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Recent Dutch-Language Publications

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Ernst van den Boogaart, *Vreemde verwanten: De wereld buiten Europa 1400–1600*. Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2019, 404 pp. ISBN: 9789460044618, price: EUR 29.95 (hardback).

From 1400 on, Europeans ventured out of their own continent in search of the unknown and in particular the many sorts of riches they imagined they would find. Before then, only occasional travelers went East and their reports, such as those of Marco Polo, were widely read and served as an impetus to discover. The Portuguese sailed ever farther south along the coast of West Africa to ultimately round the Cape of Good Hope and reach India and Southeast Asia. They soon settled and with Goa as their center upheld a monopoly for decades. After Marco Polo's visit to Sumatra, it was the Portuguese who collected the priceless spices from as far as the Moluccas, with Melaka serving as their base. Soon thereafter, Europeans arrived on the North and South American continents. Van den Boogaart (1943), a well-known expert on this European expansion, describes this pushing back of frontiers in the book *Vreemde verwanten*, guided by the contemporary travel reports. He supplies the facts of the journeys, as well as the ethnographic details that are given in these reports, illustrated by sometimes hair-raising prints, for instance of horrible “cannibals”. By including maps, he also shows how fast cartography evolved from imagination to fact, culminating in Ortelius' map of the world, first published in Antwerp in 1570, and discussed by Van den Boogaart in the last chapter of this book. As to the Indonesian Archipelago, references are made to Melaka, Sumatra, Java, the Moluccas, and Banda. More extensive are the two chapters on India (70 pages), with special attention to the friezes of Balthasar Springer (1508) and the *Codex Casanatense* (1550), both relatively unknown. This is all very expertly done, and this lavishly illustrated book will certainly become a valuable reference.

Simon Rozendaal, *Zijn naam is klein: Piet Hein en het omstrede verleden*. Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Atlas Contact, 2019, 391+8 pp. ISBN: 9789045038780, price: EUR 24.99 (paperback).

Simon Rozendaal (1951) is a retired scientific journalist, with a respectable publication record, who turned to history when he discovered that his home in Delfshaven, now a part of Rotterdam, was situated on the spot of the birth place of 'naval hero' Piet Hein (1577–1629). Piet Hein became renowned as a result of his successful capture of Salvador da Bahia (Portuguese Brazil) in 1624, and even more, as the cunning fleet commander who took the Spanish treasure-fleet in 1629. Its enormous booty helped the Dutch Republic to get the upper hand in its war against Spain. Piet Hein lived on in popular memory until recently. Rozendaal soon found out that data on his personal life were scarce and already published in a number of biographies. From these it became clear that Piet Hein also served the VOC as a merchant. In 1607 he left for the Indies. He was in Banda, and involved in establishing a spice monopoly, in 1609 and 1611. He returned in 1612. He was not involved in Coen's massacre of the Bandanese in 1621. Before his VOC assignment, he was a captive of Spain and Venice for almost ten years. Thereafter he joined the West Indies Company (WIC), founded in 1621, as a privateer.

His luck ended in 1629, when he was killed in a battle with Dunkirk privateers. Rozendaal solves the problem of the lack of data by filling in the background information of Piet Hein, and using him as a stepping-stone to take part in current discussions and evaluations of the 'Golden Age'. He writes interesting chapters on Delfshaven and urban developments, the role of fishing, naval trade, and colonies, as well as religious life. In the end, his judgement on Piet Hein is positive, certainly judging by the yardstick of the norms of his time, as a dauntless and fair commander, who respected his own men and his adversaries. Although the WIC, and Piet Hein, were not involved with the slave trade until 1635, Rozendaal gives an overview of slavery in those years, with Barbary privateers who held thousands of slaves from Africa and Europe, playing a prominent role. Rozendaal's views are moderate and relativistic, asking for an understanding of the Dutch Republic by studying its own norms, wherein right or wrong were clearly categorized.

Angelie Sens, *De kolonieman: Johannes van den Bosch (1780–1844), volksverheffer in naam van de koning*. Amsterdam: Balans, 2019, 477 + 16 pp. ISBN: 9789460038914, price: EUR 39.99 (hardback).

