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## Recent Dutch-Language Publications

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Norbert Peeters, *Rumphius' Kruidboek: Verhalen uit de Ambonese flora*. Zeist: KNNV Uitgeverij, 2020, 256 pp. ISBN: 9789050117470, price: EUR 29.95 (paperback).

Georg Everhard Rumpf, better known as Rumphius (1627–1702), was born in Hesse (now Germany). He served with the VOC and was stationed as a military officer in Ambon in 1652. In 1657 he changed his position to that of a prestigious VOC merchant. He was to stay in Ambon his whole life, not least since from 1660 he became more and more involved in his studies of the botany of Ambon and the other Moluccan Islands. He collected plants and described and systematized them. He also made magnificent drawings in color. The VOC appreciated his work and subsidized it. Rumphius himself suffered from an eye illness, which caused blindness. Nonetheless, with the help of assistants, he worked on. In 1692 the *Kruidboek* (Book on herbs) was ready. The VOC forbade its publication as it might contain useful information for competing colonial companies. Its twelve volumes were only printed from 1741 until 1750. These contained descriptions of 1,700 species and 700 illustrations. His name as a prominent botany scholar was herewith solidly established. The book's author Peeters (1985), who studied botanical philosophy, tells Rumphius' life story, but moreover selected fifteen plants for a separate chapter. In a mix of Rumphius' remarks and Peeters own comments from a botanical, cultural, anthropological, historical or fictional viewpoint, an instructive, very legible and entertaining tour de force is accomplished. Coconut palm, sago palm, betel tree, areca palm, nutmeg, clove tree, banyan tree, kanari tree, upas tree, pitcher plant, banana tree, ginger plant, orchid flowers (in Indonesian *anggrek*, here misspelled as *angrek*) and a few more plants are allotted a chapter. There is also room to write on his findings in the bush and on the sea shore, which found their way to other scholarly books Rumphius wrote, all published posthumously.

Mary Eggermont-Molenaar (ed.), *Averij en tijgers: Memoires en brieven van generaal Willem Schenck, Java 1815–1841*. Ingeleid en geannoteerd door Mary Eggermont-Molenaar. Leiden: Ginkgo, [2020], 159 pp. ISBN: 9789071256868, price: EUR 20.00 (paperback).

Willem Schenck (1772–1846), born into a well-to-do family, with a record of service to the House of Orange, chose to follow a military career which mirrored the vicissitudes of revolution and restoration up until the Battle of Waterloo. In this battle he was involved with his unit as an auxiliary. In 1816 he was sent to the Dutch East Indies as a lieutenant colonel, along with his unit. His ship was part of a squadron of six that was to formally restore Dutch sovereignty on the Indies, as the British relinquished their hold on the area. Schenck steadily rose in the colonial ranks. As a subcommander he was active in the Java War (1825–1830). He came into conflict with the commander-in-chief Hendrik Merkus de Kock. (In Bossenbroek's book, discussed in the previous issue of *BKI*, Schenck is not mentioned.) He was granted a leave, and next returned to the Indies. He was pensioned in 1836, and wrote an extensive autobiography. Editor Eggermont-Molenaar adds two documents to this biography. Schenck kept a diary of his journey from Amsterdam to Batavia in 1814–1815 that took seven months. From July to September 1841 he made an inspection tour, on special request of the Governor General, to report on the state of the armed indigenous units that were employed by the local rulers. He wrote eight letters to the sister of his daughter-in-law about his daily experiences. In general he does not delve deeply, but his letters give insight in the life of high Dutch officials and Javanese aristocrats. He gives an interesting account of a fight between tiger and a water buffalo (*kerbau*), staged especially for him.

The editor has spared no pains to research her subject, as 270 footnotes attest. Additional aids, such as family trees, introductions, summaries, bibliographies and an index, are all included. The notes contain numerous short biographies of Dutch members of elite families. The book is well-illustrated. In short, a book for connoisseurs.

Michiel van Kempen (ed.), *Het andere postkoloniale oog: Onbekende kanten van de Nederlandse (post)koloniale cultuur en literatuur*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2020, 320 pp. ISBN: 9789087048655, price: EUR 32.00 (paperback).

