Recent Dutch-Language Publications

Harry A. Poeze

KITLV/Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian
and Caribbean Studies, Leiden, The Netherlands
poeze@kitlv.nl

Dirk J. Tang, *Met Hollandse bedaardheid: Hoe Nederland tussen 1800 en 1873 slavernij in de koloniën afschafte*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2021, 189 pp. ISBN: 9789462496712, price: EUR 14.99 (paperback).

Dirk J. Tang, *Slavernij: Een geschiedenis*. Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2021, 246 pp. ISBN: 9789462496811, price: EUR 29.99 (paperback).

Slavery has recently become a hot subject of popular and scholarly debate. An important impetus was given by the opening of the permanent Rijksmuseum exhibition and the reports, initiated by town boards and councils (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht), on the role of slavery in the economic and cultural development of the respective towns. The results are revealing. Simultaneously, quite a number of publications added new voices to the debate. Dirk Tang (1947), a retired historian, who has already published widely on the subject, launched two books. The title *Met Hollandse bedaardheid* characterizes the Dutch position relating to slavery and its abolition—it was slow and late compared with other European nations. Formerly, writers on the subject generally concentrated on slavery and slave trade in the Atlantic, and on the slaves' plight on the plantations of the Americas. This approach has now been expanded, and the wide-scale use of slave labor in India, Southeast and East Asia is now acknowledged. Still, the background and role of slavery in the West and East differs considerably, which causes problems when described in a comparative perspective. In Tang's book, the emphasis is on the abolitionist movement in the mother country, which became vocal around 1800 in the wake of publications by John Stedman and Dirk van Hogendorp, who were inspired by the much stronger British anti-slavery movement. Progress was slow and parliamentary support only lukewarm, notwithstanding the influential lobbying of W.R. van Hoëvell. At last, fearing international repercussions, the government had to acquiesce. The abolition in the East in 1860 went relatively smoothly.

In the West it was opposed, and when it proved inevitable, in 1863 it was continued for another ten years through a kind of semi-slavery. Tang sketches the course of abolition and the principal actors involved in a clear and balanced way, thus offering a handy summary of the abolitionist movement. A bibliography is included but an index is unfortunately not.

The present publication *Slavernij: Een geschiedenis* is a revised edition of this 2013 title. Tang endeavors to give a summary, for a general audience, of slavery through the ages, from antiquity until its formal abolition in the nineteenth century, and all over the world (Africa, Europe, and Asia). He reviews the causes and forms of slavery in a balanced and accessible way, bringing together facts and theories, known and unknown. Thus, a discussion of slavery in the Middle Ages serves as a stepping stone for the Dutch involvement in the trade. Slave trade in Asia, and the VOC's role in it, have only recently become subjects of research, revealing slavery's essential role in VOC trade relations. Tang includes less than ten pages on the VOC and slavery—and as an explanation points to the recent nature of attention for the VOC and slavery. A chapter on Africa, with special attention on Barbary pirates, is illuminating. This all leads to an extensive history of slavery in Suriname. A last chapter discusses the abolition, more or less covering *Met Hollandse bedaardheid*: it is less on the Dutch developments, and more on the pioneer British initiatives. The book is lavishly illustrated.

Leo Balai, *Herengracht 502: Slavenhandel, geweld en hebzucht, 1672–1927*. Edam: LM Publishers, 2021, 144 pp. ISBN: 97894600225239, price: EUR 24.50 (paperback).

Herengracht 502 tells the story of the inhabitants of this luxurious residence from 1672 on. The cost of building was defrayed by Paulus Godin (1653–1690), and his wealthy family. Their wealth was to a great extent based on profits made through trading slaves—buying them in Africa, transporting them to America, and enslaving them, via the West Indies Company (WIC) and the Sociëteit van Suriname. The Amsterdam elite, closely connected by family bonds, thus displayed its opulence. Balai (1946), who published on the Atlantic slave trade before, also extends his narration to the East Indian activities of Amsterdam families as to slavery. He supplies a wealth of data on these networks. An interesting detail concerns Herengracht 502, from 1907 on, owned by Nederlandsche Handel-Maatschappij (NHM) with J.Th. Cremer, director of the Deli Maatschappij, a member of parliament and minister of colonies, followed by C.J.K. van Aalst, another tycoon, as its tenants. A lot of circumspection sur-

rounded the gift of the NHM of Herengracht 502, in 1927, to the municipality to function as its official residence. There was suspicion that 'in exchange' Amsterdam promised to be lenient with regard to the new office of the NHM, which transgressed the building regulations. There is no proof of such an informal agreement. This book fits well with the recent interest in the involvement of specific towns in slavery. Regarding Amsterdam, a collection of essays was published in 2021. For a review: Brandon et al., *De slavernij in Oost en West: Het Amsterdam-onderzoek* (see *Bijdragen* 177–1(2021):165–166).

