Indonesian Mockery of the Dutch during the Indonesian Struggle to Maintain Independence (1945-1948)

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Research on the struggle for Indonesian independence (1945-1949) and the harsh response of the Dutch to their former colony is abundant, with most studies focusing on the nature and forms of violence. One neglected area of research is how Indonesian nationalists represented the conflict in the form of mockery. This study intends to fill this gap by examining mocking textual representations of the Dutch, created and disseminated by Indonesians through print media. By 1945, the Indonesians had declared their independence and considered themselves fully capable of taking care of their new country. When the Dutch tried to take back rule in Indonesia, they were sarcastically accused of trying to recolonise Indonesia by cruel means. By contrasting the good 'us' with the bad 'them', mocking representations became a way for Indonesians to ridicule the Dutch. In these representations, the Dutch were portrayed as the people of a tiny country – compared to a large Indonesia – who were colonial-minded in an equal post-war world. Indonesians moreover emphasised the weak authority of the Dutch in Java and depicted them as perpetrators who falsely arrested innocent Indonesians, as producers of false propaganda, and as people who often boasted to be clever but actually lacked knowledge and were easily deceived by Indonesian fighters. This paper elucidates issues pertaining a type of representations that should be understood as an additional, yet often forgotten form of resistance against occupying foreign forces in the post-World War II era.

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De Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsstrijd (1945-1949) en de felle response van de Nederlanders op hun voormalige kolonie is veelvuldig onderzocht, waarbij de meeste studies zich richten op de aard en de vormen van geweld. Een grotendeels verwaarloosd onderzoeksgebied is de vraag hoe Indonesische nationalisten het conflict verbeeldden in de vorm van spot. Dit artikel tracht deze leemte te vullen en onderzoekt spottende tekstuele representaties van Nederlanders, gemaakt en verspreid door Indonesiërs via gedrukte media. In 1945 hadden de Indonesiërs de onafhankelijkheid uitgeroepen en achtten zij zichzelf volledig in staat om hun eigen land te besturen. Toen Nederland probeerde de macht in Indonesië terug te grijpen, gebruikten Indonesiërs sarcasme om te wijzen op de wrede acties van de Nederlanders in hun pogingen het land te herkoloniseren. Door de goede 'wij' te contrasteren met de slechte 'zij', werden spottende representaties een manier voor Indonesiërs om de Nederlanders belachelijk te maken. In deze voorstellingen werden de Nederlanders onder andere afgeschilderd als het volk van een piepklein land – vergeleken met het grote Indonesië – dat in het naoorlogse klimaat van gelijkwaardigheid vasthield aan koloniale gebruiken en denkpatronen. Daarnaast benadrukten Indonesiërs het zwakke gezag van de Nederlanders op Java en schilderden zij hen af als daders die ten onrechte onschuldige Indonesiërs arresteerden, als makers van valse propaganda, en als mensen die er prat op gingen slim te zijn, maar in werkelijkheid dom waren en makkelijk te misleiden waren door Indonesische strijders. Door te focussen op dergelijke humoristische, satirische representaties, analyseert dit artikel een belangrijke, maar vaak vergeten vorm van verzet tegen bezettende buitenlandse machten in het tijdperk na de Tweede Wereldoorlog.

Introduction[1]

Many historians have taken an interest in the Indonesian struggle for maintaining independence between 1945-1949 and the harsh response of their former colonisers, the Dutch. They have examined various aspects related to the armed conflict between the two countries, with a greater emphasis on violence. This emphasis on violence is not surprising given that the presence of the Dutch to re-establish their colonial rule was challenged by Indonesian nationalists who wanted to form a new, independent, and sovereign state. As a result, the conflict in Indonesia between 1945 and 1949 was extremely bloody. This is exemplified by several studies that researched different aspects of the role of violence within this conflict.

1 The author would like to thank to the two anonymous reviewers of the original version of this paper for their constructive comments and suggestions.

Rémy Limpach, for instance, examined the extreme and structural violence committed by the Dutch army in Indonesia.[2] Similarly, Gert Oostindie, building on egodocuments of Dutch soldiers, investigated the types and structures of their acts of violence.[3] Bart Luttikhuis and Anthony Dirk Moses edited a book in which they emphasised that violence became widespread during the Dutch-Indonesian conflict and affected almost all layers of society.[4] One of the more recent contributions to this debate is a study by Luttikhuis and Christiaan Harinck. By using Indonesian archives for Dutch historiography, they seek to offer a new perspective on the conflict. Yet, their study still remains within the context of reconstructing the different acts of violence that were committed during the conflict.[5]

The theme of violence during the war has attracted a lot of attention from Indonesian scholars as well. The majority of them view the Indonesian Revolution as a political crisis that was marked by the return of Dutch rule and later opposition to this rule by pro-Republican Indonesian fighters. Furthermore, these historians argue that this crisis was impacted by additional conflicts of ideology and interests within the Republic, popular resistance to traditional rulers, and the emergence of political opportunists seeking personal gain. Given these various problems, violence emerged as a route that was often taken at both a national and local level. This idea appears in several works by Indonesian scholars, including Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin's study of the Dutch-Indonesian War and internal Indonesian conflict in Aceh during the revolution.[6] We find it again in Anhar Gonggong's work on the Darul Islam rebellion in South Sulawesi (1949-1962)[7], and in Julianto Ibrahim's studies on the ideological conflicts among fellow Republican fighters and of fighters and bandits in Surakarta respectively.[8] Apart from the theme of violence, new approaches have emerged through which historians seek to understand the Indonesian revolution. These focuss specifically on how the war was represented in

2 Rémy Limpach, *De brandende kampongs van Generaal Spoor* (Amsterdam 2016).

3 Gert Oostindie, *Soldaat in Indonesië 1945-1950: getuigenissen van een oorlog aan de verkeerde kant van de geschiedenis* (Amsterdam 2015).

4 Bart Luttikhuis and Anthony Dirk Moses (eds.), *Colonial Counterinsurgency and Mass Violence: The Dutch Empire in Indonesia* (Abingdon 2014).

5 Bart Luttikhuis and Christiaan Harinck, 'Voorbij het koloniale perspectief: Indonesische bronnen en het onderzoek naar de oorlog in Indonesië, 1945-1949', BMGN – *Low Countries Historical Review* 132:2 (2017) 51-76. DOI: https://doi.org/10.18352/bmgn-lchr.10340.

6 Nazaruddin Sjamsuddin, *Revolusi di Serambi Mekah: Perjuangan Kemerdekaan dan Pertarungan Politik di Aceh, 1945-1949* (Jakarta 1999).

7 Anhar Gonggong, *Abdul Qahhar Mudzakkar: Dari Patriot Hingga Pemberontak* (Jakarta 1992).

8 Julianto Ibrahim, *Bandit dan Pejuang di Simpang Bengawan: Kriminalitas dan Kekerasan Masa Revolusi di Surakarta* (Wonogiri 2004); Julianto Ibrahim, *Dinamika Sosial dan Politik Masa Revolusi Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (Yogyakarta 2017).

various media like music[9], newspapers and magazines[10], and Indonesian propaganda in general.[11]

Most of the research mentioned above, both from Dutch and Indonesian historians, introduced us to various perspectives on the nature and forms of violence during the Dutch-Indonesian conflict, building on sources that had never been used before like egodocuments and songs. Other studies examined the range of political responses from the Indonesian government and its supporters, in the form of the establishment of government institutions or efforts to seek support from the international community.[12] Although all of these studies have enriched our knowledge of the complexity of this revolution, it must be noted here that the conflict was not exclusively coloured by armed contact that resulted in casualties and material damage. Behind the violence lied radical differences of perspective between the two countries on how Indonesia should be rebuilt after the end of the Japanese occupation. Some studies regarding the representations of the Dutch-Indonesian war have been conducted[13], especially from the Indonesian perspective. Nevertheless, as most studies focussed mainly on violence, diversity on this theme is still needed.

This article thus seeks to broaden the scope of research on the Indonesian revolution and examines an important aspect of the struggle for Indonesian independence that has been largely ignored so far, namely how Indonesian independence fighters viewed and represented themselves

9 Wisnu Mintargo, *Musik Revolusi Indonesia* (Yogyakarta 2008).

10 Andi Suwirta, *Suara dari Dua Kota: Revolusi Indonesia dalam Pandangan Surat Kabar Merdeka (Jakarta) dan Kedaulatan Rakyat (Yogyakarta), 1945-1947* (Jakarta 2000); Muhammad Yuanda Zara, 'Securing the State, Defending the Religion: An Analysis of *Boelan Sabit* Newspaper Publications (December 1945-January 1946)', *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 13:1 (2019). DOI: https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2019.13.1.115-140.