In April 2019, a colloquium was organized to commemorate twelve and a half years of the Chair for Dutch Caribbean Letters of Amsterdam University. The 24 contributions are collected in this book, edited by Michiel van Kempen who

held the Chair all these years. The pieces, of a heterogeneous nature, share the intent to offer a view about some surprising aspects of (post)colonial culture and literature. The majority of them, understandably, are concerned with Caribbean matters. A broadminded approach allowed for the inclusion of no less than eight pieces with an East Indies emphasis. Among these are the particulars of a German-language book published in 1779 by a Hungarian who related his VOC experiences (by Gábor Pusztai), a biography of female novelist M.C. Frank (1838–1891) and her daughter Josephine (1860–1926), who became well-known as J.M.J. Catenius-van der Meijden, writer of popular cookbooks (Adrienne Zuiderweg), and an analysis of the novel *President Dramakutra* (1957) of H. van Galen Last (Remco Raben). Moreover, Kees Snoek wrote on Sjahrir and Jacqueline Bel on the *njai*. Together this wide variety offers reading-matter for a wide (semi-)scholarly audience.

Anita van Dissel, Jan Hoffenaar and Elsbeth Locher-Scholten (eds), *Wat een vondst!: Verhalen uit de geschiedenispraktijk*. Amsterdam: Boom, 2020, 272 pp. ISBN: 9789024436569, price: EUR 29.90 (paperback).

In this *liber amicorum* for military and colonial historian Petra Groen on the occasion of her retirement, fifteen historians tell about a find that made an important impact on their research agenda and influenced the contents and analysis of it. These finds include a photograph, a poem, a meeting, archival documents, and more. Of the contributions on colonial history and beyond seven concern the East Indies/Indonesia. Anita van Dissel discovered letters of Jaques Vosmaer (1803–1836) in which he critically reports about Dutch policies, especially on Celebes, where he was posted. Mark Loderichs discusses the relative importance of mobile warfare and erection of forts in the Java War (1825–1830). The sad fate of three sons of Batak aristocrat Si Singamangaradja XII is reconstructed by Elsbeth Locher-Scholten. After their father was killed by the Dutch in 1907, they were under close supervision and successfully ‘brain-washed’ to become loyal subjects of the colonial state. However, they still were suspect and for decades were banned from their Batak homeland. Esther Zwinkels evaluates the administration of justice by Japanese courts in Indonesia, which, she concludes, was not altogether a mockery. Thijs Brocades Zaalberg discovered a rare diary of a Dutch platoon commander who gave a frank and critical account of the decolonization war at a grassroots level. He was stationed in West Java. He relates instances of excessive violence, which he attributes to racialism, World War II experiences and the nature of a guerrilla war. Cyrille Fijnaut reports on the process that ultimately led to a seven-volume

series on police history in the Netherlands and Eastern and Western colonies. Elly Touwen-Bouwsma relates her search for buildings in the Netherlands with a colonial link. Until today 12 walking guides have been compiled and are available via the attractive website [www.koloniaalerfgoedtevoet.nl](http://www.koloniaalerfgoedtevoet.nl)

Guus Veenendaal, *De spoorwegen in Nederlands-Indië 1864–1942*. Zwolle: WBooks, 2020, 280 pp. ISBN: 9789462584099, price: EUR 34.95 (hardback).

The railways in the Netherlands Indies have figured prominently in the list of Dutch achievements in the Indies. Photographs of steam locomotives in the tropical mountains were impressive and reproduced on a grand scale. However, a serious study of these means of transport, essential for the functioning of the Indies economy, is long overdue. Before he retired in 2005, the historian Veenendaal (1940) worked as a historian with the Nederlandse Spoorwegen (Dutch Railways) and published amply on his subject. His present title details the development of the Indies railways. A continuous feature from the first plans to build railways was whether the railways should be built and operated by private initiative or by the state. This was part of a discussion in the Netherlands on the financing of infrastructural works. A divided Dutch Parliament delayed the decision. In the end private initiative (most important the Nederlandsch-Indische Spoorweg Maatschappij, later Java Spoorweg-Maatschappij) and State Railways (Java Staats Spoorwegen) together covered Java. In 1872 the first substantial railway, from Semarang to Yogyakarta was opened. On Sumatra, separate networks were developed in Deli, Aceh, West and South Sumatra. In 1939, the total length of Indies railways was 7583 km. Next to this an estimated 12,000 km were operated locally or by a plantation. The numerous tramways were very popular and the result of private investment.

