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The Secret of Major Kido

The Battle of Semarang, 15-19 October 1945

After the capitulation of Japan, Lord Louis Mountbatten as Supreme Allied Commander for South East Asia decreed that all Japanese officers should surrender their swords to British officers in front of their own troops in order to make them lose face and impress on them the fact that they were a beaten army. In this respect he disregarded the instructions of the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, General Douglas MacArthur, who considered it necessary not to let the Japanese officers lose face and control over their troops (Terraine 1968:129). MacArthur was right, because in several places Mountbatten's order soon turned out to be unworkable.

At the ceremony of the formal surrender of the Japanese South East Asia forces, which was staged with a great show of Allied strength in Singapore on 12 September 1945, Mountbatten stressed that the Japanese had succumbed to the overwhelming power of the Allies. However, in many areas that still remained to be occupied by the Allies he would be constrained to rely on the Japanese for protecting not only ex-prisoners of war and internees, but also his own forces, whose very task it was to disarm those selfsame Japanese (Dennis 1987:2, 59, 172, 226). So a most curious situation arose, which was probably without precedent in history and so incredible that, according to a recent book by Meirion and Susie Harries (1991:390), there is little evidence, or indeed likelihood, that it actually materialized.

These remarkable developments were a consequence of the transfer, soon after the capitulation of Japan, of an enormous area that was previously under the jurisdiction of MacArthur to that of Mountbatten, notwithstanding the serious shortage of forces and ships which the latter faced. Mountbatten for this reason had objected to such a transfer at short notice when the war against Japan was still on. After the Japanese

HAN BING SIONG, a former Associate Professor of Criminal Law of the University of Indonesia and director at the Netherlands Ministry of Education and Science, has specialized on Japanese swords. He has previously published *An outline of the recent history of Indonesian criminal law*, VKI 32, 1961, and *Azas-azas Tata-Hukum Nasional dalam bidang Hukum Pidana*, 1964. Mr. Han may be reached at Ocarinalaan 556, 2287 SJ Rijswijk.

capitulation he felt that circumstances had changed, however (Mountbatten 1951:180, 182; Woodburn Kirby 1969:224).¹

Even before the announcement of the extension of Mountbatten's area, his staff realized that it would be impossible, in the event of a sudden Japanese capitulation, to despatch occupying forces to all the territories still in Japanese hands immediately. It was inevitable that the Japanese army should be instructed to maintain law and order in these territories awaiting the arrival of the Allied forces (Dennis 1987:12). The negotiations with the Japanese delegation in Rangoon on 27 and 28 August 1945 led Mountbatten to believe that the Japanese High Command would obey his orders strictly (Mountbatten 1951:184; Woodburn Kirby 1969:238). In keeping the existing chain of command of the Japanese forces intact, he expected that the Japanese regional and local commanders would do their duty as well (Mountbatten 1969:282). In view of this it is difficult to comprehend that he should have totally ignored the importance for Japanese officers to keep their swords if they were to continue exercising authority over their troops.

Due to a complete lack of information² about developments in the areas concerned, in particular Java, during the war, even on the Dutch side (L. de Jong 1986:494-509; Dennis 1987:75-6), Mountbatten did not expect his forces to get involved in any serious fighting except perhaps a few incidental skirmishes with groups of rebellious Japanese. It was naive and, according to the official British war historian, 'a supreme example of wishful thinking' (Woodburn Kirby 1969:316) to expect the Japanese to loyally obey the order to maintain public order and preserve the status quo till they were relieved by the Allies. If Mountbatten had been better informed, he would have understood that many current processes had been initiated or supported by the Japanese (suffice it to refer here to Kanahole 1967 and Reid 1980), so that it was most unlikely they would help suppress these. Contrary to Mountbatten's expectations, the Japanese in many places failed in their duty, of course due also to the serious delay in the arrival of the Allied forces. This was not so everywhere, though.

On 15 October 1945, something that Mountbatten in his wishful thinking was expecting from all the Japanese but which in view of the circumstances in fact was most surprising took place in Semarang: before Mountbatten's forces landed, the Japanese garrison under the command of Major

¹ Therefore, differently from L. de Jong (1986:479), I believe Mountbatten had consented to the transfer.

² Mountbatten 1969:v, 289; Woodburn Kirby 1969:310-2; Squire 1979:61; Dennis 1987:67.

I Japanese from Tjepiring, Oct. 12-14, 1945	8 <i>Kempeitai</i> , Oct. 3-16, 1945
II Woengkal/Siranda water reservoir	9 Hotel Bellevue, RAPWI officers' mess
III Tanah Putih water reservoir, Oud Tjandi	10 Toempangweg
IV Karangtempel, whence came Dr. Kariadi	11 Junction Dr. De Vogelweg and Van der Hoopweg
1 Left-wing assault (Major Yagi)	12 Kampong Ngaglik
2 Junction Oei Tiong Bing-weg and Kenarilaan	13 Former office of Raad van Justitie
3 Van Deventer school	14 Indonesian police headquarters
4 Indonesian Police Precinct IV, Nieuw Tjandi	15 Hotel Du Pavillon
5 Shüchōkan's residence	
6 Residence of Indonesian Resident Wongsonegoro	I* Right-wing assault (Captain Satō)
7 Merapiweg	2* Grand Theatre
	3* Indonesian Police Precinct I, Pandean

Kido Shinichirō (and therefore henceforward referred to as Kido Butai³) took action against the Indonesian nationalists. Subsequently a battle raged which according to Nasution (1977:354, see also Hofland 1985) was the first major battle of the Indonesian nation and according to Nugroho Notosusanto (1979:139) was the fiercest clash in the early days of the Indonesian struggle for freedom. Nugroho Notosusanto claims that no name of any Japanese commander is so deeply imprinted in the memory of the Indonesian nation as that of Kido. Within five days Kido Butai had the city under control again.

As the Japanese acted with great fury, it was generally assumed in Semarang at the time that they started fighting the Indonesians because the latter had slaughtered a large number of Japanese detained in the Boeloe prison the day before.⁴ This was also the view taken in various reports issued shortly afterwards.⁵ Even the 16th Japanese Army headquarters supposed the massacre in Boeloe to have preceded this military action.⁶ So it is not surprising that this seemingly plausible explanation was repeated several times in the literature outside Japan.⁷ Even since Anderson (1972:147-8)⁸ pointed out that the Boeloe massacre took place after, and not before, Kido Butai launched its attack, historians like J.J.P. de Jong

³ Anderson (1972:145) assumes that *kidōbutai* means 'armoured corps'. However, Kido's forces were not an armoured corps (Han 1979:54). The word *kidōbutai* was used by the Japanese to refer to the U.S. Assault Fleet (*Djawa Baroe* 2604, 24:4; 2605, 2:4, 6; 2605, 5:4; *Pandji Poestaka* 2605, 23-2:56; *Asia Raya* 2605, 4-197:1). So the Indonesians in Semarang believed they had fought against the strongest Japanese unit in Java (*Warta Indonesia*, 3 Nov. 1945, 1-27:3). Indonesian sources (except Nugroho Notosusanto 1979:139) consequently often take *Kido butai* to refer to elite or special forces (*Peranan TNI* 1965:60; Bondan Sudharto 1976:116, 123; Tjokropranolo 1992:53). However, the Chinese characters or *kanji* for the name of the U.S. Assault Fleet and for *Kido butai* are different, and the two are also pronounced slightly differently.

⁴ This is what I noted down in my diary. See also Boissevain and Van Empel 1991: 303-5; and Abrar Yusra and Ramadhan 1993:131. Leland (SMG 0214-1A (a), 22 October 1945) also suggests a casual connection, first mentioning the massacre in the Boeloe prison and only then the offensive launched by Kido Butai. This misunderstanding did not fail to have its consequences for some Japanese, see footnote 82.

⁵ Scholtens (RIOD IC 055795 (c):8), who mentions October 16 as the day Kido Butai launched the attack, and Darling (IWM:3). Leland (SMG 0214-1A (b), Report No. 1) mentions the slaughter in the Boeloe prison (point 9) before the fighting started by Kido Butai (point 11).

⁶ RIOD IC 065452:18, 065453:47, according to which the Boeloe massacre took place on 14 October 1945, whereas the Japanese forces started their attack on October 15.

⁷ For example, *Tussen sawahs en bergen* 1948:8; Van Mook 1949:98; Helfrich 1950:266; Doulton 1951:246; Smit 1952:64; Woodburn Kirby 1969:321; Nasution 1977:351-2.

⁸ See also Reid 1974:50; Remmelink 1978:63; Groen 1985:117; Drooglever 1987: 50 (mentioning October 18 instead of October 16 as the day Kido Butai found out about the Boeloe massacre); and Harclerode 1990:172. Goto (1995:6), however, suggests that according to Anderson the Boeloe massacre preceded Kido Butai's action.

(1991:94)⁹ are still suggesting that the Japanese in Semarang took action against the Indonesians because of the murders in the Boeloe prison.

Clarity about the time when the Japanese were slaughtered is provided by a Dutch naval officer, J.E. Helfrich, a member of the RAPWI team in Semarang, in his report on his imprisonment in Boeloe from 14 to 16 October, which is accurate beyond any doubt because it was written the day after he was released by Kido Butai. Contrary to the Dutch, who were arrested during the day of October 14, the Japanese prisoners were brought in at night. In the night of October 15, shots and cries were heard inside the prison. In the afternoon of the 16th, shots were again heard inside the prison (RIOD IC 055795 (a); Schouten 1947:103). The Japanese and Indonesian accounts of the mass murder confirm this.¹⁰

As regards the time Kido Butai started the Battle of Semarang, I noted in my diary that in the night of 14-15 October we were awakened by the noise of machine-gun fire and busy traffic along Djalan Gadjah Moengkoer, formerly Dr. De Vogelweg. I remember that one of my brothers who the next morning wanted to go down-town was ordered at the Dr. De Vogelweg, in front of the former Pension Zeezicht, by a Japanese sentry to turn back. Just after the sharp turn of the road, out of sight to anyone coming from down-town, the Japanese had placed a car with a machine-gun trained on it as a road-block. According to the report of Captain C. Wishart, commanding officer of RAPWI for Central Java, the Japanese came at 4.30 a.m. that day to inform him that they had opened fire on the Indonesians and were attacking the town (RIOD IC 055795 (d); see also ARA PG 1112:2; Schouten 1947:103). This is borne out by Japanese archive documents: according to the text of Major Kido's order¹¹ to his troops, issued at 2 a.m. on 15 October, they were to attack at 3.30 a.m., one hour before the Japanese were due to report to Wishart in the Hotel Bellevue, where the RAPWI staff were staying (ARA PG 1112:1; RIOD IC

⁹ See also Lucas 1984:463; Bosdriesz and Soeteman 1985:65 (although pp. 68-9 give different information); and Dennis 1987:189. Broeshart et al. (1989:33) mention the Boeloe slaughter in the chapter concerning October 14, but state on pp. 34-5 that Kido Butai only found out about the murder on October 16, and on p. 38 explain the real reason for the action of the Japanese.

¹⁰ RIOD IC 006762 (which is the document Anderson relies on); 'Semarang' 1984:73-84; *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:143-6. According to Hadiman and Suparmin (1985:68), the massacre took place on October 17.

¹¹ See Keibitai Meirei, Shōwa 20-10-15 02.00 [Garrison Order of 15 October 1945, 2 a.m.] ('Kido Butai Copies':67-8; I am indebted to the late Mr. Han Bing Hoo for the trouble taken by him to obtain these copies for me in Semarang). See also Miyamoto 1973:162; and 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:26. An English summary of the history of Kido Butai, 'Defence of Semarang', which was submitted to Brigadier Darling in March 1946, only mentions that the Indonesians fired shots at the ammunition dump in Djatingaleh at 3 a.m. (I will return to this subject later). Consequently most sources, like Groen 1985 (p. 116), Broeshart et al. 1989 (p. 34), Drooglever 1987 (p. 49), *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977 (p. 132), and *War History Series* 1976 (p. 12), assume that Kido Butai launched its attack at 3 a.m.

055795 (c):21; Schouten 1947:116). This implies that they recaptured the area of Nieuw Tjandi within one hour. In other words, the Japanese took the offensive before the murders in Boeloe. Consequently the slaughter could not possibly have been the reason for their action.

According to several Indonesian studies¹², the Battle of Semarang even started a day earlier, on October 14 instead of October 15. People in Semarang in fact commemorate the battle annually on October 14. On that day in the year 1945, at about six in the evening, Kido Butai soldiers disarmed the Indonesian police guard of a certain water reservoir, so the Indonesian accounts inform us. This gave rise to a rumour that the water had been poisoned by the Japanese. The Japanese reports do not mention this incident, however; for the Japanese it was probably just a routine matter in the course of a patrol. Moreover, the Indonesian accounts contradict each other about which particular water reservoir was involved.¹³ In any case the Indonesian doctor Kariadi of the Central Hospital, on his way to the water reservoir to examine the water for poison, was shot and killed on Djalan Pandanaran¹⁴, formerly Hoogenraadslaan. Here a group of 339 unarmed Japanese civilians who on October 12 had been moved from the steel factory in Tjepiring, near Kendal, about 30 kilometres west of Semarang, was temporarily stationed.¹⁵ They clashed¹⁶ with the Polisi Istimewa¹⁷

¹² *Republik Indonesia* 1952:110; Bondan Sudharto 1976:130, 138; *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:125-6; Hadiman and Suparmin 1985:65; and *Sejarah Panglima* 1989:143. See also De Rochemont 1977:86; Hofland 1985; Groen 1985:91; and Reid 1974:50. In *Tiga puluh tahun* (1977:41, Dutch translation in Broeshart et al. 1989:35-6) both dates are mentioned.

¹³ *Peranan TNI* (1965:60) mentions the reservoir in Oud Tjandi, and Bondan Sudharto (1976:130) that in Djatingaleh, while *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:125) and Hadiman and Suparmin (1985:66) refer to Djalan Woengkal/Siranda (Nieuw Tjandi).

¹⁴ Bondan Sudharto 1976:138; *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:126. If the reservoir concerned was that of Djatingaleh, as Bondan Sudharto states, then it is puzzling why Doctor Kariadi, coming from Karangtempel (Bondan Sudharto 1976:134), should have gone via Pandanaran. Possibly he assumed that the water reservoir at Djalan Woengkal/Siranda was the one that had been poisoned.

¹⁵ On the Japanese from Tjepiring and their clash with the Indonesians, see 'Semarang' 1984:68-71. The Indonesian authorities of Kendal wanted these Japanese to leave the area, possibly because all the Japanese had already been moved from the nearby Residency of Pekalongan. Lucas (1984:156-9) gives an account of the struggle in Pekalongan, which on October 7 became the first area in Indonesia to be free of Japanese. The Japanese of Tjepiring were to be concentrated in Temanggoeng awaiting the arrival of the Allies, and they were just in transit in Semarang.