The historian Angelie Sens, affiliated with the Dutch Press Museum and afterwards with the International Institute of Social History, received a decisive incentive in 2013 to start working on a biography of Johannes van den Bosch. It took her seven years to conclude her study. *Only* seven years, one might add, in view of the important role of Van den Bosch in many state affairs during the first four decades of the eighteenth century and the mass of archival material that report about this. It is a pity that only a few sources about his eventful personal life have survived. Thus, his personality sometimes lacks contours, as Sens admitted and regretted, as well. What is clear is that he was impulsive and quick-tempered, and a man of unbridled energy, with indefatigable enthusiasm for his ideas and ideals, in a turbulent time of revolution and enlightenment. His family was from a provincial higher middle class background, and by choosing a military career he used an opportunity for upward social mobility. His education as a military engineer, as well as his volunteering for an Indies posting helped in this respect. He made his name by writing long memorandums on military matters and on appropriate policies to rule the Indies colony. A good marriage and the profitable exploitation of a plantation also helped. Van den Bosch resigned in 1808 out of discord with the new governor-general H.W. Daendels, who is very negatively portrayed by Sens. Back home again, he sided against France with the House of Orange King Willem I.

His ideas about alleviation of the masses of destitute inhabitants were realized by founding a Benevolent Society, which endeavored to give the lower classes a respectable life by turning wild lands into arable lands in the remote province of Drenthe. Thanks to Van den Bosch, these colonies could be realized. They reflected his ideas about human society, with his belief in the malleability of men, and their personal rights. In practice, this collided with the extent of force that was allowed in his paternalistic view. In the Culture System in the Indies as well as the slavery of the East and West Indies, he also endorsed the prolonged use of forced labor. The colonies in Drenthe opened in 1818, encountering many problems. There was opposition too, directed at the controversial Van den Bosch. He served a short term as highest official of the Dutch West Indies (1827–1828), pondering inconclusively about the future role of slavery. In 1828, he was made governor-general of the East Indies, with the assignment to save the Indies as a Dutch colony, and moreover to turn it into a source of income for the motherland. Van den Bosch reorganized agriculture, by retaining land rent, and private western enterprise, supplemented by the ever more

important Culture System (*Cultuurstelsel*), with its forced deliveries and forced labor. Equally important was the privileged position of the Netherlands Trading Society (*Nederlandsche Handel Maatschappij*). On a more abstract level, he pleaded for a balanced position of capital and labor—surprisingly modern, and thus not heeded. Upon his return in 1834, Van den Bosch was made Minister of Colonies. He resigned in 1839. Van den Bosch was a key figure in his active years. His unique colonies survived as a governmental penitentiary institution. Historians have thus far not agreed on his role, and especially in the debate on the Culture System he was strongly condemned as a conservative proponent. Sens makes a careful and convincing evaluation of Van den Bosch' controversial ideas and endeavors. She did so thoroughly, as the notes and bibliography (at 45 pages each) attest. The fictional elements she adds would have been best omitted.

Leo van Bergen, *Pro patria et patienti: De Nederlandse militaire geneeskunde 1795–1950*. Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2019, 371 pp. ISBN: 9789460044465, price: EUR 29.50 (paperback).

In 2015, the medical historian Leo van Bergen (1959) took the initiative to discuss a suitable commemoration in 2019 of 150 years of the Regiment Medical Troops and its predecessor, the Military Medical Service (*Militair Geneeskundige Dienst*, MGD), collaborating with the Netherlands Institute of Military History (*Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Geschiedenis*, NIMH). His proposal to write a history of military medical service was favorably received. He was funded by NIMH and managed to produce a solid history in a praiseworthy short period of time. Such a general overview of this subject had been missing until now. Van Bergen was well-qualified for his task, having produced a number of medical history monographs, among which a critical study about the involvement of the Red Cross Organization in the decolonization war in Indonesia during the turbulent 1940s. The primary focus in this book is on developments in the Netherlands. He deliberately leaves out a discussion of the medical history of the KNIL army in the Netherlands Indies, including during the decolonization war of 1945–1950. However, he includes a medical history of the tens of thousands of Dutch volunteers and conscripts that were sent to Indonesia after 1945, to ensure the establishment of an independent Indonesia with a durable political and economic influence of the Dutch. This distinction between KNIL and the military from the Netherlands in terms of their medical experiences looks somewhat artificial for this period. A separate medical history of the KNIL has yet to be written.

