were changed (like the age of Governor-general Zwaardecroon in 1718)⁴⁵ and some parts rephrased, perhaps due to the author relying on a bad copy of Ritter’s story, the author not understanding the earlier text fully, or a desire to “modernize” the logic to fit current expectations. For instance, the two versions differ in describing van der Schuur’s insulting of Elberveld, an incident which provides the rationale for Elberveld’s break with the Dutch. Tio Ie Soei did not effectively explain why the incident takes place, while the 1889 version explicitly states that it took place because Elberveld was deemed insufficiently respectful towards the VOC.

⁴⁴ Although unlikely, Tio Ie Soei may have had access to *Sinar Terang* or a later Malay-language version of the story. Besides the professional need as an editor and writer to follow other newspapers, he conducted research on the development of the Dutch East Indies press. While this research was published much later, it suggests a long-term interest in older periodicals.

⁴⁵ Both P. Bh. and W. L. Ritter claimed that Zwaardecroon was fifty-eight years old at the time of his installment as Governor-general on November 13, 1718. Zwaardecroon was born on January 26, 1667, making him fifty-one at that time, and fifty-four at the time of the Pieter Elberveld incident. Bezemer (1921).

Tio Ie Soei's narrative would likely have been as authoritative as the 1889 version had been in its representation of an historic event. While not sandwiched between newspaper articles, the book version still framed the story with a recognizably masterful display of historical knowledge. Two changes in form may have helped as well: the expansion of the latter portions of the story, specifically to include some gory details about Dutch execution techniques,⁴⁶ and inclusion of the monument inscription in a different format and font so it stood out on the page like a plaque on the monument itself. Finally, the cover of the book presented a spooky grayish blue photograph of the monument with the spiked skull. This distinctive photograph undoubtedly served both to attract attention and to provide further evidence of the story's truth.

Figure 12. Cover of the 1924 Tio Ie Soei publication.



The 1920s was a period of intense activity by the government, politically oriented newspapers, and the activists who managed them. Some of the more radical newspapers were frequently confiscated and its publishers arrested. Strikes had been common for several years, but were increasingly frustrated by the Dutch. The tension must have been apparent to Tio Ie Soei and many potential readers, even if the Chinese press was to some extent isolated from this struggle. Such tensions would have made this tale about a revolution against the Dutch immediately relevant and interesting, especially after the remnants of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) launched a revolt against the Dutch colonial government in 1926-27. In this context, the racial make-up of characters could be important, depending on the identity of the reader and how they chose to interpret the story. The existence of the category “Eurasian” was significant in such a context. For example, the two people who betrayed Pieter Elberveld were Javanese, but since Elberveld was Eurasian

⁴⁶ These details were put in quotation marks and referred to as the verdict.

(though legally European) and portrayed negatively, the Javanese could be absolved of their treachery. At the same time, Elberfeld was Islamic and anti-Dutch, qualities that he shared with Javanese, thus forming a link between Eurasians and Javanese. With a lot of effort, the negative bias *could* be ignored, creating a radical nationalist history of the type which the PKI and the *Indische Partij* at least might have endorsed. This sort of complexity offered critical readers in the 1920s ways of seeing moral and racial judgements not possible in 1889, and made Pieter Elberfeld a dangerous historical character.

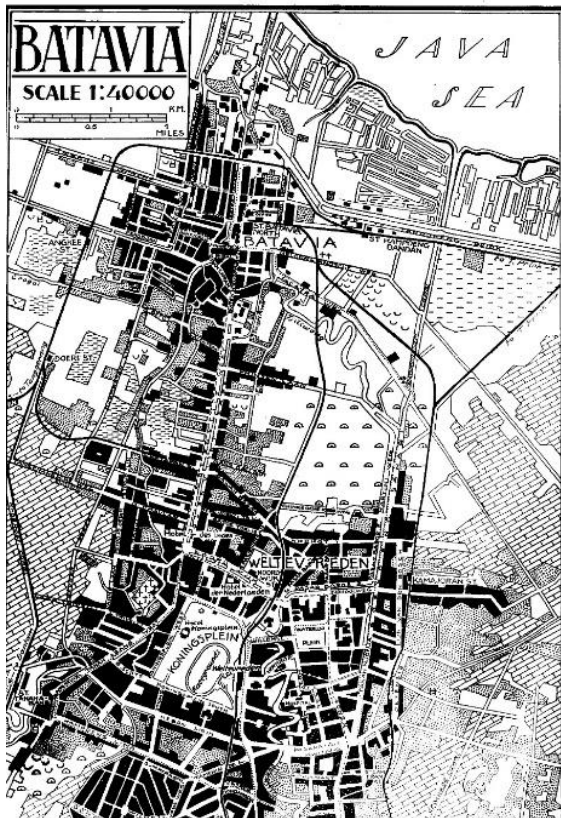


Figure 13. Batavia in 1930

Section of a map from *Van Stockum's Travellers' Handbook for the Dutch East Indies* by S. A. Reitsma (The Hague: W. P. Van Stockum & Son, 1930). This map shows the electric tram route passing down the Jacatraweg and faces page 172, which talks about the “white-washed human skull” and Pieter Elberfeld.

Questions concerning the story's effect on Indonesian society are difficult to address, but there are indications that it was indeed significant. One of C. R. Boxer's popular histories and an article by Jusuf Nur Arif (Nio Joe Lan) have noted that the Eurasian community had requested the dismantling of this monument during the 1930s, but that the colonial government had denied this request.⁴⁷ Perhaps significantly, a Dutch-language biographical dictionary that was published beginning

⁴⁷ Boxer (1979: 67-8); and Jusuf Nur Arif, “Kisah Pieter Erberfeld-Kasus Rencana Makar di Zaman Penjajahan,” in *Batavia: Kisah Jakarta Tempo Doeloe* (Kumpulan karangan dari Majalah *Intisari* 1963-1988), (Jakarta: Gramedia, nd.). This article was originally published in 1968. Without a clear citation, Boxer also claimed the monument “remained until 1941,” a date which is obviously incorrect.

in 1910 finally, in 1930, found Pieter Erberveld important enough to include in the eighth volume.⁴⁸ The sources for this entry included an important book published in 1910 (de Haan) and little newer material, indicating that its inclusion in this volume was because the editors now found him important. Several other histories of the Indies published in the 1930s and 1940s also devoted a few pages and a picture to Pieter Erberveld, his revolt, and his monument. Not surprisingly, drivers-cum-guides, like the Batavian Ahmat in 1934, took their customers to the monument and were able to relate some version of the “unfortunate” traitor’s story.⁴⁹ Finally, some exiles to Boven Digul, the Dutch internment camp for Indonesian political prisoners, were not only aware of Pieter Elberveld, but also considered him a freedom fighter; in 1929, a certain Puradisastra talked about him in a speech commemorating the death of a prisoner killed by police.⁵⁰

Curiously, the most substantial publication on Pieter Elberveld in the 1930s, while never mentioning Tio Ie Soei or Indonesian knowledge about the event, cut to the core of the authority of Tio Ie Soei’s history. *De Indische Gids* in 1938 published a two-part article entitled “’t Erberveld-proces” by G. B. J. van Heuven, which clearly identified the “story”—as opposed to the historical—elements of the Ritter version.⁵¹ While some of the article’s information is wrong (such as Ritter’s profession: “if we are not mistaken, a priest”), still its direct quotations of Dutch documents, its complaints about missing archival documents needed to check the story (sources which are thus only represented in de Roo’s 1866 history), and its inclusion of a large amount of detailed information make this a powerful counter-argument to the Indonesian reader-friendly Tio Ie Soei version. It is thus tempting to see this as a direct response to the Tio Ie Soei/Ritter narrative and a testament to the success and popularity of the drama as it was shaped by those authors. Van Heuven’s article was relatively hard to read and was located in a colonial journal where only highly educated readers would see it. Coincidentally, perhaps, this article has been forgotten, even by well-educated, Dutch-trained scholars.

⁴⁸ *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biographisch Woordenboek*, vol. 8.

⁴⁹ Lockhart (1945: 253-4).

⁵⁰ Bondan (1992: 128). Puradisastra got the details wrong, placing the revolt of the half-Dutch, half-Javanese hero in around 1745, during the tenure of Governor-General Valkenier (whose shortened term in office was actually 1737-41). Interestingly, the details of the execution (a prominent feature of both the 1939 Godee Molsbergen book and the Tio Ie Soei novel) and of the location of the monument were more accurate.

⁵¹ Heuven (1938: 417-29, 528-39).

C. A Rebel without a Monument, 1940s-1960s

Despite requests of the Eurasian community, it was not until the victorious Japanese army took control in Indonesia that the monument was removed. The demolition, which probably took place in mid-1942, was reportedly accompanied by the ceremonial burial of the skull by Japanese troops,⁵² and followed by occupation of the land by local residents. The Japanese military authorities, whose permission would have been essential for any publication concerning Pieter Elberveld during the Occupation, had rather ambivalent feelings about him, as Mayumi Yamamoto has shown.⁵³ This ambivalence stemmed, in part, from the Japanese regime's desire that Indonesians forget the Dutch, as reflected in a short article on the use of books in the schools of Probolinggo. This article stated that "similarly, if those books that are used have words or phrases that might make students remember the Dutch government they should be eliminated. This should be done in an appropriate manner by the teachers."⁵⁴ This is without doubt one reason why Elberveld rarely appeared in Indonesian publications of that period—and in fact only one mention of him has been identified.

A photograph of Pieter Erberveld being honored, with his skull and the inscription covered by an extended Japanese flag, flanked by large flower bouquets, with a table for incense and ceremonial offerings, all bathed in warm sunlight, appeared in a special issue of *Pandji Poestaka* commemorating the first anniversary of the Netherlands East Indies' surrender to Japan. This picture was accompanied by a characteristically grim, washed-out photo of the monument in the pre-war period—undoubtedly copied from a pre-war publication—meant to contrast Dutch disregard with Japanese respect for Elberveld. Nowhere was it noted that the monument had been or would be demolished.

⁵² "Silang-siur Tentang Pieter Erbervelt," *Kompas*, August 7, 1981.

⁵³ Yamamoto (2004).

⁵⁴ "Boekoe jang boleh dipakai dalam sekolah," *Asia Raya* 44 (June 12, 1942): 4.

Figure 14. Respected martyr.

Illustration from *Pandji Poestaka*, th. XXI, 9/10 (8 Mart 2603)

The visual impact of the pictures is striking, however the text accompanying the brighter picture is as important. Entitled “Opposing the Dutch” it reads:

Approximately two hundred years ago, a few sons of Mataram, helped by an Indo-German named Pieter Erbeveld, along with his friend Karto Drijo, attempted to topple and seize power from the Dutch in Djakarta. Unfortunately this attempt did not succeed. Pieter Erbeveld and his friends were arrested and sentenced to death. Pieter Erbeveld’s head was impaled and stuck into a wall in a place in Djakarta by the Dutch government to make [him] into a sign of the

fate of those who dare to revolt against Dutch power. Now, in this period of change, Pieter Erberveld's service receives **appropriate respect**.

As one of the very few new representations about Elberveld during this period (copies of Tio Ie Soei's novel and oral stories may have continued to circulate), this picture would have had a significant impact on its readers. The readership of *Pandji Poestaka* had expanded dramatically due to restrictions on other publications and efforts to increase Indonesian language literacy; it was thus minimally in the tens of thousands.⁵⁵ However, distribution was largely limited to Java (the area administered by the Japanese 16th Army), and, judging from library collections today, it appears that few copies of the periodical survived the war and revolution.

The new nation achieved independence in 1945-1950 without a monument to Pieter Elberveld. Nonetheless, references to his failed rebellion continued to appear after independence, including one from the early 1950s framed as a discussion of the historical origins of the name Pecah Kulit.⁵⁶ Phoa Kian Sioe's story, published early in 1951, is very different from previously published narratives.⁵⁷ It appeared in a large-format Sunday magazine filled with discussions of politics and social issues (such as elimination of polygamy or preparations for war destroying American education), as well as film and entertainment. This story covered two full pages, and included a picture of the original monument which it described as Elberveld's "grave." The introduction mentioned that the Dutch government covered the skull with plaster (*kapur*) to eliminate the stench—at least according to stories people used to tell. According to Phoa, the Japanese government's destruction of the monument was intended to prevent people from remembering events which had taken place hundreds of years earlier. Phoa noted that "the Japanese People" forgot that a history (*satu riwayat*) cannot be permanently eliminated because people will recompile that history (*sejarah itu*) which they find useful.

⁵⁵ According to *Balai Poestaka Sewadjarnja 1908-1942* (1948: 31), the number of subscribers during the occupation grew to around twenty thousand and would have expanded further but for the limitations placed on it by the Japanese military authorities.

⁵⁶ Phoa Kian Sioe, "Sabagian Riwayat Djakarta: Asal-Usulnja Kampung Petjah Kulit," *Sunday Courier*, III, no. 3 (January 21, 1951), pp. 8-9.

⁵⁷ Phoa Kian Sioe was a writer active in the Jakarta area from 1949-1956, with an active interest in history and music. His writings not only appeared in *Sunday Courier*, but also in periodicals like *Pantja Warna* and in monograph form, e.g. *Sedjarahnja: Souw Beng Kong, Phoa Beng Can, Oey Tamba Sia* (Djakarta: Reporter, 1956).

Phoa Kian Sioe's version of the story begins with the incarceration of Erberveld's father for corruption. When young Pieter and his mother, a strongly Islamic Bantenese woman, went to visit him in prison, his father asked Pieter to seek revenge for him someday. After serving half of the six-month sentence, Pieter Sr. died, and subsequently Kijai Tubagus Kartaderia, the elder brother of Pieter Sr's widow, came to Batavia to cheer up his sister. Kartaderia eventually brought his wife and daughter to Batavia, where he provided Islamic instruction to a number of people, including Lt. Untung Surapati⁵⁸ and Pieter Jr. According to this narrative, Pieter Erberveld became a renowned teacher of Islam by age twenty and was a "fanatic" Muslim, despite his Christian schooling. One day, a slave named Tombok, who was jealous of Raden Untung Surapati's relationship with Kartaderia's daughter, Nji Bagus Sukarningsih, confronted her, threatening unnamed consequences if his love was not returned. Shocked, she told her aunt and uncle (Pieter Elberveld), who had the household's chief slave beat Tombok. Tombok later slipped out and reported Elberveld's conspiracy to a Dutch officer who provided money and a promise of the rank of sergeant if the plot were foiled.

Only after this event is described does the narrator inform the reader that Kijai Tubagus Kartaderia had recently traveled to Banten not to teach, but to recruit people for a revolt. Recruits were given a red cloth with an Arabic inscription as a *jimat* (amulet) to insure invulnerability. On November 1, 1721, fifteen people recruited by Elberveld and fifteen people recruited by Kartaderia in Batavia, ostensibly "to found a Langgar [Islamic school]" in the back yard of the family's house. However, on November 10, Tombok discovered 120 people and learned from a friend that they were fasting for forty days before beginning a "holy war." He promptly reported this news to the Dutch officer, who repeated his promise and gave him more money. On the night of the revolt, Elberveld's house was surrounded by VOC troops,

⁵⁸ The Balinese Surapati, brigand and VOC soldier in the Batavian area, fled to Central Java in 1684 after attacking a VOC detachment. In central Java, he was the leader of the famous slaughter of Captain Tack and his men near the court, after which he fled to east Java, remaining a major figure until his death in 1706. Ricklefs (1981: 79-82, 87). Surapati's involvement in this story is anachronistic, as the last time he was in Batavia, Pieter would have been around eight years old. Surapati's death in 1706 also presumably precludes his involvement in the Elberveld conspiracy, but the anachronism conveniently links these two figures and gives seniority to the aristocratic, Bantenese Kartaderia. Phoa probably was inspired by links to Surapati's descendants which are occasionally mentioned in Dutch sources. According to Dutch interpretations of Lay Ek's confession, the Javanese Kartadriya was sent to Batavia by a son of Surapati, Ingabeij Passar. See Ricklefs (1993: 382, n. 69).

but somehow Surapati's troops were able to approach it and join Elberveld's men as promised. A battle ensued, and after Kartaderia was shot and killed by a Dutch soldier, his students fled. Surapati entered the house, rescued Nji Bagus Sukarningsih, and took her to Banten. Elberveld continued the battle, fighting until his strength was gone and he was captured. The Dutch officer in charge gave the order to immediately punish the resisting Elberveld, so he was tied to several horses and torn to pieces.⁵⁹

In what seems to be characteristic of many of the colonial-era writings, the protagonist and other characters are not portrayed as either ideal heroes or despicable villains. The author—and perhaps his readers—seems not to have required that Pieter Elberveld Sr. be faultless in order to want or deserve revenge, thus he is not condemned in the story when he asks his son to seek retribution. Pieter Elberveld Jr. also seems to have been understood and accepted by the author, while the Governor-general, the protagonist's enemy, is portrayed as a good man.

In 1964-65, Tio Ie Soei's version of Pieter Elberveld was republished in serial form, with only linguistic revisions. These changes made the text much more readable for a popular audience, but did not significantly alter the meaning of the text itself. However, both the placing of the story in a newspaper adjacent to other articles and stories, and the new context of the 1960s, did change the potential meanings of the Pieter Elberveld story. The leftist Jakarta newspaper that reprinted it, *Bintang Timur*, published a *Lentera* page devoted to the arts in each Sunday edition. Besides the republication of older stories to make them more accessible, this page frequently included informative articles on literature and sharp "scholarly" attacks on other literary figures. Generally, the *Lentera* page served as a forum for individuals close to Pramoedya Ananta Toer, one of Indonesia's more important literary figures from the late 1940s.

While Tio Ie Soei's "Pieter Elberveld" became more available and more readable in the 1960s as a result of its republication in *Bintang Timur*, we cannot confidently identify its reading audience. Certainly, in the 1960s, the vast majority of Indonesians could read Indonesian, and *Bintang Timur's* circulation would have been very, very high in comparison to newspapers in the nineteenth century. A substantial

⁵⁹ The author then cited a history of Indonesia by van Rykevorsel which contradicts this, stating that Elberveld was beheaded and buried in front of his house.

number of people were also involved in producing the *Lentera* page, and they would almost certainly have read “Pieter Elberveld.” However, the page's strident attacks on famous figures and the implicit interest in “art” may have alienated some potential readers, leaving an audience made up of those with more conscious interests in the arts and the requisite political views. There were also significant numbers of Chinese-Indonesian readers for this publication, although almost certainly not a majority. Chinese-Indonesian writers were published in the *Lentera* pages, and stories related to China could have attracted other ethnic Chinese readers. *Significantly*, *peranakan* Chinese contributions to Indonesian culture were not ignored by *Bintang Timur*. Taking such facts into account, we can conclude that readers were likely to have numbered in the thousands.

Tio Ie Soei's “Pieter Elberveld” now became more significant as a statement about early twentieth-century literature and society than as a historical report on the eighteenth-century rebel, Pieter Erberveld. That was certainly the orientation of those who published the story in *Bintang Timur*, since they were primarily interested in literary and political figures in the late-colonial period. The more sophisticated readers would have felt this, especially since serialized literature was a regular feature of *Lentera* and *Bintang Timur* in general. However, as *Lentera*'s rendition of the story was virtually identical to the 1924 publication, the text still would have spoken strongly in presenting its version of the events of 1721-2. Even if readers in the 1960s knew comparatively little about Elberveld, which seems likely, the impact of this story on readers' understanding of Indonesian history would have been significant. Race was not such a sensitive issue at this time, since the Dutch had left Indonesia fifteen years earlier, although the confrontation with the Dutch over West Irian a few years earlier might still have resonated, and Eurasians were still being stereotyped as gangsters, hustlers, and whores.⁶⁰ It is difficult to judge to what extent non-European ethnicity would have been important to this audience, but racial ambiguity probably did not play a major role in making Pieter Elberveld a dangerous figure in 1965. Issues of loyalty—for example the disloyalty of Pieter Elberveld to the VOC—may have been more important to readers at this time. On the other hand, Dutch power may have seemed suspicious to readers, providing sympathy to Sarinah and her father.

⁶⁰ Thanks to Benedict Anderson for bringing this point to my attention.

The reappearance of this story immediately preceded a period of violent unrest. At the time of publication not only was *Bintang Timur* filled with violent language, but President Sukarno had declared 1964-5 to be “a year of living dangerously” Tension was in the air. Not only did the story’s violence fit the prevailing mood, but the execution of Pieter Elberveld could have served as a warning to those who dared betray President-for-life Sukarno and/or the Indonesian masses. The resolution of the tension was again not favorable for Indonesian leftists. In the months following a coup attempt on October 1, 1965, or at least what was made out to be a coup attempt, hundreds of thousands of people were killed and a new government led by General Suharto took control. As a result, Pramoedya Ananta Toer was exiled from Java, *Bintang Timur* banned, and back issues in the National Library locked up away from all readers lacking permission of BAKIN (Badan Koordinasi Intelijen Negara, State Intelligence Coordination Agency).

D. The New Order and the Re-establishment of History

A few years after the left-oriented Sukarno government was replaced by the more rightist Suharto government, the Jakarta Regional Government’s Museum and History Service published what was apparently the first self-conscious “historical note” about Pieter Erberveld in Indonesian.⁶¹ The author, Drs. S. Z. Hadisutjipto,⁶² drew on several of the most famous Dutch scholars who dealt with Erberveld, but the principal source of inspiration and information was Tio Ie Soei’s 1924 novel.⁶³ Hadisutjipto sought to understand who Pieter Erberveld was, his personality, actions, and reasons for those actions. This effort made the work interesting and readable, while the influence of Tio Ie Soei made it a very strange formal history.

⁶¹ Hadisutjipto (1970). This publication was entitled *Pieter Erberveld: Mentjoba Meraih Bintang*.

⁶² Sudibjo Z. Hadisutjipto was born in Pemalang on August 17, 1936. A teacher at one time, he became the head of the Central Museum’s manuscript section for ten years and the director of the Gedung Kebangkitan Nasional for six years. In 1991, he was the head of the Balai Pustaka manuscript division, and was teaching at Universitas Indonesia. His publications include histories as well as a larger number of translations or retellings of historical stories, both from Dutch and Javanese originals. Hadisutjipto (1991).

⁶³ The only sources mentioned in the text were a piece by Barchewitz (1730) and Tio Ie Soei’s book. An attached list of “reading material” listed five items, including de Haan’s previously mentioned book, de Roo’s 1866 article, Tio Ie Soei’s book, a publication by J. A. van der Chys on Kapitein Jonker (who died in 1689!), and the facsimile and discussion of the inscription by A. B. Cohen Stuart.

Despite interest in those matters, Hadisutjipto's primary focus was the issue of national hero status. His introduction urgently raised the following questions: "What is our characterization of Pieter Erberveld now? Is it proper that he be described as an Indonesian national hero, while he was not an Indonesian . . . ?" (p. 3). This formal problem reflects a conscious effort to identify and secure the histories of Indonesian national heroes on paper and in the minds of the citizens of Suharto's New Order Indonesia. The writing of this history was essential because, as noted in the forward by G. A. Warmansjah, BA, the acting head of the Museum and History Service, knowledge "would gradually erode, become foggy, and finally be completely lost from people's memory if there was no effort to inform [the people] or retell the events which took place in that area 250 years ago" This parallels New Order attempts to control memories of the events of 1965-6 as well as memories of the PKI and historical figures from earlier periods—only government historians could properly preserve memories.

This publication addressed primarily academic or administrative audiences interested in history, and would have been available to anyone with access to a large number of libraries, yet it was probably rarely read. Government publications are not known for being exciting, popular works, but they are available to those that seek them. In fact, we know that this publication was read by at least a few people, including the authors of a TV screenplay and a review of the TV drama. Later editions may have been intended for use in schools as well, and if used for that purpose would have reached a more substantial audience.⁶⁴

The structure of the paper was intended to make the conclusions authoritative to an audience with exposure to academic scholarship. For example, the background of Pieter Erberveld and his family are discussed first, paralleling Dutch biographical studies. Where this paper becomes unusual is in Hadisutjipto's use of Tio Ie Soei's 1924 novel. Hadisutjipto carefully cites Tio Ie Soei's suggestions that Elberveld hated the Dutch because of van der Schuur and that Elberveld's "guru besar dan pembina jiwa" (teacher and spiritual guide) was a certain "Hadji Abas." In neither case is the accuracy of Tio Ie Soei's information questioned, despite the absence of references in

⁶⁴ This text was republished several times, with a second edition being published in 1971 and the "third edition" in 1994. The 1994 edition seems to carry the introduction from the 1971 edition, as it is significantly different from the introduction to the 1970 edition. This new edition has leading words of the following page noted at the bottom as an aid for reading aloud.

the Dutch sources listed in the bibliography. In this work, Tio Ie Soei thus figures as an equal or superior source of information compared to Dutch scholars or archival documents. The two reasons Hadisutjipto suggests for the Dutch discovery of the planned revolt are drawn from Tio Ie Soei's work as well (the betrayal of Elberveld by the Sultan of Banten and Ali). Rather than questioning this information, or even the very existence of a plot, Hadisutjipto explains at great length why the Sultan of Banten was forced to behave in the way he did.

Tio Ie Soei's text is used in even stranger ways in later parts of Hadisutjipto's text. After explaining that a certain dialogue between Kartadria and Elberveld was a product of Tio Ie Soei's imagination, for two pages he quotes the novel, then states that "based on the dialogue above, it can be ascertained that at the moment that Ali gave his report to Captain Cruse [the Governor-general's assistant], the revolt planned by Pieter Erberveld was only two or three days away." The contradiction implicit in Hadisutjipto making this and subsequent conclusions on the basis of an excerpt he himself identified as "imagination" is fascinating. The questionable existence of Ali is not even problematic for this author. After another four page quote, Hadisutjipto lapses into his own voice, then gradually shifts to a close paraphrase of Tio Ie Soei's novel, including conversation. All this is without citation or quotation marks. It is just the history of Pieter Elberveld.⁶⁵

While Hadisutjipto's text clearly shows sloppiness and a lack of critical thinking, these weaknesses do not fully explain the author's ideas and intentions in composing the text nor how readers might have seen this publication. This study effectively took Tio Ie Soei's *Pieter Elberveld* and gave it a new coat and new authority. The real audience addressed was clearly restricted, but republication in 1971 and 1994 ensured its continued availability. Significantly, the highlighted parts of the 1924 story are the very elements that Ritter had created from his imagination in the 1840s because they provided information which interests readers, among them some historians.

⁶⁵ S. Z. Hadisutjipto deserves to be remembered for one other text—a letter—which he wrote. Upon his return from Buru, Pramoedya Ananta Toer wrote to Balai Pustaka to inquire about manuscripts related to early twentieth-century literature which he had submitted for publication in 1965. As the responsible Balai Pustaka official, Hadisutjipto responded that there were no such documents, but if there were, they would have to be burned. Thanks to Pramoedya for showing me this letter.

Readers had more sources of information available to them, however. The historical picture book *Djakarta Djaja Sepandjang Masa*, by R. Mohamad Ali S. S. and F. Bodmer,⁶⁶ published a large one-page photo of the monument and a short explanation. More significantly, an article in the popular magazine *Intisari*, which appeared in 1968⁶⁷ provided a rather different picture, focusing on the question of whether this was a story of betrayal (of the Dutch) or an unfair legal process. Based almost entirely on a 1939 work by “Prof. Dr. Godee Molsbergen,”⁶⁸ Junus Nur Arif (Nio Joe Lan) suggested that the confessions of Erbervelt and Kartadriya were obtained through torture and were largely concocted to please the torturers. No other major character of the Ritter-Tio Ie Soei version appeared in his discussion, and Erbervelt’s hatred of the Dutch was said to have resulted, in large part, from a dispute over his inheritance. Junus Nur Arif was not only able to read and write fluently in Dutch, but was an important critic of Chinese-Indonesian literature, and his 1962 book on the subject had briefly mentioned Tio Ie Soei’s novel.⁶⁹ By sticking close to Dutch sources, however, he implicitly suggested that the Tio Ie Soei novel was literature and not history. Such a view would have been obvious to readers of *Bintang Timur* who had seen the 1964-5 serialized story in or who had carefully read Nio Joe Lan’s 1962 book.

Developments during this period are of special importance because the monument seems to have been rebuilt by the Jakarta History and Museum Service at this time.⁷⁰ It is not clear whether this reconstruction was part of the commemoration of the founding of the city, part of the evolving “project mentality” of New Order Indonesia, or part of a reconceptualization of history into symbols under their control—whether in the form of a monument, publications, or scholarship in general. However, the presence of a monument in Pecah Kulit certainly would have affected the understandings of residents and visitors to North Jakarta by giving Pieter

⁶⁶ R. Mohamad Ali S. S. and F. Bodmer, *Djakarta Djaja Sepandjang Masa* (Jakarta: Pemerintah D.C.I. Djakarta, 1969). Two thousand copies were printed.

⁶⁷ Junus Nur Arif, “Kisah Pieter Erbervelt.”

⁶⁸ Godee Molsbergen (1939).

⁶⁹ Nio Joe Lan (1962).

⁷⁰ The introduction to the 1970 Hadisutjipto publication referred to preservation work on the monument that was expected to be undertaken in the upcoming years. This is supported by the lack of earlier references to the reconstructed monument, not in the least the clear statement of Jusuf Nur Arif that (as of 1968) the monument was no longer in Pecah Kulit, but rather was in a museum. See Jusuf Nur Arif, “Kisah Pieter Erbervelt.”

Elberveld a visual presence.

In 1977, the Jakarta Regional Government's Museum and History Service published a version of the Tio Ie Soei story which differed significantly from the 1924 original. This publication helps illuminate how the government of Indonesia attempted to deal with a story created for a different audience. Tio Ie Soei is listed as the author of "Raden Kartadria and Pieter Elberveld: A Story Which Took Place in the City of Betawi,"⁷¹ and no reference is made to textual revisions, except for brief praise for the person conducting the "research" leading to publication.

Two differences between the texts are apparent from the title itself. First, in the 1977 version, Raden Kartadria suddenly receives equal billing. The contents do not illuminate his life in the least, however; his role remains just as minor as in the original version. Rather, Kartadria's responses become short and crisp, more authoritative (occasionally as if he were explaining things to a child), and completely devoid of the verbal or visual tokens of respect which are so prominent in the original.⁷² Consequently, Elberveld is transformed into an uninteresting leader with a very efficient Javanese military officer taking care of his affairs. Second, the word "truly" (*betoel*) was omitted in the rephrasing of the title. This seems to undermine the authority of the text to speak about the people and events in the novel, but also eliminates the antique feeling of Tio Ie Soei's original subtitle. In actuality, the source of authority is shifted to the publisher, whose title "Museum and History Service" is prominently placed on the cover. The publisher's ability to rediscover this lost work and to stamp it "historical" is what provides readers with a believable text, or, perhaps more accurately, provides evidence that there is an authority (the Museum and History Service) on which Indonesians can rely to deal with the past in an appropriate manner. Readers are thus excused from all responsibility to think critically about the subject or to ask how government historians come to know something.

⁷¹ Tio Ie Soei (1977).

⁷² Tio Ie Soei grew up at a time when "respect" or *hormat* was both a feature of daily life and frequently condemned in the radical native press. Undoubtedly, *hormat* was part of his vision of the past, but the editor of the 1977 version may have felt that this "feudal" image was not one that the audience could share. Nonetheless, it seems likely that there was a desire to put Raden Kartadria and Pieter Elberveld on more equal footing, and so show the Javanese more respect.

Significant sections of the original story were cut to make this booklet, while changes are apparent everywhere. Just as this text is unconvincing as a biography, it does not function well as another type of history. The insults of Elberveld are still present, but the description is shortened, and the reason for his revolt is less clear than in previous versions. In the end, this publication becomes a bland record of boasts and arrests that evokes little empathy for or understanding of the protagonist. The most significant alteration is the near disappearance of Ali; all but three references to him are deleted, and Ali no longer figures as Elberveld's betrayer. Only the final reference explains that he was the "friend for life" of Sarina. Since pivotal scenes with Ali have been deleted, Sarina is made to seem somewhat crazy, if devoted, when she runs in to apologize to Elberveld, yet actually has nothing to say. The other character eliminated was the Sultan of Banten. Thus, the reason for Elberveld's arrest, which in all previous versions was explained as betrayal by two Javanese (including the 1924 version supposedly being reprinted), vanishes. Elberveld's treason is discovered because the Governor-general compiled facts out of thin air (the ultimate goal of police states like the late Netherlands Indies and the New Order government of Suharto). Some information about material goods is presented, and a military efficiency posited for the eighteenth-century. In the end, Tiole Soei's history is converted into a list of confirmed facts with shallow nationalists challenging the Dutch and being cruelly executed, while the VOC state is an incomprehensible monolith which can neither be understood nor defeated.

It is unclear whether this text had any intended audience. When the editor got around to inserting quotation marks (after five to six pages), the use of such punctuation marks was erratic at best, making it very unclear who is speaking. Single-paragraph speeches were divided into a number of new paragraphs, complicating reading, while certain offensive parts (for example, symbols of respect or descriptions based on skin color) were deleted in a way that renders some sentences incomprehensible. Other linguistic changes similarly seem to have made the narrative more difficult to understand. Finally, with the elimination of Ali, not only do actions of the Governor-general and Sarina seem erratic, but the romance is gone. This would not have added to the appeal of this story.

If there was no intended audience for the History Service's publication, or at least no effort invested to encourage people to read this "Pieter Elberveld," why

publish the story? One reason is that the government was publishing biographical works about heroes of Jakarta for the 350th anniversary of the founding of the city by the Dutch.⁷³ An unreadable story may be as effective as a readable one for the purpose of filling such a quota. As various print versions of the story had appeared in previous years, surely this story had been absorbed into the collective memories of Jakarta's inhabitants; if the History Service was to present itself as the sole authority on Jakarta's history, Pieter Elberveld could not be avoided. (If the monument had indeed been reconstructed before 1977, then that would have made Elberveld even more unavoidable.) Additionally, there might also be a need to bring Elberveld into a proper nationalist history, as the undomesticated story could seem dangerous to a government presenting "the history" of Indonesia or Jakarta, since that story was written by a "non-Indonesian" (a Chinese-Indonesian) and showed a Eurasian about to launch a revolt against Dutch rule in the capital itself being betrayed by two Javanese. This might have seemed especially significant since nationalist historiography could no longer feature the 1926 revolt against the Dutch, since it had been launched by the PKI and was now interpreted as evidence of PKI duplicity. Publication of this story with "modern" post-1972 spelling could address all these concerns easily.

Perhaps we miss the point when we attempt to read a text that was not actually intended to be read by audience. In her work on Javanese literature, Nancy Florida suggests that the "New Order Javanese elite have invented a vision" of an elite Javanese cultural peak when literature had reached a point where it passed beyond the ability of mere mortals to understand.⁷⁴ The power of the literature came to be located in unread, but known, texts. In a different way, perhaps, particular meanings were created or supported by having only the title page of "Pieter Elberveld" readable. The text of the story could be safely disregarded, but understood to concern an eighteenth-century hero and his Javanese aristocratic hero-friend who were executed by the Dutch. Because of the way in which this document was published, Tio Ie Soei himself became the author of this mangled text now replacing the old (1924) text, which might otherwise have appealed to a limited audience. New Order efforts either to erase pre-1972 writings from the consciousness of Indonesians or render

⁷³ By 1994, the apparently rewritten introduction to Hadisutjipto's version of *Pieter Elberveld* (1994, dated Djuni 1971) shifted the focus to the "Hari Djadi Kota Djakarta jang ke 444."

⁷⁴ Florida (1987); see also Florida (1995) for a newer reformulation of the same ideas.

them old-fashioned and obsolete through application of a new spelling convention also would have helped assure that readers would not have searched beyond this republication and examined the original.⁷⁵ Thus, the meaning of Pieter Elberveld changed substantially, and the independent authority of Tio Ie Soei's story coopted. Tio Ie Soei's death in 1974 could only make the appropriation of his novel easier.

In the same year, another book was published by the Jakarta Museum and History Service. Written by Drs. Uka Tjandrasasmita, this book covers a wide period of Jakarta's history, from prehistoric times up through 1750.⁷⁶ While the main discussion is divided into (first) topical divisions such as "The Growth and Development of Government" and (second) into different periods, the final six sections deal with specific historical events, one of which is "The Planned Revolt of Pieter Erberfeld Fails." This section provides general information about Pieter Elberveld, his wife Margaretha, and their daughter Aletta, as well as about problems with Erberfeld's inheritance, presumably from the de Roo and de Haan publications listed in the bibliography. Information about van der Schuur is presented as if it originated from these same sources, but was actually taken from the Hadisutjipto publication cited in the bibliography. Tio Ie Soei, misspelled as Tiolle Soei, is cited in the text as the source of information about Erberfeld's conversion to Islam, possibly because the author encountered conflicting information. However, Tio Ie Soei is not cited for six paragraphs that clearly originated from his novel and must have been obtained through Hadisutjipto's 1970 publication. These paragraphs summarize the Tio Ie Soei story, centering on the roles of Ali, Sarina, and Captain Cruse in the events and exposure of the revolt. Through this adoption of Tio Ie Soei's narrative, the story became a more integral part of the government history of Indonesia, while Tio Ie Soei's badly mangled name was marginalized but still utilized.

Unlike some of the other books published by the Museum and History Service, this book was reasonably well written, and presents what seems to be a stable, well-researched historical narrative. Reassuring high-quality printing, a good mix of Indonesian and Dutch-language bibliographical references, combined with strategic use of in-text citations, all supplement the role of the Government publisher in

⁷⁵ Thanks to Benedict Anderson for bringing this to my attention.

⁷⁶ Uka Tjandrasasmita, *Sejarah Jakarta: Dari Zaman Prasejarah Sampai Batavia Tahun 1750* (Jakarta: Pemerintah DKI Jakarta, Dinas Museum & Sejarah, 1977).

reassuring the reader that this is indeed a reliable history. The contextual presentation of the early history of Sunda Kelapa and Batavia allows readers to imagine this failed revolt as part of a larger Indonesian history, a picture reinforced by the relatively long discussions of Kartadriya's role and by the list of other Indonesians involved in the revolt. There is little emphasis on the European character of Pieter Erbeveld, although his parentage is clearly mentioned. Instead, the author presents the Surapati revolts and the Trunajaya rebellion of the previous century as backdrop to this instance of Indonesian and Islamic resistance against Dutch control.

