

# Transcription Round Table Discussion January 31, 2019<sup>1</sup>

Youtube link: <https://youtu.be/8eyRRCIGg6k>

Red = critics

Black = participating researchers Dutch study on 1945-1949

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[min. 00:00]

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Ladies and gentlemen it's almost 14 minutes after 12. So we already shook hands the last 5 minutes, entering the building, so I think we can make a fresh start, right away. I understood that the Round Table will be completely in English, or?

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Completely in English and only Jeffry [Pondaag] will speak in Dutch.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Okay. So I am really happy that we're finally sitting here at this round table.

[min. 01:02]

As you know this has a long history. The conversations about this meeting started almost a year ago in April [2018]. I was a bit surprised to read that we were pressed to have this round table, I think it was a kind of... that we agreed to have this meeting, after we invited some of the writers of the open letter, so I'm really happy here and I hope that we will be able to have a real conversation for two hours because I think that we might learn a lot from each other, so I hope we will be able to listen to each other and to have also a conversation not just one way, one side first and then the other side, but that we can also develop arguments, to have indeed a conversation.

[min. 02:05]

So I think we should start. Jeffry you made the program, the first on the program is Francisca Pattipilohy, give her the floor and perhaps...

[KITLV-director Gert Oostindie entering the room]

**Frank van Vree:** Ah... I forgot to announce that you would be a little bit late because you had to come here from The Hague and had problems with getting here.

**Mariëtte Wolf:** And what about Arthur Graaff, will he be late too?

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Well I didn't receive a message from him yet. Just continue...

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Yeah I think the first [speaker] is tante Cisca [Francisca Pattipilohy].

**Francisca Pattipilohy:** Shall I start? Okay... The focus of the research on 45-49, starting the narrative with the Bersiap period is problematic...

[min. 03:05]

...because it leaves out 3,5 centuries of colonial violence. How does this colonial war relate to the centuries of injustice before? Already since the 1920's the students of Perhimpunan Indonesia (PI) in the Netherlands were active to propagate independence in a peaceful way, through talks and negotiation. Yet their requests were ignored. They even helped the Dutch fighting fascism during World War II, but without result. When the Republic was proclaimed in 1945 violence did not immediately occur. From Indonesian perspective, the violence came as a surprise...

[min. 04:05]

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<sup>1</sup> This transcription was made by a group of volunteers, among others: Agung Geger, Annemarie Toebosch, Daniella van der Helm, Dida Pattipilohy, Franciska Manuputty, Marjolein van Pagee, Ricky Velis and Surya Dalimunthe.

...the Bersiap only occurred after the British troops arrived in late 1945 in Indonesia. From Indonesian perspective they came to support their Dutch allies in recolonizing the country. Why is the latter Indonesian view not included in the outline of the research project? That's what I wanted to ask.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Okay, perhaps, just to give a starting point of an answer... I think that... And that will maybe return a couple of times during this afternoon...

[min. 05:03]

But I think we should be aware of the fact that the main goal of this research is a critical study of, in the first place the violence against the Republic of Indonesia, starting in 1945, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, that's the main focus. And why is this the main focus, because particularly this period of violence (apart from the violence that is inherit to colonialism) particularly this period of violence has been denied by Dutch society for more than 60 years. That is why we are focusing on this specific within the wider context of colonial history. So I think we shouldn't forget that that is the main objective of this research.

[min. 06:02]

So we'll start, because that is the main focus. Of course, we also do a lot of work that includes all the aspects of colonial history before 1945, but the focus is starting on August 1945. And I think the Bersiap-period is one these periods to understand what actually happened in this period. So we need that period as the same we need 1948, 1949, when there were big battles by the Dutch Army, we need this period to understand what happened and what went wrong in the Netherlands within the judicial system, within politics, within... so that's the main... Esther you want to...?

[min. 07:03]

**Esther Captain:** Yes I want to make a comment, do we pronounce names in order to introduce ourselves for the public maybe? I am Esther Captain, and I am one of the researchers that is involved in the sub-study on Bersiap and Berdaulat violence. So, thank you for your comments. I do think that you raise important questions and remarks on this, particularly. So, thank you for that. And, indeed, the violence of Bersiap period didn't came out of the blue. I think that's very important to recognize. And we as a researcher for this sub-study especially dedicated to the Bersiap and Berdaulat violence. We do make a continuity between violence in several periods during this period of war but also the period of colonization by the Dutch. So we do have a lot of literature that we are using. And there's a whole lot of historiography already been made by other scholars that we include.

[min. 8:01]

And this colonial period of time has been researched thoroughly. And that is the work that we are using. But, as Frank is saying, the focus of this research program is on the period 1945-1950. So, we do incorporate it in our perspective and in our view, but, the focus is starting on 1945. And, I also think it's very important that, to realize, I think we all agree on the table, on the aim of our work is to write as much as possible an inclusive history.

[min. 8:32]

And that we all support the fact that we are trying to write an inclusive history. And that for a lot of people here in the Netherlands, Dutch and Indo-European, and also people of Chinese descent, Bersiap period was extremely important for them, because compared to even the Japanese occupation, it has been more violent and also so traumatic. So, violence didn't came out of the blue, and it's also important to recognize for people from the European descent, that this period of time has to be written.

[min. 9:06]

So, we are trying to make a connection of Bersiap period as a period of extreme violence, and also what the repercussions were for the later period of time. So, that's why it is included. And we do make these longer lines, continuities, in history.

[min. 9:25]

**Fridus Steijlen:** Right, a little bit, because I think it goes further, Cisca. You said, the struggle wasn't... sorry, I am Fridus Steijlen from the witness and contemporaries project. The struggle, and yes, the request for independence was not recognized. I think it even goes further. People fighting for this independence were put away as political prisoners in Boven Digoel and so on. So, I think it's important to recognize this. At the end, you say, why does the Indonesian point of view that the arrival of the Allies or the British was seen as

recolonization, is not included. I think we try to include it. When I'm conducting some interviews with Indonesian veterans, people who were involved especially at this area of the revolution, and they are the ones who bring in this perspective. And I think what is necessary and our responsibility is to bring this perspective in the projects and in the other projects of the research. So at least we are open, we have to do our effort to incorporate.

[min. 10:51]

**Frank van Vree:** Michael, you want to respond to that?

**Michael van Zeijl:** I can respond now but I can also do it in my own time. But, since you asked me now...

**Frank van Vree:** I think we, this is a conversation, so please.

[min. 11:05]

**Michael van Zeijl:** The argument that it was a sensitive time for Dutch Indies diaspora, that's my social construct also, I think should not be an argument in this, because our grandparents, or parents maybe, or their parents, they didn't leave the Archipelago for nothing. They were indoctrinated with colonialism. And they are also not a victim. And actually that argument that you use helps erasing our identities. There is a huge problem in our community with proxy racism and denial of our history, and not recognizing our part. I mean, my social constructs part, in colonialism and in decolonization. There was a system of hierarchy and we were not at the bottom of that hierarchy. We were not only victims of racism, but we were also perpetrators of oppression. So, this is an argument that should not weigh in this research, because this...

**Esther Captain:** ... I didn't mean...

[min. 12:19]

**Francisca Pattipilohy:** Yeah, I want to say also, I was there in 1945, 17th of August. Nothing happened until in October, when the Gurkhas of the Southeast Asian forces came into Jakarta. And I was living in a house near, in the opposite of a kampung, a very big kampung, where also nationalists were living. They came with carriers, how do you call that, and they shot just on the entrance of the kampung without saying nothing. That was only the end of October 1945. And then violence started.

**Esther Captain:** Coming back to your comment. I forgot your name again.

**Michael van Zeijl:** Michael.

**Esther Captain:** Michael, I agree with you on that point. That it's important to address also the role of being a perpetrator. I agree on that.