¹⁶ The shots fired during this clash were heard inside the Boeloe prison by J.E. Helfrich (RIOD IC 055795 (a)), at Nieuw Tjandi by Wishart (RIOD IC 055795 (d)) and Soltau (ARA PG 1112:2), and at Djatingaleh by the Kido Butai ('Defence of Semarang' 1946:2; 'Kido Butai Copies':43, 66; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:26; 'Semarang' 1984:68).

¹⁷ *Warta Indonesia* of 13 October 1945 (1-14:2) announced that the Polisi Istimewa was not the same as the Japanese-instituted Tokubetsu Keisatsu Tai, while of course in fact it was. The Tokubetsu Keisatsu Tai were special police units which had been

(Indonesian Special Police) late in the evening of October 14, at around 10.30 or 11 p.m., when the latter tried to lead them away. According to some Indonesian accounts the Japanese offered resistance because they already knew the Kido Butai was going to attack the Indonesians the next day (Bondan Sudharto 1976:133; *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:127). According to a Japanese account the leader of the group of Japanese, Morimoto, had indeed visited Kido in the afternoon of October 14 after an interview with the *shūchōkan* (Japanese Resident), and had then been told the details of Kido's plan for attacking the Indonesians. So Morimoto informed his men accordingly and issued orders for action at 4 p.m. The Japanese resisted the Indonesians with wooden sticks, iron bars, and a few small arms¹⁸ smuggled in by some Kido Butai men and then escaped¹⁹ in the direction of the Kido Butai quarters. Being strangers in Semarang, they did not know the way, and so many only reached Kido Butai at Djatingaleh or the Kempeitai (Japanese Military Police) at Nieuw Tjandi²⁰ in

established in each Residency and were more heavily armed than the regular police. The strength of each unit was around 60-150 men, depending on the significance of the Residency, those of Djakarta, Priangan and Soerabaja being larger than those in other Residencies. For instance, Soerabaja had a unit of 150 men (Oudang 1952:47, 96), and Bandoeng one of 200 (Smail 1964:60). According to Groen (1985:106), that in Semarang was 600 strong, which is impossible, however, in view of the rank of its commander, R.M. Bambang Soeprapto Dhipokusumo, who was a police inspector (Hadiman and Suparmin 1985:64). According to a former member of the Polisi Istimewa of Semarang (Soediyono 1990:2) and to Police General Hoegeng Iman Santoso, in a letter of 30 April 1991, the actual strength was 60. Kido Butai estimated its strength at about 150, and that of the police force in Semarang as a whole at 800 ('Kido Butai Shi' 1984:22-3).

¹⁸ Bondan Sudharto 1976:133; *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:128. If the Japanese only had a few small arms, how could Doctor Kariadi have been shot while passing? According to the 'Kido Butai Copies' (p. 68), the Japanese fought bare-handed, while 'Semarang' (1984:68), RIOD IC 065453 (p. 47), and *War History Series* 1976 (p. 12) state that they had armed themselves with wooden sticks, which is confirmed by Soediyono (1990:2). The Japanese seized some police firearms this way.

¹⁹ Anderson (1972:147) believes that all were put in jail in Boeloe, but the accounts in *Peranan TNI* (1965:61), *Sedjarah TNI* (1968:34-5), and Nugroho Notosusanto (1979:140) are different. According to *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:129), only one Japanese was shot and one captured. 'Semarang' (1984:76-9) indeed only mentions one Japanese from Tjepiring as being in the Boeloe prison. Of the 196 Japanese captives, 94 belonged to the Railway Corps, among them *shiseichōkan* Teratsune, a civil administrator with a rank equal to that of general officer.

²⁰ Groen (1985:111), referring to the Tull report, points out that the Kempeitai had been concentrated in the Kido Butai barracks in Djatingaleh (see also Hadiman and Suparmin 1985:24). The Tull report provides no information whatsoever on this point, however. From the beginning of the Japanese occupation, the Kempeitai had been stationed in the Palace of Justice at Bodjong. Judging from my own diary notes, they had moved to the Hotel Futabaso (formerly Hotel Van Brussel) on Nieuwe Tjandiweg on 4 October. Keibitai Meirei 10-16 04.00 ('Kido Butai Copies':89) gave the Kempeitai at Tjandi orders to assist the Left-Wing Assault Group with its mopping-up operations. Bondan Sudharto (1976:133, 143), *Sedjarah TNI* (1968:34), *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:127-8), and the maps, also those in 'Kido Butai Shi'

the course of the next day.²¹

Certainly of relevance in this connection is the fact that till noon on 16 October²², Kido Butai had no information whatsoever about the place where the Indonesians had taken the captive Japanese, and only found out about the massacre of a large number of them after the Boeloe prison had been stormed and captured at 4.30 p.m.²³ Some Dutch authors²⁴ report that a few Japanese who had escaped from the Boeloe prison had informed the Kido Butai of the slaughter. However, it was an Indonesian captured during the military operation who put Kido Butai on the track of the captive Japanese.²⁵ In fact, three Japanese succeeded in escaping, who

(1984:23), all confirm that the Kempeitai was in Tjandi. Except in Anderson (1972: 146) and Bondan Sudharto (1976:120), there is no information regarding any arms transfers by this unit. *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:100-1, 105) only says that an arms transfer was being negotiated, but up to 13 October the Semarang Kempeitai was the only Kempei unit still retaining its arms. Whether this unit, inasmuch as it still possessed arms, joined the fighting when Kido's forces reached Nieuw Tjandi in the early morning of 15 October, or whether it remained neutral still needs further investigation.

²¹ As I noted in my diary, in the morning of 15 October four Japanese, one of them wounded in the leg, appeared in our garden at Djalan Toempang. Shortly before this shouts of '*Siap! Siap!*' had been heard in the neighbourhood and we had seen groups of Pemuda armed with *bambu runcing* (bamboo spears) assembling on the surrounding hills. In view of the imminent danger, and as our house was located away from the built-up area, my mother immediately directed them towards Djalan Watoe Gedé while making signs of '*Butai! Butai!*' to them. They got away just in time, as the Pemuda appeared in the *ketéla* fields in front of our house in search of these Japanese a moment later.

²² Keibitai Meirei 10-16 04.00 ('Kido Butai Copies':91) contained an order to attack the Boeloe bridge and to continue mopping-up operations on both sides of the Bodjong Road. So at that time the Boeloe prison was not yet a target. Only at noon, according to Keibitai Meirei 10-16 12.00 ('Kido Butai Copies':92) – see paragraph 1 in particular – was the order to capture the Boeloe prison issued to the Kempeitai (commanded by Captain Wada Kunishige), together with a platoon of Morimoto Butai (from Tjepiring), a company equipped with heavy machine-guns (commanded by Captain Fukuda), and a unit equipped with a new fast-firing gun, in fact, the Model 1 mobile 47 mm. gun of 1941 (commanded by First Lieutenant Kubota Junichi) (see also 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:28). *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:146-7), which is partially based on the memoirs of Sergeant Tanaka of the Kempeitai, suggests that the Boeloe prison was stormed by that unit alone, however, while Groen (1985:117) is of the same opinion. According to an eyewitness account by F. de Rochemont, it was Kempeitai Sergeant Kawano Toshiharu who forced open the prison gate, while *Sejarah pertempuran* mentions a Corporal Ono in this connection. Most peculiarly, according to *Kenpeitai* (1986:63), Wada with twenty men were held captive in the prison.

²³ See the abstract of the report on the implementation of Keibitai Meirei 10-16 12.00 ('Kido Butai Copies':94-5; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:28; 'Defence of Semarang' 1946:3-4). Bondan Sudharto (1976:153) and *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:146) both confirm this.

²⁴ L. de Jong 1988:743; Boissevain and Van Empel 1991:303-4; and Broeshart et al. 1989:33 (who assume that these Japanese ended up in our garden, but see footnote 21).

²⁵ See the abstract of the report on the implementation of Keibitai Meirei 10-16

only joined Kido Butai safely at 6 p.m., after the capture of the prison ('Semarang' 1984:81).

Consequently, as several Indonesian sources confirm²⁶, the Boeloe massacre was not the reason for the Japanese to attack the Indonesians, by way of revenge, as was often assumed at the time. On the contrary, the massacre was an act of revenge on the part of the Indonesians, in line – assuming that the Kido Butai intelligence reports (see Goto 1995:13) are correct – with a resolution adopted at a conference of Pemuda (Young Freedom Fighters) from all parts of Central Java in the evening of 13 October. The fact remains, however, that according to all the Indonesian sources I have checked, the Japanese acted with great ferocity. The Pemuda captured in the first clashes in the morning of 15 October were summarily dealt with by the Japanese.²⁷ A British report (RIOD IC 007417-007453; see also Anderson 1972:148; Reid 1974:50) suggests that the fighting initially proceeded without any great casualties on either side. Only after the Boeloe slaughter was discovered did the Japanese go 'fighting mad. They swept through the town, regardless of dangers or their own losses like one of the Mongolian hordes of Genghis Khan or Tamerlane. They took no prisoners and everyone with arms or suspected of carrying arms was captured and killed. Whole lorry loads of prisoners with their hands tied behind their backs were driven out into the countryside and never heard of again.'²⁸ According to my own diary notes, however,

04.00 ('Kido Butai Copies':92; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:28), which is confirmed by *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:147.

²⁶ *Peranan TNI* 1965:61; *Sedjarah TNI* 1968:35; Bondan Sudharto 1976:149; *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:144-5.

²⁷ The Indonesians captured near the Van Deventer school, among them the former Shōdanchō Widadjō, like those arrested near the former Stadstuin (Town Park) at Djomblang, were executed (*Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:133, 140). L. de Jong (1986:600) is one of the authors reporting that no prisoners were taken on either side.

²⁸ RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 71. Groen (1985:117) is very sceptical about this account. She posits, without any documentary evidence, that Tull derived it from Kido, who according to her certainly did not play down his own actions, in view of his prestige with the British and his image among the Indonesians. Kido Butai was not at all proud of its ferocious behaviour, however. Captain Akihira Kichirō, who was Keibitai Shunin (officer in charge of the garrison and Kido's second in command), told me in March 1974 that they expected for a long time to be prosecuted for war crimes. It would seem to me that a low number of victims would have been more advantageous to the Japanese; see Reid (1979:164) on the battle in Tebing Tinggi. Groen, on the basis of an eyewitness report, advances the opinion that the Kempeitai only dealt with those who had been involved in atrocities against Japanese. Using an unpublished survey of obituary notices and notices about missing persons in the newspapers of the time, she concludes (Groen 1985:118) that the number of Indonesians killed during the battle did not exceed 300. On a visit to the Indonesian military cemetery in Semarang in 1990, I indeed counted only 269 graves of people killed in the Battle of Semarang. It is very doubtful, however, whether all were reinterred at this cemetery after so many years. Besides, the publication of obituary and other notices in newspapers had not yet become a common practice among Indonesians at that time. As I myself have witnessed, the Japanese behaved harshly even

there were shots fired in the immediate vicinity of our house at 7 a.m. on October 16, hence many hours before Kido Butai found out about the Japanese captives killed in the Boeloe prison. We saw three helmeted Japanese firing in the direction of the ravine. Shortly afterwards a group of about 30 or 40 Indonesians tied to each other and guarded by militarized Japanese civilians armed with *bambu runcing* (pointed bamboo stakes) appeared and were ordered to sit down on the road in front of our house. We had a strong foreboding that something terrible was going to happen. After the shooting stopped and the three gunmen joined the group, the Japanese dragged their Indonesian prisoners into the next ravine, to our immense horror, and the shooting started again.²⁹ Probably as elsewhere during World War II, the Japanese warrior code, or *bushidō*, which imposes the duty to fight to the bitter end and makes capture by the enemy an utter disgrace, was responsible for this, as this made for a total lack of rules on the treatment of prisoners, with consequently a wide divergence of such treatment, and often gave rise to contempt for prisoners.³⁰ In my own research I have not come across any order for Kido Butai to execute Indonesian captives. Kido personally explained to me in a letter of 20 October 1988 that it was left up to commanders at the front to decide how to treat prisoners.

If the Boeloe massacre was not the cause for but a consequence of the attack by Kido Butai, then what was it that made the Japanese start the

before the discovery of the Boeloe massacre. According to Chinese eyewitnesses, several streets were littered with corpses. In Pendrikan (formerly Prins Hendriklaan) the ditch overflowed because it was full of corpses. See also F.A. Staas in Bosdriesz and Soeteman 1985:69; Broeshart et al. 1989:33; SMG 0214-1A (a), 22 October 1945.

²⁹ According to *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:134, 141), these were 25 Angkatan Muda members who had offered resistance at Merapiweg 16 and Pemuda who had been taken prisoner during the mopping-up operations in Kampoeng Ngaglik. Compare Bondan Sudharto 1976:143, 152.

³⁰ Execution of prisoners was not at all the rule, and treatment was meted out according to individual inclination (Swinson 1968:24; Zich 1977:150). I know of a young Indonesian (later to become a major-general with the Indonesian police) who, when about to be taken away for execution by a Japanese soldier after being discovered during a round-up in Pendrikan, was saved by his mother's pleas for mercy. The Japanese soldier, greatly touched by this, advised him to find a better hiding-place next time. The Indonesians who were taken to the Kido Butai barracks in Djatingaleh, such as Governor Wongsonegoro and Doctor Soekarjo, and very young schoolboys were not killed, either (*Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:134-6, 156, 170). Meirion and Susie Harries (1991:410) consider the modern Japanese Army's rules of conduct a perversion of the original *bushidō* code. Had they studied this, however, they would have found grounds for the above explanation; see Morris 1975:15, in particular note 2.5. As Spiller (1993:340) puts it, these two authors argue in accordance with occidental concepts of chivalry, without realizing that *bushidō* was a totally different system of chivalry, with different rules and notions. See also Zwitser 1994:169.

battle? According to the Japanese author Miyamoto (1973:162), followed by Rummelink (1978:63; see also Schumacher 1985, and Broeshart et al. 1989:33-4), it was the murder of Japanese by the Indonesians the day before the Boeloe massacre, October 14, when the Indonesians were arresting Japanese, that enraged Kido and made him decide to attack. To me this seems impossible, however, because, as we have seen, Kido already had a detailed plan for military action that afternoon, while the Indonesians did not start arresting Japanese until the evening (RIOD IC 055795 (a); *War History Series* 1976:12).³¹ And so, differently from Reid (1974:50), I do not believe that the arrest of Japanese could have been the reason, either. Moreover, as the Indonesians in a few cases proceeded to execute Japanese only late in the evening³², Kido could not have known about this yet when he issued his order to attack at 2 a.m. on the 15th. At most, he could have guessed some Japanese were being killed when shots were heard shortly before, at 10 p.m.³³ Presumably Lieutenant-Colonel Miyamoto, as a former officer of the 16th Japanese Army headquarters, wanted to stick to at least part of the latter's report – which, as we have seen, in this respect is inaccurate – just so as to have an explanation to offer the Indonesians in the context of present Japanese-Indonesian relations.