E. A Star is Born

In 1981, Pieter Erbeveld became the subject of a TV drama produced by the national TVRI Sentral station in Jakarta. "He Tried to Reach the Stars," written, directed, and starred in by Zainal Abidin, presents a very different picture from earlier versions of Pieter Erbeveld's drama, although Zainal Abidin depended on the 1970 historical note and perhaps the 1977 version of Tio Ie Soei's novel.⁷⁷

The story opens with Ali wandering in a daze, as music reminiscent of science-fiction films plays in the background. Before Ali arrives at Erbeveld's house, we see Erbeveld being dragged behind two horses by a Dutch soldier. Ali's emotional monologue is then followed by the main story, beginning with Ali and another slave chatting in recognizably Jakartan dialect about Ali's chances with Sarina. Erbeveld has a daughter by his wife (now dead and buried in Amsterdam), but he has never acknowledged Sarina, the daughter of his *nyai*, as his own child. Sarina had been told that her father was executed by the *kompenni* for rebellion, a detail that foreshadows Erbeveld's own fate. Accordingly, she is confused by the affection of the still-Christian *tuan besar*, Erbeveld, yet she burns with patriotic anti-Dutch passion. The story begins to develop when soldiers are shown laughing about Erbeveld's Thai and German parentage. While it is unclear whether this flashback is meant to represent the insult by van der Schuur text that was mentioned to *Nyai* by Pak Haji, the taunts do lead Erbeveld to become Islamic and seek revenge on the *kompenni*. Conflict with his legal daughter Aletta occurs when Aletta asserts that her father's introduction of a native woman into the house destroyed his marriage to her mother. Aletta

⁷⁷ "Ia Coba Meraih Bintang," a drama broadcast by TVRI on June 20, 1981.

subsequently demands to be allowed to “return” to Amsterdam.

In a series of meetings, Pieter Erberveld, Pak Haji, Lay Eek (a Chinese Muslim), and Kartadria plan to expel the Dutch from Batavia. In response to Erberveld's demand that all Dutch be killed, women and children included, the others insist that innocent people not be harmed, arguing that their goal was merely to win independence by expelling the Dutch. Later, the same debate is repeated between Erberveld and female fighters from Cirebon. In a more private meeting, *Nyai* announces that “this is the time,” and Erberveld tells Sarina her true parentage. Sarina's ambivalent reaction to the discovery that her father is a European intensifies her patriotism, even resulting in a conflict with the pragmatic and happy-go-lucky Ali, who does not endorse the revolt. She accuses Ali of being a coward, and indeed during the final preparations Ali runs to inform the VOC because he fears their patrols. Kartadria is subsequently instructed to escort Sarina away to safety, and although initially she resists, she is persuaded by her father's insistence that she must live to continue the struggle. The battle with the Dutch led by Pieter Erberveld,

Nyai, and the other leaves all the insurgents dead except Erberveld (who is taken away and later killed). When Kartadria and Sarina return, Sarina then kills Ali for betraying the revolution and announces that from this day forward she will embark upon a new struggle for freedom. The film ends with a close-up of her determined face.

Islam is a dominant feature of this film. Not only does every significant Islamic character object to Erberveld's vicious plan to kill “even newly born babies” exemplifying Islam's fairness as well as the distinction between Pieter Erberveld and true Indonesians, but there is a lengthy scene during which Erberveld and Pak Haji discuss conversion (his melodramatic conversion is shown later), and an extremely long scene that shows Pak Haji teaching women to read the Koran, thus emphasizing the Islamic nature of the resistance. Even the Chinese Lay Eek, a Sumbawan in Dutch histories, is Islamic in this film. This emphasis on Islam may have been related to the relatively self-conscious Islamic component to Jakarta and West Java identities, or perhaps to the role of Islam in the original 1889-1924 stories, and the need to draw a clear line between good revolutionaries and the Dutch. In this rendition of the Erberveld story, Islam was turned into the signifier of “native,” while Christianity became implicitly foreign or Dutch. This dichotomy was muddled only in

Pieter Erberveld, who not only cooperated with Pak Haji and the others before converting to Islam, but also demonstrated both a loyalty to the struggle and an improper desire for revenge.

The struggle for independence is also of primary importance, and Erberveld's desire for revenge is directly challenged by other characters. From the beginning, Sarina declares her patriotic intentions, and the numerous patriotic women in this drama are similarly outspoken. This makes the story about the struggle for independence, as Hadisutjipto intended, a struggle involving both men and women. On the other hand, Kartadria is converted into a minor character as Pak Haji, Lay Eek, and Pieter Erberveld take on leadership roles. As a Javanese aristocrat, Kartadria is the ideal partner for Sarina as she continues to fight for independence, and Sarina thus plays the central role in the drama and survives the end of the story.

Curiously, many of the features that provided authority to previous versions were changed in the film. For example, the mention of VOC governor-generals' names and dates of rule had usually framed the story, providing part of the factual introduction. In this production, Zwaardecroon's name is mentioned by soldiers as they arrest Pieter Erberveld, but their heavy accents emphasize the foreignness of both the ruler and of Erberveld, rather than confirming the truth of the story. The monument is not mentioned, and the means of execution no longer discussed, leaving the impression that Erberveld was killed by being dragged by a horse.

Viewers were probably expected to empathize with the extremely patriotic characters and to accept the setting as realistic and as part of their own world. When female characters are shown learning to recite the Koran, and Pak Haji is shown interacting with other characters, for example, the drama provides a familiar "realistic" setting for viewers (which would simultaneously reinforce good middle-class Muslim behavior). Similarly, the film's representation of the colonial period is clearly guided by popular historical memories. Sarina, daughter of a native Indonesian and a man of European standing, is assumed to be the daughter of a *nyai*, that is a concubine or "house-keeper." Other types of relationships were apparently inconceivable, and Sarina's mother plays the role of *nyai* with authority. In fact, *Nyai* does not resemble an eighteenth-century slave in any respect. Their large house, with its surrounding high wall, probably dates to the nineteenth century, while Erberveld's clothes, both a black and white colonial suit, as well as his more informal

outfits, complete with suspenders, recall photographic images of the late-colonial period and twentieth-century dress. While the film inaccurately represents the eighteenth century, it doubtlessly impressed most viewers as realistic. However, the film's reliance on popular images of the past made this seem like just another historical story made up for television, not a dramatization of an actual historical event. Along with the absence of the haunting monument, this makes the TV drama rather unmemorable.

One important function of the film was to remind Indonesians of Pieter Elberveld and to stimulate discussion. An article published in the Sunday edition TV section of *Kompas* following the broadcast illustrates one type of popular perception of the film.⁷⁸ The article, "Kill Ali not the Company" discussed the production as a historical drama, not as a history. The critic focuses on the story (a romantic drama between Sarinah and Ali), the main characters and actors, and the film's weaknesses. In choppy language, he attempts to outline the plot, but notes the difficulty due to repetitions and flashbacks.

In another article, the screenplay and resulting drama were criticized by a prominent Indonesian anthropologist, Koentjaraningrat, who obviously did not know where this story originated.⁷⁹ The most important feature of the article was its inclusion of information about Pieter Erberveld, but more generally Koentjaraningrat attempted to bring the old Dutch histories and biographies back into the tale. Citing various sources, including a Dutch source from 1730,⁸⁰ the writer identifies three types of "mistakes" in the drama. First, he notes that the story was set in 1772 rather than 1721, an essential distinction affecting costumes and furniture. Second, he points out that Pieter Erberveld was a Eurasian of German and Thai descent, was hard to get along with, and tended to quarrel with friends. For that reason he was evicted from several hundred hectares of land in 1708, an injustice that motivated his plan for revenge.⁸¹ Koentjaraningrat also notes the absence of Sarinah, her mother, and Haji Abas in Dutch sources, and the role of Karta Drie (Cartadrie) as the

⁷⁸ "Membunuh Ali bukan Kompeni," *Kompas*, June 28, 1981.

⁷⁹ Koentjaraningrat, "Pieter Erberveld coba meraih bintang," *Kompas*, July 19, 1981.

⁸⁰ The same source was cited in *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biographisch Woordenboek*, v. 8, p. 493.

⁸¹ Koentjaraningrat was not wrong, as Dutch sources do suggest something similar. According to one historian there was a conflict with the Governor-general over land, and the existence of a plot was questionable.

religious leader in these Dutch histories. Finally, he complains that the costumes and furniture were modeled after those of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with Elberveld dressed as an early nineteenth-century Dutch military officer. Koentjaraningrat's points emphasize how the film carried the militarization in the 1977 *Tio Ie Soei* republication visually a step further, and the high point of Dutch colonialism backwards from the early twentieth to the eighteenth and presumably the seventeenth centuries.

Another article published in *Kompas* a few days later introduced more facts and pointed out that the story was adapted from Tio Ie Soei's novel.⁸² The main purpose of this article, however, was still to revise and correct the depiction of Elberveld's life that had just been seen by many Indonesians, and to bring their understanding back in line with more conventional Dutch writings about Erberveld.

The film was undoubtedly effective in reaching a large audience, including people not addressed by print publications, since this media makes literacy or the desire to read irrelevant. According to the Central Bureau for Statistics,⁸³ in 1981 48.9 percent of the population of DKI Jakarta above-age-ten read newspapers, but 87.5 percent watched TV. Given the limited viewing choices, it is possible that more than 10 percent of the over-age ten population in Jakarta alone (almost 500,000 people) saw the film. As "la Coba Meraih Bintang" was broadcast throughout Indonesia, the audience would surely have been much larger. The ambiguity between fact and fiction and the presentation of news, factual stories, and announcements via the same media may again have provided authority to the images presented. The government was even more involved in this version, as the national TV stations (then under monopoly control) both produced and broadcast this film. However, as the medium of TV is also ephemeral, it did not allow the repeated viewing that might have facilitated incorporation of this film into Indonesian understandings of history. Review articles are slightly less ephemeral, but still would have only reached a small and relatively elite audience of *Kompas* readers who were interested in the arts.⁸⁴

⁸² "Silang-siur Tentang Pieter Erbervelt," *Kompas*, August 7, 1981.

⁸³ *Buku Saku Statistik Indonesia 1983* (1984), pp. 86-87.

⁸⁴ The same observations would be valid to varying degrees for other articles, for example, the article by Herling T. in *Monitor Radio & Televisi* no. 21 preceding the broadcast. Cited in Koentjaraningrat, "Pieter Erbervelt."

F. Decades of Contention: 1980s

In 1982, Pramoedya Ananta Toer included this story in a collection of turn-of-the-century stories he was editing entitled *Tempo Doeloe*. Inclusion of “Pieter Elberveld” in this anthology is particularly strange, since its original publication date was almost twenty years after those of the other stories in the collection. Pramoedya may well have decided to include it in response to the government-sponsored ‘Pieter Elbervelds’ of 1970, 1977, and 1981.⁸⁵ As noted above, Pramoedya had been at least partially responsible for the publication of “Pieter Elberveld” in *Bintang Timur* in the 1960s, and had only recently been allowed to return from exile on the island of Buru.

The 1982 version is virtually identical to the original 1924 version, except that endnotes have been added to explain different words, an introduction points out that Sarina does not appear in the historical record, and a list of Tio Ie Soei’s publications is presented with a bibliography. The publication of this anthology effectively makes Tio Ie Soei’s *Pieter Elberveld* available once again to readers, after having been half-buried in partial adaptations in 1970, 1977, and 1981. *Tempo Doeloe* was banned within a few years of its publication, seemingly to harass Pramoedya; however, the government’s action probably also indicates contention over whether the understandings of history which were present in the 1900s, 1920s, 1960s, or 1970s should be allowed to exist, and in what forms.

The year 1982 also saw the first edition of A. Heuken’s English-language guide, *Historical Sites of Jakarta*, a book which was not only repeatedly revised and reissued in English (6th edition, 2000), but also issued in Indonesian (the 1997 Indonesian edition was adapted from the 1995 English edition). The fact that it was published in Jakarta and covered a range of subjects which could be easily appropriated by journalists and other writers who lacked either the time or ability to

⁸⁵ Pramoedya (1982). Pramoedya’s organization of the anthology indicated an interest in representations of the anti-colonial struggle in different periods, thus this story fit nicely into the eighteenth-century slot and the date of publication was of secondary importance. However, his characterization of the anthology as a collection of turn-of-the-century works, the twenty-year gap in publication dates noted above, and Pramoedya’s reference (p. 23) to the failure of the TV drama to acknowledge the origin of the script in Tio Ie Soei’s novel all suggest that Pramoedya consciously selected this work as a corrective to versions of the story that had been influenced by the New Order’s agendas and had moved further way from Tio Ie Soei’s “original” publication.

peruse other sources, made this publication singularly important. In fact, this book was used in a number of writings about Erberveld in the 1980s and 1990s, making it a critical starting point for contemporary writers, and thus merits some consideration.⁸⁶

Heuken sought to explain the historical backgrounds of various sights around Jakarta, and thus discussion of Pieter Elberveld is located next to entries on the Portuguese Church and Hendrik Zwaardcroon, who was buried in the graveyard of the church he patronized. Once the reconstructed monument was removed, Heuken changed his narrative to state that it had been located near the church “as recently as” 1986 and provided directions for those who wish to see the replica.⁸⁷ In addition to this information, the third edition includes other significant changes as well. Heuken, a priest professionally concerned with morals and an individual concerned with the preservation of historical artifacts, was clearly outraged that the monument had been moved to the Taman Prasasti out of a “lack of historic consciousness and greed for what money could be made out of the last piece of land available.” His anger is reflected in his description Pieter Erbervelt, whom he portrays as the victim of machinations of a “governor-general, known for his ruthlessness” who “may have been personally interested in disposing of Erbervelt.” The portrait presented here bears a striking resemblance to Suharto, whose New Order officials had the replica removed. Heuken speculates that the monument might have been built “years later [after Erbervelt’s death], when people no longer remembered or did not want to remember all the ghastly details”—conceivably a veiled reference to the reconstruction of the monument in the 1970s or the many commemorations of the events of 1965-6.

Immediately following the discussion of Erbervelt, Heuken briefly mentions the execution of twenty-six low-ranking Europeans in 1722 who had been involved in “corruption and theft of the Company’s goods.” He explains that this type of drastic anti-corruption action by the VOC happened “only once and only against the ‘small fishes’” and that no protest followed the event. What could better describe Indonesia from a middle-class perspective in the late 1980s? The fact that this edition of

⁸⁶ Unfortunately, as the Indonesian translations have not been available, the English publications have to represent the Indonesian translations as well.

⁸⁷ Heuken (1989).

Heuken's book was published in Singapore may have allowed the author to sharpen his description of Erbervelt so that it became a political and social critique. Subsequent versions in English and Indonesian were available in Indonesia, and thus Heuken's initially straightforward description of Erbervelt's actions, followed by expressions of doubt concerning his guilt, allow readers to imagine him as victim, as rebel, or, cynically, as both simultaneously. Heuken's book also includes pictures of the monument and the "tomb locally regarded as that of Raden Kartadria," as well as references to a few Dutch works that can be cited from his text or looked up, references that provide later authors with a handy tool for superficially researched reportage.

Although Heuken's book came to be quite significant for both Indonesian- and English-language writing about Indonesia,⁸⁸ other traditions continued to be reproduced. In 1988, for example, the History and Museum Service of DKI Jakarta published another history of Jakarta, this time by Sagimun M.D.⁸⁹ A solid-looking, 522-page volume, it devoted more than two pages to Erbervelt in the context of resistance against despotic VOC power. Apparently drawing on Uka Tjandrasasmita's 1977 book, the author chose to highlight Ali's role, with the slave Sarinah's refusal of his love duly noted. The possibility that there was no plot against the Dutch, which would mean that the Governor-general was truly acting in an arbitrary, self-interested manner, was curiously omitted. Unlike in the film, here it is noted without fanfare that the majority of Erbervelt followers were Islamic. Unlike some "formal histories" this book mentions the monument and its destruction in 1942, but still does not discuss the reconstruction and subsequent relocation to another government museum in around 1986. This book and its narrative fall into a newly created tradition of government-published official histories (1970-), which may have been widely distributed in official circles but were probably not sold to the general public. With their smooth integration of elements of Tio Ie Soei's narrative, they became the new custodians of Indonesian history.

⁸⁸ Through the late 1990s and the early 2000s, there have been a number of articles about Erbervelt in Jakarta's newspapers, most working from Heuken's book. See for example, Ida Indawati Khouw, "Tale of Jl. Pecah Kulit more than skin deep" *The Jakarta Post*, Saturday, April 8, 2000; and "Pengadilan Rekayasa di Batavia," *Republika Online edisi*, June 23, 1998, <http://www.republika.co.id/9806/23/11300.htm>. Most are written in English and aimed at a foreign audience.

⁸⁹ Sagimun (1988: 119-121).

A distinctly different story about Raden Kartadria was also published around this time in a collection of folk tales collected in Jakarta in 1980-81 by the Museum and History Service.⁹⁰ This tale focuses on Kartadria's good character and the fortune teller who predicted that he would either have a tragic life or would have to abandon people who needed help. Raden Kartadria goes to Batavia and meets Elberfeld, helps defend the people, and so is executed by the Dutch. In narrating the story of Raden Kartadria, no "factual" information about his life is provided, yielding a mere assertion that he existed and was a wonderful, kind person. Unfortunately, it is hard to ascertain how accurately this narrative represents the tale told by the storyteller and whether its inclusion was coincidence, representative of folk tales in circulation or one of a list of popular "legends" the compilers wished to include. Despite substantial differences, this version is still consistent with the trend of other government publications in its emphasis on Kartadria and other things not in Dutch historical records.

A second unusual version is presented in a book of essays originally written in English by Willard Hanna, and published in Indonesian translation in 1988.⁹¹ Because "events cannot be reconstructed with full confidence" Hanna chose to present "the most melodramatic" version of the story, the English-language version written by W. B. d'Almeida in 1864. The story conventionally opens with a mention of Eberfeld's German father and Javanese mother, and notes that Eberfeld's hatred of the Dutch resulted in plotting with others who wanted to revolt, namely influential Chinese, royal refugees from Central Java, *mardijkers*, slaves and fanatical Muslims. This story features Eberfeld's daughter Meede, who loves a Dutch officer (unacceptable to her father); after overhearing the conspirators, she informs her lover of her father's plot to seize control of the whole island of Java. Eberfeld was to become Bin Hamid bin Abdul Sheik al Islam, while a Sultan of Jakarta and a new Susuhunan were to be appointed. In this version, the sentence and punishment of Eberfeld and his co-conspirators is treated at great length. Hanna finally notes that the smelly monument filled an important public need, serving as a public toilet until it "disappeared during the Japanese Occupation." It was later rebuilt for tourists, but "is no longer used for public needs that are still demanded by the city."

⁹⁰ Sahri Supriadi, "Raden Kertadria" (a 1980-81 interview), in *Cerita Rakyat* (1982: 47-54). This was an interview conducted in 1980 or 1981.

⁹¹ Hanna (1988: 123-126). This story was entitled "Komplotan Eberfeld, Pembunuhan Masai Orang-orang Cina, Peperangan-peperangan Mataram."

A final distinct version is a discussion of Pieter Erberveld by Ridwan Saidi published in 1987.⁹² Ridwan Saidi cites the Tio Ie Soei publication for a translation of the monument's inscription and as evidence of the way the story has remained alive for the public. Dutch historical sources are used: a 1730 publication used by Koentjaraningrat, an article by the historian de Graaf published in the journal *Tong-tong*, and the *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biographisch Woordenboek*. His emphasis mirrors the Dutch histories in discussing the background of Pieter's father and other family members, the origin of the name "Pecah Kulit," a critical discussion of the plot, as well as descriptions of the torture and prosecution of Pieter Erberveld. In the end, his essay diverges from his sources, mistakenly asserting that local residents prevented the Japanese from removing the monument, and hinting about a connection between the Erberveld monument and Toyota Astra's bankruptcy following their building a showroom on that site. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that this book has been used by other authors.

G. A Textual Heritage of a Vanishing Figure

This chapter has traced out the lines of development of Malay- and Indonesian-language representations of Pieter Elberveld, following the developing historiographical practice of Indonesians and the use of a textual heritage. However, it is also an attempt to study of elusive Indonesian- or Malay-language audiences—what they might have read, learned, or understood of this material, especially over the critical Japanese occupation period. In fact, these stories did not simply objectively inform their readers about the events of 1721-22 or merely provide them with somewhat macabre entertainment. While Elberveld has rarely occupied the political and historical spotlight, he was never of *no* importance, and thus rather than becoming *the* symbol of colonial power, Indonesian nationalism, Islamic belief and identity, Eurasian identity, or the omnipotence of the state, he has been one of the symbolic building blocks that different people have used to construct or apprehend Indonesia. The proposed demolition of his monument in the 1930s, the Dutch refusal of that request, the Japanese demolition, and the New Order reconstruction and incarceration of the replica in a government museum all provide evidence of this marginal importance. Even when merely translated or introduced into new contexts,

⁹² Ridwan Saidi (1997).

the Elberveld narratives could form a picture that was familiar to readers, laced with potentially usable information, and imbued with an allegorical message. However, readers also undoubtedly read the stories from their own perspectives, referring to their own concepts and categories, and potentially yielding very different results. It is not unlikely, for example, that many twentieth-century readers have looked back at an unchanging colonial society built out of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century experience, overlooking the substantial changes in social structure, historical context, and government structure that have taken place during the preceding two hundred years. In other cases, readers' anti-colonialist or nationalist understandings of history and society allowed or even required a reinterpretation of which characters held most responsibility for the events of 1721-22, as well as reinterpretations of Elberveld and other associated characters in this drama.

Despite the demolition of the monument in 1942, as the occupying Japanese military sought to eliminate reminders of the oppressive Dutch, the continuous reappearance of Elberveld demonstrates that interest has not subsided. In fact, the attention given to the monument in both positive and negative senses probably helped convince Indonesians of the importance of this little bit of their history, and even required concrete actions to rebuild the monument and preserve the fragments remaining from the first monument.

Each history of Pieter Elberveld varied somewhat in form and content, changes which suggest that Pieter Elberveld is very much alive in Indonesian society. The intensity of publication since the 1960s (including the TV production) implies that the meaning of 'Pieter Elberveld' was contested, most particularly in the 1980s-1990s when there were clearly conflicting traditions. Questions about which stories and messages might be appropriate for particular audiences seem at times to have been at the center of that struggle. However, those who sought to reshape the Elberveld story seem also to have been concerned with readers' conceptions of the past in general, and with obvious similarities between past events and present situations, which provide opportunities for veiled social and political critiques. We can conclude that what may have been true in 1968 is no longer the case: "After the statue of the skull along with the decree were removed from the Pecah Kulit field, the story of Pieter Elberveld is now conserved in the museum and in the memories of the

elderly who relate it for generations.”⁹³

In the absence of any other production of knowledge about Pieter Erberveld and “the conspiracy of 1721” in Malay or Indonesian, more popular and by our standards less conventional historical materials ultimately provided a substantial portion of the basis for both the Indonesian historical writings and more critically popular understandings of Pieter Elberveld and his revolt. Dutch language studies would have been important for a very few members of the elite, but simply would not have been accessible to most Indonesians. Information from these sources has filtered into Indonesian discourse, but some streams of historical retellings continue to display resilience. Nonetheless, as can be seen from the selection of story elements, what “really” happened in 1721, what life was “really” like in the eighteenth century, and the “real” characteristics of Pieter Erberveld may have very little relevance for many contemporary Indonesians; rather the contemporary context is of singular importance for writing and reading. The social truths going into, but more importantly deriving from, these publications (and the TV drama) are the understandings which contribute to popular conceptions of history and popular Indonesian world views. These are “truths” which we need to explore in order to understand modern Indonesian history, and consideration of audiences is therefore of critical importance.

If we are to pursue such a history of Indonesian perceptions of their past, this case demonstrates that the Japanese occupation cannot be ignored, as filling the gaps of this history also significantly change the meanings which past generations of Indonesians experienced and which we seek to perceive.

⁹³ Junus Nur Arif, “Kisah Pieter Erberveld, p. 39.

Chapter IV.

World War II: Imagining the Unimaginable

If the Japanese occupation can be constructively utilized to perceive the actual intent of fiction writers during both the colonial period and the Japanese occupation period, as well as to better understand long-term histories, examination of World War II can also lead to entirely new inquiries, subjects which are neither extensions of existing research topics nor easily imaginable.

This chapter argues that the Japanese occupation can be integrated into histories through a focus on subjects which are intrinsically related to the Japanese occupation or World War II, that is research departs from an understanding of the wartime context and research questions are formulated on that basis. This chapter will explore four historical subjects related to developments during the war or as a result of wartime circumstances and the resulting transformation of the historical narrative.

these power shifts, since because of that he was unconventional staff like Nishijima Shigetada



Maeda Tadashi leaning on his sword with Sukarno in the midst of a group of geisha. Makassar, end of April, 1945.
© National Archives The Hague, NEFIS 3985.

Figure 15.
Photograph of
Sukarno,
Maeda and
“geisha”

A. Working Japanese Women in the Wartime Empire

During revision of the *Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War* for the second printing, the editors were confronted with a picture with women in kimonos during Sukarno’s visit to Sulawesi (above). The presence of Japanese women was such a surprise to the owner or archivist that the picture was labeled “Maeda Tadashi

leaning on his sword with Sukarno in the midst of *Japanese geishas*,” a virtual impossibility.¹

The Japanese occupation of Indonesia is highly gendered; all our representations are of a purely male Japanese army, assisted by male Japanese civilian employees of the military, conquering, controlling and administering the former colonial territories of Southeast Asia. Japanese men’s “need” for women and sexual services, in particular, resulted in rapes, women being recruited or brought in from other areas as *ianfu*, or adoption of local concubines. One of the keys here is the systematic absence of Japanese women from the histories of the war; to take one substantial example, the aforementioned *Encyclopedia of Indonesia during the Pacific War* (Post 2010), has virtually no mention of Japanese women in Indonesia.² In most works, individual names or gender are rarely mentioned at all; it is assumed they are men, and in most cases they are interchangeable.³

However, this simple picture of wartime society is disrupted by pictures of Japanese women in Indonesia like those in the pages of the wartime magazine *Djawa Baroe*. Were there really Japanese women in Indonesia, and if so, who were these women? How many were in Indonesia? Why were they there? How did they interact with the local population and the Japanese military administration? This section will survey some of the scattered sources related to Japanese women in Indonesia to assess what we do or could know about them, as well as to address the question of why we don’t have a single coherent narrative about a Japanese woman, and how our histories of the war might change if we did have such a narrative.

One has to search a long time to find any references to Japanese women in Indonesia. Well-read scholars who read wartime publications probably have seen pictures, such as aforementioned picture of “geishas” in Macassar. With no mention of Japanese women in previous histories and only a few ambiguous photographs in

¹ Post (2010: 544), emphasis added. From the entry “Maeda Tadashi.”

² One of the very few appearances of Japanese women is a mention of a brothel in Surabaya reportedly staffed largely by Japanese women. This reference is in my own article. At least one other reference is to Japanese women in Japan. On page 324, there is a picture labeled “Japanese female teacher,” but the woman is apparently Indonesian.

³ This is obviously not as true about Japanese writings.

wartime periodicals, scholars' lack of interest in Japanese colonial communities other than describing it as a monolithic [male] military oppressor logically results in western and Indonesian scholars never even conceiving of including Japanese women in their research. Japanese studies are only slightly more inclusive.

While this section opened with a reference to the *Encyclopedia*, my interest in this subject began in 2002 when I was chatting with a member of the board of directors of a small fashion company in Tokyo. Upon learning I was conducting research on Indonesia during the war, this individual mentioned that his aunt had been on Bali during the war, but that she had died a few years earlier, and his family didn't know much about her time in Indonesia. If there had only been a handful of women in Indonesia, then this must be an amazing coincidence! If there had been Japanese women there, it might drastically change our image of an exclusively male military dominating Indonesia and Indonesians, and also might bring additionally complexity to our image of Japanese society in Indonesia; that is to allow the possibility of viewing Japanese as human once more and perhaps eventually getting over World War II.⁴

This section starts by establishing that there were indeed Japanese women in Indonesia, sketching out what women were there, when, and for what purposes, and trying to understand their interactions with Indonesian society. The focus is primarily on Java, due to the availability of sources, but it is not intended to be, and perhaps cannot be limited to Java or even Indonesia, as neighboring parts of the Japanese military controlled empire were similar and were not entirely autonomous.



Figure 16. *Jawa Shinbun* (June 30, 1944)

⁴ It is arguable that the failure to allow World War II to become a part of the past, and not a political touchstone in both domestic and international politics, should not be attributed merely to any Japanese “failure to confront (or remember) their past,” but at least in part to a problem of people (including scholars) in Asia, Europe and America failing to recognize Japanese as human actors during World War II. They are either victimizers or [inconceivably] victimized.

1. Public imagery in Indonesia

During the Japanese occupation, the print media included images of Japanese women on a surprisingly regular basis. Although there were images of movie stars, factory workers, and regular Japanese citizens in the homeland, there was also a conscious effort to represent the Japanese women in Indonesia to the Indonesian public. Perhaps the most important vehicle for such imagery was the illustrated periodical *Djawa Baroe*, published in Jakarta on the 1st and 15th of each month.⁵

Figure 17. (Left) Playing karuta. *Djawa Baroe* (January 15, 1943).

Figure 18. (Right) Paying respect to fallen soldiers. *Djawa Baroe* (date unknown).



The pictures clearly show Japanese women, and in some cases present a limited text describing the women or their activities, often to illustrate Japanese customs, like hatatsuki or karuta on New Year's Day. On such occasions, and often in other meetings with Indonesian women, the Japanese women were dressed in kimonos. However, they were also shown participating in civil defense activities, particularly in fire-fighting and first aid, or in providing food for soldiers. Japanese women were shown paying their respects to fallen soldiers at a shrine, and in the Gunseikanbu office.

⁵ Another periodical, *Pandji Poestaka*, is less likely to have substantial material, but would be very interesting. Only around one year of *Pandji Poestaka* and a few scattered issues of *Asia Raya* and other newspapers were available during the writing of this section. Some data was obtained from the NIOD collection before their online collection was closed down. While publishing—and propaganda work in general—was most substantial on Java, Sumatran publications like *Minami* (Medan) are also of interest, but only scattered issues were available.

Figure 19. Gunseikanbu staff in a moment silence.

*Djawa Baroe* (June 15, 1943).

Figure 20. (Right) Mrs. Miyahira teaching Japanese.

*Djawa Baroe* (March 1, 1943).

Japanese women were also shown teaching, and in these cases, their names were normally mentioned. The March 1, 1943 issue, for example, shows a teachers training school for women, with two Japanese instructors, Nj. K Miyahira and Nona T. Abe teaching Japanese and some kind of dance/physical activity.⁶ Similarly, the July 15th, 1943 issue has a 2 page spread labeled “Wanita Nippon jang memberi pimpinan kepada orang Indonesia.” Relevant pictures include: (1) a picture of Indonesian girls around a piano learning to sing Japanese songs from Japanese girls (one playing piano, another playing violin), probably in Bandung, and (2) Nona Yukie Nishiyama and (3) Nona Tomiko Tanaka (not visible) of the Tjirebon-shu office teaching women at the Tjirebon Middle School.

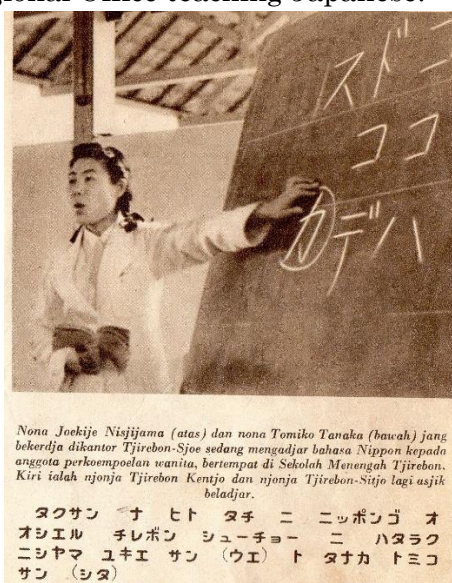
⁶ The same two women, identified as being from the Education section in Jakarta, met with women teachers in central Java (goeroe-goeroe Perempoean Mataram) in early January 1943 before visiting the Mendut, Boroboedoer, and Prambanan temples (*Sinar Matahari* January 12, 1943).

Figure 21. Ms. Abe leading physical activities.



Djawa Baroe (March 1, 1943).

Figure 22. Ms. Nishiyama of the Cirebon Regional Office teaching Japanese.



Djawa Baroe (July 15, 1943).

A number of the pictures and texts show Japanese women voluntarily meeting Indonesian women, teaching them a little Japanese language, or teaching them something about Japanese culture. The emphasis is thus not on regular interaction, but on these women's willingness to spend their own time after work to do something for Indonesian women. By its very nature, this must be irregular in nature. We can see this in the July 1, 1945 issue of *Djawa Baroe* with its five pictures of women from the Navy Office in Jakarta meeting with Indonesian women.

Figure 23. Japanese bows.



Figure 24. A friendly chat.



Navy liaison office staff and Indonesia women meeting. *Djawa Baroe* (July 1, 1945).

Rather than taking these pictures and brief textual representations as mere propaganda lies, it seems more reasonable to take these images seriously as partial

truths which served propaganda purposes. We can thus see that there was a community of Japanese women on Java actively supporting the Japanese war effort, that many of them worked in high level official government offices like residency offices,⁷ the Military Government Headquarters (Gunseikanbu), the Naval Liaison Office in Jakarta, or more rarely in teaching in women's colleges. Their activities outside the office appear to be as a group, participating in emergency preparedness drills, teaching Indonesian women, or meeting Indonesian women on special occasions for propaganda purposes. These pictures suggest that the Japanese women never interacted with men outside of the office, but even interactions with Indonesian women were unusual.

2. Beyond the Images for Indonesian Consumption

There is no substantial quantitative data available from the Japanese occupation period itself, which means we have to rely on a combination of post-war quantitative data and any other data we can glean from wartime sources. The focus here is primarily on Java, for which the best data is available.

At the end WWII in August 1945, there were approximately 300,000 "Japanese" in Indonesia. This figure includes the military (gunjin), civilians employed by the military (gunzoku), and other civilians. Of these, approximately 170,000 were in eastern Indonesia, and the remaining 130,000 were in Java and Sumatra (Post 2010:54). One estimate dated 22 October 1945 concluded there were approximately 68,300 Japanese in Java, while figures from the end of June 1946 stated that 58,288 people had been repatriated already and 15,316 remained (primarily retained as laborers or for investigation of war crimes), for a total population of 73,604.

The best data I have found which is explicit about gender is from around April 1946.⁸ This data indicates that there were 845 women and 34 children in Java (and none in Bali and Lombok). The same source indicates that there were 63,888 men, thus

⁷ See also "Memuliakan Roch Nona Kisimoto," *Sinar Baroe* (Mei 25, 1945) which notes a Shinto memorial service for a Japanese women.

⁸ Miyamoto (1973: 256-7). This date is based on a note related to the expected "movement" of people from Java on 1 May 1946, probably to Galang Island near Singapore, as the first step in repatriation.

a total “Japanese” population of 64,767, with 1.15% women. Assuming that the difference between April and June 1946 is the number initially repatriated, then 8,837 people or 12% of the Japanese population had been repatriated during these three months. The biggest question is whether women had been prioritized in the initial repatriation (likely), but Red Cross nurses were ordered home early in 1945 and there is also reason to believe that some women may have been transferred closer to the front in early August 1945. Based on these possibilities, there were thus probably between 845 and 5,000 women resident in Java/Bali/Lombok during the war, but probably between 1000-2000 women.

Table 2: Japanese on Java, 1945-1946

| Japanese on Java, 1945-1946 | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| | Est. Oct. 1945 | April 1946 | June 1946 |
| Total “Japanese” | 68,300 | | 73,604 |
| Remaining on Java | | 64,767 ** | 15,316 |
| Men | | 63,888 | |
| Women | | 845 | |
| Children | | 34 | |
| Repatriated | | [8,837] | 58,288 |

** 3,144 military, 1780 Army para-military (46 women) and 307 Navy para-military (75 women) were to be moved on around May 1, 1946.

Where were these women located? It is easy to imagine a large majority in the Jakarta area, either during the war, or during the process of post-war repatriation. In fact, with respect to the regional distribution, in April 1946, there were 230 women in West Java, 124 in Mid-Java, 491 in East Java, and none in Bali or Lombok. In West Java, there were only 20 women in Jakarta, 148 in Pondok Gede/Bogor, and 62 in the Bandung/Cirebon areas. A different source, a name list of “civilians” in Java, seems to contain a list of the women remaining in West Java after 1 May 1946, including many nurses at the hospital in Pondok Gede.⁹ The small number in Jakarta may be due to

⁹ Nishijima Collection JV-XX. Dating of this list and identification of it as representing the

earlier repatriation, while the high number in Surabaya may be due to the evacuation of women from Bali and Lombok to Surabaya, but there may also have been larger numbers of administrative staff or “comfort women” near the Navy port in Surabaya, either of Japanese ethnicity or from Japanese colonies of Korea and Taiwan.

The Japanese language newspaper, *Jawa Shinbun*, provides small bits of additional information related to short term visitors to Java, the presence of older Japanese women, the potentially special situation of Surabaya, and some additional information about long-term residents.

Some women who had been resident in Indonesia before the war were there during the war. In December 1943, Eka Mori (Eka Baasan), a woman of about 55 years of age resident in Sukabumi who worked at a soldier’s dormitory donated her colonial period savings to the Army. Similarly, In July 1944, Nakamura Shino, a 56 year old translator for the Kempeitai donated the money from the sale of a car to the military (*JS* July 27, 1944). Shino had arrive in Indonesia from Nagasaki at age 18, and after marrying a Chinese named Koh, she lived in Banyuman, Ungaran, Semarang. In 1944, two Japanese women took a Japanese language test in Surabaya, including Yamada Emiko, who had been born in Java (*JS* Dec. 17, 1943).

