

# Now There is No Government: *Rampok* of 1942 in Indonesia

YAMAMOTO Nobuto<sup>1)</sup>

Introduction  
A Wartime Regime at Risk  
*Rampok* Reconsidered  
How Did *Rampok* Happen?  
*Rampokkers* and Victims  
Timing  
No Authority  
Concluding Remarks

## Introduction

In the face of a collapse of established power and authority within a colonial setting, especially during periods of profound historical transition, how did individuals respond? When confronted with unforeseen circumstances leading to such collapse, individuals often found themselves disoriented. However, if they were aware that such a collapse was imminent, what consequences did they anticipate? This became a poignant reality for the populace of Indonesia in the early months of 1942.<sup>2)</sup>

---

1) From April to July 2023, I had the privilege of being a researcher at the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies (NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies), Amsterdam, the Netherlands. I express my sincere gratitude to Hinke Piersma and Peter Keppy for their warm companionship during my stay. On 6 July, I had the opportunity to present my ideas at NIOD's coffee lecture series (koffielezing). I am thankful to Elizabeth Chandra and Joss Wibisono for their valuable comments and suggestions. This article presents preliminary research results supported by the JSPS (the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI) (C), Grant Number: JP21K12392.

In the waning days of the Netherlands Indies colonial government in 1942, unforeseen social disorders ensued following Japanese attacks and landings in various parts of the archipelago. On 9 January 1942, one month after the outbreak of the Asia-Pacific war, Japanese forces commenced bombing Tarakan in Northern Borneo.<sup>3)</sup> This news reverberated throughout the Indonesian populace, inducing feelings of anxiety, fear, insecurity, and helplessness. The realization that Indonesia was now a war zone compelled the people to grapple with a sense of urgency, prompting them to respond to the unfolding crisis.

Since the late 1930s, regardless of their race, inhabitants in Indonesia were well-informed about the war situation developing in Europe and Asia.<sup>4)</sup> The consistent intake of news via newspapers and radio broadcasts, particularly amidst the onset of Japanese troop bombings across the archipelago in January 1942, significantly influenced the collective perception that an invasion of Indonesia by Japan was imminent—it was merely a matter of time. The anxiety among the populace intensified day by day. By the end of February 1942, however, local newspapers, unless they adopted a pro-Japanese stance, ceased publication due to the Japanese military invasion and subsequent control of major cities in Indonesia, compounded by shortages in paper supply. The occupation by Japanese forces profoundly impacted media outlets, leading to their closure and likely contributing to a vacuum in news dissemination. This event marked a significant disruption in the dissemination of information during that period. The absence of news about war developments through traditional media outlets increased the challenges faced by the local population in accessing information during this tumultuous time. Consequently, they had to rely on rumors and stories that passed from other places to comprehend the

---

2) In this article, to illustrate the evolving political landscape during the transition from colonial rule to the Japanese occupation and beyond, I use the term “Indonesia” to denote the geographical entity, “Indonesian(s)” for the indigenous people in Indonesia, and “Indies” to refer to the colonial government and regime until 8 March 1942.

3) “Tarakan diserang 3 bomber Djepang”. *Pemandangan*, 10 Januari 1942. This article mentions four islands in the Indonesian archipelago: Borneo, Celebes, Java, and Sumatra, presented in a structured order.

4) William H. Frederick. *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989, pp. 85-89.

situation.

The news of the arrival of Japanese forces sparked widespread social disruptions, acts of violence, and looting, contributing to a complex and tumultuous situation. Among those affected were Europeans, primarily Dutch officials, businesspeople, and their families, as well as the ethnic Chinese community, who faced the dilemma of whether to stay or evacuate. This dilemma underscores the intricate decisions individuals had to make in response to geopolitical developments. The evacuation of Europeans, in particular, seeking perceived safer locations in Java or even fleeing to Australia, created a sense of an authority vacuum among Indonesians. However, the evacuation process was fraught with challenges, and some Europeans experienced and witnessed instances of looting and violence during this turbulent period. The timing of this social upheaval varied across regions; while some areas experienced unrest in February 1942, in others, it was predominantly observed in March, with certain instances extending into April.

Contemporary local newspapers in the Malay language reported social disorders, using the Malay word *rampok* to describe various instances of criminal activities, including looting and violence. *Rampok* became a phenomenon across different regions of Indonesia, affecting cities, towns, and rural areas. For instance, the Batavia-based daily newspaper *Pemandangan* extensively used the term *rampok* in its 17 March 1942 issue, employing it 20 times in a single article.<sup>5)</sup> Given the war situation, however, the reconstruction of specific incidents of *rampok* during that time can indeed be challenging.

The disruption in local newspapers and the limitations on information flow due to the occupation further complicate the historical record. The newspapers,

---

5) *Pemandangan* was started by a conservative and opportunistic journalist Saeroen in Batavia on 8 April 1933. It was considered a nationalist, conservative, pro-Japanese daily, and enjoyed a good relationship with leading Indonesian "national" figures such as Dr. Soetomo, Mohammad Hoesni Thamrin, Soekardjo Wirjopranoto, H. A. Salim, and Parada Harahap. Since it had pro-Japanese stance, on 17 May 1940 it was forced to stop publishing for a week by the Indies government. After that, *Pemandangan* continued to circulate its newspaper even during the Japanese occupation period. About Parindra's activity, see Susan Abeyasekere. *One Hand Clapping: Indonesian Nationalists and the Dutch, 1939-1942*. Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1976.

such as *Sin Sin Po*, *Kung Yung Pao*,<sup>6)</sup> *Berita Oetama*,<sup>7)</sup> and *Pemandangan*, provided some insight into the occurrences of *rampok*, albeit in a limited and controlled manner as they were Japanese-authorized. These newspapers frequently reported on incidents, especially in West Java, either in-depth or as straight news. But their coverage was often limited and one-sided. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the *rampok* phenomenon during this period, I turned to the NIOD archives, which house crucial documents and abundant testimonies. These documents include personal accounts, official reports, and other primary sources that illuminate the experiences of individuals and communities in the early months of 1942.

To grasp the essence of *rampok*, this article directs its attention to the political context, examining the political frameworks and their evolution in Indonesia during a pivotal era shaped by the unfolding events of World War II. I introduce two analytical concepts: the wartime regime and the vacuum of power and authority.

The concept of a wartime regime constitutes a fundamental analytical

---

6) Chinese language newspapers such as *Sin Sin Po* and *Kung Yung Pao* were allowed to publish daily newspapers even in March 1942. They reported on lootings and vandalism by using Chinese characters for these terms instead of the Malay word. Some background explanation is necessary for the Chinese language newspapers at the outset of the Japanese occupation in Java. In March 1942, the Japanese military seized nearly all Chinese-language newspapers as it entered major cities in Java. *Sin Po*, a prominent Chinese language newspaper in Batavia, was chosen for Japanese propaganda directed at the Chinese-speaking/reading audience. They changed its name to *Sin Sin Po* on 10 March 1942, and later to *Kung Yung Pao* on 26 March.

In documenting *rampok* incidents targeting Chinese individuals in West Java, including those who had fled from Singapore, Twang Peck Yang relies on *Kung Yung Pao* [sic] about his examples before 26 March, but they were published in *Sin Sin Po*. Twang Peck Yang. *The Chinese Business Élite in Indonesia and the Transition to Independence 1940-1950*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1998, pp. 70-74. About six months later, on 1 September 1942, the Malay version of *Kung Yung Pao* began publication for Malay-speaking/reading Chinese audiences, changing its name from *Hong Po*. This provides a concise overview of the media landscape and its transformations during this historical period. For a more detailed history and contents of *Kung Yung Pao*, see Tsuda Koji. *Kung Yung Pao, The Only Daily Newspaper for the Ethnic Chinese in Java during Japanese Occupation: An Overview*. 2020.

framework. A wartime regime refers to the governmental structure, laws, policies, and measures implemented during a period of armed conflict or war. Within each wartime regime, there is a distinct delineation of a perceived adversary, achieved through the mobilization of society and the militarization of its population for defense and war efforts. These regimes often involve significant shifts in governance, with increased centralization of power, restrictions on civil liberties, imposition of martial law, censorship, and allocation of resources towards the war effort. Wartime regimes may also include measures such as conscription, rationing, curfews, and heightened security measures to ensure national security and control. The extent and nature of wartime regimes can vary greatly depending on the specific circumstances of the conflict and the goals of the governing authority.

The wartime conditions prevailing in Europe and Asia presented extraordinary political circumstances for both the Netherlands and Indonesia. Commencing in 1939 with the outbreak of the war in Europe, the Netherlands found itself in conflict with Germany, while the Indies faced the looming threat of Japanese invasion from the early 1930s.<sup>8)</sup> The political landscape across the Indonesian archipelago underwent significant changes between 1940 and 1942,

---

7) *Berita Oetama* was the official organ of the Great Indonesia Party (Partai Indonesia Raya or Parindra), a political party founded in Soerakarta, Central Java, in December 1935 by Dr. Soetomo, along with other senior figures, including Mohammad Hoesni Thamrin, Sorsanto Tirtoprodjo, Soekarjo Wirjopranoto, and Woerjaningrat. This party became the largest Indonesian political party and a major participant in the Volksraad, the Dutch-controlled People's Council. However, on 20 May 1942, the Japanese authority dissolved the party and despite its pro-Japan stance, the newspaper *Berita Oetama* was shut down. Nevertheless, some editorial staff and reporters continued their work at a new paper called *Asia Raya*. This reflects a common occurrence during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, where media outlets with favorable views towards Japan, despite being subject to numerical restrictions, were allowed to continue under new names or with some changes. Regarding the onset of the Japanese occupation in Java, see Harry J. Benda. "The Beginnings of the Japanese Occupation of Java". *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 15(4), 1956, pp. 551-553.

