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Marieke Bloembergen, Polisi zaman Hindia-Belanda; Dari kepedulian dan ketakutan. Translated by Tristam P. Moeliono, Anna Wardhana, Nicolette P.R. Moeliono, Tita Soeprapto Mangoensadjito. Jakarta: Penerbit buku Kompas, KITLV Jakarta, 2011, xliv + 540 pp. (

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included which are not found in Korigodskiy's much larger dictionary. One of the outstanding qualities of the latter dictionary is precisely its abundance of collocations and other examples. The article for the lemma *cara* for instance contains 35 words in eleven one-column lines in the dictionary under review, whereas Korigodskiy uses more than seven columns of 65 lines each and six words per line. A major reason why the Indonesian-Russian section of Pogadaev's dictionary is an essential complement to Korigodskiy's is, apart from the extra lemmas, the fact that the Russian equivalents of the same entry are often different, whereas neither dictionary can be said to be wrong. To give just one example out of many: the equivalents of *kayu* in the dictionary under review are 1) *лес* (*les*) 'timber', *деревесина* (*derevesína*) 'timber', 2) *палка* (*pálka*) 'stick', whereas the equivalents *дерево* (*dérevo*) 'tree' is given only in a few examples/collocations. In Korigodskiy the first meanings are 1) *дерево* 'tree' (with the adjective *древесный* (*drevésnyj*)), 2) *дерево* 'wood' (with the adjective *деревянный* (*derevjánnij*)), 3) *бревно* (*brevnó*) 'log', *полено* (*poléno*) 'log, billet', 4) *палка* etcetera, whereas *лес* only appears as an equivalent in four of the 114 collocations.

The ideal dictionary remains utopian. What is clear is that in spite of its predominantly receptive character, Pogadaev's dictionary is a welcome addition to the growing series of bilingual dictionaries that have appeared in Indonesia over the last decade.

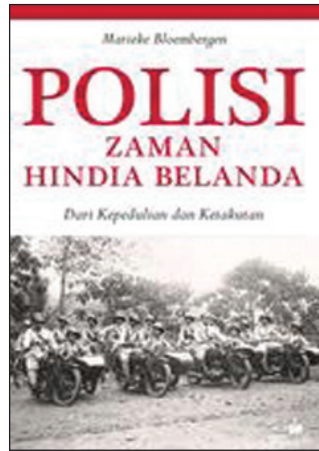
Marieke Bloembergen, *Polisi zaman Hindia-Belanda; Dari kepedulian dan ketakutan*. Translated by Tristam P. Moeliono, Anna Wardhana, Nicolette P.R. Moeliono, Tita Soeprapto Mangoensadjito. Jakarta: Penerbit buku Kompas, KITLV Jakarta, 2011, xlv + 540 pp. (with separate inserted Introduction by the author). ISBN 978-979-709-544-4. Price: IDR 102,000 (soft cover).

Marieke Bloembergen, *De geschiedenis van de politie in Nederlands-Indië; Uit zorg en angst*. Amsterdam: Boom, Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 2009, 408 pp. ISBN 978 90 850 6707 8/ISBN KITLV 978-90-6718-360-4. Price: EUR 35.00 (hard cover).

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The police force in the Dutch Indies had a difficult job, which was made even harder by the different expectations of groups in Dutch East Indies' society and in the Netherlands. To complicate matters, police operations in the colony were also highly influenced by the international attention paid to



the Dutch East Indies and its reputation abroad. The way the police force was administered and supervised had far-reaching consequences on the way it worked on a daily basis, and on the way it was perceived by the public. All this was in a situation of increased Islamic

presence and the awakening and increasingly frequent actions of the pergerakan or native movements in the colony.

If this were not enough, there is more to come. The Dutch Indies had to contend with two world wars, a global financial and economic recession, and a complete change in the ways Europeans started to understand the colonial phenomenon and the impact this had on colonial policies in the motherland and thus in the colony itself. The ethical policy of the early twentieth century also had a great effect of the colonial police. In the period under discussion in the book, roughly between 1870 and 1942, Indonesians and Indonesian society also changed irrespective of colonial developments. Ideas and notions of independence and freedom swept over the archipelago in increasing intensity, and the idea that the “natives” were “just” an undifferentiated and passive mass whose wishes and aspirations could conveniently be ignored proved increasingly untenable.

More confounding still was the way the inhabitants of the Dutch Asian colonial possessions were perceived. The population, roughly divided into Europeans, other Asians and natives, did little to ease matters for the much-battered Indies police force who occasionally found an outlet for its frustrations by acting with extreme violence and force against the Chinese. Ultimately, it was not even clear whom the police worked for. Was it for the European section of society? But then, what about the ‘natives’ who were also the victims of wide spread corruption, not to speak of murder and theft, arson and rape. Were they not in need of, and did they not have the right to protection from the State as well? As always, the Chinese found themselves in the highly unfortunate position of being somewhere in between and thus nowhere.