Surabaya seems to have been home to a relatively large Japanese community. In 1944, a relaxation place for Japanese women called “Fujinryō” was created in Surabaya. The 2nd floor of an Army barracks (rikugun ryō) in Tonjungan was used for this facility, which allowed Japanese women to play piano, play table tennis, listen to music, read books, and eat light food like sushi, while ikebana and tea ceremony activities were planned (*JS* March 31, 1944).

Other information about Japanese women in Java included the arrival of dozens of teachers, including some Japanese women to teaching in two women’s teacher’s colleges. One of these teachers was Koga Masako from Gunma (*JS* October 24, 1943). Other residents seem to have been typists and other office workers for private Japanese companies. In October 1943, it was announced that these young women, aged 22-23,

women in West Java, not the entire island was based in part on the fact that 121 *gunzoku/kaigunzoku* women were due to be moved from Java, leaving approximately 109 “civilian” women (nearly matching the 110 names on the list).

who had lived in supervised quarters, were now allowed to live by themselves; they were also allowed to marry Japanese men in Indonesia (*JS* October 16, 1943). This seems to indicate that the initial strict control over the behavior and provision of security for young Japanese women was no longer needed. At the end of the war, *Jawa Shinbun* noted that Japanese women working as civilian logistics staff and military contracted civilians had been converted to nurses at Army hospitals from August 1, 1945 (*JS* September 8, 1945). Indonesians had begun to be given 3 month intensive nursing training in early 1945 (*DjB*), which indicates a shortage of nursing staff, probably due to transfers to combat areas.

Figure 25. Staff orientation



New female staff for the military administration during orientation in Jakarta. Photograph courtesy of Yamada Fusako.

Unfortunately, while women returning from Indonesia at the end of the war formed a returnees association, Selatan Fujinkai [Southern Women's Association], and occasionally held meetings, as they did for the 25th and 45th anniversaries [probably of the end of the war], they seem not to have issued a newsletter or other substantial printed records. One of these women, Yamada Fusako, had been employed by the Army and was recruited to come to Java as one of the first Gunseikanbu employees. She lived in Jakarta for several years with other female staff in a type of dorm, and was repatriated on a hospital ship after the surrender in 1945.¹⁰

¹⁰ Interview. Setagaya, July 23, 2015.



Figure 26.
Gunseikanbu staff
relaxing.

Female Gunseikanbu
staff relaxing in the
Pasar Minggu area of
southern Jakarta
during a day off.
Photograph courtesy of
Yamada Fusako.

3. High profile visitors

Articles in the *Jawa Shinbun* also indicated that a variety of high profile visitors came to Java during the war, including a few women. For example, a member of the Toho dance group, Suda Keiko, came to Jakarta in 1943 and learned Sundanese dance, spent two months on Bali studying Balinese dance which she had already studied in Japan with Ito Keiko, and then observed Jogja and Solo dancing.¹¹ Following visits to hospitals to boost wounded soldiers' morale, and a Japanese dance performance for the Supreme Military Commander's party for the inauguration of the new Chūō Sangiin in late October 1943, she returned to Japan (Sept. 29, Oct. 22). Ms. Suda was, however, not the most significant visitor.

¹¹ See also "Kesan Nona Suda tentang Tarian Bali," *Pembangoen* (October 2, 1943).

In the heady early months of Japanese occupation, the Imperial Japanese Army News Department and major Japanese newspaper companies decided to follow a pattern established in the 1930s, and to invite a group of writers to travel through newly occupied areas in Southeast Asia as a means of providing extra attention within Japan around the first anniversary of the start of the war. Although merely subject to standard censorship, the army could generally rely on authors and publishers to produce favorable works, even on the violent occupation of Nanjing in late 1937.¹² Of course, the situation in most occupied territories in late 1942 was relatively good, perhaps the best point during the occupation, and the one year anniversary of the start of the war was a great nationalistic rallying point, making this an exceptionally opportune moment. By mid-1942, a large number of male literary and other writers had already been recruited for the Propaganda Sections of various occupying armies, however women had not yet been tapped. A list of women to travel to Malaya, Java, Burma, and the Philippines was prepared, and the women summoned to be informed of their mission in early September 1942. Most of these women writers had been on more than one trip to the Asian mainland, so their cooperation was apparently taken for granted. Their departure on the 20th of September was in practice too soon, especially given the reluctance several women, and a delay of approximately 40 days took place before the actual departure.

This small group of women is one of several different sets of women consciously recruited for some kind of service in the south. Curiously, this group of women writers is rarely remembered in histories of the war and their travels are rarely mentioned in biographical studies, as is generally the case for *all* the women travelling to the south.

In fact, the women in this group of Imperial Japanese Army appointed writers were not the first women writers to travel to the south. In the summer of 1941, Kimura Ayako, the daughter of a famous literature writer Kimura Sōta, joined the Japanese Foreign Ministry. Young, fluent in French, and able to type, she was quickly attached to various groups going in and out of French Indochina, even travelling to Thailand as part of her official functions. A large number of grainy photographs testify to her

¹² One exception was Ishikawa Tatsuzō's *Ikiteiru Heitai* [living soldiers], written by another novelist travelling with the 16th Army and describing the atrocious behavior of Japanese troops in the Nanjing attack. This novel was published by Chūō Kōron and was banned the day after publication on February 17, 1938 despite heavy pre-censorship. Yamamoto (1993); Keene (1987: 909-916). The author and editor were subsequently prosecuted.

inclusion in various functions with largely male officials. On March 3, 1942, Kimura met Mori Michiyo, the wife of Kaneko Mitsuharu who was there at the behest of the Foreign Ministry to promote Japanese culture, at the Japanese Ambassador's residence.¹³ On November 13, Kimura was part of a round table with a *Shufu no Tomo* journalist, novelist Yoshiya Nobuko (1896-1973) in Saigon. While not known as a writer herself, Kimura did publish a book in 1943, *Futsuin-Tai-inshōki*, filled with photographs of herself, which appeared with a forward by the famous politician and advocate of southward expansion, Takekoshi Yosaburō.

Figure 27. Kimura Ayako in Saigon (c.1943)



Figure 28. Cover of *Futsuin-Tai-inshōki* (1943).



Returning to the 1942 group: the initial list of women to be sent to the South included 9 women, three destined for Malaya, two for Java, two for Burma, and two for the Philippines. A second draft dropped at least three of the women, replacing them with three others, but ultimately only five women departed for Southeast Asia. The destinations correspond to the major occupying units in Army controlled areas, indicating systematic planning in Tokyo, rather than local requests for the visits. Excluded were the Navy controlled “outer islands” of Eastern Indonesia, as well as the indirectly controlled territories on mainland Southeast Asia.

¹³ Kimura (1943); Mulhern (1994: 229). Kaneko Mitsuharu is notable for his poem about the Erbevvelt monument. See Yamamoto (2004).

Table 3. Female Literary Writers by Destination (1942)

| First list | Second list changes | Actual Departure |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Malay | | |
| Kubokawa Ineko (Sata Ineko) | | Kubokawa Ineko (窪川稲子) (from 1940 usually 佐多稲子) |
| Hayashi Fumiko | | Hayashi Fumiko (林芙美子) |
| Nakasato Tsuneko | Nozawa Tomiko | ----- |
| Jawa | | |
| Yokoyama Michiko | | [Hayashi Fumiko] |
| Uno Chiyo | Mikawa Kiyō | Mikawa Kiyō (美川きよ) |
| Burma | | |
| Masugi Shizue | Koyama Itoko | Koyama Itoko (小山いと子) |
| Mizuki Yoko | | Mizuki Yoko (水木洋子) |
| The Philippines | | |
| Kawakami Kikuko | | Kawakami Kikuko (川上喜久子) |
| Abe Tsuyako | | Abe Tsuyako (阿部艶子) (later called 三宅艶子) |

Each of the women was sponsored by a newspaper company in charge of publishing a Japanese language newspaper in that area; thus Kawakami and Abe were sponsored by *Tokyo nichī-nichī shinbun*, Hayashi and Mikawa by *Asahi shinbun* which was in charge of publishing *Jawa shinbun* and *Boruneo shinbun*, Mizuki and presumably Koyama by *Yomiuri shinbun*, while Kubokawa would have been sponsored by Dōmei and 13 regional newspapers who were collectively in charge of Malaya, Singapore, Sumatra, and North Borneo.¹⁴ Initially, no restrictions were placed on the itineraries of the women by the military, but generally included the newspapers' area of responsibility, in addition to Singapore which was the HQ of the Southern Army.

The main group of five women, destined for the central and western parts of Southeast Asia departed from via the port of Ujina in Hiroshima with a larger group of approximately 13 male writers on October 31, 1942. Hayashi Fumiko, Mikawa Kiyō

¹⁴ On this point, see e.g. Katō 2010: 113.

(美川きよ),¹⁵ Sata Ineko (佐多稲子),¹⁶ Mizuki Yōko (水木洋子) and Koyama Itoko (小山いと子) had received their letters of commission, orders and passports from News Department of the Ministry of the Army more than a month earlier, on September 14, 1942.¹⁷ In apparent violation of international law, they seem to have travelled on a hospital ship; they were told that it was secret and the pages of their notebooks related to the trip south were cut out upon arrival in Singapore.¹⁸ Use of the hospital ship was probably not merely for convenience or safety, but also due to a common belief that women travelling on warships was bad luck.¹⁹

Kawakami Kikuko and Abe Tsuyako travelled a different route to the Philippines, but their departure time was also probably in late October 1942, and they probably accompanied a group of male journalists (with whom they later visited southern parts of the Philippines to see the anti-guerrilla propaganda efforts). [With limited time, I have found few sources about this group, although Abe Tsuyako did write a book about her travels, *Hitō nikki* (1943, republished 2002), which had dates carefully censored.] Their trip involved an extended period of time in Manila, which was relatively comfortable due to the prevalence of English. During this trip, Abe met with the Philippine Executive Committee head Jorge Vargas and the Director-General of Kalibapi (the Association for Service to the New Philippines) Benigno S. Aquino, Sr. who talked quite a lot. Abe also watched a speech by Aquino from the window of her hotel. Abe and Kawakami also travelled outside Manila on Luzon, and further south, to the Visayan Islands, finally returning to Japan in March or April, 1943.

Upon their arrival in Singapore on November 16, the larger group of Japanese

¹⁵ The kanji for her family name can be read as Yoshikawa; her name appears in some Indonesian periodicals with that reading.

¹⁶ Born as Sata Ine, she used her second married name (with her given name modified slightly to be a more sophisticated pen-name), Kubokawa Ineko, until around 1940 when she began to use Sata Ineko. The name Kubokawa does occasionally appear in wartime texts.

¹⁷ Mochizuki 2008. This information and much in the following narrative is derived from Mochizuki's small but useful book, which relied primarily on the notebooks of different individuals, including Hayashi Fumiko and her occasional travelling companion, Mizuki Yōko.

¹⁸ Bob Hackett, "IJA Hospital Ship/Transport CHICAGO MARU: Tabular Record of Movement," http://www.combinedfleet.com/Chicago_t.htm (2012), accessed on July 2, 2014. Although the ship seems to have been repainted with red crosses on around September 12, 1942, The Allies were not formally notified by the Japanese Foreign Ministry about its status as a hospital ship until November 21, 1942, several days after Hayashi's group disembarked in Singapore. Mizuki Yōko reports cutting out the pages herself before they were discovered by the Kenpeitai.

¹⁹ Thanks to Mayumi Yamamoto for this insight.

women writers shared a vehicle with some Japanese women who were on their way to serve as *ianfu* [comfort women].²⁰ Traveling with Mikawa Kiyō and others, Hayashi visited war related sites in Johor on November 18. They stayed in the Singapore-Johor area until November 24, when Sata Ineko, Hayashi and others went on a trip along the West coast of the Malay Peninsula. During this trip, they traveled through Ipoh, Taiping, and Penang, and were heading towards Alor Star close to the Thai border on November 29. Their activities included things like visiting the Sultan's palace at Perak, seeing the Snake Temple and riding the cable car in Penang. It is likely that after visiting Alor Star, Hayashi returned to Singapore, as Mikawa Kiyō reported spending a week together in Singapore before Mikawa went to Jakarta and Hayashi to Borneo. During this time, they probably visited schools in both Singapore and Malacca.²¹

Mizuki Yoko arrived alone in Rangoon on December 12, as Koyama Itoko's health was poor, and Burma would be too difficult for her. Koyama instead went to Sumatra. Mizuki travelled extensively throughout Burma, including various parts of Central Burma and Arakan until notified by the military authorities on February 25 that she was to return to Japan. On March 2, Mizuki departed from Rangoon, travelling by way of Thailand, where she was able to interview the wife of Field Marshall Pibun on March 8, before taking the train to Singapore, a 3-4 day trip (March 10-13). On March 25 she flew to Manila, then March 26 to Taiwan, before flying back to Japan.

In 1943, the well-known Japanese writer Hayashi Fumiko²² spent around 8 months traveling through southern areas. *Jawa Shinbun* (24 September 1943) reported that she came to Java to experience the life of Indonesian farmers and to learn about the Indonesian spirit. Hayashi Fumiko was ultimately not only the most famous, but the most-widely travelled woman on this mission.

²⁰ Kuroda (1952: 58, 71). Kuroda Hidetoshi was employed by the Japanese periodical *Chūō Kōron*. In 1942-1943, he spent approximately 8 months travelling in the South. His presence also indicates that the women were travelling in mixed company.

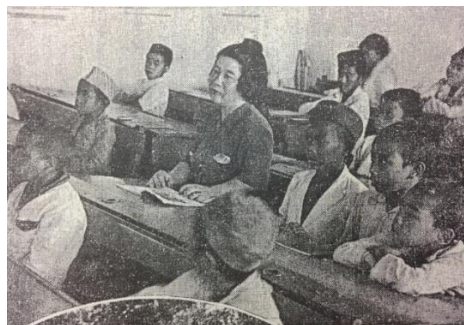
²¹ Mikawa Kijō, "Kanak-kanak Daérah Selatan," *Djawa Baroe* (May 15, 1943).

²² For the best general English language summary description of the life of Hayashi, see Aoki (1994: 102-108). Joan Ericson's critical discussion is perhaps even more critical for understanding Hayashi's life and publications (Ericson 1987). Both works are used extensively in the description of Hayashi's life below. Susanna Fessler's *Wandering Heart* (1998) is also useful, although it is surprisingly uncritical at times and reproduces a few critical mistakes of earlier scholars.

Hayashi's main assignment was visiting Java and Sumatra, but she was reportedly excited by the prospect of visiting Borneo, a trip made possible and probably important by Asahi Shinbun's management of the *Borneo shinbun* (based partially in Banjarmasin). On December 9, Hayashi arrived in Jakarta, where she was accompanied by Mikawa [Yoshikawa] Kiyō. She left Jakarta December 12 for Surabaya, where she [and probably Mikawa Kiyō] stayed in a *ryōkan* [traditional Japanese-style hotel] selected by the *heiten* [logistics] section of the local military administration until December 15, when she went alone to Banjarmasin on an Asahi News airplane conscripted by the military.²³ While in Banjarmasin, the actress Satsuki Nobuko and her theatre troupe performed; Hayashi was able to meet her, and apparently watch a performance of 'Sandiwara Njonjah Satsuki Nobuko.'²⁴ According to the *Shukan fujin Asahi* (February 3, 1943), she was asked to meet with Japanese women working as typists, nurses, and office staff at the end of December.²⁵ On January 6, 1943, Hayashi arrived in Surabaya on a Navy plane at 7:00 pm, but not before making a contribution of f.30 for a new Indonesian women's organization 'Keroekoenan Poeteri Islam.'²⁶

Figure 29. Dinner at Trawas.

Figure 30. Trawas Elementary School.



Hayashi Fumiko with the Supono family and visiting the Trawas Elementary school. *Jawa shinbun* (January 19, 1943; January 16, 1943).

²³ Mochizuki (2008), 125. Mikawa returned to Jakarta.

²⁴ According to Mochizuki, Satsuki arrived December 24, and performed the 25th and 26th, after which she left Banjarmasin. However, the Indonesian language *Borneo Shimbun* (December 29, 1942) reported that she performed in the Tokio Building on the 26th (Saturday night) and the 27th (Sunday night). Her troupe had just finished performing in Shōnan-tō (Singapore), the Malay Peninsula, and Java. The performances (of three stories each night) were aimed entirely at the local Japanese community: the Japanese military, civilians, and private citizens. However, a few Indonesians, including the author of the article, were allowed to attend. The article in the *Borneo Shimbun* described the plots in surprising detail.

²⁵ Mochizuki 2008.

²⁶ Mochizuki (2008: 126); *Jawa shinbun* (January 9, 1943). On the donation, see *Borneo Shimbun* (January 12, 1943).



Figure 31. Hayashi Fumiko with the village head of Trawas.

With village head Supono and his family in Trawas (East Java). *Jawa Shinbun* (January 16, 1943). This picture appeared in *Asahi Shinbun* and other newspapers.

Upon arriving in Surabaya, she apparently went to the Yamato hotel from where she telephoned for a vehicle to take her to the ‘branch office’, perhaps the branch office of *Asahi Shinbun* or another newspaper company. After one day of rest, on January 8, she went to the Surabaya Sendenbu office to see Mr. Oka,²⁷ then stopped to pay respects at the Army and Navy offices. This visit was undoubtedly important for her visit, because not only was Borneo part of the Navy controlled area, Surabaya was one of the largest Navy ports, despite being in Army administered Java. While the day was filled with formal visits, in the evening she enjoyed a *becak* (three-wheeled pedicab) ride. The next few days, however, seem to be waiting days, as her notebooks merely note ‘shopping in the rain,’ ‘rain,’ and ‘rain’ again.

On January 12 she went to the cool mountain village of Trawas (East Java) via Mojokerto for a ‘homestay’ at the home of the village head, Supono, by arrangement of the Surabaya Provincial Affairs Manager Moriya Keiichirō.²⁸ This was one of the critical points of her visit to Java, perhaps for her personally as well as for her sponsors. Her stay in Trawas with Mr. Supono’s family was reported to metropolitan readers, complete with a picture of Hayashi with Mr. Supono, his small child, and his wife.²⁹

²⁷ M. Oka was the Sendenbu Surabaya branch head, and help to make the local *Soeara Asia* into the largest paper in Java at the time of his transfer to Jakarta in September 1943. ‘Toean M. Oka Meninggalkan Soerabaja’, *Soeara Asia*, (September 10, 1943).

²⁸ “Hayashi-joshi • Sama-sama seikatsu e—kanpon de ‘utsukushiki hōrōki’ ??,” *Jawa shinbun* (January 16, 1943).

²⁹ “Jawa no Hayashi joshi,” *Asahi shinbun* (January 29, 1943), 4. My notes indicate that Mr. Supono was given a chance to visit Japan in 1944, but I have not been able to find a source for

While in Trawas, Hayashi also visited a market and a school. It's likely that Hayashi remained in Trawas until the morning of January 18, as she was in Surabaya from January 18-23. On January 25, she was in Den Pasar (Bali), but it's not clear how she got there and when she arrived. She visited Kintamani on January 26, then Danau Agung on the 27th, before returning to Surabaya on the 28th.

Hayashi remained busy throughout her stay in Java. On January 30, she took a 'steam train,' probably the train from Surabaya to Jakarta (or Batavia as she seems to have referred to it, despite the official name change), finally returning to the seat of the Sixteenth Army military administration for Java.³⁰ She spent January 31 in Jakarta, but on February 3, she watched a performance of 'Bintang Surabaya', a drama troupe with big stars like Fifi Young and Dahlia, in Sukabumi, a town south of Bogor; she arrived back in 'Batavia' the next day late in the afternoon or early evening. After partaking of a Chinese meal (*shinameishi*) on February 5, on February 6 she left for Singapore, apparently on a Japanese newspaper owned plane piloted by a certain Omata. What she did there and when she returned is unclear, but she was reportedly a guest of the 'Galo heitan' February 10-17, which was probably in the Ciamis regency (Galoeh) Southeast of Bandung.³¹

Somehow, it seems that she was in Surabaya on February 12, meeting with around 50 prominent Indonesian women, including Mrs. Sudirman, at the Kabupaten [Regent's Residence].³² While it's not clear what was discussed at this meeting, Mrs. Sudirman (Raden Ajeng Siti Sudari) was the wife of the Assistant Resident (*fukushūchō*) of Surabaya and was not only a very important local nationalist and women's movement figure from the 1910s, but had been an energetic and sometimes abrasive member of the Surabaya Municipal Council from 1935-42.³³ During mid-

that information, which may be mistaken.

³⁰ During at least part of her stay in Java, she was assisted by a female employee of the military government, Ota Ikuko, who translated for her.

³¹ Mochizuki (2008: 127). If this were correct, then this visit could have been related to a Japanese language speaking and singing competition. On February 9, the Bandung newspaper *Tjahaja* announced that seven girls and boys from three elementary schools in Ciamis (Sekolah Rakjat 3, 5 and 6) had been chosen for the competition in Bandung, and were being trained at Sekolah Rakjat 3.

³² See "Menjamboet Njonja Hayashi," *Tjahaja* (February 16, 1943) and "Njonja Hayashi Tiba di Soerabaja," *Tjahaja* (February 17, 1943).

³³ Frederick (1988: 42-43).

February (February 18-24), it's unclear where Hayashi was, but on February 25, she met with approximately 60 Indonesian women members of Kaoem Iboe Islam Djakarta [Islamic Women of Jakarta] at the M.I.A.I. building.³⁴ On February 26 she stayed at a 'Bandung *heitan ryokan*,' then at the Kamikōchi Hotel (上高地ホテル) which was a Jakarta office designated *heitan ryokan*, eating dinner and breakfast there, before leaving again for Jogja. She spent the night of February 28 at the Asahi Hotel, another 'designated hotel'.

Figure 32. Hayashi Fumiko at an Islamic Women's group meeting



Hayashi Fumiko (standing in the center) speaking at the Islamic Women of Jakarta meeting (*Jawa shinbun*, February 26, 1943).

On March 3, Hayashi left Java for good, travelling to Sumatra, where she spent nearly 2 months. The first stop was Palembang where she taught a Japanese language class on March 4. This class was for 40 students from 15-20 years old, and left her impressed with their ability to absorb Japanese.³⁵ The next day, Hayashi left for Jambi, then went to Padang on March 8 where she stayed in the Yamato Hotel, to Bukittinggi on March 12, where she stayed in the Chuo Hotel and was able to see horse racing on March 18, and then went on to Medan, from where she went on side-trips to Brastagi

³⁴ "Njonja Hayashi Sedang Membentangkan Pikirannya," *Soeara M.I.A.I.: Madjallah Islam* (March 15, 1943); "Yūga to nintai o toku," *Jawa shinbun* (February 26, 1943), p.2.

³⁵ "Kiyomi terbang dari jauh dari Jepang," *Srivijaya Post* (September 10, 2011). <http://palembang.tribunnews.com/2011/09/10/kiyomi-terbang-jauh-dari-jepang> (Accessed on April 4, 2014). The ultimate source seems to be Hayashi's notebooks, which I have not yet obtained. In August 2014, this article was no longer available online.

in the highlands, and Aceh, before departing on April 26.³⁶ Once reaching Medan, she was reunited with Koyama Itoko and Sata Ineko who had been based in North Sumatra.

Hayashi's return trip was efficiently organized, leaving little wasted time or possibility for extra activities. On May 5, Hayashi Fumiko left Singapore for Manila, staying May 6. Despite the brevity of her visit, this too was reported in the *Asahi shinbun* of May 7, 1943. In the afternoon of May 7, she left for Taiwan (Heito), then on May 8 to Shanghai where she had dinner, then enjoyed lunch with a certain Army 2nd Lt. Arakawa Shohei before returning to Japan via Haneda.

While it is sometimes reported that this trip provided Hayashi with material for writing stories during the next few years, surprisingly, it seems that she did not write much about the South during the war. Of course, from 1943 or 1944, the opportunities to publish decreased due to the wartime circumstances. However, even during her travels, rather than writing news, Hayashi Fumiko *was* news, and sometimes she made news. Other women writers were also news or stories, but some did more writing as well, for example Abe's *Nikki* of 1943, or the series of articles by Mikawa Kiyō. During this trip Hayashi was often indebted to military government officials, and to local military commissary units for food and housing, but the main support came from sponsoring newspaper company offices.

After their return to Japan, some of the women participated in meetings to discuss their travels in Southeast Asia, like one held in April 1943 in Yurakucho.

While the initial motive for sponsored trip to the south was domestic audiences within Japan, it seems clear that this visit also was designed—at least on the local level—to provide a small number of local people, especially women, an opportunity to interact with Japanese cultural figures. Some of the activities of the women were reported in the local Indonesian language press in Java and Borneo, and probably in other local papers throughout the region, although perhaps with less detail than in the Japanese language publications. The presence and activities of the smaller number of journalists, writers, actors or other celebrities like Hayashi Fumiko were likely to be noted, as part of the purpose of their crisscrossing the occupied territories was precisely

³⁶ Some Japanese sources claim that Hayashi went to the Andaman Islands, but this is likely a mistake originating in the occasional use of the name 'Andalas' for Sumatra. While there are open spaces in her schedule, I have seen no indication of travel to the Andamans.

to be seen. Curiously, it was the local Japanese language press which devoted the most consistent coverage, not metropolitan papers! In fact, as male journalists, writers, and artists were already involved in the military administration, it could be argued that their presence as Japanese women might have been a critical part of the cultural regime imagined by the Imperial Japanese government as well as local military governments in Southeast Asia.

On occasion, Hayashi Fumiko met with groups of the young women who were sent to Java and other areas of the South, including while she was in Banjarmasin in Borneo, reminding us that while small in terms of female/male ratio, young women should by no means have been negligible in terms of total numbers.³⁷ However, unlike Hayashi, these women were effectively not allowed on the street. They were to work, and perhaps be seen by soldiers in the line of duty, but not by the local public. This may have changed slightly later, as women were technically allowed to live outside of company dorms in the last years of the occupation, but certainly in 1942, they were highly restricted, described later by a male journalist as ‘packed into a can.’³⁸ Published accounts give a sense that meetings between Japanese and local women were very much appreciated by both sides, for example in the Jakarta meeting of December 1942 between representatives of the Japanese nurses, doctor’s employees, administrative staff, teachers, and Indonesian women’s groups.³⁹ Curiously, this other instance of public exposure was very close to Hayashi’s visit. Despite this coincidence, the contrast between the high-profile Hayashi Fumiko with her newspaper and magazine coverage, homestay in the cool village of Trawas, special meetings with women’s groups, public speeches and even teaching classes, could not be much greater.

In 1942-43, the media focus on women was more intense than for the men; for women it was very public work. Perhaps the Japanese military, the central government, and Hayashi herself wanted to show that women were in it together with the men. On the other hand, in late 1942 women were still being recruited for work in the South, primarily for hotels and offices as clerical staff, typists, et cetera, primarily in Java and

³⁷ Kuroda (1952) expressed surprise that so many young Japanese women were being sent to Java.

³⁸ Kuroda (1952). For information about the loosening of restrictions on Japanese women, see Horton 2013 and Hōton [Horton] (2014).

³⁹ “Nakayoshi ocha no kai,” *Jawa shinbun* (February 1, 1943).

the Philippines.⁴⁰ However, regardless of the varied purposes of the military, the travels of Japanese women writers did seem likely to have had an impact both at home and in occupied areas, though it would be a mistake to over-emphasize its long-term importance.

Even though Hayashi Fumiko's trip was at least partially coordinated by men in various military Publicity Departments [*Sendenbu*] or affiliated offices in local military administrations, a woman actively engaging with local residents was unusual and could have potentially helped reassure local populations that Japan did not simply intend to dominate; in particular, this offered a means for local women to engage with Japan and Japanese. Without Hayashi's presence, Indonesian women would have had fewer direct interactions with Japanese, and we would probably have significantly less information about some types of local activities. The local Japanese public, both men and women, may have appreciated a celebrity among them as well, but regardless some of them did meet her, leaving a small mark in written records, one far more natural than staged photographs of questionable representativeness which on occasion graced the pages of truly propaganda-oriented magazines published in Tokyo like *Front*.⁴¹

The evidence presented here, while merely a first step in documenting the lives of these women and their lives in Indonesia, clearly indicates that Japanese women did play a role in the Japanese administration, and were regular features of life in Java at least through their appearance in publications. Most of the women had little direct contact with Indonesians, but at their presence would have been known to Indonesians of the time. Teachers and elite visitors were able to contact Indonesians. Clearly, invisibility of Japanese women was never a fact, which begs the question of why they were forgotten.

Of course, Japanese women were not exclusively sent to Java. In addition to the travels of Hayashi Fumiko and her comrades, and the comfort women she met, there were certainly others, and explorations of other areas will certainly unveil larger history.

⁴⁰ "Nanpō yuki josei," *Asahi shinbun* (December 25, 1942), 4.

⁴¹ See, for example, the picture of a Japanese nurse "teaching Japanese" to a suspicious looking Indonesian child in 1942, reproduced in Earhart (2008: 178).

Figures 33-34. Metropolitan women's magazine from 1943 (1 & 2).

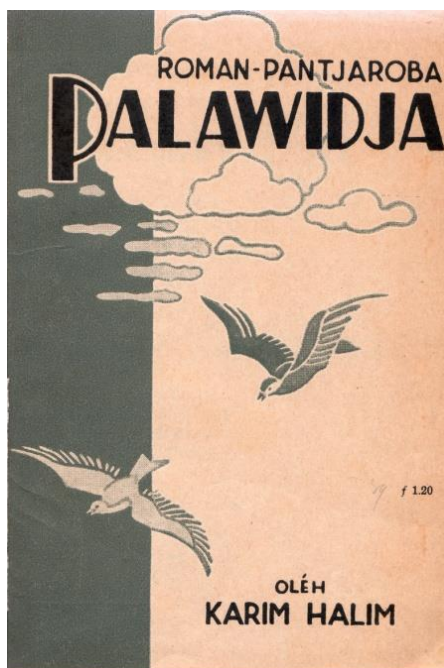


Metropolitan women's magazine from 1943 with an article on Japanese women in Singapore. Courtesy of Clay Eaton.

B. Dreams of Co-Prosperity in Wartime Java: The Absence of *Roman-Pantjaroba Palawidja* in Postwar Indonesia

In early 1945, during a three year period which admittedly had seen the publication of very few new novels, a beautiful new book appeared with an illustration of two birds swooping gracefully under a number of light clouds. The book was entitled *Roman-Pantjaroba Palawidja* [Field Crops: A Novel of Total Change].⁴² Published on good paper, with reassuring type and carefully made illustrations scattered throughout the book, the publication of this book should have been an event of some cultural significance. However, seen from the long lenses of 2012, it seems that this book has been almost, but not quite completely ignored, almost but not quite completely forgotten, and almost but perhaps not quite unread. We'll return to that later, but first let me explain about the contents of the novel:

Figure 35. Cover of Karim Halim (1945).



1. Summary of the story

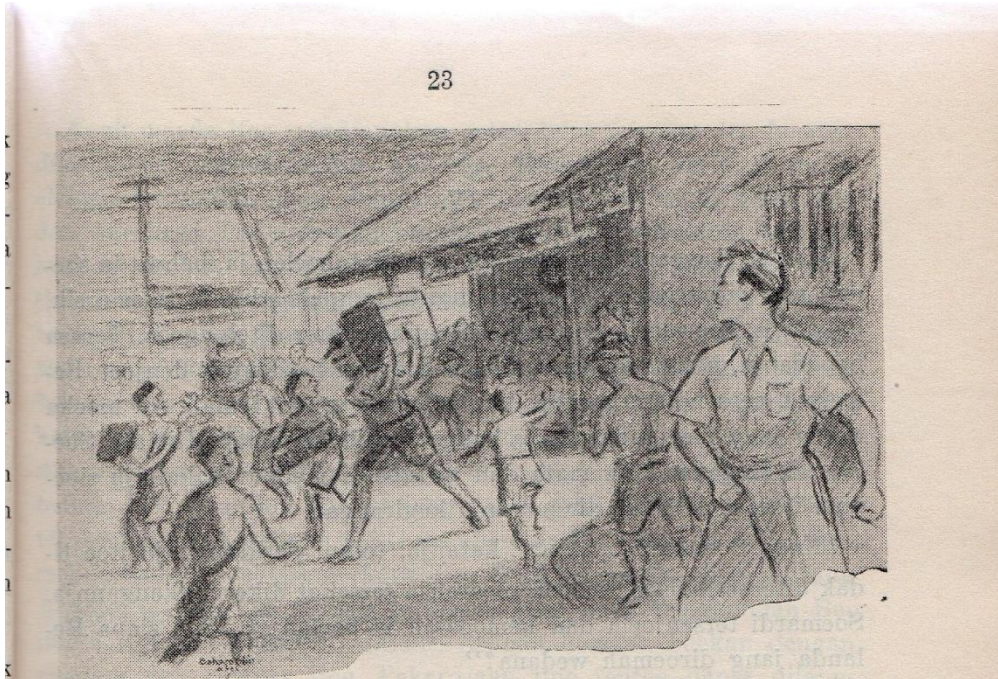
The story begins with tense anticipation as it became clear that the Dutch could not resist the onslaught of the Japanese armed forces in March 1942. Although there was much rejoicing at the loss of the Dutch, and thankfulness towards Japanese soldiers, the scorched earth policy of the retreating Dutch and bad feelings toward the former governments resulted in bad behavior, especially the looting of the homes of the Dutch and other local residents.

Rengasdengklok, a small town in the region of Karawang in West Java, was one of many places experiencing such conditions. Native residents of the town and nearby villages looted and destroyed homes and shops in the town. The Chinese patrol “Ronda Tionghoa” tried to secure the town with weapons, which resulted in fighting with the

⁴² Karim (1945).

looting villagers. At the same time, there was a battle between the Dutch and the Japanese in Karawang itself, and the river Tjitaroem was filled with corpses.

Figure 36. Looting in 1942.



Soemardi seeing the villagers looting Chinese stores in early March 1942.

The first scene opens with a teenage girl and her frightened younger brother taking refuge in the home of R. Harsadibrata, a retired irrigation official. The girl (Soei Lan) and her brother (Jin) are local Chinese, whose home was destroyed and looted; Soei Lan (and her brother) escaped from a worse fate by hiding behind a barrel, and were later found by the local schoolmaster, Soemardi, who took them to his father's home and informed their parents who were then in the town of Karawang. Harsadibrototo spent his time praying, but also helps to reassure Soei Lan and his own daughter, Soemarsih, who is worried about her brother who had gone out to try to combat the widespread looting and violence.

During this period of chaos, Soemardi does his utmost to restore a safe, peaceful environment, but is hampered by his lack of authority. Rather he feels the Wedono and Assistant Wedono (Soemardi's brother-in-law Kartahadimadja) need to publicly act. After a long search, he finds them at the home of the rich Chinese leader Baba Lim with a number of other Chinese leaders. To his amazement, he finds the local officials refuse to act themselves and are completely dependent on Baba Lim and that local

security has been put in the hands of the Ronda Tionghoa, a Chinese patrol; after an argument with Baba Lim and the Assistant Wedono, and he is told to leave or be detained. That night things get out of hand, as the Chinese patrols decrease due to sleepiness and native villagers from across the river begin to loot stores and homes. By morning, chaos reigns, and the Ronda Tionghoa found itself in a defensive mode until rifle shots begin. Soemardi, who is trying to get villagers to understand right and wrong, and to return to their villages is enraged to find the shots coming from a Dutchman at the Wedono's residence. Running there, he is first knocked over and trampled, then punched by a Ronda Tionghoa member, and eventually knocked out. Meanwhile, the Ronda Tionghoa arrest as many as possible, who are then executed by Chinese seeking revenge. Meanwhile the villagers' wives and children await them on the other side of the river, regretting the lack of thought of their men.

After Soemardi awoke in his home with a heavy head injury, he rested but soon went back to work. Perceiving that government officials had failed by not trying to reason with the villagers, and that he had failed by not establishing a Komite Ra'jat, he went to Baba Lim to explain his goals. Baba Lim was soon won over, and together they established a Komite Ra'jat, and at a mass meeting, Baba Lim apologized publically for the excesses of the Ronda Tionghoa. The Ronda Tionghoa was converted to a general militia, and the Komite Rakjat strove to take over the functions of the Dutch government. Then finally March 9 arrived.⁴³

With the surrender of the Dutch to the Japanese army, Indonesians were freed from Dutch colonial oppression and all sorts of changes began to take place. However, as Soemardi was crossing the river one day, it tipped over and his head hit some rocks causing severe injuries. As a result of his injuries, his efforts in Rengasdengklok were stalled. The military authorities also ordered all political activities to stop for the time being, for already existing laws to be enforced (unless in conflict with military orders), and for the local people to obey the old government officials who were now under Japanese supervision.

⁴³ The Dutch military commander H. ter Poorten announced the surrender of all troops in the Netherlands East Indies on March 9, 1942. His vaguely worded surrender allowed the interpretation that other troops of other allied nations were included, thus inhibiting them from continuing to fight the Japanese. As the 16th Army landed on Java on March 1, Allied resistance lasted only nine days.

This provides the setting for the rest of the story in which the Chinese are won over, and Chinese and native Indonesians work together. Baba Lim, for example, helps cooperatives which assist peasants in using their time more efficiently. Soei Lan and her brother Jin go on a picnic with Soemardi and Soemarsih, and while Soemarsih and Jin play, Soei Lan and Soemardi have an opportunity to speak more, leading to their falling in love, and eventually marrying.

A series of unfortunate events take place, challenging Soemardi's family. Soemarsih's boyfriend, Soeleman, a student at the medical college, and the son of the Wedono, reappears but is cynical and nasty, having lost all his goals in life with the collapse of Dutch colonialism. Soeleman breaks up with Soemarsih and disappears. Soemardi is also arrested, for which Soemarsih blames her husband (the Assistant Wedono Kartahadimarta) and returns home to her father and sister. On the other hand, Soemarsih suspects Soeleman was responsible.