8) The Indies government closely monitored and expressed concern regarding Japanese activities in the archipelago as well as in the region. For further insights, see Nobuto Yamamoto. *Censorship in Colonial Indonesia*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019, pp. 205-226.

transitioning from the Indies civil regime to the Indies military regime, and eventually to the Japanese military regime. Both of these subsequent regimes constituted wartime administrations formed during the period of conflict. The transition of power to a wartime regime disrupts the existing socio-political order and may engender an environment conducive to various forms of violence, including instances such as *rampok*. Such transitions inevitably give rise to significant societal tensions, particularly during periods of power shift.

The second concept pertains to the vacuum of power and authority. For the purpose of this discussion, power is understood as the overarching capacity to influence others, while authority refers to a specific form of power acknowledged as legitimate, often associated with formal or traditional positions within social hierarchies. Whereas power may be exercised through diverse methods, authority hinges on perceived legitimacy and acceptance by those under its jurisdiction. When established systems of authority falter or are disrupted, a power vacuum can emerge, leaving communities vulnerable to various criminal activities, including looting and violence.<sup>9)</sup>

Envisaging a smooth transition between different wartime regimes presents considerable challenges, as the danger lies in the potential vacuum of power and authority during such transitions, which can destabilize both national and local power structures. This susceptibility may be exploited by certain individuals or groups for personal gain, disregarding public welfare and order. The existence of a vacuum of power and authority during transitions underscores the likelihood of social upheaval and opportunistic behavior in the absence of a stable power framework. This concept offers a pertinent and insightful framework for comprehending the phenomenon of *rampok*, particularly within the context of wartime. By focusing on this concept, critical inquiries center around the timing and manner in which the local population perceives and interprets the vacuum of power and authority. The article suggests that in certain locations and circumstances, this vacuum may precipitate unforeseen

---

9) My understanding of power, authority, and violence is shaped by Hannah Arendt's seminal work, *On Violence* (New York: Harcourt, 1970). Within this text, Arendt offers a nuanced exploration of the concepts, elucidating distinctions between power, strength, force, authority, and violence.

social violence, thereby highlighting the complex dynamics and risks inherent in political transitions amidst wartime regimes in Indonesia.

In the wartime political context, *rampok* should be regarded not merely as a criminal activity, but also as a manifestation of violence that encompasses psychological, deprivation, structural, and systemic dimensions, reflecting a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding. This expanded perspective acknowledges the societal implications of *rampok*, considering not only its physical actions but also its psychological ramifications and potential voluntary elements. The suggestion that *rampok* may involve ordinary individuals in spontaneous acts, as later discussed, rather than being solely the domain of organized criminal entities, adds complexity to its comprehension. This viewpoint underscores the broader socio-political contexts within which *rampok* unfolds.

The article seeks to investigate the circumstances surrounding when, where, and how *rampok* occurred, examining both the perpetrators of *rampok* and those impacted by it. This initial endeavor to reconstruct and comprehend the social history of *rampok* in 1942 is pivotal for elucidating the dynamics and conditions surrounding this form of violence. By delving into the social context, the article aims to offer insights into the motivations, reactions, and consequences of *rampok* during a period characterized by significant political upheaval and disruptions.

## **A Wartime Regime at Risk**

The geopolitical dynamics of the early 1940s exerted a profound impact on Indonesia, as concurrent developments in both Europe and Asia exerted influence on the region. To comprehend the extraordinary circumstances faced by Indonesia during this period, this section offers a concise overview of the political and military landscape in the country. This era witnessed pivotal changes for Indonesia and the Netherlands across political, economic, and social domains, heralding a transformative phase. Regardless of race or nationality, the populace of Indonesia experienced what can be termed the “new order” during this time. This term encapsulates the sweeping political, economic,

and social transformations that unfolded in the region.<sup>10)</sup>

The period marked a significant transformation for Indonesia, transitioning from a civil colonial regime to a military regime. The key events that led to this shift include the occupation of the Netherlands by Nazi Germany on 10 May 1940 forcing the Dutch government into exile in London. With the war in Europe posing a visible threat to its colonies, the Netherlands had to adapt its governance structure. In response to these challenges, the Netherlands transferred authority over the colony from The Hague to the Governor-General in Batavia of the Indies. This move elevated the Governor-General to the highest civil and military authority. Subsequently, on 14 May 1940, Governor-General Tjarda van Starckenborgh Stachouwer declared martial law in the Indies following the surrender of the Netherlands to Germany. This declaration marked the end of civilian control, signifying a shift to military governance in Indonesia. The institution of martial law marked a significant departure from previous governance structures. The Indies now entered a wartime regime, anticipating the potential invasion of Japanese forces. This complex historical backdrop underscores the multifaceted challenges faced by Indonesia during this transformative period.<sup>11)</sup>

The preparations carried out by the Indies government in anticipation of the impending war offer valuable insights into the administrative adjustments required by the evolving circumstances. A notable aspect of these preparations, owing to the shortage of military and police forces, entailed the reconfiguration of the roles of civil servants, especially those within the Interior Administration Department, known as the Binnenlands Bestuur (BB). The BB served as a pivotal governmental institution in the Indies, acting as a link between the European regional administration—where indigenous chiefs could also be appointed—and the indigenous population. At the regional and local levels,

---

10) For a concise overview of the period, see Henk Shultz Nordholt en Harry Poeze. *Merdeka: De strijd dome de Indonesische onafhankelijkheid en de ongewisse optimist van de Republiek 1945-1950*. Zutphen: Warburg Pers, 2022, pp. 47-49.

11) The list of organizations established for war preparation appears in NIOD, Indische Collectie, "1118 Indië als geallieerde bondgenoot; Nieuwe Instellingen en Maatregelen 1940-1942, 1942".



indigenous chiefs were primarily employed within the BB structure. Following 11 May 1940, the BB underwent a reorganization framed within the context of “national” defense while still carrying out its routine administrative functions. The restructured BB faced new and expansive responsibilities, extending beyond its traditional duties. Personnel associated with the BB were tasked with following military trains, initiating the construction of airfields and emergency landing fields, building roads for military vehicles, and mobilizing the local populace. Despite these expanded roles, it appeared that the BB was confronted with an overwhelming array of new tasks, indicating the challenges posed by the heightened demands of wartime preparations on the existing administrative structures.<sup>12)</sup>

The wartime preparations extended beyond the reformation of the BB, leading to the establishment of new organizations aimed at mobilizing civilians in Indonesia. In August 1940, the Volunteer Exercise Corps (Vrijwillige Oefencorpsen) was initiated, and subsequently, the City and Country Guards (Stad- en Landwachter) emerged from this initial framework.<sup>13)</sup> The Volunteer Exercise Corps served as a platform for individuals seeking military training, conducting practice sessions once or twice a week. As the military reserve began regular call-ups, the City and Country Guards were formed, consisting of individuals in the emergency formation of their offices and therefore exempt from military service. Their primary role during wartime was to uphold local peace, order, and security. Notably, both Dutch and non-Dutch citizens, including Chinese and Indonesian individuals, were allowed to volunteer for the City and Country Guards. Beyond urban areas, Land Guards (Landwachten) were often organized by companies themselves, irrespective of the owner’s race. The Department of War supplied arms to all these organizations.<sup>14)</sup> However, despite these efforts, the City and Country Guards were hastily set up and organized, lacking comprehensive training and preparation for the impending wartime situations. This lack of readiness posed a significant challenge for these

---

12) G.C. Zijlmans. “De Indische Bestuursdienst 1940-1942.” In G. Teitler ed. *De val de Nederlands-Indie*. Amsterdam: De Betaafsche Leeuw, 1982, pp. 24-42.

13) *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

organizations as they navigated the complexities of the evolving war landscape.<sup>15)</sup>

The mobilization efforts extended to women in Indonesia, exemplified by the establishment of the Committee for Women in Mobilization Time (Comité Oorlogsarbeid Vrouwen In Mobilisatietijd, C.O.V.I.M.). This organization operated throughout Indonesia, conducting organized courses aimed at educating women of all backgrounds for various roles during wartime. The courses provided practical training in essential skills, including first aid and cookery, with a focus on cooking in large quantities. Additionally, women were instructed on substituting local foodstuffs for imported items, a practice that later proved crucial during the occupation. The organization also engaged in large-scale production of knitting and woolen articles for England. The C.O.V.I.M. played a multifaceted role by publishing several brochures and later extending its involvement to address issues related to refugees, housing, childcare, and more. This comprehensive approach reflected the organization's commitment to supporting and mobilizing women for diverse roles during the wartime

---

14) NIOD, 400 Indische Collectie, "1118 Indië als geallieerde bondgenoot; Nieuwe Instellingen en Maatregelen 1940-1942, 1942". The differential treatment of European City and Country Guardsmen during the Japanese invasion of Java indicates the complexity of the occupation dynamics. In Batavia and Semarang, the Japanese military considered the European City and Country Guardsmen as military units, resulting in their internment. However, in Soerabaja, a different approach was taken. The City and Country Guardsmen in Soerabaja were subject to distinct treatment, reflecting the varied policies or strategies employed by the Japanese military in different regions. Such discrepancies in the treatment of European guardsmen during the Japanese invasion underscore the multifaceted nature of wartime decisions and actions, influenced by local circumstances, military considerations, and broader strategic goals. The nuances in the treatment of specific groups during the occupation further emphasize the complex dynamics of the wartime period in Java.