The history of Dutch military medicine since 1795 is predominantly conveyed in negative terms. A continuous lack of qualified surgeons and suitable medical facilities, caused by a thrifty and uninterested government, hampered the successful development of a medical service. Measures to admit only qualified surgeons with an academic background had only a theoretical effect. It gave rise, however, to the articulation of the dilemmas a surgeon faced when forced to choose between his military duty to patch up wounded or sick soldiers to make them fit for service again, and his doctor's oath to create optimal conditions for the cure of his military patients. From its establishment, this choice between seemingly incompatible demands was the subject of debate. They influenced three key issues that occupied the military surgeons in their medical duties, during the entire period Van Bergen reviews. These were feigning illness, venereal diseases, and mental disorders. The last two chapters (50 pages) of the book discuss the war in Indonesia. In the Netherlands, feigning illness was widely applied by prospective conscripts to evade service overseas; in Indonesia itself, the comradeship in a hostile environment acted as a brake to simulation. Venereal diseases were a great problem, for which no ready solution was available, as the strict Dutch norms precluded the distribution of condoms.

Mental health issues multiplied as military service endured. Fighting an elusive enemy, with no clear gains, in the long run led to exhaustion and mental problems. The proverbial shortage of the medical service was even more serious in Indonesia—in 1946 there were 270 surgeons' vacancies and hospitals fell far below the requirements as to hygiene, with all kinds of diseases as a result. There was a lasting lack of medicine and medical instruments. In his review, Van Bergen profits from Frans Doeleman's PhD on the medical history of an infantry battalion under his medical care, and articles by W. Kramer on his experiences as a division psychiatrist, with a lot of basic information. Once again, the surgeons faced the dilemma of sending a patient back to strengthen his understaffed unit, or give him time to recover off duty. Van Bergen also looks at the violence applied, and its causes. Kramer noted the considerable number of psychopaths in the army, who according to a colleague of his were useful, perhaps indispensable, for the Special Forces and Paratroops to achieve military goals. A few pages deal with the minor role of the Red Cross and its Indonesian branch. The policy of winning hearts and minds of the population by giving medical assistance failed as resources were inadequate. This pioneer study ends with 55 pages of notes, bibliography, and index.

Thom Hoffman, *Een verborgen geschiedenis: Anders kijken naar Nederlands-Indië*. Zwolle: W Books, 2019, 256 pp. ISBN: 9789462583443, price: EUR 34.95 (hardback).

Thom Hoffman, a well-known Dutch actor of Indies descent, has for some years endeavored to give counterweight to the picture that is created in most of the photo books that have colonial Indonesia as their subject. The much-praised collections of Rob Nieuwenhuys have set the tone—a picture of a tropical paradise, in which the Dutch colonizer also did their paternalistic duty to lead the ‘natives’ in their development. From twenty public collections in the Netherlands, Hoffman collected photographs that question this image of *tempo doeloe*. In his chronological account, he pleads for another way to look at these pictures. Directly or indirectly, they tell a story of violence, exploitation, armed resistance, war, racism, and discrimination. Quite a number are already well-known, but brought together with yet unpublished photographs, they still impress and shock. Hoffman orders his collection chronologically, giving attention to the “coolie” labor in Deli, the Aceh War, the nationalist emancipation and resistance, the communist insurrections, the Digul internment camp and, extensively, the Decolonization War of 1945–1949, along with many more subjects. Hofmann’s criteria for inclusion are not altogether clear. Many ‘neutral’ photographs are included too. The pictures are accompanied by short introductions that function adequately. Unfortunately, the text contains many mostly small errors. For instance, the Indonesian Communist Party was not a split off of the Sarekat Islam. As to Digul, Tanah Merah and Tanah Tinggi are confounded in the captions. Special praise goes to the publisher for its great work to make this book an exemplary edition in a generous format of 25 × 31 cm.