Marjolein van Pagee, *Banda: De genocide van Jan Pieterszoon Coen*. Utrecht: Omniboek, 2021, 208+16 pp. ISBN: 9789401917537, price: EUR 20.99 (paperback).

Historian Marjolein van Pagee (1987) studied world and colonial history, and combines these in a biography of Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587–1629), already notorious during his lifetime. This reputation lasts until today, and certainly surfaces when there is a suitable occasion, like a museum exhibition, a memorial year, or a provocative publication. Van Pagee makes it abundantly clear that she belongs to the critical generation of historians with an uncharitable view of Coen. This is for a substantial part based on Coen's handling of the conflict between Banda and the VOC. Banda was the sole place where nutmeg was grown. In Europe it fetched high profits, and a monopoly of trade in these nutmegs was the first prize. The VOC had to compete with European competitors, and trade ships from the region. Furthermore, the Banda rulers could not be expected to submit to the VOC's demands to grant them exclusive trading rights. The matter had already caused violent clashes during the 1610s. Coen decided to solve the matter once and for all. A big fleet sailed to Banda and asked for unconditional surrender. The answer did not matter, however. The outcome was that the Bandanese were killed on a massive scale, the local rulers were tortured and executed, and hundreds of women and children were enslaved and transported to Batavia.

Even by the standards of the time, Coen's actions were excessive, and resulted in a rebuke by the VOC headquarters in Amsterdam. In the mainstream literature on Coen, his Banda expedition was generally glossed over, or considered a mistake, that paled before his great achievements as the founder of Batavia, and the establishment of an ever stronger trade emporium, based on Coen's conviction that trade and war were inseparable. Van Pagee holds a different opinion. She sees Coen as a representative of colonialism, that was embraced in particular in the Netherlands. It intersected with racism, whose

recipients ranged from Iberians to Muslims, and certainly including the people constructed as primitive natives of the Indies. This train of thought allowed no safety valves to restrict the colonial power. On the contrary, the famous lawyer Hugo de Groot, the protestant clergy, and the House of Orange all supported the VOC's policies. Van Pagee tells the story of the Banda-VOC conflict, embedded in a biography of Coen and a history of the VOC. In a last chapter of forty pages, she classifies and analyses later appraisals of Coen, with most attention on the contemporary debate, in which Coen ranks, together with Van Heutsz and Westerling, as the worst colonial villains.

Philip Dröge, *Moederstad: Jakarta, een familiegeschiedenis*. Amsterdam: Spectrum, 2021, 444 pp. ISBN: 9789000365302, price: EUR 24.99 (hardback).

Philip Dröge (1967) worked as a journalist and published two titles on Indonesia: *De schaduw van Tambora*, on the eruption of the Tambora volcano on Sumbawa Island in 1815, the strongest in the modern era, and *Pelgrim*, a biography of Snouck Hurgronje, published in 2017. He intends to reach a wider audience than fellow-historians, and has succeeded in his objective. This third title, centering on Jakarta/Batavia, is a combination of a history of Batavia, beginning with J.P. Coen's choice of the site for a VOC fortification, with impressions of present-day Jakarta, with as a connecting thread the lives and times of his family members. Dröge himself has many forebears in the Indies, almost all of whom lived in Batavia. A DNA test resulted in a classification of his parentage: 80% European, 9.5% Indonesian, 9.5% Chinese and 1% Papuan. The result triggered Dröge to find out how these forebears landed in Batavia and made a living there. The living members of his family did not remember much, or even declined to speak about the bitter memories of Japanese occupation and revolution (1942–1949). They were aware of their Indies past, as well of their Indo-European descent, but declined to open old sores. Dröge was fascinated by his heterogeneous descent and started to reconstruct his family tree.