**Michael van Zeijl:** Yeah, because this argument is used by white Dutch to whitewash their history.

[min. 13:29]

**Esther Captain:** Yeah, I see what you mean, that also people of Indo-European descent might have had a role there. And I think, it is for me erasing their part of history. I think it's very important to embrace it in a way, how difficult it may be. The thing is it is not as simple to say "those are the victims and those are the perpetrators", because these roles can be shifting and changing along the time.

**Michael van Zeijl:** I agree on that. But, last decades, there was totally no focus on the indigenous population. There was always the narratives of our social construct and white social construct. There was never time for...

**Esther Captain:** And with 'indigenous' you mean, what population?

**Michael van Zeijl:** I'm not going to use this racist phrase they used in the Dutch Indies.

**Esther Captain:** No, of course not. Indonesian population.



**Michael van Zeijl:** Yeah, the indigenous, people without European ancestors. ... I forgot my point.

**Frank van Vree:** I know what you want to say, there was more attention, there was only attention for that...

**Michael van Zeijl:** Because we never took, the people before us never took the time to focus on that part. Even our National Memorial Day erased them, you know.

[min. 14:47]

**Frank van Vree:** But, Michael, I agree completely with your argument. But what we, what is also included in the program is region studies, the studies in the non-European department. Indeed, in regions in Indonesia itself with this, with local population, on a local level also, to bring in that perspective. So that's, what we really try to, and we are sincerely trying to do that, to bring other perspectives, than indeed the perspective that had been dominant so far. Because you're completely right.

**Michael van Zeijl:** Yeah, but you present this as a reason to legitimize this part of research.

**Frank van Vree:** No no no no...

[min. 15:30]

**Esther Captain:** It's not meant as a legitimization. It's one of the aspects, that is a part of this history that has to be written, that they can both be perpetrators, but also our victims have been victims. I mean that's also important that you cannot deny historically.

**Patty Gomes:** Yeah, so okay, we need to go to the next...

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Yeah we're nearing... It's not very long per point but we have still enough time to discuss.

**Frank van Vree:** It's worthwhile this conversation.

**Patty Gomes:** Yeah, we need to go to the next point because...

[min. 16:08]

**Jeffrey Pondaag:** The Netherlands never had good intentions. And still, until today. I assume that my performance of last September 13<sup>th</sup> that everybody knows who that was. Sukarno was not a murderer. [Dutch Queen] Wilhelmina was, she was a murderer. We are talking about human rights violations. When you talk about 'Indonesia' it is a falsification of history. What right does the Netherlands have to occupy a country 18,000 km away and see it as 'Dutch property'?

[min. 17:00]

Besides that, the Netherlands says that the transfer of sovereignty took place on 27 December 1949. As long as this is the case, these researchers cannot speak of 'Indonesia.' That means that the Netherlands. The so-called 'Dutch-Indies government', which was illegal murdered and executed their own 'subjects.' I think, and not only me, there are more people who agree with me. We think that you should start at the beginning. We are human beings! Who are not seen as human beings!

[min. 18:00]

The Netherlands only applies the tactic of 'divide and rule'. You have no idea how my family has been torn apart! And then you talk about the Bersiap in this way. But the question is: who were those people that committed the crimes of 'the Bersiap'? Who are they? Indonesians? How can you think that! On the website of your government it is written: 27 December 1949, the transfer of sovereignty. Until now. [Minister] Ben Bot did not recognize 1945. Just 'aanvaarden' [accepting]. As long as recognition doesn't happen you can't talk about Indonesia. This is a very important point! Why? If the Netherlands recognizes Indonesia from 1945 (who were, after all, kicked out within 3 days by the Japanese, in 1942) then the Netherlands attacked a sovereign nation. And that's a war crime!

[min. 19:17]



By the law of war! You cannot just skip that, it's impossible! It's not right and it's not allowed. You cannot, how to say that... start in the middle of the pie. No, you have to share it, slice by slice. That's where you start. And I want to ask Mr. Gert Oostindie who received 4,1 million Euros, when you and Mr. Van Vree talk about the Indonesian researchers... But who are they? How much money do they get and for what they get the money?

[min. 20:00]

This is our money! It is taxpayers money! So we are responsible for that too. I hope I will get an answer. I hope that, as a follow-up of my statement here, I hope that the researchers, and you too Fridus, I talked to you often. And you too Mr. Limpach, who uses the term "Indonesia." I called you after your book got published. You told me that you use the term 'Indonesia' because everybody does it. Well, that is falsification of history. Because I asked you: "Why do you use the term 'Indonesia'?" You told me on the phone...

[min. 21:00]

Because nowadays all historians do that. That is falsification of history! If you want it or not, it is falsification of history! And... in relation to my statement, Rogier will say a few words as well...

**Rogier Meijerink:** Shall we first ask the researchers to respond?

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Well... you say it.

**Patty Gomes:** We have 7 minutes for reactions.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Well, let them react!

**Rogier Meijerink:** Short

**Rémy Limpach:** Can I be the first? My name is Rémy Limpach. I used the word Indonesia because for me 17 August is a historical fact. I am an academic and not a representative from the [Dutch] government. That is why I chose for the term Indonesia. That's how simple it is.

[min. 22:03]

**Jeffry Pondaag:** If you do that, my question is: do you recognize Indonesia?

**Rémy Limpach:** As a historian, it is a historical fact, so yes! But I am not the government.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Okay I understand.

[min. 22:18]

**NIOD director Frank van Vree:** I think we need to say it in English because I think it's important. For the research program, we start at the 17<sup>th</sup> of August as the beginning, the legitimate starting point of the Republic of Indonesia. We are not bound to what the Dutch government is doing.

**Patty Gomes:** We think that it's fundamentally wrong; it's not the starting point.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Wait, are you talking about the 15<sup>th</sup> or the 17<sup>th</sup>?

**NIOD director Frank van Vree:** The 17<sup>th</sup>.

[min. 23:00]

**Jeffry Pondaag:** My question is: do you researchers recognize 17<sup>th</sup> August 1945? That's what I want to hear!

**Peter Romijn:** It's a historical fact and it's also a very important marker in the history of the state and nation building of Indonesia. That's no problem at all for us.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** So my conclusion is then that the Netherlands attacked a sovereign nation. Which is a war crime, right? Agree or not?

**Fridus Steijlen:** What did you say about the Netherlands attacked what?

**Jeffry Pondaag:** That the Netherlands attacked a sovereign nation! Because on 17 August it is our independence. And apart from that, this is very important, the Netherlands was already gone in 1942! They have no business there anymore!

**Peter Romijn:** It's an effort of recolonization and reoccupation and I think that our job is to find out why the Dutch engaged in this effort.

[min. 24:00]

Also in the international context of developing a new world order, the Atlantic Charter, the United Nations organization and also in the aspect of developing the international criminal law, the tribunal of Nuremberg and Tokyo, the principles of those tribunals and how the Dutch were taking reckoning of that international development. That's specifically in our line of questioning. And I think that it's logical in the context of the discussions that we're having.

**Rogier Meijerink:** I think I want to react to this point. I think it's great if this whole research is indeed acknowledging 17<sup>th</sup> August 1945 as the starting point of Indonesia. But it's a fairytale. It's simply not true. Holland is the only country, until today, not recognizing Indonesian independence starting from... (may I please finish my point??) the 17<sup>th</sup> of August [1945].

[min. 25:00]

And we talked about this point already after the presentation of the 13<sup>th</sup> September. You're talking about new terminology and you end up with independence, decolonization, violence and war in Indonesia '45-'50. That's three lies in one sentence! There was... Indonesia only existed for 5 days in this period [of 1945-1950]. There was no war; it was police action. We were killing our own civilians. Also, decolonization didn't happen in this period [of 1945-1950]. It either happened in 1942 when the colony ended existing or it happened in 1965 when the economic colonization ended. Not within this period [1945-1950]. By choosing this kind of terminology, you are only helping the Dutch state to camouflage this really shameful fact of still not acknowledging Indonesian independence from [1945]. So that's why I'm saying: you were just like cherry-picking the most politically attractive terminology, shifting at will between the Indonesian perspective and Dutch perspective.