As for its sources, no effort is reported to consult the Indonesian IPPHOS collection of photographs, taken during the War of 1945–1949, and also published in large volumes. A very recent publication in this field is *Seni & diplomasi / Art and diplomacy*, published by the Directorate History of the Indonesia Ministry of Education and Culture, which contains 236 pages of paintings, sketches, caricatures, posters etc. that relate to the Dutch-Indonesian conflict of 1945–1950. Exhibitions are also scheduled as part of this project, in Jakarta and in the Netherlands, with the Bronbeek Museum and the Rijksmuseum in an assisting role. The book is introduced by a few short essays and information on the 18 artists whose works are included. Unfortunately, the book is not for sale, and copies are unavailable.

Mar Oomen, *Missievaders: Een familiegeschiedenis van katholieke wereldverbettersaars*. Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Atlas Contact, 2019, 302 pp. ISBN: 9789045032740, price: EUR 22.99 (paperback).

The interbellum years were the heyday of Catholic emancipation in the Netherlands when Catholics claimed their legitimate place in Dutch society. Part of this process included extensive missionary efforts in the Netherlands itself and in the colonies. In relative terms, the Netherlands supplied the greatest number of missionaries on a worldwide scale. Not all mission workers were ordained, however. Such an exception was Janus Oomen (1902–1986), who hailed from a pious and well-educated family and was strongly motivated to spread the Catholic faith all over the world. He studied medicine with the express objective to become a mission doctor. Medical facilities, along with ‘God’ and education towards civilization, were considered by all missions as the most successful means to proselytize the ‘natives’. Janus and his wife were stationed in Tomohon (North Sulawesi), where he, in pleasant surroundings, improved the hospital organization. His wife supported him as a social worker in this overwhelmingly Protestant area. His next station, in 1940, was Rangkasbitung (Banten), in a Muslim stronghold, where the family felt isolated. After the Japanese invasion, Oomen was still able to work for a year as a doctor. Next, the family was split and interned in Bogor, Cimahi, and Cideng. Oomen tried to continue his work in Makassar, but left Indonesia for good in 1951. He made the change from mission to tropical doctor, and became active as a consultant for the World Health Organization, still active and eager to promote the Catholic faith. His son Dries (born 1931) followed in his footsteps and became a doctor in Tanzania and Ethiopia from 1958 on. The old-fashioned mission worker had become obsolete. Development aid was to set the tone for the next decades. Janus and Dries had great difficulty to adapt, with tragic consequences. (Grand)daughter Mar, a journalist and anthropologist, stumbled across a vast amount of papers, giving a detailed account of Oomen family life. Amplified by information from archives and secondary sources, she thus sketches the history of her family against the backdrop of Catholic emancipation, its rise and fall in half a century. About half of the book is on Indonesia, with useful information. On the basis of her own research experiences Mar Oomen pleads for the systematization of the Dutch archives on religious and medical matters, so as to make these more accessible.

Herman Keppy, *Zijn jullie kerels of lafaards?: De Indische en Indonesische strijd tegen de nazi's 1940-'45*. Den Haag: Uitgeverij West, 2019, 272 pp. ISBN: 9789082063547, price EUR 29.95 (paperback).

For twelve years Herman Keppy (1960) has been collecting the stories of Indies and Indonesian men and women who were active in the resistance against the German occupiers of the Netherlands. His many publications on the subject have now been reworked and collected. For the most part these are biographical accounts of one or a group of resistance fighters. As a criterium to qualify for inclusion in this book, he applies a broad definition of Indies descent. An Indies place of birth or stay, or a Eurasian background sufficed. At the time, they were not conscious of their background, nor motivated to make an issue of it. They were all Dutch citizens, on equal footing with Dutchmen without an Indies connection. This was fundamentally different from the 800 to 1000 Indonesians—servants, students, and seamen—who as colonial subjects ranked second and were only temporarily in the Netherlands. The book's main subjects are the resistance of military men, among them a considerable number of KNIL military, students, and women. There were quite a few who crossed the North Sea to Britain, or took the long road via Switzerland. They also enlisted in the RAF and the Royal Navy. The kaleidoscopic image of the book reflects the heterogeneity of the Indies community. The reader thus sometimes loses track, or experiences texts as too much of an enumeration. This is a pity, as Keppy, with a lot of personal involvement, tells the forgotten, often moving stories of men and women who lost their lives in their fight against Germany.