15) In December 1943, A.J.A.C. Nootboom submitted a nearly 300-page long report entitled *Vier oorlogsjaren op Java* and critically reviewed how poorly the Indies government prepared for the war in Java. NIOD, 400 Indische Collectie, "3181 Nootboom, A.J.A.C., reserveofficier, Tjililintjing, Tangerang, Tjitjoeroeg: Tjilatjap: West-Java (+oorlogsvoorbereiding, stadswacht, landwacht, landstorm; krijgsgevangenkampen: Soekaboemi); bersiap: opvangkampen: Banjoebiroe (Midden-Java)".

period.<sup>16)</sup>

The events surrounding 8 December 1941 unfolded with Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, prompting the Netherlands, as part of the Allied nations, to declare war against Japan. The Dutch-exiled government expected to receive military support from its allies, including the US, the UK, and Australia, to defend Indonesia. Following the declaration of war, the BB was promptly tasked with strategic actions. This included the demolition of strategically located *kampongs* (villages) and the destruction of crucial items such as oil, rubber, arms and ammunition supplies, means of transport, and radio communication facilities. These preemptive measures were aimed at impeding the Japanese military's advance and limiting their access to vital resources. However, the Japanese military proved to be highly formidable, advancing southward at a pace that exceeded the expectations of the Dutch and the Allied Forces.<sup>17)</sup> As the Japanese approached Java and Sumatra in March 1942, administrative officers received orders to destroy secret archives, codes, and topography maps to prevent their falling into enemy hands. These defensive measures underscored the challenges faced by the Dutch and their allies in responding to the swift and unexpected military advancements of the Japanese forces in the region.<sup>18)</sup>

Indeed, the early months of 1942 witnessed a swift and coordinated Japanese military advance through various parts of Indonesia. The speed and efficiency of their campaign had significant implications for the region, leading

---

16) NIOD, Indische Collectie, "1118 Indië als geallieerde bondgenoot; Nieuwe Instellingen en Maatregelen 1940-1942, 1942".

17) The intelligence failure and underestimation of the Japanese military's capabilities and strategies by the Allies were significant factors in the events of that period. The Allies had anticipated that the Japanese military would reach Indonesia around May 1942, but the actual speed and effectiveness of the Japanese advance surpassed these expectations. This miscalculation can be attributed to various factors, including the swift and coordinated nature of the Japanese military's actions, their effective strategies, and perhaps a lack of accurate intelligence on the Japanese forces. The Allies' failure to accurately assess the situation contributed to the challenges they faced in responding to the Japanese advance, highlighting the complex nature of intelligence and strategic planning during times of war.

18) Zijlmans, "De Indische Bestuursdienst", *op.cit.*, pp. 11-12.

to the occupation of multiple territories and administrative posts. The invasion to Indonesia began with simultaneous attacks on Tarakan in northern Borneo and Manado in North Celebes on 11 January 1942. In Tarakan, the Dutch Indies military surrendered to the Japanese two days later. The Japanese military's momentum continued as they reached Balikpapan in East Borneo on 24 January and Bandjarmasin in South Borneo on 10 February. In Sumatra, the Japanese attacked Palembang on 14 February and successfully conquered it the following day. Consequently, by January 1942, the Japanese military had already occupied administrative posts in East and South Borneo and North Celebes. This was followed by their presence in Sumatra and Java in February or March 1942, with some areas in the eastern parts of Indonesia being occupied as late as mid-1942. The rapid and effective military campaign by the Japanese forces during this period had profound consequences for the Indies, leading to the occupation of various regions and administrative posts across the archipelago.

The unfolding events in February and March 1942 marked a challenging and decisive period for the Indies government in the face of the advancing Japanese forces. By 15 February 1942, Japanese bombers were targeting the capital in Batavia, prompting the evacuation of government functions and officials to Bandoeng. This relocation reflected the intensification of the war situation and the increasing threat to key administrative centers. The culmination of challenges for the Indies government came with the Battle of the Java Sea, which commenced on 27 February. The American-British-Dutch-Australian naval command attempted to halt the Japanese invasion of Java. However, the battle extended until 12 March, ultimately resulting in the defeat of the Allied forces. The formal surrender took place at the Japanese headquarters in Bandoeng. These events marked the end of organized resistance by the Allied forces in Indonesia, and the Japanese occupation of Java became a significant chapter in the broader context of the Asia-Pacific War.<sup>19)</sup>

Meanwhile, on 5 March, Batavia surrendered to the Japanese military and

---

19) For a detailed description of the development of the Battle of the Java Sea, see P. C. Boer. *The Loss of Java: The Final Battles for the Possession of Java Fought by Allied Air, Naval and Land Forces in the Period of 18 February–7 March 1942*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2011.

was declared an “open city”. This designation meant that the city would not be defended, allowing for the occupation to proceed without resistance. The news of the surrender and the transformation of Batavia into an “open city” had a profound impact on the residents. One Dutch individual, upon hearing the news, expressed a sense of disbelief and the feeling that “everything was finished”,<sup>20)</sup> yet unable to fully comprehend the future. The quietness that settled over Batavia, as observed by a returning resident, likely reflected the profound changes and uncertainties that the city was facing under Japanese occupation. Three days later, on 8 March, the Indies government had already accepted Japan’s demands for an unconditional surrender of the archipelago to the Japanese military. The following day, Governor-General Tjarda van Starkenborgh Stachouwer was taken captive by the Japanese, marking a symbolic moment in the transfer of authority and the commencement of the Japanese occupation of Indonesia.

The Japanese occupation of Indonesia marked a significant transition, introducing a new wartime regime. However, establishing a new order and administration in the occupied territories was a complex process that required time and effort on the part of the Japanese authorities. The restructuring of administrations and the reshaping of society were multifaceted tasks that encompassed various aspects of governance, economy, and social structures. The Japanese sought to assert control over the territories they occupied, implementing changes that aligned with their wartime objectives. This involved reorganizing existing administrative structures, imposing new policies, and sometimes integrating local institutions into the occupiers’ framework. The challenges faced by the Japanese in reorganizing and reshaping the occupied territories included resistance from local populations, logistical difficulties, and the need to adapt to the diverse socio-cultural landscape of Indonesia.<sup>21)</sup> As a result, the process of establishing a new order and administration unfolded over time, with varying degrees of success in different regions.

---

20) NIOD, 400 Indische Collectie, “4593 Java. Report of Mr. Van Eeghen: ‘Experiences during the first months of occupation on Java’, 1945”.

## **Rampok Reconsidered**

It is noteworthy that the term *rampok* is often used in studies related to the Indonesian Revolution (1945-1949).<sup>22)</sup> Peter Keppy's 2010 work, *The Politics of Redress: War Damage Compensation and Restitution in Indonesia and the Philippines, 1940-1957*,<sup>23)</sup> serves as a contemporary example, employing the term multiple times. This indicates the enduring relevance and utility of the concept of *rampok* in academic discourse, enabling researchers to articulate and analyze specific facets of the social and political dynamics of the period. The consistent usage of the term across various studies underscores its importance in encapsulating particular aspects of historical events and social phenomena in Indonesia.

Robert Cribb's study, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution 1945-1949* published in 1991,<sup>24)</sup> is a

---

21) A significant number of soldiers from the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (KNIL) went underground and organized resistance movements against the Japanese during the occupation of Indonesia. These resistance efforts were part of a broader network of anti-Japanese resistance activities that sought to resist and undermine the occupiers. The resistance movements operated covertly, engaging in activities such as intelligence gathering, sabotage, and providing support to Allied forces. These efforts aimed to resist Japanese rule and contribute to the eventual liberation of Indonesia. The members of these resistance groups faced significant risks, as Japanese authorities were ruthless in suppressing dissent. Despite the challenges, these acts of resistance demonstrated the determination and courage of individuals who opposed the occupation and sought to contribute to the larger Allied war effort. The resistance movements in Indonesia played a role in shaping the postwar narrative and contributed to the eventual restoration of Dutch colonial rule in the region. The stories of these resistance fighters are an important part of the complex history of the Asia-Pacific War in Southeast Asia. For instance, NIOD, Indische Collectie, "908 Rapport "Het Ondergrondsche Verzet in Nederlands-Indië" van J.L. de Voogt, samengesteld in opdracht van Generaal S.H. Spoor"; "4183 Typescript door MM Hegener, Verslag van het onderzoek op Sulawesi naar de KNIL-Guerrilla aldaar van maar tot augustus 1942".