Soemarsih and Soei Lan work together on a unified women's organization, an important step in realizing a multi-ethnic society, and their dedication and hard work is ultimately rewarded. Soemardi is eventually released, and to the surprise of family members, thanks his brother-in-law for helping to get him released. Soeleman reappears as a dedicated Peta officer⁴⁴ and apologizes for his bad behavior. Soemardi also becomes a member of the regional council. The story thus ends with three happy couples representing the military (Peta), the administration, and the civilian political leaders who struggle to achieve social unity—especially between Chinese and natives—and prosperity within Greater East Asia.

⁴⁴ Pembela Tanah Air [Defenders of the Fatherland] was a self-defense force established under the 16th army in Java in 1943. Numerous studies exist, but one important early study was completed and published at Waseda in the 1970s: Nugroho Notokusanto's *The Peta Army during the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia* (1979). Notokusanto's works were particularly important as part of the New Order reimagining of Indonesian history. See also *The Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War* (Post 2010).

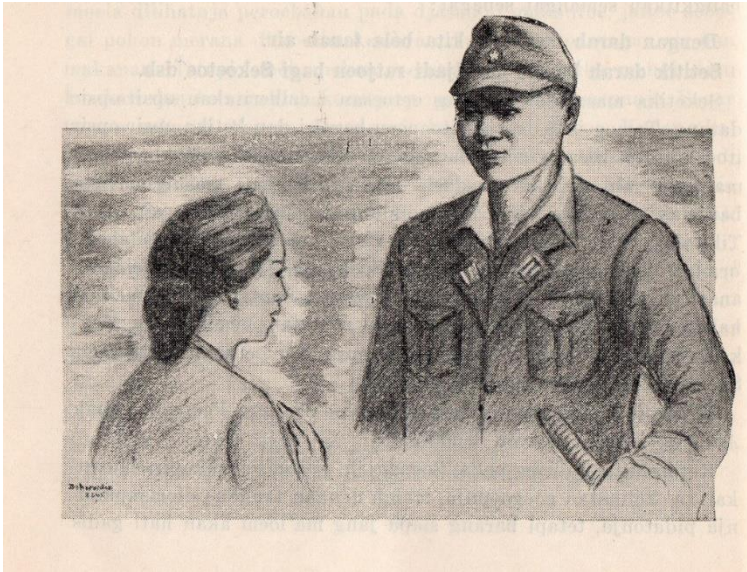


Figure 37. Soemarsih and Soeleman.

The meeting of Soemarsih and Soeleman upon his appearance as a Peta officer.

While the main story element is the intertwined romances, most importantly between the Chinese Soei Lan and the native, civilian political/educational leader Soemardi, the author does offer his readers more than a simple romance. He strives to make his story relevant to the social context of his readers; in this it is clearly following the spirit of the 1939-40 Medan fiction debate, when authors and publishers who had been publically squabbling over morals held an unprecedented meeting to discuss the issue of pop fiction and its value to society.⁴⁵

Roman-Pantjaroba Palawidja included elements such as descriptions and explanations of Chinese-native Indonesian violence, criticism of native officials, but then after their reform, praise; criticism of Chinese leaders who also reform and are praised; non-government leaders playing important roles in helping society to develop and increase residents' prosperity; Indonesian becoming Peta/military members; achievement of interracial co-operation and unity both in practice and in symbolic form; practical efforts described (education, co-operatives); Indonesians working for the future together; and even verbatim quotations of the 1st and 3rd government regulations issues on March 7, 1942 by military authorities and published in *Osamu Kan Po* in the special anniversary edition of March 1943.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ This meeting was held in Medan in December 1939 and was attended by writers and publishers from throughout Sumatra, as well as a representative of Balai Pustaka, H. B. Jassin. H.B. Jassin's reports were published in *Pandji Poestaka*. The debate, however, continued well into the next year. For one part of this continuing debate, see Chapter II above and Horton (2012: 47).

⁴⁶ For these and other regulations published at this time, see *Kanpo: Berita Pemerintah* (Gunseikanbu 1989).

Figure 38. Final Illustration.



The peaceful river flowing past Rengasdengklok at the end of the story.

2. Reception of the Story

How this book was received by readers? In fact, even the distribution of this book is a very large question. Appearing in April 1945, only four months remained until the end of the Japanese occupation; a very short period of time for the book to reach many readers unless previously established distribution networks were used. The copy available to me, may not have been in circulation at all, as it was in perfect condition; I also have not located any book reviews in the local press of the time, although as they were controlled by the Balai Pustaka and the government. However, even if we assume that some copies did get distributed to readers in the closing months of the occupation, the contents may have seemed a little out of date. The “sirih kapoer” at the beginning of the work was dated December 18, 1943, indicating a substantial gap between the events of 1942-3 narrated in between the covers and its publication. The issues of the early occupation, or even 1943-44 with the development of Peta, would similarly have seemed out of date. In the long term, this historical gap could play a different role, in signaling a novel set in the past.

Indonesian readers during the postwar era, if they know about Karim Halim⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Karim Halim was born in Bukittinggi on December 1, 1918, but graduated from the Sekolah Goeroe Moehammadijah. He worked as a teacher for some time, while publishing poetry (often under the name R. O. Hanka) and prose stories. Early in the occupation, he moved to Jakarta and initially lived with H.B. Jassin. In 1944, he was employed as a writer by Balai Poestaka, and was a member of Sasterawan Angkatan Baroe Djakarta (Keimin Bungka Shidosha). See Jassin (1984:4) and “Riwayat Hidoep Karim Halim,” *Djawa Baroe* (15 Juli 1944), 27.

and *Roman-Pantjaroba Palawidja* at all, know about it though the works of H.B. Jassin or through works which depend entirely upon Jassin's work. H.B. Jassin mentions Karim Halim's novel as one of only two novels published by Balai Pustaka during the war, describing it simply as "the work of Karim Halim, filled with billowing romantic idealism, but far from the real world."⁴⁸ From earlier comments about Nur Sutan Iskandar's *Tjinta Tanah Air*, it is clear that Jassin was of the opinion that *Roman-Pantjaroba Palawidja* was too favorable to Japan in that concerns of Indonesians were not included. Additionally, old styles of writing were used, with old familiar techniques. However, while Jassin finds little to talk about, he also is not very harsh in his criticism.⁴⁹ Rather, H.B. Jassin seems content to allow the work to fade away, while works featuring individualism or other newer literary features were given lengthy discussion.⁵⁰

If H.B. Jassin was the source for most Indonesians, most non-Indonesian scholars interested in Indonesian literature would have been introduced to Karim Halim's novel through A. Teeuw's classic work. Teeuw in his *Modern Indonesian Literature* (1967) chooses 1942 as the breaking point from colonial literature, paralleling political history. In his view, 1942 serves as the break, but only after 1945 do you see characteristically "revolutionary" publications; 1942-1945 is thus essentially a dormant period where the new period characteristics are present but invisible. Teeuw mentions three novels; two from Nur St. Iskandar, and Karim Halim's *Roman Palawija*, but these are seen as merely propaganda: "although not one Japanese appears in the book [*Roman-Pantjaroba Palawija*], it teems with Japanese slogans. As literature these

⁴⁸ Jassin (1967: 163).

⁴⁹ Jassin (1954: 11). These are the final words of the chapter:

"Biarpun bagaimana pudjian dan pudjaan kepada Djepang pada suatu waktu ada dirasakan oleh penjair-penjair dan pengarang2 kita sunggu2 dari hati, biarpun orang jang lain pendapatnya menjemooahkan mereka itu dan duduk dipinggir djalan hanja melihat orang berbaris dengan tegap dan oenuh semangat. Orang boleh menedjek lembaga jang bernama Pusat Kebudajaan tjap Nippon, dimana segala macam hasil kesenian dipesan dan dibikin, tetapi tidak bias disangkal bahwa hasil lembaga itu berguna djuga waktu itu dan bagi kemudian hari untuk memperpadu segala semangat dan tenaga. Disanalah seniman-seniman muda kita jang pekerdjaannja sama dengan romusha djiwa dan pikiran, disiksa dan dimasak batinnja untuk revolusi jang akan dating."

⁵⁰ There has been at least one unpublished undergraduate thesis written related to the novel, and several minor references, generally mimicking H.B. Jassin's discussion, or the Teeuw discussion mentioned below.

books have no importance whatsoever.”⁵¹ The “real” nature of this period seems to lie in the poems and short stories written during the occupation, but not published until the revolutionary period. Teeuw’s dismissive description of literature during the Japanese occupation and *Roman-Pantjaroba Palawidja* in particular as Japanese propaganda and not being worthy of literary interest is a pattern which appears repeatedly in the books which can be found in university libraries and the smattering of blogs, course materials and publications that appear in Google searches.⁵²

Teeuw and other writers actually build off of H.B. Jassin’s *Kesusastraan di Masa Djepang* (1947/1954) and *Gema Tanah Air* (1948).⁵³ Teeuw’s preference for the undated selection of prose and poetry in H.B. Jassin’s compilations and other plays published during the post-war era suggests that the nature of his objections may largely be superficial, the result of slogans and other superficial manifestations of “Nipponcentrism,” without which he could perceive an acceptable nationalism and revolutionary outlook. Nonetheless, Teeuw does describe the contents of “*Second Crops: A novel of the change of monsoon*” by writing, “again an idealistic novel about a young teacher in the Rengas-Dengklok area (near Djakarta) who devotes himself to furthering the unity and progress of the Indonesian people, and works hard, especially for the improvement of the relations between Chinese and Indonesians in this area.”⁵⁴ Despite the fact that Teeuw was dependent on H.B. Jassin’s work, Jassin seems much more balanced and understanding of the idealistic goals of and demands on authors during the Japanese occupation.

One important recent publication about the occupation period, the *Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War*, includes an article about “Literature” by Helen

⁵¹ Teeuw (1967: 109).

⁵² Examples of commonly available books are Jacob Sumardjo’s *Sinopsis Roman Indonesia* (Sumardjo 1995) and *Konteks Sosial Novel Indonesia 1920-1977* (Sumardjo 1999), as well as *Ringkasan dan Ulasan Roman Indonesian Modern* (Maman S. Mahayana, Oyon Sofyan & Achmad Dian 2007: 101). Internet sources examined include “Sastra Tahun 1942-1945,” *Berbagi Ilmu* (12 April 2012), <http://chocoronotomo.blogspot.jp/2012/04/sastra-tahun-1942-1945.html> (accessed on 2012/06/27) and Muhammad Damhuri, “Menegasi Identitas Sastra Indonesia,” 2009, <http://sastra-indonesia.com/2009/08/menegasi-identitas-sastra-indonesia/> (accessed 2012/06/27). This originally appeared on *Republika Online*.

⁵³ Jassin (1954, 1948). Strangely, for a compilation of literature, there is generally no publication information for the featured literature. The 4th edition of *Gema Tanah Air* (1959) does finally include publication information.

⁵⁴ Teeuw (1967: 108-9).

Pourpouras. Pourpouras depends on Teeuw for her description of novels during the war and thus similarly concludes that the two novels were full of propaganda, but that short stories became important during the war (only later noting that they too were superficial and filled with propaganda).⁵⁵

The conclusion of an examination of Indonesian or foreign works related to the occupation period and literature is that Karim Halim and his novel *Roman-Pantjaroba Palawidja* is almost total ignored, occasionally referenced with very stereotyped descriptions and without reexamination of the original story. It's not a surprise that the general public would remember little about this novel, even if it has not truly been forgotten, and that it would also be unread. The almost total absence of Indonesian wartime cultural production in the literary cannon and historical consciousness *is* striking and begs serious consideration, as does the content of these works.

3. Absence and Remembering

A. Teeuw and H.B. Jassin conducted research on literature, and thus have less interest in history; their concern with new trends in literature is quite understandable (even if it is colored by personal experiences, personal biases, and personal relationships), however, numerous prewar novels written with similar pedantic, "old-fashioned" styles have been republished by Balai Pustaka without triggering such a negative reaction. This suggests there may be something else going on which discourages remembering of this novel. Why should it be ignored? However, as a historian, works which are written, published and read are particularly interesting for what they can tell us about society and for their role in changes in society. If Karim Halim wrote using older styles, it may have actually been more effective in reaching an audience than cutting edge writing.

Actually, this novel is somewhat more complex than many prewar pop novels which focused on the nationalist movement, although it does have a similar feel. Rather than being a minus, the explicit mention of some practical content of nationalist activities could have even been attractive to some nationalist activists; there is no question of the novel being harmful to public morals.

⁵⁵ Pourpouras (2010: 376).

Why then should *Roman-Pantjaroba Palawidja* be absent from both discussions of history and literature? Here I will just offer a few suggestions of possible reasons for this forgetfulness or avoidance. First, in the immediate postwar period, Indonesians were loath to admit any form of cooperation with the Japanese as it could have put them personally at risk in dealing with vengeful Dutch or result in political problems for the Republic which had already been labeled “made in Japan.” Furthermore, a setting of 1942 and 1943 may have felt very out-of-date in early 1945 as preparations for independence were accelerating. However, both reasons would gradually evaporate, as political developments left this work as a part of history. On a different tact, many intellectuals may have been more comfortable “a-political literature” or art for art’s sake, rather than socially engaged literature. Such individuals are unlikely to be sympathetic to this novel.

Even more critical is the allergic reaction of Indonesians to any discussion of racial conflict. Beyond the long-standing New Order policy of forbidding discussion of racial conflict, discussions of native Indonesians or Muslims actively engaging in such racial violence is particularly taboo. This novel is virtually unique in describing the violence of the early days of the Japanese occupation, but it is also unique in its care to present a picture where all racial and social groups are rehabilitated and who play constructive roles in the future. The Chinese leaders and their native government counterparts are clearly blamed for responding to native villagers looting with violence, but both groups are once again brought into the fold. Similarly, while villagers are clearly to blame for looting, with proper education, they can play constructive roles for society. Perhaps if only the Chinese were to blame it would have been easier to discuss. Similarly, Indonesians have developed very fixed understandings of the occupation period, particularly after Suharto came to power and enlisted the assistance of Nugroho Notosusanto as a researcher and then as a Minister of Education and Culture.

What would happen if Indonesians were to begin to read this novel? If Indonesians and scholars of Indonesia have been avoiding this novel, it could be a very revolutionary change for Indonesian society. The republication of the story about events during the Japanese occupation could even open up a new space for remembering and discussing Indonesian history and interracial relations within Indonesian society.

C. Perceiving Wartime Timor: Australia and the Timor Area in the Early Postwar Period

The Japanese occupation of Indonesia is clearest in Java and Sumatra, although many aspects of their history is also unclear. Conditions in eastern Indonesia are generally not merely unknown, but unknowable. When East Timor gained its independence from Indonesia following the 1999 referendum, a new project to provide a bibliography about the history of the newly born nation during the Japanese occupation was launched in Japan under the leadership of Prof. Goto Ken'ichi and with the support of the Toyota Foundation. With determined work over several years, amazing amounts of information began to appear, much of it from post-surrender Australian sources, reflective of both wartime and early postwar conditions and activities which are normally unknown and unknowable.

The end of World War II in Timor was like much of the war itself, a potentially confusing affair. Prior to the arrival of the Allies in Timor, increasingly mistaken information was being reproduced in Allied intelligence estimates of the Japanese presence on Timor, and by August 1945 these reports were very inaccurate. Military planners' expectations were thus also inaccurate. The return of the Dutch and Portuguese, different military and political jurisdictions, as well as the Australian military role in the surrender and immediate postwar tasks meant that there were numerous ceremonies, more than one administration was present, and a variety of units were assigned to undertake a range of tasks. Luckily, the veil of censorship had been lifted, and besides troops engaged in security tasks, reporters came and went to cover surrender ceremonies, while military history units came to photograph and sketch, leaving visual evidence which contrasts strikingly to the previous three or four years of Japanese presence.

This article focuses on the Timor area in late 1945 and early 1946, drawing largely on Australian photographic evidence as a means of better understanding how the war "ended" for the many individuals involved. What happened to the Japanese troops present on Timor during much of the war, who surrendered to whom, what were the material conditions on the island, what were Australians doing on the island, and how were the Dutch and Portuguese colonial authorities reinstated in their respective

areas? How many Indonesians from other areas were on Timor at the end of the war and how did local residents react to the arrival of the allies? A good understanding of the immediate postwar era helps us to understand the war in Timor, long limited to the story of guerilla warfare in 1942, and the vague assumption of terror-driven Japanese military dominance during the remainder of the war. It also provides one piece of the puzzle of postwar resolution of the wartime dislocations suffered in different ways throughout the archipelago and Asia in general. In presenting visual images, this article also helps to balance the often sinister images produced by stereotypes and archival documents.

1. The End of the War in Portuguese Timor

In May 1945, the Japanese Prime Minister instructed Minister Morito Morishima in Lisbon that negotiations on Japanese withdrawal from Timor could be undertaken.⁵⁶ Both sides understood that the arrival of Portuguese reinforcements would be a necessary step in this process. Progress was slow, and given Japanese requirements for continued neutrality and the practical need for Allied consent, negotiations were extremely unlikely to bear fruit. As Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945, Morishima was informed that Japan was indeed proceeding to return East Timor to Portuguese control. Tokyo then announced to the world that as its involvement in Portuguese Timor had been “self-defense” it was going to immediately return control to the Portuguese in accordance with that government’s wishes, and that they had already given instructions to the Japanese authorities in Timor.⁵⁷

On September 1, the senior Japanese commander in Dili, Col. Yoshioka and vice-consul Yoshitarō Suzuki⁵⁸ reportedly met the Portuguese governor, Manuel

⁵⁶ Morito Morishima (森島守人, 1896-1975) was a native of Ishikawa prefecture. A Foreign Ministry functionary, he served as the head of the East Asia Section from 1936, and then as Minister to Portugal until 1946. He was elected to the Diet in 1955 as a Socialist Party member. For more information on Morishima and Japan-Portugal relations during and after the war, see Gotō (1999), especially pages 186-191.

⁵⁷ “Djepang menjerahkan Timor,” *Penjoeloeh* (August 20, 1945). The dateline for this story was New York, August 17, 1945.

⁵⁸ The involvement of a Col. Yoshioka is surprising, as the commander of the 1st Taiwanese Inf. Reg. was Col. Kobungo Tsuneoka (恒岡小文吾), a native of Okayama Prefecture. The commander of this regiment would normally have been the senior officer in Portuguese Timor. The Portuguese governor identified Col. Yoshioka as the commander of the Japanese army on Timor (Carvalho 1947: 620).

Ferreira de Abreu de Carvalho, and informed him of the end of the war.⁵⁹ On September 5, the Japanese government informed the Portuguese government that East Timor was once again under Portuguese control, and the Portuguese government informed the Allies that all Japanese would be at UN disposal. On the afternoon of the 6th, Consul Suzuki also informed the governor of the plans for rapid evacuation of the Japanese troops from East Timor, expected to be largely completed by the 9th or 10th of September, while 150-160 indispensable troops would remain for up to 30 days (Carvalho 1947: 637).

2. Arrival of the Allies

Upon the end of hostilities in August 1945, the Allies began to readjust military and territorial responsibilities. Australia was somewhat naturally assigned the areas closest to its coast, and a series of new territorial commands were established, including that of the Timforce or TimorForce. The assignment of the Timforce was to take the surrender of the Japanese (Operation Tofo), and generally to settle affairs in the Lesser Sunda archipelago. Brig. Lewis G. H. Dyke, the commander of a brigade in Australian I Corps in Morotai, was assigned the Timforce command and was sent to Darwin on August 29 to prepare for the deployment of Timforce.⁶⁰ The rest of his I Corps brigade was expected to follow in late September, but those troops were ultimately sent to Ambon (Long 1966: 570). The Tasmanian 12/40th Australian Infantry Battalion (NIOD photograph 56396) and a range of smaller Australian units with which he arrived in Timor, along with some Netherlands Indies Army troops, were deemed sufficient.

On its departure from Darwin on September 7, the fleet of Operation Tofo included the old Australian survey ship the *HMAS Moresby*, the corvettes (Australian minesweeper) *Parkes*, *Horsham*, *Benalla*, *Echua*, and *Katoomba*; the *Kangaroo* (a boom defense vessel), the *Bombo* (a converted stores carrier), and the landing crafts HDML

Consul Suzuki was apparently appointed to replace Consul Tominaga on around 13 April 1945. Information about Consul Suzuki from Shigeto Takahashi (personal communication, October 28, 2008) and Carvalho (1947).

⁵⁹ Gunn (1999: 231). Ferreira de Carvalho was appointed governor in 1940 and was replaced in December 1945 by Oscar Ruas (AWM 121400).

⁶⁰ Lewis G. H. Dyke (VX89) was born in Adelaide on August 6, 1900.

(Harbour Defence Motor Launch) 1322, 1324 and 1329; as well as the Dutch *Abraham Crijnsen* and a KPM-owned troop transport ship.⁶¹ The landing craft were towed by warships. On the 9th, the corvettes *HMAS Warrnambool* and *HMAS Gladstone* joined the flotilla. On board the *Moresby* were Brig. Dyke and the senior naval officer for Operation Tofo, Commander G. L. Cant.⁶²

The surrender of the Japanese in Timor was only possible following the slightly delayed surrender by Lt. Gen. Fusatarō Teshima of the Japanese Second Area Army to Gen. Blamey on Morotai on September 9 in accordance with instructions from Field Marshall Terauchi's headquarters in Saigon (Long 1966: 553-4). The Timor expedition thus finally arrived at the prearranged rendezvous off Timor at 8:00 am on September 11, and was met by two Japanese naval officers who were queried about minefields and other critical information through RAAF translator Pilot-Officer Weatherstone. At action stations, the Allied flotilla then entered the harbor in single file behind the *Abraham Crijnsen* and anchored at 10:30 am.



Figure 39. Col. Kaida approaching.

AWM OG3478

Col. Kaida preparing to board the *HMAS Moresby* from a Japanese barge. Photo by John T. Harrison.⁶³

⁶¹ There is contradictory information about the total of Australian and Dutch ships which arrived in Kupang on September 11. See for example, Gill (1968), NIOD 56402, and the Sea Power Centre–Australia site (<http://www.navy.gov.au/spc/ships/parkes.html> cached July 30, 2008 by Google, accessed on August 28, 2008) and other similar pages.

News reports in Indonesia noted that the *Abraham Crijnsen* had been assigned to protect the KPM ships *van den Bosch* and *Thedeus* which were to land Australian and NEI troops as well as NICA staff on Timor. It is unclear why the *Thedeus* was not included in Operation Tofo. See “‘Abraham Crijnsen’ bergerak ke-poelau Timor,” *Penjoeloe* (September 10, 1945). L. De Jong (1986: 852-3) mentions the *Camphuys* as the transport ship.

⁶² Glen Loftus Cant (1902-?) of Gleneg, Victoria entered the RAN in 1915. He was appointed a Lt. Commander in 1932, and was regularly employed as an acting Commander from 1941. He was designated as RAN representative on Operation Tofo by Gen. Blamey, and frequently described as the commander of the *Adelaide*, his posting until February 25, 1945. His next command was minesweeping in the *Katoomba* from February 1946. From 1947-1962, he shuffled between the Emergency List and temporary service, formally retiring in 1962. (AA: A6769 Cant G L)

⁶³ The Australian War Memorial houses the most complete collection of photographs of this period, most of which are accessible through the AWM website. The AWM website states that

At 11:50, a small boat carrying Col. Tatsuichi Kaida (戒田達一) of the 4th Tank Regiment, his Chief-of-Staff Major Minoru Shōji, and a small number of other Japanese to the Moresby. While unarmed soldiers looked down from above (AWM OG3484), others gathered around as closely as they could to observe events, a few holding .303 rifles and bayonets (AWM PO2325.008). The surrender ceremony on the quarterdeck of the *HMAS Moresby*, witnessed by the officers of the escorting ships and a number of allied troops, involved a reading of English and Japanese versions of the instrument of surrender, the surrender of swords, and the signing of the instrument of surrender on a table draped in an Australian Flag. Acting in their roles as commander and chief-of-staff of the Japanese forces on Timor, Col. Kaida and Maj. Shōji signed on behalf of the Japanese military, and the commander of Timforce, Brigadier Dyke, accepted the surrender. Dutch officials, while present, were not allowed to sign the document, which helped fuel bad feelings on the part of the Dutch (Jong 1986: 583; Gunn 1999:233-234). Portuguese representatives were not even present on the *Moresby*.

The Allies were careful to ensure that the ceremony was immediately known to the world. Besides members of the Military History Section (see below), reporters had also been included in the expedition, and RAAF Flight-Lieutenant John T. Harrison personally carried his own pictures to Melbourne, arriving within 28 hours of the ceremony (OG 3476). A number of similar pictures eventually reached the Netherlands as well.

low-resolution photographs with AWM marks do not require special permission for non-commercial use, educational use, or use within an organization. Many photographs have thus similarly been reproduced on public internet sites. Special thanks are due to the AWM for making such important resources available.

The Netherlands Institute for War Documentation has a picture archive for the war which includes a number of images of the Kaida and Yamada surrender ceremonies, as well as of NICA activities in West Timor and the Lesser Sundas. While not reproduced here, the different focus in these pictures provides an important counterbalance to Australian archival sources.



Figure 40. Surrender ceremony on the HMAS Moresby.

AWM 019251

Following the surrender ceremony, an Australian naval beach party landed, followed in turn by an Army reconnaissance party under Brig. Dyke and the “RAN Port Directorate.” A Dutch party landed as well. The following day the main body of troops and supplies were landed, and on September 13 Timforce HQ was established. By the 14th, some of the ships had returned to Darwin, and the Moresby followed on the 16th (Gill 1968: 693-4).

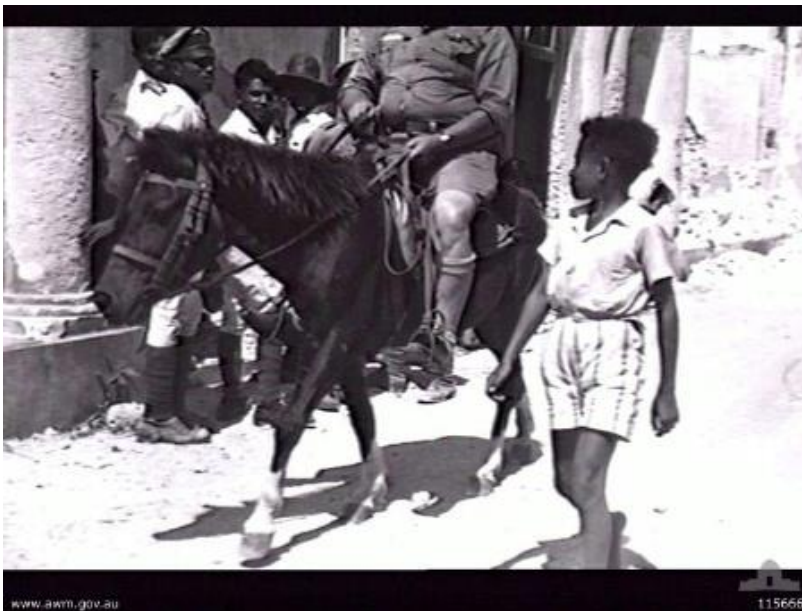


Figure 41. A Dutch naval officer riding a pony through Kupang.

AWM 115666.

Dutch Naval Lt. Com. Boddiga of the Abraham Crijnsen riding a pony through Kupang, September 11, 1945.

As was the case in many other places, the Allies arrived nearly a month after the cessation of hostilities. The situation on Timor had gradually begun to change, as the Japanese prepared for the return of the Allies and the Portuguese were released

from internment in Liquicia, but the relatively subdued nationalist movement even in West Timor was particularly significant. The absence of large numbers of allied POWs in Timor was also important in keeping tensions and the pace of change low.⁶⁴ The arrival of Europeans seems to have been initially welcome for some Timorese, worrying for others, but certainly the local population came out to greet the allied troops and NICA officers, both as individuals and in organized festivities. In this, the geographical and political distance from Java comes through very clearly in the photographs of the first days in West Timor. One picture in the AWM (115124) shows two allied officers greeting a large number of enthusiastic Timorese on a Kupang street with two unarmed Japanese soldiers apparently standing guard. Another picture shows alert, happy faces of some of the people who greeted Dutch Col. C. C. de Rooy in Kupang on September 11 (NIOD 52415). On September 16, Raja Hans Nisoni of Camplong⁶⁵ greeted the arriving Allies with a festival presided over by the Raja, his wife and others (AWM 116006, 019340, 019337). The Rajah himself played a banjo during the festivities.



Figure 42. A dance for Timforce.

AWM 115677

A Dance performed in honor of the arrival of Timforce in Kupang on September 13.

During mid-September, the area controlled by the Allies rapidly expanded. When Brig. Dyke visited Soë to interrogate and arrange the surrender of Japanese troops on September 17, the Allied troops were greeted by locals with “welcome” signs,

⁶⁴ All POWs from Timor were sent to other parts of Southeast Asia, including Burma, early in the war, leaving only “protected” Portuguese in their concentration area.

⁶⁵ This is presumably Don Nepa Wicliff Hans Maurits Nisoni, raja of Fatu Leu from 1945. Born in 1911, he was the son of one raja of Kupang (r.1918-1945) and brother of another (r.1945-). See <http://www.royalark.net/Indonesia/kupang4.htm> and related pages on the Nisoni family (accessed 10/15/2008).

cheering, and the singing of the Dutch national anthem.⁶⁶



Figure 43. Welcome in Soë.

AWM 116000.

Soë, September 17.

3. Ceremony in Dili⁶⁷

Portuguese Timor presented something of a problem, and there was an ongoing diplomatic squabble between Portugal and Australia, with Australian officials striving both to prevent Portuguese reinforcements from arriving and to ensure that the Australian military accepted the Japanese surrender. Nonetheless, the Australian government did not immediately take actions offensive to Portuguese authorities. The fact that Brig. Dyke had accepted the surrender of all Japanese on Timor, along with the Portuguese refusal to allow more than a token landing in Portuguese Timor, stimulated the Australian cabinet to send a party to Dili to ensure that things were in order, to arrange the transport of Allied POWs and civilian internees, to remove Japanese personnel and war materials, and to make necessary arrangements for a War Graves Commission mission and war crimes investigations. It was also to be symbolic. After arranging for “as many ships as possible” to be sent to Dili, W. D. Forsyth, a senior diplomat assigned to assist Brig. Dyke, flew from Darwin with Mr. Manderson and Mr. Brandao as a translator to meet with Brig. Dyke, and then on to Dili with Maj. John M. Bailleu.⁶⁸ On September 22, they met with the Portuguese governor (who had been

⁶⁶ AWM 115998, 115000; NIOD 56392. They were also greeted by the local Japanese commander, Army Lt. Sato (116003).

⁶⁷ Sources vary widely in their descriptions of events, and even the number of ceremonies is unclear, perhaps numbering as many as three.

⁶⁸ Major Bailleu was Brigade Major, second in command to Brig. Dyke (AWM 120268).

warned about their imminent arrival in a phone call by Col. Kaida), and on September 23, 1945, five corvettes carried a party of Australian soldiers under Brig. L. G. H. Dyke to Dili.⁶⁹



Figure 44. RAN Ceremony in Dili.

AWM 119625

RAN and AIF troops at the ceremony of September 24 in Dili. Photo by Keith B. Davis.

A small party of Australian troops was greeted by the Portuguese Governor, Manuel Ferreira de Carvalho at his residence on September 23, including Capt. McCabe and Brig. Dyke, and on this occasion Brig. Dyke congratulated the Governor on the return of Portuguese sovereignty (AWM 119611, 119614-5).⁷⁰ On September 24, one officer and 10 ratings from each of the ships (the *Parkes*, *Gympie*, *Katoomba*, *Gladstone*, *Warrnambool*, and the newly arrived *Moresby*) were invited to come ashore, and a brief formal ceremony was held in a clearing near the bombed-out Dili Cathedral. With rows of Australian soldiers and a large mass of Timorese, Arabs, Portuguese, and especially Chinese watching, Governor Ferreira de Carvalho in his formal white uniform and Brig. Dyke laid wreathes in memory of Australian soldiers and others who had died under Japanese oppression at the base of a flagpole in a palm/bougainvillea shrine constructed on Portuguese orders the previous night. An Australian navy bugler

⁶⁹ Forsyth (1975); Gill (1968: 694); Long (1966: 571-2); AA A1838/2,377/3/3/2, Evatt to Commonwealth Government (14 September 1945), <http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/historical-documents/Pages/volume-08/245-evatt-to-commonwealth-government.aspx> (accessed on 9/4/2016).

⁷⁰ Gill states this was actually on September 24th.

played “The Last Post” to close the ceremony.⁷¹ The same day, the governor and Brig. Dyke signed a seven-point memorandum regulating Allied activities in Portuguese Timor, and mandated the removal of the Japanese as soon as possible (Carvalho 1947:677-8). In the days following the ceremony, some of the 150-200 Japanese left in East Timor along with Timorese laborers were put to work disposing of ammunition in the ocean off Dili.⁷² Other Australian officers began to travel with translators and guides to locate war graves and conduct critical business.



Figure 45. Laboring in Dili.

AWM 119642.

Timorese and Japanese laborers loading Japanese ammunition on a barge at Dili on September 25. Photograph by Keith B. Davis.

According to Wallis’ account of events in Dili, the day after the ceremony, Timorese began to assemble in Dili and in the harbor, and a full day of festivities began, with an estimated 6,000 participants (Wallis 1946). The Australians interpreted this as a celebration of the liberation of Timor (by Australian troops), but it was also likely to be related to the imminent arrival Portuguese troops.

The Portuguese warships *Bartolomeu Dias* and *Gonçaves Zarco* arrived in Dili on September 27, 1945. Australian Brig. Dyke and RNA Commander Gale paid a formal visit to the Portuguese warships. A troopship, the *Angola*, arrived two days later carrying a military expedition with 2,223 troops, engineering companies, and substantial supplies (Carvalho 1947: 685; Gill 1968: 694; Gunn 1999: 235). While the Portuguese administration had already begun to reestablish control over East Timor, this provided the material support necessary for effective administration. Symbolically,

⁷¹ “Tribute to Brave at Timor” *The Herald* (September 29, 1945).

⁷² See Gunn (1999: 234) and Long (1966), in particular the picture between pages 556-7.

it was also an important event, as the renewed connection with the metropolitan military might encouraged Timorese to cooperate with the Portuguese administration, and to reestablish the prewar colonial *status quo*.



Figure 46. Arrival of Portuguese sloops.

AWM 119659

The sloops
Bartolomeu Dias and
Gonçalves Zarco in
Dili Harbor
September 29, 1945.
Photo by Keith B.
Davis.

The various Australian ships left in stages, with Dykes HQ ship, the *Moresby*, departing October 1. Allied forces in general had little to do with Portuguese Timor after October 1, 1945.

4. Surrender of General Yamada

On September 25 or 26, Lt. Gen. Kunitarō Yamada,⁷³ commander of the 48th Division, arrived in Kupang from Sumbawa (via Flores) with two derelict, door-less bombers and eight staff officers, including Capt. Yoshioka.⁷⁴ The planes had been

⁷³ Lt. Gen. Kunitarō Yamada (山田国太郎, 1894-1984) was a native of Aichi province. He was a graduate of the Imperial Japanese Army Academy (27th class, 1915) and the Army War College (40th class, 1928). He was promoted to Lt. General in October 1943 and assigned to the 48th Division in the Sunda archipelago in November 1944 after a posting as Chief of Staff in the Thailand Defense Army and Military Attaché in the Embassy in Thailand (1943-1944), but he had previously been commanding officer of the 2nd Tank Brigade (1942-1943), as well as serving in teaching positions at the NCO School and War College (1934-1937). He did not arrive in Sumbawa until December 7, 1944, forcing Tsuchihashi Yūitsu (土橋勇逸) to delay his departure to Indochina. For detailed information, see the autobiographies of Yamada (1979) and Tsuchihashi (1985: 499-502), as well as

<http://www.generals.dk/general/Yamada/Kunitar%C5%8D/Japan.html> (last accessed 9 April 2016).

⁷⁴ The undercarriage of one of these bombers collapsed upon landing (AWM 120079). For more on the arrival of Gen. Yamada and his planes, see Farram (2004: 217) and Yamada (1979:270). Yamada claims to have left Sumbawa and arrived in Kupang on September 25.

painted with green crosses on a white background, the prearranged sign of surrender. In addition to discussions about important military affairs, like the destruction of Japanese arms, to his great surprise, Yamada was interviewed, photographed, and sketched by Australian journalists and history section members.⁷⁵



Figure 47. Gen. Yamada's aircraft.

AWM 120079.

One of the bombers in which Gen. Yamada's party arrived in Timor. Photograph taken October 3 by Keith B. Davis.

At 3:00 pm on October 3, a fifteen-minute formal ceremonial signing of the instrument of surrender for the Japanese in the Lesser Sunda Islands (east of Lombok) was held on a large parade-ground with Brig. Dyke who had just returned from Dili at 7:00 am. General Yamada arrived at the ceremony with Staff Capt. Yoshioka and one other Japanese and was searched for hidden weapons by one of his Australian escorts. They were then escorted by Captains Castles and Wincer throughout the proceedings. Held on a parade ground and witnessed by local Timorese, the ceremony was attended by Commander Gale and approximately 90 men from the RAN, as well as members of the AIF 12/40th Battalion and NICA personnel, including a platoon of NICA police boys. The 12/40th Battalion band also was there (AWM 120093), completing the ceremonial ambiance. Besides the signing of the instrument of surrender, a Japanese translation had been prepared and after the RAAF translator Edward Weatherstone read through the document, it was presented to the Japanese troops (AWM 120122).

⁷⁵ Yamada (1979: 271-3). Yamada also claims to have met Brig. Dyke on the 25th, when he was in Dili. While it is technically possible for Brig. Dyke to have been shuttled back and forth following the ceremony on the 24th, more likely Gen. Yamada misunderstood with whom he was meeting.



Figure 48. Senior Japanese officers during surrender ceremony.

AWM 120099.

General Yamada and other senior staff under allied escort during the surrender ceremony for the Lesser Sundas on October 3, 1945. Photo by Keith B. Davis.