Another explanation put forward in the literature, although less frequently so, is that Kido was acting under pressure from, or at the request of, Allied officers in charge of RAPWI. Contrary to Mountbatten, many authors³⁴

³¹ The order to arrest the Japanese was issued at 6 p.m. ('Kido Butai Copies':43; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:26; 'Semarang' 1984:68; Miyamoto 1973:162; 'Defence of Semarang' 1946:3; Groen 1985:116; Droogelever 1987:49).

³² 'Semarang' (1984:84-9) gives an account of the killing of Japanese outside the Boeloe prison. *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:130-2) only mentions a few of these cases.

³³ According to Groen (1985:116, followed by Broeshart et al. 1989:33-4) Kido received the news that some Japanese had been shot and killed at around 10 p.m. However, the source Groen is referring to does not say anything about Kido being informed about these killings.

³⁴ With regard to Bandoeng, most authors point out that the Japanese took action on the orders of RAPWI on 10 October 1945. It has even been asserted that they were commanded by a British major (Van der Wal 1971:350)! Anderson (1972:141, who refers only in a footnote to the possibility of pressure being exerted by the Allies), Reid (1974:50) and Rummelink (1978:62, who considers it possible that they were acting under Japanese Army Order 1153), however, explicitly admit the possibility of the Japanese commander, Major-General Mabuchi, acting on his own initiative. Anderson qualifies the explanation that Mabuchi decided to take action after the Indonesians threw him out of his car as sardonic (ARA AS 5207 (b); J.J.P. de Jong 1991:94). Most interestingly, J.J.P. de Jong (1988:74, 94) points out that the RAPWI commander in Bandoeng, Gray, was unable to press Mabuchi into action, though he does not support this with documents. A possible indication may be that the Dutch repeatedly urged Gray to press Mabuchi more forcefully (ARA AS 5207 (b)). In any case, it is evident that the Japanese move was quite unexpected and unknown to Gray (ARA AS 3021). According to Indonesian sources, Mabuchi attacked because the

appear to be sceptical about the possibility of the Japanese being prompted merely by devotion to duty. This explanation is based on the report by Royal Air Force Wing Commander T.S. Tull (RIOD IC 007417-007453), in charge of RAPWI in the area of Ambarawa, Banjoebiroe and Magelang, south of Semarang. Tull and his group landed by parachute at a spot near Magelang on September 18. Within a week after Mountbatten had beaten the big drum at the ceremony of the formal surrender of the Japanese forces in Singapore, people like Tull, who had to do their job on the spot, realized only too well that they would be totally dependent on the Japanese in the absence of Allied forces. So Tull issued instructions that everyone should treat the Japanese in as courteous and as pleasant a manner as possible. When, a few days later, an officer arrived from Djakarta to investigate Japanese war crimes, Tull sent him back as quickly as possible. Differently from Dutch historians like L. de Jong (1986:601) and Groen (1985:102), Tull reports that the Japanese cooperated fully with RAPWI in all respects. The Japanese general officer in command of Central Java, Nakamura Junji, appointed Major Katō as liaison officer, provided Tull with an appropriate staff, supplied RAPWI with forty lorries and forty cars, improved the supply of fresh foodstuffs for the camps, and strengthened the camp guards. The Japanese provided medical supplies from their own stocks, as well as a hospital. In Magelang the Japanese prepared adequate accommodation, complete with bedding and cooking utensils, for over 3000 troops in anticipation of the arrival of Allied forces, which RAPWI used for convalescents. In Djokja the Japanese put aircraft with pilots at the disposal of the Allies for communications with Semarang and Batavia. And by the end of September they had stocked the camps with at least one month's supplies for the existing camp strength (RIOD IC 007417-007453, Nos 29, 34-7, 46).

Although Tull judged their discipline in defeat to be astounding, the Japanese in the area concerned completely failed in their duty in one respect: they were extremely loath to take action against the Indonesians, as, for instance, on the occasion when stores dropped from aircraft were looted.³⁵ Shortly after this, when the Indonesians succeeded in capturing Japanese arms in Soerabaja, they grew more and more insistent in their demands for arms from the Japanese army in Central Java. Tull (RIOD IC 007417-007453, Nos 53, 62) considered it essential for the safety of the internees that the Japanese should retain their weapons, however, and

Pemuda betrayed the agreement with him (Djèn Amar 1963:82; Hadiman and Suparmin 1985:59; Penders and Sundhaussen 1985:22). This is confirmed by Oba 1979:24, 26, who also mentions Gray's demands that Mabuchi take action, at the same time suggesting, however, that these demands did not prompt him to launch his attack.

³⁵ RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 31. As Mountbatten (1969:283) put it: 'The Japanese, except in a few individual cases, were cooperative, and were found to be scrupulously discharging all their duties except one: they were not keeping public order'.

therefore took great pains to restrain them from surrendering arms to the Indonesians in his area, though to no avail. In the opinion of Major-General Nakamura, the Indonesian police should be enabled to maintain order and to protect the internees, and should therefore be provided with arms. More will be said on this point later on. According to the General, a refusal of the Indonesian demands for arms would inevitably provoke fierce fighting, which would seriously endanger the internment camps.³⁶ The situation deteriorated rapidly, in Tull's eyes, and there was one transfer of arms after another. Matters soon reached a climax when in the night of 13 October the Indonesians surrounded and disarmed Nakamura and his staff in Magelang³⁷, and when early the next morning Tull received a telephone call to the effect that the entire RAPWI staff and all the European males who had happened to be outside the camps had been put in jail in Semarang (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 69, I) and furthermore received information that the Indonesians were about to cut off the food and water supplies to the camps.

In view of these most alarming reports, Tull summoned his Japanese liaison officer, Katō, requesting him to assist RAPWI despite any orders he might have received from Nakamura. In Tull's opinion the only thing that stood between RAPWI and complete anarchy was the presence of 200 Japanese in Ambarawa, of whom 100 were armed, and the 500-strong garrison in Semarang, who also still had their arms. Katō promised that he would discuss the matter with other Japanese officers and would draw up a plan. He asked Tull to trust him to take the most sensible course open to them (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 69, I; Schouten 1947:103).

Quite understandably, Tull believed that it was thanks to Katō that the Kido Butai attacked the Indonesians in Semarang, as the fighting there promptly started the next morning. Another development suggesting this was the departure of three lorryloads of Japanese troops for Semarang and breaking through the barricades at Ambarawa (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 69, II). Probably Tull assumed these to be the 100 armed Japanese of the 200-strong Ambarawa garrison. In addition, it soon turned out that the extremely fierce fighting in Semarang was drawing large groups of Pemuda from Ambarawa, Magelang, Djokjakarta and Solo.³⁸

Moreover, the Japanese who had left for Semarang had announced that they would return to restore order. In view of this, the Pemuda concentrated at a place about 10 kilometres from Ambarawa, where they

³⁶ RIOD IC 007110-6; RIOD IC 065451:1-2; RIOD IC 007274; Miyamoto 1973: 150-1, 1986:336-7.

³⁷ Nakamura had left his sword at home that day. During his absence the Indonesian police on 14 October, at 1 a.m., raided his house and took the sword away (ARA AS 5204 NAK-17).

³⁸ The Pemuda marched on Semarang also from other areas; see *Peranan TNI* 1965:62; *Sedjarah TNI* 1968:35; Nasution 1977:356; Bondan Sudharto 1976:156-7; *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:171-2; Hadiman and Suparmin 1985:67.

erected an enormous road-block to prevent the Japanese troops from returning. Consequently, the internees at Ambarawa, Banjoebiroe and Magelang were out of danger. Tull assumed this diversionary tactic to be part of the plan Katō had promised to draw up to ensure the safety of the camps (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 69, III; SMG 0201/2). Soon afterwards, Tull was generally considered in Allied circles to be the man who had urged Kido to restore law and order in Semarang (SMG 0214-1A (b), Report No. 1, point 11; SMG 0201/2 (which misspells Kido's name)).

Groen, the first historian to describe the developments in Central Java during the last five months of 1945 extensively, shares this view. She suggests that Tull's request not to surrender any arms to the Indonesians and to protect the internees, if necessary by force, was conveyed to Kido by Lieutenant Ishida from Ambarawa, who on 14 October informed Kido about Central Java commander Nakamura being captured in Magelang (Groen 1985:116. For Ishida's report to Kido, see 'Defence of Semarang' 1946:2). The effects of the bloody Japanese reaction to the unexpected Boeloe massacre aside, Groen, while assuming that the Japanese had deliberately concentrated all military operations on Semarang, agrees that this was necessary for winning the battle and for restricting the dangers for the internees at Ambarawa and Banjoebiroe, which in her opinion were much more difficult to defend (Groen 1985:119). Drooglever³⁹ is more cautious, being doubtful about Tull's suggestion that Kido acted at Tull's request, as Kido's English-language report, 'The Defence of Semarang', does not mention this at all.

For a number of reasons I myself have never believed that this was the true course of events. After receiving the news of Kido's action against the Indonesians, the Japanese at Ambarawa surrendered to the Indonesians and allowed themselves to be put in jail (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 69, II; SMG 0201/2; Schouten 1947:103). It would seem that they would certainly not have done so if they had indeed devised a plan together with Kido for a combined operation against the Indonesians. In that case they would either have started a military action themselves in the area of Ambarawa, simultaneously with Kido in Semarang, or – if the Japanese shared Groen's point of view and considered it necessary to concentrate all operations on Semarang – have despatched all the available armed troops to Semarang instead of restricting these to only three lorryloads. As it turned out, the Japanese garrison in Ambarawa was larger than Tull assumed, comprising 300 troops.⁴⁰ Particularly remarkable is the fact that

³⁹ Drooglever 1987:49. J.J.P. de Jong (1988:74, 94), without giving this problem a moment's thought, expresses the view that Tull could not have achieved anything with regard to the Japanese keeping order in Central Java.

⁴⁰ RIOD IC 007110-6. Army Order No. 1111 of 16 August 1945 (RIOD IC 065459:1) made 400 men of the 48th Division available for guarding the camps in

Katō was not among the officers who informed Tull of the battle that had started in Semarang. If a joint plan had been devised, as promised by Katō, he would have had every reason to tell Tull about it personally. As Kido does not refer to Tull's attempts in his report, Groen should have been more critical of Tull's explanation, especially as she suspects that Kido was out to create a good impression on the British (see footnote 28).

Whereas I myself for a while was inclined to believe that the local RAPWI authorities in Semarang could have spurred Kido on to action (Han 1985:41), I later also had serious doubts about this in view of the improbable account in the sources⁴¹ concerned, which make it look as though Kido Butai attacked the Indonesians bare-handed and so recaptured the previously surrendered arms. This account, which was possibly prompted by the fighting between the Indonesian police and the mainly unarmed Japanese from the Tjepiring steel factory, completely ignores the fierce resistance offered by the Pemuda. Moreover, neither Wishart⁴², the commanding officer of RAPWI in Semarang, nor Kido mention any consultations between them about fighting the Pemuda. None of the Indonesian sources I checked refer to any influence exercised by the local RAPWI.

When one examines the Japanese sources, quite a different picture emerges of the role played by Katō. Tull was totally unaware that Katō was the commanding officer of the troops which had to protect the camps in the Ambarawa region, so that it was he who decided to surrender to the Indonesians. The explanatory memorandum accompanying Kido's order to attack, issued at 2 a.m. on 15 October 1945, mentions that Kido had had two telephone conversations with Katō, pointing out to him that military

Central Java. As Drooglever (1987:41) rightly points out, Tull (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 9) is incorrect in mentioning 40,000 men under the command of Nakamura. Groen (1985:104), although referring to Tull, changes this number to 10,000 (see Broeshart et al. 1989:31). Nakamura declared he commanded 4,000 men, including non-combatants and the Indonesian forces, before the capitulation (RIOD IC 007108 and 016892). For a survey of the Japanese Army in Java as a whole, see Miyamoto 1973:44 (in Van Delden 1989:59).

⁴¹ SMG 0214-1A (b), Report No. 1, point 11; IWM, Darling 1946:3; Watts 1955:138; Cole 1963:198; Dennis 1987:189. Boissevain and Van Empel (1991:304) and Van Baal (1985:469) also speak of unarmed Japanese relieving the Boeloe prison.

⁴² Besides, because of the division of responsibilities between him and Tull, Wishart was not qualified to remind the Japanese of their duty to maintain order (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 14). Possibly this was because of Mountbatten's policy to keep the hierarchy in the Japanese Army intact. Everything had to be arranged through Nakamura in Magelang. Soltau reports that after his release from jail he had consultations with senior Japanese officers about the serious general situation, but does not mention urging them to take action, either. On the contrary, he states explicitly that Kido's 'action was taken entirely on his own initiative' (ARA PG 1112:1, 4). As we have seen, Kido by that time already had a detailed plan for attacking the Indonesians which he explained to the leader of the group of Japanese from Tjepiring.

action was inevitable, as the situation had become extremely grave.⁴³ These telephone conversations took place following attempts by Captain Yamashiroya, commander of a Kido Butai unit stationed in Ambarawa, all evening until midnight on October 14 to persuade Katō to join Kido Butai in its campaign against the Pemuda. Contrary to Groen, Kido Butai felt that concurrent military actions in Semarang and Ambarawa would be more effective, apparently realizing only too well the danger, which Groen (1985:119) herself refers to, of an operation restricted to Semarang which would leave Ambarawa and Banjoebiroe without Japanese protection. As there had not been any difficulties in Ambarawa up till then, Katō did not consider action there necessary and did not agree to a joint operation (Takadō Eiichi 1984:101^{*44}). First Lieutenant Ishida (1984:97^{*}), who, Groen assumes, passed on Tull's request for action to Kido, confirms this account of the role of Katō. After all efforts turned out to be in vain, Kido ordered Yamashiroya to return to Kido Butai. Differently from what Tull assumed, the Japanese breaking through the barricades with three lorries at Ambarawa and heading for Semarang were not reinforcements sent in accordance with the plan devised by Katō, but were members of Kido Butai itself. In Oengaran they met with fierce Indonesian resistance and Yamashiroya was killed, as the first Japanese officer to fall in the Battle of Semarang. Therefore it was not Katō who urged Kido to fight, but the exact opposite was true. Although Kido would certainly have gained in prestige if he had reported his attempts to win Katō over to his side, he refrained from mentioning them in his English report, probably to avoid putting Katō in an awkward position vis-à-vis the British.⁴⁵ As A.J. Leland, Lieutenant-Commander of the Royal Navy and liaison officer of the British forces in Semarang, put it in a letter to Drooglever: 'The Report by that extraordinary Japanese Major Kido I find fascinating, more for what it does *not* say than for what it says' (Drooglever 1987:37). A clear example of this is the case of Katō and Yamashiroya. To provide historians outside Japan with more examples like this is the purpose of the present study.