As for the Indonesians, their position was fundamentally different. They were acutely aware of their background, and in their wartime activities their Indonesian identity was always a determining factor. Keppy includes a chapter of 30 pages on the Indonesians. The personal approach also here is dominant. Thus, a number of organizational developments are neglected, as well as the political component in these. In comparison with the book I published in 1986 (*In het land van de overheerser*), Keppy has some new life stories to add, but leaves out some Indonesians who died in German camps. He refers to a 1940 article in the Perhimpunan Indonesia (PI) journal 'Indonesia', in which student leader Setiadjit declares the neutrality of his organization in the 'imperialist' war. Keppy calls this 'curious' (p. 195), but in fact Setiadjit followed Moscow's orders, which declared this neutrality after the Soviet-German Agreement of August 1939. When Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, this uneasy position came to an end. This all makes clear that Setiadjit and the PI were under communist influence. Setiadjit was to become the respected PI leader

who was involved in the top of the resistance. Keppy (p. 259) summarizes his opinion on Setiadjit: ‘the courageous leader of the Perhimpunan Indonesia and the Indonesian resistance in the Netherlands, who initially was a prime minister in the cabinet of Soetan Sjahrir and who in 1947 was killed by soldiers of the new Republic.’ The above three lines contain four factual errors, yet other than that the book is accurate. The hundreds of rare illustrations contained in this finely produced book deserve large praise.

Nienhuis, Corrie, *Leven tussen hoop en wanhoop: Dagboek van Corrie Nienhuis, Indische oorlogs- en kampherinneringen 1941–1945*. Groningen: Palmslag, 2019, 473 pp. ISBN: 9789493059276, price EUR 22.50 (paperback).

In 1928, Corrie Nienhuis (1897–1986) began service as a nurse with the Indies government. She worked in a number of hospitals. When the Second World War broke out in 1941, she was stationed in Makassar, Sulawesi. Soon the Japanese occupied the island. Men, and separately, women and children were interned. Nienhuis thus spent the war years in camps in Malino and Kampili. She continued her work as a nurse, but under ever worsening conditions: illness, hunger, and maltreatment by the Japanese troops. About fifty women and children did not survive. An added threat was the air fights between Japan and America, as Sulawesi was a frontline country for over a year until an Allied bombardment destroyed the Kampili camp in 1945. During the years in internment, Nienhuis kept a diary. In 1946, back in the Netherlands, she reworked her notes into a chronological narrative poem of about 1,700 stanzas of four lines each. There is no comparable publication of this size to be found in the abundant number of books on the camps. Already in the Kampili she wrote poems, 13 of which are included in this book. The 250 pages of poetry are followed by a 120-page truthful rendering in prose, made by Margaret Leidelmeijer. After reworking her diary, Nienhuis hardly spoke about her experiences, nor did she want her writings to be published. Close kin at last took it upon themselves to get this document printed. As to its format, it is unique. As to the contents, there are a number of sources available—contrary to what the editors say—on Malino and Kampili (see www.japanseburgerkampen.nl). Nienhuis’ story, of course, adds to our knowledge and insight, for instance, of a nurse working in a camp hospital. The publication has been done carefully, with background information on Nienhuis’ biography (although sparingly), two indexes, and a number of bad-quality illustrations.

John Jansen van Galen, *Fiasco van goede bedoelingen: Nederland en de Indonesische onafhankelijkheid*. Amsterdam/Antwerpen: Pluim, 2019, 269 pp. ISBN: 9789492928757, price: EUR 22.99 (paperback).