[min. 26:11]

That's not [writing] history. That's writing propaganda. This is a fairytale you are writing.

**Peter Romijn:** Well, it's very interesting that you're pointing at the issue of terminology. This is one of the discussions we're having constantly in our own circle. And we are aware of the impact of the choices we make. Therefore I can only say that we are still discussing the consequences of the words chosen. And, well, perhaps you may count on us as professionals, that we will develop more insight during the project. That is really normal for historians to work like that. But if the question is 'what is the importance of the 17<sup>th</sup> August [1945]',

[min. 27:00]

well, as I said, it's an important marker in the history of independent Indonesia. We cannot deny that. There are several other developments going on like you rightfully mentioned. There is a longer continuity. But for us it's very important, from the Dutch point of view, to find out what exactly has caused the Dutch military violence in Indonesia. I think that there is a genuine interest from most of us [the researchers]. For me as a person this has been present since the 1980's in my mind: what has caused Dutch military violence? And for a long time it has been impossible to discuss this from the point of view of crimes of war. The word 'crimes of war' was a discussion stopper and we are now moving into a direction where 'crimes of war' are not a discussion stopper anymore, but an analytical property. And, it's up to us to find the right analytical terminology to discuss what has happened and you're right; it is important. But...

[min. 28:06]

**Arthur Graaff:** I would love to have a reaction of prof. Oostindie on Jeffry's remark concerning war crimes. Do you accept [the term] war crimes?

**KITLV director Gert Oostindie:** I wrote a book in which I use the term 'war crime' all the time. So what more can I say.

**NIOD director Frank van Vree:** Micheal, I want myself to react a bit too on Rogier but Micheal... [go ahead]

**Micheal van Zeijl:** You use arguments like: we are scientists, you can count on us and we are doing research about history and all... But the research you're doing is about violence. So it's not just physical violence, it's also economical violence. So how can you not take this trick that the Netherlands uses until today to prevent to take responsibility – why do you go and play with terminology while this is actually a very important part that you should mention in your [research]?

[min. 29:06]

Because this is a part of the strategy they [the Netherlands] used to oppress and to maintain their wealth that they gained there. Because changing the date [of independence] would mean serious complications for the Netherlands, because then also a lot of treaties like the RTC wouldn't be valid anymore. So instead of playing magician with terminology, why don't you just put this in your research that this is one of the ways they oppress, still.

**NIOD director Frank van Vree:** It's not a play. I want to deny that this is play because the first title was... It started with 'decolonization' and the reason for that was because this is an international field of research. Decolonization is an accepted term in this kind of studies. And we, after discussions with a lot of people...

[min. 30:00]

...particularly Indonesian researchers: they said it is not 'decolonization'; it is 'recolonization'. You should start with the 17<sup>th</sup> of August in 1945. And that's the reason...

**Micheal van Zeijl:** But it started with 'politieele acties' [police actions].

**NIOD director Frank van Vree:** No, no, no, we never use the word 'politieele acties.'

**Micheal van Zeijl:** But that's the one you should use! Because this is how the Netherlands presents this; this is part of their strategy!

**NIOD director Frank van Vree:** And it is to us to demonstrate that that's a false term, because what we want...

**Rogier Meijerink:** It's the only factual term.

**Micheal van Zeijl:** There are so many legal consequences linked to that term: that you cannot deny it, that you cannot change [the meaning of] it in your research.

**Peter Romijn:** But we studied the use of that terminology during the episode that we're studying, I mean, it's obvious that it has political background and the roots of the terminology of 'politieele acties' is a politicized one.

[min. 31:00]

But it's up to us to understand and to make clear why it has been chosen and of course you cannot say they called it like that during that time, so we're taking it over. No. It's our job to analyse, not to reproduce.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Can I add something? I'm standing on the side, but maybe I can contribute. Because I think what's happening is, you all say: we are historians, we are academics, we are not part of the state and we can name it whatever we want and you choose for saying, like Ben Bot in 2005, we recognize, with our mouth we recognize 1945. But I think what your point is, you should explain or at least acknowledge or admit that the state that you're a part of – and I mean, NIMH is part of the state however you like it or not, it is part of the state. You are receiving government funding so you should explain that until today, Dutch law is not recognizing 1945 and there's a reason for that. There is a reason...

[min. 32:00]

**Michael van Zeijl:** Otherwise it's not objective anymore

**NIOD director Frank van Vree:** Yeah but all the research in the Netherlands is paid by the government except some, what they are doing... all universities, all...

**Marjolein van Pagee:** That's another discussion. I want to talk about why... There is a reason, there's a reason that Dutch law has never changed after he admitted, after he said ... he recognized in 2005... I, - not recognize



or acknowledge ('aanvaarden' in Dutch) 1945 that after that there was some adding, only 'de facto' and not 'de jure' and you have to explain that...

**Michael van Zeijl:** That it is a trick

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Exactly!

**Jeffry Pondaag:** This is a very important point, right? I want to have this clear.

**Michael van Zeijl:** I assume, because this person [pointing to NIOD director Van Vree] used this argument in his speech at [the kick-off event at] Pakhuis de Zwijger.

[min. 33:03]

He came afterward to us discussing this with a completely nonsense argument, sorry, but we really showed you that it is not true and you stated we used this date in our research, which is a false date. This is why it is so important.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** No, no but...

[min. 33:23]

**Peter Romijn:** I think there is something like a misunderstanding.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** But why is it a misunderstanding, why is this law, this Dutch law that has not been changed, not important? Why not?

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** But as research we are not bound to the legal political line of the government.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** But you don't explain it, if you only say 'I acknowledged 45' but you don't explain that our current government or you don't even research what's the reason that they don't change that law, then what is the point of only saying... what is the point?

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** I think it is not very difficult to understand why the Dutch refused and why they used terms like the 'politieele acties', and why they call it 'Excessennota', because they didn't want to acknowledge what really happened.

[min. 34:11]

**Marjolein van Pagee:** But until today.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Until today! No, and it is to us to show what happened during that period.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Then explain it.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** So, the point we would... I mean we can... (it's like circling around...) As long as we use the terms that the government is still using to this very day... The 'Excessennota' is the official point of view of the Netherlands, if we take that as starting point... No, we have to make clear that it doesn't deserve that kind of name.

**Michael van Zeijl:** It doesn't... there is no need to have a complete research about what the best terminology is, you can make this clear in one disclaimer in your research

[min. 35:01]

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** What kind of disclaimer?

**Michael van Zeijl:** The phrases that the state uses are not about bla bla bla but this is the official term that the state uses and the legal term also. Because when you do not add it you are denying the complete legal current situation.





**KITLV Director Gert Oostindie:** Let me just add one question, about this date. I think we all agree on this round table that the Dutch state should have acknowledged 17 August right at the moment [in 1945] but they didn't.

**Michael van Zeijl:** They still don't.

**KITLV Director Gert Oostindie:** No. But the question is for us as historians they failed to acknowledge 17 August at that moment. We cannot undo that. It's a fact that they didn't. And for the rest it's a political statement or positions that we may or not take but that won't change history.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** But this is not about history this is about today, the Dutch law today and that's the question: why don't they do that?

[min. 36:01]

**KITLV Director Gert Oostindie:** We are not about Dutch law making.

**Mariëtte Wolf:** We're historians.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** But you are by mouth saying 1945 is the date but that is meaningless as long as you don't find out the reason why they are not changing that law.

**Peter Romijn:** That is not our purpose to contextualize it in such a way that it is possible to understand.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** It is crucial, I think.

**Peter Romijn:** But why you all think that we don't do that...

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Because only by mouth you're saying that you are recognizing [1945], but you don't explain that the date is not yet [recognized]...

**Patty Gomes:** Can I ask something too? What is 'probleemstelling' in English? What is your problem definition?

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Of the research program?