11 Muhammad Yuanda Zara, *Voluntary Participation, State Involvement: Indonesian Propaganda in the Struggle for Maintaining Independence, 1945-1949* (PhD dissertation; University of Amsterdam 2016).

12 George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca 1952); Alistair MacDonald Taylor, *Indonesian Independence and the United Nations* (Greenwood 1975); Robert J. Leupold, *The United States and Indonesian Independence, 1944-1947: An American Response to Revolution* (PhD dissertation; University of Kentucky 1976).

13 On the representations of violence during the conflict in Indonesian newspapers, see Muhammad Yuanda Zara, '"Trust me, this news is indeed true": representations of violence in Indonesian newspapers during the Indonesian revolution, 1945-1948', in: Luttikhuis and Moses (eds.), *Colonial Counterinsurgency and Mass Violence*. Media historian Louis Zweers examined how the Dutch army treated media reports on the conflict. See Louis Zweers, *De gecensureerde oorlog: Militairen versus media in Nederlands-Indië 1945-1949* (Zutphen 2013). Andi Suwirta briefly comments on the function of carricatures as social critique against both the Dutch and Indonesian authorities in Indonesian newspapers during the conflict. See Andi Suwirta, *Revolusi Indonesia dalam News and Views: Sebuah Antologi Sejarah* (Yogyakarta 2015) 98-120.

('us') and their main enemy, the Dutch ('them'), through ridicule.[14] Negative representations of the Dutch were disseminated by pro-Republican print media, both in English and Indonesian, demonstrating the desire of the Indonesian side to spread its anti-Dutch sentiment among a wider audience. The Indonesian fighters' mockery showcased a profound hatred of the Dutch, especially of the cruelty of Dutch colonialism in the past and the Dutch desire to reintroduce colonial practices in a place where Indonesians believed a new independent and authoritative state, the Republic of Indonesia, had been established. Ridicule built up these negative sentiments, even anti-Dutch attitudes, and gave rise to feelings of hatred againts the Dutch and all things associated with them. At some point, these feelings exploded and became a desire to punish, take revenge, and even expel the Dutch from Indonesia.

Many of the different types of stereotyping, labelling and violence that involved both parties were rooted in the idea of the 'us'/'self' and 'them'/'other' as it emerged during the conflict. This was a notion that played a key role in the attitudes and actions taken by Indonesian fighters in their struggle against the Dutch. This concept of othering helps us understand portrayals of Indonesians as the protagonist and the Dutch as the menacing 'other'. On the concept of othering, the Irish philosopher Richard Kearney writes that when a major problem arises in a community, accusations are often directed at 'strangers' who are deemed responsible. These accusations then become manifested in actions to alienate or even to get rid of these 'strangers'.[15] This act of blaming other parties unites community members in a shared identity, 'with the basic sense of who is included (us) and who is excluded (them)'.[16]

The psychologists Ervin Staub, Robert J. Sternberg and Karin Sternberg provide a more in-depth assessment of this idea of 'us' and 'them'. According to these scholars, the boundaries or distinctions between groups – for example, differences in political views, ethnicity and nationality, or past trauma inflicted by one group on another – can inspire negative attitudes towards each other which subsequently form the root of hatred. In the worst case, this hatred is translated into acts of violence[17], committed against those 'others' who are labelled negatively, hated, and therefore thought to deserve

14 In this article, I use mockery, ridicule, sarcasm, irony, satire and joke interchangeably. Despite the fact that they have slightly different meanings, they share certain common elements relevant to this study, namely attitudes expressed in unpleasant ways to insult or make fun of the Dutch in order to make them look foolish, dishonorable, inferior and wicked in front of seemingly intelligent, independent, proud and well-respected Indonesians.

15 Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness* (London/New York 2002) 26.

16 Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters*, 26.

17 Ervin Staub, 'The Origins and Evolution of Hate, With Notes on Prevention', in: Robert J. Sternberg (ed.), *The Psychology of Hate* (Washington 2005). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1037/10930-003. Quoted in Robert J. Sternberg and Karin Sternberg, *The Nature of Hate* (Cambridge 2008) 27-28. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511818707.

punishment. In order to explain the existence of the menacing 'other' to 'self', feminist scholar Sara Ahmed states that 'the presence of this other is imagined as a threat to the object of love'.[18] This holds true for the Indonesian case. The return of the Dutch as the heinous 'other' to Indonesia in September 1945 was considered a major peril. These foreign aggressors would destroy Indonesia's hard-fought and hard-won nationalist ideal which had materialised in August 1945 as their 'object of love' at the time: an independent Indonesia. In this article I use the concept of 'othering' as one of the frameworks for understanding why Indonesian nationalists built up negative images of the Netherlands through jeering remarks.

It is important to notice that besides the idea of othering, mockery is another crucial concept in this article. Both are strongly interrelated 'weapons' of war used by the Indonesians. Mockery and joking have long been common practice in various forms in Indonesian society, including among the Javanese, the largest ethnic group in Indonesia. Javanese traditional performance art, *wayang kulit* (shadow puppetry), not only conveys stories about good defeating evil, as for example symbolised by knights who win the battle against the giants in the context of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* epics. *Wayang kulit* also contains elements of ridicule and mockery, mainly to entertain the audience, as exemplified for instance by *Punakawan*, the four devoted servant-clowns Semar, Gareng, Petruk and Bagong. *Punakawan* told many jokes, mocked each other, and even made fun of their masters' habits through puns and humorous behaviour.[19]

Already during the colonial period, in addition to political organisations and armed rebellion, Indonesian nationalists used satire as a weapon to fight the oppression of the Dutch. A case in point is the article 'Als ik een Nederlander was' ('if I were a Dutchman') by Ki Hadjar Dewantara – one of the founders of the first political party in the Indies, the Indische Partij – which was published in *De Express* newspaper in 1913. In it, he imagined himself a Dutchman and cynically criticised the call of the Dutch government on the indigenous people in the Indies to commemorate the centenary of Dutch independence. He wrote: 'If I were a Netherlander, I would never celebrate Independence Day in a land where we do not give its people independence'.[20] This satire led him to be exiled to the Netherlands.

Yet perhaps the most prominent Indonesian satirist of the pre-war era was Ki Hadjar's colleague in the party, Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo. Graduating

18 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions. Second Edition* (Edinburgh 2014) 43.

19 James R. Brandon (ed.) and Pandam Guritno, *On Thrones of Gold: Three Javanese Shadow Plays* (Honolulu 1993) 79-80; Ward Keeler, *Javanese Shadow Plays, Javanese Selves* (Princeton 1987) 192.

20 R. Franki S. Notosudirdjo, 'Musical Modernism in the Twentieth Century', in: Bart Barendregt and Els Bogaerts (eds.), *Recollecting Resonances: Indonesian-Dutch Musical Encounters*. Southeast Asia Mediated 288:4 (Leiden/Boston 2014) 133. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004258594_007.

as a doctor from the Dutch medical school School tot Opleiding van Inlandsche Artsen, Tjipto was known to be very critical of Dutch colonialism and Javanese traditional rule.[21] He expressed his critiques in a unique way, through the use of mockery. Mockery and satire allowed him to challenge the colonial and feudal establishment and offered a new way of looking at the relations between natives and the Dutch, as well as between commoners and Javanese nobility. He often did what historian Hans Pols described as breaking etiquette, and he irritated those who were socially and politically higher than him, including Dutch and Javanese authorities.[22]

As a historically old genre of communication rooted in Indonesian society, Indonesian independence fighters, from 1945 onwards, continued using this type of satirical resistance. The Dutch were ridiculed in Indonesian print media through three different formats, namely textual representations, visual representations and a combination of the two. As the satirical dialogues in the Indonesian print media constituted a specific genre of ridicule, this study focuses only on textual mockery of the Dutch. I specifically investigated mocking representations found in pro-Republican magazines and newspapers, namely one biweekly (that later became a weekly) magazine, *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, and the four daily newspapers *Merdeka*, *Banteng*, *Gelora Rakjat* and *Mimbar Indonesia*. The Indonesian print media targeted a specific audience, namely a literate audience. These people used newspapers and magazines as their main source of information, which in turn may have reinforced or changed their beliefs on certain political issues.