Where neither the Boeloe massacre nor previous attacks on Japanese provided the reason for Kido to take action against the Indonesians, the question arises what was the cause of the bloody clash in Semarang then. If the Japanese in Semarang had surrendered their arms to the Indonesians,

⁴³ 'Kido Butai Copies':69; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:26 (which also mentions that Katō had about 300 men under his command); 'Semarang' 1984:68.

⁴⁴ I am most indebted to First Lieutenant Hayakawa Shirō for being so kind as to translate the passages from Japanese texts which I have marked here with an asterisk (*).

⁴⁵ According to Tull, Katō had told him 'that I must trust him to take the wisest course open to them'. By 'them' Katō of course meant the Japanese, not the RAPWI!

as some authors⁴⁶ allege, there would have been no plausible explanation whatsoever.

As elsewhere in Java⁴⁷, the Indonesians in Semarang had acquired arms before the Five Days' Battle in the first place from Japanese who handed them over individually. In addition the Pemuda in Semarang in three cases succeeded in capturing whole stocks of arms.⁴⁸ On 25 September 1945 they seized a quantity of arms which the Japanese were about to move from the arsenal of the Department of Public Safety of the Resident's office⁴⁹ to put in Kido Butai's custody.⁵⁰ That same day they looted a quantity of dynamite and arms in a raid on the office of the electricity company.⁵¹ And lastly, on October 3 they captured some crates filled with weapons and ammunition in a raid on a depot near the airfield.⁵²

However, these raids were all on units or offices which did not belong to Kido Butai. Does this mean that Kido Butai did not surrender any arms to the Indonesians? Authors like Overdijkink (1946:66), Donnison (1956:

⁴⁶ *Tussen sawahs en bergen* 1948:8; Wehl 1948:3, 48; Rajendra Singh 1958:228 and the literature mentioned in footnote 41.

⁴⁷ Sometimes it has been suggested (Overdijkink 1946:65; Wehl 1948:3, 41; J.J.P. de Jong 1988:83, 1991:92) that in Bandoeng no arms transfers took place. See, however, Smail 1964:60; Anderson 1972:140-1; Nasution 1977:322; Hadiman and Suparmin 1985:58-9; Van Delden 1989:105.

⁴⁸ According to Broeshart et al. (1989:29) the Indonesians obtained large quantities of Japanese arms already at a mass meeting on September 24, though none of the Indonesian sources mentions this. ARA AS 5207 (a) mentions the mass meeting without any reference to arms being secured by the Indonesians. For a detailed survey of all arms seized by the Indonesians, see 'Semarang' 1984:58.

⁴⁹ Called Shū Chianbu, this office was in the charge of the *shūchōkan*, or Resident, and was responsible for both the public prosecutor's office and the police (Oudang 1952:42; Zorab 1954:41).

⁵⁰ RIOD IC 065453:47 (which mentions October 2 as date); ARA AS 5207 (a); 'Kido Butai Copies':24*; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:18. Groen (1985:106-7), assuming that the Indonesian police had for the greater part been disarmed by the Japanese, believes the arms in question to have been the weapons of the Polisi Istimewa. Differently from the PETA, however, the police was not disarmed (Larson 1970:259; Rummelink 1978:53), nor was the Polisi Istimewa of Semarang (Hadiman and Suparmin 1985:24) and Bandoeng (Smail 1964:60). Though Groen mentions the number of arms remaining after the raid, in the source she refers to the relevant figures indicate the arms missing. *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:97-8) states that the arms were those of the Forestry Department. Indeed, according to the Indonesian chief of police two unknown Japanese had brought a quantity of arms to the police headquarters that day. Not long after that three lorryloads of weapons were taken away by the Japanese to an unknown destination. When one lorry returned to pick up another load, the Indonesians raided the police headquarters and seized the arms (ARA PG 745; 'Semarang' 1984:58, which has the same report).

⁵¹ ARA AS 5207 (a); 'Kido Butai Copies':24*; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:18; 'Semarang' 1984:58-9. This raid is not mentioned in *Sejarah pertempuran*.

⁵² 'Kido Butai Copies':33; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:19; 'Semarang' 1984:59; *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:102. *Warta Indonesia* of 10 October 1945, 1-11, mentions 4 October as the day this took place.

428), Anderson (1972:146), and others⁵³, basing themselves on information provided by Tull (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 69, I), point out that Kido Butai indeed retained its arms. Groen (1985:111, 113) believes that this was thanks to the efforts of Wishart⁵⁴; I will return to this point later. Mullaly (1957:391) and Woodburn Kirby (1969:321), on the other hand, refer to Kido Butai as a partially disarmed battalion, while in Rummelink's opinion Kido Butai had previously handed over a major part of its arms (Rummelink 1978:63). Clarity on this point is provided by both the Japanese and the Indonesian accounts.

Tull⁵⁵ began to worry about the situation when he was informed of the surrender of the Japanese garrison in Djokja on October 5. What he had no idea of, and what as a consequence historians in the West do not mention, either, was that Kido Butai had been ordered by Nakamura to hand over 500 rifles and 1000 pieces of ammunition already the previous day, which on October 5 was followed by the transfer of another 200 rifles and 600 pieces of ammunition (Han 1985:41). On October 3 the BKR (Badan Keamanan Rakjat) in Semarang had claimed the PETA weapons which Kido Butai had in its custody.⁵⁶ The leaders of the BKR were Taroeno-koesoemo and Trisnoesoedomo, former battalion commanders of PETA⁵⁷, which had been disarmed and disbanded by the Japanese shortly after the capitulation of Japan. Kido tried to dissuade the Indonesians, but when they persisted in their demands, he went to Magelang with the BKR

⁵³ De Rochemont 1977; L. de Jong 1986:599; Drooglever 1987:48. J.J.P. de Jong (1988:83, 1991:92), where he states that in Semarang not all the Japanese surrendered to the Indonesians, is undoubtedly referring to Kido Butai.

⁵⁴ Wishart himself does not mention this in his report. Scholtens and Schouten do not mention any attempt by Wishart in this connection, either. Groen (1985:109), referring to Tull's report, asserts that Christison had given Tull and Wishart orders accordingly. However, there is no mention at all of any orders by Christison. According to Tull it was a policy he had adopted personally (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 54).

⁵⁵ RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 60. Tull knew, though, that the Indonesians in Semarang, Ambarawa and Magelang were also claiming weapons from the Japanese (ARA AS 5204 NAK-5).

⁵⁶ 'Kido Butai Copies':33-4*; 'Semarang' 1984:62; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:19-20; Kubota, as quoted by Bosdriesz and Soeteman 1985:57; Nasution 1977:351.

⁵⁷ On PETA in general, see Lebra 1977 and Nugroho Notosusanto 1979. On 20 June 1945 the Fifth Infantry Battalion commanded by Major Kido was established as Osamu No. 10833 Butai of the Osamu (16th Japanese) Army. It comprised 112 men from the disbanded Nampo Gun Kanbu Kōhoseitai (Southern Army Officers' Training School) and 653 Heihō (Indonesian auxiliary soldiers). Besides, there were two PETA Daidan (battalions, of about 535 men each) subordinate to Kido as well, one in Semarang (commanded by Daidanchō Soetrismoedomo) and the second in Weleri (commanded by Daidanchō Taroenokoesoemo) ('Kido Butai Copies':1; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:12, 22). Nugroho Notosusanto (1979:98-100) inclines to the view that there were three more Daidan, in Pati, Rembang and Djepara, also under Kido's command; however, the Residency of Pati was part of the East Java Command (ARA AS 5203:5).

leaders that evening to submit the case to Nakamura. The latter decided the next day to comply with the Indonesian demands.⁵⁸ On 5 October a mob of 2000 Indonesians claimed more weapons. Kido made a strong appeal to the Indonesian Resident, Wongsonegoro⁵⁹, to persuade them to abandon their claims, but when Wongsonegoro refused, Kido made an additional limited quantity of arms and ammunition available. Although this incident aroused much anger and frustration among the officers and men of Kido Butai, Kido managed to restrain them from taking any action.⁶⁰

The next day it became clear to Kido why Nakamura had given in to the BKR demands on 4 October. On 6 October he received an instruction regarding the maintenance of public order from Nakamura, which had been issued precisely on 4 October in implementation of Order No. 1149 of the 16th Army headquarters of 3 October. Nakamura hereby instructed his troops to leave the maintenance of law and order to the Indonesians and to lend the latter assistance. He further recommended that his troops leave the protection of Allies to the Indonesians. The use of arms was prohibited, being permitted only against looters. The transfer of weapons was prohibited as well, though his Instruction of 5 October stipulated that small quantities of weapons could be lent to official Indonesian agencies for the maintenance of peace and security, provided a receipt was obtained. About the loan of larger quantities the Central Java commander should be contacted. There was no stipulation whatever against the transfer of larger quantities of arms. It was pointed out very emphatically that Indonesia and Japan were no enemies of each other ('Kido Butai Copies':35-9*; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:20).

For various reasons, this information is historically very interesting. Firstly, Army Order No. 1149 of October 3 and Nakamura's Instruction of October 4 were clearly in line with the statement made to the press by the British Commander-in-Chief, Lieutenant-General Sir Philip Christison, a few days previously, on September 29.⁶¹ He had pointed out among other things

⁵⁸ *Peranan TNI* (1965:60) and Bondan Sudharto (1976:123) confirm that Nakamura ordered Kido to hand over the arms, which Nakamura himself conceded (RIOD IC 007108). According to *Warta Indonesia* of 10 October 1945, 1-11, and *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:102, this transfer of arms took place on 7 October.

⁵⁹ Tull reports, very interestingly, that Wongsonegoro together with the Regent of Semarang on that same day had asked him to agree to a transfer of arms to the Indonesian police (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 60). See also Schouten (1947:99-101), who states in addition that the Regent of Semarang on 3 October asked Tull to disarm all the Japanese. This is not mentioned by Tull.

⁶⁰ 'Kido Butai Copies':35*; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:20. My diary entry tallies with this. According to it, First Lieutenant Wakatabi Toshio told me on 3 October that the men of Kido Butai were eager to teach the Indonesians a lesson, but that the *butaichō* (commander) forbade this. Drooglever (1987:48) also reports that many Japanese were displeased with Nakamura's policy.

⁶¹ The sources differ about the place where Christison made his controversial

that the Indonesian government was expected to carry on the civil administration in areas not occupied by the British.⁶² Similarly, the Army Order and Nakamura's Instruction stipulated that maintenance of order and security was the responsibility of the Indonesians. These documents support J.J.P. de Jong's view (1988:81)⁶³ that Christison's statement was of greater consequence than has hitherto been conceded or even realized. Apparently the statement led the Japanese Army headquarters to believe that the Allies had followed its advice⁶⁴ to recognize the Indonesian independence movement and to cooperate with the Indonesian authorities in order to prevent bloodshed, and had therefore changed their order to preserve the status quo.⁶⁵

Secondly, the documents make it clear that, where up till now it has been assumed in the literature outside Japan that Nakamura was acting on his own initiative in providing the Indonesians with arms, he was simply implementing the policy of the 16th Army headquarters. It is true that Nakamura seems to have exceeded Army Order No. 1149 of October 3 (RIOD IC 065459:27) in more than one respect. For example, this order prohibited the transfer of arms to Indonesians without opening up the possibility of lending arms. Lieutenant-Colonel Hirakawa Mutsuyuki (ARA AS 5204 NAK-14), a member of Nakamura's staff, stated in his interrogation, however, that Nakamura had received a telephone call from Army headquarters instructing him that he was allowed to hand over weapons if the Indonesians signed a receipt for these.⁶⁶ To mention

statement. L. de Jong (1986:646-8) states that it was Singapore. After arriving in Indonesia, Christison made another statement, but the Indonesian press quoted that made in Singapore.

⁶² *Warta Indonesia*, 4 October 1945, 1-6:1; Van der Wal 1971:184, 201. The British rectified the statement shortly afterwards. Yong Mun Cheong (1982:36) has compared the various points as quoted by the press and as contained in the statement as Christison claimed he made it.

⁶³ Captain Nakamura Hiroshi pointed out already in 1946 that the Indonesians inferred from the statement that the British would not disarm them, so that they intensified their efforts to obtain weapons from the Japanese (ARA AS 5208 (a)).

⁶⁴ See ARA AS 5203, which repeats the statements of the Sambōchō (Chief of the General Staff) on board the *Cumberland* on 21 September (ARA AS 5204 NAK-16; Van der Wal 1971:150; L. de Jong 1986:627).

⁶⁵ Although the Japanese High Command intended with Army Order No. 1154 of October 8 (RIOD IC 065459:30) to take a stronger stand against the Indonesians, it stated explicitly that it was abandoning the previous policy of maintaining the status quo. Other stipulations implying that the Japanese military administration would assist Indonesian mass movements and that the Japanese should help the Indonesians preserve law and order clearly indicate that the Japanese assumed that Christison had followed their recommendations.

⁶⁶ Hirakawa's written statement is slightly different, saying that a telephone message was received from headquarters containing instructions to ask for a receipt if weapons were lent (ARA AS 5204 NAK-15). Groen (1985:110) refers to an Allied instruction of 3 October allowing the Japanese to transfer arms in exceptional cases. The sources she mentions do not provide any information about such an Allied instruction,

another example, the Army Order did not restrict the use of arms to cases of looting, as Nakamura had stipulated in his Instruction, but permitted it also in a number of other cases, such as where other means of keeping order were exhausted, if the relevant unrest was impeding the Allies or affecting the public welfare, if it undermined the morale of the Japanese forces, or if it brought disgrace on Japanese army units. Actually, as we will see later, Army headquarters had issued secret instructions placing limitations on the Army Order with regard to the use of arms, in the same way as it had liberalized it by allowing the lending of arms.⁶⁷

In the third place, Army Order No. 1149 and Nakamura's Instruction provide important clues for tracing the cause of the conflict between Kido Butai and the Indonesians which led to the Battle of Semarang.

The incidents in Semarang of October 12 are well-known from hitherto available sources.⁶⁸ The Indonesians were dissatisfied with the weapons they had so far acquired, as Kido Butai itself remained fully armed. Hence a mob of thousands surrounded the Kido Butai barracks in Djatingaleh on that day demanding Kido Butai's complete disarmament. Kido again went with an Indonesian delegation to see Nakamura in Magelang. The discussions there lasted four hours, without any agreement being reached. The Indonesians persisted in their demands, and the Japanese continued to try and dissuade them. Next an order was received from the Commander-

however. To me this seems out of the question, as the Allies had repeatedly forbidden the Japanese to hand over arms. Moreover, if the opposite were the case, the possibility of lending arms would have been provided for in the Army Order and the Japanese would not have needed to resort to secret messages.

⁶⁷ According to Miyamoto (1973:151-2*) and Rummelink (1978:61), Japanese Army headquarters was apprehensive about the consequences of Army Order No. 1149, as it expected – in this case without good reason, as it turned out – that it would have no further opportunity of passing on such interpretations to the regional commanders secretly by telephone.