**Patty Gomes:** This problem fits in the research definition, in your research, why do you use certain terms?

[min. 37:04]

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** I start to try to summarize what it is, and that it is that we want to quickly study the history of the period 45 - 50 as a period of extreme violence...

**Michael van Zeijl:** sorry, I have to interrupt because you have all the stage you need, constantly, and he didn't finish his question yet.

**Patty Gomes:** [responds, inaudible]

**Michael van Zeijl:** Yes I know but...

**Rogier Meijerink:** He is just repeating himself.

**Patty Gomes:** But you need to take into account these things he say...

**Michael van Zeijl:** But he didn't finish his question yet. This all goes from his time.

[min. 37:40]

**Rogier Meijerink:** First I want to react to Gert Oostindie. The Netherlands recognized Indonesian independence

'de facto' on the second of May 1946 already... so you are now saying that they didn't recognize it. [gives paper to Oostindie]

**Peter Romijn:** Only 'de facto'

**KITLV Director Gert Oostindie:** But the problem is it's not 'de jure'.

**Rogier Meijerink:** I know, I know, but this is the same kind of fairy tale that they're trying to create.

[min. 38:05]

I want to react on the point of the 'politieonele actie'. I do indeed acknowledge that it is unacceptable to talk about this situation as 'politieonele actie' but it is reality until today and you should know the consequences of the legal reality if we would change this legal reality. I mean NIOD was involved in research about the Second World War about reparations, now the stolen art and now actually where we are right now with the legal redress regarding the Second World War. You know that there are extreme consequences if we [the Netherlands] would today recognize Indonesia 1945, so the way... with your terminology now you are hiding away the fact that we do not recognize... and you create a false presentation of reality which doesn't really show that we still don't recognize Indonesia from '45. So, in that way, that is what I mean with that you are creating a fairy tale. This is not history. You have to show the facts in history.

[min. 39:19]

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** May I try to summarize what you said, because I think it's an observation that you say if you don't address that specific issue of name giving and the contrast between name giving and how we look to it now, you cover up more or less, or you silence this whole problem of the, you still silence... actually you should make it more a point of research itself that is the law itself is very problematic and you should be aware that you just go over it, if you don't refer or don't come back to these old terms of 'politieonele actie,' if you just ignore that, then you are actually still ignoring... That is what you said? [Rogier nods in agreement] I think this is an argument that we should really take along.

[min. 40:11]

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Are your questions answered Jeffry [Pondaag]? Because we are about to move on.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Yes, I have a question to Gert Oostindie, who are the Indonesian researchers? Who are they? How much money do they get and for what? You don't have to answer me now but you can also do that later.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** I can just start, very briefly. When we started the research program...

**Jeffry Pondaag:** We already know about Bambang [Purwanto] and Abdul Wahid.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Shall I reply in Dutch Jeffry?

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Yes but I only wanted to say that about Bambang and Wahid we know. They are included, that's easy. But what I find important is: which universities are collaborating? When you talk about universities... Who are they, how much money do they get and for what? Simple.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Very shortly, when we started the research program... Can I just do it in Dutch for a moment?

**Jeffry Pondaag:** You can do it in English.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Jeffry understands

[min. 41:17]

**Francisca Pattiplohy:** Can I make one more statement. On 11 March 1942 the Dutch lost their rule, their influence and everything in Indonesia. We have three and half years that Indonesia has been going on with Indonesian rulers with Indonesian population. So what was the reason for the Dutch to send troops to Indonesia. We ruled our own country which we did also during the colonization except for the high echelons.



**Jeffry Pondaag:** Besides that it was not legitimate right, I want to add that.

**Francisca Pattipilohy:** That's the only thing I wanted to add, to make that point clear.

[min. 42:14]

**Jeffry Pondaag:** It is legal right, do we agree on that? Oh, I mean illegal.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** To answer your question about Indonesia, when we started the program, as I said this is a program on Dutch history, Dutch military intervention, Dutch war crimes in Indonesia, that's the starting point, something that was denied for 60 years. And what we wanted to do is to ask Indonesian researchers to look with us and to do research. And initially we had 4 positions or 4 positions for Indonesian researchers written into the program.

[min. 43:00]

Then we started to discuss with UGM about how they could or should get involved in the program. Then, in this discussion, came forward that they wanted to make their own program, their own research, we said 'okay, it's up to you.' So it's now a completely autonomous program with 13 researchers, 4 coordinators from different universities. But it's their own program and they are the only ones and they asked us also that they would talk for their own program and that we wouldn't talk for them. So what they are doing, they have their own program what we had agreed about is that as much as possible, we have discussions, we will have publications together, we will make volumes with articles of Dutch and Indonesian researchers but they are completely autonomous in their research program.

[min. 44:01]

**Jeffry Pondaag:** But we still want to know the names. We want to know the names, yes, we want to have a discussion with them! That's another thing. I mean they can, just like what we are doing here.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** As far as I understood, and I'm looking to Gert [Oostindie] or Ireen [Hoogenboom], that in February they will release their website?

**Ireen Hoogenboom:** Yes they are going to release their own website. They can... Let me know if anybody wants information about them.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Who is them?

**Marjolein van Patee:** I think we need to move on to the next point, this can be answered by e-mail. We have one video message

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Oh and how much money do they get?

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Oh I have no idea or whatsoever. Marriët?

**Marriët Wolf:** There was money for 4 positions for Indonesian researchers.

[min. 45:01]

**Jeffry Pondaag:** How much!?

**Marriët Wolf:** I don't know how much.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** I must know, sorry.

**Marriët Wolf:** I don't know.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** We will let you know.

**Marjolein van Patee:** Okay, promised.



**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Because in Indonesia they also put money of their own university. So it was mixed.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Indonesians should know. Our people have to know what they're doing and how much money they got. Simple

**Marjolein van Pagee:** So they just made a promise that you're going to get that information. We're going to watch a video message from Michigan, from Annemarie Toebosch, if it's working. Wait... Quick Time is not available...

[min. 46:00]

Ok, wait... I have it here as well. I handed out her text as well as you can see. This is loading.

[min. 46:35]

**Annemarie Toebosch (via video message):** Good afternoon, my name is Annemarie Toebosch. I will continue in English. I am talking to you from my office at the University of Michigan where I run the fastest growing Dutch program in the United States. We teach language and culture here, and the core of our curriculum is our race and ethnicity education. This core fits with the mission of my institution. I just finished teaching 100 students about Anne Frank and her legacy.

[min. 47:03]

They look at, what my students do is they look at the Diary as a human rights document, and in parts of the course they hold it up against human rights violations in Dutch and American history, as it relates to racism in society today. NIOD and people associated with NIOD have a solid stamp on this course and on our program. My students visit the NIOD website for information, I send them there to do their research all the time. They read articles by David Barnouw, who was also a lecturer in this program. They read Harry Paape, several articles by him, and they read articles by Diennek Hondius, who has worked in collaborations with NIOD, and whom I'm talking to about a visit, possibly, to this campus to talk about Dutch slavery in the United States. And Evelien Gans would have been our memorial lecturer here three months ago.

[min. 48:03]

And when I heard that NIOD was involved in this '45-'49 research study, my heart sank right through this office floor. I do not know how to reconcile this. Here is a national genocide center that has decided to put itself shoulder to shoulder with, as I understand from the people in the room with you today, with a research institute under the Dutch Ministry of Defense, a research institute that consults the Dutch state, as it defends itself against war crimes, claims of war crimes. As we say in the United States, this does not pass the smell test. But that is not even my biggest concern. I have read NIOD's defense of this research, on their website, in a description of the year in review at Pakhuis de Zwijger...