When ready, and after his first visit to Jakarta in 1994, he was strongly motivated to give the names in his pedigree content and make them people of flesh and blood. Many years of research followed in archives all over the world, in particular the VOC archives. His experiences are reported and he shares his findings with the reader. It is often the inducement to venture into today's Jakarta in search of remnants of the past, for instance a residence or office of an ancestor. Dröge was lucky, as among his ancestors were some men of name. David de Solemne supervised the building of Batava Castle in the 1630s. Later, high offi-

cials such as Carel Hartsinck, and his namesake Andries, who had eleven concubines and thirteen children, left their traces in the VOC files. So did Pieter Maurisse, the highest lawyer in the Indies colony. Many more followed and became part of the growing Indo-European population, and enjoyed the colonial order and prosperity. The worldwide crisis, of course, also made Dröge's forebears suffer. Dröge, in his hunt for material remains, tells the story of Batavia and, no less, of Jakarta now. He visits improbable places, and comments on the modern metropolis in a way that many observers who resided there for more than a few months will recognize. It all makes for pleasant reading, and due to its special focus, is also revealing. Criticism? Providing one map only is insufficient, an index would have helped and, worst, illustrations and photographs are not included.

Tom Phijffer, *Vuur, vuur!: Over het leven van Oost-Indisch ambtenaar Edouard Carolus (1807–1855)*. Hilversum: Verloren, 2021, 158 pp. ISBN: 9789087049362, price: EUR 19 (paperback).

The deciding factors for Douwes Dekker/Multatuli to write *Max Havelaar* were his experiences in the Lebak region, his conflict with the Regent Karta Nata Negara, and his son-in-law Wira Koesoema. On a grand scale, these two officials extorted the local population. Forced labor was common. According to Multatuli, he endeavored to halt these practices by applying all kinds of persuasion, but to no avail. Moreover, he sought the support of high Dutch officials to act against the regent. No support came, as the colonial government was very reluctant to interfere. Douwes Dekker was rebuffed and resigned in 1856, after little more than a year in office. His predecessor as assistant-resident of Lebak was Edouard Carolus, who, after less than a year in office, died in November 1855. In the abundant secondary literature on Lebak, his role is only worth a few mentions. Only in passing, Multatuli writes that Carolus was poisoned by Wira Koesoema, without supplying further proof. The same goes for his reference to Carolus' reports on the conduct of the regent, addressed to the authorities in Batavia.

Intrigued by this person, Tom Phijffer (1965) started an extensive search to give Edouard Carolus profile. His background was Antwerp, after which he had been enjoying life in Paris, and when his father went bankrupt, he turned to KNIL service as a last resort. From 1828 on he embarked on a successful career. As a government official he acted as supervisor of the indigo production (1833–1852). After a Dutch furlough, in 1854 he took up his work in Depok, which ended so tragically. Phijffer collected a lot of material on Carolus's life, result-

ing from impressive and fruitful research. He accounts for his findings, not in notes, but in a concluding chapter on sources. An index is not included.

Arjan Onderdenwijngaard, *Multatuli leeft in Lebak: Honderdzig jaar Max Havelaar in Indonesië*. Amsterdam: De Geus, 2021, 271 pp. ISBN: 9789044543742, price: EUR 18.50 (paperback).

Onderdenwijngaard (1961) visited Indonesia for the first time in 1980, to be followed by many other visits. Since 2015 he has lived there permanently, occupied with cultural matters. In 1856, Eduard Douwes Dekker (1820–1887) was posted as a government official in Rangkasbitung in the West Javanese province of Banten. The next year he was discharged after accusing the indigenous regent of extorting his subjects, and the colonial rulers of turning a blind eye to such practices. He returned to Europe and began writing his masterpiece *Max Havelaar*, a mixture of fact and fiction. It was published in 1860 and was destined to cause controversy up until today. Onderdenwijngaard became directly involved with Multatuli in 1987, when he recorded his first documentary for radio and film in Rangkasbitung. A number of other works were to follow, proof of his unabated interest in Multatuli. In this book, he collects the results of his research on the reception of *Max Havelaar* from the first mention in Indies newspapers until the present day.