⁶⁸ 'Defence of Semarang' 1946:2; Harclerode 1990:172; Zwaan 1985:106, 108 (though this survey lacks coherence and accuracy, mentioning 13 October instead of 12 October, for instance); Groen 1985:112-3; Drooglever 1987:48; and Broeshart et al. 1989:32, 34 (which confuses Lieut.-General Nagano Yūichirō with his predecessor, Lieut.-General Harada Komakichi). The Indonesian accounts of Bondan Sudharto (1976:126) and *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:105, 108-10) differ from this. They suggest that immediately after the transfer of 160 arms on the 12th and 13th (the transfer of the smaller quantity of arms according to Kido Butai having taken place on 5 October) the Indonesians demanded that Kido Butai should be completely disarmed. According to the latter source the case was then submitted by telephone to Nakamura in Magelang, who in turn consulted army headquarters in Djakarta. This account is based on the notes of Kempeitai Sergeant Tanaka, about whom it is most uncertain that he joined the delegation to Magelang, however. Tjokropranolo (1992: 50) presents yet another version, claiming that Kido Butai had already agreed to surrender its arms to him and his mission, but had changed its mind on hearing the news that Nakamura had been ill-treated in captivity. I searched in vain in the Indonesian sources for information on the role played by the Tjokropranolo mission. Besides, the news that Nakamura had been taken prisoner was received after Kido had informed the Indonesians that he refused to let his men be disarmed.

in-Chief of the Japanese Army forbidding the surrender of arms to Indonesians, even if it meant having to use force.

The state of affairs on October 12 was strikingly different from that on the 4th. Whereas on the 12th Kido, in accordance with Nakamura's Instruction of October 5, submitted the problem to Nakamura in the same way as on the 4th, on the latter date Nakamura had had no difficulty whatever in giving in to the Indonesian demands – speaking with hindsight, quite naturally, as he had then just received Army Order No. 1149 and prepared his own instruction. On October 12, on the other hand, the discussions took hours and Nakamura could not make up his mind. In view of the Army Order and his own Instruction of October 12, it should have been as easy to take a decision as on October 4. The question therefore is why the transfer of arms had suddenly become such a complicated problem to him that an order from Djakarta was required. Nakamura writes in his memoirs that he feels so bitter about the Semarang incident that he would sooner not write about it (Miyamoto 1973:151, 1986:337). The Kido Butai journal does not shed any light on this enigma, either. Here we are confronted with what I have chosen to term 'the secret of Major Kido'.

One may well wonder if Kido possibly used such strong arguments as to put Nakamura in an awkward position. Moreover, could it have been to prevent Nakamura losing face that the discussions of October 12 were not recorded in the Kido Butai journal? The Commander-in-Chief's unexpected order is an enigma as well.⁶⁹ Did Nakamura, at his wits' end, ask the Commander-in-Chief to take the decision in the expectation that he would stick to the policy previously outlined and would order Kido to give in to the Indonesian demands?⁷⁰ If so, then of course the order to open fire if

⁶⁹ See also Drooglever 1987:48. According to 'Defence of Semarang' (1946:2) it came in the form of a wireless instruction, but as Yamamoto declared that all communications had been cut off by the Indonesians on 7 October (RIOD IC 007153), Groen (1985:110, 112) has her doubts about this. In fact, Yamamoto still received a telephone call from Mabuchi in Bandoeng on 10 October (Miyamoto 1973:145; rendered as 'telegram' in Van Delden 1989:187). Nakamura indeed declared that he could not communicate by wireless at the time (RIOD IC 007108). As stated in 'Kido Butai Copies' (p. 41*), 'Kido Butai Shi' (1984:20), and 'Semarang' (1984:65), however, the instruction was sent not by wireless but by telegraph. See also Shibata 1986: 373, although the date of dispatch of the telegram mentioned here is 9 October. As Miyamoto (1973:151*) says, telegraphic communication was indeed still possible, but telegrams were subject to Allied censorship. If the telegraphic communications with Magelang were cut off at all, the Indonesians would certainly have had them restored, as it was in their own interests to obtain a favourable decision from Djakarta.

⁷⁰ Miyamoto (1973:151*, 461*) confirms that Nakamura repeatedly consulted army headquarters about the transfer of arms to the Indonesians on 12 October, but says nothing about the instruction to open fire. According to his account, army headquarters only stressed that both the transfer of arms and the use of force were forbidden. Kinoshita, however, does refer to the instruction to shoot (Shibata 1986:373). Goto, although well aware of this instruction (Goto 1984:42), in his discussion of the

necessary must have disappointed him bitterly, as Army headquarters had confirmed its instructions not to use force against the Indonesians still the previous day.⁷¹

In a personal interview with Major Kido in Kyōto on 19 August 1986, in which I asked him why he had persisted in his refusal to surrender his weapons to the Indonesians, he very definitely denied any connection with RAPWI requests. He explained that the original arms of the Japanese Army included rifles with the Imperial sixteen-petalled chrysanthemum engraved on them (Smith 1960:504; Honeycutt and Anthony 1983:11-3), indicating that they were the property of the Emperor. According to the rules of the Japanese Army, surrender of Imperial arms was absolutely impossible, as it was the duty of every soldier to fight to the death. Every Japanese soldier had learned to shield his rifle with his body if he was wounded. The weapons given to the Indonesians on October 4 and 5, on the other hand, were those with which the disbanded PETA had been armed. There were no serious objections to the surrender of these weapons, as they had been captured from the former KNIL.⁷² So Kido had merely acted out of a sense of duty, objecting to being disarmed by the Indonesians because of a strict adherence to the Japanese military code. For Kido Butai this was a matter of honour, therefore. As is pointed out in 'The Defence of Semarang', the prestige⁷³ of the Japanese Army and international faith were at stake here. Kido's feelings were strengthened by the Commander-in-Chief's order. As stated in the Hōkokusho, or daily report, he therefore decided at that moment to take action against the Indonesians if this was inevitable.⁷⁴ That is why Kido was already able to give the leader of the group of Japanese from Tjepiring details of his battle plan in the afternoon of 14 October.

condemnation of Kido's action by members of army headquarters, interestingly enough, refrains from pointing out that army headquarters itself had issued the instruction. He does not explain either why the meeting of 12 October ended in failure (Goto 1995:11, 16).

⁷¹ Miyamoto 1973:150, 1986:337. Tull had agreed to this policy, according to Nakamura. Shortly afterwards it was no longer possible to issue secret instructions (Miyamoto 1973:151-2*). Probably it was also because of this policy that Mabuchi had to restrict his operations in Bandoeng (Miyamoto 1973:144-5; Van Delden 1989:187-8).

⁷² See Miyamoto 1973:161*, 462* (to whom I am indebted for making photocopies of his book available to me in 1994), who also refers to the Kido Butai arms as weapons with the chrysanthemum emblem. Nugroho Notosusanto (1979:115) confirms that the PETA arms comprised weapons seized from the former KNIL.

⁷³ An aspect to which Goto's paper of 1995 has not given any attention is the hurt pride of the Japanese due to the way the Indonesians treated them after the capitulation of Japan (*Warta Indonesia*, 23 October 1945, 1-17:1; Bondan Sudharto 1976:136; *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:106; Nugroho Notosusanto 1979:140; Abrar Yusra and Ramadhan 1993:130). This may explain the ferocity of Kido Butai's action.

⁷⁴ 'Kido Butai Copies':41*; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:20. Compare also 'Semarang' 1984:65.

Therefore Tull, Overdijkink, Donnison, Anderson and others were right in saying that Kido Butai refused to be disarmed. All the Indonesian sources⁷⁵ referred to in this study confirm this, as they all discuss the Battle of Semarang in the context of attempts by the Indonesians to seize Kido Butai's arms. Remmelink, unaware of the distinction made by Miyamoto between the former PETA weapons and the arms engraved with the chrysanthemum emblem, views the PETA weapons, which in fact were captured KNIL weapons, as part of the arms of Kido's troops and therefore incorrectly supposes Kido Butai to have surrendered the majority of its arms to the Indonesians. And Mullaly and Woodburn Kirby's view of Kido Butai as a partially disarmed battalion was probably the result of Kido Butai's having mobilized and put into action several hundred unarmed Japanese civilians and civil administrators in the afternoon of 15 October, when the military operation was already well under way (see footnote 112).

Drooglever wonders whether the Japanese High Command in Djakarta had changed its policy or if the authorities in Magelang and Semarang had suddenly interpreted the High Command's announcements in a different way. A change of interpretation by Kido was out of the question, as he had adopted a definite stand of his own. Nakamura apparently was at a loss what to do about Kido's argument, as Kido referred so explicitly to the Emperor's emblem engraved on the arms.⁷⁶ The order to use force indeed represented a fundamental change of policy by the High Command.⁷⁷ Overdijkink (1946:66) reports that Vice-President Hatta warned all residents and National Committees on October 14 – just too late – to avoid

⁷⁵ In addition, I would refer to Dwipayana and Ramadhan 1989:30. Nasution (1977: 351), *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:133), and Hadiman and Suparmin (1985:65) all state explicitly that Kido Butai had remained fully armed.

⁷⁶ Dr. K. Posthumus has suggested that Kido refused to obey Nakamura's order to give in to the Indonesian demands and persisted in his refusal in Magelang (ARA AS 5470). In view of the strict hierarchy in the Japanese army, it seems unlikely that this was actually the case. In this army a subordinate could only ask his superiors how one rule should be interpreted in relation to another; see ARA AS 5195, Article 11. In other places the Japanese had solved their problem by filing off the Imperial chrysanthemum from the rifles (RIOD IC 006524).

⁷⁷ Strictly speaking, Army Order No. 1154 of 8 October, with its instructions to protect arms, ammunition depots and internment camps to the fullest extent (RIOD IC 065459:30), already represented a fundamental change in policy, although it was probably emasculated by the secret instruction not to use force against Indonesians. As stated in Remmelink (1978:62), this order had no influence in Semarang. Nakamura had indeed given no instructions for its implementation. I have found no reference to it or to Army Order No. 1153, concerning the Hawthorn Proclamation, in the 'Kido Butai Copies'. As we have seen, army orders in accordance with the military hierarchy were passed on to Kido Butai through Nakamura, and were recorded in the Kido Butai journal. According to 'Semarang' 1984:64*, Kido knew how to act because of the Hawthorn Proclamation, although this is probably just an argument with hindsight. If Kido had known of the Proclamation, he could easily have referred to it on October 12 in order to retain his arms.

armed clashes with the Japanese, as Army headquarters had given orders to respond to every instance of pressure by the Indonesians with force.⁷⁸ But in Kido's case this order only arrived after he had already made his views clear. According to Nakamura, the High Command had confirmed its policy against the use of force against the Indonesians only the day before. Hence it is most tempting to speculate that its volte-face was prompted by Kido's fundamental attitude. As the British had ordered the Japanese High Command eight to nine times on October 9 and 10 to take action against the Indonesians, and the British and Japanese Chiefs of Staff had a meeting in Djakarta precisely on October 12, the High Command probably could no longer avoid giving the relevant order when asked by Nakamura to take a decision about Kido's arguments against the surrender of arms to Indonesians.

When Kido Butai refused to hand over its arms, a clash was inevitable. Encouraged by their success in East Java and in several other places in Central Java, the Indonesians in Semarang became increasingly threatening. The defeat suffered in Bandoeng certainly also played a part in this.

Nugroho Notosusanto, who also interviewed Kido, did not succeed in getting to the crux of the matter. Kido's only explanation to him was that he realized he had to keep ahead of the Indonesians, who according to intelligence reports were planning an attack to seize Kido Butai's arms in which they would kill all who offered resistance (Nugroho Notosusanto 1979:140). The crux of the problem is, however, why the Indonesians in Semarang were so aggressive. This question in turn leads to another question, namely why Kido retained his arms so stubbornly. Probably because Nugroho Notosusanto did not have 'The Defence of Semarang' at his disposal and therefore did not know what happened on October 12, his formulation of the question in his interview with Kido was insufficiently clear. It remained a mystery to him why Kido Butai in Semarang fought the Indonesians, especially as another battalion of Nakamura's in Central Java, that of Major Yuda Mitsuomi in Poerwokerto, had no objection to peacefully⁷⁹ surrendering its arms to the former Daidanchō Soedirman.⁸⁰ The

⁷⁸ See also Zorab 1954:125. Friend (1988:219) was told by Hatta that Yamamoto had promised to surrender weapons after mock fights in which both sides would fire shots in the air. Of course Hatta had to be informed when genuine firing was decided on.

⁷⁹ When the Military Administration and the Kempeitai in Pekalongan clashed with the Indonesians, not only did the company of Yuda's battalion stationed there as Keibitai adopt an attitude of aloofness, but its commander even gave the Indonesians advice on how to lay siege to the Kempeitai (Lucas 1984:159, note 105)!

⁸⁰ According to Nalenan (1982:71-2) this took place on 23 October 1945, after Nakamura's permission was obtained. The Indonesians thus acquired arms for about six battalions (*Peranan TNI* 1965:65; *Sedjarah TNI* 1968:29; Nasution 1977:364), so that Soedirman's forces were the best equipped units of the entire Indonesian army, which was part of the reason for his being elected Commander-in-Chief shortly afterwards (Nasution 1955:111; 'Editorial note', Miyamoto 1986:338; Salim Said

Indonesians left these Japanese in peace, as did the British on their repatriation.⁸¹ Nugroho Notosusanto believes that this was all due to the faulty communications between the High Command and the units in the field. As he was told by Miyamoto personally that Army headquarters had issued explicit instructions against the use of force – it is strange that Miyamoto did not tell him about the order of 12 October to take action against the Indonesians, which he does not mention in his book, either – Nugroho Notosusanto (1979:141) assumes that the instruction did not reach Kido. As we now know, the facts were quite different. Moreover, Nugroho Notosusanto, L. de Jong (1986:599), and very recently also Goto (1995:20) overlook the fact that Kido and Yuda were in totally different positions. Yuda, unlike Kido, had no internment camps and therefore no RAPWI personnel who were dependent on him for their safety in his area. In Kido's case, on the other hand, the surrender of his arms would have meant depriving the internment camps and RAPWI of effective protection. My hypothesis therefore formerly was that Kido Butai persisted in its refusal to hand over its arms because, according to the Japanese military code of honour, it had a duty and a responsibility towards the ex-internees and other population groups (Han 1985:41). As is evident now, however, the military code of honour was indeed decisive, but in a more direct way because of the rule never to surrender one's arms. Because the duty to fight to the death no longer existed after Japan's capitulation, the rule against surrendering oneself or one's arms for Nakamura and Katō had probably lost its validity as well.⁸² So, differently from Kido, they felt that the safety of the internment camps would be better ensured if they

1986:47, 1991:13).

⁸¹ The Allies ordered the Japanese army headquarters to move Yuda Butai to Bandoeng, but it failed to pass the order on on the pretext that it was impossible to get through (Miyamoto 1973:152, 1986:338).