The Voice of Free Indonesia was written in English, published in British- and Dutch-occupied Jakarta and mainly intended for foreign correspondents and troops in Java, and for non-Indonesian readers abroad.[23] According to one of its contributors, a pro-Republican Scottish-American citizen named K'tut Tantri (Muriel Stuart Walker), the purpose of publishing in Jakarta was to make their magazine the primary source of information about developments

21 Muhammad Balfas, *Dr Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo Demokrat Sedjati* (Jakarta 1957).

22 Hans Pols, *Nurturing Indonesia: Medicine and Decolonisation in the Dutch East Indies* (Cambridge 2018) 75-77. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108341035.

23 So far, no detailed information is available about who the editors of this magazine were. In the first edition of this magazine it was mentioned that this magazine was 'edited by men who fight for freedom, justice, goodwill and understanding'. Some contributors used short names (such as Sentot), initials (such as S.G.) or symbolic names (such as *kromo*, a Javanese term symbolising 'ordinary people'), so it is difficult to know their background. Some articles were written anonymously. But some contributors were known, such as writer Hans Bague Jassin and Pramoedya Ananta Toer. See the first edition of *The Voice of Free Indonesia* (date unclear, likely October 1945); Molly Bondan, *Spanning a Revolution: Kisah Mohamad Bondan, Eks-Digulis, dan Pergerakan Nasional Indonesia* (Jakarta 2008) 289-290; Mohamad Bondan, *Memoar Seorang Eks-Digulis: Totalitas Sebuah Perjuangan* (Jakarta 2011) 151; Koh Young Hun, *Pramoedya Menggugat: Melacak Jejak Indonesia* (Jakarta 2011) 11.

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Figure 1. The front cover of *The Voice of Free Indonesia* magazine, first edition. The date and month of publication are unknown, but it was presumably published in the second week of October 1945. © Courtesy of the National Library of Indonesia.

in Indonesia for foreign correspondents. The Dutch paid great attention to this strongly anti-Dutch magazine. In her autobiography, K'tut Tantri recalled that her article, in which she mocked the 'shameful behaviour' of the Dutch during the Japanese occupation, triggered the Dutch troops to raid the editorial office of the magazine and to destroy the facilities inside.[24] This was clearly an attempt to halt further publication.

The readership of *The Voice of Free Indonesia* was very broad. It covered Java and was even sent to Australia. The Indonesian Ministry of Information sent the magazine to Indonesia's independence struggle committee in Australia, namely the Central Committee for Indonesian Independence (CENKIM). When it received more copies, CENKIM sent them, along with a variety of print media they had, to other independence struggle committees in the United States, England and Egypt. By consequence, the magazine was mainly aimed at foreigners, both in Indonesia and abroad, and sought to shape world public opinion.

The four daily newspapers I investigated all addressed the Indonesian public.[25] They had their own columns for humour and mockery which commented on the latest political developments in the country. Just like the columns containing ridicule in *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, the original authors of these columns were unknown. Occasionally, for instance in the case of humorous columns in *Banteng*, *Merdeka* and *Gelora Rakjat*, authors used a pseudonym. Based on my own research, anonymity was not uncommon in Indonesian propaganda at the time, given the severe Dutch retaliation against the media and journalists who were seen as provoking anti-Dutch sentiments among the Indonesian people.

I examined a number of examples of mockery published between late 1945 and 1948. This was the period when the Dutch began to gain control of important areas in Java and Sumatra and started to show their presence by establishing a government, issuing currencies and carrying out acts of violence, like arrests and shootings targeting Indonesians.[26] This paper will

24 K'tut Tantri, *Revolt in Paradise* (London 1960) 222.

25 The *Merdeka* newspaper was first published in October 1945 by Burhanuddin Mohammad Diah. Working as a journalist for a newspaper published by the Japanese authorities during the Japanese occupation, *Asia Raja*, Diah immediately showed his pro-Republican stance after Indonesia's independence. After Japan lost the war, he and his friends took over the *Asia Raja* printing facility and used it to publish *Merdeka*. *Merdeka*'s head office was located in Molenvliet Timoer, Jakarta. This newspaper was aimed at Indonesian audiences, especially in Java. Meanwhile, the *Banteng* newspaper was published from the end of October 1945. Published in Solo, Central Java, *Banteng* referred to itself as a '*Bekal Perdjoeangan*' (stock [of information] for struggle). This newspaper provided a space to propagate the existence of the Republic of Indonesia and called on its readers to fight the Dutch. See, for example, *Banteng*, 3 November 1945. However, no information is available about the editors or journalists of this newspaper.

26 The materials taken from *The Voice of Free Indonesia* were already in English. The English translations of other materials are mine. Insertions in square brackets are also mine.

focus on the context that facilitated the creation of mocking representations of the Dutch, the kinds of political messages Indonesian mockery brought forward about different political developments (especially during the early phase of the conflict), and the meanings of such representations for the Indonesian struggle to maintain independence. The paper is divided into three parts. The first deals with the satire that attacked certain bad habits and evil practices associated with Dutch colonialism. The second focuses on texts that boasted Indonesians' intelligence as a way to secure victory. The last part pertains to mockeries that expressed hatred towards colonial-minded people, including the Dutch as well as those Indonesians who still looked up to their colonial masters.

Satirising the menacing Dutch

Shortly after Indonesian independence was proclaimed on 17 August 1945, Soekarno and Mohammad Hatta, the President and Vice-President of the Republic of Indonesia, established various government organisations to support the existence of this new nation. The government formed ministries, the semi-parliamentary body Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat (KNIP, or Central National Indonesian Committee), regional governments, armed forces and the police. Meanwhile, the defeat of Japan enabled the release of Dutch internees in Japanese prisons who subsequently tried to exert their influence. In September 1945, British forces went to Indonesia to free European captives and to accept the Japanese surrender.[27] The return of the Dutch to Indonesia was a major challenge for the Indonesians who longed for freedom. Conflict broke out between Indonesian youth and Europeans in Surabaya. The arrival of the British troops in Java in September, and in Sumatra the following month, triggered an escalation of the conflict, since Indonesians accused Britain of supporting the Dutch presence. The conflict then grew, pitting Indonesian youth not only against the Dutch, but also against British armed forces.

The reappearance of Dutch rule immediately revived the memory of pre-war colonialism and all kinds of evil associated with it. In this context, mockery was intended to remind the Indonesian public of how horrible the Dutch presence had been. They emphasised that if the Dutch were given another opportunity to rule, they would undoubtedly repeat their exploitative and repressive colonial practices. One example expressing this sentiment is a Solo-based newspaper, *Banteng*. On 3 November 1945, the newspaper editor, under the pen name 'Mas Kromjos', featured a commentary on the return of the Dutch. He emphasised that history showed that the

27 Richard McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia, 1945-1946: Britain, the Netherlands and the Indonesian Revolution* (London/New York 2005) 10-30.

Dutch were untruthful, making it perilous to let them return to Java. Under a column named 'Gado-Gado' – referring to an Indonesian salad with peanut sauce, denoting that this column commented on anything in both Malay and Javanese – one passage reads:

> The events that occurred 350 years ago will not happen again. At that time, the Dutch very politely, with all respect to the Javanese king, begged the Javanese king to be allowed to hitchhike and trade here. But what happened? With all their tricks they made us absent-minded, so that they stood on our heads, and from someone who just hitched a ride, they became great masters. But now the Dutch (whether 100%, 50% or 1½%) will not have the opportunity to feed or hand-feed us anymore.[28]

This quote portrayed the Dutch as a desperate outsider who turned into an arrogant boss in the house of the host who used to welcome them. This mockery served as a reminder for Indonesians of the harmful, long-lasting effects of the Dutch presence in the past. As such, it was written to prevent Indonesians from forgetting about the exploitation, racism, poverty and underdevelopment that Dutch colonial practices had brought about. In addition, the text blamed Indonesian traditional authorities for being easily deceived by the Dutch, hoping that the current regime would not be fooled in the same way.