John Jansen van Galen is a senior journalist and historian with a special interest in the decolonization of the former Dutch colonies in East and West. In *Afscheid van de koloniën* (2013), he set out to write a comparative history. It was not altogether a success, partly because of the incomparable scale. His conclusion to this study is of interest. He criticizes the general moralistic view, in which the Dutch are considered a priori to be on the wrong side. He sides with those few Dutch scholars who think otherwise and who might be called revisionists. Dutch policies, although lacking consistency, might also be called pragmatic, and in that respect these were initially successful. Jansen van Galen, in his *Fiasco van goede bedoelingen*, builds upon these conclusions, and restricts himself to Indonesia. He analyzes three commonly held opinions. First, the Netherlands stubbornly and violently opposed the decolonization (1945–1949). Second, the transfer of sovereignty (1949) was a Dutch debacle. And third, the Dutch betrayed the Papuans and their promise of self-determination in 1962 by acceding to their incorporation in Indonesia. Of equal interest is Jansen van Galen's question of what could and should have been done differently. A fundamental step in these respects was the speech of Queen Wilhelmina of December 7, 1942, which radically broke with the reluctant and halfhearted official position towards nationalism before Japan occupied Indonesia. The Dutch adhered to this policy, which remained their point of departure during the decisive negotiations of the Hoge Veluwe Conference, the Linggadjati and Renville Agreements, the Roem-Van Roijen talks and the Roundtable Conference. Even the two Dutch Military Actions were justified through terminology derived from the Dutch concept of decolonization—and not just cynical, but sincere.

Thus—notwithstanding opposition from the Right, including the army, and with a lot of ups-and-downs, with the Catholic Party in power, detracting from the general premises—it was the Labour Party that saved the general policy: the creation of an independent federal Indonesian state, united in an equivalent union with the Netherlands. In the process, the Indonesian Republic was soon recognized as a partner in negotiations—a laborious process, in which the Republic, subject to many pressures, also from the army, was a difficult partner to deal with. International pressure soon played a great role. Jansen van Galen accompanies his analysis with a concise and reliable account of the course of the conflict, in which, however, the developments after the second Dutch military action receive relatively minor attention. To sum up, his first issue can

thus be refuted. As to the second, the Dutch got more than could be expected, for instance in the economic fields. These advantages soon withered, as the Indonesian-Dutch relations deteriorated fast, caused by West New Guinea, which was excluded by the Dutch from the transfer of sovereignty. It took until 1962, under US pressure and an immanent Indonesian invasion, for the Netherlands to part with New Guinea. The Papuans were no more than pawns who were sacrificed. Could all this have taken another course? Jansen van Galen gives some clues, but does not advocate a clear position. There are changes that could have been made in the 1930s and until 1942, but in these years, colonial shortsightedness was paramount. Jansen van Galen adds references, but rather erratically. Many paragraphs would have profited from references to the sources.

Alexander Willem Bor, *Retour Amahai: Krijgsgevangen onder Japanse bezetting (1942–1945)*. Harderwijk: Gopher, 2019, 289 pp. ISBN: 9789492984821, price: EUR 22.50 (paperback).

Lex Bor (1912–1981) grew up in the Indies, graduated in law in 1937 from Utrecht University, and returned to the Indies to work as a lawyer with the Department of Justice in Batavia. He was drafted as a KNIL soldier and stationed in Kediri, where he was engaged in battle with the invading Japanese. He was made a prisoner of war and was interned in Malang and Batavia. In April 1943, he was shipped in a party of a thousand men to the Moluccas to work in forced labor to construct airfields. He worked in Amahai (Seram), on Haruku from October 1943, and in Liang (Ambon) from November 1943 until August 1944. Conditions were among the worst of the Japanese prisoner's camps, as they were starved and medical care was absent. The return journey, which took more than two months, became a tragedy and cost the lives of 370 men, about half of the men transported, who were neglected on purpose by the Japanese military in charge. Lex Bor managed to survive, only barely, and became an example of the drive to survive and of human resilience. He resumed his career in Indonesia and New Guinea until 1962. He then started writing his reminiscences, of which only a small part were published. His account is reserved and he succeeds in avoiding strong emotions, which makes him very persuasive, and renders his account all the more impressive. Regretfully, it was not published in full before, an omission that is now made good, and the more welcome as not much has been published on this forced labor in the Moluccas (see www.japansekrijgsgevangenenkampen.nl).

Martijn van Empel, *Ivo Samkalden, een rechtlijnig democraat*. Amsterdam: Prometheus, 2019, 414 pp. ISBN: 9789036144866, price: EUR 29.99 (paperback).