Veenendaal concentrates on the long discussions to establish a specific railroad and the difficult construction of the railways, which required numerous bridges and other infrastructural works. He has a lot of attention for the locomotives. In total, 1721 steam-powered trains built by 24 factories were imported and put to use in the Indies. Of special importance was the debate on the rails gauge to be used. An agreement was difficult to reach, with the result that at least three gauges were used, necessitating costly adjustments. Veenendaal is a real expert, and with a lot of illustrations, maps, bibliography, notes, and index, this book is up to the standards. An English edition of this book is forthcoming from Indiana University Press.

Still, there are shortcomings. The book is predominantly a history of technical progress. The Staats Spoorwegen in the 1920s employed about 40,000 men

(and a few women). When adding the employees of other railways and of tramways the number of employees rises exponentially. Veenendaal devotes only a few paragraphs to all these employees, and their work. How was the hierarchy of employees and workers? What did race mean in the organization? What to say about their salaries? What trade unions were active? Have there been strikes? How were ‘unruly elements’ supervised and thrown out? How did the railways react to ‘extremist’ actions? For instance, in 1918 the Deli Railways were confronted with a strike, in which Indonesian and European employees joined hands. This was a rare occasion, which caused a furor, as it shook the foundations of colonial rule. In this respect, it is worth mentioning too that trains and steam engines were widely seen as symbols of progress and pioneers of a new era, as is made abundantly clear in the Indonesian-language press and in novels. These questions, of course, fall outside the scope of Veenendaal’s study, but one might ask to at least mention these aspects of the Indies railways.

Eveline Sint Nicolaas and Valika Smeulders (eds), *Slavernij: Het verhaal van João, Wally, Oopjen, Paulus, Van Bengalen, Surapati, Sapali, Tula, Dirk, Lohkay*. Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum/Atlas Contact, 2021, 352 pp. ISBN: 9789045042459, price: EUR 27.99 (paperback).

This book was published to accompany the inauguration in May 2021 of a permanent exhibition in the Dutch Rijksmuseum on slavery in the former Dutch colonies in the West and East Indies and Africa, as well as its essential influence on the social and financial relations in the motherland. It took Eveline Sint Nicolaas and Valika Smeulders, both curators with the Rijksmuseum, with the help of many colleagues—named “the think tank”—four years to collect and map out the exhibition and its objects. As mostly nameless human beings, the personal legacy of the hundreds of thousands who were made into slaves was not abundant. However, a diligent search with a new perspective yielded a surprising number of objects, which were able to convey a sense of slave life for a contemporary audience. The two curators also wrote the introductory essays on the build-up of the exhibition, and a general overview and background story of slavery. Ten essays were chosen on individuals from different areas and from different positions. As for the East Indies, the few available data on slaves to whose names was added “Van Bengalen” are collected as they left their names in archival documents in Batavia, Cape Town, and Dokkum (Friesland). The other two biographies are atypical, but could be based on a considerable number of documents. These were on Surapati, who rose from a slave to army commander, first in the VOC, but next for his own goals, and in battle with the

VOC. These goals were achieved when he became the ruler of the East Javanese town Pasuruan. Unfortunately, there was no happy ending: in 1706 he died in battle against the VOC. In independent Indonesia, Surapati was included in the pantheon of national heroes. He was commemorated in publications and has numerous streets named after him.

The other biography is on Dirk van Hogendorp who was a successful plantation owner on Java and in Brazil. He employed slaves, but paradoxically he also published a theater piece based on his father's novel *Kraspoekol*. Both condemned slavery. Another surprise piece concerns Oopjen Coppit. With her husband, Marten Soolmans, she was painted by Rembrandt. This highlight in Rembrandt's oeuvre is now in joint possession of Rijksmuseum and the Paris Louvre Museum. Oopjen's wealth was for a substantial part based on colonial businesses, especially in sugar. And thus there is a direct link between the slave workers and her opulence. A concluding chapter is based on interviews by Karwan Fatah-Black and Martine Gosselink with nine scholars based in the Netherlands. The interviews were reorganized and combined to give a thematic overview of the opinions on a number of issues regarding slavery and the Dutch role in it. The nine researchers are Reggie Baay, Piet Emmer, Cynthia McLeod-Ferrier, Wayne Modest, Gert Oostindie, Matthias van Rossum, Valika Smeulders, Alex van Stipriaan and Gloria Wekker. Contemporary issues are listed and discussed in a handy and instructive way. The controversial questions that have given rise to emotional debates on aspects of Dutch slavery are not evaded. Although opinions and interpretations differ on specific aspects of the slavery, in general there appears to be more common ground than expected at first sight. This book is not a catalogue to the exhibition, but a separate publication on the subject, including a great number of high quality photographs of the objects exposed in the exhibition.