⁸² For the differences in the attitudes of the Japanese after the Japanese capitulation see ARA AS 5205; Zorab 1954:120-1; Goto 1984 (who on p. 20 curiously mentions the Kempeitai of Soerabaja as an example of Japanese surrendering without offering resistance); and Friend 1988:219. There were also instances of Japanese defecting to the Indonesians after faithfully carrying out the terms of the Rangoon Agreement. There is the example of a number of members of the Semarang Kempeitai breaking out of prison (whereby several were killed) because the Dutch military tribunals for war crimes – due to the misconception that the Japanese action in Semarang was prompted by the Boeloe massacre – refused to take their action into account (De Groot 1990:135-6, 375). One of them, Wada Kunishige (who had been in charge of the attack on the Boeloe prison and was now under sentence of death), moved in with a Chinese family, rather than actually going over to the Indonesian side. He was recognized and arrested after a traffic offence he committed while working as a taxi driver in Djakarta, but broke out of prison again, to be shot when found by a patrol (personal communication H.J. Janse, who arrested Wada). See also De Groot (1990: 62-4), who received this information through F. de Rochemont and reports that favourable testimonies given by Europeans were ignored by the military tribunal. Petitions for clemency were submitted as well.

refrained from the use of force and gave in to the demands of the Indonesians.

This being Nakamura's view, the obligation for Kido to protect the internment camps could not of course serve as an argument against the disarmament of his troops. The archives nevertheless clearly indicate that for Kido the responsibility for and protection of the camps and RAPWI indeed were a matter of honour.

As Remmelink explains, the Japanese Army in Java shortly after the capitulation of Japan decided to move its troops from areas which it expected to be occupied by the Allies. In Central Java, too, preparations for this removal were immediately begun. Nakamura issued the order accordingly as early as 24 August, designating Kalimas, Medini and Soemowono as areas of concentration for the Japanese in Semarang. On 4 September the first group of 26 men from Kido Butai and 100 men from Major Yagi's battalion, which had arrived from the Moluccas on 26 August, left for Soemowono, which was reserved for army units and where one platoon was already stationed. For the transportation of building-materials from Ambarawa to Soemowono a special transport unit was formed under the command of Captain Yamashiroya⁸³, who, as we have seen, on 14 October persuaded the garrison in Ambarawa to join the battle against the Indonesians. However, on 15 September Kido ordered 50 men to return to Semarang for the defence of the internment camps, followed on 23 September by another 15 men from Soemowono and 5 from Ambarawa to strengthen the Kempeitai ('Kido Butai Copies':18*, 23*; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:17-8). On 25 September Kido decided to stop the preparation of concentration areas and gave orders for the reinforcement of the guards at the railway station – at that time RAPWI was on the point of evacuating ex-internees from Ambarawa and Banjoebiroe to Soerabaja by train (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 45; RIOD IC 055795 (c):10-1; Schouten 1947:95) – and for sending a company of Yagi Butai back from Soemowono to Semarang.⁸⁴ When on 27 September the situation deteriorated – Kempeitai members had been stopped in the street and disarmed by Indonesians, whereupon Kido Butai saw to it that the arms were returned ('Kido Butai

⁸³ 'Kido Butai Copies':4-6, 10*; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:15-6. Yagi Butai was a unit of the 42nd Infantry Regiment of the 5th Division, which belonged to the 2nd Army. The latter had its headquarters near Makassar (Hayashi 1959:136). Oba (1979:10) and Fuller (1992:46, 65) point out that this division was stationed in the Moluccas. *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:112), Nugroho Notosusanto (1979:140), and L. de Jong (1986:599) assume that Yagi Butai came from Irian. According to Miyamoto (1973:147, 1986:334), Yagi Butai had little sympathy for the Indonesians, or even for the Japanese administrative apparatus or personnel in Java. As a result, the latter preferred separate concentration areas from those of the military, making effective communication and control very difficult for army headquarters.

⁸⁴ Keibitai Meirei 9-25 ('Kido Butai Copies':23-4*); see also *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:112.

Copies':27*; ARA AS 5207 (a)) – Kido decided to concentrate as many troops as possible in Semarang. Excepting some small units (among others that of Yamashiroya in Ambarawa), he withdrew his forces from Soemowono and Ambarawa.⁸⁵ That evening 101 men commanded by Captain Yamada arrived to assist Kido Butai with its duties for RAPWI ('Kido Butai Copies':31; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:19). Most remarkably, this was a detachment of Yuda Butai in Poerwokerto, which a month later rescued the Gurkhas in Magelang when they were surrounded by Indonesians!⁸⁶ Kido further instructed Yagi Butai to collect food for the camps, for which purpose ten lorries from Magelang were put at its disposal.⁸⁷ In the course of the transport of the food to the camps, however, the Japanese were obstructed by the Indonesians, who had set up various check-points ('Kido Butai Copies':32*; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:19). As is recorded in the Hōkokusho, or daily report, of Kido Butai, on September 30 they relieved Captain Wishart and a Dutch officer who had been harassed and disarmed by a mob of Indonesians.⁸⁸

True to his principles, Kido on September 25 intended obstructing the group of Pemuda that had raided the arms transport and the electricity company agency, but was forbidden by Lieutenant-Colonel Hirakawa, a member of Nakamura's staff, to do so because he regarded it as a matter for the Japanese Resident.⁸⁹ For the same reason Kido tried to dissuade the BKR leaders from claiming PETA arms on 3 October. His sense of responsibility for the safety of the camps undoubtedly was a decisive factor also on 12 October.

⁸⁵ 'Kido Butai Copies':27-28*; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:19; see also *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:113.

⁸⁶ Keibitai Meirei 10-31 11.00 ('Kido Butai Copies', without any page indication). British Indian reinforcements were also despatched to Magelang (SMG 0214-1A (b), No. 1, point 32; SMG 0214-1A (a), October 31 and November 1 and 5, 1945; Drooglever 1987:56; Broeshart et al. 1989:43), but it was the Japanese who rescued the besieged Gurkha company in Hotel Montagne (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 95; Mullaly 1957:393; 'Defence of Semarang' 1946:5; 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:34-5; Groen 1985:130, who incorrectly refers to Yamada as a Kempeitai captain). Therefore Doulton's view (1951:272) that the Japanese only lent important assistance for the first time on November 18, during the second Battle of Semarang, is most curious. Zwaan's description (1985:111) of the battle near the hotel lacks accuracy.

⁸⁷ Keibitai Meirei 9-28 ('Kido Butai Copies':30-1*). Compare RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 36.

⁸⁸ 'Kido Butai Copies' (p. 33*), which also contain a record of the incident whereby Netherlands Indies currency was circulated by the crew of a B-25 bomber. Probably the Indonesians arrested Wishart as a consequence. Schouten (1947:101) states that this incident occurred on 5 October, but confirms at the same time that the Indonesians besieged the RAPWI head office because of the incident.

⁸⁹ As is noted in the Hōkokusho, or daily report, referred to in the 'Kido Butai Copies' (pp. 24-5), in which Hirakawa's view is also reproduced (see also 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:18). Lieut.-Colonel Hirakawa Mutsuyuki, when interrogated on 30 October 1945, therefore referred his interrogators to the Semarang Shūchōkan (Resident of Semarang) for information on the arms of the police (ARA AS 5204 NAK-14).

Lastly, as Captain Akihira Kichirō, the *keibitai shunin* (officer in charge) of the garrison informed me⁹⁰, the military operation in Semarang on 15 October was executed in such a way as to divert the Pemuda from the internment camps in the eastern part of Semarang by provoking them to attack the rapidly advancing Kido Butai forces in the western part of the town. This diversionary tactic is not mentioned in the Kido Butai journal, though I personally consider it possible that Akihira had come to an arrangement with Yagi and Satō at the operational level. In my view the positions which Kido Butai had taken up after seventeen and a half hours of action against the Indonesians are indeed indicative of such a tactic. On the eve of the offensive Kido had decreed the following order of battle: three companies comprising 383 men and commanded by Major Yagi – the Sa Kōgekitai or Left-Wing Assault Group – were to proceed from Djatingaleh to Bodjong (in the western part of Semarang), while the targets of the U Kōgekitai, or Right-Wing Assault Group, consisting of 94 men and commanded by Captain Satō, were Djomblang, the Grand Theatre and Police Precinct I at Pandean (all in the eastern part of the town).⁹¹ At 9 p.m. on October 15 both unit commanders issued their respective instructions for the subsequent action from the positions then occupied. These instructions indicate that Yagi had by then advanced as far as the BPM building, half-way along the Bodjong Road, whereas Satō still was in Djomblang, and thus had captured only a minor portion of the eastern part of the town.⁹² Moreover, Satō had not met with any significant resistance on his way from Djatingaleh to Djomblang, according to the Indonesian sources (Bondan Sudharto 1976:141-2; *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:140), which do not contain any indications as to why it should have taken him seventeen hours to crush the resistance of the Pemuda at Djomblang, either, so that there seems to have been no reason whatever for him to restrict his advance on that day to Djomblang. Only in the evening did he order his troops to advance towards the Halmaheira internment camp, the Mlaten

⁹⁰ Interview at the Hakone Golf Club on 26 March 1974, and again at Ōizumi on 21 August 1986. Towards this end the Left-Wing Assault Group started its advance at 3 a.m., half an hour before the Right-Wing Assault Group. Kido stated to me on 19 August 1986 that he was ignorant of this tactic, referring to the 3.30 a.m. zero point of the assault order for both assault groups. Most intriguing is Bondan Sudharto's claim (1976:139) that the first shots were fired at the junction of Kenarilaan and Oei Tiong Bing-weg at 3 a.m.

⁹¹ Keibitai Meirei 10-14 20.30 ('Kido Butai Copies':52-61); 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984: 20-1, 24.

⁹² 'Sa Kōgekitai Meirei and U Kōgekitai Meirei 10-15 21.00' [Orders of the Left-Wing and Right-Wing Assault Groups respectively of 15 October, 9 p.m.] in 'Kido Butai Copies':79-80. The BPM building and the Stadstuin (Town Park) were referred to in Japanese as Kōtōhōin (Court of Justice) and Hōjin Shūkaijo (Civilian Club) respectively. Groen (1985:115) on her map has incorrectly indicated the BPM building at the beginning of the Bodjong Road opposite the Palace of Justice, where the NIS (Nederlands-Indische Spoorwegen) Building was located, instead of at the junction where she has, also incorrectly, marked in the Central Java Radio Station.

prison and the Grand Theatre, so that the capture of the last target, the police precinct at Pandean, then was still out of reach. In this connection it should be pointed out that, contrary to what is sometimes suggested in the literature⁹³, the Japanese in Semarang had not ceased guarding the internment camps to resume this only on October 15.

The way Kido deployed his troops for the benefit of RAPWI and the internment camps certainly cannot have escaped the notice of Wishart, the RAPWI commander in Semarang. I myself, contrary to Groen (see above), consider it quite possible that Wishart fully trusted Kido Butai and thus refrained from any attempt at influencing Kido to prevent the disarmament of his troops and ensure the protection of the camps. Kido has definitely denied having acted at the request of RAPWI, while Wishart himself has not mentioned this at all. Tull and Scholtens say nothing about it, either. Wherever the latter's 'Report on RAPWI Mid-Java activities' mentions the assistance given RAPWI by the Japanese, it appears to do so in quite positive and appreciative terms. The Japanese took care of the organization and transportation of supplies to the camps (RIOD IC 055795 (c):7). RAPWI's policy was to leave the Japanese supply service as much intact as possible. This worked out extremely well, enabling RAPWI to keep its own logistics department small and compact and thus to direct all its attention to supplementing the Japanese supplies. Enough food for one month was kept in storage, so that there was no danger of shortages (see also Schouten 1947:102). The Japanese purchased fresh vegetables, meat, eggs and fruit, and at a later stage obtained these by barter for cloth from their own stocks. They succeeded with a few interruptions in keeping their supply channels open (RIOD IC 055795 (c):16). Until its final evacuation, the Ambarawa camp lived on Japanese rations supplied by the Japanese in cooperation with RAPWI. The Japanese financed the supplies they purchased for the camps from their own funds. RAPWI considered this a fortunate state of affairs (RIOD IC 055795 (c):17). The 120 vehicles RAPWI had at its disposal until the Battle of Semarang had been mostly obtained from the Japanese (RIOD IC 055795 (c):14). There was Japanese assistance for the evacuation by rail to Soerabaja (RIOD IC 055795 (c):10-1), while according to another observer the guards did an excellent job (Schouten 1947:98). RAPWI received first-class service from the Japanese

⁹³ Groen 1985:111, 118; J.J.P. de Jong 1991:94. Groen's source (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 66) only mentions that Indonesian guards were placed alongside the Japanese camp guards at Ambarawa and Magelang, however. Her other source (RIOD IC 055795 (c):8) does not say that the camps were only guarded effectively from October 15 onward, either. According to the map in 'Kido Butai Shi' (1984:23) the positions on 14 October were as follows: the Halmaheira and Lampersari camps each had a *shō-tai* (of about 30 men = 1 platoon) for their protection, and the Bangkong camp two *bun-tai* (each of about 10 men = 1 section). Wehl (1948:48) and Rajendra Singh (1958:228) are not correct on this point, either.

in all respects (RIOD IC 055795 (c):22).⁹⁴ Moreover, there were no casualties in the camps in the Battle of Semarang due to effective Japanese action and protection (RIOD IC 055795 (c):8).

Rommelink 1978 (p. 63)⁹⁵ is the first publication to analyse the Japanese Army policy of withdrawal of its troops from the cities after the capitulation. Mainly on the basis of the incidents in Soerabaja, his conclusion is that by this withdrawal the Japanese Army in fact rendered itself incapable of keeping the situation under control in accordance with Mountbatten's orders. This conclusion rests on the assumption that the Japanese Army had already implemented this policy to a considerable extent at the beginning of September 1945.⁹⁶ As we have seen, the developments in Central Java were quite different. Kido's first troops left for Soemowono only on 4 September. He ordered troops back to Semarang already eleven days later, and abandoned the preparation of the concentration points altogether on 25 September. The majority of his troops had returned from Soemowono by 28 September. Although Rimmelink also discusses the

⁹⁴ Scholtens only complains that the 'Japanese transfer of arms was watched but could not be prevented' (RIOD IC 055795 (c):7). However, these arms were not handed over by Kido Butai but by the Resident's office. The only time RAPWI could observe a mob seizing arms from the Japanese from its head office in the BPM building at Bodjong was in the raid on an arms transport from the Residency's Department of Public Security on 25 September, which Kido Butai wanted to suppress. Groen (1985:106) assumes that this raid took place when the said department had to move out of the BPM building, as RAPWI needed it for its head office. Nothing is said about this by Scholtens (RIOD IC 055795 (c):6) or Schouten (1947: 94). According to both *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:98) and 'Semarang' (1984:58) the arms transport started from the rear gate of the main police station. ARA PG 745 also mentions the main police station at Bodjong as the place where the arms were seized. Its rear gate was visible from the BPM building at Karang Tengah.