[min. 49:01]

And where is colonialism in this? Where is colonialism? Piet Hagen and 350 years of colonial oppression are buried somewhere down at the end of a paragraph. And this is not ok. For a national genocide center, 350 years of rape, torture, exploitation, and slavery should be the beginning, the middle and the end of your research. It should not be a side note, it should not be an after-thought. And anything less than that is a whitewashing of history. Gans and Hondius were very clear and brave about this: "nivellering", the Dutch word "nivellering", leveling. We cannot level the suffering of Jews in a genocide with the suffering of the non-Jewish Dutch in WWII. And here is NIOD, in a glaring case of double standard,

[min. 50:02]

signing its name under a study that in its very conception has a cultural relativistic view of human rights violations. It's an attitude of "let's look at '45-'49 from all sides, let's look at it from all perspectives, all sides. And I've heard this before, not long ago. I heard this attitude from my current president, who, after Charlottesville, seeing neo-nazis walk down the streets of Charlottesville said there were bad parties on both sides, bad people on both sides. In Indonesia? There were no bad people on both sides. There was one bad party of one side, and the rest fell out from this. Because '45-'49 is not the story of '45-'49. It's the story of 350 years of oppression and human rights violations.

[min. 51:00]

And human rights are absolute. They can not be negotiated in the Dutch polder. They are in their definition non-negotiable. And so it's very troubling that a genocide center, which is a hop and skip away from the international court, the international criminal court in The Hague, has apparently found a way to look past this. And so my question is specifically for NIOD: How do I explain NIOD in a human rights curriculum, this coming

week when I step into class and my students and I read Barnouw together. This is not, I'm not making a political statement here, I have no agenda. This is, I am genuinely stuck here. My students implicitly trust the research direction I send them in, the websites I send them to, and I do not know how to explain this.

[min. 52:00]

I do not know how to explain NIOD's role in this research, and so I don't know how NIOD knows how to explain this to the Netherlands, to the world. And so I hope that NIOD has a "moment van bezinning", a moment of reflection today in this meeting, and clearly, unequivocally distances itself from any cultural relativism in the face of oppression. And so I ask NIOD that it advocate for the inclusion of all important court documents of '45-'49 cases against the Dutch state. Sit down with Jeffry Pondaag, sit down with Liesbeth Zegveld, find the most important documents, and include them in the write up of this study. I say that also because the truth will out; documents will come to light. And NIOD knows this.

[min. 53:00]

NIOD understands what happens when you bury documents, such as documents about a ship called the Van Imhoff, you know what I'm talking about. And so, that's one question I have for you. The other question I have for NIOD is that you advocate for an independent write up of the conclusion of this research, not by one of the three research institutes that signed on the dotted line here, but by an independent institution, a write up, a conclusion that 350 years of oppression deserves. Because you are the genocide center. Thank you.

[min. 53:50]

**NIOD director Frank van Vree:** I think, this question is first of all addressed to me, as director of NIOD, I'm a bit worried, a bit surprised. It feels a bit like that we need some better communication, because she referred to some issues, like the good book of Piet Hagen and to Evelien Gans, and I have written side by side with Evelien Gans, against grey history in the Netherlands, against Chris van der Heyde, some articles against the nivelling, a levelling of a history...

[min. 54:37]

**Michael van Zeijl:** Can you stop derailing and get to the point, because now you are disqualifying her question.

**NIOD director Frank van Free:** No, no no, I don't, I definitely don't. So, I think that we, I take seriously what she says, and I think, we, this is not how we stand into this research. To be sure, this is not at all. We are not levelling history, we are not relativizing human rights violations.

[min. 55:04]

Not at all, this is not what we want and if she reads that from our website...

**Michael van Zeijl:** We all do.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Yes!

**NIOD director Frank van Free:** Then we have to change, no, that is not what we are doing.

**Michael van Zeijl:** But it looks like it.

**Arthur Graaff:** You have to accept it. We all doing that, that's why we are here.

**Patty Gomes:** The way we see it, we want to make it right, so let's listen, he has to change the website...

**Frank van Vree:** I mean, so if this is what people are reading from our website about our program then we did something completely wrong in our communication.

**Rogier Meijerink:** But can you answer the question, you are working together with the Ministry of Defense, can you explain that, as an institution...

**NIOD director Frank van Vree:** That is another a question, because why we are working with the institute of Military History, because this institute works under the same rules as we do and that is the rule of the Royal Academy of Science about independence research.



**Marjolein van Pagee:** We all know that the same institution is not helping the victims that Jeffry's organization is bringing to court.

[min. 56:09]

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Even worse, Fridus [Steijlen] tells me that they're not victims. I mean that's what he tells me, that they're not victims. Apart from that he said in a radio talk show that our victims (I'm talking about the Indonesian victims) that these are not victims... That they are...

[Fridus interrupting]

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Wait a minute! You can say that now, but you did tell me that! I mean, they are 'witnesses'. And if they are 'witnesses', we brought dozens of cases to court. Where are you?

[min. 57:00]

Dozens of files in which you can read what the victims went through, men who were being called. Just like the Nazis did. How they were called from their houses in the early morning. To come to a square where their names were called then they were gunned down there. Where are you? Since 2006 I am filing court cases! Then suddenly it is all because of the book of Rémy Limpach. The research started after the book by Rémy Limpach. But we were already working on this since 2006! We won the Rawagede case in 2011. South Sulawesi

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Jeffry did you bring the documents, the court document that is very clearly referring to the role of NIMH?

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Oh yes, but I only brought one...

[min. 58:00]

This is from our case from last December 10th. 12 times NIMH is named here. This is the plea of the State. And then you claim that NIMH is independent? NIMH researched about Mr. Lambogo who was beheaded. Then the reaction from NIMH? "It is not written in our files." It is not written in the archive. So it does not exist! They do recognize that he was wounded but they do not recognize that he was beheaded. Because? According to NIMH, it's not written in the archive. Sorry, but how can you be independent when you defend the State in court? Not just this case, this is already like that since 2006.

[min. 59:04]

So you tell me!

**NIMH-Director Bert Schoenmaker:** If I may respond to the...

**Jeffry Pondaag:** I want to add to this, you compiled a list, in 2016 or 2017, with 350 names of people who were murdered. What are you doing with it? What are you doing with it? I asked the State to research this together. Besides, some of the names of this list already received damages. But the State says: "We wait the outcome of the research by NIOD, KITLV and NIMH." In other words [until the relatives] will all be death. But what is NIMH doing with this research? [Pointing to the letter] With the names that they found? 350 names! Full names.

[1:00:03]

Don't make me laugh. This research is for me from the start... And also how Gert Oostindie is dealing with this, how he is selling his book in Indonesia. Only talking to the hearts of Indonesians like: how poor these Dutch veterans.

**Michael van Zeijl:** Jeffry, they didn't reply your question yet. It will cost us time.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Okay but I just want to finish this, you pity these [Dutch] veterans! He [Oostindie] doesn't talk in his book about the people that were killed by these veterans.

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** Can I interrupt you?

**Jeffry Pondaag:** He does not write about these 6,000 Dutch conscripts that refused to go to Indonesia. Who deliberately called themselves 'Indonesia' conscientious objectors, not 'Indies' conscientious objectors. He doesn't mention it, and then talks about 'the Bersiap'.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Let's first ask a reaction from NIMH about the...

[1:01:08]

**NIMH-director Ben Schoenmaker:** Yes, we have always been... I am the director of NIMH for those who don't know me, we have always been quite open about our role in the court cases and in the Q & A of the programs' website, what we do is what is that we independently carry out what is called historical verification. So, the facts put forward in the claims we try to verify those facts as best as we can in our archival research and we try to substantiate them as best as we can. Sometimes unfortunately the archives are not as complete as we probably wish and that in our verification study we have to say 'Okay, there is no proof, there is no evidence for this claim, we haven't been able to find it.

[1:02:00]

**NIMH-director Ben Schoenmaker:** And that is the only thing that in that case we do. In other cases, we do find evidence that supports the claim and then of course that is included in the verification study. And again the verification study is historical work and we carry it out as we do all our research in accordance with the norms and standards that we as professional historians set to abide them.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** But do you recognize then that you are representing the State in this and not representing the victims that he {Pondaag} is representing?