After October 3, Gen. Yamada was “left responsible for civil administration and preservation of law and order in Sumbawa, Flores and Sumba” (Long 1966: 571), although it is unclear whether any communication facilities were provided. The surrender prefaced the Australian-led Sunforce (commander, Major John M. Ballieu) which traveled around the Lesser Sundas from around 14 October to around 30 October, extending the area under actual allied control.⁷⁶ A new concentration point for the Japanese in the Lesser Sundas was created at Lopok, Sumbawa,⁷⁷ and people were shuffled around by ship and Catalina flights. Catalinas carried war crimes suspects and sick Indonesians in need of hospitalization to Kupang.⁷⁸ In one, a man named Ali Mustamin, previously an employee of the RAN station in Singapore who had spent 10 months as a laborer on Sumba, was sent to Kupang (AWM 118737). General Yamada presumably accompanied the Sunforce expedition, but if so, then he was already of marginal significance as he is rarely if ever mentioned in publications or archival documents.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ One of the escorting ships was the HMAS Parkes.

⁷⁷ According to Yamada, 25,000 Japanese were eventually concentrated here under his administration until around May 1946.

⁷⁸ On such a flight on October 23, 1945, see AWM 120207.

⁷⁹ In his autobiography, Yamada vaguely claims to have returned to Sumbawa immediately after the ceremony in Timor, but it seems more likely that the Allies would have insisted on his presence when visiting areas officially under 48th Division control. He would thus have “returned” with the Sunforce expedition.

Shortly after the departure of Sunforce, General Sir Thomas Blamey, commander of the Australian Armed Forces, arrived in Kupang by Catalina Flying Boat (October 19). He was greeted at the wharf by six people, including Brig. Dyke, Flight Lt. Featherstone, Capt. Reg Saunders, and two rajas (AWM 132552-3). After addressing a parade of Timforce personnel, Blamey visited the Japanese camp at Taurus (132563).

5. Japanese postwar experiences

As the Burma front worsened in early 1945, soldiers had been pulled off of Timor and sent to Java on various ships, the first leg of a long trip to reinforce the Burma front. The units on Timor were thus vastly under-strength at the end of the war.⁸⁰

After the Japanese surrender on August 15, the troops in East Timor were gradually moved to West Timor. This was also desired by the Portuguese authorities who had begun to take control in East Timor. Thus by the time the Allies arrived, there were very few Japanese left in East Timor, probably only 150-200 Japanese who were being used for guard duty at munitions depots and other critical institutions (Gunn 1999:234). According to an Australian intelligence report (probably based on Japanese reports), by October 12, 1945, only 3235 Japanese remained on Timor, including 578 civilians, 792 Navy personnel, 1208 Army personnel, and 657 “other auxiliaries.” There were, however, 19,577 Japanese in the Lesser Sunda archipelago, mostly Japanese army troops.⁸¹

Upon the arrival of the Allies, a self-supporting camp for Japanese POWs was established under the command of Col. Kaida at Tarus, about 7 miles [11 km] east of Kupang. This location was selected to keep the malaria-infected Japanese troops outside of mosquito-range from the allied soldiers. The Japanese camp was largely self-sufficient. Besides maintaining their own camp, building and repairing necessary

⁸⁰ The individual Japanese troops (including Taiwanese) interviewed by the Forum for Historical Documents on East Timor during the Japanese Occupation Period in 2005-2007 all had left Timor by the end of the war.

⁸¹ Advanced Headquarters Australian Military Forces, “Weekly Operations and Intelligence Report No. 1,” cited in Long (1966: 555).

facilities, the Japanese kept busy growing vegetables. Lieutenant Commander Yonekura, commander of Japanese naval forces in Timor, also resident in the camp, showed the Australian Military History Section the vegetable garden during their visit on October 10, 1945 (120162). Despite the loss of the war, the Japanese troops largely held to their own conventions, for example saluting the victorious soldiers and bowing to Allied flags every day in their own camp.



Figure 49.
Japanese
Commander
Yonekura and his
vegetable garden.

AWM 120162.

Lt. Commander
Yonekura showing
a visiting
Australian the
vegetable garden
(October 10).
Photograph by
Keith B. Davis.

The major towns of Dili and Kupang were devastated by Allied bombing, and smaller towns had been damaged as well. Lacking any other reliable source of labor, especially for hard labor and semi-skilled work that needed to be completed immediately, the Allies put Japanese to work on reconstruction. One of the first tasks was to repair the roads and wharves at the port in Kupang (see below) so that Australian transport could be landed (019388). They also worked on other infrastructure projects, like making an auxiliary power generator for Kupang (120134), and building the Provost barracks. They also burned trash at the 12/40th Battalion camp (AWM 120120), and did laundry at the 55 Camp Hospital (AWM 120119).



Figure 50.
Japanese POWs
repairing a bridge.

AWM 120132.

Japanese POWs
repairing a bridge
under the
supervision of
Australian troops
(October 8).
Photograph by
Keith B. Davis.

Such labor duties were probably expected by the Japanese troops, and perhaps welcome as it kept them busy, allowed them to leave the camp, and brought them into contact with allied soldiers. They were still able to construct a small Shinto shrine in the camp, and individuals showed their special skills, for example by making a wood camera case for the MHS photographer or repairing sports equipment.



Figure 51. Shinto shrine

AWM 120155.

The Shinto shrine constructed in
the Japanese camp. Photo by Keith
B. Davis.

A decision was soon made to further concentrate Japanese in Sumbawa. The first shipment of Japanese prisoners to Sumbawa (Lopok) on the Dutch ship *Stagen* with 30 Australian guards and 130 NEI Army personnel departed from Kupang on 4 November. The Japanese POWs boarded barges (carrying their own gear) and were

taken to the ship.⁸² Before they boarded, Lt. Gen. Yamada, commander of the 48th Division, inspected some of the troops (120262). The transfer of Japanese troops continued later in the month, using the *Haruoka Maru* (formerly the Straits Settlement Company Ship *Kinta*) to Sumbawa Besar on 19 November 1945. The use of this ship was part of a decision to use Japanese ships to “save allied shipping.”⁸³ With the exception of war crimes suspects, this ended Japanese involvement in Timor. Most were have eventually been repatriated to Japan from Sumbawa.

6. NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration) and local society

Along with the Australian military, 10 Dutch officers, 17 NICA officials of various ranks, and a number of NEFIS (Netherlands Forces Intelligence Section) personnel landed in Kupang on September 11, 1945 (Farram 2004: 218). Whereas the Australian military was assigned war related tasks such as confiscating weapons and interning the Japanese, NICA officials came to Timor with the ultimate goal of taking over administration of the entire Indonesian archipelago. One of their first actions on Timor was to identify, dismiss, and if possible arrest Indonesians who had collaborated with the Japanese during the occupation period. I. H. Doko⁸⁴ and F. Runtuwene of Minseibu, and D. Adoe of the police were among the first to be dismissed from their administrative positions. Repeated searched of their residences followed. I. H. Doko, a prominent nationalist from the prewar period, argues that some of the charges of collaboration were made by Timorese who had been guilty of wrongdoing during the Japanese occupation and thus lost their positions (Doko 1981: 111-112).

⁸² See AWM photographs 120257, 120259, 120260, 120263, 120265, and 120266.

⁸³ This is an odd assertion, however, as the RAN began to mothball ships in December 1945 (including several which took part in Operation Tofo), indicating a *surplus* of ships, either with respect to RAN personnel or tasks. More likely it was done for political convenience. On the transfer of the Japanese, see AWM photographs 121513-17, 121519, and 121522.

⁸⁴ Leader of the prewar Perserikatan Kebangsaan Timor, from 1943 Izaak Hendrikus Doko had served as the head of the “Bunko Kakari” (apparently Health, Education, Religion and Information Affairs), the head of the youth organization, Seinendan, as well as the editor of the *Timor Syuho*. See Doko (1981: 100-3), Farram (2004: 195-7), and Gunn (1999: 227),.



Figure 52. NICA staff at Tarus.

AWM 120176.

NICA related staff at Tarus, October 10. At left, Adjutant de Bree of NICA, and second from right, NICA Police 2nd Sgnt. Bire. Photo by Keith B. Davis.

Under the leadership of Col. C. C. de Rooy,⁸⁵ NICA officers like Lt. Snelleman quickly reestablished relationships with local leaders and began to play an important role in local affairs, as is clear from their mediating role in arranging a soccer game between Timorese and Australian troops on November 15 (AWM 121510).⁸⁶ By early 1946, Col. De Rooy had been promoted to CONICA head in Makassar. At that time (Feb. 1946), Lt. Col. Van Oyen was the senior Netherlands Indies Army Forces officer in Kupang (125757).

NICA personnel also spread throughout the region. NICA units were installed at Bima on January 13, with a company of RNIA troops, giving NICA control of Sumbawa, except in the areas where the Japanese were concentrated (Long 1966: 573).

7. Local Timorese Society

With the announcement of Japanese surrender in August 1945, the Japanese quickly moved to reduce their responsibilities. Responsibility for Kupang city was turned over to Dr. A Gabeler (mayor), Tom Pello and I. H. Doko by the Regional Administration (*Ken Kanrikan*) in August 1945. Doko was informed of this decision on

⁸⁵ C. C. de Rooy was subsequently CONICA (Commanding Officer NICA) in Makassar in 1946. He was converted to an (acting) resident in the reorganization of Dutch-controlled territories before he and his wife returned to the Netherlands in mid-1946. See photograph taken in Kupang on 11 September 1945 (NIOD 52415).

⁸⁶ On Lt. Snelleman's visit to Soë on September 17, see NIOD 56387.

August 23 by a Japanese official who wished to apologize for his behavior the previous day, but the nascent Timorese city administration was cut short by the arrival of NICA and the Allies on September 11.⁸⁷ In Portuguese Timor, the formerly interned Portuguese were so few in number that direct control of local affairs would have been in the hands of local elites until late September.

Upon arrival in Timor, one of the tasks of the Australian military was the liquidation of Japanese goods. Arms were guarded by Japanese, until they were inspected by and destroyed under the supervision of Australian troops, which in East Timor was between September 23-October 1. Tanks, motor vehicles, artillery and other large items were collected by the Japanese military in a few locations like Tibessi outside of Dili, where Japanese soldiers tried to destroy them in August 1945.⁸⁸ Before Australian soldiers arrived under orders to make the tanks inoperable, Timorese had already salvaged (or looted) a large amount of equipment for themselves (AWM 119657). The arms disposal process was more relaxed in West Timor where Timforce was based.

While arms were destroyed, food stocks were sometimes divided up in the villages in which they had been stored by the Japanese army (AWM 115669). This probably helped to alleviate the shortages of food which were common throughout Asia by late 1945. There were however few signs of starvation in the photographs of Timor, despite an inclination of the photographers to present dramatic, anti-Japanese images. Nonetheless, the devastation in Timor was not limited to the destruction of Kupang and Dili, and the coffee, rubber, and cocoa plantations of East Timor.



Figure 53. Japanese and Timorese laborers at Dili.

AWM 119642.

Japanese POWs and Timorese laborers preparing to dump ammunition into the ocean near Dili (September 25, 1945). Photo by Keith B. Davis.

⁸⁷ On his immediate postwar experiences, see Doko (1981: 108-10).

⁸⁸ See, for example, AWM pictures 119652-7 of Tibessi.

During the first months after the war, there were few conflicts between Indonesian nationalists, NICA, Timforce, and the Japanese in the lesser Sundas. Beginning in December 1945, however, there were several conflicts between Indonesian nationalists and the Japanese over arms in Sumbawa. On January 3, four Japanese were wounded and two nationalists killed at Gempe. The same day, several other attacks against Japanese posts took place. The Australian Army ordered the Japanese to shoot, and arrests were made, calming things down (Long 1966: 572-273).



Figure 54. Bazaar at Hatu Udo.

AWM 121462.

Timorese at the bazaar in Hatu Udo (East Timor) on December 14. Photograph by Keith B. Davis.

In general, however, life quickly “returned to normal” under the leadership of the traditional elites and the NICA or Portuguese colonial overlords. In East Timor, the local population would have been responsible for providing the labor needed to rebuild the infrastructure destroyed in the war. As Dili and other towns were in ruins, reconstruction was a major challenge. In West Timor, the Japanese assisted in the reconstruction for the first months, until they were relocated outside of Timor, resulting in fewer demands upon local Timorese.

8. Javanese on Timor

At the end of the war, large numbers of Javanese (and smaller numbers of other Indonesians) were scattered throughout the archipelago and beyond, many serving as laborers in very poor conditions.⁸⁹ It was critical for both humanitarian and practical administrative reasons to return these individuals to their home areas as

⁸⁹ The actual conditions of laborers in the Timor area is hard to determine as the captions to AWM photographs emphasize that they probably hadn’t eaten a “decent meal in years,” but they look far healthier than the gaunt Portuguese shown in other pictures.

soon as possible. This was one of the tasks undertaken by NICA and the Australian authorities in Timor.

On October 2, the *HMAS Gympie* arrived in Kupang bringing a number of “Javanese and Timorese slave laborers who were released from Japanese internment” (AWM 120068-71). It is unclear where they were arriving from, but it is possible that they were arriving from Portuguese Timor, where the *Gympie* had been from September 23. The last ship from the Dili mission, the *Moresby*, left Dili on October 1, and arrived at Kupang early on October 3. It is thus possible that they had been laborers in the Fuiloro or Baucau areas. A picture from October 16 shows “liberated Javanese prisoners of war.” If the caption is correct, then this group was probably made up of former KNIL troops (NIOD 51918).



Figure 55. Javanese and Timorese laborers on the HMAS Gympie.

AWM 120069.

Javanese and Timorese laborers on the HMAS Gympie (October 2). Photograph by Keith B. Davis.

The group which received the most attention was probably Javanese women, whose presence tended to be noted by authorities and who were excellent subjects for photographers, although the information recorded about these photographs is rather less than reliable. For example, a group of 56 girls from Java were found in a camp in Atambua in September 1945. The caption for pictures in an Indonesian periodical on Java notes that there were 3,500 Japanese soldiers in Atambua, a figure which could be an estimate of the wartime garrison but also could be the number of Japanese there in September 1945 (after the evacuation of Portuguese Timor). The girls had been reportedly lured with promises of employment in hospitals.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ “Nasib Gadis Indonesia,” *Penjoeloeh* (20 September 1945). Similarly it’s unclear whether all these girls had been in Atambua during the war, and when they arrived there.



Figure 56. Javanese women in Kupang (1).

AWM 120082.

The photograph caption indicates it was taken in Kupang on October 2, 1945. Note that there seem to be 44 women in the picture. Photo by Keith B. Davis.

A second series of pictures now preserved in the Australian War Memorial depict Javanese women in Kupang with primarily the same caption: “TWENTY SIX JAVANESE GIRLS WHO WERE LIBERATED AT KOEPANG FROM JAPANESE BROTHELS. JUST PRIOR TO THEIR RELEASE THE JAPANESE ISSUED THEM WITH RED CROSS ARM BANDS IN AN ATTEMPT TO CAMOUFLAGE THE FOUL MANNER IN WHICH THESE GIRLS HAD BEEN USED.” In some pictures they were being unloaded from a Japanese junk (October 3rd). Why they would be on a boat nearly three weeks after the allied arrival is not clear, nor is it clear why pictures dated October 3rd show 22 women (e.g. AWM 120087), but a picture dated one day earlier would show around 44 women (AWM 120082). The dates of the pictures may be mistaken, and other Javanese women may have been put together in one place,⁹¹ but all that is known for sure is that there was at least one group of Javanese women who had been serving as prostitutes or comfort women, and were reportedly issued Red Cross markers before the Australians “arrived.”⁹² In these pictures they seem to be well clothed, healthy, and in good spirits.

⁹¹ Pictures like the one reproduced in *Materials on East Timor during World War II* (Forum 2008), in which two women posed with Gen. Tsuchihashi and the Japanese HQ staff in Kupang, suggests that not all Javanese women in Timor during the wartime years were comfort women or prostitutes. These women were probably administrative staff brought from Java.

⁹² See AWM pictures 120082-87. On this group of “fifty women” found in brothels in Kupang, as well as other information about prostitution in West Timor, including the involvement of Timorese women, see Farram (2004: 203-5). Unfortunately, the information Farram provides does not seem to resolve the contraction raised in these pictures and their captions.



Figure 57. Javanese women in Kupang (2)

AWM 120087.

Kupang, Timor (October 3, 1945). Photograph by Keith B. Davis.

The women in question were placed in the care of NICA, which probably repatriated them to Java. Concentration in West Timor and repatriation to home areas was the fate of most other Javanese laborers and former KNIL troops. The fact that *heiho* are not mentioned is curious, and suggests that they were either grouped with former KNIL (thus POWs) or as “laborers” (usually called by the Japanese term *romusha* in Indonesia).

9. Timorese Guerillas

When the Allies arrived in Kupang in September 1945, some Timorese came with them, soldiers variously identified as “Timorese guerillas” or “Indonesian commandos.” Three of Timorese, identified in one picture as Trooper Francesca da Silva, Trooper Celestino dos Anjos, and Alexandre da Silva, seem to have been civilians from Portuguese Timor who assisted the Australian military in 1942-3, then were brought to Australia, and were given further commando training by SRD (Services Reconnaissance Department). These men were probably brought to Timor in order to repatriate them to their homeland, as one man, Celestino dos Anjos, could not be contacted in November or December 1945 when Gen. Blamey awarded him the Loyal Service Medallion.⁹³ There were probably other (West) Timorese or Indonesians in

⁹³ This was granted on the basis of his assistance to the 2/2nd Independent Company and other Australian units in 1942-43, and his parachuting into the Lalaia Valley of East Timor in June 1945 at great risk for himself and his family. He finally received his medallion in 1971, at which time he was the “headman of the village of Bibileu.” See AA: B4717 Anjos/Celestino. The CAVR report, Chapter 7.2, “Unlawful Killings and Disappearances,” page 172 notes that Celestino dos Anjos, father of the former Ratih commander for Kraras, was killed near Kaijun Laran on

Australian service accompanying the mission, in addition to the Dutch Indies Army troops.



Figure 58. Indonesian commandos headed to Timor.

AWM 114880

“Indonesian Commandos”
boarding the *Parkes*.



Figure 59. Special Reconnaissance Section members.

AWM 115663

Special Reconnaissance Section members from Portuguese Timor on board the *HMAS Parkes* in September 1945. Captain A. D. Stevenson with Francesca da Silva (left), Celestino dos Anjos (center left) and Alexandre da Silva (right).

10. Indonesian nationalists arriving in Timor

A group of 1,416 Indonesian nationalist “mutineers” were deported from Australia in October 1945 on the transport ship *Esperance Bay* along with a small number of their Indonesian and Australian wives.⁹⁴ While they willingly departed Australia, having been assured by Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell that they

September 22, 1983. Lambert (1997: 428) confirms his death.

⁹⁴ The caption on the pictures states that they were “FIM (sic) sympathizers,” and states that rather than go to Batavia, they elected to stay in Timor under Australian control. That seems to be rather inaccurate. See Lockwood (1970: 54-55). Some of these Indonesians were internees from Boven Digul (eg. Senan, Soerparmin and Saedyat), but others were sailors, KNIL soldiers, or Indonesian civilians.

would be delivered to Republican controlled areas, 40 Indonesians were removed at Kupang by Brig. Dyke on orders of his superiors because Louis Mountbatten would not grant safe passage to these individuals.⁹⁵ Nineteen of the forty had to be removed from the ship by force, and at least one, Jim Lumanauw, a spokesman for Indonesians in Australia, seems to have been jailed in Kupang. These Indonesians were kept far away from the local Timorese, being placed on Semaue Island until February 17, when the Australians were due to leave. They then were transported to other SEAC controlled areas (North Borneo and Singapore) to prevent NICA from imprisoning them while ensuring that they did not return to Java. Nearly all made it to Java by August 1946, while Lumanauw arrived some months later.⁹⁶

Figure 60. Indonesian nationalists detained at Timor



AWM 125764. Five of the Indonesian nationalists on Timor prior to their departure around February 17. Photo by Keith B. Davis.

⁹⁵ Soeparmin (1988), writing 33 years later, claims that the Indonesians refused to get off at Kupang and were then forced at bayonet-point to board an Australian navy ship at Jakarta, on which they were taken back to Kupang. There they met 60 ex-KNIL soldiers who refused to fight for the Dutch colonial state against their own people.

⁹⁶ 125764, 125763. On these deportees, the context of their departure from Australia, and their arrival in Java, see Lockwood (1970), especially pp. 54-55, and Soeparmin (1988).

11. The Australian Military History Section⁹⁷

In September 1945, a field team of the Australian Military History Section was assigned to collect information related to the war in Timor for the historical record.⁹⁸ An important part of this was taking photographs and making sketches of people and places that had been significant for Australian army troops. The field team included three key members: a war artist, Charles Bush,⁹⁹ a photographer armed with a Mentor reflex camera, Sgt. Keith Benjamin Davis, and a guide, Sgt. George J. B. Milsom, a former member of the 2/40th Inf. Bat. which had been based in Kupang (December 1941-February 1942) and then the 2/2nd Independent Company which had been based in Portuguese Timor until December 1942.



Figure 61. History Section Kupang HQ.

AWM 122427.

Section members in front of their Kupang HQ (November 14). Photo by Keith B. Davis.

The Military History Section Field Team arrived in Kupang in time for the surrender ceremony on September 11, travelling on the *HMAS Moresby* on which the surrender ceremony would take place. Once in Timor, they were assigned a house as an HQ in Kupang. From September to early February 1946, the team travelled around Timor force controlled areas, particularly Timor, but also to Sumbawa and Sumba with

⁹⁷ The Military History Section commander was also the longest-serving director of the AWM, Lt. Col. John Linton Treloar (10 December 1894-28 January 1952) of Melbourne. From his first assignment in the Australian War Records Section in 1917, he was the guiding force behind the development of the Australian War Memorial. During WWII, he became the head of the Department of Information, returning to the AWM after the war. <http://www.awm.gov.au/people/327.asp>, last accessed on 9/4/2016.

⁹⁸ The discharge papers for one MHS member indicates service in Timor from October 13, 1945, a mistake of one month. They also show his return on March 8, 1946, a date which seems rather late.

⁹⁹ Photograph in Hatu Udo, 15 December 1945 (121466).

the Timforce mission. Their mission ended with the removal of the Australian force in February 1946, after which they continued work on the war crimes proceedings in Darwin in early March 1946.

The team covered the ceremonies with Col. Kaida on the Moresby, with Portuguese officials in Dili, and with Gen. Yamada in Kupang, as well as Lt. Gen. Berryman's visit,¹⁰⁰ then visited Sumbawa, Sumba and Flores, including the new concentration point for Japanese at Lopok on Sumbawa (AWM PO2325.005). While in Kupang, the team met a number of Japanese, at which time they photographed and sketched some of them. One of the Japanese even made a wood camera box for Davis' camera. After most of the Japanese had been sent to Lopok, the team headed to Portuguese Timor, traveling throughout Portuguese Timor with a jeep and trailer brought by ship to Dili, a truck from the Portuguese, and occasionally ponies. The Portuguese administration also provided a translator, at least during the arrival of Charles Eaton in Dili in January 1946, but Milsom and local Timorese like Manuberi, his former *creado*, also helped provide information.

There was also at least one member of a Royal Australian Air Forces historical section team who visited Kupang in October 1945, Eric Thake,¹⁰¹ and was photographed by Davis while sketching Gen. Yamada (AWM 120153).

12. War Crimes Investigations¹⁰²

One of the most important tasks of the Allied administration and a critical part of the process of wrapping up the war was investigating war crimes, and whenever possible prosecuting those responsible for misdeeds. For the Australians, that meant

¹⁰⁰ F. H. Berryman, Chief of Staff of the Australian Military Forces, arrived at Penfui airfield (Kupang) on October 9 to discuss policy matters with Brig. Dyke and to inspect the troops (AWM 120143, 120146).

¹⁰¹ Eric Thake (1904-1982) was a Melbourne native who had briefly worked as a commercial artist in the 1920s, and had been active in studying and promoting art prior to the war. He was sent to northern Australia, Timor and Dutch New Guinea by the RAAF, and in general his work is far more colorful and sophisticated than the work of other military artists who drew very simple realistic pictures. http://www.awm.gov.au/aboutus/artist_profiles/thake.asp accessed 22/8/2008. See also the AWM's biographical note "Flying Officer Eric Thake" at <https://www.awm.gov.au/people/P65147/>, last accessed 9/4/2016.

¹⁰² At present, this discussion only takes into account Australian war crimes investigations and trials, as Dutch materials are not available.

above all the execution of Australian soldiers in 1942, but also mistreatment of POWs before their transfer outside of Timor. Investigation of events in Portuguese Timor was delayed, in part due to the very reluctant cooperation of Portuguese authorities who were jealous of their sovereignty, irritated over their treatment at the end of the war, and possibly fearful that information which appeared in an investigation would be inconvenient for authorities who were attempting to establish their own version of the truth.

Captain R. Hilmer Smith was placed in charge of the investigation of atrocities in Timor. Beginning work soon after the Allied arrival in Timor, Capt. Smith was based at Bakunase, which was the center of NICA administration, and he seems to have been able to work effectively with the assistance of Dr. Gabler, Sgt.-Maj. G. Brandes of the Netherlands Indies Army and 2nd Sgt. Bire of the NICA police. In 1942, these three men “assist[ed] Australian troops and harassed the Japanese.”¹⁰³



Figure 62. NICA investigations of war crimes.

AWM 120173.

Photograph taken at Bakunase [Bakoenasee] on October 11, 1945 by Keith B. Davis. Seated behind the table (from left to right) are Adjut. De Bree, Capt. Hilmar, Corporal D. D. Monro (AMF) and Corporal A. Lumangkun (NICA).

Interviews were conducted in a businesslike atmosphere, with witnesses seated before a table at which Capt. Smith and others sat, taking notes. In order to allow native Timorese to overcome their fear of reprisal when identifying war crimes suspects, witnesses were put in a house and allowed to look through the wooden lattice of the window at the Japanese lined up outside, and speak to the Australian

¹⁰³ AWM 120173-4, 120176.

interrogator standing right outside the window. Japanese identified as suspects were ordered to stand to one side, while others were allowed to return to the main group of Japanese.¹⁰⁴

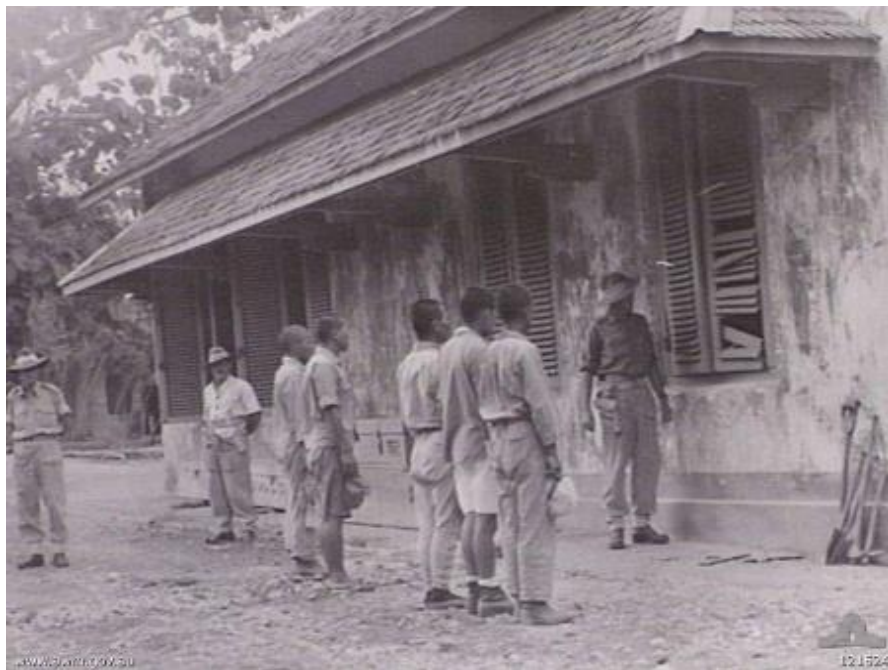


Figure 63.
Identifying war
crimes suspects.

AWM 121524.

Identifying
suspects at
Bakunase,
November 21,
1945. Photograph
by Keith B. Davis.

Among those detained for further investigation were Lt. Ohara and Capt. Sakamoto. Lt. Ohara Seidai, the commander of the Moa Island garrison in 1944, was detained because he was identified by two “eyewitnesses” in Kupang as being involved in the execution of 30 natives. Capt. Sakamoto named three men who executed two Indian POWs at Lautem, along with his deceased commander, Col. Jogo Kumakichi (d. November 1944).¹⁰⁵

On the other hand, individuals wanted elsewhere were sent to other jurisdictions, for example Maj. Gen. Tōru Tanaka, who was probably initially under suspicion of having ordered the execution of natives on Moa island in 1944, but was also wanted in China and by the Dutch.¹⁰⁶ Additionally, a number of suspects were

¹⁰⁴ AWM photographs 121524-121525 (21 November 1945).

¹⁰⁵ AA (Victoria): MP 742/1 336/1/399. He was a lieutenant at the time of the incidents in question.

¹⁰⁶ Tōru Tanaka (田中透), commander of the 2nd Taiwanese Inf. Reg. from October 15, 1941, was a graduate of the 26th class of the Imperial Japanese Army Academy (1914). Prior to posting in Timor, he was the No. 2 District commander, No. 4 Border garrison, Manchuria (April 1939-January 1941).

Events after the end of the war are unclear, but various sources present contradictory reports.

expected to be taken to Darwin, where Capt. W. Smith of the 12/40th Battalion was constructing the Emery Point camp for suspected war criminals and a war crimes court was being prepared (AWM 125943).

The war crimes suspects in Kupang were not all from Timor. Kupang was an initial concentration point for Japanese war crimes suspects in the Lesser Sunda archipelago, and some Japanese suspects from Flores and Sumbawa were sent there for prosecution in October 1945. In one case, five war crimes suspects and an Indonesian murderer were sent on board the HMAS Gladstone, then taken to a Catalina Flying Boat for transport to Kupang on October 20, 1945 (AWM 120198).

For the Sunforce mission, Capt. A. D. Stevenson of the 2/4th Commando Squadron, who had parachuted into the Lalaia Valley of Portuguese Timor in June 1945 with the SRD civilian Celestino dos Anjos and Sgt. R. O. Dawson, was placed in charge of investigating war crimes.¹⁰⁷ Capt. Stevenson has also briefly traveled in Portuguese Timor in September, during the Dili mission. As the units travelled through Sumba and the Lesser Sundas, Stevenson collected information about war crimes, interviewing those with special knowledge of events anywhere in Asia.¹⁰⁸

Australian investigators were first and foremost interested in atrocities committed against Australian troops or the special units sent during the war. As the units involved in the initial invasion of Timor had been sent to Rabaul and other areas in the east, not much of the information gathered in 1945 could be used in Australian war crimes trials. Rather new information was compiled in Timor in 1946-7 and elsewhere was used in court.

One states that Tanaka was quickly identified as a war crimes suspect, and sent to Darwin for trial in March 1946 (AWM 125977). Although he was reportedly wanted in China, he seems to have been ultimately convicted in Ambon in January 1948, and executed on April 7, 1948. MP 742/1 336/1/1213 suggests that he was tried by the Dutch, then sent to China, perhaps in 1947.

¹⁰⁷ Arthur David Stevenson was born in Hampton, Victoria in 1920. After serving in the 2/4th Commando Squadron from January 1942 until September 1943 (including around four month in Timor), he joined the SRD, and was awarded Mention in Dispatches for his service in Timor in June 1945 (Operation Sunlag). He was discharged in April 1946. <http://www.specialforcesroh.com/>, AA: B4717 Anjos/Celestino, and AA: B883 VX54688.

¹⁰⁸ See AWM 118730, 118737, 118740, and 120220.

On June 21, 1946, Major N. F. Quinton of the War Crimes Commission arrived in Dili and along with RNEI Capt. H Pos attempted to investigate war crimes in Portuguese Timor. Major Quinton's primary task was to investigate war crimes against Australian soldiers, while Capt. Pos was investigating other matters. Portuguese officials at best were not supportive, and on occasion were even obstructive.¹⁰⁹

13. Australian War Graves Commission

Of almost equal importance to Australians was finding the remains of Australian soldiers who had died. From 1945, units traveled around Timor, in both West Timor and Portuguese Timor, investigating possible Australian graves. Capt. R. J. Crilley was the commanding officer of the 16th war graves unit. Capt. Crilley first came to Portuguese Timor with the September 23rd Dilly expedition, at which time he was able to travel to Allieu, and probably elsewhere on brief trips (Wallis 1946: 31). He probably left with Brig. Dyke at the end of September, returning again in December 1945. Despite some disappointments, numerous remains were located. For example, on December 13, 1945 the war graves unit had the remains of an Australian soldier exhumed from the grave in the Beco area, and moved to the Australian cemetery near Kupang (AWM 121443).

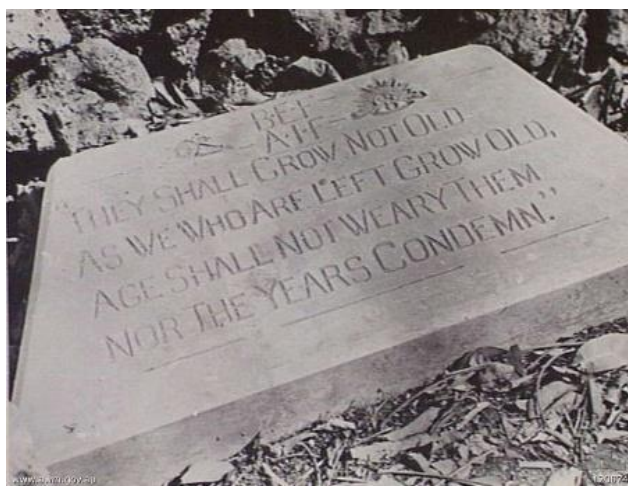


Figure 64. Australian memorial plaque.

AWM 120074.

At the Australian cemetery between Kupang and Penfui. Photography by Keith Davis.

The Australian cemetery in Kupang was also a project of the 16th war graves unit, and was constructed by Japanese POW laborers under the war graves unit direction (AWM 121522).

¹⁰⁹ See Gunn 199: 235-6, as well as the letter from Major Quinton to Consul Eaton in MP742/1 336/1/1724. The latter file also contains a small number of interrogation reports from Dili.

14. The End of Australian Involvement in Timor

On January 24, 1946, the famous Northern Territory aviator Charles Eaton arrived in Dili to take up the consular position there. The Military History Section Field Team was still in Portuguese Timor and was able to photograph his arrival there. The posting of a well-known figure, famous for his missions over Timor during the war, probably helped relations with the Portuguese, whose feathers had had been ruffled by Australian insistence on Portuguese not being involved in accepting the surrender of the Japanese in Portuguese Timor. Practically it also made sense, as Eaton's predecessor, David Ross, had been a civil aviation official first placed in Dili as Qantas representative.¹¹⁰ Eaton was soon frustrated with the lack of cooperation from the Portuguese in the war crimes investigations.



Figure 65. Australian Consul Charles Eaton arriving in Dili.

AWM 125213.

RAAF Group Captain Charles Eaton (left), new Australian consul to Portuguese Timor, being greeted by the governor's Aide-de-Camp after arrival in Dili on the HMAS Camperdown. Photograph taken by Keith B. Davis on January 26, 1946.

In West Timor, as the authorities prepared for Timforce withdrawal, they began to tie up loose ends, sending war crimes suspects to Darwin, sending Indonesian nationalists deported from Australia on to North Borneo, etc. They also had a final sports tournament and ceremonies on February 17, with Brig Dyke appearing for the last time as Timforce commander. (125766) During the final month, Timforce was under the command of Col. T.W. Bartley of the 12/40th Battalion, and on March 19, ceased to exist.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Eaton (1895-1979) served as consul until 1947, when he was sent to Indonesia as Australian consul-general to the Netherlands East Indies.

¹¹¹ See Long (1966: 573).

While the four year history of Japanese and Australian involvement in the Timor area ended with the departure of the Australians, the import of the war and postwar “reconstruction” efforts effected the late colonial and postcolonial lives of Timorese on both sides of the Timorese border. Even 60 years after these events, echoes of this period sometimes reverberate in new ways, but are only truly meaningful with a detailed knowledge of events, and are best with a visual image of the places and individuals involved in these events.

D. Returning Home: The Postwar “Repatriation” of Indies Residents to Japan and Wartime Relationships

The end of the war was another momentous period of change, and during the next four and a half years, virtually everyone was to be sent “back home” to where they belonged. This meant more than just bringing Javanese girls back to Java from eastern Indonesia—which did not always happen, as will be discussed in Chapter V—or sending Japanese soldiers home or to execution blocks. Nor did it mean merely going back to the prewar *status quo*, whatever that might have been. Often it meant recreating the world as it was in the minds of those in power. Other times it meant creative responses to the humanitarian crises within the immediate postwar context.

From mid-1946 through early 1947, a number of non-Japanese women and their families “repatriated” to a devastated Japan which they had never seen.¹¹² Women who could demonstrate that they were married to a Japanese soldier were given permission to “repatriate” to their husband’s home, in most cases dependent on evidence of parental permission. Considering that for much of the occupation period, it was not possible for Japanese soldiers and local women to marry, legally recognized marriage was a difficult requirement, as was parental approval, since parents were often in Europe and hard to locate. Given the fact that Japan was a defeated nation, and that Japanese were publically hated by so many Dutch, the stigma of association with Japanese would have convinced many women to do their best to hide any willing relationships with Japanese. Most of these women must have been driven by what the Dutch could not imagine, love or commitment to their relationship with a Japanese man. The number of women who went to Japan were small, in the hundreds, but as information about this chance was not widely distributed, and requirements difficult to fulfill, it is extremely likely that there was no small number of women who had had some form of relationship with Japanese men.

Most of the women who came to Japan left soon after their arrival, as life in Japan was very hard, and women growing up in the Indies would have had little knowledge of the culture in Japan. In many cases, the family situation was not what they expected as well, and in some cases their husbands could not accompany them or

¹¹² Mr. Ōba Sadao, while working as a laborer on the docks of Tanjung Priok, witnessed the departure of some of these women and their families. Personal communication.

could not quickly return to Japan. A few, like Annie Nenaka,¹¹³ stayed with their husbands and families in Japan, but most gave up their marriages within a year or two and returned to Indonesia, while a few seem to have made their way to America or another country.