⁹⁵ See also Squire 1979:59. Tull suggested already in 1945 that the withdrawal of their forces made it difficult for the Japanese to enforce law and order (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 25; see also Zorab 1954:123). Nevertheless, Tull's report in my view does not provide any evidence that their self-internment had this effect. According to Tull himself, the Japanese troops were sufficiently strong, so that there was no need for handing over their arms to the Indonesians (ARA AS 5204 NAK-1). In Magelang, the local Japanese commander was ready to take action. In Solo, the 1100 infantry were strong enough to keep the area fully under control (ARA AS 5204 NAK-10). The Mase Butai in Solo only interned itself after being disarmed (ARA AS 5208 (b); G.P.H. Djatikoesoemo as quoted in Bouman 1995:213; Broeshart et al. 1989:31). Van Velden (1963:457) does not report that the internment camps were endangered by the self-internment of the Japanese, either.

⁹⁶ Rimmelink 1978:54. See also the objections of J.J.P. de Jong (1988:72), who incorrectly attributes to Rimmelink a statement to the effect that the greater part of the Japanese Army had withdrawn in camps already at the end of August, assuming that Rimmelink derived this information from Japanese officers, whose purpose it was to obscure the actual role of the Japanese army. However, although Rimmelink indeed based his study to a large extent on Miyamoto's book, I could not find any reference in this book to how the Japanese self-internment was implemented.

Battles of Semarang⁹⁷ and Bandoeng⁹⁸, he does not seem to have realized that these Japanese military actions clearly testify that self-internment had not necessarily made the Japanese forces powerless. A recall of forces from the concentration points always remained possible.⁹⁹ To my mind it was primarily the instruction not to use force against the Indonesians that made the maintenance of order impossible for the Japanese forces. It further made obedience of the Allied order against the surrender of arms to the Indonesians impossible. It is incomprehensible that the British should only have discovered the existence of this instruction very late and then refrained from more vigorously pressing the Japanese to revoke it. Possibly this was due to their own attitude towards the Indonesians, as was accidentally revealed by Christison. Therefore I agree with J.J.P. de Jong (1988:71-95)¹⁰⁰ that the power vacuum in that period was caused not by

⁹⁷ Groen (1985:94, 96), although discussing the Kido Butai operations in detail, also suggests that the Japanese in Central Java rendered themselves almost powerless by their policy of self-internment without mentioning Kido Butai as an exception.

⁹⁸ Van Delden (1989:67-8), too, most curiously observes with regard to Bandoeng that self-internment contributed to the power vacuum there. However, Mabuchi called back his forces for his action, as Overdijkink (1946:65, who gives inaccurate figures, however) and Smail (1964:62-3, footnote 23) asserted. The Bandoeng garrison (as Van Delden herself (1989:58) points out) only comprised a battalion, so that it is impossible that it could have mustered the 2000 troops Mabuchi deployed against the Indonesians.

⁹⁹ Consequently, military action against the Indonesians was also still possible until 3 October in Soerabaja, in my opinion. J.J.P. de Jong (1988:84) denies this, assuming that the Indonesians by that time already had all the weapons in their possession. However, at that stage no large quantities of weapons had as yet been seized (see Nugroho Notosusanto 1985:21-9; Soejitno Hardjosoediro 1987:61-3). In contrast to the accounts about Banjoemas, most Indonesian sources on Soerabaja omit to mention the quantities of weapons captured (*Peranan TNI* 1965:66-71; Nasution 1977:370-7; Hadiman and Suparmin 1985:77-82). It is a fact that all four battalions of the East Java Command were then still fully armed. Only after the surrender of the East Java Commander, Major-General Iwabe Shigeo, to the Dutch Naval Captain Huyer and the transfer of their arms to the Indonesians by these battalions (Iwabe had to give orders accordingly to that in Malang separately (Nasution 1977:378-9), while the other in Besoeki objected (Miyamoto 1973:125; Rummelink 1978:60)) did the Indonesians have an enormous arsenal at their disposal. Frederick (1989:218) in my view is incorrect in assuming that this huge arsenal passed into Indonesian hands between September 2 and October 2. He refers to among others Woodburn Kirby (1969:331), but the figures the latter gives are for the total number of weapons seized in the whole of Central and East Java. His argument that the Indonesians were already in control of the town (Frederick 1989:267, note 1) is not valid, either, since the situation in Semarang was quite similar. I therefore fully agree with Rummelink that the role played by Huyer needs a full, critical examination. In my view, Huyer was obliged to continue urging Iwabe to take action. By ordering Iwabe to surrender, Huyer made it impossible in advance for the four battalions to take independent action in the same way as Kido Butai after the capture of Nakamura in Semarang. As not all persons concerned were heard at the Dutch parliamentary inquiry, contrary to what Drooglever assumes in the third thesis of his *De Vaderlandse Club* (1980), not all the facts were disclosed.

¹⁰⁰ I disagree with De Jong where he describes (p. 94) the British failure to imme-

the Japanese policy of self-internment¹⁰¹, but by the attitude of the British.¹⁰² It was also they who partially disturbed the status quo, which had been restored by the Japanese in Bandoeng and Semarang¹⁰³, after the arrival of their troops and so brought the Indonesian attacks in November on themselves. These they could only repel with the assistance of the Japanese¹⁰⁴, although Mountbatten had stressed the superiority of his forces only two months previously, at the surrender ceremony in Singapore!

The British, without any false shame and with typical fairness, made no attempt to obscure the great importance of Kido Butai's action, but sang the praises of the Japanese without restraint. So Tull wrote in his report: 'In the course of their fighting the Japanese, who fought with incredible gallantry despite losses which with most troops would have been prohibitive, in all cases protected the internment camps from molestation and released numerous Dutch and Eurasian captives from the jail'. He continued: 'If the

diately order Nagano and Yamamoto to surrender their swords as a blunder. De Jong compares the situation in Java with, among others, that in Sumatra and Indo-China. The Japanese Commander-in-Chief of Sumatra retained his sword till May 1946, however (Han 1995:45), while the Japanese Commander-in-Chief of South Indo-China also was allowed to keep his sword after the capitulation (Han 1982:9). To the Japanese the retention of their swords was essential for the exercise of authority. De Jong's story that Nagano and Yamamoto were arrested by the British but were released after offering their apologies is also inaccurate. According to Van der Wal (1971:274), the British threatened to arrest them, but refrained from doing so after they apologized. Only after the Indonesian attacks of November 1945 were they both arrested (and obliged to surrender their swords) and sent to Singapore for trial (Doulton 1951:279).

¹⁰¹ According to J.J.P. de Jong (1988:75, 94), Japanese self-internment had become a fact in October 1945. Like Rimmelink and other authors, he fails to wonder how the Japanese in Bandoeng and Semarang could have fought their battles.

¹⁰² Rinzema (1989:35, who on p. 40 refers to Yamamoto as being Nagano's superior!) contradicts J.J.P. de Jong on the basis of the sources cited by Groen from the Tull report. However, I have my doubts about the Tull report on this point (see footnote 95).

¹⁰³ Van Mook, letter to the Minister of Overseas Territories, Logemann, of 23 October 1945 (Van der Wal 1971:423). See also RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 88, and 'Defence of Semarang' 1946:6.

¹⁰⁴ Tull reports that shortly after their arrival, the British disarmed the Japanese in Semarang but allowed them to guard their own weapons (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 89). See also SMG 0214-1A (b), Report No. 1, point 32; SMG 0214-1A (a), letters of 31 October 1945, p. 1, and 5 November 1945, p. 1; Drooglever 1987:53; and Dennis 1987:190. Mullaly (1957:392), however, points out in his book on the Gurkhas in Semarang that, excepting some repatriated units, Kido Butai remained armed. I noted down in my diary on 27 October that news was circulating that Kido and his officers were to retain their swords. According to another story, the British provided certain Kido Butai units with British arms, like Bren guns and No. 5 rifles. On December 14, when the British were evacuating Ambarawa, I was astounded to see a Japanese column armed with these returning to Semarang. See Cross 1989:105 (although he, too, assumes that the Japanese were initially disarmed).

Japanese had not fought, the same kind of atrocities as occurred in Sourabaya would have befallen the internees in Semarang and Ambarawa. Moreover the small force of British ... would possibly have met with the same fate as the 49th Brigade in Sourabaya.¹⁰⁵ Captain D.B. Friend, adjutant of the Gurkha battalion that landed in Semarang on 19 October, expressed the opinion that 'There is little doubt that the internees at Semarang owed their lives to Kido and his men, for it was they who prevented the Indonesians from capturing the camps and massacring the inmates before the arrival of British troops' (Mullaly 1957:391; see also ARA PG 1112:3-4). As Brigadier K.T. Darling put it, 'In fact it is true to say that by their actions a very large number of British and Dutch lives have been saved' (Darling 1946), and 'there is no doubt that, owing to the shortage of British troops at that time in Semarang, it would not have been possible to operate without these Japanese forces' (IWM, Darling 1946:3). So for their commitment even after the arrival of the Indian forces the highest praise was also bestowed. Brigadier R.B.W. Bethell, in his letter to Kido of 17 December 1945 (reproduced herewith; see also 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:38), described their work as 'magnificent', while in the opinion of M.W. Denning, Chief Political Advisor to Mountbatten, who was assigned to Christison, the Kido Butai 'displayed as much gallantry and devotion to duty at the behest of the British as they had in the days of their own arrogant domination' (as quoted by Dennis 1987:226). According to the official British historian, 'the situation in Semarang might have been worse but for the assistance given by Major Kido'.¹⁰⁶ In November news went about in Semarang that the British were so impressed by the Japanese that they had recommended one of their commanders for a royal decoration.¹⁰⁷

The 'Report of Medical Section RAPWI Mid-Java', which presumably was written by Dutch officials, also points out that the Japanese 'restored peace and order in Semarang in an excellent manner, thereby preventing

¹⁰⁵ RIOD IC 007417-007453, Nos 73, 76. Indonesians, too, were rescued by Kido Butai, as, for instance the father and brothers of Van Mook's second in command, R. Abdoelkadir Widjoatmodjo. As he told me, they were kept in custody in Gergadji. After their release, he received a telegram from the Japanese informing him that they had been taken to safety. Kido Butai even offered to guard their house, but the family had declined this. Shortly after that a brother, Doctor Aboebakar, was abducted by the Pemuda and killed.

¹⁰⁶ Woodburn Kirby 1969:321. The author informs the reader of the 49th Brigade's order of battle in Semarang on 15 December 1945 in footnote 2, p. 338: '4/5th Mahrattas, 2nd Kumaon Regiment (late 2/19th Hyderabad), 3/10th Gurkhas, "A" Squadron 11th Cavalry (light tanks), 6th Indian Field Battery, one troop 2nd Indian Anti-Tank Regiment, Kido Battalion and a proportion of divisional engineer, supply and workshop units'. This seems really unique for a book on the war *against* Japan.

¹⁰⁷ Christison, in his unpublished memoirs, p. 181, writes that Kido was actually recommended for a British DSO (Distinguished Service Order). Kido wrote to me in a letter of 20 October 1988 that Bethell had recommended Kido Butai as a unit for a decoration. The decoration was not awarded, however.

in a place of honour
to remind me of the
magnificent work of
you and the Kido Butai
while under my command
at Semarang.

I wish you all the
very best of luck.

Yours sincerely,

R.B.W. Bethell.

Brigadier.

17 Dec 45.

H.O. RA 23 hnd Bn.

S.E.A.C.

Dear Major Kido.

I wish to thank
you and all the officers
under your command
for the present of the
Sword which you so
kindly made to me.
I shall keep it in my house.

Letter from Brigadier R.B.W. Bethell to Major Kido (reproduced by courtesy of the latter)

the killing of the loyal population as a whole' (RIOD IC 055795 (c):78). As the Dutch Lieutenant-Governor-General Van Mook so aptly put it, Kido Butai's action caused the European internees' aversion to the Japanese due to years of maltreatment and humiliation in the camps to suddenly change to a kind of gratitude and admiration.¹⁰⁸ The same was true of other population groups, who either invited ex-internees to stay with them or rendered assistance in some other way. 'We owed our lives to our enemies'¹⁰⁹ is a saying that applied to many. Major Scholtens¹¹⁰, although himself a Japanese ex-prisoner of war, in his reports gradually switched over from the adjective 'Japanese' to 'Nipponese', a term which the Japanese preferred and which accordingly was compulsory during the occupation, but which everybody disliked.

Most interestingly, Dutch historians like Groen (1985:116), followed by Rinzema (1989:32), are much more critical of Kido Butai's military operation. In Groen's opinion, Kido was very passive and indecisive. When on the morning of 14 October the Indonesians started arresting European and Eurasian males outside the camps, RAPWI officials and others, he did nothing. According to Groen's account, Kido agreed to the Pemuda's moving Japanese from Tjepiring to Semarang so as not to irritate the Indonesians. He remained equally passive when the Indonesians detained the Japanese detachment at the airfield and moved it at 12 noon. He failed to come into action even after hearing from Lieutenant Ishida that Nakamura in Magelang had been surrounded and captured by the Indonesians and – Groen assumes – after receiving Tull's request for action from him.

¹⁰⁸ Van der Wal 1971:423. Quite naturally, not everyone appreciated Japanese protection in the beginning (Van der Wal 1973:483; Bosdriesz and Soeteman 1985:65; De Kadt 1978:142). In Semarang, however, people soon felt more secure under this protection than under that of the British Indian forces; see Boissevain and Van Empel 1991:306. My own family had the same experience. I noted in my diary that from 14 November the protection of Nieuw Tjandi was Kido Butai's responsibility again. This is confirmed by 'Defence of Semarang' 1946:6. Groen (1985:137), although referring to this report, gives 16 November as date, while according to ARA PG 745 it was 15 November. A Japanese unit, Fuse Buntai, was stationed near our house, and on 14 December was replaced by a machine-gun section of the 6/8 Punjab Regiment. Whereas the British Indian guard always used to retreat into the building at sunset and when it rained, the Japanese sentry always remained outside, also at night! We very often heard them patrolling in our garden. For Sumatra, see Burghardt-De Boer 1983:185; see also Ferguson 1976:249, 251, 1983:5. Most strangely, the Brigadier's residence in Semarang was also guarded by Japanese, rather than by his own forces (IWM, Darling 1946:4)!

¹⁰⁹ Keizer-Heuzenveldt 1982:77; see also Van Baal 1985:368, 1989:512; and Boissevain and Van Empel 1991:305.

¹¹⁰ RIOD IC 055795 (b). See also Helfferich-Koch (1981:231-2, 235), who states that the first British forces arriving in Ambarawa were assisted by 'Nipponners'. As regards the Japanese acting as vanguard to the Gurkhas, see Remmelink 1978:63; Zwaan 1985:108; Bosdriesz and Soeteman 1985:70; Hadiman and Suparmin 1985:125; Tjokropranolo 1992:53; *War History Series* 1976:13.