But, as of January 1946, the Dutch managed to take control of Jakarta, after a few months of struggle between the Indonesian government and the Dutch army backed by British troops. As a result, the capital of the Republic had to be moved to a city in the interior of Java, Yogyakarta, where its ruler Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX, the King of Yogyakarta, had declared his support for the Republic.[29] This transfer meant that Indonesian fighters had lost control of Jakarta. Still, they found ways to undermine Dutch rule in the city and cultivated an image of a fragile Dutch power in Jakarta. For Indonesians, the Dutch claim was weak, as they were having difficulty maintaining control of the city. Indonesians symbolised this state of affairs with a caricature (figure 2) accompanied by a, likely fictional, dialogue between the Vice-President of the Council of the Netherlands Indies Henricus Johannes Spit and Charles van der Plas, member of the Netherlands Indies Civil

28 'Indo.....', *Banteng*, 3 November 1945. In the original text:
'*Peristiwa jang terdjadi pada 350 tahoen jang laloe tidak akan teroelang lagi. Pada waktoe itoe belanda dengan lakoe dodok, késot, mohon dengan segala hormat kepada Radja Djawa, soepaja diperbolehkan mondok oentoek berdagang disini. Tetapi, apa jang terdjadi?? Dengan segala tipoe moeslihat kita dapat di-lélo2, hingga mereka dapat mlangkring diatas kepala kita dan dari seorang jang hanja mondok sadja, lantas mendjadi toean besar. Tetapi sekarang, Belanda (baik jg 100% 50% atau 1½ pCt) tidak akan dapat ndoelang atau ngloloh kita lagi*'.

29 John Monfries, *A Prince in a Republic: The Life of Sultan Hamengku Buwono IX of Yogyakarta* (Singapore 2015) 134-135. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814519397.

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Figure 2. A mocking carricature and text in the pro-Republic daily newspaper *Merdeka*, republished in *The Voice of Free Indonesia* magazine, first edition. The date and month of publication are unknown, but it was presumably published in the second week of October 1945. © Courtesy of the National Library of Indonesia.

Administration (NICA) and Governor of East Java in the late colonial period. Hubertus Johannes van Mook, the Acting Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies in 1942-1948, silently sat in front of the two men and contemplated:

> Said Spit: 'You want to succeed Tjarda as Governor-General of Netherlands Indies, don't you, old boy?'
> Grunted Plas: '...Eh?...'
> Reproached Spit: 'I know, I know, but you haven't even succeeded in establishing yourself as Governor-General of Klender.'[30]

The exchange cited above points to at least two things. First, it insinuated Van der Plas's excessive personal ambition to rule in Indonesia, becoming the new Governor-General of the Indies if necessary. Second, it made fun of the inability of the Dutch, and especially Van der Plas, to control even Klender, a small hamlet near Jakarta. Klender itself was controlled by a strong local informal ruler named Haji Darip, whom historian Robert Cribb labelled the 'boss of Klender' who 'succesfully blended brigandage with patriotism'.[31] He was the son of the previous ruler of Klender and, as indicated by his name, he was a *haji* (a Muslim who completed a pilgrimage to Mecca), a title that was highly respected by the local people. He showed his pro-Republican stance by establishing the Barisan Rakyat Indonesia (Indonesian People's Brigade). The conversation above humiliated the Dutch by illustrating that they had failed to subdue even a hamlet ruler, implying that the Dutch were incapable of conquering much larger areas of Indonesia, let alone the whole country.

Ridicule was also used in Indonesians' efforts to delegitimise Dutch economic policy. In administering the post-war economy in the Dutch-occupied Indonesian territories and to underline its legitimacy, the NICA issued a currency known among Indonesians as '*uang NICA*' ('NICA money') as of March 1946. Mocking stories were circulated by Indonesians to show that they refused to use the money because it had no value at all. Thus, they cultivated the impression that busines and trade would not work well if the worthless NICA currency was in use.

> NO DUTCH MONEY, PLEASE!
> A Dutch lady wishes to sell her house furniture previous to her leaving for Holland.
> A prospective buyer calls and offers the lady a large amount. They make a deal, upon which the buyer calculates the payment in Nica money at the official rate of exchange.

30 A caricature in the pro-Republic daily newspaper *Merdeka*, republished in *The Voice of Free Indonesia* magazine, first edition (date and month unknown, but presumably second week of October 1945). The conversation was already in English, indicating that it was mainly addressing foreign correspondents in Java.

31 Robert Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries: The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution 1945-1949* (Singapore 2009) 52.

> 'What? Nica money? Ben je mal (are you crazy)?'
> 'But...'
> 'I want Jap money for use here before I go. I can't get anything with that God-damned Nica money. What good would Nica money be in Holland?'
> The deal is off.[32]

In *The Voice of Free Indonesia* we find similar examples of such ridicule, including a scenario in which an Indonesian butcher refused a woman who wanted to buy goat's flesh with what the butcher labelled 'that unrecognised money'[33] and a sarcastic story in which a lady complained that she could not buy vegetables, fruit, and charcoal with NICA money.[34] In short, NICA money was depicted as unable to buy virtually anything.

NICA money was considered a disastrous '*tanda NICA*' (sign of the NICA), so that those carrying it in the Republic's territory would face serious consequences from Republican fighters.[35] The Republican government had planned to issue its own currency in October 1945, but had failed to do so due to limited facilities and funds.[36] Nevertheless, efforts to issue their own currency persisted and in October 1946 the Republican currency, Oeang Repoeblik Indonesia, was finally issued. Upon launching this new money, Vice-President Hatta campaigned for its use as a form of independence and economic development, as well as a form of resistance to NICA money.[37]

The jokes above were further used to communicate the political message of Indonesian nationalists in a simple and readily comprehensible way. Understanding political messages on the radio or official press releases took time, especially because of their serious nature and technical and diffuse

32 'NO DUTCH MONEY, PLEASE!', *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, edition 10, March 1946. As I mentioned earlier, the creators of the jokes and mockeries in *The Voice of Free Indonesia* were unknown because their names were not mentioned at the end of the jokes. The jokes in this magazine consisted of only two elements; first, the title of the joke; and second, the contents of the joke. There was also no mention of the creator of this joke in the editorial. Some jokes were said to be taken from other print media, such as *Merdeka* (Jakarta) or *Tribune* (Australia). In this case, the orginal source of the jokes was mentioned. It was possible that the person who made the jokes was the journalist of *The Voice of Free Indonesia* himself, who captured various criticisms against the Dutch in Indonesian public spaces (such as markets), then processed them in the form of insulting jokes. This was perhaps done because such jokes could not be used as news material, given that they were half-serious and originated from ordinary people. As a whole, the news in *The Voice of Free Indonesia* was very formal and sourced from Republican leaders such as President Soekarno and Prime Minister Sjahrir.

33 'A SCENE AT A JAKARTA MARKET', *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, edition 10, March 1946.

34 'JAKARTA STREET SCENE', *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, edition 10, March 1946.

35 Cribb, *Gangsters and Revolutionaries*, 79.

36 Mohammad Iskandar, '"Oeang Repoeblik" dalam Kancah Revolusi', *Jurnal Sejarah* 6:1 (2004) 47-53.

37 Mavis Rose, *Indonesia Free: A Political Biography of Mohammad Hatta* (Singapore 2010) 214.

language. Using the market – where people went to almost every day – as its setting, and mimicking dialogues between buyers and sellers, was an effective way of conveying to the Indonesian audience that there was 'real' evidence that NICA money was not accepted by sellers. There was no point in holding NICA money and by consequence, for any transaction, sellers and buyers had to use Japanese or Republican money instead.

Negative representations were also created for other symbols pertaining to the Dutch presence and authority in Indonesia, including for instance the Dutch flag. Both the Dutch and the Indonesian flags had white and red colours. But, while the Indonesian flag consisted of only red and white, the Dutch flag also had blue at the bottom. According to one Indonesian joke, red and white were the winners:

> TWO TO ONE
> Tim: Speaking of majority, the Indonesians have won, also in the matter of flag.
> Tom: You mean, red-white against blue!
> Tim: Right, and blue is at the bottom besides![38]

Furthermore, the colours of the Dutch flag gave Indonesians reasons to believe that the Dutch were not built to live in a country with a tropical climate. The following example illustrates this:

> BAD OMEN!
> Jack: Hey Joe, I was awfully shocked yesterday.
> Joe: What seemed to be the trouble, Jack?
> Jack: I saw from the air the red-white flying on the Dutch Marine Establishment!
> Joe: How...come!
> Jack: On closer observation I noticed the blue. Dammit, on a clear sky the blue becomes so obscure, you only see the red and white.
> Joe: That's just why the Dutch wish to have it cloudy in Indonesia all the time.[39]

In the Netherlands, the usually grey and dark sky makes it easy to see the blue on the flag, but in tropical Indonesia with its clear blue skies, the blue almost disappears. Here, nationality created a boundary between 'us' (Indonesian citizens) and 'them' (Dutch citizens). The flag is a sacred symbol for a country and its citizens, but it can also be a symbol of alien domination, especially for nations controlled by foreign troops. The use of the Dutch flag on Indonesian soil was viewed as illegal by Indonesians who considered themselves independent and saw the Dutch flag as a symbol of past colonial atrocities.