Their very existence, though, is what concerns us most here, as the possibility of meaningful relationships between Japanese men and local women during the occupation has been unimaginable in public discourse since August 1945, and perhaps during the occupation as well. These women's existence demonstrates that there was personal contact between some Japanese men and local women, a fact which leads to additional questions about the nature of society in Java or other areas during the Japanese occupation. Could it be possible that the Japanese occupation was somehow more open to inter-ethnic relations than during the Dutch "bersiap" period of 1945-49? This would directly contradict received images of the occupation, in which division between ethnic groups was absolute during the Japanese occupation due to Japanese racism. The "repatriation" of these women to follow their husbands, or even their "re-repatriation" when culture-shock and post-war conditions got the best of them does not end the changes to history. It is a beginning, as it opens the gates to new questions and new research.

The exploration of subjects which have been unimaginable for decades strengthens our knowledge of the wartime years, but also has the potential to further transform our knowledge of different areas of history. The presence of Japanese women in Indonesia has the potential to significantly change our understanding of society during the war and offers us a chance to reconsider the nature of revolutionary era Dutch ideology. The examination of a novel from the wartime period, almost but not completely unknown to Indonesian literary history, changes not just literary history, but also our picture of wartime life, and makes suggestions for today's society. Writing the history of a small part of the eastern archipelago, Timor, during and after the war is new, and brings up a range of topics which have been unknown, and therefore unimaginable. The existence of photographic evidence itself changes our understanding by allowing us to look historical actors in the eye, and with some historical background, rather than assuming we know everything (based exclusively

¹¹³ Mori (1994). The National Archives in Den Haag also has a significant number of documents about these women, some of them from the Dutch mission in Tokyo.

on stereotypes). This is especially important in consideration of uninformed derogatory statements about anyone convicted or even investigated for war crimes.¹¹⁴ At the same time, watching the crafting and compiling of this historical evidence by the Australians deepens our understanding of the history as well. Finally, the repatriation of Indies women to Japan after the war, again challenges our understandings of racial/ethnic relations during the occupation.

In each of these cases, an exploration of a wartime subject introduced a subject heretofore almost entirely new to Indonesian history and in the process substantially changes our picture of the war. These brief explorations lead to more questions which ultimately can lead to new histories—an entirely new understanding of the wartime period.

¹¹⁴ In this context, and beyond the context of the Timor case already discusses, the very different cases of Aochi Washio and Yamashita Tomoyuki are illustrative. Aochi Washio was one of the first Japanese convicted of war crimes in Jakarta in an extremely short trial, and became a martyr for many Japanese who knew him when he died in prison. Statements of some of the “victims” and his own testimony were not rebutted but rather ignored in the verdict. See Yamamoto (2011) and (2013). Yamashita was convicted of crimes of his subordinates which prosecutors admitted he did not order or even know about. In both these cases, the conviction should have little bearing on our evaluation of these individuals, as the convictions were clearly not related to a pattern of the kind of bad behavior normally imagined with the term “war crimes.”

Chapter V.

Re-historicizing Postwar Memories of the War

This chapter seeks to examine some of the ways postwar historical discourses on the war have been fundamentally ahistorical, shaped by postwar agendas, as well as to demonstrate that careful examination of the wartime context and critical reading of the postwar history can reshape these representations. The primary focus in this chapter is on comfort women, the women providing sexual services to the Japanese military in military-authorized institutions, who have been at the center of public conflict over the war since around 1991. The first study relates to the legal structure and society in the Netherlands, Indonesia and Japan before and during the war, critical context which has always been ignored in discussion of the comfort women. The second study focusses on reading an important Indonesian contribution to the literature on comfort women, focusing on the construction of the knowledge about Indonesian comfort women in general and in Buru in particular, and considering what can be utilized in this work. The final section abandons the comfort women, instead focusing on Australian constructions of the war in Timor, which focus primarily on the 2/2nd IC and 2/4th IC and their experiences in a 13 month period in 1941-3, thus 2-3 years earlier than discussed in Chapter IV. Each of these cases illustrates a history of World War II in Indonesia which is represented, but with fundamental flaws in the history, primarily due to the emphasis on political aims rather than the history itself.

A. The Prewar Socio-legal Context of Wartime Comfort Women in Indonesia and Japan¹

During the course of the last 23 years the comfort women have been a consistent feature of discourses on World War II in many different countries. With respect to Indonesia, most writings are some combination of sensationalist journalism, political activism, and uncritical recycling of information obtained from other sources. Thankfully there have been a few publications which expand our knowledge of the subject, but despite testimonies on some women and waves of attention, our

¹ Use of Dutch archival sources in this section follows a detailed report published by the Asian Women's Fund (Yamamoto & Hōton [Horton] 1999), a report which was approved by the archivists of the Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, the Algemeen Rijsarchief, and the Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken.

understanding of the comfort women and the context in which they appeared has developed very little since 1992. Instead, the comfort women issue is most commonly raised by politically-oriented individuals or groups, including by established politicians in Korea, the US, Canada, and Europe, activists such those in Amnesty international or Vownet, Christian church groups and some conservatives or right wing reactionaries. Their primary interest in the present—or agendas for the future—results in poor history writing. To phrase it crudely, the question of whether a woman was “forcibly recruited” or “volunteered” forms the central issue for the political “debate” between the “right-wing” and “liberals”, especially in Japan. When there is no right-wing active, the Japanese government and its refusal to provide further funds or apologies is used as the requisite “right-wing” against which to crusade. Reactionary Japanese similarly find a “liberal” target to criticize. After decades of such political discourse, it seems time to return to a serious academic effort both to document—critically and carefully—issues related to the comfort women, and to make an attempt to analyze this history.

As terrible as the situation was for many comfort women, the distinction between “forced” and “willing” was never that clear. Prostitution almost always depends on a combination of persuasion (including ambiguous “misrepresentations”) and coercion (physical, social, or economic) to obtain the cooperation of a woman, family and others in a given society for recruitment and to keep the woman working. While not eliminating the possibility of agency on the part of women, this makes a truly free prostitution virtually impossible, and makes pure, simple victimization by an outsider problematic as well. It is a question of degree and character.

In this section I return to the historical contexts and precedents for the wartime comfort women system. By examining the legal and social contexts, I endeavor to go beyond the simplistic question of whether a woman was “forced” or “willingly recruited” to be a comfort woman and the situation in which she found herself during that period, and to include the social norms and legal structures of Indonesia (then the Netherlands-Indies), the Netherlands, and Japan. None of the policy-makers, Japanese soldiers or civilians involved in these affairs, nor any local residents of Indonesia were acting in a vacuum; the world in which they lived was shaped over a long period.

1. Prewar Prostitution in the Netherlands-Indies and Japan

During the 19th century, as the Netherlands Indies colonial government expanded its intervention into various aspects of life in the Indies, it attempted to control some bad effects of prostitution—most particularly venereal disease—through regulation of prostitution. The first laws related to prostitution were put in place in 1852. Initially, at least, the Netherlands Indies government was concerned not with the various forms of indigenous prostitution, but rather with types of prostitution which were most apparent and most affected European interests. Thus, in addition to the controls over brothel prostitution, *ronggeng* dancers were apparently also subject to medical checks but not special prostitution taxes in the regulation period (Hesselink 1987: 214).

Prostitutes were to be officially registered, given regular medical inspections (virtually impossible in most locales due to a shortage of medical personnel), and were to keep registration and medical check cards on their persons. Any woman found infected was then kept in the hospital (or designated isolation shed) until “cured.” Based on these general guidelines, local authorities were to issue detailed regulations. After 1874, as a part of the central government’s efforts to shift financial burdens to others, municipalities and other local authorities were given full responsibility for regulation. In most cases this meant reissue of essentially the same regulations.² These laws effectively encouraged brothel prostitution, as opposed to more disperse, harder to control varieties. In some places prostitutes were even localized into a few *kampung*. Separate brothels for military personnel, mandated in the 1852 laws, also existed throughout this period and Japanese prostitutes in Riau were even provided with prophylactics by the Dutch Navy (Hesselink 1987: 206; 216-7).

While there was anti-prostitution sentiment in the Indies, and Indonesian reactions became stronger and better organized over the first decades of the 20th century, legal changes were mainly determined by metropolitan interests. By around 1901, the anti-prostitution movement in the Netherlands and other European

² For regulations as well as example registration cards, registration lists and formal certificates of permission to operate brothels prepared by the Residency of Probolinggo (by H. van Steeden and H.C.A. Muller), see Reglement (1894). For other examples, see citations in Hesselink 1987: 221.

countries, based largely on Christian morals and concern for the victims of “white slavery,” had been able to eliminate officially-regulated prostitution in some municipalities such as Amsterdam. The International Agreement for the Suppression of White Slave Traffic of 1904 involved the collection and sharing of information related to the “traffic in white slaves” by a central authority in each state and more generally to share information about the procurement of women and girls for any type of “immoral purposes.” The International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic of 1910 declared it “illegal” to procure any girl under age 20 regardless of consent, as well as to engage in traffic in women recruited through deception or force. The International Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women and Children of 1921 raised the age of consent to 21, and created a system of licensing international employment agencies. Finally, the Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Women of Full Age of 1933 made traffic in adult women illegal regardless of consent. All of these agreements aimed primarily to combat the international traffic in women and children, and did not fully address domestic prostitution. The Netherlands joined with other European countries as an original signatory of both the 1904 Paris treaty and the 1910 convention, and later ratified each of the other treaties related to the international trade in women and children (excepting the 1949 treaty banning prostitution itself).

In 1911, the regulation of prostitution in the Netherlands was eliminated with application of new “public morality laws” which while not outlawing prostitution *per se*, penalized third parties who made a profit from prostitution or facilitated immoral behavior. In the words of one scholar, “a ‘policy of tolerance’ thus was adopted in the Netherlands, whereby the morals police simply allowed the operation of brothels and closed sex houses as long as they did not cause any nuisance or disruption to the broader society. Thus, although the Dutch state had formally adopted an abolitionist position, prostitution, both at home and abroad, was allowed to continue” (Kempadoo 1994: 142-3). Furthermore, hesitation to completely abandon regulation can be seen from the description of “a sort of informal registration” and regulation which allowed Dutch police to keep lists of practicing prostitutes and ensure that foreigners could not practice most forms of prostitution, although some Germans did join the large numbers of streetwalkers (League of Nations 1937: 125-7). Ideally this legal framework protected women, although the same apparatus could be used to harass them. This is the legal framework that the Netherlands bequeathed to the Indies in 1913, both

through inclusion of the Indies in international agreements and ensuring that laws in the colonies and at home were more or less compatible.³

Articles 250 bis and ter of the Netherlands-Indies penal code (volume 2, title 14 on moral offences) were the primary laws used to control prostitution. 250 bis states that “he who deliberately caused or promotes fornication by third parties as a profession or habit will be punished with imprisonment not exceeding 1 year 4 months or a fine of not more than 1000 guilders.” 250 ter states that “trade in women and trade in underage males will be punished with imprisonment of not more than 6 years.”⁴

As a result of these laws, a substantial change in prostitution took place, most importantly well-organized brothels, whether based in hotels or in special buildings, effectively ceased to exist in the Indies. In the words of the League of Nations Commission (1933: 240), “the official attitude in the Dutch East Indies towards the problem of prostitution is, in brief, the following: the exercise of prostitution itself is not a legal offence. There is no regulation and no licensing of prostitution whatsoever.” The medical checks of prostitutes by local authorities had already been abandoned in 1911, in anticipation of other legal changes. There were also efforts made to eliminate some types of unlicensed prostitution, but these were taken on a local level, with the acceptance of draft laws attacking streetwalking and allowing mayors and residents to place a “ban” restricting access to any building suspected of facilitating prostitution. By 1933, these laws had apparently been adopted in Medan, Pematang Siantar, Atjeh, Padang, Bangka, Batavia, the Preanger Regencies, Bandoeng, Blitar, Semarang, and Djokjakarta (League 1933: 241-3).

Despite Indonesian participation in the struggle against traffic in women in the early 1930s, and efforts to track down missing girls from areas such as Jogjakarta, girls assumed to be taken either by force or under false pretenses for sale or prostitution, authorities apparently had limited ability to control traffic in women and very few tools to control small scale prostitution.⁵ Accordingly it publicly flourished

³ Ali Sastroamidjojo (1933) directly attributes the changes in Netherlands East Indies laws (specifically to article 250 ter) to the 1910 international agreement, not to the changes in the Dutch legal code.

⁴ For the original Dutch language legal code, see eg. Engelbrecht (1940), p.1040.

⁵ Many of the cases which were solved in fact were not related to prostitution *per se*, and sometimes not even “traffic in women” in the wider sense. In one case, a man from Padang who

throughout the final years of Dutch rule.⁶ The widespread problem of prostitution even after application of new laws helped make both street prostitution and hotel prostitution a feature of Indonesian literature (e.g. Djola-djoli 1925 and Ener 1932). Japanese observers also occasionally took note of prostitution in the Indies, such as Shibukawa (1941) who wandered into a Chinese brothel/opium area filled with inviting women with white-painted faces, and Takei (1935) who commented more generally on the wide range of “flowers” sold in Bandoeng. Not surprisingly, especially considering the abandonment of medical checks in 1911, venereal disease rates remained very high in many areas and were a cause of concern to public health officials.⁷

As many authors have noted, there were various types of indigenous prostitution. Especially well known in this context are the *teladek* or *ronggeng* dancers in Java. However, even the more “modern” forms of prostitution were widely spread in Indonesia by the late 19th and 20th centuries. Women were recruited as coolies for the plantations of Deli with wages so low that women were expected to serve as prostitutes for other coolies, but were also frequently drawn into the service of European employees as “housekeepers” (Stoler 1985). In the late 1930s, a medical doctor, R. D. G. Ph. Simon, provided eight categorizations for prostitution which he observed in Surabaya: “that found in the small cafes near the harbour and in the old port town; the street prostitutes from local *kampung*; the brothels in the centre of the city owned by Chinese and Japanese; the brothel *kampung* on the margins of the city; the discrete services of housebound Dutch women for young, unmarried Dutch men; European prostitution in organized brothels; and finally, homosexual prostitution and pederasty” (Ingleson 1986: 125). The most common form of prostitution in Surabaya was prostitution in special *kampung* [villages or neighborhoods], but also common were the private “agreements” with bar girls and streetwalkers assisted by men who solicited

worked as a “*kepala kontrakt*” (contracting agent) in Mr. Cornelis (now Jatinegara) was caught providing girls from Java for sale to men in Singapore. On this case, in which the accused was acquitted by the Landraad in Batavia due to “lack of evidence,” see Ali Sastroamidjojo (1933).

⁶ Braconier (1919: 511-515); Hesselink (1987: 207); Ingleson (1986); League 1937.

⁷ Military authorities were apparently more effective, presumably by virtue of their efforts at prophylaxis and education. According to a graph presented at the 1937 Bandoeng Conference of Central Authorities in Eastern Countries (League 1937:80), for European soldiers there was a tremendous drop in gonorrhoea rate from the peak of around 25% in 1911 to 7% in 1935, syphilis from the peak of 18% in 1920 to 4%, and in “soft chancre” from its peak of 15% in 1911 to 2%. For native soldiers, the rates dropped less substantially from their peaks in around 1918-1921 (12% to 5%, 7.5% to 2% and 2.5% to less than 1% respectively).

for the women and protected them from arrest.

The case of Japan was significantly different than that of the Netherlands East Indies. Licensed prostitution in Japan dates to at least the early 17th century (the beginning of the Tokugawa shogunate),⁸ but significant changes were introduced in the 19th century due to interactions with the West. Along with instituting regular VD checks, one change involved “ensuring” that prostitutes were able to leave the profession, thus differentiating Japanese prostitution from slavery. This found legal form in 1900 (League 1933: 103), however, in practice prostitutes were often encouraged to return to brothels. Military brothels like those in the 19th and early 20th century Netherlands-Indies were a modern innovation which Japan first began to develop during the Siberian Campaign of 1918-20 to deal with venereal disease.⁹ While prostitution was legal in Japan until 1956, some prefectures did enact bans on licensed prostitution, including Gumma in 1893 (Japanese Government 1926). This anti-prostitution movement, spearheaded by the Christian Temperance Union, was particularly successful in the late 1920s and 1930s when a number of prefectures passed laws to eliminate licensed prostitution.¹⁰ Nevertheless, instead of eliminating regulation of prostitution, the central Japanese government continued to enact strict regulations designed to control venereal disease and other “bad effects” of prostitution.¹¹

Despite the existence of a number of different categories of prostitutes, these efforts at regulation related primarily to the group of licensed or regular prostitutes (*shōgi* [娼妓]).¹² Before issuance of a license, the police were required to confirm consent of both the women and head of their household, usually the father or husband. The women were then registered, given (regular) medical checks and restricted to official brothel areas. Officially they were only allowed to work for 4-6 years, and were only issued licenses if they were at least 18 years old. Geisha in Japan proper were subjected

⁸ Of course, this is not to imply that there was no prostitution in Japan before the Tokugawa shogunate.

⁹ Yoshimi (1995: 18); Suzuki (1993: 234-6).

¹⁰ The Christian Temperance Union movement introduced western sexual morality into Japan, and as a result, the movement was not only anti-prostitution but anti-prostitute.

¹¹ Baishun Taisaku Shingikai (1959: 276).

¹² In 1925, there were reportedly 50,056 *shōgi* in Japan proper. These women—possibly all Japanese—worked in 11,154 licensed brothels within 541 brothel quarters.

to less control and licensed from age 12, as their primary functions were related to more general entertainment, although they were generally recognized as a type of prostitute. To mention only two groups, *shakufu* [hostesses (酌婦)] and *jokyū* (女給) [waitresses or bar maids] also served as prostitutes, but were generally under little state control. The expansion of these other categories of unlicensed prostitution (especially *shakufu*, *jokyū* and streetwalkers (*gaishō* [街娼])) with the difficulties for regulation which that entailed and the potential spread of venereal disease were major concerns of the Japanese authorities.

The situation in the colonies was slightly different. The number of registered prostitutes in these areas was relatively low. In Chōsen [Korea] in 1930, there were reportedly 2,975 registered prostitutes, of whom 1,841 were Japanese, 1,132 Korean, and two Russian. There were also more than 1,600 licensed prostitutes in Kwantung and the South Manchuria Railway Zone, primarily Japanese but including some Chinese. The minimum age for licensed prostitutes was 17 in Kwantung and Chōsen, but only 16 in Taiwan (League 1933: 104). The most important difference was probably in the importance of the other categories of prostitutes. Geisha were subjected to medical checks in both Kwantung and Taiwan, and registration was extended to many restaurants and different types of waitresses, allowing the government to keep some control over these gray areas of prostitution.

Overseas prostitution was a major part of Japanese emigration during the 19th and early 20th centuries following the Japanese relaxing of bans on overseas travel. These women, now collectively known as *karayuki-san*, made up a significant portion of the emigrants in Southeast Asia, thus helping to establish Japanese communities and to provide remittances to Japan. Early 20th century counts of Japanese residents of the Netherlands Indies show substantial numbers of women who acknowledged working in one of the traditional Japanese prostitute jobs (Yamamoto 2004).

Despite the relatively tight restrictions on prostitutes, Japanese actions with respect to prostitution were apparently acceptable to international authorities, although sometimes subject to criticism. In the 1910s and 1920s, the Japanese government through its consuls and embassies worked actively to eliminate overseas Japanese prostitution by forcing *karayuki-san* to return to Japan or to abandon that

profession (Warren 1993:159-169). In the case of the Netherlands East Indies, the wider Japanese community was also heavily involved in the elimination of Japanese prostitutes. This movement was motivated by the desire to raise Japanese prestige in the Indies (Yamamoto 2004). In 1925 Japan also accepted modified versions of the 1904 Agreement, 1910 Convention, and the 1921 Geneva Convention (although “under age” was understood as under 18 years old in the versions Japan accepted in 1925).¹³ The regulations which Japan used to protect women and children from various efforts to lure them into prostitution specifically made punishable recruitment of “virtuous” or married women, thus ensuring a loophole for “loose women” or women already working as prostitutes to be recruited. Japan also excluded its colonies and other dependencies, and only agreed to observe the movement of women to and from these colonies.¹⁴ Thus, the agreements seemed to only govern the movement of women and children between countries, which notably allowed movement of women for “domestic” prostitution between Japan and her colonies.¹⁵ However, based on official Japanese information, there was very little movement of women into Japan proper; women from overseas, including Japanese dependencies of Sakhalin, Formosa and Korea, were not granted licenses to practice prostitution in Japan proper. However, as no passport was necessary for metropolitan women to travel to Japanese dependencies, there was a significant flow of women out of Japan proper for prostitution which the government could not prevent (Japanese Government 1926; League 1933: 114).

The approaches to managing prostitution and the social and health problems thus varied considerably from place to place, with prostitutes in Japan under

¹³ This reservation was withdrawn in 1927 (Yoshimi 1992). In 1933 Japan even endorsed the elimination of the words “under age” from the 1910 agreement, eliminating all age distinctions from the article which makes recruitment of underage women punishable. However, according to the League of Nations itself (1933: 104), licensed prostitutes in Japan were granted licenses at age 18. Therefore this age restriction probably should be seen as affecting the recruiting of “virtuous women” for “immoral purposes” only.

¹⁴ For the 1904 Agreement and the 1910 Convention, Chōsen [Korea], Taiwan, the Kwantung Concession and the Japanese part of Sakhalin were excluded. For the 1921 Convention, the Pacific Mandate Territories [Nanyō] were also excepted. Despite early support, Japan did not sign the 1933 Convention, possibly due to Japanese withdrawal from the League in early 1933.

¹⁵ Yoshimi (1992: 33-36). The League of Nations Commission of Enquiry into Traffic in Women and Children in the East (1933) reported that Japan excluded her colonies from the treaties entirely.

Mayumi Yamamoto has suggested that the different treatment of and restrictions on prostitution in Japan proper, its colonies, and in foreign countries might be related to the Japanese government’s efforts to show a good face to the world (personal communication).

considerably greater regulation and restriction and provided with less effective protection from abuse. Nonetheless, neither the Netherlands East Indies nor Japan were free of prostitution, but the different forms (and perhaps scale) of prostitution and the roles government had played in prostitution in general in the 20th century virtually ensured that the interaction between Japanese and their new subjects in the Indies would at best not be easy for either party and would probably be disturbing to many of their new subjects. This difference, along with the development of military brothels elsewhere in the Japanese empire, at least in part due to the unquestioned assumption of male need for sex—the famous “necessary evil” doctrine—and need to “control” the undisciplined behavior of Japanese soldiers to protect Chinese civilians after the rape of Nanking in 1937-38,¹⁶ provides the context of Japanese actions in Indonesia.

2. The Wartime Situation

After fall of the Netherlands East Indies in March 1942, Japanese military authorities would have had to make arrangements for the creation of some type of brothel or *ianjo* (comfort station). In some cases, messages were sent requesting that women be sent from Taiwan for such purposes. During the Japanese military occupation, like other socio-cultural systems, Netherlands Indies-style “prostitution,” including strategies of recruitment, also continued to function. Although the initial troops brought some facilities to the strange new occupied territory (Indonesia), the Japanese military administration also gradually became familiar with local prostitution practices and adapted them to their needs. The local population, however, in the course of the occupation gradually adjusted to the Japanese military’s expectations about prostitution as well. In most cases, the women were presumably recruited locally, recruitment focusing initially on practicing prostitutes, and gradually turning to other women who could somehow be convinced to cooperate, or whose families were convinced to cooperate due to hunger, pressure, threats, or promised rewards. To do this, Japanese military officials needed the cooperation of local residents, Chinese, Dutch and native. Famously, President Sukarno has acknowledged assisting the Japanese in procuring women to protect other Indonesian women, but other less

¹⁶ According to an official report from General Okabe Naosaburo of the North China Expeditionary Force in 1938, the establishment of *ianjo* was urgent to protect the Chinese living in the vicinity from uncontrollable Japanese soldiers, to preserve the prestige and honor of the Imperial Japanese Military, and to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases among the troops (Yoshimi 1992: 209).

famous cases exist.

Widespread reports show various strategies of recruiting through promises to become an actress,¹⁷ or to obtain some type of training and work in professions such as nursing in Tokyo or other distant location.¹⁸ Recruiters, rarely Japanese, made promises that were misleading to say the least, but provided clues to the recruits that later they and their families would have to accept that “they should have known” in the prewar social context. Stage actresses and other female performers (including the *teladek* or *ronggeng* dancers in Java) were suspect and known to be potentially of “low morals” to both local native Indonesian and ethnic Chinese communities, while nurses having the responsibility to care for the Japanese troops might seem to Japanese, in particular, to be similar. In any case, for Javanese girls to be taken far away from their families would already have been disconcerting, at the very least, and most families would have suspected that something was amiss from the very beginning. It is precisely this ambiguity that must have been important and illustrates the continuity and changes in the local prostitution practice. One area of continuity was in the recruitment and transfer of women from Java to the outer islands. According to Stoler (1985), men and women were recruited by agents in Java with various enticements, and then sent to East Sumatra to be coolies on plantations. However, female laborers were quickly either recruited by European overseers as concubines or converted to prostitutes for the large numbers of male coolies.¹⁹ The transfer of laborers from Java to other islands was also practiced during the Japanese occupation period, however, the transfer of prostitutes and other types of laborers followed a different pattern due to adaptation of Japanese military “logistic” needs.

In terms of recruitment of women as prostitutes, except during the initial arrival of the Japanese military, continuity with Dutch colonial period practice and

¹⁷ E.g. the case of Mardiyem who was probably recruited in Yogyakarta in 1943 in the most famous case (Budi Hartono and Dadang Juliantoro 1997). Mardiyem, who passed away in late 2007, claimed to have been recruited in 1942, but that claim is inconsistent with information she provided in interviews in the early 1990s.

¹⁸ To mention only a few cases, reports of such recruiting appeared in distant and diverse places like Sulawesi and West Java, where Pramoedya reports that girls were recruited for such “education” (Pramoedya 2001).

¹⁹ Stoler quotes an early 20th century description of a hospital for prostitutes which shows the pathetic conditions of the women themselves and the tragically atrocious working conditions. Unfortunately, conditions during the war were sometimes just as bad, if different.

gradual change existed just as in any other socio-cultural context. There was, however, one very significant practice which occurred in several internment camps in Java in 1943-44. Internment camps for ordinary citizens were invented during the Japanese military occupation,²⁰ and this unique setting resulted in a unique recruitment process in which there is little continuity with prewar prostitution. However, at the same time, a similar “negotiation” processes appeared there between internees and recruiters. The cases of women recruited in the internment camps of Magelang in late 1943, in the internment camps in and around Semarang in early 1944, and in Batavia illustrate well some of the common techniques which may have been used in recruiting women, and the limits on recruitment and brothel operations by the Japanese military. These cases are also cases about which we have the most reliable information, because they were special enough to warrant post-war investigation and prosecution at the B-C Class War Crimes Trials in Batavia. The conditions of military prostitution will be illustrated with a heavy reliance on evidence compiled by Dutch prosecutors. Since the Dutch BC Class War Tribunal only prosecuted “forced prostitution” and not that involving other women, despite careful interpretation of the documents, this description might be shaped by the postwar Dutch discourse on “forced” vs. “free-willing” women.

According to the reports of the European camp leaders,²¹ in December 1943 or January 1944 a list of young women was made during a visit to the women’s internment camp at Muntilan by several Japanese.²² The camp leaders were required to write the names of the women pointed out by the Japanese and later to type a list. In early January the women on the list may also have been called to the administration office and asked if they would be willing to work. This list was then used by the Japanese to

²⁰ While the camps were an innovation of this period, they began with strategies that were very similar to the Dutch colonial government. The colonial government had restricted the place of residence for various political prisoners in the 1920s-1940s, thus requiring individuals from Java and Sumatra to live in internment camps in malarial New Guinea. In 1942-43, some Europeans and Eurasians were subjected to a series of residential restrictions for “their own protection” culminating in full-fledged internment camps.

²¹ RIOD 034258, RIOD 034251. These testimonies seem generally reliable, although the camp head seemed very concerned to defend herself against accusations by other women that she did not sufficiently oppose the Japanese or that she was even “friendly” with the Japanese leaders. After reading a number of these testimonies it is clear that the European camp leaders cooperated with the Japanese, even if reluctantly.

²² According to the European camp leader, they were the Japanese camp commandant, the Resident of Magelang, a member of the Kempeitai, and a local Japanese civilian (RIOD 034251).

call these women to the church on January 25, 1944 where they were examined by a medical doctor (checking their heart, legs, eyes, etc.). Around 15 were selected while the mothers and camp leaders gathered outside. These young women were given 30 minutes to pack a suitcase, and with some force, all were taken out of the camp.²³ They were then taken to houses in the officer's encampment in Magelang. The European administration then made a list of women "of light morals", most of whom had relationships with Japanese in Surabaya, who could be taken instead (and whom were generally referred to as "volunteers" by other women, an ambivalent term at best).²⁴ These women were collected on January 28, and according to some testimonies were taken to the local police station along with the previously selected young women, where in the presence of representatives of the camp leadership selection was redone. Two of the "volunteers" and two of the "selected" women were returned to the camp, while approximately 13 other women were sent to Magelang, medically inspected, raped and forced to work as prostitutes.²⁵ An effort was made to prosecute some individuals for this incident, however, for a variety of reasons the court was unable to obtain any convictions.²⁶

In early 1944, around 35 Eurasian and Dutch women were removed from 4 civilian internment camps in Ambarawa and Semarang.²⁷ These events took place after the announcement of impending transfer of internment camp management from civilian administration to the military (November 7, 1943) but before the transfer took

²³ There is a certain amount of variation in witnesses' descriptions. One of the assistant camp heads claims that "certainly 8" of the 15 were forced, but that the others went more or less willingly. She seems unaware of the "selection" at the police station mentioned by others, and is uncertain about how many women were returned to the camp (RIOD 034258).

²⁴ The European camp head claimed that the Japanese gave the camp leaders a list of the women of "low morals" on January 25 (RIOD 034251), while her assistant acknowledges that they had given the Japanese such a list after January 25 in order to try to convince the Japanese to return the women taken on the 25th (RIOD 034258).

²⁵ Only one document in the Vos de Wael archive (# 9) mentions this affair, but has different dates and numbers of women.

²⁶ See Groot (1990: 35-8) for a discussion of the only case that went to trial.

²⁷ These camps were Ambarawa I/VI, Ambarawa IX, Halmaheira, and Gedangan. According to some sources (and the Poelgeest report), resistance in Gedangan was strong enough that only "volunteers" were taken out of the camp, although other sources (eg. NEFIS BM/1123, BM/1125, and BM/1126) suggest that volunteers were only collected at a later date. The names of the internment camps are sometimes inconsistent. For example, one victim claims that she and 8 other women were taken from Camp IV (probably Ambarawa IX) and that 9 girls were next taken from Camp II (probably Ambarawa I/VI) (RIOD 035054). The verdicts mention 5 camps: Semarang-Oost, Gedangan, Halmaheira, Ambarawa IV and Ambarawa VI.

effect (March 1, 1944). According to one person selected at Ambarawa I/VI, all women between 17 and 28 years of age had to line up and come to the camp office one by one on February 23, then 20 of them had to again report to the office on February 24 for further selection.²⁸ On February 26, 10 women were taken from the camp and brought to a building on the Kanarielaan in Semarang together with women from other camps where they were forced to sign a statement in Japanese. They were then reselected and brought to 4 brothels in Semarang on around February 26.

The process in each of the other camps seems to have been similar. The selection of these young women in each camp by a group of Japanese men, was usually done with the reluctant assistance of the camp leaders who were not informed of the purpose. The degree of force which was necessary to encourage the women in the camps to cooperate varied considerably. In Ambarawa VIII [Sumawono], Bangkok and Lampersari, however, there was sufficient resistance to prevent the removal of the women and in some camps older women volunteered so that the younger ones would not need to go (e.g. in Gedangan).²⁹ This is one indication of a shared understanding about what was intended. In practice, the recruitment of women in the camps involved several military officers and several of the brothel managers.

The brothel managers were Japanese men born on Honshu Island between 1903 and 1923. At least two of the managers had arrived in Java only months after the Japanese invasion, and had previously been running brothels on Hainan Island. Upon arrival in Java, one opened both a brothel and restaurant, while the other simply opened a brothel.³⁰ One of the brothel owners reported having managed brothels at the request of the Semarang residency from January 1943 until the capitulation of Japan.³¹ Conflicting information compiled by the Japanese government in 1947 suggests that he had already opened the brothel in August, 1942.³²

²⁸ RIOD 00238 (Interview 322b).

²⁹ BURAM Box 5, MHA-M and Vos de Wael #13. Poelgeest also suggests that some women in Halmaheira Camp volunteered to replace younger women but that this offer was refused by the Japanese.

³⁰ Yoshimi (1992: 377). It is likely that these were two of the same brothels that housed the women from the camps. One of these men moved to East Java after the closing of the brothels in 1944.

³¹ RIOD 019429. The brothel owner's statement is presented in the verdict of the 13th Japanese prosecuted for the Semarang affair (RIOD 027091).

³² Yoshimi (1992: 377). This document was created in response to Dutch demands in the course

The brothels were closed after an inspecting officer from Tokyo was informed that the women were not willing to serve as prostitutes. The brothels were then quickly closed on orders from Jakarta (after less than 2 months of operation), and the women sent to Kota Parijs camp in Bogor where they were given special medical treatment and reunited with their families. According to a Japanese civilian doctor in Semarang, the brothels were reopened three months later with other Eurasian women.

One of the earliest war crimes trials in Batavia was the 1946 trial of a Japanese man who had been resident in Batavia from 1920 until November 30, 1941,³³ and who opened a restaurant called the Akebono Club in June 1942 and then a brothel for civilians called the Sakura Club or Gang Horning Brothel in September 1943 at the request of the Japanese mayor of Batavia.³⁴ This owner claims to have only opened the brothel under strong pressure from the government and kept himself at a distance from the day to day affairs of the brothel, which was largely managed by his European mistress. A number of Europeans (including Eurasians) were employed there, usually first being recruited into the Akebono Club restaurant and then later forced to move to the Sakura Club brothel. The court found that the brothel owner was responsible for the threats of Kempeitai punishment made by the European manager as she was his mistress and he had a financial stake in the women's presence in the brothel. He was thus found guilty of "the war crime of enforced prostitution."³⁵ This case was one of a very few cases of prostitution prosecuted at the Batavia trials, and the one with the least military involvement.³⁶

of their preparation for the prosecution of the war crimes trials.

³³ This man and his wife had run the Suwa Hotel (probably at Molenvliet Oost 27) and had been an active member of the Japanese community. He was also known to the Japanese community as being fluent in Indonesian and Dutch, and so would have had fewer communications problems than most Japanese. After the war he worked briefly as a translator helping interned Japanese, and later died while serving his sentence in Batavia (Kawai 1968: 52-3).

³⁴ See Piccigallo 1979, "Case No. 76," and Utsumi 1996 for discussions of this case.

³⁵ The published UNWCC discussion of this case (Case No. 76, p.124) notes that the original statute reads "Under the war crimes are understood acts which constitute a violation of the laws and usages of war committed in time of war by subjects of an enemy power or by foreigners in the service of the enemy, such as: 7. Abduction of girls and women for the purpose of enforced prostitution." Abduction was apparently not present in this case. As the court took note of the "poverty-stricken" condition of which he "took advantage" for his profit, this case ends up looking less like a war crime than a civil crime, except that it seems likely that his European manager/mistress was not prosecuted because she was not Japanese.

³⁶ It should be noted that despite the references to European "madams" in the Poelgeest report, the role of the Japanese owner's European mistress/manager in running daily affairs, recruiting

Recruitment in Batavia (especially in internment camps) and Central Java for these two institutions was done primarily by the manager with the assistance of several European procurers, although the Japanese owner also participated in several recruiting trips to Central Java. Women were required to have joined the brothel “of their own free will,” regular medical checks were required, officially no woman under age 17 was to work there (a rule which was circumvented in at least two cases), and women were to receive regular monthly salaries plus a percentage of the visitation fees. The resulting picture is of relatively widespread European prostitution as some of the women who were recruited from internment camps in Batavia are mentioned as probably having been prostitutes before the war, although it is also clear that some women believed that they would either only act as serving girls or only have a sexual relationship with one man. Severe poverty was clearly a factor in some women’s decisions to join the brothel. Once in the brothel, there were strong pressures upon the women to stay in the brothel, permission to leave the brothel was never willingly granted, and some women who tried to leave were arrested briefly and then dismissed from the brothel. Critical in this was the Kempeitai, charged with oversight of the brothel through monthly inspections.

Importantly, the information in these court documents blurs the boundaries between regulated prostitution and military prostitution. The military was obviously involved in the founding and regulation of the aforementioned brothel, as Java was under military administration at the time, but it was neither founded by the military as an organization nor intended for the use of soldiers. This case also blurs the distinction between “forced” prostitution and “free” prostitution (insofar as there is ever truly free prostitution), as the women were at least at times misled and at other times threatened in order to keep them at work in the brothel.

Evidence on comfort women in Indonesia during the war is unreliable, a problem which is shared with evidence from other countries. Numerous Indonesian sources have appeared since 1992, with a range of second-hand testimonies, uninvolved witnesses, and women testifying about their own lives. There is undoubtedly a substantial basis to many of their claims. Nevertheless, as contemporary discourse

women, and making threats is not mentioned, while the Japanese owner is referred to as a pimp.

tends to shape memories, unconfirmable second-hand information is better noted, but not relied upon, and even personal testimonies can be complicated, as will be discussed in the next section. For example, numerous sources report that girls were recruited through the use of promises to provide education in Japan or elsewhere in Asia. Should we accept this information as it appears in identical (but generally sketchy) form from many sources, or reject it as being very likely to be shaped by contemporary discourse? Publications and wartime intelligence reports support the claims that young women were offered chances for education, including in Tokyo, but that is a far cry from proving that all girls recruited for education were actually destined for brothels, much less official military brothels. However, seeing the social situation during Japanese military occupation in an anthropological way, emphasizing continuity and changing of society, the pre-war prostitution practice actually helps us to understand recruitment of women by local agents. We can more easily accept this information into the general picture than accept it for a particular case.