Rick Honings, *Het eiland van vuurrazernij: De Krakatau-ramp van 1883 en de Nederlandse literatuur: Negenentwintigste Bert van Selm-lezing*. Leiden: Primavera Pers, 2020, 63 pp. ISBN: 9789059973213, price: EUR 8.90 (paperback).

On August 27, 1883 the Krakatau Volcano, on an island in the Sunda Straits, erupted and exploded. It had a devastating effect on the inhabitants of the nearby Java and Sumatra. In fact the whole global atmosphere was affected by the eruption. Scientists from many disciplines did research on the islands and a plethora of publications saw the light. Honings (1984), a specialist in nineteenth and twentieth century literature of the Netherlands and the Indies, has turned to another field of research in this printed lecture. He discusses the phil-

anthropy of the Dutch metropole which also found a particular format in voluminous newspapers filled with hundreds of contributions by different authors. Thus *Holland Krakatau* and *Nederland Insulinde* were issued, sold at a relatively high price, with the net gains being used to aid the victims. He searched for the literary legacy of the eruption, and found relatively little. In the field of literature, Louis Couperus and Hella S. Haasse gave their impressions and there was not much more. Only a few children's books qualify, among them a Dutch translation of a British novel and a 2014 Dutch book *Ontsnaapt uit de kaken van de dood* (*Escaped from the Jaws of Death*). The few titles reviewed all have a colonial perspective, in which the non-European characters only play anonymous roles in the background. The book is well illustrated and the result of fine editorial care.

Rudi Wester, *Bestaat er een raarder leven dan het mijne?: Jef Last, 1898–1972*. Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2021, 565 pp. ISBN 9789044629040: price: EUR 34.99 (hardback).

Jef Last's life story reads like an adventure novel, packed with exciting stories about the highs and lows he went through. He was a novelist, a poet, and an essayist. He obtained a Ph.D. in sinology, and wrote extensively on China and Japan. He contributed hundreds of articles to newspapers and magazines. His bibliography lists 150 separate publications, as well as numerous translations—he mastered fourteen languages. Apart from his literary and journalistic work, he was also an officer in active service on the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War (1936–1937). During the German occupation of the Netherlands, he was involved in the resistance, responsible for the illegal and influential publication *De Vonk*. After the Dutch liberation, *De Vonk* was continued as *De Vlam*, speaking out against the Dutch reoccupation of Indonesia, with Jef Last as an editor. Of all his publications, about ten concern Indonesia. A strong sense of justice made Last an ever stronger opponent to colonialism, as practiced by the Dutch in Indonesia. He worked at the time for the Social Democratic Party, in its department of Worker's Education, but was discharged.

He turned left, and made acquaintance with the radical Indonesian students in the Netherlands. He was close to Hatta at the time. He showed his solidarity by publishing revolutionary poems, meant to be an instrument in the agitprop (agitation and propaganda). He became involved in the League against Imperialism founded in February 1927 after a congress in Brussels. Wester mentions Last as present there, but in the Proceedings of the Congress he was not listed as a participant. In its Dutch weekly, he published his poems, among them a few

impressive ones on the Digul internment camp. He visited the Soviet Union several times, but soon became disillusioned with Stalin's Union. He became a member of the Communist Party in 1932, but resigned in 1938. It was also the end of his political novels, which until then had been in the service of communist ideas. It came as a surprise in 1950 when Vice President Hatta invited Last to come to the newly independent Indonesia to advise on the improvement of the public relations with the Netherlands. He stayed on, writing a report on Balinese culture and became a teacher at a Bali Secondary School. He met Sukarno a few times and even became a messenger to deliver letters of Sukarno to Dutch Prime Minister Willem Drees. He left Indonesia in 1953, when the security of Dutchmen on Bali could no longer be guaranteed. On Indonesia, he wrote a few travelogues, a theater piece—which was also staged—and two popular children's books, in cooperation with Udeyana Pandji Tisna. He remained a prolific writer until his last years.