22) For instance, Else Ensering. "Banten in Times of Revolution". *Archipel* 50(1), 1995, pp. 131-163.

23) Peter Keppy. *The Politics of Redress: War Damage Compensation and Restitution in Indonesia and the Philippines, 1940-1957*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2010.

standard reference to *rampok*. His analysis connects *rampok* to bosses and gangs in and around Batavia during the Indonesian Revolution. Connecting *rampok* to powerful figures operating in the surroundings of Batavia sheds light on the role of bosses and gangs outside formal structures of authority. This analysis extends to the coordination of labor and product supply and connections with various actors, emphasizing the networked nature of *rampok*. His perspective implies that the Indies authority viewed *rampok* as connected to criminal activity. His analysis adopts a social structural approach, suggesting that *rampok* can occur at any time, not solely during periods of upheaval or chaos. Cribb emphasizes the role of bosses and gangs, particularly their use of underground networks, in the perpetration of *rampok*. This social structural analysis implies that certain conditions or elements within the social structure may contribute to the occurrence of *rampok* beyond specific historical events.<sup>25)</sup> It appears to provide a framework for understanding the social structural aspects of *rampok* within the broader context of Indonesian history.

The term *rampok* in Indonesian studies is a convenient word that refers to the act of looting during times of chaos. It involves targeting properties and owners with the intent to acquire valuables or resources amid turbulent conditions. In English looting is somehow different from robbery and vandalism. Robbery typically occurs in normal times and involves the act of stealing from individuals directly, often with the use of force or threat, while vandalism involves the intentional destruction of property without necessarily aiming to harm individuals. Examples of *rampok* in 1942 Indonesia can encompass acts that align with the definitions of robbery and vandalism, in addition to looting. *Rampok*, in the context of historical events, may encapsulate

---

24) Robert Cribb. *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution 1945-1949*. North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991.

25) A book chapter by Henk Schulte Nordholt and Margareet van Till echoes Cribb's understanding of *rampok*. They argue that Batavia and its surrounding areas experienced local violence since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and such violence was facilitated by the colonial state ceding some spaces for "criminals". Henk Schulte Nordholt and Margareet van Till. "Colonial Criminals in Java, 1870-1910". In Vincente L. Rafael. ed. *Figures of Criminality in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Colonial Vietnam*. Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1999, pp. 47-60.

a range of actions that involve stealing, damaging property, and potentially threatening or harming individuals. Given this broader understanding, *rampok* can be interpreted to encompass various forms of disorderly and criminal behavior during the chaotic period in 1942 Indonesia. The term becomes a comprehensive descriptor for actions that involve the unauthorized acquisition of valuables, destruction of property, and potentially violent or coercive elements.

Therefore, I use the term *rampok* in the context of 1942, which is somehow different from examples on which Cribb relies for his historical study. His social structural explanations of *rampok*, derived from cases in Java, raise a concern about its applicability to the Outer Islands. Theoretically, the multifaceted causes of *rampok* may vary across different regions in Indonesia. The universality of the term *rampok* in Indonesia, historically and contemporarily, highlights the need for alternative explanations that consider diverse historical contexts. It also reinforces the necessity of exploring regional variations and understanding the specific contexts in which *rampok* occurs across Indonesia.

The observation from the NIOD collection that many examples of *rampok* were initiated not by the military but by mostly civilian Indonesians underscores the diverse nature of the perpetration of violence during this period. This kind of historical documentation serves as a crucial resource for understanding the multifaceted nature of social and political dynamics during times of upheaval. It contributes to a more nuanced and comprehensive view of the impact of historical events on the lives of individuals and communities in Indonesia during the 1940s. The fact that these instances of violence and *rampok* occurred across different racial groups highlights that the impact of such events was widespread, affecting the inhabitants of Indonesia regardless of their race. The experience of violence, anxiety, and fear paints a vivid picture of the tumultuous and challenging conditions faced by the population during this historical period.

In the context of 1942 Dutch documents and testimonies by Dutch people who experienced chaotic situations also use the Malay term *rampok* and its Dutch variations, like *rampokkers* (looters, robbers), *rampokken* (robberies), *rampokkerij* (robbery), *rampokpartijen* (robbing party, robbery affairs), *rampokbenden* (robber gangs), *rampokzaken* (robbery affairs).<sup>26)</sup> Those same words



appeared in documentation in the revolutionary period as well. In 1942, not only bosses and gangs but also ordinary people took part in *rampok*. Additionally, due to the prevalence of *rampok* incidents in 1942 across various cities, towns, and regions, some Dutch established anti-rampok organizations (known as *anti-rampok organisatie* or *anti-rampok vereeniging*) and armed themselves against *rampokkers*. When the Japanese occupation started, they were supposed to surrender all their weapons. But when their weapons were found, they always had excuses, saying that they were necessary for defending themselves against *rampokkers*.<sup>27)</sup> This highlights the extent of social chaos during the period of power transition.

The question of what factors influenced individuals to think and act in certain ways during the period of the Japanese invasion of major cities in Indonesia in 1942 is undoubtedly complex and multifaceted. Understanding the motivations behind people's actions during this time requires consideration of various historical, social, and psychological factors. This leads to revisiting what *rampok* looked like in 1942.

## How Did *Rampok* Happen?

In 1942, numerous *rampok* incidents occurred. The NIOD archives house a

---

26) For instance, a Dutch dictionary, *Indisch Lexicon*, which shows Indies words in Dutch literature, carries *rampok* related words. P. Minguars, J. Heij, and P. Posthumus. *Indisch Lexicon: Indische woorden in de Nederlandse literatuur*. Leiden: Brill, 2005, pp. 461-462.

There is an intriguing development regarding the term *rampok*. It has been assimilated into Dutch (the Netherlands) and Afrikaans (South Africa) vocabulary since World War II. In the Netherlands, a notable example is the popular comic series *Rampokan: Java* (1998) and *Rampokan: Celebes* (2004) by Peter Van Dongen, which explores themes related to *rampok* in Java and Celebes in 1946. In the case of Afrikaans, the variation *rampokker* has become common. An example provided is a comic titled *Cor Dirks. Die Uile En Die Rampokkers* published in Pretoria in 1950. The term *rampok* traveled from Indonesia to South Africa through the Netherlands, and it has taken root in both languages at a contemporary time. This illustrates the cross-cultural influence of the term, as it moved beyond its original linguistic and geographical context, becoming incorporated into the vocabulary of other languages and cultures.

27) NIOD, 400 Indische Collectie, "970 T" and "973 W".

wealth of invaluable contemporary documents and post-war testimonies, providing insights into the diverse types of *rampok* that transpired across various locations in Indonesia from February to April 1942. This section of the article aims to highlight and briefly introduce a selection of representative examples of *rampok*.

### Ricardo's Report

In the NIOD archives, there is a specific document from October 1942 titled "Rampok", presumably submitted to the Japanese authorities. This document focuses on providing examples of *rampok* incidents in West Java. The author, C. Ricardo, was a European executive associated with the Jacoberg trading company (Jacobson van den Berg & Co.).<sup>28)</sup> Amid the Japanese occupation in 1942, he had the privilege of undertaking a business trip to West Java. His journey included visits to locations such as Maoek, Tangerang, Batavia, and Priangan, and besides his business, he collected stories of *rampok* incidents during his trip. His detailed report on *rampok* provides valuable insights into the nature and context of these incidents during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia.

The *rampok* examples he documented took place in the first half of 1942 during the Japanese occupation. The context suggests that these incidents occurred as early as late February, and most likely extended into March, and possibly even April. Ricardo acknowledges various interpretations of the term *rampok* in the Indonesian context, such as to attack something or someone in large numbers, to go on a robbery in gangs, and the euphemistic translation of privateer and freebooter. Perpetrators of *rampok*, referred to as *rampokkers*, are characterized by malevolent behavior, organized group structures, and the brazen looting and vandalism of residences and businesses without apprehension.

Ricardo's observations about *rampok* provide a nuanced perspective on the

---

28) NIOD, 400 Indische Collectie, "4616 Verslag van C. Ricardo: 'Rampok', over de aard van het rampokken in verschillende plaatsen in West-Java in maart 1942, 1942" [hereafter, Ricardo, "Rampok"].

phenomenon, highlighting both its organized and spontaneous aspects. One of his notable observations is the difficulty in prosecuting *rampokkers*, as few witnesses come forward, and fear of retaliation looms large.<sup>29)</sup> This suggests a pervasive atmosphere of impunity surrounding *rampok* incidents. Moreover, Ricardo likens the spread of *rampok* to that of a “contagious disease” (*besmettelijke ziekte*),<sup>30)</sup> suggesting that it can manifest both as orchestrated criminal endeavors led by seasoned “professionals” (*professioneele rampokkers*)<sup>31)</sup> and as impromptu actions involving ordinary individuals. This dual nature implies a complex dynamic underlying the phenomenon, which contrasts with Cribb’s portrayal in his book. Cribb may present *rampok* primarily as organized criminal activity, overlooking its potential spontaneous occurrences involving non-professional perpetrators. Thus, Ricardo’s interpretation offers a broader understanding of *rampok*, encompassing its multifaceted nature and shedding light on its societal implications beyond conventional criminal frameworks.