Of all the political mockeries, the most widely circulated one by Indonesians focussed on how geographically small the Netherlands is when

38 'TWO TO ONE', *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, edition 10, March 1946.

39 'BAD OMEN!', *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, edition 10, March 1946.

compared to Indonesia. Examples such as these served to make Indonesians aware of the vastness of their own country as opposed to the tininess of the Netherlands. By making fun of the size of the Netherlands, these jokes were meant to put the Dutch down and to ridicule their claim to colonial power in Indonesia.

> DAT KLEINE ROTTE HOLLAND
>
> Clerk (replying to a lady who inquires when the next evacuee-ship will sail for Holland): 'Your name is not in the list madam. This list is now being revised, only the most important are to go to Holland.'
> Lady: 'Young man, all I ask you is when the next ship will leave. I don't want to go to "Dat kleine Rotte Holland"'.[40]

Indonesians believed that foreigners thought the same. According to another Indonesian joke, even Joseph Stalin realised how small the Netherlands is, especially when compared to Indonesia. The Dutch simply had no basis for bragging. The international community should have thus recognised Indonesia as being more important than the Netherlands.

> LEGEND HAS IT THAT...
>
> One of Bang Amat's friends, a Chinese descendant who used to be a close associate of the Chinese consul general, delivered the following joke. Once upon a time there was a conference attended by four big countries. The four big countries conveyed their proposals and interests. The Dutch were also present at the time, although it was not known in what capacity, whether as an observer, or in other capacities. The Dutch presented their proposal as well. Stalin was shocked and asked where the Netherlands was and where Indonesia was. This was the Netherlands and this was Indonesia, the Dutch said. No way, Stalin said smilingly. See, the Netherlands was small, while Indonesia was big. No way. No way.[41]

Mocking the small geographical size of the far tinier 'other' was a way to lift the spirits of the enormous 'us' while putting down and intimidating the Dutch. The Netherlands may have been one of the most developed countries in Europe at that time, but when comparing its geographical size to Indonesia, the image of its superiority was weakened.

40 'DAT KLEINE ROTTE HOLLAND', *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, edition 10, March 1946.

41 'DONGENGAN', *Gelora Rakjat*, 18 April 1946. In the original text:
'DONGENGAN.....
Seorang sobat Bang Amat, seorang bangsa Tionghoa jang dahoeloe dekat dengan consul djenderal Tiongkok telah njampaikan leloetjon sbb. Ketika doeloe diadakan conperensie 4 negara besar, 4 negara itoe saling mengeloearkan oesoel dan kepentingannja. Belanda pada waktoe itoe hadlir. Entah sebagai penindjau. Entah sebagai apa. Blanda itoe djoega ikoet mengasongkan oesoelnja. Stalin kaget dan bertanja. Mana Nederlan dan mana Indonesia. Ini Nederlan dan ini Indonesia, kata Blanda. Tidak bisa kata Stalin sambil mesem. Lihat Nederlan ketjil Indonesia besar. Tidak bisa. Tidak bisa'.

Mocking representations of Dutch security measures

The Dutch authorities claimed that they maintained law and order in Indonesia. For this reason, they announced that they had taken various security measures and carried them out according to the rules. They arrested and punished people they regarded as intruders and extremists. Often these were Indonesian independence fighters or those sympathetic to the Republic. For Indonesians, getting arrested by the Dutch or British was often described as being 'kidnapped', giving the impression that the Dutch actions were illegal, potentially dangerous, and life-threatening. An Indonesian report stated that between October 1945 and February 1946, hundreds of Indonesian youth had been kidnapped by the enemy. The details were as follows: 329 young men kidnapped by Dutch (NICA) troops, 229 young men kidnapped by British troops, and 113 young men kidnapped by Gurkha troops. There were another twenty young men kidnapped, whose kidnapper was unknown.[42]

These figures were clearly worrying for the Republic and several actions were taken in response. First of all, the Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, tried to take care of the abductees by, for instance, securing their release from Glodok prison in Jakarta. Secondly, the Indonesian print media conveyed the image that the Dutch and the British had made false arrests and had therefore committed a criminal act. In the press, Indonesian journalists argued that the enemy of the Republic arrested Indonesians for silly, if not illogical, reasons. This was illustrated and accentuated in a ridiculous, fictionalised interrogation that appeared in *The Voice of Free Indonesia*:

> *Stranger than Fiction*
> —Your name?
> —Ali.
> —Work?
> —Teacher of a middle school.
> —Suspect.
>
> Next. Aha, you were a heiho, weren't you? (Japanese auxiliary troops of natives).
> —No, Sir.
> —No, I see, you were a Petasoldier (National Army).
> —I never entered service, Sir.
> —Then you're a pemoeda.
> —Yes, I am a young man.
> —Suspect.

42 Osman Raliby, *Documenta Historica I* (Jakarta 1953) 273.

Next. Your name?
—Tek Beng (suddenly sighing and whispering a name).
—Who's that you are calling?
—My grandson, Sir.
—How old is he?
—Sixteen, Sir.
—Suspect.

Next. (Louder) Next.
Your name?
—Hihi, my name? Name? At home. In the market.
—Silly ass! Your age?
—Seven years. Haha.
—(Swearing). How much is 5 and seven.
—Five and seven and eight and twenty is six.
—Suspect. Next.[43]

Mockery like the example above, served to criticise the absurd interrogation by Dutch troops when arresting Indonesians, regardless of whether they were related to the pro-Republican movement or not. It ridiculed Dutch soldiers by implying that they did not know the correct steps in enforcing the law, including how to conduct interrogations and arrests. This joke exemplified a growing public concern that under foreign rule, anyone who was young could become a victim of unlawful and unfounded arrest. Young men (*pemuda* or *pemoeda*), who the Dutch often associated with extremists, were a common target. Even a school teacher could not escape arrest if he were of a young age. Above all, Indonesian readers were made to believe that the Dutch were purposefully abusing civil liberties.

Interestingly, a person of Chinese origin named Tek Beng also featured in the joke cited above. The Chinese faced a dilemma after Indonesian independence was declared. Part of the Chinese community was eager to become Chinese citizens and hoped that the Chinese government would help them in the midst of the Dutch-Indonesian conflict. There were also pro-Dutch Chinese, especially those who appreciated Western culture and who had strong economic ties with the Netherlands. Other Chinese welcomed the Dutch presence in the hope that the situation would return to normal so that their economic activities could resume. Only a minority of Chinese symphatised with and supported the Indonesian cause, at least in the first months after independence.[44] In this context, the above joke highlighted the Dutch racial discrimination against non-Europeans. It further served to direct the attention of Chinese citizens to the Indonesian struggle for independence, emphasising that the Chinese would experience

43 'Stranger than Fiction', *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, edition 8, March 1946.

44 Donald E. Willmott, *The National Status of the Chinese in Indonesia 1900-1958* (Singapore 2009) 36-38.

poor treatment from the Dutch authorities, who were depicted as hating anyone who was not white.