**NIMH-director Ben Schoenmaker:** No, no...

**Jeffry Pondaag:** You can say no but this is the way it is! That's how simple it is. It's just like that.

**NIMH-director Ben Schoenmaker:** That is your view of the matter, not my view.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Why?

**NIMH-director Ben Schoenmaker:** Because what we do is that we carry out historical research to verify...

**Marjolein van Pagee:** But for the State.

[1:03:00]

**Rémy Limpach:** Also for the court!

**Marjolein van Pagee:** And you do that

**Jeffry Pondaag:** And if you do that, you should have been to South Sulawesi to research the case of Lambogo there to find out whether he was really beheaded or not. But you don't do that! So you are not helping the people that we defend. Look the scale weighs more heavy on the Dutch side. It's just like that. I'm already living here for 50 years, it was always like that. From 1969 I have started here, when I arrived. When you were busy with the 'Excessennota' (List of Excesses).

**Patty Gomes:** And do you take these claims that are proven into account in your study?

**Marjolein van Pagee:** The question is more direct actually...

[1:04:00]

Annemarie asked, 'are you, the three institutions, prepared to sit down together, not with NIMH, but on the side with Jeffry together with his lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld, are you prepared to do that.' That was one of her questions.

**Fridus Steijlen:** I think the answer is quite easy because the original program that Jeffry was referring to was about a complaint that Liesbeth Zegveld had, that when we were talking about 'Dutch' then we were talking about victims and when we were talking about Indonesians then we were not talking about victims, and this is what I didn't agree on in this. It's a kind of complicated discussion. Right after the radio broadcasting Jeffry called me, and the next month of May I went to Jeffry to talk about it, and that at least was an attempt to start

a discussion, and at least Liesbeth Zegveld who also said to me 'we want to talk', so we are really prepared to talk but another thing that I asked Jeffrey at that point to help me bring us and the voices of the people you are standing for in to the [research program]...

**1:05:02**

[Jeffry Pondaag objects]

**Fridus Steijlen:** It's what I said to [you?] to bring it into the program, and I think this still stands. And another thing that we did is we put on the research curriculum, on the internet of our research program, all the cases that Liesbeth had put in the court, and we will try to find those documents that are not directly available through the internet, on the internet, because we think it's very important that all the researchers in whatever part of the project have access to these important witnesses.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** But I think from the start Jeffrey was not included so you can take all his documents and include these documents but I think that's not respectful.

**Fridus Steijlen:** No, I was... the program was not... didn't start, the only project that started... the program was still starting up, and the only project that started was the Witness and Contemporaries project, and at that point I already started the discussion [with Jeffrey].

**1:06:01**

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Yeah, but he's not just a witness. That's what the discussion is about.

**Fridus Steijlen:** He's not, but I was talking with Jeffrey to help us to bring the voices...

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Yeah, to share...

**Fridus Steijlen:** No, bring the voices together, we have to bring the [Indonesian] voices in too. But I think that's an important question.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Yeah, you wanted the documents, you wanted his archival documents.

**Fridus Steijlen:** No.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** What did you want then from him, from Jeffrey? Did you want him at the table?

**Fridus Steijlen:** To cooperate with me and bring in the voices [of Indonesian victims].

**Jeffry Pondaag:** We didn't even arrive at that point! I only said: I have my archive upstairs. You only wanted to have a look at it.

**Esther Captain:** Can I just add, because I think it's very difficult, just a small remark, because I think it's always difficult when institutions are called, because it's like having no faces, it's like a big institution, I think at the individual level there has been a lot of contact with the organizations that are here, that we share our thoughts with.

**1:07:02**

**Esther Captain:** So I read Jeffrey's remark also as an invitation to come and visit you also at the court cases again, and also to pay tribute to the work you have been doing in the last couple of decades, so, you've been very important for us, and...

**Jeffry Pondaag:** It's public, at the court

**Esther Captain:** Yeah, but again, good to know, I read it as an invitation for us as researchers to take that up seriously.





**Rogier Meijerink:** So I hear no answer to either of the questions Annemarie put. Are you going to give the answer in writing afterwards? Because we are out of time now. Giving the answer in writing?

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Are we what, sorry?

**Rogier Meijerink:** Giving the answer in writing, to the questions that were asked?

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** To the questions, if we are running out of time we will answer in writing

**Lara Nuberg:** But I have one more question: Does anyone know why Jeffry's organization wasn't included in the first place?

[1:08:00]

**Lara Nuberg:** Because then this whole discussion wouldn't have happened actually. Why was, in the outline of the research, his organization not involved?

**Rogier Meijerink:** Maybe also in writing because we're running out of time.

**Arthur Graaff:** I know the answer.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** But in what you mean, in the research program, in the social resonance group or...

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Yeah, start with that.

**Lara Nuberg:** Yeah. That was part of my question so I'm already running into my own question.

**Arthur Graaff:** Because Jeffry is a 'sharp-knived activist', is the answer professor Oostindie gave.

**Lara Nuberg:** No I mean, this is like, imagine there's a German research organization that goes to the Netherlands to investigate the Holocaust here in the Netherlands, and it wouldn't include, they don't include any Jewish organization in Germany or here, that's so weird. I don't think a Jewish organization would accept that so, why in the first place wasn't Jeffry invited to organize this whole research design?

[1:09:05]

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Or, take part in the social resonance group.

**Lara Nuberg:** Yeah, because I think that [the committee] May 4 and 5, all those committees, they always have the same blind spots as your organizations already have.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** So it is, the question on the social resonance group, the social resonance group consists of umbrella organizations of various social groups in the Netherlands. That was the idea, and there were no individuals included. We decided to have these umbrella organizations, and to discuss with other groups, Indonesian and Dutch groups separately, and that's why invited Jeffry already, and Marjolein already in rather early stages, in the first September.

[1:10:01]

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Yeah, but I'm not part of the social resonance group with Histori Bersama?

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** But what we tried that was the meaning of the invitation one year ago to have a regular conversation with...

**Marjolein van Pagee:** That's too late.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** We were talking about the social resonance group, and I gave the answer that was meant to be an umbrella organization, and to have separate conversations with different organizations, PPI [Indonesian student organization] and with other groups.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** That's later. From the start you did not invite K.U.K.B.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** That's a second question, why we did not have conversations with Jeffry and Liesbeth at this stage. I was not involved so I can't give an answer, perhaps somebody [looking to his right:] you were not involved either.

**Arthur Graaff [pointing at KITLV-director Gert Oostindie]:** He was involved.

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** And what I can answer is that there were three institutes...

[1:11:02]

...that are still around the table now, at one point published an article in the Volkskrant in 2012 saying, you know, we are jumping from one incident to the next, excesses, whatever, and so we're talking war crimes, we're talking of violence at a far greater scale than was ever acknowledged by the Dutch government. It's about time that the Dutch government starts funding serious research about this. From that moment on the three research institutes have been lobbying for that one point, the Dutch government after say, you know, five years said yes. I mean, that's the history.

**Lara Nuberg:** Yeah, but I mean, when you decide a project, when you decide a research project, you know, it's quite clear to me that you at least ask a diverse group of advisors, and that's not what happened.

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** We are three scholarly institutes. We work, in our research, we want [...] historians to be part of it.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** That's why we should first talk about the social resonance group/focus group, why was K.U.K.B. not invited to take part in that group.

[1:12:06]

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** It took us a year and a half to get you around the table here. We've been asking for this meeting for a year and a half.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** And we didn't hear anything up front to take part in this social resonance group.

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** That's something else.

**Mariëtte Wolf:** ...Of Dutch umbrella organizations

**Marjolein van Pagee:** He lives here in the Netherlands, for how long already? He's no Dutch enough to...

**Mariëtte Wolf:** That's not what I mean. What I mean is that the foundation, Jeffry's foundation, is not an umbrella organization like the others are. And what Frank [Van Vree] just said, apart from the social resonance group, we contacted other groups in Holland and in Indonesia, and maybe we started a little late with that but...