With Ricardo’s description of *rampok* in mind, the subsequent section, which examines four instances of *rampok*—two sourced from testimonies in the NIOD archives and two documented by Ricardo himself—hopes to offer insights into the diverse characteristics and occurrences of *rampok* during February and March of 1942. These examples serve to contextualize the various forms and contexts in which *rampok* occurred, thereby enriching our understanding of its dynamics and societal impact during this pivotal historical period.

#### Example 1: Off-Kandangan, South Borneo

The first example is derived from the testimony from a “European” survivor’s point of view about violence in South Borneo. The specific realities of

---

29) Ricardo, “Rampok”, p. 1. From the late March, however, the Japanese authority regarded *rampokkers* as criminals and threatened them with even death sentences. “Pertemoean diantara pemimpin-pimpinan Tionghoa dan Kolonel Nakajima: Pendoedoek Tionghoa haroes insjaf bahwa “Asia ada boeat bangsa Asia”: Perampok-perampok akan mendapat hoekoeman mati!” *Pemandangan*, 20 March 1942, p. 3.

30) Ricardo, “Rampok”, p. 1.

31) Ricardo, “Rampok”, p. 2.

Borneo during this period differed from Java. The Japanese invasion of Borneo began on 10 January 1942, starting in the northern part of the island. At that time, Borneo was divided into two colonies: the northern part was under British rule, while the southern part was under Dutch jurisdiction. The Japanese were not concerned with such juridical divisions, successfully conquered the northern part by mid-January, and proceeded to advance further into the southern part of Borneo.

The testimony about *rampok* was given by Mrs. Widow Pereira Aminah, who was Indonesian and married to a Dutchman, who was the officer of the Tax Office in a small town called Kandangan.<sup>32)</sup> She and her husband lived there, some 100 km northeast of Banjarmasin. The only way to travel long distances in South Borneo was to take a boat on the river. When the news reached that the Japanese had landed in Borneo and were even advancing to the town of Kandangan, they hastily fled. Together with their friends, they left Kandangan at the beginning of February 1942 by boat. They planned to go via Negara (80 km from Kandangan) to Moeara Moening (plus 35 km), intending to hide there. On the way, however, they were overpowered by our boat feeders, who tried to rob their money, foodstuff, etc.<sup>33)</sup> Fortunately, the European men on the boat fought back and defended themselves, resulting in severe injuries. One of the boat operators was killed, while the others fled the scene.

This narrative illustrates that when Dutch individuals attempted to escape from relatively isolated locations in Borneo, they had to depend on local residents to operate the boats. It was the only viable option for the Dutch. The individuals operating the boats possessed sufficient knowledge that the Dutch carried valuable and essential items under the circumstances. Upon the Dutch boarding the boats, local operators saw it as an opportunity to take action for their own benefit. However, they underestimated the resistance, leading to a failed attempt. I suspect that this was not an isolated incident but must have occurred in many places during the tumultuous period.

---

32) A testimony by Mrs. Pereira Aminah in Banjarmasin in October 1947 in NIOD, 400 Indische Collectie, "865 Pereira-Aminah".

33) "Onderweg bedoeling hadden de door ons medegenomen voedingmiddelen geld, enz. te rampokken", *Ibid.*

Example 2: Soember, East Java

The second example is based on the testimony of Joh. Hoek, a Dutch private citizen presumably associated with the Land Guard. In early March 1942, his unit engaged in guerrilla warfare against Japanese troops in and around Soerabaja, East Java. The unit was constantly on the move, encountering Japanese forces one day and being surrounded by Indonesian gangs the next, eventually leading to them surrendering their weapons.

On 7 March, they arrived at the Soember-Djai Plantation (about 130km from Soerabaja), where *rampok* had occurred. The following day, during a patrol around the plantation, they apprehended the leader of the looters, who turned out to be the plantation's driver Ardjo. In the afternoon of that day, the message from the Japanese arrived from Djombang through an Indo-European resident who had been appointed provisional resident. The order was to surrender the weapons and ammunition present there, with a few rifles and revolvers being excluded for defense against the *rampokkers*.<sup>34)</sup>

This episode reveals the emergence of an unexpected *rampok* leader within a plantation, shedding light on the dynamics of the situation. While specific details are not provided, it is reasonable to infer that the *rampokkers* attacked and looted the company facilities. Plantations were commonly situated in rural areas, each operating factories dedicated to specific items and often forming a distinctive community akin to a small town. Within this environment, residents, including owners, their families, and laborers, could comfortably reside, fostering a close-knit familiarity among them.<sup>35)</sup> The company driver seemed to occupy a favorable position for acquiring information about the ongoings in the plantation and exploited it when the Land Guard did not function efficiently. However, it is surprising to learn that the company driver was able to mobilize and organize the looters, prompting them to take action.

---

34) NIOD, 400 Indische Collectie, "387 H".

35) To understand the plantation life, see Peter Post and May Ling Thio. *The Kwee Family of Ciledug: Family, Status, and Modernity in Colonial Java*. Volendam: LM Publishers, 2019. The book offers a detailed exploration of plantation life, with a focus on a Chinese *Peranakan* family (those born and raised in Java).

### Example 3: Serang, Banten, West Java

The third example is based on Ricardo's account of a looting incident in Serang. Located 90 km from Batavia, Serang was labelled as "The capital of the *rampok* area" (*De hoofstad van het rampokgebied*).<sup>36)</sup> This description sheds light on the severity of *rampok* incidents in that location. The specific account of a looting incident at Hotel "Vos" in Serang provides a poignant narrative.

The incident happened a day before the Japanese entered the town. Five individuals, described as "friendly" (*vriendschappelijk*) hajis,<sup>37)</sup> visited Hotel "Vos" and assured the manager, Mr. Vos (presumably of Dutch origin), that they would take care of him. Because of his familiarity with them, he placed trust in their intentions. The manager was directed to go to the back of the hotel for safety. As he moved, he noticed a silent crowd of local Bantam people (*Bantammers*) outside the hotel, seemingly acting as spectators. Once the manager reached the back, he heard a commotion, and upon hastily returning to the hotel, he found that everything had been torn down and taken. The looting occurred swiftly, leaving the once beautiful hotel in complete ruins. The witness asserts that the five hajis initiated the looting, indicating a premeditated and organized aspect of the incident. The manager's inability to intervene or prevent the looting emphasized the rapid and chaotic nature of the event. Despite the manager's attempt to seek safety, the hotel was swiftly ravaged, leaving him helpless in the face of the looters.<sup>38)</sup>

This account vividly portrays the impact of *rampok* on businesses and individuals. The involvement of individuals known to the manager adds a layer of betrayal to the narrative. For the manager, the betrayal and looting happened unexpectedly. However, hajis had meticulously planned the attack and mobilized local people who swiftly looted the hotel.

### Example 4: Bekasi, East of Batavia

The fourth tragic account by Ricardo titled "The drama of the kongsi house"

---

36) Ricardo, "Rampok", p. 6.

37) A haji is a Muslim who has undertaken the pilgrimage to Mecca, and in many Muslim societies, the term serves as an honorific title for a respected individual.

38) Ricardo, "Rampok", pp. 6-7.

(Het drama van het kongsi-huis)<sup>39)</sup> in Bekasi reveals a harrowing episode of resistance against *rampokkers*. The incident took place in Bekasi, located 20 km from Batavia. *Rampokkers*, fully aware of the impending Japanese troops' arrival, targeted a Chinese *kongsi* house with 300 accomplices. The Chinese manager, anticipating an attack, saw numerous gangs nearby and prepared firearms in the hope of defending his firm. There was a slight hope that if they could hold off the *rampokkers*, the Japanese soldiers might intervene to stop the violence. The firm successfully defended itself on the first day when gangs attacked.

However, on the second day, the gangs returned with more people and weapons, making it increasingly difficult for the firm to defend itself. Faced with overwhelming odds, the manager was forced to make difficult decisions. In a desperate attempt to prevent further humiliation and destruction, the manager decided to burn and destroy valuables, money, and jewelry. As time ran out and the *rampokkers* approached with axes, the manager, unwilling to face humiliation, made the heartbreaking decision to kill his family and himself. *Rampokkers* eventually broke into the house, causing chaos and mutilating the corpses of Chinese men, women, and children. The house was set on fire, and after looting, the *rampokkers* left, leaving devastation in their wake.<sup>40)</sup>

This incident was highly sensational, attracting attention not only from Ricardo but also from local newspapers in nearby Batavia as early as late March.<sup>41)</sup> According to the newspaper *Pemandangan*, the Chinese businessman involved was named Lie Boeng Kim.<sup>42)</sup> This tragic episode vividly illustrates the extreme measures some individuals took in response to ruthless *rampok* attacks. The desperation, loss, and violence depicted in this narrative underscore the

---

39) Ricardo, "Rampok", pp. 4-6. The term *kongsi*, originating from the Hokkien dialect, translates to company. It is frequently understood as referring to Chinese social organizations or partnerships.