Rudi Wester (1943) began her research in 1986. Interrupted by other duties, it took her 35 years to write this biography. It was worth the wait. Her early start made it possible to interview and consult many contemporaries of Last. She has done a fine job. She also endeavors to detect Last's inner motives, pointing at his youth experiences and his homosexuality. She is thus present in the biography, adding her comments, without becoming obtrusive. Her admiration for Last is no hindrance to a critical observance of Last as a unique phenomenon.

Ineke van der Wal, *De tempel met de chrysanten: Krijgsgevangene in Tokio*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2021, 187 pp. ISBN 9789462496798, price: EUR 19.99 (paperback).

After the Japanese occupation of Indonesia in March 1942, the Dutch inhabitants were gradually interned in camps, separated by gender. However, with Wim Einthoven (1893–1942), his wife Beb Einthoven-Zeeman (1895–1990) and their four children, it was a different story. Wim was director of the Radio Laboratory in Bandung, a research institute of the Indies Postal Services. Soon the Japanese conglomerate Sumitomo showed interest in the Laboratory. Five staff members and their wives and children, a group of 22, were interned together, apart from the other Dutchmen. They were also kept in service, without specific tasks. In January 1944, the group was transported to Japan, first in Tokyo, later in rural Nagoya, employed by Sumitomo, without a clear purpose in their assignments. Only many years after the war, did it become clear that they were meant to assist in the research on radar. Nothing came of that. The whole group was housed together, without contact with the outside world. They suffered from

uncertainty about their fate, the lack of food and of medical care. This caused the death of Wim Einthoven. In a number of respects their circumstances of life resembled those of the Japanese, whose society and infrastructure were destroyed by the American bombardments. They were freed, and recovered in American hospitals in Manila. Beb and her children went to Brisbane, the former site of the Indies government in exile. From there they repatriated, arriving in Rotterdam in August 1946. Beb's granddaughter Ineke van der Wal wrote this book on a remarkable war event, basing her knowledge on letters from Beb, diaries, interviews, documents, and publications—a fine example of persistent research, that adds to the history of internment camps.

Jan Brokken, *De tuinen van Buitenzorg*. Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Atlas Contact, 2021, 220 pp. ISBN: 90789045043821, price: EUR 22.99 (hardback).

Jan Brokken (1949) is the author of about thirty titles, which received a lot of praise, are well-read and have been translated a number of times—his genre is often called literary non-fiction. His mother Olga (1912–1983) and father Han (1910–1988) arrived in the Indies in 1935. His father was a clergyman and theologian, and was charged in a special assignment by the colonial government and the Protestant Church to research a mass movement to convert from Islam to Christian on Selayar Island, south of Sulawesi. They lived in Makassar. Olga was active in a number of matters. She took lessons in Buginese and Makassarese by language expert A.A. Cense, and even became his assistant. She played the church's organ and became fascinated by Indonesian music, in particular gamelan. She had a club of local women whom she taught sewing. She recorded this daily life in 39 frank letters to her sister in the Netherlands. These and other themes are given separate chapters in this book. The history of research in the regional languages, with experts like Cense, Matthes, Kruyt, and Adriani is recorded. Extensive attention is there for the western composers, who were inspired by the gamelan to compose musical pieces with references to the gamelan. Thus, Leopold Godowsky and Paul Seelig get their fair share. Olga also writes about her personal worries, related to pregnancy and birth of her two sons. In 1942 their idyll ended. Japan occupied the Indies and Han, in Pare-Pare, and Olga, with her two toddlers, were interned apart from each other, in Malino and Kampili. They all survived, after many hazards, but were marked for life. In 1947 the four repatriated. Olga and Han were both traumatized by their experiences during the internment and the independence war. The years in the Indies were for the greater part not a subject to be discussed. Brokken has sketched a fine and intimate portrait of his mother, which brought himself also to a bet-

ter understanding of the mind-set of his mother and the changes therein. It is a pity that no pictures were included. Regularly, there are references to photographs, and these would have enhanced the reader's identification with the text.