It is not a scholarly and distanced narration, but a personal account of *Max Havelaar* and Multatuli and their influence on the author, and their reflections on Indonesian culture and society. A short biography of Douwes Dekker, including the genesis of *Max Havelaar*, are followed by a chronological discussion of its scant references, the majority of which were negative. This changed only slowly. In the twentieth century, at last, he was ranked first as an author and visionary critic of the colonial system. As such, he was also embraced by Indonesian nationalists such as Tirtoadisoerjo, Kartini, Sukarno, and Soewarsih Djojopoespito. His impact, however, was limited by the lack of a translation in Indonesian. It was only published in 1972 and reprinted many times. Lacking a full translation, interpretations and conclusions from *Max Havelaar* were modelled to make these conform to political or cultural premises. Thus, the communist party stressed the anticolonial aspects, while the government downplayed its harsh criticism of the regional corruption. Within these constraints, however, there was increasing room for the 'real' Multatuli. The initiative was taken by Bantenese historians and officials. It resulted in a museum annex library (which opened in 2018) in Rangkasbitung, as well as yearly Multatuli festivals. Onderdenwijngaard was an eyewitness for thirty years of the appraisal

of Multatuli and an eager collector of all relevant material. He has now drawn on this rich experience to write this history of Multatuli's reception, which also includes the author's personal views, offered in an unobtrusive way. His concluding remarks, evaluating *Max Havelaar's* relevance for today, contain some insightful pages on Indonesian society today.

Jan Breman, *Kolonialisme en racisme: Een postkoloniale kroniek*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021, 403 pp. ISBN: 978946372255, price: EUR 29.99 (paperback).

Jan Breman (1936) is a retired Professor of Sociology, who taught at universities in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. His primary interest was the position of the poor labor class in India and Indonesia. In 1987, and thoroughly revised in 1992, he published with KITLV Press *Koelies, planters en koloniale politiek*, which caused heated polemics in the public press, but also between the so-called Amsterdam and Leiden Schools of history. The Amsterdam School, with involved scholars like W.F. Wertheim and Jan Pluvier, were denounced by Leiden historians like Fasseur, Emmer, and Van den Doel for their sociological and partisan view. Historical research has proved Breman right in his grim picture of colonialism and racism in the plantation belt of East Sumatra. In this collection, Breman has brought together fourteen essays. Seven were published previously—between 1988 and 2010—and seven were written specifically for this volume. Two of them may be seen as addenda to the *Koelies* book, one of them with a biography of J. van den Brand, who in 1902 made public what transpired in Deli. The articles appeared in *Bijdragen* and *De Gids*.

By the way, on pp. 227–228, Breman refers to the refusal by the KITLV to publish his monograph on the Preanger system of forced coffee deliveries. He asserts that KITLV turned down his publication for qualitative reasons, and was wrong to do so. But, as far as I know, the publication was not accepted for 'commercial' reasons. Such considerations were increasingly taken into account, regrettably but understandably.

Three essays concern the Belgian exploitation of the Congo, probably the most outrageous example of violence and racism, but in its foundations closely related to the Deli society. These five chapters may be considered to be case studies on colonialism and racism, that Breman identifies as strong forces that for more than two centuries determined the organization of society and state. In general, in his introduction and chapters 8 until 14, he follows a chronological path, in which for particular periods he looks for the decisive forces in the developments and changes in Indonesian society, that also have a more univer-

sal bearing. Racism in Indonesia was rampant, not only concerning the 'natives', but also concerning the Indo-Europeans. It served to divide and weaken the anti-colonial forces. The Ethical Policy was successfully obstructed by the white settlers, and the manifestations of nationalism suppressed by a formidable array of police reinforcements and law regulations. For those in opposition, the Indies were a police state. After Indonesia's Proclamation of Independence, the Dutch still adhered to their prewar principles. Trade and industry pressed for military action, and succeeded in 1947 and 1948. They were successful in maintaining their hold on Indonesia's economy until 1957. In the Netherlands, 'development policy' became a popular term, but it soon eclipsed. A bleak picture arises in Breman's analysis. Colonialism still is a strong force, but hides under new names. Racism manifests itself ever stronger, too. Breman points as proof to the widespread sentiment against immigrants. Breman raises a lot of questions, and has no ready solution. His book is polemical and fastidious, sometimes one-sided and difficult to grasp, but it deserves to be read.

Rasit Elibol (editor), *De nieuwe koloniale leeslijst*. Amsterdam: Das Mag/De Groene Amsterdammer, 2021, 240 pp. ISBN: 9789493168879, price: EUR 21.99 (paperback).

In a series of articles, the weekly *De Groene Amsterdammer* looked critically at the canon of literary works on colonialism and its effects on the Netherlands, the Dutch Indies, Suriname and the Dutch Antilles. Its purpose was to measure established authors and titles against the yardsticks of today's views, in which Edward Said's ideas are strongly represented. Thus, this collection discusses eleven titles on the Indies and five each of Suriname and the Antilles. An introduction could have served as a guideline for the authors and bring forward conclusions. Unfortunately, this is not the case, as the introduction is mainly a narration of personal experiences. The authors diverge widely in the treatment of the author and title they have chosen or been assigned. In this way, it does not propose a new colonial canon, but a heterogeneous collection of essays.