Ivo Samkalden (1912–1995) is best remembered as a mayor of Amsterdam (1967–1977), who steered the Dutch capital through a turbulent decade. He succeeded Gijs van Hall, whose policies were controversial and caused him to be demoted. The Partij van de Arbeid (Labour Party) asked Samkalden, known for his intelligence and experience combined with his moderately regent-like posture, to take up the job. He was one of the few men considered able to solve Amsterdam's problems. His past, since 1947, as a high official in the Law Department, as a Professor of Law in Leiden and Wageningen, and two terms as Minister of Justice supplied ample proof of this. Interestingly, Samkalden had an Indies past that has hardly received attention. Biographer Martijn van Empel (1943), retired Professor of Law in Amsterdam, makes up for this by devoting more than a hundred pages to these formative years. Of Samkalden's relatives, quite a few had worked in the Indies, including his father. His choice to enter the Leiden Indology course was also prompted by economic necessity, as his family was impoverished and the Indology students received grants from the government. Samkalden concluded his study and got a PhD in 1938 with a thesis on the Volksraad (People's Council), a parliamentary body with restricted authority. He went to the Indies, a married man by that time, and was assigned as a candidate controller to posts in Surabaya and Sidoarjo.

Van Empel describes his daily routines and particular interests, as well as his misgivings about Dutch colonial rule. Inter alia, the author speaks of the declining influence of the Volksraad, while a strong argument may be made that the opposite was happening. All developments in this field came to an end with the Japanese occupation. Samkalden's family was split up and interned, surviving relatively unharmed. All were repatriated and Samkalden took up a law study, yet not for long. The negotiations with the Indonesian Republic soon deadlocked. The Dutch government thus sent a Commissie Generaal to Jakarta to assist Lieutenant Governor General H.J. van Mook. Its chairman was Willem Schermerhorn, who asked Samkalden and Piet Sanders to become part of his staff, especially to advise on aspects of constitutional law. In practice, they became responsible for the flow of information to the outer world. In their diaries, Schermerhorn and Sanders have given exhaustive accounts on the course of affairs, in which Samkalden also figures. In public opinion, Samkalden was considered to be sympathetic towards the Republic. He went back to the Netherlands on July 1, 1947, three weeks before the Dutch launched their military action. He must have felt relieved. He never wrote about his Indies years. Van Empel has competently written this biography, using an

impressive amount of sources—books, archives, interviews—which sometimes inevitably becomes an enumeration.

Sanne Biesheuvel, *Oorlog aan de Overkant; De belevenissen van een hospik in Indië/Indonesië*. Haarlem: In de Knipscheer, 2019, 296 pp. ISBN: 9789062656134, price: EUR 22.00 (paperback).

Dirk Biesheuvel (1926–1991) was a medical orderly, conscripted in 1946, to serve in the Decolonization War of Indonesia. He notes his experiences in a diary. Later in life, he never seriously discussed his Indonesia years, nor the diary he kept. Long after he died, his daughter Sanne read his diary, reworked it and published it as a ‘novel based on the diary of an Indies veteran’. She only briefly notes the nature of her editorial labor. It looks as if she remained close to the original text, and added some corrections and explanations. Unfortunately, she did not correct the many misspelled Indonesian names.

Biesheuvel was part of the Korps Geneeskundige Troepen, 32 Hulpverband-plaatsafdeling, and during his Indonesia years (January 1947-January 1950) stationed on Java: Cimahi, Purwokerto, Banyumas, Cilacap, Magelang, and Solo. In general, he worked in the local military hospital, and was directly confronted with the war: many wounded and dead were brought in. It was Biesheuvel’s task to lay out the corpses, whose number grew after the Second Dutch military action. Occasionally he took part in patrols, witnessing torture and execution in Kroya on the Dutch part. He describes daily life, having a serious relationship with a Javanese woman, a teacher’s daughter. Dirk Biesheuvel returned to Indonesia only once, in 1976. His search for his love, as he reports in a sequel to his diary, was in vain, and resulted in a real cliffhanger. There are a number of accounts on the medical part of the war. Biesheuvel’s readable report is a worthy addition.

Herman Spinhof, *Vertrapte illusies: Verborgene oorlogsherinneringen van Molukkers*. Zutphen: WalburgPers, 2019, 150 pp. ISBN: 9789462494374, price: EUR 19.99 (paperback).