**Marjolein van Pagee:** So your answer is that because Jeffry, because K.U.K.B. was not taking part because he's not an umbrella group, whatever...

**Jeffry Pondaag:** I don't get it! I know what an umbrella is, but I have no idea what she means with it!

[1:13:04]

**Rogier Meijerink:** Can we please stop derailing. You're a half hour over time and you keep claiming time from the research organization, repeating what we heard a hundred times, we can read that on the internet, now please put on the movie. We're a half an hour over time and you didn't answer one of Annemarie's questions.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** We're going to watch a video message from Australia, from Melbourne, from Fia.

[1:14:14]

**Fia Hamid-Walker:** Hi there distinguished researchers. Before I introduce myself, I would like to acknowledge that I'm standing here today on the stolen land on what always was and always will be the land of the Kulin Nations. I pay my respect to the elders past, present and emerging, as well as to all aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people in the wider community and beyond. Indigenous sovereignty has never been ceded in so-called Australia and I try to be mindful of this in everything I do. My name is Fia Hamid-Walker. I'm a Javanese, Indonesian-Australian and I am one of the signatories of the Open Letter tante Francisca Pattipilohy and bung Jeffry Pondaag initiated. The truth is I'm not a Historian.

[1:15:00]

I'm a political campaigner and an international development practitioner. I learnt the history of Dutch colonialism at schools when I was spending my formative years growing up in Surabaya. I was taught to remember the years, events and people for the sake of passing examinations, and not to critically comprehend the historical conditions given. Were the historical lessons in those classrooms made for the benefit of the Dutch government or the Indonesian government? I did not know and I will never know. We need more research on the politics of history education in schools, am I right? And that is why your research into "the Independence, Decolonization, violence and war in Indonesia in 1945 to 1950" has attracted my attention... If I'm not a historian, why bother? I give you an 'I-perspective.' Here is what most people forget about how it feels to be a postcolonial subject like myself.

[1:16:00]

I did not experience how it was being under the Dutch colonialism nor was I part of the independence struggles in 1945-1949, but I do experience what it meant to be constantly expected to follow the footprints of colonialism, from how should I look to how should I value my success. And as an international development practitioner... [I know] these colonial values are still pretty much well and alive. So that's the nexus between myself and this research. I cannot recall how I found out about your research, it was most likely from the social media. I have been living in Australia and I have supported the indigenous struggles for sovereignty. So when I heard about this research, I jumped out with excitement just because it is called "decolonization" and I think it's about the time. But I guess I was wrong. I couldn't find anything substantial on your website in regard of this project. How the research is going conducted, used, and for what purpose, who are involved in this research project.

[1:17:06]

It has been very difficult for me to conclude the impartiality of this research if everyone involved in this research keep talking passing each other. You do not actually address the concerns most people are having. You claim that this research is going to be critical. But you have in fact excluded critical voices. Those of tante Francisca and bung Jeffry Pondaag from participating and contributing in the decision-making process that led to this project... Why? Inviting Bung Jeffry to speak for 10 minutes in one single event for the purpose of disseminating this research is not considered participation or contribution. It is tokenization, one of the colonial characteristics... Instead, you engage the "local" Indonesian researchers, who according to Frantz Fanon, they are the brown faces with white masks.

[1:18:00]

They will do whatever to make their masters happy. As historians I'm pretty sure you have heard the tactic of "divide et impera". I adored this term when I first encountered it in the secondary school. It sounds so sexy and deadly. The only time I used this tactic was when I hate someone and wished them all the bad things in the world will struck them. I guess I have been internalizing a colonial tactic, subconsciously, but don't you use the same tactic for this research too? What do you think? Thank you for your time to listen to my video question.

**Lara Nuberg:** So yes, basically, I already referred to her question in the video, and maybe you can elaborate a bit more on...

[1:19:00]

Because it's so vague how Indonesian people got involved in this project, we still don't have an answer to this so it's difficult to ask more about them, but what kinds of sources are they going to use, because if they use the exact same sources as we here in the Netherlands do then I don't see a diverse perspective evolving in this research project. Then it's just the same blind spots that we all keep on having since we all grew up in this colonial way of thinking.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** May I first address one of discussions that she asked on [the paper?], the video. I feel a bit, well, I think she is talking about Indonesian researchers who are the brown faces with white masks. I think, that's I think denigrating for our Indonesian colleagues.

**Lara Nuberg:** Well, oh... so that's the question now.

[1:20:03]

**Frank van Vree:** Yeah, so, I feel really bad about that sentence because I think that's... that's insulting to them. And I think, frankly, and then I think secondly, and then I answer that question, that the fact of the independence and the autonomous character of the Indonesian research project makes clear that it's not *divide et impera*, they have their own program, their own line of research, so this is not the case. And then, so I think that's for her questions.

**Lara Nuberg:** But how can you be so sure of that, because maybe those historians are educated in the same system as we are here in the Netherlands, so we still have the same Western perspective on history, so as long as that's not, how do you say that, recognized, then they will come up with the same results, they will look at history from the same perspective as you already do so, so I don't see how does that bring diversity into this research project.

[1:21:06]

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** I think you grossly underestimate our Indonesian colleagues.

**Lara Nuberg:** But, yeah but I already...

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** But I also find it very difficult to discuss this while they're not around here.

**Lara Nuberg:** Yeah and also, because you at least, you don't even acknowledge the importance of postcolonial studies.

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** I've said...I've written something else about postcolonial studies.

**Lara Nuberg:** Ok, well, I haven't read that yet but I think that's very...

**Michael van Zeijl:** And you also underestimate how it is to be mentally colonized, the impact, and...

**Lara Nuberg:** Yeah, I think that's really something that we should take into account.

**Peter Romijn:** But let's be fair, what would be the alternative?

**Esther Captain:** Yeah, can I just add, because I think you raise a very important question about the sources...

**Rémy Limpach:** They are not colonial subjects anymore.

**Esther Captain:** But about the sources that we are studying. The very tricky thing about this is that the colonial sources and also the historiography has been written from a certain Dutch perspective but we do need those sources, and we do need other sources, but I do think that the researchers in this program are aware of the fact they are, the sources are indispensable, we need them to start writing it...

[1:22:05]

but they are also inadequate, so we have this both double vision on it: we know that we cannot do without it and we do have to take extra effort to get other visions in, so there's extra work to be done, but the sources cannot be done without, so it's both indispensable and inadequate, and I think that's a way of working with this consciousness of that, at least for me, that's how I try to work on this, and I cannot talk for the Indonesian researchers, but be sure for the Dutch, "Dutch", I'm not sure if I'm, if that's the correct way of positioning myself, but in our sub-study we try to work in that way, with the double consciousness.



**Patty Gomes:** May I ask a question, why did the Indonesian researcher, researchers refuse to work together with you?

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** No they didn't refuse, we are working together with them but we...

**Patty Gomes:** Oh ok, oh you *still* are.

[1:23:01]

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** Sure! Definitely.

**Patty Gomes:** I thought they were autonomous.

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** No, well, that's something else, I mean, they said, we are far more interested in writing the social history of the Revolution rather than looking at Dutch [...violence?], we said, well, device your own program.

**Patty Gomes:** So the focus is different, not because of a dispute or...

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** No, no, not at all.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** The focus is different but they're working in the same area, same cities, same...

**Patty Gomes:** Ok, I now understand.

**Francisca Pattipilohy:** May I ask once more, if in your research, if now one of the items is colonialism, why is then only the Bersiap period your main research problem? If colonialism is one of the items, what about the Aceh War...

[1:24:01]

...what about the Balinese genocide, what about the Lombok expeditions, and all the 600 wars written down by Piet Hagen, have they not an influence on your research? That is my only ask.