The book that is under review here is the Dutch version. The contents of both the Dutch and Indonesian versions are of course the same, but please note that the page numbers in this review refer to the pages in the Dutch version. Clearly, Marieke Bloembergen saw herself confronted with a lot of ideas, information, sources, and other challenges in writing this book. In all she has succeeded admirably in presenting a picture of the police in the Indies. It

would, however be more correct to say that she portrays the organization and administration of the police and the policies towards them in the archipelago rather than the police force itself. The actual person of a Dutch Indies police officer and how he and the force worked and lived on a daily basis remains largely underexposed. This is a pity as it would have made the book much livelier and would have given the readers some time to breathe before delving into yet another discussion of yet another reorganization. As far as this goes, the Dutch have hardly changed at all. Apparently then, as now, the best way to handle vexing and inconvenient problems is to ignore them and divert attention to organizational issues, thus keeping the public's eye as far away from the actual issue as possible.

If anything becomes clear from the book it is that the police were led by emotion and image-building rather than by reason. The book portrays a shocking picture of the unending reorganizations the police force in the Indies had to contend with, and these were more reflective of dissatisfactions with the organizational part than the overall actual performance of the force. Shocking too is that a single occurrence of dissatisfaction could lead to yet another comprehensive reorganization which, talking about the wider perspective of colonial studies that the book also wants to address, reflects the psychological state of mind of most European colony dwellers. Forest after forest of paper was thus wasted and wasted again by trying to fit the police in the colony into ideas that usually came from people outside the colony who had little understanding of what the police force was supposed to do and how it was to do its task in cooperation with the army and other law enforcement agencies. Leaving aside personal aspirations to power and leadership positions and the remarkable lack of trust and coordination between all these law enforcement agencies (also evident in the way the colonizers continued to perceive the "natives" who, after all, usually did the actual job), the way politics handled police issues is remarkable for its lack of accuracy and for its – still very Dutch – way of making problems financial and thus again diverting attention from real issues. The author reveals misunderstanding upon misunderstandings and the way administrators tried to solve problems from behind their desks. Let us have a closer look at the book. The title is puzzling. *De Geschiedenis van de politie in Nederlandsch-Indië* (The police in the Netherlands East Indies/ *Polisi zaman Hindia-Belanda*) is clear enough, but it is interesting that the Dutch title would seem to refer to the Dutch East Indies polity while the Indonesian translation points to a period in time. The sub-title gives rise to questions: *Uit zorg en angst* ('Out of concern and fear', in Indonesian translation: *Dari kepedulian dan ketakutan*). The problem here is what the word *uit* really means. In English, it would be 'out of' but it has a connotation of 'because of, due to' or even 'caused by'. *Kepedulian* is in my view not the same as *zorg* 'concern' which might have been better translated with *kekhawatiran*, because this term also reflects the insecurity of the police's position in the colony and the uneasiness the force felt in their job. The idea of 'care and fear' is one example of an idea that Marieke returns to throughout the book, but which to me

remains not entirely clear. For me, the general picture she portrays is one mostly of fear and not of care. Perhaps the subtitle should have been reversed into *Uit angst en zorg*. Another point of departure, for instance, is the fact that in the author's view:

the police was the face of the colonial state. Ideally, it could lead the government into the innermost part of native society and it was the police that brought the state closest to its subjects. Therefore, the colonial police can teach us most about the way the late colonial state functioned and of the relationship between that state and its subjects (p. 14).

I wonder if this is true. The police were only interested in the people and forced to deal with them for a limited number of reasons: crime and criminal offences, and (threats of and possible) uprisings against that State. In the absence of these, the police force had little interest in the people, and perhaps the author might have stated her idea more pertinently by saying that the police was in closest contact with the people when the people did not do what the State wanted them to do, or when they threatened it. Another issue is, of course, that although the police might have had closest physical dealings with the people, whether this led to greater contacts is questionable. People are usually loath to be close to law enforcement agencies, including the colonial police. Her idea that the police had a dual function which worked nicely on paper but not at all in practice is more to the point. A police that enforces foreign laws and tries to keep the people under its thumb is distrusted, no matter what it does.

I could not escape the impression that the book understands the Dutch Indies' subjects in terms of the Europeans and especially the Dutch in urban areas, and that the natives are somewhat downplayed and lumped together in a kind of unspecified and diffuse mass and a dangerous one at that. Many examples in the book refer to the cities of Batavia, Semarang and Surabaya, and if the rural areas are portrayed this is because situations such as cane fires, for example, threatened European interests. We are also mostly in Java and only occasionally elsewhere in this vast polity. What the situation was like in the villages and outer regions of the colony may perhaps receive more attention in future studies. A statement like the following may be untenable if the "natives" were taken more into consideration. "Furthermore, also for colonial states, the subjects' approval for their administrators (as it is for non-colonial states) is a prerequisite for effective authority – the more so since they derive their existence from violence" (p. 19). I wonder what she means, because one can hardly expect the native subjects of the Dutch colony to condone their colonial administrators. As I understand it, most of them would have welcomed their departure earlier rather than later.