Maluku, as well as its inhabitants, occupy a special place in Dutch colonial history, first as the producers of spices and later as suppliers of soldiers, who were praised for their courage and loyalty. This state of affairs changed drastically when Japan invaded and occupied Indonesia in 1942. The turmoil extended after Japan’s defeat in 1945, with the war of independence of the Indone-

sian Republic. The ordeal did not end, as in 1950 the Republic of the South Moluccas was proclaimed. A violent civil war followed, and in its wake 12,000 Moluccans—military and their relatives—were ordered by the Dutch to leave for the Netherlands, where frustrations led to violence.

Between 1997 and 2001, 724 men and women were interviewed about their Indonesian experiences from the 1930s until the 1960s, in the KITLV Project Stichting Mondelinge Geschiedenis Indonesië. This unique project was supplemented by more than 50 interviews with Moluccans, held under the auspices of the Maluku Museum. Spinhof has selected 17 interviews, of which 6 are of women, to be included in this book, organized chronologically, and introduced in an adequate fashion. Of course, it is not possible in this concise book to present a comprehensive account of the experiences of the Moluccans. But what the author includes gives an impression of the immeasurable misery and grief ordinary people suffered at the hands of Japanese, Dutch military, fellow Moluccans, and Indonesian bands during the *bersiap* period. The civil war on Ambon in 1950 was a particularly violent case, as testimonies in the book testify. Some stories border on credibility, but here reality exceeds fiction, as in the experiences of Matta Mezach Matajane (already published as a book). His story and those of others also record the courage and inventiveness needed to survive. Thus, this book makes a convincing point in showing how oral history provides an additional personal dimension to Indonesian history. With 24 pages of illustrations.

Bart Peeters, *Anneke Grönloh, de biografie*. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij JEA, 2019, 323 pp. ISBN: 9789070024970, price EUR 49.95 (with LP Anneke Grönloh, *Charade*) (hardback).

Anneke Grönloh (1942–2018) was the most successful Dutch popular singer ever, who sold about 30 million records. She was an Indies woman with a career stretching 60 years, who was always aware of her Indonesian background. Her biography, by Bart Peeters, her manager for thirty years, is the third recent study—after the Tielman Brothers and Wieteke van Dort—recording Indies and Indonesian influence on Dutch popular music, beginning in the 1950s. On a more general level, Lutgard Mutsaers also contributed to its historiography. Anneke Grönloh's father was a Dutch KNIL officer, and her mother was an Indonesian from North Sulawesi. Born near Tomohon, she was interned in a Japanese camp, survived the *bersiap*, and left for the Netherlands in 1949. Already at a very young age, her singing talent was noted. She was scouted and signed with Phonogram, the gramophone branch of Philips. Her first record

featured Indonesian songs. Dutch songs followed, securing her for many months a first place on the charts. She became a teenage idol, with no Dutch precedent. The rise of pop groups like the Beatles ended this phase of her career. Her popularity, however, remained unabated, also in Belgium and Germany. A lasting commitment involved many musical tours in Malaysia and Singapore, and later in Indonesia. Here she remained an idol, and attracted unprecedented audiences. Bart Peeters gives an admiring chronological account of Grönloh's life, mainly based on interviews with her and her many colleagues in music. The book is voluminous, has a large format, and is heavy (2 kilos). It's of exemplary quality, contains hundreds of photographs, and has a useful index. Unfortunately, a discography is missing.

Saskia Rossi, *De ring van Marsini: Zomaar een Indische familie*. Soest: Boekscout, 2019, 125 pp. ISBN: 9789463892391, price: EUR 18.99 (paperback).

Saskia Rossi (1957), of Eurasian descent, generally met with silence and evasion when she asked her mother (1916–2010) and other family members about their experiences during the Japanese occupation of Indonesia, and the Indonesian Revolution. Their fate was sad. Her grandfather and two uncles died: drowned during a Japanese POW transport, executed by the Japanese secret police and killed during the *bersiap* period. The surviving uncles and their families were forever marked by their bitter memories. Only recently did Rossi start her research on the real fate of her uncles. A tenacious search yielded lots of material. In this concise book, Rossi tells the life stories of her mother and uncles. In this way she honors their courage and perseverance. The book is also her own account of the quest to find her roots. Her experience of Occupation and Revolution is of course not new, but every story is unique. Thus Rossi's book is a worthy addition to the body of knowledge of the Indonesian decolonization. With a list of sources.