Tjalling Bouma, *Naar een federaal Indonesië: De geschiedenis van de totstandkoming van de Republiek der Verenigde Staten van Indonesië en de bijdrage van federale Indonesische nationalisten aan de Indonesische onafhankelijkheid, 1917–1949*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2020, 448 pp. ISBN: 9789087048464, price: EUR 39 (hardback).

The Round Table Conference in The Hague (August–November 1949) to conclude the Dutch-Indonesian conflict was not between two parties (Republic of Indonesia and the Dutch); a third party also participated, formally on equal footing. These were the federalists, organized in *Bijeenkomst voor Federaal Overleg* (BFO), established in July 1948. Federalism as a basic feature of a future Indonesian state was already discussed in the early twentieth century by a number of Dutchmen, resulting in different opinions. The prominent politician Hendrik Colijn declared himself in favor of a federal state, also because this would best serve his conservative concepts on the Indies' future. The connection between Colijn and federalism made federalism suspect, also as it was termed as a vehicle to practice a divide and rule policy.

The role of federalism in the Dutch-Indonesian conflict has not been studied in comprehensive detail. Bouma took up the challenge to do so and wrote his Ph.D. on the subject. It certainly serves its purpose to enlighten an academic readership as to the real course of events concerning the federalists. With conclusions, summaries, bibliography, index and a laudable 150 short biographies (25 pages) of the protagonists, this book is exemplary.

In August 1945, the Indonesian Republic proclaimed itself a unitary state, reacting in this respect upon the divisive policies of the Netherlands and Japan. This unitarism was not considered incompatible with federal proposals. Federalism was accepted by the Republic, even without debate, as long as the integrity of the Indonesian state was ensured. Already in the Linggadjati Agreement of November 1946, Indonesia had been divided in three: the Republic (comprising Java and Sumatra), East Indonesia and Borneo. In May and December 1946, at conferences in Malino and Denpasar, the *Negara* (State) Indonesia Timur (NIT) was established, while that of Borneo was postponed due to internal conflicts, notwithstanding the efforts of its prominent leader Sultan Hamid of Pontianak. At first, NIT was divided between supporters and adversaries of

the Republic, as were its leaders, Sukawati, Tadjuddin Noor, and Nadjamuddin. Only with the young and competent Balinese prince Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung as a (prime) minister, was NIT able to claim an important role in the intricate political processes in Indonesia. By the way, Anak Agung has written two books about his experiences, together almost 1,300 pages. He sometimes colors his narrative somewhat. Bouma has diligently noted these instances. In 1947, in West Java, the *negara* of Pasundan was established with a lot of Dutch support. This state continued to be a bone of contention, with conflicting Dutch, Indonesian, Darul Islam, and communist troops active in the region. After the first military action of the Dutch in July 1947, the federals were put under pressure to support Dutch designs to establish an Indonesian state without the Republic. Bouma considers the Dutch policy towards the federal design as sincere, certainly in its first stages. From the evidence Bouma himself brings forward, however, is not a different evaluation possible? The federalists were dependent on the Dutch for facilities, and their parliaments and administration were to a considerable extent filled with Dutch officials. The Dutch regularly guided the *negara* in terms of meetings, travels, and statements. On the other hand, there are many instances of impolite behavior of Dutch officials towards the federalists. They were not informed, not invited, and considered to be actors that could be neglected at will. This may be a manifestation of condescension, a legacy of colonial times.

The federals declined to play this subordinate role and established BFO, without Dutch participation. It marked a slow process to dissociate from the Dutch, as a sizeable part of the new *negara* (states) remained pro-Dutch. However, after the second Dutch military action in December 1948, BFO sided with the Republic, whose leaders were arrested and held captive in Sumatra. They played an active role in the negotiations that led to an agreement on the route to Indonesian independence. After an inter-Indonesian conference of the Republic and BFO in July–August 1949, the two parties steered the same course towards an independent Indonesia. Formerly opponents, now the Republic and BFO fraternized and closed ranks to achieve an optimal result. In 1950, the federal states succumbed in a matter of months. They were labelled as a Dutch colonial scheme to prolong its influence in the new Indonesian state.