40) *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

41) "Karena Ketakoetan, Esteri, Anak dan Tjoetjoe Ditembak Sendiri dan Dibakar: Drama jang menjedihkan". *Berita Oemoem*, 27 March 1942.

42) Another newspaper, *Pemandangan*, also touched upon this case. Pembantoe A. Kh. "Djakarta-Poerwakarta dalam 2 hari: Kedjadian disana sini". *Pemandangan*, 3 April 1942, p. 4.

devastating impact of *rampok*, as documented in the newspapers.

### ***Rampokkers and Victims***

Drawing from the examples of *rampok* in Borneo and Java presented in the previous section, it is evident that *rampok* leaders and initiators did not randomly target the Chinese and/or Europeans, nor did they loot places and houses arbitrarily. Instead, they had specific individuals or locations in mind, carefully planning and organizing their attacks in advance. Utilizing local networks and information, they were well-acquainted with their potential targets and patiently awaited the opportune moment to carry out their attacks. Now, the question arises: Who were the *rampokkers*?

*Rampok* did not erupt suddenly without prior indications. Typically, *rampok* incidents involved locally rooted leaders or initiators, indicating that their actions were confined within their own territory or community. *Rampokkers* operated as organized groups, engaging in looting and vandalism, as Ricardo documented. These leaders often belonged to local gangs or held positions of influence within various local networks. They could be acquaintances, neighbors, or individuals trusted by the community. Some leaders even assumed religious roles. In the Serang example highlighted by Ricardo, the initiators were hajis, known for their kindness and recognized by the hotel owner.

Leadership roles were diverse, ranging from local figures relied upon by Europeans for evacuations to seemingly ordinary individuals, such as boatmen attempting a robbery in Mrs. Pereira Aminah's example. Some leaders had employment with European companies, like the driver in Soember who turned out to be a *rampok* leader attacking and looting European businesses. Anyone with information, friends, or a network that could aid their plans or ambitions could become a *rampok* leader.

The four examples of *rampok* from the previous section highlight the diversity of individuals engaged in *rampok* during wartime. The fact that those involved in *rampok* include boat operators, company drivers, religiously respected figures such as hajis who were close acquaintances, and gangs



underscores the complexity and varied nature of these actions. This diversity suggests that the motivations and circumstances leading to such attacks can be multifaceted, involving individuals from different backgrounds and roles in society. During wartime, *rampokkers* can encompass a broader range of individuals and exhibit more spontaneous characteristics.

Then, the next question turns to who the *rampok* victims were. Notably, all *rampokkers* were Indonesians, with Europeans and Chinese being the primary targets in both urban and rural areas. The race of the victims was often documented in instances of robbery and looting, leading to the tempting assumption that *rampokkers* selected targets based on race. This assumption arises because NIOD documents and testimonies were primarily based on the voices of victims including some spectators. They documented mainly victims' stories rather than the perspective of the *rampokkers*. Documents and testimonies written and spoken in Dutch were intended for a Dutch audience who perceived Indonesians as *rampokkers* attacking them. It is tempting to think that race was a major factor influencing the selection of targets. This understanding, in itself, is not surprising.

Having said that, I have a different interpretation after delving into various documents and materials. The examples above reveal a deliberate approach to target selection, suggesting that *rampokkers* did not choose randomly; instead, they possessed specific information about their victims. This information enabled them to meticulously plan the timing and execution of their attacks. It is hard to imagine that *rampokkers* would exclude fellow Indonesians with possessions from their targets while selectively focusing on European and Chinese victims. This raises the question of the criteria used in selecting potential targets.

To explore this question, contemporary Malay language newspapers, primarily targeting Indonesian readers, help reconstruct the image of potential targets of *rampok*. Local newspapers did report *rampok* incidents from time to time. Examples of *rampok* I have encountered so far happened mainly in West Java. One report carried a witness statement: "It does not matter, whatever race of those inhabitants" (*Tidak perdoeli, pendoedoek itoe bangsa apa djoega*).<sup>43)</sup> However, there was a distinct difference in how they described the victims; they

were not mentioned as Indonesians.<sup>44)</sup> Instead, the victims were described in terms of their occupation, such as peasants (*petani*) and goat farmers (*pedagang kambing*).<sup>45)</sup>

In reality, therefore, individuals of any race, including Indonesians, became victims if they possessed anything—be it food supplies, radios, automobiles, etc.<sup>46)</sup> This demonstrates that race did not play a significant role for *rampokkers* when selecting their targets. It is safe to say that the victims of *rampok* encompassed individuals of various races who became targets due to their roles in the colonial regime, involvement in private small- or medium-sized businesses, or possession of valuable items. Their power, authority, or wealth represented their class in the eyes of *rampokkers*, and the visibility of their class determined their fate during this turbulent period. Simultaneously, it is essential to note that *rampok* did not happen everywhere, despite the existence of class factors throughout Indonesia. There must be some reasons why *rampok* did not occur in some cities or towns; this question remains to be explored in the future. For the time being, it is reasonable to assume that the class factor played a determining role in selecting potential victims in specific circumstances.

## Timing

How did the *rampok* leaders determine the timing of their attacks? Testimonies from Borneo's experience uncover that, as the conflicts between the Japanese and the Allied military intensified in January 1942 and Japanese troops landed in the northern part of Borneo in February, Europeans began evacuating from their hometowns to major cities. What were the news and information conveyed during this period?

The news related to the Japanese troops sent mixed messages to the residents. It did not have to bring the facts, but it could also include rumors. It

---

43) "Perampasan kerbau", *Berita Oemoem*, 9 April 1942.

44) When referring to Chinese residents, local newspapers did not specify their ethnicity but rather simply mentioned their names.

45) "Perampasan kerbau", *Berita Oemoem*, 9 April 1942.

46) "Perampasan kerbau", *Berita Oemoem*, 9 April 1942.

brought anxiety and uncertainty to the future. Then one should reconsider the meaning of the news, saying that the Japanese troops landed in Indonesia. It is undoubtful that the news terrified the inhabitants, in particular the Dutch nationals because the Netherlands was at war with Japan. The Japanese military might take them as enemies, and one never knew what would happen to them if the Japanese military arrived in their cities and towns. Understandably, European women and children began to evacuate to safer places in January and February. Under the Indies military regime, KNIL, the BB, the Volunteer Exercise Corps, and the Land Guards were all alerted to the Japanese invasion.

As the wartime situation deteriorated in Indonesia, as mentioned earlier, the BB, along with the Demolition Corps, received orders to demolish strategically located *kampongs* and destroy items such as oil, rubber, arms, ammunition supplies, means of transport, and radio communication equipment. By mid-February, all national government functions and other government officials had been evacuated to Bandoeng. With the communication network disrupted and the central government moved to Bandoeng, local government authorities gradually became dysfunctional. Dutch local authorities were preoccupied with preparations to vacate their posts and abandon cities and towns.

As Europeans and officials prepared for the imminent Japanese attacks and evacuated to various places in Indonesia, panic ensued among the local population, leading to chaos in many cities and towns. This occurred before the Japanese arrival at these locations, marking the beginning of *rampok*. Not only *rampokkers* in this activity, but all residents in Indonesia could sense the impending breakdown of colonial power and authority. It did not matter whether local newspapers carried the news; the desperate circumstances were visible to everyone. This led to an extraordinary situation where organized groups of *rampokkers* looted houses, buildings, and shops. In another instance, people simply appropriated goods left behind by departing Europeans, as if they had the right to do so.

This raises the final question of the article: How did *rampokkers* and ordinary residents perceive the atmosphere in Indonesia from February through April 1942?

## No Authority

The early months of 1942 marked the period of Japanese occupation in Indonesia during World War II. Japanese forces had invaded and gained control of major cities, leading to significant changes in governance and daily life. The Japanese invasion and occupation brought about uncertainty, fear, and a sense of upheaval. However, the power transition did not occur overnight; instead, it unfolded gradually over time. The period between the collapse of the Dutch colonial administration and the establishment of the Japanese military regime was marked by a vacuum of authority and a significant shift in power structures.

This created a period of social and political instability. Many Europeans, anticipating Japanese occupation, evacuated major cities. This evacuation, as mentioned earlier, might have contributed to a sense of a power vacuum. For *rampokkers*, the chaotic conditions during wartime presented opportunities for looting and criminal activities. The breakdown of established authority structures could have emboldened some individuals to engage in such actions. Ordinary residents likely experienced a mix of fear, uncertainty, and the challenges associated with adapting to the new wartime reality. Economic hardships, disruptions in daily life, and the overall atmosphere of war would have contributed to a complex set of emotions among the general population.

The people recognized the emergence of “a vacuum of authority” (*een gezagsvacuüm*)<sup>47)</sup> and, in response, felt less obligated to adhere to the prior social and legal order and authorities. With the Indies authorities seemingly unable to protect Indonesia, locals believed they had to navigate the impending, unpredictable, and unstable situations on their own. In the absence of recognized authorities, the act of *rampok* seemed to lack legal categorization as a criminal activity. Consequently, it appears that no authorities could effectively intervene to prevent or halt *rampok*. The question of legitimate authorities thus became a pressing concern for Indonesians, forcing them to contemplate their

---

47) “Doch er bleek geen Jap aanwezig te zijn. Wel was de bevolking, door het ontstaan van een gezagsvacuum, aan het rampokken geslagen” in NIOD, 400 Indische Collectie, “997 Aug-W (146-165)”.

course of action in the face of this new reality. Ricardo's report on *rampok* vividly captures the sentiments of the people during such incidents.