Extracting the analysis of the respective authors, the outcome is moderate. The 'Big Three' of Multatuli, Couperus, and Haasse survive. Augusta de Wit (by Alfred Birney) does not. Gloria Wekker, carefully sticking to the collection's intentions, convincingly shows Du Perron's colonial bias as to class, race, and gender. A well-deserved addition is Soewarsih Djojopoespito's *Buiten het gareel*, written in Dutch. Pramoedya Ananta Toer's Buru tetralogy, however, does not meet the criteria for inclusion, as he wrote in Indonesian. Other essays

are on Marion Bloem, Frans Lopulalan and Helga Ruebsamen. Thus, it is an interesting collection, but one which as a whole does not live up to expectations.

Wim van den Doel, *Snouck: Het volkomen geleerdenleven van Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje*. Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2021, 623 pp. ISBN: 9879044635621, price: EUR 49.99 (hardback).

In his time Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) was acknowledged as a great scholar, but also a man embroiled in many controversies, largely caused by his active and outspoken role as an advisor to Dutch officials in The Hague and Batavia regarding the government policies vis-à-vis Islam in the Indies. Snouck came from a well-to-do Protestant family of clergymen and entered Leiden University as a theology student, but soon changed to the study of Islam. His PhD of 1880 was about Mecca, but for a more rounded-off picture of the Islam, Snouck considered it essential to visit this holy town. It took a lot of time before The Hague and Batavia approved his posting in Jeddah, where the hajjis from the Indies disembarked and a Dutch consulate had been established. He was to study the course of the pilgrimage and also the views and opinions that were promoted by Islamic scholars, in particular those from the Indies. The only way to obtain such knowledge was to settle in Mecca. To this end he converted to become a Muslim student, and as a logical consequence also was circumcised. He moved to Mecca. As such, he was part of the international community of Islamic scholars—all contacts with the Dutch officials were broken off. He even followed the widespread custom to buy a female slave. Due to international intrigues, Snouck was evicted from Mecca after five months. He reported on his findings, and made no bones about his loyalty. What to think of his conversion? Was it only for the sake of scholarly knowledge? Was his data not collected under a deliberately false pretext? Was he a secret agent of the colonial government? None of this was discussed in those years. Only later, under similar circumstances, was high official Ch.O. van der Plas, who was similarly trained in Leiden and based in Jeddah, accused of infiltration tactics by Indonesian nationalists, a reproach that Snouck was spared.

The result of Snouck's stay in Mecca was a highly acclaimed book, as its 2007 reprint shows, on the holy town. Back in the Netherlands, he was not happy with an academic career, and was eager to accept an advisorship to the Batavia government. He arrived in 1889 and stayed until 1906. These years saw the subjugation of Aceh after more than thirty years. Snouck's advice was heeded and

executed halfheartedly until J.B. van Heutsz was given the reins. He claimed victory, and was rewarded with the governor-generalship (1904–1909). Relations between the two comrades-in-arms had slowly cooled and led to conflicts. Snouck's advice on Islamic matters was continuously based on his opinion that Islam was the often thin roof covering popular religion. Below it thrived all kinds of popular beliefs and customs dating from pre-Islamic times. Thus, there was no single approach to nominally Islamic events and problems and he advised suitable measures only after a scrupulous investigation of the local or regional circumstances. He judged pan-Islamism differently. This destructive movement had to be battled ruthlessly. Snouck was not against the colonial structure. For the time being, it was the best construct that ultimately would lead to an autonomous Indies, in which the Indonesian elite was to govern. Snouck did not elaborate on the role of the masses.

To broaden his knowledge, Snouck plunged himself into Javanese society. He married twice, following Islamic rites, first with a Sundanese woman of high birth who bore him five children. He paid for their education, and their commonly known descent secured them good marriage partners. In public, Snouck never mentioned his Sundanese children. Back in Leiden, he then married a Dutch woman, following Dutch family law. Together they had a daughter.

In Leiden, Snouck was the undisputed first man of his faculty. He was still advisor to the Batavia government, which regularly asked his advice. His teaching and managerial obligations cost a lot of time, at the expense of solid scholarly work. He was widely feared by his students for his harsh criticisms. As always, Snouck took part in the public debate on the Indies, often embroiled in polemics fought out in newspapers. He evolved in his Leiden years into a proponent of independence for Indonesia, which, according to him, was ripe to govern itself. He opposed conservatives like H. Colijn and governor-general B. de Jonge. In his last publications, he mercilessly attacked these men and the theories they stood for.