Another Dutch policy ridiculed through Indonesian mockery was the act of blockade. From the beginning of January 1947, in their efforts to weaken the economy of the Republic, the Dutch prevented the import of goods to Republic-held territories from reaching Java and Sumatra. The Republic was in dire need of these imported goods to build the new country.[45] 'Blockade' became a frequently heard word in Republican circles.[46] Among Indonesian nationalists, the term was associated with the cruel acts of the Dutch in limiting the access of Indonesian people to daily necessities that could only be obtained from abroad, like textile. The term was used satirically too, to mock every Dutch attempt to limit nationalist actions. The Dutch not only blocked the sea, according to the following example, they might even block the months of the year:

> Tomorrow the people of India and Pakistan will commemorate their anniversary of independence. Two days later, the Indonesian people will also commemorate the third anniversary of their independence.
> It turned out that August was the month of independence of the Asian nations. Indonesia's proclamation of independence took place in August. Vietnam too. India and Pakistan were the same.
> Maybe later there will be thoughts from the colonialists to hold a blockade against August. Let them mess themselves up.[47]

Apart from responding to the blockade, Indonesians responded to armed attacks as well. On 21 July 1947, Dutch forces launched a major attack on Republican-controlled areas and economic resources in Java and Sumatra. Known as the 'Police Action' (by the Dutch) and as 'Military Aggression' (by the Republic), within a few weeks the Dutch had succeeded in controlling important cities on both islands. Republican forces resisted. President

45 Thomas Lindblad, *Bridges to New Business: The Economic Decolonization of Indonesia*. Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 245 (Singapore 2008) 65. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004253971; Frances Gouda and Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/ Indonesia: US Foreign Policy and Indonesian Nationalism 1920-1949* (Amsterdam 2002) 244. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/9789048505036.

46 See, for instance, Pramoedya Ananta Toer, Koesalah Soebagyo Toer, and Ediati Kamil, *Kronik Revolusi Indonesia. Jilid III (1947)* (Jakarta 2001) 146.

47 'Dr. Clenik', *Merdeka*, 14 August 1948. In the original text:
'Besok rahajat India dan Pakistan sama memperingati ulang tahun kemerdekaannja. Dua hari sesudah itu rahajat Indonesia djuga peringati hari ulang tahun ketiga dari kemerdekaannja. Rupanja bulan Agustus mendjadi bulan kemerdekaan bangsa2 Asia.
Proklamasi kemerdekaan Indonesia, bulan Agustus. Vietnam djuga. India dan Pakistan idem.
Boleh djadi nanti akan ada pikiran dari kaum pendjadjah untuk mengadakan blokade terhadap bulan Agust. Biar déh mereka renjem sendiri!'

Soekarno called for a ceasefire, which was later echoed by the United Nations.

One Indonesian journalist fought the Dutch offensive with sarcasm, citing the words of a Dutch politician who disapproved of the military attack, and likened the 'police action' (a term that was supposed to refer to a legal proceeding) to the behaviour of a clown.

POLICE ACTION

I have read an article in *Vrij Nederland* written by a famous writer and politician in the Netherlands. He condemned the police action on July 21 and labeled it as an insane act. Now I understand why Jakarta's brother said that the action was an *aksi polisjinel*, a term similar to the term 'polichinel', which in French means clown.[48]

At a party or in a show, a clown usually starts out as funny, but can suddenly change its facial expressions to something many find frightening. Thus, in this context, the Dutch clowning may seem trivial at first, but for some it soon came to be viewed as an odd and creepy action performed by strange and manic outsiders, or 'them', in contrast to the respectable and rational 'us'.

Praising the Indonesians' intelligence

One of the most common stories shared by Indonesian joke-tellers talked about Indonesians' cleverness in deceiving their enemy. This was an image aimed at countering the widespread stereotypes that came about during the colonial period. These stereotypes depicted Indonesian natives as uneducated, backward and uncivilised, while the Dutch were depicted as educated, intelligent and enlightened. Through this kind of joke, Indonesians made fun of the Dutch and the British. The following text is a case in point.

DIPLOMACY

Ali and Saleh were walking along a street in Jakarta when they unexpectedly met their former boss (a Dutchman, director of an import office), who asked them how they were faring.

'Miserable, Sir, with all these extremists threatening our very life. One can hardly earn an honest living!' replied Saleh, emphasizing that every Indonesian is

48 'AKSI POLISJENEL', *Mimbar Indonesia*, 10 November 1947. In the original text:
'*AKSI POLISJINEL*
Dalam Vrij Nederland, saja batja sebuah artikel, dari seorang pengarang dan ahli politik jang terkenal dinegeri Belanda, dalam mana ditjelanja aksi politioneel tanggal 21 Juli dan menamakannja bahwa tindakan itu tindakan gila-gilaan. Sekarang saja mengerti apa sebab abang Djakarta, mengatakan tindakan Belanda itu aksi polisjinel, sebutan mana sama dengan sebutan kata "polichinel", jang dalam bahasa Perantjis berarti badut.'

yearning for the good old days, upon which the Dutchman presented them not a little sum of money, encouraging them to keep up, and they parted.
'I'll cut your throat for speaking like that' Ali made [a] face at his companion, 'Miserable!'
'What have I done now,' replied Saleh. 'Here, take this (giving his comrade 50% of the money), that's the result of my diplomacy, and I spoke the truth at that I mean Dutch extremists.'
Both laughed.[49]

This story shows that Ali and Saleh laughed together in agreement for Saleh had succeeded in exploiting the innocence of a Dutchman to the benefit of them both. For Indonesian readers, this story implied a victory by smart 'us' over the more economically powerful, but less clever, strange 'other', in this case represented in the form of a Dutch businessman owning major capital. Ali and Saleh felt extremely disturbed by what they called 'Dutch extremists', a term they used to reject the Dutch labelling of Indonesian freedom fighters as 'Indonesian extremists'. From an Indonesian perspective, it were the Dutch who should be labelled as extremists, given their disproportionate acts of violence. Indonesians were aware of various violent acts committed by the Dutch, as these were reported on in several print media reports and narratives delivered by Indonesian leaders during the last months of 1945.

Despite the fact that most Indonesian natives had a low level of education at best, one Indonesian joke argued that they were still more intelligent than the Dutch:

Piet (Questioning arrogantly): 'You Indonesians wish to be free, have you understood what world diplomacy means?'
Amat (Replying with a mocking smile): 'World diplomacy is the use of beautiful explanations to cover foul practices based on mean desires in order to obtain the objects of the Government.'
Piet: 'W...h...a...t...?'
Amat (Calmly explaining further): 'Just look at the present happenings in Indonesia with open eyes and honest conscience. The motive of the Dutch for their earnest efforts to rule again in Indonesia is the desperate poverty which threatens the Dutch, but they say that they have the responsibility to help the Indonesians to obtain their aspirations to self-determination. The British, compelled by their position as imperialist in Asia, help to re-establish the Dutch as imperialist in Indonesia, with the help of a great army equipped with all kinds of modern armaments. But the British repeatedly declared that their duties were only to disarm the Japanese and help the prisoners of war and Allied civilian internees.

49 'DIPLOMACY', *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, edition 11, 6 March 1946.

> And both are now provoking the Indonesians to fight them, so that world opinion will turn in their favour, when they use Sherman tanks, thunderbolts and other modern arms to crush the Indonesian aspirations'.[50]

Piet and Amat were common names in the Netherlands and Indonesia respectively. The dialogue above thus reflected an encounter between the Dutch, who were cynical about the ability of Indonesians to be independent and to socialise in the international community, and Indonesians, who clearly understood the post-Second World War global political landscape. Amat was depicted not only as smart, but as very calm and assertive. The arrogant Piet, on the other hand, was shown to be shocked by Amat's extensive knowledge, indicating that he was either amazed by the Indonesian's understanding or embarrassed because it turned out that his interlocutor was smarter than he thought.

Criticising colonial-minded Westerners

The Dutch campaign to delegitimise the existence of the Republic often characterised Indonesian independence fighters as fascists, extremists and terrorists. Indonesian youth were negatively labelled because they received military training and were encouraged by the Japanese to adopt an anti-Western stance. After the Japanese defeat, the *pemuda* took over weapons from the Japanese forces and fought on the side of the Republic. Dutch troops were their main target. This disturbance from the *pemuda* made the Dutch depict them as extremists too, although this image was rejected by young Republican supporters. The following joke is illustrative in this respect:

> Jack: 'Pemoeda, that means extremist, isn't it?'
> Jantje: 'Absolutely right! Terrorist!'
> Jack: 'Why, this dictionary says....."youth""!
> Jantje: 'Ach, ja.....right.....youth.....terro.....rist!'[51]

Jack obviously symbolised the British troops, who came to Indonesia in September 1945 to disarm the Japanese forces and to release prisoners of war.

50 *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, edition 9, March 1946.