In all cases of robbery and looting, numbering in the thousands, the police were far from sight.

It soon became evident that even government institutions, of which we only mention the pawnshops, were not spared from the visits of *rampokkers*.

The motto of the criminals was: 'Who will stop me now that there is no government?'

[original text]

In alle gevallen van roof en plundering, duizenden in getal, was de politie verre te zoeken.

Dat ook de gouvernementsinstellingen, waarvan wij alleen maar de pandhuizen, niet vrij bleven van het bezoek van rampokkers, bleek weldra.

De leuze der boeven was: "Wie zal me wat doen, nu er geen gouvernement meer is".<sup>48)</sup>

This account reveals that the police were spectators from the distance when *rampok* occurred and thousands of buildings and shops were robbed and looted. Neither power nor authority was effective. The account mentions the slogan among *rampokkers*, reflecting a significant aspect of the prevailing mindset during that time. The slogan, "Who will stop me now that there is no government?", underscores the belief among *rampokkers* that the absence of a governing authority provided them with a sense of impunity and freedom to act without consequences.

The awareness of this consciousness and atmosphere was not merely a transient phenomenon; rather, it persisted and underwent revision following Indonesia's proclamation of independence on 17 August 1945, which was succeeded by the Indonesian Revolution until 1949. Amid the revolution period, in 1947, Indonesian author G. Pakpahan reflected on the chaotic political and

---

48) Ricardo, "Rampok", p. 13.

social circumstances of 1942. Pakpahan's observations about the period before and during the Japanese occupation provide not only an Indonesian perspective on that time but also shed light on how they remembered their history. His documentation, originally written in Indonesian, was translated into Dutch by the Dutch scholar R. de Bruin<sup>49)</sup> and published as a single package. Pakpahan recalled a time of turbulence, as there was ultimately no government in the early months of 1942:

Because the old government at that time had lost its power (although still obligated to maintain security) and the new government had not yet arrived or had not prioritized security, the rough sentiments within the people were free to overflow and rampage unrestrainedly as they pleased.

[original text]

Oleh karena pemerintah lama pada waktoe itoe telah kehilangan kekoasaanja (walaupoen masih diwadjibkan mendjaga keamanan) dan pemerintah baroe belum tiba atau belum memperdoelikan keamanan, maka bebaslah perasaan kasar jang ada dalam manoesia itoe oentoeek meloeap dan meradjalela dengan sepoeas-poeasnja.<sup>50)</sup>

The breakdown of the colonial government and the vacuum of authority created a situation where individuals, including *rampokkers*, perceived a lack of institutional control and punishment. This perception likely emboldened them to engage in looting, vandalism, and other criminal activities, as they felt there were no consequences for their actions. This quotation encapsulates the anarchic conditions that emerged during the wartime regime transition, where the

---

49) Unfortunately, there is currently no available information about Pakpahan. However, given that his documentation was directly translated into Dutch, I assume that he worked closely with Dutch authorities in the 1940s. The Dutch translator, R. de Bruin, was a researcher at the Indies Section of the National Institute for War Documentation in Amsterdam, founded in May 1945.

50) NIOD, Indische Collectie, "1394 1261 dagen onder de stralen van de Rijzende Zon, manuscript van G. Pakpahan, 1947".

absence of a functioning government led to a sense of lawlessness and opportunism. It reflects the understanding that, in the absence of a governing structure, individuals might act without restraint, believing they could act with impunity.

The sense of freedom and sovereignty among *rampokkers* contributed to the development of insecurity and anxiety in communities where hundreds or thousands of ordinary individuals—Indonesians, Chinese, and Europeans alike—lived side by side. Various individuals coped with this fear in different ways, reflecting diverse perceptions of the unfolding events. The collapse of the Dutch colonial order was one aspect, and the impending Japanese military occupation was another. No one could anticipate the significant shift in the political landscape that the arrival of Japanese forces might bring or what the occupation might entail for ordinary lives and societal structures. Some individuals were hopeful about the arrival of Japanese troops, anticipating that their presence could help restore social order. This suggests a level of desperation and a perception that the Japanese military might bring stability to the chaotic situation caused by *rampokkers*. Others feared the uncertainty associated with the Japanese occupation. These contrasting reactions demonstrate the complex emotions and responses of the population in the face of socio-political upheaval.

By the end of March 1942, the social mood of “Now is a time of change” (*Masa sekarang ialah masa perobahan*)<sup>51)</sup> had spread throughout Indonesia. Hopes and fears, freedom and uncertainty, sovereignty and anxiety coexisted among the people. Commencing from mid-March 1942, the Japanese military occupation government, constituting yet another wartime regime, initiated efforts to reinstate social order and assert its governance within the archipelago. The social disorder and fear created by *rampokkers* started to be brought under control, dissipating the climate of uncertainty and anxiety among the population.<sup>52)</sup> Some Indonesian intellectuals even hoped that the incoming Japanese occupation would be brief,<sup>53)</sup> reflecting a perceived sense of freedom

---

51) Ar. Mustyka Hanafi. “Ir. Soekarno dan Drs. Moh. Hatta”. *Pemandangan*, 3 April 1942.

and sovereignty for certain individuals. The sense of newfound freedom and sovereignty might have contributed to the criticism and dismantling of political, economic, and social establishments. It had the potential to spark a social revolution but failed to materialize due to the establishment of the newly formed and more restrictive wartime regime. Within this wartime regime, which relied upon and reinstated locally entrenched traditional and administrative authorities, the communal perception of freedom and sovereignty underwent restriction and transformation into mobilizational power orchestrated by the government.<sup>54)</sup> The persistent inquiry persisted: how would this newfound sense of freedom and sovereignty endure within the framework of the emerging authority?<sup>55)</sup>

---

52) As previously discussed, the Japanese wartime regime faced challenges in establishing governance across the archipelago. During this period of transition, *rampok* incidents occurred intermittently, prompting former KNIL officers to defend the communities to which they belonged using armed forces. The Japanese authorities permitted such defensive actions and penalized *rampok* perpetrators upon capture.

53) Indonesian nationalists and intellectuals resonated with this sentiment. In April 1942, while imprisoned in Tjipanas, West Java, Soetan Sjahrir wrote a note in Dutch about the future of an independent Indonesia. He held onto the hope that the Japanese occupation was an interlude (*intermezzo*) on the road to independence. NIOD, Indische Collectie, "4735 Aantekeningen van Soetan Sjahrir uit april 1942 over het verwezenlijken van een zelfstandig Indonesië, 1942".

54) George McT. Kahin. *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952, pp. 101-133; Benda. "The Beginnings of the Japanese Occupation of Java" *op.cit.*; Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson. *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972; B.R. O'G. Anderson. "Japan: 'The Light of Asia'". In Josef Silverstein. ed. *Southeast Asia in World War II: Four Essays*. Monograph Series No. 7, Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, 1966, pp. 332-369; Frederick, *Visions and Heat, op.cit.*, pp. 81-181; David Jenkins. *Young Soeharto: The Making of a Solider, 1921-1945*. Singapore: ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2021, pp. 173-303.

55) I intend to elaborate on the concepts of freedom (*kebebasan*) and sovereignty (*kedaoelatan*) within the context of 1942 Indonesia in the forthcoming article.



## Concluding Remarks

The article offers a dual-tiered argument regarding the phenomenon of *rampok* during February and March 1942, providing fresh insights into the intricate social dynamics characterizing transitions between wartime regimes. The primary argument, grounded in the concept of wartime regime, serves as a plausible analytical framework, emphasizing the challenges inherent in transitioning from one wartime regime to another. It posits that social disorder and unrest arose from the power shift between two wartime regimes. This perspective illuminates the political backdrop and socio-political circumstances contributing to chaotic conditions and a breakdown of social order during the transition period. Acknowledging the non-uniform occurrence of *rampok* across Indonesia adds complexity to the historical narrative, prompting crucial inquiries into the factors influencing its presence or absence in different regions. The adoption of a multidimensional approach fosters a comprehensive understanding of the intricate dynamics that characterize the transition between wartime regimes in Indonesia.

This leads to the second focal point of the article: the vacuum of power and authority creating an opportunity and motivation for local communities to engage in *rampok*. The argument suggests that, due to the absence of power and authority, *rampok* leaders and instigators exploited the situation, targeting and assaulting figures of authority and wealth protected by the colonial structure. This underscores the historical and structural factors shaping the targets and dynamics of *rampok*. Subsequently, the analysis delves into the factors propelling collective action and examines how individuals articulated their instincts, contingent upon the availability of pertinent documents. A thorough exploration of local grievances, power dynamics, and community relationships will contribute to a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted nature of *rampok* during this historical period.