Although the Dutch authorities compiled information on prostitution during the Japanese military period, these cases all deal primarily with European or Eurasian women, and thus are special cases. Moreover, the data was collected to prepare for prosecution in war crimes tribunals for which the Dutch established special laws at the end of the war. One of the areas in which their “war crimes” differed from other Allied nations was in their inclusion of “forced prostitution” as a war crime. The inclusion of “forced prostitution” as more than a civil offense under both Japanese and local laws suggests the degree of difference in attitude towards prostitution which had developed, but also the fact that the Dutch were suspicious that they had been targeted. Both the aforementioned Semarang and Magelang cases, and the relative ease with which various Dutch consented to cooperate with Japanese military authorities may have fueled this feeling, although from another perspective it looks as if the Dutch were eager to hide this Dutch willingness to cooperate.

During the last 23 years of well-politicized discourse on comfort women, the word “prostitute” has been sensitive and rarely used in discussing comfort women with the exception of the most extreme “right-wing” Japanese discourses. The avoidance is indeed related to former comfort women’s sensitivities, but there are also political motivations for sensationally overemphasizing the uniqueness of the Japanese comfort system and the difference from prostitution. However, this de-emphasis of prostitution

and “re”-focus on forced-prostitution, rape, and slavery have led the public to misunderstanding history, and to restrict discussion on comfort women, marginalizing women who did not fit the current discourse. Soon, none of the women will remain with us, but we will still have to face a history built on the silencing of potentially important experience.

B. Pramoedya Ananta Toer and the Comfort Women of Buru: A Critical Analysis of *Perawan Remaja dalam Cengkeraman Militer* (Teenage Virgins in the Grasp of the Military)

On September 11, 2000, one day before he left Indonesia to receive the Fukuoka prize in Japan for his intellectual and humanitarian contributions, the Indonesian novelist Pramoedya Ananta Toer delivered a fascinating manuscript to the office of the publisher KPG (Kepustakaan Populer Gramedia). The manuscript was a typescript dated June 14, 1979, with repetitions and numerous unreadable words. The contents related to Javanese women who remained on the mountainous island of Buru in Eastern Indonesia at the end of World War II.³⁷

Most works related to the comfort women of Indonesia appeared in the 1990s, after rumors of large compensation payments spread throughout Indonesia and both international and domestic demand for sensational news stories blossomed. With their recycled stories, many works have long ceased being surprising to their readers, except perhaps to young audiences. This manuscript eventually became one of the more unusual publications, *Perawan Remaja dalam Cengkeraman Militer* [Teenage Virgins in the Grasp of the Military]. Although published at the end of the comfort women “boom,” the book was constructed on the basis of information compiled while Pramoedya was a political internee on the island of Buru in the 1970s, with a small amount of supplemental information obtained after his return to Java in the 1980s and 1990s.³⁸ As a manuscript produced in an earlier period, focusing on women living far from the political center of Java, this is a potentially important work.

1. The Book and the Author

The editors wrote that Pramoedya’s “health condition prevents him from wrestling with the world of writing in an intensive manner,” something that

³⁷ Located on the western end of the same group of islands as Ambon and Seram, the island of Buru is located between 3° 4' and 3° 50' S and 125°58' and 127° 15' E (1911 Encyclopaedia).

³⁸ On Pramoedya’s time on Buru, see his autobiographical *Nyanyi Sunyi Seorang Bisu: Catatan-catatan dari P. Buru* (Pramoedya 1995) and the English translation *The Mute’s Soliloquy: A Memoir* (Pramoedya 1999).

Pramoedya was quite open about from at least the early 1990s.³⁹ This meant that the KPG editors had to somehow turn the old manuscript into a publishable manuscript, with limited participation of the author himself. This neither excludes the possibility of Pramoedya's involvement in the reframing and editing, nor does it suggest his involvement. In this context, the remarkable difference between the first four chapters and forward on the one hand, and the last four chapters on the other, is particularly significant.

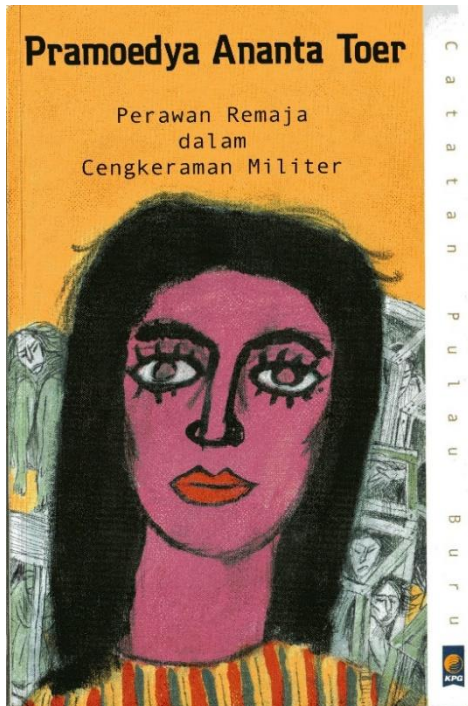


Figure 66. Cover of *Perawan Remaja dalam Cengkeraman Militer*.

Cover of the original Indonesian first edition.

The book was apparently composed by Pramoedya as he received the reports of a number of the [male] Javanese exiles who met the women involved. Pramoedya did not go out in search of these women, and rarely if ever met the women in question. In fact, as Pramoedya notes in one section, the Tapol [*tahanan politik* or political prisoners] were not allowed to interact with the local people, and were themselves engaged in a struggle to survive (p. 65). The narrator of most passages is the individual who met the women, and who provided notes or described the meeting allowing Pramoedya to later compose a narrative.⁴⁰

³⁹ In a discussion in his visiting room and even more explicitly on the street “escorting” me to the edge of the housing complex in which he lived, he explicitly blamed the Suharto regime for his inability to put *any* words on paper.

⁴⁰ As Pramoedya uses the first person for his own comments as well as the narratives of his informants, there is some confusion about who is speaking.

The first chapters present the book's conclusions in extremely straightforward language, with conclusions even enumerated for the reader. Mixing autobiographical details, information about other young women gleaned from their male acquaintances who were subsequently exiled to Buru with the author, his own memories, perhaps a bit of imagination, and additional information compiled at a late date about individuals who did not become comfort women, in these early chapters Pramoedya tries to present a simple moving picture of the recruitment of young women on Java and the fate of those women during the Japanese occupation, one which is comfortingly familiar to Indonesians today, focusing entirely on a foreign evil which they have learned about in textbooks and in other media produced during the past 20 years.⁴¹

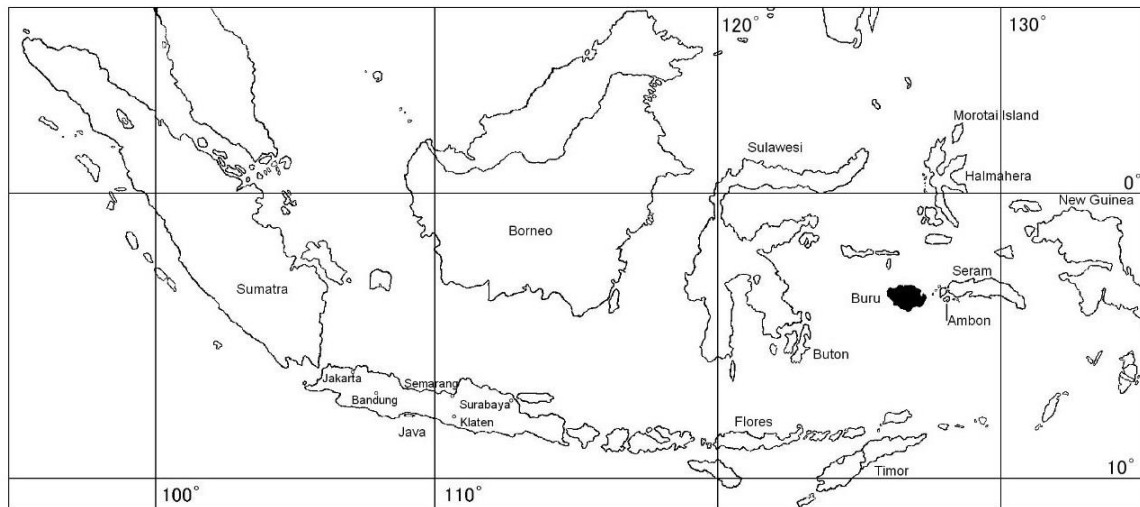
Rather than simply presenting information about these women one by one, or a summary conclusion about these women's experiences, the book offers increasingly long "adventure" narratives, showing the struggle to reach these women, and describing the obstacles in obtaining their stories. Here Pramoedya explicitly follows the genre of *Minggat dari Digoel* [Escape from Digoel] from the 1930s.⁴² The longest of the narratives, a narrative on the search for Ibu Mulyati from Klaten, covers more than half of the book (pp. 99-214), but ultimately includes no information about this woman's experiences other than the narrator's own conclusion that he had met the right woman but that she was bound by oaths to remain silent. The sections related to the women on Buru island convey a sense of a dark, frightening environment where neither nature nor the natives can be trusted, evoking a powerful image similar to E. M. Forster's colonial era India.⁴³

⁴¹ On recent images of the Japanese occupation in Indonesian discourse, see Horton (2005) and Raben (1999). Additional information may be found in the *Encyclopedia of Indonesia in the Pacific War* (Post 2010), particularly the articles by Adrian Vickers on "Indonesian Historiography of the Occupation Period" (pp. 448-453) and by William H. Frederick on "Indonesian Views" (pp. 455-468).

⁴² *Minggat dari Digoel* was one of a number of books published about the political internees of Boven Digul in the Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia) and their attempts to escape, this fascinating, multi-volume book was filled with ethnographic notes and photographs. Pramoedya was collecting these "Digoel" books in the early 1990s, which were eventually published in *Cerita dari Digul* (Pramoedya 2001a). Only volumes I-IV of *Minggat dari Digoel* were included in this collection.

⁴³ See both his novel *A Passage to India* and the film of the same name, as well as Dirks 1992.

Map 1. Indonesian Archipelago



2. Historical Information of the Main Body

The first somewhat detailed information about individual *ianfu* appears in Chapter 5. Pramoedya opens the chapter by describing the political prisoners' departure from Java and arrival in Buru in August 1969, drawing a parallel with the earlier wave of Javanese transported to Buru, Javanese comfort women during WWII. Providing the context of meetings in 1972-76 in the villages and fields of the Wae Apo river basin on Buru, Pramoedya tries to carefully relate who met who, when, and the information obtained at that meeting. Apparently recorded by Pramoedya 2-5 years later, this carefully constructed chapter covers the meetings over the first years in Buru, describing in the first person a number of quite casual meetings, along with the growing shadow of angry husbands armed and ready to defend themselves and their wives. Initial contact was sometimes very easy, as some of the women did occasionally come to the coastal communities to obtain cloth or salt, but these visits were not only rare, they frequently were the final visit for these women.

In one of the earliest chance meetings with these women, in September or October of 1972, a *tapol* named Rodius Sutanto met two women from Central Java who claimed to have come to Buru in 1944, having intended to continue their studies in Japan, and who never returned to Java because they were ashamed (*malu*).⁴⁴ Although they lived "far away," two or three months later they were met by another *tapol* and

⁴⁴ See pages 45-47.

seem to have been seeking out Javanese. The narrator notes that Rodius Sutanto had heard that some girls had been sent to school in Tokyo during the war, and in fact one acquaintance in the first grade of a girls middle school had been prepared to go, but presumably did not go since he saw her in Semarang in 1950.



Figure 67. A polyclinic in Lesula (South Buru).
Courtesy of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation.

A month or two earlier, a *tapol* named Suyud was introduced by a local resident to a woman looking for *tapol* from Semarang. Following him to the village of Kampung Wai Grending, he met Sutinah, the daughter of the Sleko Gas Factory director in Semarang, and older sister of one of his middle school classmates at SMP Kanisius Semarang.⁴⁵ She had been recruited for schooling in Japan, but was taken to Namlea in Buru instead, where she was made into a prostitute for the Japanese soldiers there.⁴⁶ Along with two friends, she eventually escaped thanks to an Alfuru youth whom she married, and who eventually became the Kepala Soa [village head of] Wai Tina.⁴⁷ She clearly expressed her desire to return to Java to see her family when the *tapol* returned.

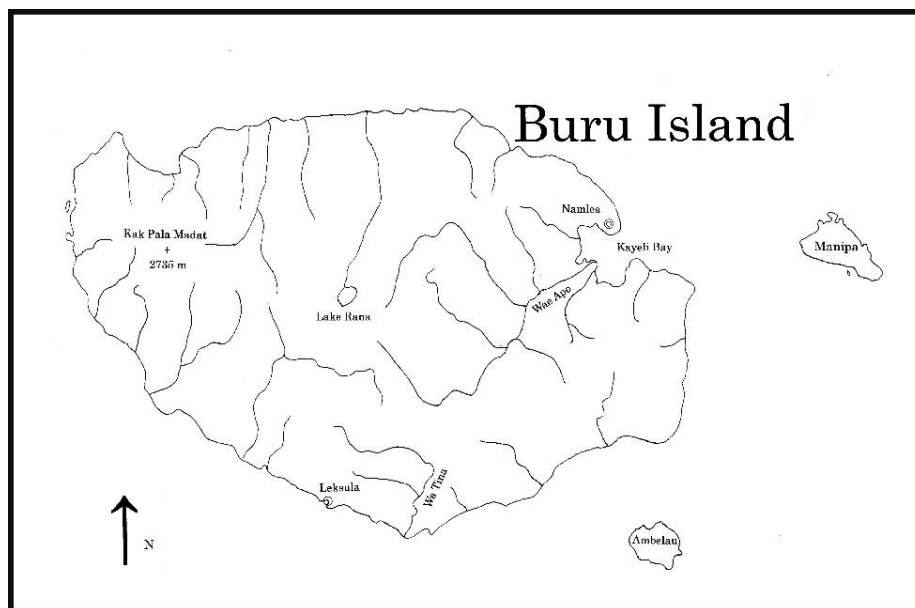
⁴⁵ See pages 47-49.

⁴⁶ Namlea was the Dutch administrative center before the war, as well as the site of a small pre-war airstrip which was used by Australian aircraft in 1941-42, and then subsequently by the Japanese during the war.

⁴⁷ Here, *alfuru* refers to the darker skin ethnolinguistic groups of the mountainous interior of Buru and other eastern Indonesian islands near New Guinea, in opposition to the lighter skin “Malay” groups generally resident in coastal areas.

In 1973, a *tapol* living in Wanasurya was able to speak with a woman who identified herself as Sulastri of Sompok, Semarang.⁴⁸ In 1944, she departed “for school in Tokyo,” but her parents had not been willing to let her go with the “Japanese officer” until warned that they were being disloyal to the Emperor. After some (unexplained) humiliations and cruelties in military bars established for the amusement of Japanese soldiers, she was sent out on a ship with 228 girls, 22 of whom were from Semarang, and landed on Buru Island in early 1945. After Japan surrendered, “they” had to fend for themselves and Sulastri became involved in local society.⁴⁹ As a woman, she became the property of a man (her husband) and a village (*soa*) in the Gunung Biru-Biru/Wai Tina Dara valley. Her husband did not allow her to speak with strangers, especially in other languages, and conversation was cut short by her spear-toting husband on more than one occasion. After two meetings she stopped appearing.

Map 2. Buru Island



In February 1976, a woman called Kartini related to Soeprihono Koeswadi that she had been told by her father, a local Javanese civil servant (*narapraja*) that she

⁴⁸ The meetings between Sutikno W. S. and Sulastri are described on pages 49-51. Pramoedya notes Sulastri may be the same person as Sutinah as they even have the same number of siblings.

⁴⁹ The context indicates that “they” are Sulastri and the other women with her, but the language used allows readers to assume that all 228 women from the ship were there in Buru. An examination of the Oshikawa translation (see below) suggests that Pramoedya may indeed have believed that there were “hundreds” of Javanese women on Buru.

would go to school in Tokyo.⁵⁰ She was picked up from her home in Sukorejo and taken by a Japanese man in a *montor keblak* (motorcycle sidecar) to Kendal where she joined other girls. In Kendal, she was warned by the Javanese woman (Mbok Setro) who took care of the girls to wear her waist scarf tightly (*bersetagen yang kencang*) on the ship, possibly a warning to protect herself against the Japanese men. Indeed, on the ship, the man who had counted the girls in Kendal brought her to a room on the Buru-bound ship and raped her repeatedly. Once landed, she became the “property” of four more polite Japanese, who called her “cook” or “boy” and with whom she had to sleep at night. After a Javanese-speaking Japanese man took two women to Morotai, and another girl died, Kartini was responsible for all the Japanese guards of the *romusha* working on moving rocks on the beach until some Chinese girls arrived. Being frequently sick, she was not closely watched and was able to escape, after which she met an Alfuru man who helped her.

In late 1974, Tristuti Rahmadi Suryoputro met a woman from Wonogiri, the daughter of a *kamitua* or village police officer.⁵¹ In 1943, she was promised “by the Japanese government” training as a midwife (*bidan*) and then work in Ambon Hospital; her parents consented. She was taken to Semarang and put in a dorm with 40 other 14 year olds, and guarded by *heiho* or Japanese soldiers. She was taken to Seram, where she began “to understand what in fact was befalling them: raped, made into toy dolls for Japanese officers.”⁵² She was later taken to Manipah Island near Buru and kept in a building guarded by *heiho*. At the end of the war they were left by the Japanese, and everyone had to look out for themselves. She was subsequently taken by a man to Buru.

Sutikno W.S. described to Pramoedya a meeting of Ma’at and Sudadi with Suwarti from Kampung Jurnatan, Semarang.⁵³ Her father worked at the Sleko Gas Factory. She was recruited for continuing education in a school in Tokyo, and had heard

⁵⁰ On the meeting of A. L. Soeprihono Koeswadi with Kartini, see pages 59-64. A Bandung Geological Survey team (1976) and later a *tapol* named “Kang Sardi” met her in her home somewhere in Wai Tina (see pages 64-65). “Kang Sardi” was also present at the earlier meeting.

⁵¹ See pages 53-54.

⁵² This is an interesting passage as it may indicate that she was dressed up as a Japanese woman. Her testimony that she was in an institution designated for officers is also plausible, as there were both civil administration centers and military units based in the Ambon/Ceram area during the war.

⁵³ See pages 51-53.

the propaganda at school as well through local officials like the *gunchō* (*wedana*), *sonchō* (*camat*), *kuchō*, and *kumichō* (*kepala R.T.*). She remembers that they were told that it was for the greatness and victory in the Great East Asia War. She was taken to a dorm for preparations, and then sent on a ship with 228 girls, and later kept in an underground fortress in Buru until the end of the war when she and the others were left behind.



Figure 68. Namlea Harbor in Kayeli Bay, 1949.

Photograph by C. J. Taillie. Tropenmuseum of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), obtained via Wikimedia Commons.

There were several other women mentioned in this chapter, but with even less detail. However brief, these meetings seem to have provided motivation for the renewed search for the Javanese women in 1978. These three new cases were discussed in the three subsequent chapters which provide very detailed narratives about the investigation of the women's pasts and ethnographic information about their current context. In the discussion of the first two cases, those of Siti F. and Bolansar, there is a significant amount of information about their experiences in the war.



Figure 69. Barracks of the Dutch East Indies army in Namlea, 1949.

Photograph by C. J. Taillie. Tropenmuseum of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), obtained via Wikimedia Commons.

3. Siti Fatimah⁵⁴

The first of the women discussed in detail was first discovered by the *tapols* because her behavior was different than that of the local Alfuru residents. A resident of a village not far from one of the *tapol* villages, she eventually asked about a certain “Kosasih” from West Java, so Pramoedya and his friends concluded she must be a woman brought by the Japanese. Sarony interviewed her, claiming to be looking for a relative who “left Java with her.” He thus obtained information that that Siti F. was taken from the Kewedanan in Subang to Bandung, and then by train, probably to Tanjung Priok, the port of Jakarta, whereupon she was taken by ship to the village of Kisar on Flores.⁵⁵ She was later taken to Namlea on Buru. According to Sarony, she said that the commander *on* the ship was “Atacuka-san,” and on Flores it was “Wataki-san,” but from the context it seems that “Atacuka-san” was with her and the other two (?) girls until they were placed by him in a “stone house” in Namlea, and “Wataki-san” brought her to the house next door.⁵⁶ According to her testimony, there were ten Japanese in Namlea. The wife of a policeman, Ibu Pandung, “bathed and fed” her.

Later, Harun Rosidi who lived in a neighboring village compiled notes about Siti F., but the most important information came from Daswian, also called Oking, who discovered in August 1978 that she was his aunt. The printed dialog contains information establishing their relationship, and not much more, but Pramoedya later compiled information from Oking and Siti F.’s son Selang. According to this explanation, the daughter of an Assiten Wedana of Singadikarta in Subang, she was in middle school when her parents agreed to allow her to continue to school in Tokyo. Four girls left Subang, and departed with hundreds of other girls from Tanung Priok, and was taken to Flores and then Buru. At the end of the war, the demands of the girls to return to Java were refused and instead they were closely guarded.⁵⁷ Siti F. ran away into the

⁵⁴ Pages 67-78.

⁵⁵ While the island of Flores was an important location in the Lesser Sunda islands, I have been unable to locate a Kisar village. There is a small Kisar island off the East Timor coast near Lautem. The only “Kisar village” I have been able to locate is Kampung Kisar on the north side of the city of Ambon.

⁵⁶ The meaning of “stone house” and the house next door is unclear, but it is possible that she became Wataki-san’s mistress or servant. Atacuka is likely Akatsuka, while the uncommon family name Wataki does exist.

⁵⁷ While events at the end of the war are virtually impossible to reconstruct, it is clear that

interior. She married a fisherman from Buton, and after his death she married a local Alfuru man.

Figure 70. War Crimes Investigation Team in Namlea.



The arrival of the Allied war crimes investigation team in Namlea, headed by Australian Maj. Arnott (standing left), October 1945. Courtesy of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation.

Unfortunately, the final set of information which largely derived from Selang or Oking is difficult to interpret, since it does not show how the information was compiled, and in some cases may include embellishments, such as the claim that she departed from Tanjung Priok with several hundred other girls, which did not appear in her original statements to Sarony and is unlikely to be known by Selang. Other questions inevitably appear in reading this chapter. When she was first recruited is never stated, but it is critical as 1942 is very different from 1944, nor is it clear why her parents would have consented in any case. Was the argument about school so very convincing, or was it also accompanied by other more important types of “persuasion?” Was she placed in a brothel or comfort station in Flores or Buru, or was she the mistress of one Japanese for all or part of the time? It seems likely she meant to imply the latter, but it is very much unclear. When discussing the end of the war, it also seems odd to refer to girls (plural form), as she claimed there were only 10 Japanese in Namlea, although there could be a variety of reasons for this statement.

Japanese troops in Namlea would not have had the authority or ability to send women to Java. The Allies only arrived in Namlea in October 1945 for what seems to have been a very short stop. Based on this narrative, we can guess that Siti F. had already run away.

4. Bolansar (Bu Lanjar)⁵⁸

The second woman discussed in detail was known locally as Bolansar, a corruption of Bu Lanjar, and to the *tapol* as Muka Jawa (Javanese Face). In 1978, several times she came to Permukiman Giripura to buy salt, but she also would watch *wayang* and listen to *gamelan*. Based on brief conversations, the *tapol* guessed that she was from Pernalang in Central Java.

Three *tapol* men, Rony, Satiusa, and Wai Durat decided to go to her village loaded with supplies. Once in the village, Wai Durat was delegated to locate Bolansar, while the others made coffee for the residents of this tiny community and tried to ensure smooth relations. The narrator, Rony, saw the wife of the traditional leader (Kepala Adat Wiranlaheng), who never spoke, and concluded that she must be Javanese based on her appearance. Bolansar was eventually found and engaged in private conversation. According to her statements, because she was asked embarrassing questions in front of [her?] children when she had gone to the coastal villages, she was sworn to not say anything that might damage those around her. Specifically if the women were to leave the villages and take their children with them, then the tiny village communities would be irreparably damaged.⁵⁹ The narrator acknowledged that she probably had to move again as a result of their meeting, and may have been punished for talking to them.

Perhaps more important than the information about the war, it is clear that the very process of obtaining information about her experiences in the war was damaging at least in terms of her position in society, but also possibly emotionally, as she refers to her “hati” being hurt in the *tapol* villages. It is also clear in the case of each of these women that a dramatic “freeing” of these women from their oppression and allowing them to return to Java would result in the collapse of the local communities and their tradition.

⁵⁸ See pages 79-98.

⁵⁹ This might have originally been intended as a reference to the *Kepala Adat Warianlaheng*’s wife and children, but the text seems to indicate that the editors felt that it should include other women and their children, even in other villages.

5. Historical Information and the Discourse on *Ianfu*

While the historical data in *Perawan Remaja* was compiled in a place and time where our discourse on comfort women did not exist, it was edited and published during the boom in publications about comfort women, and during the peak of NGO activity. Not surprisingly, publication of this book was feted by KPG, the Koalisi Perempuan [Women's Coalition], and the Aksara Bookstore in Kemang with a discussion of the book entitled "Demanding Justice for the Jugun Ianfu" on 19 April 2001, featuring Antarini Arna of the Koalisi Perempuan and Maria Hartiningsih of Kompas. In line with common practice in comfort women related events, a former comfort woman, Ibu Suhana, offered her "testimony"; some kind of film testimony was also shown. The event closed with a film showing the process of the VAWW-NET "trial" in Tokyo which had taken place several months earlier.⁶⁰

Through the introduction, the editor situated the book in a strikingly familiar political discourse related to comfort women, rather than a literary discourse. "KPG is publishing this book because it is aware that there are still few historical notes about the sexual slavery of Indonesian females by the Japanese military. More than that, many judge that the aforementioned actions by the Japanese military are one of the greatest humanitarian tragedies of the 20th century, after the killings of those of Jewish descent by Nazi Germany and the killing of the members and sympathizers of the PKI in Indonesia. It is estimated that 200,000 females from Asian countries which had been occupied by Japan, like South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Burma, including females from Japan itself, were made into sexual slaves."⁶¹ It then covers the

⁶⁰ "Diskusi Buku 'Perawan Remaja dalam Cerkeraman Militer' karya Pramo," <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pasarbuku/message/3085> (last accessed April 9, 2016). Given the tense relationship between the organizers of the VAWW-NET mock trial and the Indonesian delegation under the leadership of Nursyabani Katjasungkana and Antarini Arna, this continued focus on the trial is interesting.

⁶¹ Page viii. While the editor curiously chooses the massacre of hundreds of thousands of PKI sympathizers in the 1960s as an apparently close second to the holocaust, and overlooks other recent calamitous events like the killing fields of Cambodia under Pol Pot in the 1970s, it is fascinating that the editor also did not find the inclusion of the "sexual slavery" of "200,000 women" as an equal event somewhat odd.

Ironically, on March 27, 2009, the night before the AAS panel on comfort women in which the first version of this paper was presented, MSNBC showed a special on the shockingly brutal "sexual slavery" of women in the US, in which it was asserted that 30,000 new victims are being taken each year. This indicates that the US in the first decade of the 21st century has treated

“refusal” of the Japanese government to “take legal responsibility,” the activities of the Asian Women’s Fund, the arguments of the NGOs, and the “people’s court” held in Tokyo in December 2000 in the following three paragraphs.

After briefly framing his narrative with a short timeline of events, Pramoedya addresses an audience of young women through a letter, imploring them not to take their security for granted and to imagine the fate of other girls like themselves at the beginning of the war.⁶² Blending his own experiences and recollections of the war with those of fellow exiles in Buru, Pramoedya makes a series of claims about the occupation. One key assertion was that if during the colonial period the Javanese bureaucracy (*pangreh praja*) was dominant, during the Japanese occupation the propaganda ministry (*Sendenbu*) was all powerful. While he notes that there was no official government decree about schooling in Tokyo, and that neither he nor his friends remember ever typing news stories about the subject, he heard rumors and was very cynical about such offers. Pramoedya thus speculates that the *Sendenbu* ordered or encouraged the Javanese civil servants to recruit women, who were persuaded in part by their parents. He notes a predominance of children of Javanese officials who were recruited, effectively demonstrating their innocence and victimization.

In Chapter 3, Pramoedya argues that the girls were picked up at their homes and taken to permanently established points, and that large numbers of the girls destined to “study in Tokyo” were kept in compounds which were visited by car after car of Japanese officers. In some cases, Pramoedya does note that they were taken directly to the ship. In constructing his narrative, Pramoedya utilized a variety of sources, but in the context of the scattered evidence (different times and places by different witnesses), the fact that nearly all evidence is speculation by individuals outside the fence and without personal contact, and that in some well-documented cases buildings were used only temporarily to collect women, the existence of a system of permanent collecting points seems a little far-fetched.⁶³ By taking one piece of

an even larger number of its young women (approximately 300,000 women) in a similarly inhumane manner. While all numbers are subject to question, this is obviously a grave matter worthy of thought and action. It also reinforces a feeling that the editor of Pramoedya’s book was guilty of “over-akting.”

⁶² Beginning on page 3, the letter fades in and out of focus in chapters 3-4.

⁶³ One such case was in Semarang, where buildings were borrowed to house women recruited for Flores in 1944, a case documented in part because of the Eurasian women included in this

incomplete evidence and juxtaposing it with incomplete evidence from another context, Pramoedya creates a picture which *might* be accurate in those times and places, or even in general. However, given the holistic assertion that the picture presented is *the truth*, this weakly supported picture seems troublingly similar to longstanding popular images.

Chapter 4 describes the exile of the women, blending information found in later chapters with information from *tapol* into a narrative which reaches its emotional crescendo here. Curiously, some of the most emotional language, that most closely fitting to the 1990s discourse, is found outside of quotation marks; the quotes in one case are Pramoedya's representation of a male friend's memories of a woman's words heard many years earlier. Somehow some of the words that he felt the need to write could not be placed within quotation marks; given Pramoedya's rather liberal use of quotation marks, this indicates that there was a very low degree of loyalty to the original testimony. For example, Sukarno Martodihardjo related information about Sumiyati who he met in Siam [Thailand] in 1947. Statements like "Did they not receive pay from Japan No! Only sometimes received recreation money on certain days when they were granted permission to go out near the dorm" appeared outside of both Martodihardjo's and Sumiyati's quotation marks, although the words of both were somehow preserved in other places.⁶⁴ It thus is probably that the original evidence in this chapter has been manipulated more than in some of the other chapters.

The fourth chapter closes with a list of five points, perhaps foreshadowing the drastic change with the narrative about Buru, or rather trying to establish a link between the first and second halves of the book⁶⁵:

Before we reach the next part, we should conclude first that those teenage virgins:

First, were released without responsibility, without severance pay, without facilities, and without thanks from the Dai Nippon military, as an action of

group. For a brief mention of this case, see Yamamoto and Hōton 1999. It is possible that established brothels were used in some locales as transfer points.

⁶⁴ The original reads "Apakah mereka tak mendapat upah dari Jepang? Tidak! Hanya kadang menerima uang rekreasi pada hari-hari tertentu, waktu mereka diijinkan pesiar sekedarnya di luar asrama."

⁶⁵ See page 42 for this list.

washing their hands of their own evil.

Second, were turned over to their own instincts for life.

Third, were not given service and legal protection by the Government of the RI.

Fourth, did not receive attention from their own families

Fifth, as a result, until 1979 or around 35 years, they were forgotten exiles.

6. Reflections of readers

As a publication by one of Indonesia's most famous novelists, this book has obtained a large Indonesian readership. Some of these readers see the book as a novel, while many others see either a humanitarian discussion of military oppression of women, or most commonly, consistent with the first four chapters, readers see a description of the oppression of Indonesian women by Japanese soldiers or Japan.⁶⁶ Even if this book is occasionally mistaken as a novel, presumably due to the author's fame as a novelist, the floating use of the first person, and the frame of a letter to young girls, this book provides careful documentation and important source material. The difference with the Japanese "autobiographical" book of Yoshida Seiji's imaginary comfort women hunting adventures couldn't be greater.⁶⁷

The publication also had an impact in Japan. Internet blogs and book reviews appeared almost immediately, but surprisingly it wasn't until 2004 that Yamada Michitaka's Japanese translation was published. With an elegant cover decorated with a photograph of a flower, the translation was entitled "The Young Girls Abandoned by the Japanese Military: The Tragic Story of Indonesian Ianfu."⁶⁸ Rather than focusing on the initial period of recruitment, this title leaves the intended period undefined, capturing the larger picture of the book, while the reference to the Japanese military and *ianfu* suggest the subject of the narrative itself and a particular political leaning.

⁶⁶ The views of some "average" Indonesian readers are easily available on the internet, for example through the reader's comments at:

http://goodreads.com/book/show/963127.Perawan_Remaja_Dalam_Cengeraman_Militer

⁶⁷ Yamamoto 2009. Yoshida's book was entitled *Watashi no sensō hanzai: Chōsen-jin kyōsei renkō* [My war crime: Forcible mobilization of Koreans].

⁶⁸ Puramudiya Ananta Tūr, *Nihongun ni suterareta shōjotachi: Indoneshia no ianfu hiwa*.

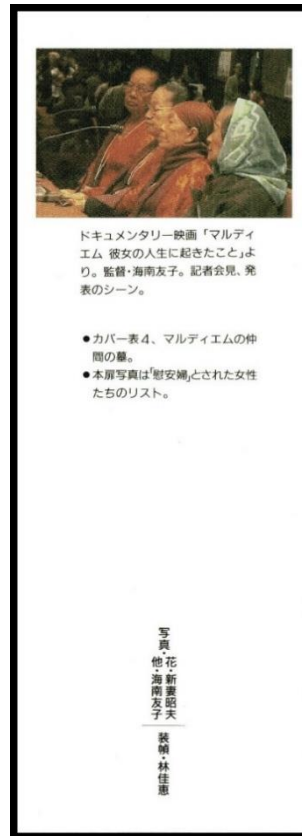
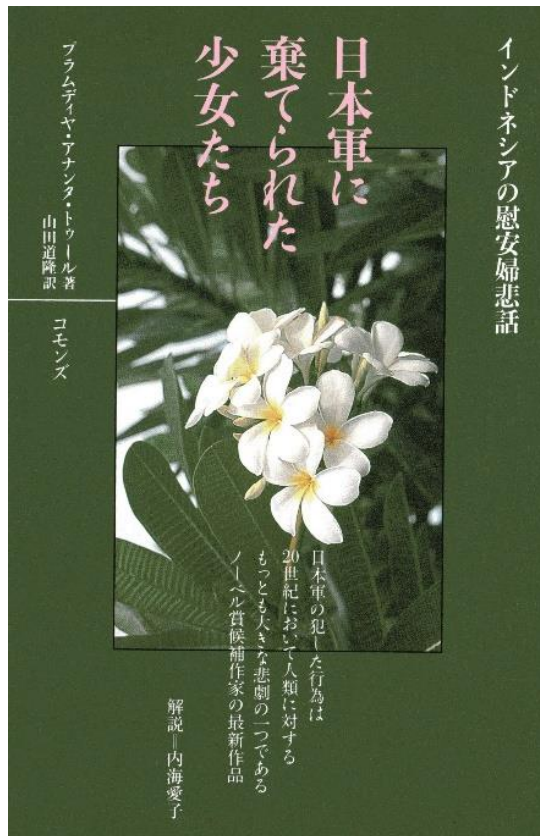


Figure 71. (Left)
Cover of the
Japanese
translation of 2004.

Figure 72. (Right)
Back leaf of the
Japanese
translation showing
4 Indonesian
women at the
VAWW-NET trial.

The Japanese translation raises numerous problems related to the author(ity) of Pramoedya, and is essential not just for interpretation of the text but also for the reception of this text and other works by Pramoedya in Japan. Although such a full analysis of Japanese materials is outside of the scope of this study, it should be noted that the framing of the text with a political forward from KPG editors was intensified by an introduction by Utsumi Aiko, who has long been active in Korean and World War II related movements. The back leaf carries a picture of the four former Indonesian comfort women during the VAWW-NET “trial” of December 2000, unmistakably connecting this text to this fin-de-siècle movement. None of these women had any connection to Buru. Without a more substantial effort to review the literature in Japanese, it is unclear whether the content has influenced understandings of *ianfu* in Japan, as much of the political discourse during this period has revolved around the search for crude force (*kyōsei renkō*) in recruiting, and thus more ambiguous materials or those showing a range of experiences have not been highly valued (Yamamoto 2009; Yamamoto 2010).

In this context, it seems important to raise the question of whether the experiences of these women during World War II were ever the main focus of the

narrative by Pramoedya and his collaborators. I would suggest that they saw in these women victims of society who, like themselves, were exiled from Java, but were weaker and even more helpless. The early nationalist revolution against the fetters of traditional social codes and old-fashioned “feudal” elites had not reached the interior of Buru, entrapping not just these women who were even bought and sold, prevented from speaking in Indonesian, and prevented from communicating with outsiders, but also the youth who wanted to learn to read and write or to speak Indonesian. The fact that the women were the victims of terrible treatment during the Japanese occupation is simply the first part of the story; the main theme is the ongoing oppression by traditional society.⁶⁹

This point is illustrated well by the conclusions to Chapter 5 (pp. 65-66):

1. Some of the young virgins who were cheated by the Japanese fascists between 1943-1944 have lived on Buru Island until 1978.
2. They live far below the civilization level and culture of their origins.
3. They are not sought out by their family, perhaps being forgotten by them, even perhaps by the entire nation of Indonesia, and considered non-existent or lost.
4. They never contacted the family they left behind, because that was indeed not possible.
5. They miss the family they left behind, and some or perhaps all of them desire to go back, even though they do not know the road which must be followed.
6. They don't dare speak in their native language, or speak about themselves to others if they are near their husband or non-Buru people.
7. They have become prisoners of their own environments. The overly heavy conditions of life make them age quickly. It can be guessed that the majority of them are dead, especially as there is no medical care, the frequency of epidemics or parasite sicknesses, which is the characteristic of virtually every foreign and backward society.