Wim van den Doel, professor of history at Leiden University, has undertaken the immense task of describing Snouck's life. The latter's archival legacy includes a list of 1,400 publications, correspondence of 2,000 letters, and thousands of items of secondary literature. Van den Doel has done a fine job, and compiled a chronological account of 600 pages in tight print, followed by 50 pages of notes. No less than 112 illustrations are interspersed in the text, unfortunately many of low quality. It is a pity that Van den Doel does not elaborate on the starting points and approach of his study. In a last chapter, 'Veneration, vilification, and appreciation', he sums up the controversies concerning Snouck. Van den Doel does not hide his admiration for Snouck—whom he once called 'the shining sun of the Leiden universe'—but reports truthfully on actions and

developments that could be considered negatively, without adding a negative editorial judgement. The rather malicious writings of Van Koningsveld are thus summarized as well. Much of the debate concerned Snouck's degree of orientalism. In this connection, the omission of Maarten Kuitenbrouwer's *Tussen oriëntalisme en wetenschap* (2001) is striking. This book covers precisely the key topics of the discussions at the time, but Van den Doel does not even include it in his bibliography. Moreover, the Kuitenbrouwer volume also sheds light on the cooperation between scholarly institutes like KITLV, and the Ministry of Colonies/Colonial Government.

It would have also been interesting to write about the reception of Snouck and his writings in post-1945 Indonesia. I wonder why Van den Doel does not discuss the biography of Philip Dröge, *Pelgrim: Leven en reizen van Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje*, published in 2017 and addressed to a wider audience than the scholarly world. The title is included in the bibliography, but there is no other mention or appraisal in Van den Doel's book. The subtitle of the book, 'het volkomen geleerdenleven', or 'the perfect scholar's life', is somewhat puzzling and ambiguous. Does this concern his dedication or continuous service to science? It's ambiguous.

Sjahrir, *Wissel op de toekomst: Brieven van de Indonesische nationalist aan zijn Hollandse geliefde*. Bezorgd door Kees Snoek. Amsterdam: Van Oorschot, 2021, 280 pp. ISBN: 89789028212305, price: EUR 22.50 (paperback).

Soetan Sjahrir (1909–1966) was one of the key figures in the struggle for independence of the Indonesian Republic. After the Proclamation of Independence on August 17, 1945, he soon became Prime Minister, untainted by any cooperation with the Japanese occupying forces, as Sukarno and Hatta were. He was to fulfill this function until June 1947. Of Minangkabau descent, and with a father high in the colonial judiciary, Sjahrir was sent to the Netherlands in 1929 to study law. He soon became involved in the political activism of the Perhimpunan Indonesia as a close friend and kindred spirit of Mohammad Hatta. Sjahrir returned to Indonesia in December 1931 to provide leadership to radical organizations. Sukarno, at the time the most prominent leader, was arrested in December 1929, and convicted. He was pardoned in 1931 and incited his followers to mass action. Sjahrir was affiliated with the Pendidikan Nasional Indonesia (PNI Baroe), which emphasized cadre training, but cherished the same ideals as Sukarno's Partindo—non-cooperation and self-help. Both parties were the subject of repression in 1934. Sukarno, Sjahrir, and Hatta were apprehended. Sukarno was sent into exile on the island of Flores, while Sjahrir and

Hatta were interned in the notorious Digul Camp. After a year they were moved to Banda in the Moluccas.

When arrested, Sjahrir was about to leave Indonesia to be reunited with Maria Duchâteau (1907–1997), whom he intended to marry. This plan failed, as did other efforts later. Thus, the tragic separation of the couple forced them to rely on letters. Maria Duchâteau carefully kept Sjahrir's letters, and when editor Kees Snoek visited her in 1994 in her house in the South of France, he was allowed to copy all the 273 letters, to be published in a scholarly edition. Thus, a unique legacy survived the vicissitudes of the Second World War. Maria Duchâteau, already in 1945, had edited a small part of the letters, published as *Indonesische overpeinzingen*, which was highly praised by its reviewers, and reprinted four times. Her editorial labor was quite extensive (combining, deleting, rewriting, and editing). Indonesian and English editions also appeared, with an epilogue by Sjahrir on his experiences during the Revolution.