Bouma tells the story in great detail, and his book will certainly be an indispensable source about the federalist movement in Indonesia. The book hardly contains errors, but the incorrect characterization of Persatoean Perdjoengan and Benteng Republik on p. 364 may be noted, as well as the errors on the Madiun revolt of September 1948 and in Amir Sjarifoeddin's biography.

Claartje Bunnik, *Een onmogelijke missie: Jaap Hangelbroek, bestuursambtenaar in de nadagen van Nederlands-Indië*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2020, 222 pp. ISBN: 9789087048853, price: EUR 19 (paperback).

Jaap Hangelbroek (1905–1982), a clergyman's son from the northern Dutch countryside, studied Indology at Leiden University (1924–1929), preparing him for a career in the Indies. He was imbued with the liberal ideas of Van Vollenhoven and Snouck Hurgronje. In 1930 he started his career as an official, posted in West Sumatra, Flores, and Batavia. In Batavia he was involved in a small group of officials working out plans for the decentralization, democratization, and emancipation of the colonial state. His work was interrupted by his internment in a Japanese camp, apart from his wife and five sons. They all survived, with a lot of scratches. Hangelbroek was at once posted with the newly founded Algemene Regeringscommissie voor Borneo en de Grote Oost, a thinktank to advise on the development of a federal state Indonesia. On this federal concept, the Netherlands and the Republic agreed in general terms, but in practice there was a lot of Republican suspicion as to the ulterior motives of the Dutch. (See also the review of Bouma's study above.) Hangelbroek and his fellow committee members were soon involved in the development of the federal system. He was to become the highest official in the state of East Indonesia, and in 1948 the personal adviser of the Balinese prince Ide Anak Agung Gde Agung, who put his stamp on the Negara Indonesia Timur, and on the policy of the federal states in their relation to the Republic.

Hangelbroek himself was a staunch supporter of the federal concept and defended it against Dutch efforts to control and change them. He identified with the NIT and Anak Agung, even when Anak Agung in 1949 choose to join the Republic in opposition to the Netherlands. As to the designation of the Dutch federal course, Bunnik's view is more critical than Bouma's. Since 1948, the Dutch, and in particular Van Mook, played the federal card not because its intrinsic qualities, but as a means to subdue the Republic. Bunnik tells the story well, and thus overcomes the lack of sources on high official Hangelbroek. The relative importance of Hangelbroek might be measured by his mentions in Bouma's study. These are only two, both in footnotes, and probably somewhat of an underrepresentation for Hangelbroek. Her choice to write this particular biography has a remarkable background. Bunnik (1954), when she was a history student in Amsterdam in 1981, wrote her Master's thesis on the Negara East Timur, based on an interview with Hangelbroek in 1978. The tapes of these interviews survived and could now, after more than forty years, be used again—a unique interval.

Arlette Kouwenhoven, *Van Elburg tot Deshima; Zes eeuwen familie Feith*. Edam: LM Publishers, 2021, 239 pp. ISBN: 9789460220203, price EUR 30.99 (hardback).

The Feith family, first mentioned around 1380 as citizens of the then prosperous Hanseatic town of Elburg, soon rose to become local aristocracy. They slowly spread outside Elburg, eventually to many parts of the world. This book reports on 21 generations of Feiths, containing information on about 120 bearers of the name. The best known Feith was, and is, the romantic poet Rhijnvis Feith (1753–1824), whose first name was almost exclusively given in the Feith family. As members of the ruling class in the Netherlands, the Feith family served as public officials, in the judiciary, and as army officers, also overseas. Gijsbert Jan (1719–1775) had a long career in VOC service, first in Batavia and then in Cochin (Kochi, India). His son Arend Willem (1745–1782) was appointed to serve as the Deshima Head, which he did for many years, and as such he visited the Japanese sovereign. Henricus Octavius Feith (1846–1925) was a navy officer and took part in the Aceh Expeditions of 1873–1874. Around 1900 the Feiths were honored with the noble title of jonkheer/jonkvrouw. Other Feiths worked on tobacco and rubber plantations, as judges or lawyers, or were promoting Heineken Beer in the Indies. Jan Feith (1874–1944), a pioneer of Dutch journalism as well as a novelist, was for two years editor in chief of *Indische Post*. The lawyer Pieter Rutger (1899–1980) lived in Pegangsaan East 56, which was confiscated by the Japanese occupation force, and given to Sukarno. In its garden, Indonesia's independence was proclaimed on 17 August 1945. The Feiths in the Indies were interned in 1942, survived and repatriated to the Netherlands. A book such as this one is a tour de force, and Kouwenhoven managed to make it a lively account of very diverse human beings with even more diverse life-stories. This large-sized book is beautifully illustrated, and with pedigrees, bibliography, notes and index up to the standards.