In its apparently “original” form, that is to say divested of the introductory sections, the book presents a (com)passionate description of the way in which traditional society in Buru oppresses its weakest members, women and children, especially those not born into the local community.⁷⁰ It also reads as a condemnation of

⁶⁹ The failure of the modern Indonesian state and society to make any effort to help these women is similarly only the last chapter to the larger story.

⁷⁰ By choosing the words “apparently original,” I am making a guess based on internal evidence. A pre-publisher draft in dot-matrix print form has recently come into my possession and analysis has just begun.

social codes or anything else which prevents individuals from returning home from their exile. Pramoedya and his comrades in Buru were trapped in the local “communities” established by the New Order government, unable to return to their families. Like Pramoedya and the other *tapol*, the Javanese women on Buru were prevented from returning to Java, or even from participating in local activities with the more modern communities on the coast, especially those with the Javanese exiles. It is a wonderful universal statement on the human condition, the contradictory and oppressive demands of society, and the need to extend a hand to the weakest people.

However, as a historian who has an interest in teasing out information about the past, an interest in popular discourse on history, and a desire to see more accurate and critical popular historical knowledge, my eyes invariable also turn to the information about World War II. In large part, although filtered through the interviewers and Pramoedya in 1970s, and the constraints of contact with the women in Buru at that time, details about these women’s experiences in World War II presented in chapters 5-8 are probably largely accurate. Many of these particular women were probably recruited with the excuse of some kind of schooling (including the safe-sounding profession of midwife at a/the hospital in Ambon), and various pressures like the demand for loyalty and need to struggle for victory in the war, as well as the potential loss of their fathers’ positions. It is not already clear exactly who was involved in the recruiting of the girls, although certainly the Javanese bureaucracy was involved in many cases. There are a few hints that parents were not always willing to allow their 14 year old girls go away, and there is at least one hint that a Javanese woman far away from the port cities understood the fate that awaited these girls. Pramoedya himself was skeptical about the idea of both boys and girls having the chance to go to Tokyo for further education, although he just mentioned the boys in passing. However, it is clear that in each of these cases the families at least pretended to believe that these girls would obtain an education. It could well have been that understanding that allowed them to live at peace, both psychologically and with the realities of Java under Japanese occupation.

Thus while similar in many respects, the information in the earlier four chapters seems even more worthy of caution, perhaps because of the holistic claims that are made, rather than the careful, precise limited claims characterizing the later narratives. Unless we are willing to take single cases to exemplify the whole experience

of the war, to take cases from 1944 and assume that they were identical with unknown cases from 1942-43, and to accept decontextualized information, then we have a long way to go before understanding the situation throughout Java and Indonesia.

Much of the hard work of compiling data and checking reliability remains. Where, for example, both “Suwarti” and “Sulastri” mention 228 women on a ship, a judgment must be made about whether as comfort women being transported they would know the exact number of women on board, whether the two women were really the same person, whether one woman learned the number from the other woman, and whether they were even on the same ship. Where the movement of the ship varies from story to story, does it imply a different ship, a different awareness, or inaccuracies of the memory of one woman? Other sources, such as postwar NICA records, may indicate women who were repatriated to Java, perhaps including the girl that Rodius Sutanto had assumed never left Semarang. Similarly, it’s possible that Pramoedya’s conclusion that elite girls were disproportionately represented may be a result of his male informants’ own backgrounds, a reluctance of elite girls to return home to their families, or pure coincidence. The sample he presents from Buru is too small and the data presented from Java too limited to reach a conclusion. If a larger sample cannot be found, then NICA records could perhaps provide the key.



Figure 73. Raising the flags in Buru. The reoccupation of Buru, symbolized by the raising of the Dutch and Australian flags in October 1945. Courtesy of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation.

Following up on the hints provided by Pramoedya and his fellow exiles in Buru, each of these sources may adjust our understanding of the war and comfort women. It is even possible that field work in places like Buru will yield some useful information, although the chances of meeting either these women or eye-witnesses to the events of the war in places like Namlea decrease every year.⁷¹ More importantly, though, such work entails the risk of damaging the social position of those women and reviving memories which they may have tried to leave behind.

By publically locating Pramoedya's book in a key position to stimulate further studies of the past, allowing his introductory letter to serve in a literary role of easing readers into his narrative, but subjecting it to critical historical analysis, a history not-entirely driven by political agendas may be possible. It seems that much of his data about women in Buru is salvageable for history writing, neither being complete regurgitations from contemporary discourse, nor hopelessly vague. This process, unfortunately, does not seem to be taking place. With a better process of historical reconstruction and reproduction, information about comfort women will be more effective in the effort to transform Indonesian society into a safer, more just society for all of its members.

⁷¹ To cite just one example, a journalist working for Surya visited Buru in 2008, yielding interesting information from individuals who were in the Namlea area during World War II. See Rohi 2008.

C. Our Friends the Timorese: Turn of the Century Australian Memory Work and the Second World War in East Timor

...They conducted guerilla operations against the Japanese, and were supported by 'creado', which is a Portuguese word for the local Timorese people...[quoting an AusAid worker] "Throughout the four years of struggle, up to 44,000 Timorese died assisting Australian soldiers."

Francis (ABC, 2006)

1. Introduction

At the beginning of the Pacific war in late 1941, Australia found its small military widely dispersed in potentially critical spots from the South Pacific to the Middle East. One such location was Timor, an island on the eastern fringes of the Indonesian archipelago which was shared by the Dutch (western half) and the Portuguese (eastern half). Even for the Netherlands East Indies and Portugal, Timor was a marginal backwater, far away from the main colonial centers. For Australia, this remote island had become strategic because of its proximity to Australia's isolated northern city of Darwin and the north coast.

My primary purpose in initiating this exploration was to better understand the situation in Timor during World War II—and relevant sources produced over a period of more than sixty years. In addition to wartime materials preserved in Australian archives, I found memoirs and publications related to the war which could potentially explain much about east Timorese society during this period, as well as the relationships between Australians and Timorese. These descriptions were not always consistent, and thus raised problems related to the use of memory in historical research. This article thus aims to present a discussion of relationships between Timorese and Australians during 1941-1943, but at the same time to explore the memory work of Australians—the ways that they have remembered the events and relationships of that period—and the way that we can conduct research into such subjects.

Map 3. Timor and Australia



2. The Colony of Portuguese Timor

In 1941, Portuguese Timor was a small colony of around 14,600 km², with a population of approximately 450,000 Timorese, 2,000 Chinese, and 300 Portuguese, including nearly 100 political and criminal deportees (*deportados*). There were also a small number of other Europeans and Australians, around 50 Arabs, and as of January 1941, 13 Japanese. While the colony was officially Catholic, centuries of Portuguese involvement had yielded a catholic community of at most 5-10 percent. Divided into six “conscriptions” (provinces) and the capital area, Portuguese Timor was a mountainous territory overseen by a tiny administrative corps of Portuguese, and secured more by a strategy of “divide and rule” than by the minute 300 man military with its 10-15 European members.⁷²

⁷² One of the six conscriptions was the 815 km² enclave of Oecussi in western Timor. Due to its geographical separation, it will not be considered here.

With many local languages, no real supra-local ‘national language,’⁷³ administrative and geographical restrictions on movement from one area to another, dominance of outsiders in most non-traditional roles (like traders, the administrative corps, or the standing army), and low educational levels, there were few indications of rapid social change or modernization in Portuguese Timor. Local villagers remained largely engaged in subsistence farming under traditional leadership, with the *liurai* at the top of the hierarchy. Besides the limited Portuguese and African presence in the administration and military, the most significant ‘outside’ presence was that of the Chinese traders resident in most towns. The monetization of the economy began in the 19th century, and by the late 1910s, the major currency was the ‘pataca,’ as the Mexican silver dollar was known, although other currencies were imported from Macau. An added complication for the Timorese economy was the fact that all imports and exports passed through the Netherlands East Indies, which was on a gold standard. The poll tax of 6, 11 or 16 patacas covered more than half of the state budget, and was particularly heavy for the Timorese, representing approximately three months of a coolie’s annual income.⁷⁴ This resulted in both discontent and economic dislocation, but may have ensured a regular supply of labor for both government projects and private plantation interests.

Table 4: Major Ethno-linguistic Groups of East Timor (excluding Oecussi)⁷⁵

| Name | Est. Population | Percentage of Total |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Bunac | 50,000 | 9.8% |
| Cairui-Midici | 2,000 | 0.4% |
| Fatalucu | 30,000 | 5.9% |
| Galoli | 50,000 | 9.8% |
| Habu | 1,260 | 0.2% |
| Idate | 5,000 | 1.0% |
| Kemac | 50,000 | 9.8% |

⁷³ The most widely spoken language, Tetum, is a regional language with several distinct dialects traditionally spoken in scattered regions of Timor, and a simplified hybrid spoken in the area around Dili, but in 1941 it was not sufficiently well-known to be a real *lingua franca*. With the adoption of a new constitution, Tetum became one of the languages used at the national level (official language), along with Indonesian (working language), English (working language), and Portuguese (official language).

⁷⁴ Gunn (1999: 195, 211) provides two slightly different descriptions of the tax regimen for the 1930s-1941. According to other information presented in his book, in 1936, wage earners (2 percent of the population) paid 11 patacas, “auxiliary laborers” (98 percent of the population) paid 16 patacas, while Europeans, chiefs and other special groups had tax exemptions.

⁷⁵ This population data is problematic, having been derived from a variety of sources over a twenty-five year period, but is still representative of the relative importance of ethno-linguistic groups. The population was estimated at 700,000 in 1990 and more than 1,000,000 in 2006.

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|-------|
| Lakalei ⁷⁶ | 5,000 | 1.0% |
| Macasae ⁷⁷ | 70,000 | 13.7% |
| Mambai | 80,000 | 15.7% |
| Nauete | 1,000 | 0.2% |
| Tetum | 50,000 | 9.8% |
| Tetum Prasa (Dili) | 50,000 | 9.8% |
| Tucudede | 63,170 | 12.4% |
| Waima'a | 3,000 | 0.6% |
| Total | 510,430 | |

Source: Gordon 2005.

During the prewar period, this tiny Portuguese colony was of little economic interest to the world. The Sociedade Agrícola Pátria e Trabalho (SAPT), a partially state-owned company established by Governor-general Celestino da Silva in 1897, was the only significant institution engaged in plantation agriculture and the purchase and exporting of smallholder coffee and other agricultural products. Not especially profitable, in around 1936 a substantial number of shares had been sold to the Japanese state-supported strategic development company Nan'yō Kōhatsu KK by a major shareholder, dr. Sales Luiz, and this institution apparently controlled 48 percent of the outstanding shares through a member of its board of directors (Sagawa Sachimaro) in 1940.⁷⁸ On the other hand, mining rights for oil and other minerals had been sold to American, Australian and Belgian investors but they made few efforts beyond geological surveys. The British and Australian governments not only sought to ensure that mining and oil contracts would not be granted to Japan, and provided air links to Kupang in West Timor and Darwin in Northern Australia in a successful effort to block a regular Japanese air link, but from April 1941 placed a senior Qantas representative in Dili, who was subsequently converted into a consular representative.

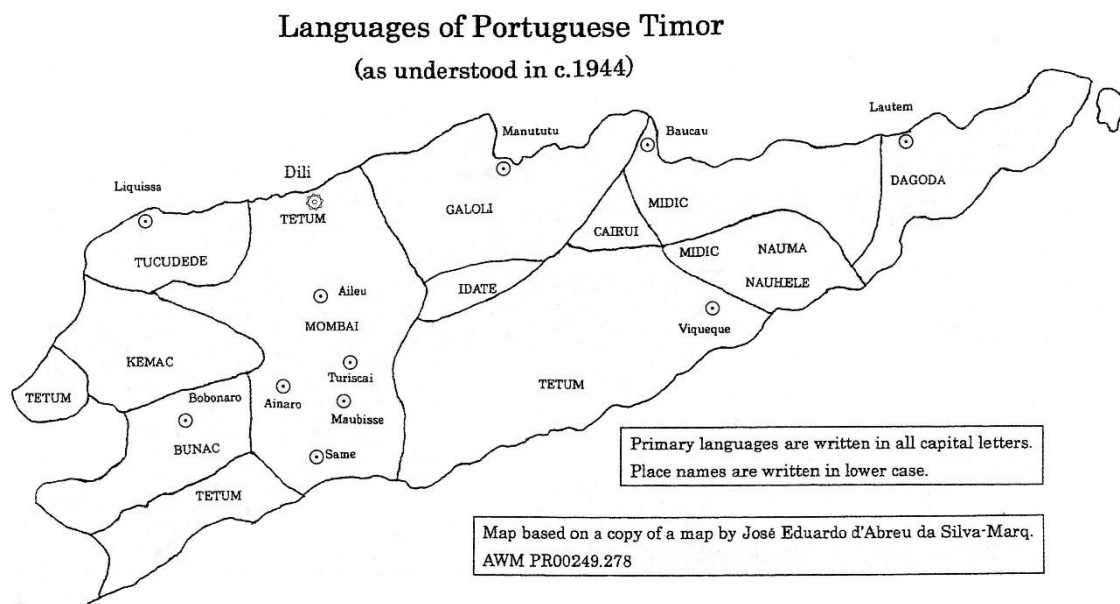
⁷⁶ The Lakalei primarily reside west of the Idate-speaking area. This group was not included on the c.1944 linguistic map reproduced below.

⁷⁷ Most Macasae reside east of Baucau in the eastern part of East Timor, and thus were outside of the Australian zone in WWII.

⁷⁸ Lee (2000: 179), Gunn (1999:201), Archer (1941). Gunn states that the stake was increased from 40 to 48 percent in 1940 with a capital investment of one million pounds sterling. Given the total size of the investment and the context of the initial sale, it is unlikely that it was Sagawa's private investment.

Established in 1921 by Matsue Haruji following the collapse of several other Japanese enterprises, the Nan'yō Kōhatsu was extremely successful at developing the sugar industry in the Marianas and building a revenue base for the Japanese colonial administration. By the 1930s, Matsue had returned to Tokyo, but Nankō was an investor in many other endeavors in the Pacific, frequently undertaken by its subsidiaries. Nankō was disbanded by Allied order in 1945. See Peattie (1988).

Map 4.



3. World War II comes to Timor

Following German occupation of the Netherlands in May 1940, there was also a gradual development of mutual defense agreements between Australia, Britain and the Netherlands East Indies. The Netherlands has established a government in exile in London and naturally the British and Dutch governments cooperated closely in colonial and defense issues throughout this period. By mid-1941, Australia had decided to support the Netherlands East Indies against a Japanese attack by undertaking the defense of Ambon and Timor. With its commitments to the war in Europe, the Middle East, and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, this was a substantial project for this huge continental nation of only seven million people.

Australian troops were sent to Kupang in Dutch-ruled western Timor in early December 1941 as part of a combined force designated as Sparrow Force.⁷⁹ Despite their inadequate defense of Dutch colonial territory, the Netherlands East Indies and Australian governments were concerned that the Japanese would invade Portuguese Timor as a means of entering the archipelago and so insisted on stationing Allied troops there until a substantial Portuguese force arrived. This meant an invasion of neutral Portuguese territory, a task undertaken by Netherlands East Indies troops in

⁷⁹ For details on these units, see Wigmore (1957).

conjunction with the Australian Imperial Forces 2/2nd Independent Company on December 17, 1941. These units totaled approximately 500 men. Ironically, the Japanese decision to invade Portuguese Timor was only made in early February 1942 in consideration of the presence of Allied troops.⁸⁰

The initial Japanese occupation of Portuguese Timor was conducted by the “Eastern Detachment” of the 16th Army. Initially approximately half of the 228th Regimental Group (total strength 4,500) and the entire 3rd Yokosuka Special Naval Landing Force (approximately 1,000 paratroops and infantry) were assigned to Timor.⁸¹ The main force was landed in West Timor while a second force (approximately 1000 men) was landed in Portuguese Timor on the evening of February 19 and in the early hours of February 20, 1942. The combined allied force in West Timor surrendered on February 23, but the 2/2nd Independent Company and other Allied elements which escaped to Portuguese territory did not surrender. While Japanese control of West Timor was quickly consolidated, a kind of ‘status quo’ developed with Japanese moving periodically through major towns along the north coast and near Dili, but only controlling a very limited territory. This may have been due to the efforts of Australians before the Japanese landings. The Australians and other allied troops had initially been placed in and near Dili, along the north coast of Timor, and had gradually mapped the footpaths in the mountains in those areas, but following the Japanese arrival they resided in small units in the towns and villages of the central and western portions of Portuguese Timor. Combatants were largely absent from eastern Portuguese Timor, in part because Australians feared being trapped by a Japanese offensive.

During the first months, the administration of Timor was still in the hands of the Portuguese colonial administration, with the governor in Japanese controlled Dili. This changed between August and November, as the Portuguese were forced into a special area ‘for their own safety’ following a bloody revolt against their rule instigated by the Japanese. This was roughly concurrent with the arrival of new Japanese troops (including two Taiwanese Regiments), which replaced the initial combat troops.⁸² Australian reinforcements also arrived in September 1942, but all Allied troops were

⁸⁰ On this decision-making process, see Frei (1996).

⁸¹ For details, see Military History Section (1953: 2) and Wigmore (1957).

⁸² These troops were sent to Java for reorganization and were dispatched to the Rabaul area under the new 8th Area Army commander Gen. Imamura.

evacuated by early 1943. Most of the new Japanese troops remained until mid-1945, when they began to be moved through Java towards the Burma front.

4. Relations between Timorese and Outsiders

Relations between the Australians and Timorese were generally good, as they treated the Timorese well (overly 'soft' in the eyes of the Portuguese), were seen as a powerful force, and furthermore received support of some key Portuguese administrators. In many instances, the Timorese provided intelligence, built houses for Australian troops, provided food, and assisted with transport. This assistance was critical to the Australian troops. Japanese relations with the Timorese were more tenuous, as their treatment of natives was often poor, and they were largely isolated from the local society in the towns where they remained in large groups. This was probably worst in the early days, as noted by an Australian military survey: "After the Japanese landing at Dilli, the majority of the natives resident there immediately fled into the interior, and it was many months before the Japanese were able to approach them, as most continued to retreat before the Japanese advances."⁸³ While the length of time it took for natives to interact with Japanese is exaggerated in this narrative, there seems to have been a greater distance between most Timorese and Japanese than was the case with Australians. Most former Japanese soldiers do not indicate that they had close, personal relationships with Timorese.⁸⁴ In many cases, though, the Timorese closest to both parties played it safe, dealing with both parties in an accommodating manner. For example, Australian soldiers at an observation post on a spur overlooking the Dili aerodrome recognized this fact after several months near the same village. The Timorese would play host to Australians in the morning, but push them out in the afternoon, and sweep up all footprints just in time to receive Japanese on their way to obtain eggs.⁸⁵

The greater personal contact between Australians and Timorese may be due in part to the small unit size, and the "commando" style training which the Australians

⁸³ Allied Geographical Section (1943: 68).

⁸⁴ This has been extremely clear in interviews conducted by the East Timor Research Forum in 2005-2006. Most former Japanese soldiers had very little contact with Timorese, especially on personal level.

⁸⁵ Henry Sproxton, interview with author and Mayumi Yamamoto, Perth, September 9, 2005.

had received. They worked in small units, and conducted a guerrilla war rather than seeking to control territory. This provided more opportunities for personal contact with Timorese, and a greater dependence on their assistance. Of course, the Japanese army sometimes also used small units, but they were far less common and generally for shorter periods. As we shall see, these personal relations with Timorese, both the *creados* and other Timorese, also results in a very different memory of experiences in Timor, memories which are more subjective and less verifiable than (for example) the requisition of food.

Within several months of the Australians' arrival in Timor, Timorese boys called *creados* began working with individual Australian soldiers. Most general descriptions of relations between Timorese and Australians make reference to these *creados*, and they are obviously one of the most direct points of contact between individual Australian soldiers and the local Timorese population. Nonetheless, in these writings, the role of the boys is unclear; were they servants, guides, volunteers, or even a type of volunteer auxiliary soldier? How were they recruited, and what were their roles? How was communication achieved? To what extent did they serve as mediator with the local population? From what ethnic groups did these *creados* originate? Did the Portuguese, Dutch, or Japanese troops have *creados*? There are unfortunately no known writings left by these Timorese, and virtually all were believed to have died, so it is has not been conceivable to ask the Timorese *creados* themselves.⁸⁶ The minor references in Australian archival documents and in publications produced during the subsequent six decades presented very contradictory information, and additionally posed the problem of how to understand such scattered and limited data.⁸⁷

5. The *Creados* and the Loyalty of the Timorese

A greater focus on recent publications, many based on the recollections and testimonies of former Australian soldiers, along with a filtering-out of some of the

⁸⁶ Although it had been commonly believed that only one *creado* was still alive (Rufino Alves Correia, the former *creado* of Lt. Tom Nisbet), in fact at least three former *creado* were alive in April 2006. Berry (2006).

⁸⁷ Even the otherwise relatively stable Wray (1987) contradicts himself, implying that *creados* were coolies or laborers on page 127, but elsewhere uses the term *creado* to describe those Timorese who had a relationship with one Australian soldier. In my original paper, I referred to this pattern of contradictory information as a "random model" of data.

unsupported minor references produced very different results. Now one particular image seemed to dominate representations of the *creado* and Timorese in general—that of the loyal native assistant and guide to Australians:

People like Barana and Francisco exemplify the kind of indispensable assistance the people are giving us here on Timor. Each of us has a loyal helper, a criado, who takes over every possible chore with a will and a half, to make our lives so much easier. My own criado, Barana, is a strapping 12-year-old who can walk any man – black or white – off his feet! He is thrilled with the military aspect of our existence together, and at the first hint of my looking tired, he grabs my Tommy Gun, slings it over his own shoulder, and proudly declares: “Tuan Barana Australian soldado!”

Yes, if courage, skill and loyalty count for anything at all, then Barana is indeed an Australian soldier, a fair dinkum Double Red. He is as close to me as a blood brother. And I know that the men, not only of my section, but throughout the entire Company, hold their own Timorese criados in similar esteem. These are not mere “native guides” – they are friends, allies, and comrades. (Campbell 1995: 79-80)

While Campbell’s narrative is unique in its use of the ethnographic present in narrating events which took place more than fifty years earlier, his description of *creados* is not so unusual. Campbell’s book also inspired a journalist to write about Campbell and his *creado*, a book entitled *Criado: A Story of East Timor* (with a forward by the Nobel laureate and future Prime Minister of East Timor Jose Ramos Horta) which presumably reached an even larger audience.

Another recent example is a news item about the visit of three former *creados* to Melbourne for ANZAC Day in 2006. The daughter of one Australian officer explained the importance of one *creado* (Rufino), by saying “we like to think he looked after Dad and that was his sole responsibility. It was pretty tough.” Her brother explained that “there was nothing like having a little knowledge by your side, and that’s was the *creados* provided.” The narrator added that the *creados* “carried guns, food and water for the Commandos and directed them around the mountainous terrain.” Correia was quoted as saying, “we wanted to help the Australians because Australia is our neighbor and the Australian people came to Timor and they were very friendly with us.”⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Jamie Berry, “Timor veterans take journey back through years,” *The Age* (April 25, 2006). <http://www.theage.com.au/news/national/timor-veterans-take-journey-back-through-years/2006/04/24/1145861286515.html> (last accessed on April 9, 2016).

The dominant image—perhaps even defining feature—of the *creado* and indeed of Timorese in works such as these is ‘loyalty.’ Without the assistance of these boys in finding food, providing intelligence, guiding them, translating for them, and providing a myriad of other forms of assistance, many more Australian soldiers would have died in the mountains of Timor. The loyalty of the Timorese is the ultimate truth, one that is proved by the return of the Australian soldiers to their homeland, and by deaths of Timorese during the war—including those who gave their lives *after* the Australians had returned home, abandoning them to their enemies in 1942-3.

While Campbell specifically writes about *creados*, Francis (2006) wrote about Timorese in general, implying that all Timorese (‘creado’) were willing to sacrifice their lives for Australian soldiers.⁸⁹ Neither discourse directly contradicts the other. Other testimonies, like the narrative of the Sparrow Force commander Callinan written in 1953, also mention the loyalty of the *creados*, and thus seem to fit this picture. The composite picture of skilled Timorese dedicating themselves to helping Australian soldiers, saving them many times before they were regrettably left behind is quite clear.

However, the monolithic pattern breaks down once one begins to analyze this loyalty. By all testimonies, the Australians received invaluable assistance from Timorese, but were they all loyal and to whom? Was it a collective loyalty, or a loyalty of individuals to other individuals? Were Timorese loyal to their chiefs who ordered them to build huts or assist with transporting goods? Or were they loyal to their Portuguese overlords, or even to Australia, or to Australians? Was the loyalty ‘eternal’ or limited in time?

As a book compiled by an observant officer soon after the war, and based in part on his own experiences, Callinan’s 1953 book is an excellent starting point:

The rifles were duly dropped, collected and distributed. Some were kept and issued to natives from the Ainaro area. There we had a detachment of six men training and organizing the natives. They were in a pocket completely surrounded by hostile natives and

⁸⁹ A quote from the Francis article opens this article (see above). As there were only 200-500 Australian soldiers during 1942, there would have been no more than 300-400 *creados*. The figure of 44,000 deaths only becomes relevant if all East Timorese—male and female, friendly or not—are called *creados*. That is indeed how Francis characterizes the term.

Japanese, and the only way we could get the rifles through was by using a specially selected body of natives under one of the chiefs to thrust them through enemy lines, collect them from us at Ailalec, and return. (Callinan 1953: 205)

Here Callinan makes reference to hostile natives working with the Japanese, and mentions that some of the Timorese assisting Australians were working under their own leaders. That does not specifically discount Timorese loyalty to Australians, but does make the absolute, eternal loyalty of all Timorese to the Australian cause extremely unlikely. It would seem to be more mediated in this case. A second passage makes the problematic nature of this 'loyalty' and the value of their assistance even clearer:

Shortly afterwards Dexter arrived. He had been misled by a native and had been traveling until midnight, when, realizing that the native had little knowledge of where they were, he had decided to rest until dawn. He, his corporal and his two little native boys had come from a place called Same, down by the south coast. We were very interested in his descriptions of the country down there. His two natives were marvelous lads, one aged about ten and the other a little older; their names were Mau Luli and Motor Car, the latter being an amusing corruption of his native name. They remained with him through very dark times, and displayed courage and loyalty which were almost unbelievable. (Callinan 1953: 81-2)

Callinan here describes one instance where the assistance of a Timorese was not very helpful, and where Australian officers had to make educated decisions to ignore their input. Furthermore, the *creados'* loyalty is described in very different terms. Rather than being of great assistance, the "marvelous lads...displayed courage and loyalty," remaining with Captain Dexter throughout his time in Timor. This is very clearly personal loyalty—a very important quality, but different than loyalty to Australia. This section is also unclear about the significance of the assistance of these "marvelous lads"; their assistance was undoubtedly appreciated, but did it make a critical difference to the Australian cause?

Christopher C.H. Wray in his history of the long year of Australian involvement on Timor (1987) similarly emphasizes the support of the local population, while acknowledging that not all Timorese were on the Australian side and that Australians had to take sides in *local* conflicts. This book does discuss the Timorese wars in some detail, but it is clearly exceptional in that regard. On the other hand, the discussion of *creado* is more limited, with the clearest characterizations made in the

captions below photographs.

Wartime narratives were also quite frank, with one critical Allied military survey noting “Unfortunately, after contact with the enemy, and after being impressed by his methods of force and propaganda, many natives readily changed sides to the benefit of the Japanese and to our detriment....the law of force is the law they understand.”⁹⁰ Some narratives are even more negative.

Thus we can make a distinction between loyalty (and presumably their superb ‘native knowledge’) being the defining quality of *creados* (and Timorese) and a more complex picture in which a practice of taking a boy-servant or *creado* gradually developed, with these boys aiding as best they could in communications with locals, guiding troops, locating food, cooking, and carrying things (especially critical during combat). We can then see that the strongest, simplest representations of *creados* as loyal saviors of Australian soldiers and even martyrs are relative recent productions, produced in the 1980s and 1990s.

Based on this reading of available sources, we can conclude that the boys had agency to select the soldier with whom they would work, and recruited friends and relatives to be *creados* for other soldiers, but for the most part the *creados* stayed with one soldier until he returned to Australia, even when they went into areas populated by other ethno-linguistic groups. This relationship, in which the boys obtained social recognition and various material goods through their relationships to the Australian soldiers, may be usefully characterized as a patron-client relationship.⁹¹ Many may have had significant trouble after the departure of the Australians, either with the Japanese or hostile Timorese, and it is likely that some died during this period. Other Japanese or Taiwanese resident in villages may have had helpers, but they never knew them as *creados*, and no such practice seems to have existed for the Dutch or Indonesian soldiers. A larger number of Timorese provided other types of assistance, more when the Australians were dominant, less when the Japanese star was rising. However, the assistance provided—sometimes in exchange for promissory notes or silver cash—was of critical importance.

⁹⁰ Allied Geographical Section (1943: 68).

⁹¹ Thanks are due to Prof. Nishimura Masao who suggested this relationship at the Institute of Anthropological Research in Laos and Adjunct Areas symposium in December 2006.

6. Timor and Australians in the 1970s-90s

Why would there be such a change in the representations of the Timorese, and why should a burst of publishing activity occur in the 1990s? One of the obvious reasons is that the Australian veterans reached their 70s may have wanted to share their experiences with the younger generations. Indeed, the two veteran's associations related to Timor have published three unit histories since 1988, the Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs has commissioned interviews with over 2000 veterans, including a number with Timor experience, making these interviews available to the public through the internet, and parts of other interviews with veterans are frequently used in the press, unfortunately with little critical thought.⁹² However there are at least two other important reasons which need to be considered.

When Indonesia invaded and annexed East Timor in 1975, Australia was one of Indonesia's strongest supporters. The initial motivation for supporting Indonesia may have been a genuine, if mistaken concern about communism next door to Australia. However, Australia was also a financial beneficiary, eventually gaining rights to drill for gas and oil in the contested waters between Australia and Timor, while becoming the only country to formally recognize Indonesia's annexation of the territory.⁹³ Australians, and in particular the Australian government had little reason to object to Indonesia's annexation of Timor, or to question Indonesian treatment of the Timorese.⁹⁴ The Australian public, like the rest of the world, was largely apathetic. This state of affairs continued from the 1970s through the early 1990s.

On November 12, 1991, the Indonesian military opened fire on protesters in a

⁹² These histories are Doig (1988), Lambert (1997), and Ayris (2006). The interviews are available at <http://www.australiansatwarfilmarchive.gov.au/aawfa/>.

⁹³ While treaties related to sea boundaries between Indonesia and Australia were concluded in 1971-3, agreements pertaining to the oil reserves in the Timor Gap took much longer, with the existence of a 50-50 "zone of cooperation" being finalized in 1989. See Chaudhary (2006).

⁹⁴ The Australian government had probably been consulted in advance, as had the US government. On December 6, 1975, the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger and President Ford met with President Suharto in Jakarta. In that meeting the issue of Timor was explicitly raised, and the US was very supportive of potential Indonesian actions. See the text of the Ford-Kissinger-Suharto meeting in Burr and Evans (2001).

cemetery following a memorial service for a Timorese killed by the Indonesian military, resulting in the deaths of more than a hundred Timorese.⁹⁵ This event, often called the Santa Cruz massacre, was filmed by a cameraman working for an English TV company, and the recording then smuggled out of Timor and into Australia with the assistance of a Dutch journalist.⁹⁶ This film clip garnered substantial international support for the Timorese independence movement, and eventually served to make it difficult for the Indonesian military to use its normal draconian methods to defeat the rejuvenated independence movement. Australians subsequently played a major role in supporting Timorese aspirations for independence, and the Australian government was eventually willing to commit its military and resources to support the UN supervised vote about Timorese autonomy within Indonesia in 1999, and the subsequent rebuilding of infrastructure prior to being granted independence by the UN in 2003.

The majority of representations about *creado* and wartime Timor have not been the work of state institutions, but rather the results of individuals, often veterans or government officials, but more frequently journalists. Why would they have not just over-emphasized the role of the *creados*, but also represented the loyalty of the Timorese in such a particular way? I believe this has to do with the need to justify Australian involvement in Timor. By positing a huge debt to the Timorese, a debt of gratitude for protecting Australia and Australian soldiers, for being Australia's eternal friends, Australian politicians and the public would have no morally correct choice but to support the Timorese with a substantial commitment of financial, political, and military resources. The very real feeling of gratitude of many veterans coincided with the goals of some NGOs and activists seeking to support the Timorese people and resolve this long-lasting conflict. Following independence, similar discourses support a more ethical division of petroleum revenues, a very significant issue during the rewriting of economic and political boundaries in the disputed seas between Australia and Timor.

⁹⁵ Other estimates and name lists suggest substantially greater numbers of victims. According to this data, 271 were killed, 278 wounded, 103 hospitalized, and 270 Timorese subsequently "disappeared" by the Indonesian military. See <http://etan.org/timor/SntaCRUZ.htm> (accessed March 27, 2007, April 9, 2016).

⁹⁶ The recently concluded Timor Gap Treaty, and the preparations for awarding oil exploitation contracts in December 1991 were very likely considerations in the Australian government's apparent diligence in trying to cover-up the potentially embarrassing massacre.

7. Conclusion

The images of the *creado*, and in particular the loyalty of the Timorese to Australia or Australians were born out of the memories and personal relationships and led to a collective Australian memory of the war. Thus the loyalty of “the Timorese” to Australians has been derived metonymically from the very real assistance and loyalty of *some* Timorese. These simplified images are neither right nor wrong, rather these representations of the *creado* and absolute loyalty have been critical to establish a “debt” for Australia, and to goad Australian politicians and the public into supporting Timor’s struggle for independence. In the context of the Timorese independence struggle and nation building, it is good politics, but bad history. Former Japanese soldiers did not generally have such personal contact with Timorese, and it is perhaps not surprising that they have not played a substantial role in shaping discourse about Timor in Japan, and that the Japanese decision to assist Timor during the transition to independence in the early 21st Century was made on a very different basis.

In exploring the history of Timor in WWII, the patterns of representation and the politics of Australian relations with Timor provide keys to interpret the memories which have been produced by Australians. The memories of personal relationships, in particular, have both an emotive force and a malleability that simple facts do not. An awareness of these patterns allows us to identify the actual roles of Timorese, and the nature of the relationships between Timorese and outsiders.

This particular case illustrates that politics—the carefully considered or even subconscious adjustments to generate consensus (and achieve a goal)—influences a wide range of sources and renders use of memories extremely difficult. While in this case some interviews were relatively clear, as were the books of Callinan (1953) and Wray (1987), they also seemed at some points to fit the dominant representation. Only careful reading of the data reveals that many of the sources actually were saying something quite different, and that the mainstream Australian discourse on Timor had changed during the 1980s and 1990s.

Chapter VI.

Conclusion: Towards a More Open History of Modern Asia

Despite a small but growing body of related works, the Japanese occupation of Indonesia is the most understudied and most misunderstood period of modern Indonesian history. Often short on data and analysis, this period is characterized *not* by Bernard Cohn's cynical lacuna or gaps, but by stereotypes, assumptions, and intensification of received understandings. These misapprehensions of the Japanese occupation period affect not only our picture of that period, but also our capacity to discern developments in the colonial and postwar periods as well. Neither provision of superficial "background" information about the World War II period nor mining of wartime related information through searches or indexes is sufficient to diminish the pull towards established discursive patterns; however, a variety of strategies *are* available for those willing to engage in serious study pertaining to the occupation.

If studies of the colonial period commonly terminate, more or less, in 1942, and studies of the revolution or of independent Indonesia begin in 1945 with superficial coverage of the occupation period as background, or textbook-style information limited to "parliamentary" preparations for the independent state in the PPPKI and the development of the PETA army, then examination of the situation during the occupation can help to elucidate both sides of "the line." The apparent paucity of sources on the occupation for researchers who know no Japanese is merely one of the obstacles to inclusion of the wartime period. Even more important is the assumptions that we understand the wartime period, and that there are no sources, and the fact that generations of Indonesians had motivations to forget about the occupation or to reproduce dominant representations.

Even more importantly, the same seems to be the case for other parts of Asia which found themselves briefly part of the Japanese wartime empire, indicating a gaping hole in modern Japanese history as well. One part of this problem is the lack of smooth exchange of information between Japanese scholars and scholars of other countries with respect to the history of Japan's interactions with Asia and Indonesia in particular.

This dissertation has sought to demonstrate how explorations on modern Indonesian history which aggressively include the occupation in a different way—by not ending histories in 1942 or beginning histories in 1945, and by focusing on subjects that are specific to the wartime periods can significantly change our picture. Once the wartime period is included, a clearer view of the continuities, discontinuities and character of life through the 1940s becomes clearer, a more inclusive and holistic picture of society, and a less antagonistic view of the role of the Japanese and the Japanese occupation is possible, fundamentally reshaping our understandings of history.

Each of the subjects dealt with in this dissertation does not constitute a complete, finished history, even of a narrow subject. Nor do they present a holistic picture of the Japanese occupation, or of the 20th century. The series of explorations rather are intended as both to demonstrate the different ways in which the Japanese occupation should be integrated into the modern history of Indonesia, and as first efforts to create such histories. In fact, many more such studies are possible. Only when a substantial number of studies, focusing on a range of subjects, and connected to the Japanese occupation period in different ways come into existence, will a broad, interesting, grounded history be writable—and imaginable. This in turn is the first step in helping Japanese historians come to a better understanding of the position of Southeast Asia and other areas occupied during the war within Japanese history.

It is probably no coincidence that the “history problem” of World War II is only present in Asia. Rather than pinning the blame on a putatively unrepentant Japan, we should to reexamine the history which we have constructed and maintained in Asia. If we eliminate reliance on the “hinges” of 1942 and 1945 which have structured our history, and advance a more varied, critical, and contextualized history, interest in historical study should rise and uninformed historical tension should decrease within Asia.

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