51 *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, edition 7, March 1946. The *Tribune* newspaper was the official publication of the Communist Party of Australia (CPA). Founded in 1920, the CPA was an anti-colonial Australian political party, especially during the interwar period. One example of the CPA's anti-colonial stance is that they advocated for ending Australian imperialism in New Guinea. See Evan Smith, 'Anti-Colonialism and the Imperial Dynamic in the Anglophone Communist Movements in South Africa, Australia, and Britain', in: Oleksa Drachewych and Ian McKay (eds.), *Left Transnationalism: The Communist International and the National, Colonial, and Racial Questions* (Montreal 2019) 239.

The British were dependent on the supply of information from the Dutch, the former colonial ruler of Indonesia. Jantje, a typical Dutch name, represented the Dutch. Through the use of sarcasm, Indonesians wanted to show that the Dutch produced false and misleading propaganda about Indonesia to other foreigners.

Sometimes Indonesian jokes making fun of colonial-minded Westerners were taken from Western print media. One example is a joke from the Australian communist newspaper *Tribune* (date unknown), quoted in *The Voice of Free Indonesia*:

> RACE DISCRIMINATION
>
> Boy: 'Colonel, is Patriotism one of the noblest virtues?'
>
> Old Colonel: 'There's nothing nobler, my boy, than to fight for freedom and Native Land!'
>
> Boy: 'Then, the Indonesians are right?'
>
> Old Colonel: 'Er—yes—er—I—mean NO er—Dammit—er—Dashit—Boy, that's different altogether.'
>
> *TRIBUNE, AUSTRALIA.*[52]

Another joke published in the newspaper *Gelora Rakjat* cricitised the Dutch way of dealing with their former colony:

> *About love*
>
> G(eorge) B(ernard) S(haw) says:
>
> *Even though India will wage civil war after they reach their independence, whatever she does to Pakistan is her own business. 'Not British business!'*
>
> A member of the Dutch parliament:
>
> *'Indonesia must be taken care of. Indonesia must be guided. We must not let go of the Indonesian people who have been united with us for 350 years!'*
>
> A Seaforth Highlanders soldier (a Dutchman!):
>
> *'If we do not dare to face the difficulties that exist today, then how will the fate of the Dutch East Indies in the future … and how will the fate of Holland, which would certainly be a 20th class country like Finland and Denmark.'*
>
> Stance number I:
>
> 'Take care of your own business!'
>
> Stance number II:
>
> 'If you don't want to obey me, then there is no other way but forced marriage!'

52 'RACE DISCRIMINATION', *The Voice of Free Indonesia*, edition 6, February 1946.

> Stance number III:
> 'I love you, my lady, uh, but first please pay for my food at the eatery, my lady, please, my lady!'[53]

In this citation, the relationship between the mother country and its colonies was described as romantic. A good relationship was based on sincere love, mutual concern, reciprocity and shared benefit. The joke illustrated what happened when the relationship was no longer harmonious. According to the Indonesians, the best solution was for the couple to part and go their separate ways, just as the British and Indians did. The joke criticised the Dutch for using coercion to maintain their relationship with Indonesia.

The Netherlands and Indonesia had in fact tried to rebuild their relationship after the Second World War. The appointment of Sutan Sjahrir, an anti-fascist figure during the Japanese occupation, as Prime Minister of Indonesia in November 1945 made a positive impression on the Dutch. From the very beginning, the Dutch did not want to communicate with President Soekarno or Vice-President Hatta, whom they considered to be Japanese collaborators.[54] Sjahrir and Liutenant Governor-General Hubertus Johannes van Mook met on 17 November 1945 and on other subsequent occasions, but no significant progress was made.[55] Between 14 and 25 April 1946, negotiations were held in the Hoge Veluwe, the Netherlands, between Indonesian and Dutch delegations. The negotations failed because the Dutch refused to acknowledge the independence of the Republic of Indonesia.[56]

53 'Perkara Tjinta', *Gelora Rakjat*, 28 May 1946. In the original text:
'*Perkara Tjinta*

G(eorge) B(ernard) S(haw) berkata:
Biar India maoe perang saudara sesoedah mereka mendapat kemerdekaan, biar mereka bikin pakistan matjem2 pakistan itoe oeroesannja sendiri "Boekan oeroesan Inggris!"

Seorang anggauta parlemen Belanda:
"Indonesia haroes dioeroes. Haroes dipimpin. Kita tidak boleh melepaskan bangsa Indonesia jg. soedah 350 th. lamanja bersatoe dg. kita!"

Seorang serdadoe Seaforth Highlanders (Belanda lo!)
"Kalau kita tidak berani menghadapi kesoekaran sekarang, bagaimana nasib Hindia-Belanda kelak..... dan bagaimana nasib Holland jg. tentoe akan djadi negeri kelas 20 matjam Finland dan Denmark".

Pendirian no. I:
"Oeroesin perkare loe sendiri!"

Pendirian no. II:
"Kalau tidak noeroet apa boleh boeat: kawin paksa!"

Pendirian no. III:
"Goee tjinta ame loe, pok, eh, bajarin doeloe bon makan di waroeng pok, ajo dong, pok!'"

54 Rudolf Mrázek, *Sjahrir: Politics and Exile in Indonesia* (Ithaca 1994) 294. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501718816.

55 Nicholas Tarling, *Britain, Southeast Asia and the Onset of the Cold War, 1945-1950* (Cambridge 1998) 95. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511552342.

56 Gouda and Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia*, 181.

In the midst of these unsuccessful attempts to rebuild relations between the two countries, Indonesian print media published various images of Dutch stubbornness as they did not want to let go of their former colony. This included the joke above, which was published about a month after the failure of the Hoge Veluwe talks.

Indonesians imagined that, for the Dutch, their relationship with Indonesia had been long-lasting and needed to be maintained for the benefit of both parties, even by force. However, Indonesia wanted the unequal relationship to end, as symbolically represented in the example above. In the text, the Dutch were portrayed as an absurd, malicious, ignorant and arrogant partner, while Indonesia was a weak younger partner longing for freedom. This rhetoric of the savage and irresponsible 'other' versus the sincere 'us' reflected popular perceptions among Indonesian people. Consequently, for Indonesians, the colonial relations had to end. The Dutch had to leave Indonesia and Indonesians had to be allowed to take care of themselves.

Another way to delegitimise the Dutch was to consistently emphasise that their attitudes were truly colonial, determining social hierarchy on the basis of skin colour. Even though Indonesians were native to the Dutch East Indies, because of their skin colour they were placed at the bottom of colonial society. In the age of independence, Indonesians dreamt of freedom, equality and democracy, ideals that were often championed by the United States during the Second World War. This admiration for American political ideas was initially reflected in slogans written on billboards by Indonesian propagandists immediately after the declaration of their independence.[57] Apart from the billboards, Indonesian mockery too reflected a hope to leave colonialism behind and to adopt democracy and equality:

> A friend of mine—an American—sent a letter describing the difference in character between American and Dutch people:
>
> The Difference
>
> Our street at night is patrolled by a couple of Indonesian policemen, and next to ours is inhabited by an American gentleman. In the course of the night, about 2 o'clock a.m. the American opened the door giving on to his front verandah, just as the two policemen were passing.
> He called out to them, and when they came, he offered them some cigarettes which they accepted with friendly: 'Trima kasih, toean besar' [Thank you, my great master].
> To which the American replied, in his somewhat halting Malay: 'Djangan bilang "toean besar" sama saja: saja tidak orang Belanda. Bilang "toean" sama saja, saja

57 Gouda and Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia*, 55.

> orang Amerika sadja!' ['Don't call me "great master": I'm not Dutch. Just call me "sir" because I'm an American!']
>
> ***
>
> With the letter, apparently our friend wants to compare American democracy with Dutch democracy!
> Meanwhile, Indonesians should also have self-respect.
> Don't be like Pa' Tolol, who is still suffering from disease and the spirit of slaves—always addressing anyone as great master—even though in reality what he gets is only cigarettes!![58]

This joke represented Indonesians with a slave mentality in the figure of Pa' Tolol, a name which literally means 'Mister Stupid'. It argued that only ignorant Indonesians still saw the Dutch as their masters. Excessive veneration of the Dutch was therefore deemed a disgrace to the independent Indonesia where everyone was equal.