Marcel van Kanten, *Wortelzucht: De geschiedenis, dat ben ik*. Edam: LM Publishers, 2021, 256 pp. ISBN: 9789460225222, price: EUR 24.50 (paperback).

This is a report of Marcel van Kanten's autobiographical quest to his multicultural identity. A DNA test resulted in the identification of the stunning number of fourteen ethnicities that had found their way in his DNA. Until then, the most prominent parts of his DNA built-up were the Indies and Surinam components, but there were also Irish-Scotch, African, Chinese, Jewish and Portuguese and still more traces. Van Kanten begins with the present, using his own memory and experiences and those of his family members, and thereupon, using an

impressive amount of sources and archives, illuminating his past. His research is an example of the possibilities such an approach offers. About half of the text is on the life of family members who migrated to the Indies. Part of them signed as a KNIL soldier, and settled down, living with a *nyai*. In an upward mobility trend, they at last had to leave Indonesia. In the Netherlands they maintained their Indies identity, in Van Kanten's case mixed with the legacy of his Surinamese forbears. The book, with illustrations and pedigrees, is packed with facts and names, which dizzy the reader, who also is requested to follow the author in his many personal digressions.

Bruni Adler, *Prikkeldraad en bamboesperen: Ooggetuigen van oorlog en dekolonisatie in Indonesië*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2021, 428 pp. ISBN: 9789462495500, price EUR 34.95 (paperback).

This book was originally published in German as *Stacheldraht und Bambuspeere: Indonesiens verdrängte Geschichte* (Tübingen: Klopfer & Meyer Verlag, 2018). As knowledge of the German language among Indonesianists may not be a common feature, I consider it useful to review this Dutch translation. Adler worked as a journalist and published three books with interviews of victims of the World War II in Europe. About ten years ago she started her work on a similar book on Indonesia with the reminiscences of common people who suffered during the turbulent war years, from before the Japanese occupation to the decolonization war, from 1940 until 1950. She includes in this book 37 interviews, eleven of which with women. She went to Indonesia, Japan, the Netherlands, Germany, the UK, and the US to find the last eyewitnesses, all of advanced age, to record their experiences. The interviewees come from diverse backgrounds: Indonesians from distinct parts of Java and Sumatra, Japanese army men, Dutchmen from all ranks, among them many Indo-Europeans, who paid a high cost, losing family members and belongings. Of course, there is particular attention to the fate of the 8,000 Germans (and former Germans), residing in Indonesia in 1940. They were interned by the Dutch colonial authorities and treated indiscriminately as enemies in a disgusting way. It culminated in the Van Imhoff ship, on its way to British India, with hundreds of Germans on board, being sunk by a Japanese U boat, with all the Germans left to drown by the Dutch crew, who survived, and were never called to account for their acts.

German women and children became outcasts from 1940. For them, times changed with the Japanese occupation, when they changed from enemy to ally. Part of the group set course for the trip home, but got stuck in Yoko-

hama until 1946. The others were brought together in the pleasant Javanese mountain resort of Sarangan, with costs paid by the German Nazi government. Its downfall did not mean the end of Sarangan as a refuge. It took until 1949 before Sarangan was evacuated, after its inhabitants lived there under dire circumstances, even becoming involved in the fighting between the Republican army and communist forces late in 1948. The Sarangan inmates still regularly organize a Sarangan reunion in Germany. In Adler's book, five German survivors share their memories on Sarangan. Adler has done her best to supply her readers with background information on history, places, organizations, and prominent people, and consulted an impressive array of relevant literature to do so. She sides invariably with the common people, and appreciation for the authorities, whether Dutch, Japanese, or Indonesian, is a scarce commodity. Together with David Van Reybrouck's *Revolusi* (discussed in the previous issue of *BKI*), Adler's collection of interviews may well be the last one based on direct eyewitness accounts.