Kido continued to waver when at about 10 p.m. he was informed that the Indonesians had arrested a group of unarmed Japanese in town, among others those from the Tjepiring steel factory, and had shot a number of them to prevent their escaping. Only after the Indonesians set an ammunition depot on fire at 3 a.m. on 15 October did Kido launch his attack.

As Groen based her study exclusively on sources in the Netherlands, quite understandably many of her questions remained unanswered, and therefore she could not but draw negative conclusions. That Kido should have been hesitant or indecisive is absolutely out of the question, however.

Firstly, it was not Kido who decided on the removal of the Japanese from Tjepiring to Semarang on October 12. The official who had taken the decision was Kataoka *sanjikan* (counsellor) of the Resident's office. These Japanese were subordinate not to Kido, but to the head of the construction department of the Resident's office, Morimoto *shiseikan* (civil administrator). Kido had only been involved in their removal inasmuch as they were initially to be temporarily stationed in the Kido Butai barracks in Djatingaleh awaiting further transportation to Temanggoeng. The Indonesian police had objections to this, however, possibly because they expected trouble from Kido Butai, and instead allocated the former nautical college at Djalan Pandanaran as a reception centre for them.¹¹¹ Only on 15 October, at 3 p.m., when the Battle of Semarang was already in full swing, did Kido mobilize all the Japanese, including the Resident and his staff, the Kempeitai, and the Japanese of Tjepiring, and bring them under his command.¹¹²

When Kido¹¹³ heard at around 9 a.m. on 14 October that the Indonesians had arrested the RAPWI officials, as well as a number of Europeans and others, he wanted to report this to Nakamura immediately. The Indonesians had cut off telephone communications with Magelang, however, while communication by radio was also impossible. He then ordered Captain Yamashiroya, who was stationed in Ambarawa, by telephone to dispatch a patrol to Magelang to find out what had happened. As we know, Kido had already decided on 12 October, after receiving the instruction of the Japanese Commander-in-Chief in Djakarta not to sur-

¹¹¹ 'Semarang' 1984:69. The source consulted by Groen does not at all suggest that Kido agreed to the removal.

¹¹² Keibitai Meirei 10-15 15.00 ('Kido Butai Copies':71-6); 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984: 25. More than 600 of them were armed with pointed bamboo stakes, with which many Indonesians were killed. ARA PG 1112:4 states that a number of Indonesians committed suicide using this weapon when Hotel du Pavillon was captured by the Japanese, rather than surrender to the latter. However, nothing is said about this in the Indonesian sources. Most probably these Indonesians were killed by Japanese armed with bamboo spears.

¹¹³ 'Kido Butai Copies':41-2*; see also 'Kido Butai Shi' 1984:21, and 'Semarang' 1984:67-8.

render any arms and if necessary to defend these weapons by taking the offensive, to launch an attack as soon as this became inevitable. Out of respect for the military hierarchy, however, he deemed it necessary to inform Nakamura of the events in Semarang first.

When the Indonesians detained the Japanese airfield garrison, Kido was still awaiting news about the incidents in Magelang. And after Lieutenant Ishida, a member of Captain Yamashiroya's unit, informed Kido about Magelang, Major Katō at Ambarawa still had to be persuaded to join the battle. Moreover, it should not be overlooked by a military historian that the Japanese Army in general preferred night attacks.¹¹⁴ For these two reasons as well Kido did not take action when news about the arrests of Japanese civilians reached him in the early evening, or when shots were heard in town later.

As regards Kido Butai's ammunition depot being set on fire by the Indonesians at 3 a.m. on 15 October, the Japanese-language archives show that the Indonesians fired shots at it at 3.20 a.m., but did not set it alight.¹¹⁵ The Indonesian sources, most remarkably, do not mention this incident at all, although it would undeniably have been an Indonesian feat worth mentioning in every respect. On the contrary, according to these sources the first clashes between Kido Butai and the Pemuda only occurred at New Tjandi and Djomblang after Kido Butai had taken the offensive.¹¹⁶ Possibly a shot was fired accidentally near the Kido Butai barracks, and Kido Butai seized on this in its report to explain to its Japanese superiors and to the Indonesians that it had had no other option but to fight, as the Indonesians had attacked first.¹¹⁷ 'Defence of Semarang' and other later accounts very conspicuously omit to mention that Kido had set zero-hour 3.30 a.m.

¹¹⁴ See Lory 1943:54, who points out that the rapidity with which Hongkong and Singapore fell was due in part to the Japanese launching their main assault at night, whereas the British expected it at dawn. See also *Handbook* 1944:97 (in which the night attack is described as the traditional Japanese method and a speciality of the Japanese army); Warner 1973:13; Meirion and Susie Harries 1991:279-81; Dunnigan and Nofi 1995:252. Bondan Sudharto (1976:140) describes the tactic as '*remi koheki*'(?).

¹¹⁵ Whereas 'Defence of Semarang' (1946:3) states that the Indonesians 'started fire at the ammunition dumps' (Drooglever 1987:49 nevertheless interprets this correctly), the Japanese version (p. 43) mentions shots being fired at the ammunition dumps, so that the English translation should have read: 'started firing at the ammunition dumps'. This is in accordance with the oral explanation which the commanders of the assault groups were obliged to give their men ('Kido Butai Copies':68). The time mentioned for the incident in the 'Kido Butai Copies' and 'Kido Butai Shi' (1984:26) is 3.20 a.m.

¹¹⁶ Bondan Sudharto 1976:137, 139-142; *Sejarah pertempuran* 1977:110, 133, 140. See also Nasution 1977:352; Nugroho Notosusanto 1979:140-1.

¹¹⁷ As indeed Drooglever (1987:49) interpreted the situation. Soltau also understood from the Japanese that they had been obliged to return the Indonesians' fire (ARA PG 1112:2). Wishart's report deviates from this, however.

already at 2 a.m. It is a coincidence indeed that the Indonesians started firing just a few minutes before zero-hour!

Where Groen criticizes Kido for not launching his attack much sooner, one would expect her to judge the attack itself positively. There is nothing further from the truth, however. Firstly, she points out that there was the danger of reprisals against all those whom the Indonesians had arrested on 14 October – which, as the Boeloe massacre has proved, was a far from imaginary danger. As a result she fails to understand why Kido even so decided to fight the Indonesians when they – she assumes – set his ammunition depot on fire. In addition there was the risk of repercussions elsewhere. As it happens, the Indonesians took revenge on large numbers of Japanese in several other places.¹¹⁸ Groen concedes that the Pemuda were too busy fighting the Japanese in Semarang to harass the internment camps in Ambarawa and Banjoebiroe (where the situation deteriorated only after the Gurkhas occupied Ambarawa and Magelang¹¹⁹). She believes that the military actions had to be concentrated on Semarang to be successful and restrict the dangers for the internees, as Ambarawa and Banjoebiroe were much more difficult to defend. Nevertheless, the negative effect of Kido Butai's operation in her opinion was that there were no Japanese in authority in those places, so that the internees and other prisoners were left completely unprotected. On the other hand, Kido's original plan to launch an attack in all three places – Semarang, Ambarawa and Banjoebiroe – simultaneously is not likely to meet with Groen's approval, either, as she considers Ambarawa and Banjoebiroe unsuitable for military operations (Groen 1985:114, 116, 118, 119).

At the end of her article (Groen 1985:154), in the evaluation of the actions of the British and British Indian forces, Groen is very sympathetic towards these, although she certainly does not close her eyes to the many shortcomings of British policy, but says that in the given situation the British had no other alternative. She praises their forces for assisting and defending the internees with valour and tact, without saying a word about the Japanese, even though the figures she herself adduces (Groen

¹¹⁸ On Djokja see RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 82, IV; SMG 0214-1A (a), 22 October 1945; for Soerabaja see Nugroho Notosusanto 1985:40; Frederick 1989:242; and on the slaughter of 86 Japanese navy personnel in Bekasi, see RIOD IC 006762; *War History Series* 1976:13; Anderson 1972:148-9. Contrary to the editors of Miyamoto 1986 (p. 369), I do not believe that the murders in Bekasi were a reaction to the Japanese take-over of Bandoeng, as the Battle of Semarang was of a more recent date.

¹¹⁹ According to Woodburn Kirby (1969:321), who incorrectly assumes that Kido Butai was garrisoned in Ambarawa and moved from there to Semarang, the situation in Ambarawa and Magelang grew worse after Kido started battle. This information he drew from Mullaly 1957:391. It becomes evident from Mullaly's book, however, that the deterioration of the situation had no connection with the campaign. As Tull reports, the situation only worsened after the Gurkhas occupied Ambarawa and Magelang (RIOD IC 007417-007453, No. 92 ff.).

1985:153) for the British and Indians killed, when compared with those for the Japanese (50 to 206), clearly indicate that the Japanese had a much greater stake in these military operations than the British and British Indians, especially where fewer Japanese were deployed.

As Groen only briefly touches on the important positive effects of Kido's military action, one cannot avoid the impression when reading her analysis that with her the risks and damages of this action weighed more heavily. She is probably of the opinion that it would have been better if Kido had followed Nakamura's policy and allowed the Indonesians to disarm his troops peacefully – a point of view one would expect from the Indonesians. Nevertheless, I have not come across any explicit statement to this effect. As an Indonesian historian (Abu Su'ud 1995) puts it, the Indonesians take a positive view of the battle. Although they suffered a devastating defeat, it was in this battle that they first acted as a nation ready to fight for its independence. This was of enormous importance for their attempts to achieve their goal by diplomacy and to win international recognition. A different stance is taken by those contemporary Japanese who focus on Japan's important contribution to Indonesian independence and, of course, condemn Kido's resort to arms (Goto 1995), entirely ignoring the Japanese military code of honour.

If Groen had considered the passages from English and Dutch texts cited above, she would have realized how precarious the situation was for certain sections of the population at that time. In this situation the Dutch staked everything to restore their power in Indonesia¹²⁰, as a result of which the Pemuda came to pose a genuine threat, trying to seize as many weapons as possible from the Japanese. Kido, on the other hand, in consequence of Mountbatten's order was responsible for public order and for the safety of the camps in Semarang. Under these circumstances a surrender of arms by him would have meant ignominiously leaving the internees as well as several other population groups to the mercy of the Indonesians. For the people in Semarang at the time this was a frightening prospect, as the Pemuda at that stage were not yet well organized or disciplined, so that it was uncertain whether the Indonesian government would be able to get them under control and prevent anarchy. All those who were afraid of Pemuda actions felt enormously relieved when Kido Butai proceeded to take the offensive.

Finally, it is highly doubtful whether all the risks to which Groen points were of relevance to Kido. As war historian Coox puts it, 'risk, as a cor-

¹²⁰ Wishart and Soltau put forward the view that the Indonesians in Semarang began their action on 14 October after receiving a telegram from Soerabaja warning them that RAPWI was just a cover-up for the Dutch imperialists (RIOD IC 055795 (d); ARA PG 1112:1; see also Schouten 1947:103). They in fact started by arresting Dutch citizens and RAPWI officials, and only later that day proceeded to arrest Japanese in general.

relate of strategic objectives, stakes and consequences, is not a word that one finds in the ordinary vocabulary of the Japanese military' (as cited by Meirion and Susie Harries 1991:286). It is a well-known fact that the Japanese forces never attached much importance to the risk of casualties. An argument like that advanced by Vice-Admiral Shibata (1986:357) in Soerabaja, namely that military action would endanger the Japanese dispersed in the town, was in conflict with the Japanese military code.¹²¹ What was most important was to do one's duty. As we have seen, Kido had already made up his mind on October 12, after receiving confirmation of his position from the Commander-in-Chief in Djakarta, that it was his duty and a matter of honour to hold on to his weapons and defend the camps and RAPWI. As regards the reprisals against Japanese soldiers elsewhere¹²², under the Japanese code of honour these soldiers had only themselves to blame, having rendered themselves defenceless by their surrender. Allowing oneself to be disarmed was an immense disgrace. And of course for Kido it was absolutely out of the question to sacrifice the camps for which he was responsible for the safety of internees and prisoners elsewhere. After all, it was not Kido but Katō who had deprived Ambarawa and Banjoebiroe of Japanese protection.

Hopefully this article, in providing information from archives that have hitherto been inaccessible, will contribute to a better understanding of the Battle of Semarang, which took place fifty years ago. In this battle the same *bushidō* (see Nortier 1985:70-1) that made the Japanese such dreaded and ruthless opponents of the Allies, imposed on the Japanese the duty to protect their former enemy with their own lives.¹²³

¹²¹ As Frederick (1989:267, note 1) points out, Vice-Admiral Shibata lay himself open to serious criticism in Japan for handing over weapons to the enemy – a serious violation of the military code. For the same reason Chief of Staff Yamamoto, according to Friend (1988:219), denied having come to any agreement with the Indonesians about mock fights for the sake of obtaining weapons from the Japanese.

¹²² According to *Sejarah pertempuran* (1977:168; see also Bondan Sudharto 1976:173), the Japanese attempted on 16 October to negotiate a truce with the Indonesians out of fear for the safety of the Japanese prisoners at Ambarawa. As the Japanese insisted that the Indonesians surrender all their arms, however, this seems to have been their main motive. According to Soltau, this was for the sake not of the prisoners at Ambarawa but of those in the Boeloe prison, who at the time were believed to be exclusively Europeans and Eurasians (ARA PG 1112:2). Wongsonegoro was obliged to order the Pemuda to cease fighting and release these prisoners. The 'Kido Butai Copies' say nothing about any attempt at negotiating a truce. On the contrary, the various Keibitai Meirei indicate that the Japanese were continuing their operations with unflagging zeal.

¹²³ According to figures published by Kido Butai, in the period of 15-20 October 1945 there were 42 Japanese killed and 43 wounded, and 213 went missing. These figures do not include the Boeloe casualties, namely 108 killed (of whom 96 were identified), 18 wounded, and 18 missing ('Kido Butai Shi' 1984:32; 'Semarang' 1984:79).

ABBREVIATIONS USED

ARA AS	Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, records of the former Algemene Secretarie.
ARA PG	Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague, records of the former Procureur-Generaal bij het Hooggerechtshof van Nederlands-Indië.
BKR	Badan Keamanan Rakjat (Indonesian Organization for the People's Security).
IWM	Imperial War Museum, London.
KNIL	Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger (Royal Netherlands Indies Army).
NEFIS	Netherlands East Indies Forces Intelligence Service.
PETA	Pembela Tanah Air (Army for the Defence of the Fatherland).
RAPWI	Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees.
RIOD IC	Documents at the Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie, Amsterdam, Indische Collectie.
SMG	Documents at the Sectie Militaire Geschiedenis Landmachtstaf (Army Staff, Military History Section), The Hague.
TNI-AD	Tentara Nasional Indonesia, Angkatan Darat (National Indonesian Armed Forces, Army).

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