The article posits, in a deductive manner, that the events of 1942 evolved into socially collective memories, resurfacing in diverse forms upon the conclusion of the Japanese occupation in August 1945. Not extensively explored in the existing literature on the Indonesian Revolution,<sup>56)</sup> this article endeavors

to provide a novel perspective to the historical narrative by highlighting the enduring impact of these events on collective memory. While the current literature acknowledges the mobilization and militarization efforts by the Japanese military regime during the occupation, this article tentatively proposes that the heightened violence in 1945 and thereafter mirrored the events of 1942 and was further intensified by the Japanese regime's mobilization and militarization of society. This exacerbation, combined with pre-existing social cleavages dating back to the Dutch colonial period, may have played a significant role in fomenting a social revolution in parts of Sumatra and Java, as well as triggering violent outbreaks with distinct class characteristics across various regions of Indonesia during the Indonesian Revolution period. The nature of violence in 1940s Indonesia remains an open question for researchers to explore.

---

56) Presented below is a chronological list of noteworthy studies on the Indonesian Revolution. Kahin. *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*. *op.cit.*, pp. 180-181, 305; Benedict Richard O'Gorman Anderson. *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972; Anderson. "Japan". *op.cit.*; Anthony Reid. *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945-1950*. Hawthorn: Longmans Australia, 1974; Frederick, *Visions and Heat*, *op.cit.*; Anton Lucas. *One Soul, One Struggle: Region and Revolution in Indonesia*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991; William H. Frederick. "Shadows of an Unseen Hand: Some Patterns of Violence in the Indonesian Revolution, 1945-1949". In Freek Colombijn and J. Th. Lindblad. eds. *Roots of Violence in Indonesia: Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002, pp. 143-172; *Journal of Genocide Studies*, Volume 14, Issue 3-4, 2012 (a special issue about violence during the Indonesian Revolution); Ravando. "*Now is the Time to Kill All Chinese!*": *Social Revolution and the Massacre of Chinese in Tangerang, 1945-1946*. MA Thesis, Leiden University, 2014; Tedi Kholiludin, *Prahara Tionghoa: Etnis Tionghoa dan Peristiwa "Gedoran Cina" di Caracas-Cilimus, Kuningan tahun 1947*. Semarang: Lembaga Studi Sosial dan Agama Press, 2018; Kevin W. Fogg. *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020; FX Harsono. "From the Oppressed towards a Dark History". In Elly Kent, Virginia Hooker, and Caroline Turner. eds. *Living Art: Indonesian Artists Engage Politics, Society and History*. Canberra: ANU Press, 2023, pp. 295-305.

Recent years have seen a new direction in the study of the Indonesian Revolution,

## References

### \* Archives

Indische Collectie. NIOD Instituut voor Oorlogs-, Holocaust- en Genocidestudies, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

### \* Primary Sources

*Berita Oemoem*, March-April 1942.

*Kung Yung Pao*, March-April 1942.

*Pemandangan*, December 1941-April 1942.

*Sin Sin Po*, March 1942.

### \* Secondary Sources

Abeyasekere, Susan. *One Hand Clapping: Indonesian Nationalists and the Dutch, 1939-1942*. Clayton: Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, 1976.

Anderson, B.R. O'G. "Japan: 'The Light of Asia'". In Josef Silverstein. ed. *Southeast*

---

specifically focusing on the perspective of violence. A representative example is a history series titled "Onafhankelijkheid, Dekolonisatie, Geweld en Oorlog in Indonesië 1945-1950" (Independence, Decolonization, Violence and War in Indonesia 1945-1950) published from Amsterdam University Press. This series is the result of a collaborative research program involving three Dutch research institutes: the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV), the Netherlands Institute for Military History (NIMH), and the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies. The series, which includes contributions from both Dutch and Indonesian researchers, places a significant emphasis on the war circumstances during the Indonesian War of Independence (<https://www.aup.nl/en/series/onafhankelijkheid-dekolonisatie-geweld-en-oorlog-in-indonesië-1945-1950>, accessed 3 January 2024). The central question explored in the series is the dynamics of the events surrounding the violence that occurred during this period. Notably, Indonesian scholars involved in the research program have rejected the use of the term "decolonization" because it is perceived to carry a Dutch-centric perspective of history. This shift in perspective and collaboration between Dutch and Indonesian scholars indicates an effort to present a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the historical events during the Indonesian revolution. For instance, Bambang Purwanto, Roel Frakking, Abdul Wahid, Gerry van Klinken, Martijn Eickhoff, Yulianti, and Ireen Hogenboom. eds. *Revolutionary Worlds: Local Perspectives and Dynamics during the Indonesian Independence War, 1945-1949*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023.

- Asia in World War II: Four Essays*. Monograph Series No. 7, Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, 1966, pp. 13-51.
- Anderson, Benedict Richard O'Gorman. *Java in a Time of Revolution: Occupation and Resistance, 1944-1946*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972.
- Arendt, Hannah. *On Violence*. New York: Harcourt, 1970.
- Benda, Harry J. "The Beginnings of the Japanese Occupation of Java". *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 15(4), 1956, pp. 541-560.
- Boer, P. C. *The Loss of Java: The Final Battles for the Possession of Java Fought by Allied Air, Naval and Land Forces in the Period of 18 February–7 March 1942*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2011.
- Cribb, Robert. *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution 1945-1949*. North Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991.
- Dirks, Cor. *Die Uile En Die Rampokkers*. Pretoria: Protea Boekhuis, 1950.
- Else Ensering. "Banten in Times of Revolution". *Archipel* 50(1), 1995, pp. 131-163.
- Fogg, Kevin W. *Indonesia's Islamic Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.
- Frederick, William. *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989.
- Frederick, William H. "Shadows of an Unseen Hand: Some Patterns of Violence in the Indonesian Revolution, 1945-1949". In Freek Colombijn and J. Th. Lindblad. eds. *Roots of Violence in Indonesia: Contemporary Violence in Historical Perspective*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002, pp. 143-172.
- Harsono, FX. "From the Oppressed towards a Dark History". In Elly Kent, Virginia Hooker, and Caroline Turner. eds. *Living Art: Indonesian Artists Engage Politics, Society and History*. Canberra: ANU Press, 2023, pp. 295-305.
- Jenkins, David. *Young Soeharto: The Making of a Solider, 1921-1945*. Singapore: ISEAS Yusof Ishak Institute, 2021.
- Journal of Genocide Studies*, Volume 14, Issue 3-4, 2012.
- Kahin, George McT. *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1952.
- Keppy, Peter. *The Politics of Redress: War Damage Compensation and Restitution in Indonesia and the Philippines, 1940-1957*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2010.
- Kholiludin, Tedi. *Prahara Tionghoa: Etnis Tionghoa dan Peristiwa "Gedoran Cina" di*

- Caracas-Cilimus, Kuningan tahun 1947*. Semarang: Lembaga Studi Sosial dan Agama Press, 2018.
- Lucas, Anton. *One Soul, One Struggle: Region and Revolution in Indonesia*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1991.
- Mingaars, P., J. Heij, and P. Posthumus. *Indisch Lexicon: Indische woorden in de Nederlandse literatuur*. Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Nordholt, Henk Shulte and Margareet van Till. "Colonial Criminals in Java, 1870-1910". In Vincente L. Rafael. ed. *Figures of Criminality in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Colonial Vietnam*. Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1999, pp. 47-60.
- Nordholt, Henk Shultz en Harry Poeze. *Merdeka: De strip dome de Indonesische onafhankelijkheid en de ongewisse optimist van de Republiek 1945-1950*. Zutphen: Warburg Pers, 2022.
- Post, Peter and May Ling Thio. *The Kwee Family of Ciledug: Family, Status, and Modernity in Colonial Java*. Volendam: LM Publishers, 2019.
- Purwanto, Bambang, Roel Frakking, Abdul Wahid, Gerry van Klinken, Martijn Eickhoff, Yulianti, and Ireen Hogenboom. eds. *Revolutionary Worlds: Local Perspectives and Dynamics during the Indonesian Independence War, 1945-1949*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2023.
- Ravando. "Now is the Time to Kill All Chinese!": *Social Revolution and the Massacre of Chinese in Tangerang, 1945-1946*. MA Thesis, Leiden University, 2014.
- Reid, Anthony. *The Indonesian National Revolution, 1945-1950*. Hawthorn: Longmans Australia, 1974.
- Tsuda, Koji. *Kung Yung Pao, The Only Daily Newspaper for the Ethnic Chinese in Java during Japanese Occupation: An Overview*. 2020. ([https://www.u-tokyo.ac.jp/biblioplaza/en/F\\_00127.html](https://www.u-tokyo.ac.jp/biblioplaza/en/F_00127.html), accessed on 30 June 2023)
- Twang Peck Yang. *The Chinese Business Élite in Indonesia and the Transition to Independence 1940-1950*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Van Dongen, Peter. *Rampokan: Java*. Amsterdam: Oog & Blik, 1998.
- Van Dongen, Peter. *Rampokan: Celebes*. Amsterdam: Oog & Blik, 2004.
- Yamamoto, Nobuto. *Censorship in Colonial Indonesia*. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019.
- Zijlmans, G.C. "De Indische Bestuursdienst 1940-1942". In G. Teitler. ed. *De val de Nederlands-Indie*. Amsterdam: De Betaafsche Leeuw, 1982, pp. 24-42.