With *Wissel op de toekomst*, a reliable and representative selection of Sjahrir's letters is available, but there is much more—the letters altogether count up till 849,000 words, thirteen times the length of *Indonesische overpeinzingen*. Still, a complete edition is a necessity, to learn more about Soetan Sjahrir, as the brilliant young man looking for anti-colonial ideology and organization, as well as love from his Maria. The book contains an instructive foreword and an 80-page biographical sketch by Kees Snoek. A list of persons, with biographical details, is also included. Unfortunately, this list was not extended to include an index of personal names.

Jelle Gaemers, *Willem Drees: Daadkracht en idealisme*. Amsterdam: Boom, 2021, 463 pp. ISBN: 9789024435487 (paperback), 9789024422814 (hardback), price: EUR 34.50 (paperback), EUR 44.50 (hardback).

Historian D.L. Daalder (1928–2016), after his retirement in 1993, worked on a comprehensive biography of Willem Drees (1886–1968), the leading social democrat in Dutch politics from 1945 until 1958, in the capacities of minister of social affairs and prime minister. Ultimately, the biography was published in five volumes between 2003 and 2014, adding up to 2,723 pages. Daalder sought the assistance of historian Jelle Gaemers (1964), who wrote the first volume on Drees' formative years and career as an alderman in The Hague and member of parliament. Gaemers was also co-author of the last volume on Drees as a prime minister (1948–1988), as well as his afterlife. In these years, Drees was immensely popular, not only with his party, but also among the Dutch population at large. He was acknowledged as the 'Father' of social security, which

helped the poor and elderly to escape from poverty or often humiliating charity. The three other volumes concern Drees' years during the German occupation, the ever present conflict with the Indonesian Republic (1945–1949), and the crisis in the Dutch royal family, which threatened the Dutch constitutional monarchy.

In 2014, the now complete set was published as one box. Altogether it is probably the most voluminous biography of any Dutch politician ever published. Gaemers was of the opinion that the massiveness of the biography, on the one hand, earned Daalder and him admiration, but on the other, was also forbidding, reducing its readership to a small group of interested laymen and historians. Thus, he set himself to the task to abridge the set by more than eighty percent. The book on the Indonesian decolonization (567 pages) was now allotted a single chapter of 40 pages. This chapter leans heavily on Daalder's book, and refers to his narrative, without including exact references. In general, he follows Joop de Jong's account, which is a safe course. There is no special contribution of Drees to the debate. He is in favor of Indonesian independence, but along a moderate road. As a Prime Minister, he tried to keep radicals in his own party, conservative protagonists in the Catholic Party, and the Dutch army on board to secure a decolonization that minimized violence and future conflicts between the parties. He also strove to maintain the coalition between social democrats and Catholics to implement his program of social reform. For that reason, in 1948, he probably approved the nomination of Beel as a new Governor General and of Sassen as minister, who dragged the Netherlands into a disastrous Second Military Action. Drees approved—to save what could be saved—and argued that his and his party's abdication would only make things worse. Drees' restraint did not extend to Sassen, whose incompetence and viciousness he detested. He also personally abhorred Sukarno. However, he usually soon adjusted to what was appropriate in international relations, or in the contacts with Indonesia, as the interesting chapter 10 (pp. 184–223) of the last volume shows. Even when taking into account the limited number of pages Gaemers had at his disposal, he cannot match Daalder's relatively unannotated volume. In my opinion, he did better in his summary of the other volumes of the biography.

Arendo Joustra (editor), *Tabé: Het lange afscheid van ons Indië*. Diemen: Uitgeverij EW, 2021, 235 pp. ISBN: 9789463480864, price: EUR 15 (paperback).

This collection brings together 27 articles by 13 authors, almost all of which appeared in the last ten years in the moderately conservative magazine Elsevier

Weekblad. Most of the authors worked with the magazine. Together, they document the laborious transition from the colonial project Indië to the independent Republik Indonesia. The articles recount pivotal developments of this process, like the Digul internment camp, the Japanese occupation, and the Bersiap in its wake. It resulted in a bitter guerrilla war, which, as to its contents and interpretation, is still controversial. For instance, the present research project on the military aspects of this war has already caused a lot of clamor, and this might well grow. This collection is most detailed on present-day developments and reports on these in a balanced way. Thus, it is an informative, readable account. A chronology and index are included.