The satire appeared in June 1946, and was seemingly aimed at local leaders who were willing to work with the Dutch to form a government outside the Republic of Indonesia, with the Netherlands as the highest authority. Since early 1946, the Dutch had held talks with a number of local non-Republican leaders, including Nadjamoeddin Daeng Malewa from Makassar. In early June 1946, news was circulating among Republicans that the Dutch would hold a conference with representatives of the 'overseas region', meaning the eastern part of Dutch-controlled Indonesia, in Malino, North Sulawesi. The conference took place between 15 and 25 July 1946 and

58 'Dapoer Klenik', *Merdeka*, 18 June 1946. In the original text:
'Seorang sobat—orang Amerika—kirim soerat menggambarkan perbedaan tabe'at orang Amerika dan orang Belanda demikian:

The Difference

Our street at night is patrolled by a couple of Indonesian policemen, and next to ours is inhabited by an American gentleman. In the course of the night, about 2 o'clock a.m. the American opened the door giving on to his front verandah, just as the two policemen were passing.
He called out to them, and when they came, he offered them some cigarettes which they accepted with friendly: "Trima kasih, toean besar".
To which the American replied, in hi somewhat halting Malay: "Djangan bilang 'toean besar' sama saja: saja tidak orang Belanda. Bilang 'toean' sama saja, saja orang Amerika sadja!".

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Dengan soerat tsb. roepanja sobat kita tadi ingin membandingkan democratie Amerika dengan democratie ala Belanda!
Dalam pada itoe orang Indonesia poen sebenarnja haroes mengetahoei harga-diri poela.
Djangan seperti Pa' Tolol jang memang masih dihinggapi penjakit dan semangat boedak—soeka men-toean-besar kepada siapapoen djoega—meskipoen tjoema mendapat rokok doang!!'

several things were agreed upon, namely the formation of federalism (in the form of the United States of Indonesia) and the need for long-term voluntary cooperation with the Netherlands.[59] Both of these clearly contradicted the Republic's ideas of forming a centralised unitary republic and of removing the Netherlands from matters of governance in Indonesia. In the Republic's view, the Malino conference – and the same applied to subsequent conferences – was evidence that the Dutch still played a big role as master in Indonesia and that there were still Indonesians who saw themselves as subordinate to the Dutch, just like in colonial times.

The colonial mentality was attacked again in the following text:

> IN THE CLASSROOM
> (When studying health science)
> Teacher: What diseases have so far not been eradicated?
> Polan: Flatterer!
> Abu: The ability to camouflage like a chameleon!
> Togog: Colonial disease!
> Wage: Profiteer!
> The teacher grumbled: These children are too naughty.[60]

Indonesians referred to this mentality as *penyakit* (a disease), introduced by the sinister 'other' from overseas. The idea that the colonial mentality was a disease shows the depth of suffering experienced by the Indonesian people during the Dutch colonial period of the past. This mentality was imagined as a plague that damaged the mental and physical health of Indonesians. The disease raged so strongly that even after Indonesia proclaimed its independence, the disease persisted. The trauma of Dutch colonialism from the past and the fear that colonialism would reappear, gave birth to hatred towards the Dutch. This was manifested in the building of boundaries between 'us' (Indonesians), who loved independence and equality, and 'them' (the Dutch), who strongly instigated a disease called colonialism.

The joke above, once again, attacked this colonial mentality. Interestingly, the scene was set in a school classroom. This indicates that the joke was intended to erase the colonial mentality among Indonesians from a very young age. Moreover, it points to the fact that for Indonesians, the colonial

59 Ooi Keat Gin, *Post-War Borneo, 1945-1950: Nationalism, Empire and State-Building* (Abingdon 2013) 120. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203526033.

60 'DALAM KELAS', *Merdeka*, 25 May 1948. In the original text:
'DALAM KELAS
(Waktu beladjar ilmu kesehatan).
Guru: Penjakit apakah jang sampai kini belum djuga dapat dibasmi?
Si Polan: Penjakit mendjilat!
Si Abu: Penjakit mbunglon!
Si Togog: Penjakit kolonial!
Si Wage: Penjakit tjatut!
Guru menggerutu: Anak2 terlalu nakal.'

mentality was a severe illness that was difficult to cure and had to be eradicated for good.

Conclusion

This study examined the representations of the Dutch in Indonesian textual mockery disseminated through pro-Republican print media. Indonesian newspapers and magazines mostly presented sombre news and views about the Dutch-Indonesian conflict. The seriousness of it all frequently made readers feel worried, pessimistic and hopeless for the future. They were bombarded with distressing words like 'death', 'wounds', 'war', 'killing', 'cruelty' and the like. By contrast, despite the fact that jokes and satire in the media only consisted of a few sentences, they were easy to understand and they managed to deliver political messages in humorous ways. They used everyday life as their setting and ordinary people as their main characters. This made the readers feel more connected with the messages they conveyed.

In examining these mockeries, several subaspects have been discussed. First of all, this article covered the topic of the Dutch wanting to return to Indonesia. The Indonesians felt that the arrival of the Dutch was not aimed at bringing Indonesia prosperity, but at colonising the country once more. For that reason, Indonesian mockery always portrayed the Dutch as a dangerous 'other', a stranger with a diabolical mission who would destroy Indonesia's dream of freedom. As strangers, they had to realise that their place was not in Indonesia, but elsewhere. A second subaspect that the article adressed is that of Dutch authority on Java. Indonesian mockery insinuated that Dutch authority was weak and that their policies failed. The enemy's way of interrogating suspected criminals was ridiculed too. Mocking representations showed that instead of using legal processes fairly, the Dutch acted arbitrarily and illegally. The paper then analysed representations of the colonial mentality that still existed in the minds of the Dutch and the pro-Dutch Indonesians. This attitude, where the Dutch still considered themselves the colonial masters, and Indonesians always bowed down before them, was depicted as a chronic disease that needed to be cured immediately.

For Indonesians, the mockery of the Dutch contained thought-provoking political satire. In pro-Republican Indonesian print media, mocking articles were placed among various news items that illustrated Dutch atrocities and the Indonesians' struggle to maintain their independence. Through this arrangement, mass media editors deliberately inspired their readers to view humourous anecdotes as additional powerful ammunition against the Dutch. The point was not solely to make people smile and laugh, but to make them contemplate the image of the Dutch as the foreign enemy of the Republic and the people of Indonesia, who had come to recolonise the country.

This study makes a contribution to academic literature pertaining to the Dutch-Indonesian conflict, which so far has been often focused on physical violence. Its original contribution lies in the new topic that it discusses, namely the creation and use of representations of the Dutch as a menacing yet foolish 'other' in the minds of Indonesians through textual ridicule in print media. On the one hand, this mockery created an image of the Dutch not as a civilised nation, but as a group of foreign, colonial-minded people characterised by cruelty, greed, arrogance, igorance and absurdity. On the other hand, these negative depictions of the Dutch in Indonesian print media helped to change the public mood and relieve stress among Indonesians, which can be inferred from the fact that Indonesian newspapers and magazines constantly provided space for mockeries targeting the Dutch throughout the conflict. Those who read the mockeries, jokes and satires of the Dutch, began to feel better and it helped them to get through the harsh situation of war.

From this research it can be concluded that mockery that targeted the Dutch was an important form of resistance during the Indonesian Revolution. The article shows that Indonesian nationalist journalists considered such mockery worthy of publication in their newspapers and magazines, despite the fact that the major function of their print media was to publish news and to report on current political events. The Indonesian print media targeted a specific audience, namely literate and knowledgeable Indonesians who used newspapers and magazines as their main source of information and read them attentively. The mockery in print added to the reach and effectiveness of Indonesia's anti-Dutch propaganda, in addition to well-known campaign methods such as speeches and posters that have been explored by scholars recently.[61]

The examples outlined above show the different perspectives of Indonesians and the Dutch in terms of how Indonesia should be governed after the Second World War. The deep-seated memories of the suffering under Dutch colonialism prompted the Indonesian news outlets to creatively fabricate and spread diabolical images of the Dutch to both Indonesian and foreign audiences. By analysing various negative framings of the 'other' during the Dutch-Indonesian conflict, this study shows how media repesentations of the enemy could help shape identities of 'us' and 'them' that, at a certain point, contributed to the increase of hatred and encouraged violent retaliation against the Dutch. This article thus provides a new insight into the mental roots of the resistance of the Indonesian fighters against the Dutch, as can be seen in the creation of the images of 'good' Indonesians and 'bad' Dutchmen during the Dutch-Indonesian war.

61 Zara, *Voluntary Participation, State Involvement*; Gouda and Brocades Zaalberg, *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia*.

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