The poor "natives" were apparently seen as the constant enemy of the Dutch and their administrators. As stated on page 187, there seems to have been a notion that contacts with the "natives" might only lead to *geknoei en corruption* (making a mess and corruption). This she might have looked at more

closely. It would have been interesting to see who these corrupt natives were, because the picture she presents in other places in the book seems to indicate the opposite, namely that the Dutch and their “cronies” were corrupt, rather than the poor “*desa man*” who had little opportunity to engage in corruption. This is the more interesting, since on pages 227 and further the author relates that the police itself needed to be cleansed of “its most evident stains” like corruption practices and other financial malfeasance, drugs trafficking, and abuse of authority.

Some remarks are fascinating but unfortunately not elaborated upon. On page 16 Marieke states that former Dutch colonial civil servants did not leave a mass of monographies (does she mean biographies?) and memoirs while their British colleagues did. This is interesting and hopefully can be explained in further research, as it may reflect a wider trend. The author has a tendency to make statements that lead to questions which she subsequently does not answer. For instance, on page 184, “In their view, the transfer of the police leadership to the office of the general attorney would break the natural development of the police”. Why should this be so? It is a crucial element of the confusion and uneasiness in the discussion of the relationship between the attorney general and the police. What is “natural development” anyway? Another example is on page 225 where she describes that the “field police” got a negative assessment because they did not succeed in squashing the rampant *rampokpartijen* in Meester Cornelis. The question that screams out to the reader is why? Why was the police incapable of curbing these robberies and looting parties in that area, or rather, why did the police elsewhere apparently succeeded in doing so? Why also was the population afraid of the military police and not of the field police as stated on page 226? What too were the political reasons to reject a proposal to replace the field police with the army, as related on page 238.

Because the author wants to put the discussion of the Indies’ police in the wider context of colonial studies, some more research might also have been useful. For instance, on page 20 she states that because of the colony’s expansion, the colonial administration involved itself more in colonial society. I wonder if this is so, because expansion as such is a matter of conquest, and involvement in people’s lives is quite another thing.

The Netherlands Indies as a State of Violence is explored in the book, but I fear not explicitly enough. I think that the fact that the colony was a State of violence is true but I wonder how many other states that were not colonized were in fact also States of violence like Russia and probably many others as well. This is not to say that the fact that the colony was violent is not important, but violence may not have been the result of the colonial relation per se, but because of the colonial State’s political make-up irrespective of its colonial aspect.

The underlying role of Islam in the time under discussion is not sufficiently explained. Her sub chapter: *Angst voor de witte hadji* (Fear of the White Hajj) does not suffice. She might have mentioned Couperus’ novel *De stille kracht*,

where this fear is clearly a feature in the daily life of the colonials, and she might have done this also if only to introduce a Dutch literary product to balance the English literary products she uses. The classic article on hajj matters and the Dutch colonial state was of course written by J.G. Vredembregt (1962), and it is a pity that this has not been used or mentioned, the more so as it was published in the *Bijdragen*, the journal of the KITLV who also published the present book.

One of the objectives of the book is to answer the question "what this changing colonial police organization – on paper and in practice – may teach us about the way the colonial State functioned." I have the impression that the answer to this question is either not yet provided, or drowned in the wealth of detailed information the book provides. I hope that she will explore this question in another publication that is more geared to that particular aspect of the (Dutch) colonial society.

The most interesting thing of the book is that I gained the impression that the police were required to maintain 'rest and order' (peace and good order) rather than to ensure that crime was punished and ultimately discouraged. This has not changed much, even now, after 65 years of Indonesian independence. Other intriguing similarities are, for instance that in the field, the colonial police were an indigenous affair, but they were lead by foreigners. This is still so in the perception of many Indonesians. The fact that the police was also given the task of elevating society's civilization is also interesting to explore in the present situation in the archipelago. That so much went wrong in the colony, 'the colonial misunderstanding' (p. 70) then was, as I fear now, because of bad communication. Far away situations and perceptions also still colour the way Indonesia's police system works, and 'what foreign countries think' is still important in daily police practice. In view of the fact that the present Indonesian police is, like it or not, a continuation of the police in the Indies, the timely translation of the book into Indonesian is to be applauded. It is a pity that the author did not comment on the many obvious similarities between the present police and the colonial police, which may be seen as an example of how colonial daily affairs long survive colonial political ties. Since she has already tackled half of this issue, perhaps we may hope that she venture into the second part as well?

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