Benedict Janssen, *De andere bezetting: Nederlands-Indië 1942–1945*. Rotterdam: Het Nachtkastje, 2021, 456 pp. ISBN: 9789082830620, price: EUR 25 (paperback).

The Japanese occupation of the Dutch East Indies (1942–1945) was the decisive factor in the transition of the Dutch colony to the independent Republic of Indonesia, proclaimed on August 17, 1945 and only grudgingly recognized by the Dutch in December 1949. Notwithstanding its essential role in the formation of Indonesia, the occupation period has not received commensurate attention, when compared with the Independence War. In the relevant studies, the Japanese period is too often seen as just an introduction to the Proclamation and Independence War. However, there are intrinsic developments worth identifying and studying. There are also monographs concentrating mainly on the Japanese interlude. Benedict Janssen (1964), a lawyer by profession, has started a series about the ‘unknown ww II’. This third volume in the series about the Japanese occupation of Indonesia is a solid enterprise to give an overview of the developments the Japanese set in motion, and which totally uprooted the colonial order, which was presumed to be unshakeable by its supporters and even enemies. In separate chapters, Janssen deals with the characteristics of Japanese rule, the economic catastrophe it caused, and the slow and cautious room it allowed nationalist leaders like Sukarno and Hatta. Next they were made responsible for the recruitment of tens of thousands of forced laborers, many of whom died. There is also ample space for the fate of the (Indo-)European minority. They were excluded from Indonesian society. The men among them were shipped to Thailand to work on the construction of the Burma Railway, or other projects. Women and children were brought together in Japanese internment camps. Slowly, conditions became worse—famine, ill-health, and harsh treatment were felt by all. The situation did not change all of a sudden after

Japan surrendered. There was chaos and violence, during which the Indonesian Republic was proclaimed on August 17, 1945.

Janssen tells this story, basing himself on published materials. The many switches from the general picture to actual events makes his book a readable and balanced account of this critical period. Janssen published his book with his own publishing company, which may affect its distribution.

Coen Verbraak, *De Molukkers: Een vergeten geschiedenis*. Amsterdam: Alfabet Uitgevers, 2021, 221 pp. ISBN: 9789021340005, price: EUR 22.50 (hardback).

André Klunder, *Ina Latu: Onze moeder, onze koningin*. N.p.: www.teachersgoabroad.nl, 2021, 96 pp. ISBN: 9789090342931, price: EUR 14.50 (hardback).

Seventy years ago, in 1951, 12,500 Moluccans—KNIL military and their families—were ordered by the Dutch government to board steamships, to be brought from Java to the Netherlands for a ‘temporary’ stay. This order was the unwanted outcome of the Indonesian decolonization conflict that could not be solved at the time. KNIL demobilization, the proclamation of the Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS), and the Indonesian government’s resolve to exercise its authority in the whole of the former Dutch East Indies all played their role. In a four-part television film, film director Verbraak tells the stories of these Moluccans by recording interviews with ten men and four women, born between 1935 and 1977, with the majority from the second generation. This book contains the extended interviews.

Upon arrival, the military were discharged—which caused lasting resentment and traumas by the men involved. Added were grievances about the pitiable housing in remote barracks, the prohibition against taking a job, and the clear discrimination of Moluccans in many other respects. From 1956 on, when the government accepted that the Moluccans would be permanent inhabitants of the Netherlands, they were housed in separate districts of villages, spread all over the country. The bitterness of the first generation made way for the militancy of the second generation, which drew worldwide publicity by the occupation of the Indonesian official residence, a kindergarten, and a provincial office, but first and foremost by the hijacking of trains, all between 1970 and 1977. These outbursts of violence cost the lives of culprits and victims alike. Since then, a slow process of unobtrusive accommodation has led to the integration of the Moluccans in the Netherlands, without losing their own identity. Verbraak’s selection of interviewees is somewhat biased. Thus, this results in ample attention to the spectacular events of the 1970s. To maintain a bal-

ance, Moluccan musician Johnny Manuhutu of the group Massada and Simon Tahamata, with 22 caps of the Dutch national football team, are also included.

Altogether these interviews give good insight into the way the Moluccan community experienced life in diaspora. Verbraak's introduction is short, but adequate. He does not enter into debate with his interviewees.

Ina Latu, by André Klunder, is similar to Verbraak's collection, but it concentrates on the biography of one woman only: Juliana Talarima-Gaspersz (1923–2020), who, in her long life, went through all the ordeals representative of the broader Moluccan community in the Netherlands.