**Peter Romijn:** Of course, clearly they have an influence on our research. And I think it's one of the challenges, to find out about the colonial context, and the context of colonial warfare, to explain why the Dutch behaved in Indonesia like they've done between 1945 and 1949. I think that's very important, and it's not just about practices, it's also about the colonial mindset and the mentality. Our study is not just about the facts but also about the underlying mentalities, the underlying long-running, centuries long-running ideas of why colonial efforts would be justified.

[1:25:06]

To be brief, it is all coming together between 1945 and 1949 because that's our first research interest, but we cannot do that without understanding the longer-term connotations. And I think that if you ask for that, yes, that's what we do.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** But with all due respect, what is being proclaimed is 'the Bersiap', right?

**Frank van Vree:** No, no, listen!

**Jeffry Pondaag:** No sorry, but that is... it is 'the Bersiap.' I want to add, it is clearly written here. Of course, this is what Han ten Broeke said [Dutch Liberal Party member] it had to be included!

**Frank van Vree:** There are only two, two out of forty, two out of forty...

**Jeffry Pondaag:** No but Van Vree, you can say so many things, but this is how it is!

[1:26:03]

**Frank van Vree:** Jeffry, two out of forty researchers are working on the Bersiap, two out of forty, so that's the amount of time that we are devoting to the Bersiap.



**Marjolein van Pagee:** That's not the point. It's the way, how you frame it, that's what we're discussing.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Come on, I live here for 50 years, you can hide it, or sugarcoat it... The fact is that you are talking like: 'look the Indonesians are guilty too.' That's what this is about.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** We are running out of time, we have to go to the next point. Are you... do you still need to...

**Lara Nuberg:** I have one more question but maybe you can answer it via email, like, what will be, when the Indonesian group comes with results, what will be the part of their results into the Dutch end results, like, are you going to compare them, and what happens if they are not the same? Did you think about it already, or...?

**Ireen Hoogenboom:** I can answer you by email if you want.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Okay, then Hadi Purnama, if you want, you can...

[1:27:04]

**Hadi Purnama:** Thank you, my name is Hadi Purnama, I'm working on my PhD at the VU in Amsterdam. I was part of the PPI in the Netherlands together with Yance. And I was also involved in these discussions from the beginning when we had the first discussion about this issue with KITLV in Leiden and the second one was at the VU. It was a very interesting issue for me, especially because I'm working on the issue of human rights and international law. I'm researching on the issues of human rights in Southeast Asia, including of course Indonesia. How the human rights need to be protected and also promoted in Southeast Asia.

[1:28:02]

However, regarding this research, when I just arrived here it was kind of interesting for me to see how we see the same facts with different view. Especially about the history between the Dutch and Indonesia, during '45 to fifties. Because the Dutch somehow still, I mean the Dutch government is still recognizing the Indonesian independence in 1949. But in Indonesia the independence is on 17 August 1945. So that was interesting. But from my perspective, especially from the international law perspective about the history of colonialism...

[1:29:01]

...and also how the United Nations refused regarding self-determination. It only came about a bit late, it only became mainstream idea, together with human rights in the nineteen sixties. Because at the beginning the United Nations also still recognized colonial territories. And that's important because it means that the international law is also part of the colonial framework at that time. Although now it is regularly evolving. Then my question is: how do you perceive this because this research will have legal consequences, either from the national or international perspective. Because such as what have been worked on by Jeffry with KUKB...

[1:30:03]

...on the issues of Rawagede for example, it is from my point of view, seeing from the legal perspective: at that time it was in The Hague Court, which means the existence of the Dutch government in Indonesia, especially in Rawagede is still existed, in that period of time. Because the Dutch government took responsibility by paying compensation. This is also making clear that the effort at that time to reclaim colonial territory in Netherlands-Indies from Dutch perspective, while Indonesia at that time already proclaimed its independence.

[1:31:06]

It becomes a very, I mean, it becomes a very confusing. Because the consequences of all this research, if you say there is violence and that the Dutch were wrong, it should have the consequences that the Dutch pay compensations at least, or to recognize that what the Dutch did between 45-50 was wrong under international law. And if the result is different, it will have different kind of legal consequences. Because all Indonesians who were under the Dutch can go to the Court in this country...

[1:32:09]

...and ask for any kind of compensation because of that. So I mean, I don't know how it's going on but the impact will be very huge. What country? And then I don't know how it will be defined in this research.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** I think the question is very clear... the... is over there, unfortunately due to the time, I mean we have to leave here, I don't know how long now, is it possible to answer this question directly to his e-

mail by one of you?

**Peter Romijn:** Well, I like to say in the first place that this is a very fascinating topic, I'm struggling with that myself.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** But we have no time...

[1:33:01]

**Peter Romijn:** Well I like to give some answer now! Because otherwise we could have done this whole session in writing. I think this is a very fascinating problem, I love to sit together with you to discuss it. It is fascinating to think that the Dutch were operating under a changing international law system. International system of United Nations. A new international World Order with a framework. And they were participating in Neurenberg and they were participating in Tokyo. And at the same time they failed to recognize that this created a responsibility for them in the Dutch East Indies. Of course they recognized it in practice, they did not recognize it formally. On all levels, civil administrators, military people, legal people recognized on the Dutch side that things were going on like we had known here under the German occupation...

[1:34:09]

...as well as the Indonesians under Japanese occupation. So there was kind of a pushing a way of guilt by making it small. I have written an article that's called "War crimes are the guilt of others." Because you cannot imagine yourself to be guilty of war crimes. And this is the thing that has to be disentangled. So I love to sit with you and discuss the issue further. Because it is explicitly part of our research project.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Where does the Netherlands get the right, Peter?

**Peter Romijn:** What are you saying Jeffry?

**Jeffry Pondaag:** A country that is 18,000 km away! You can't justify it, come on.

**Peter Romijn:** I don't think I'm whitewashing in this case

**KITLV director Gert Oostindie:** You're posing this question so often 'where... waar haalt Nederland het recht vandaan.' [Where does the Netherlands get the right] Nobody around this table is thinking that the Netherlands had the right of colonialism.

[1:35:00]

**Jeffry Pondaag:** I would say: put it in big size words on your website!

**KITLV director Gert Oostindie:** That's so self-evident.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Say it! Then it will be clear.

**KITLV director Gert Oostindie:** I've written it down many times.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** I don't agree with you Gert!

**Marjolein van Pagee:** I think it's really time to .....

**Jeffry Pondaag:** You made statements on Dutch television, you don't want to know!

[1:36:01]

**Arthur Graaff:** My name is Arthur Graaff, I am the spokesman for the AFVN-BVA, that is the Dutch Anti-Fascist League. We are associated with the *Federation International de Resistance* in Berlin, which comprises of some 20 anti-fascist European organizations and we are in this case backed by the FIR. That being said, some of my points have already been exhaustively been put to the table, so I will skip those. I'll make one or two opening remarks and then I'll put my two or three questions on the table.

[1:37:03]

I would like to stress that all the invitees here are shareholders and most of them are activists, which you seem to object to. As you have said openly in the 1<sup>st</sup> presentation and as you have said it is an impossible venture to start this research in this setting. We concur fully. From the background of our organization, which was founded in 1965 by people who survived the Nazi occupation it's obvious that we look especially to for instance the group of draft resisters...

[1:38:08]

...in the period we are talking about here and of course their position is always linked to one other issue and that is justice. At the first presentation in 2016 I put to you, I was the 1<sup>st</sup> question from the public; what are you going to do about justice? You said it's not our aim, not our goal, we are historians we don't do justice. I would like to ask a few, how do you think about the phrase that history judges things and a historian, in my view, and the views of many people gathered here, is that history serves just one purpose, not to provide databases and records but to provide a conclusion of all that.

[1:39:03]

Then another point, going back to 2016, is that in that meeting general Scheffer, you know him, the president of one of the veteran organizations asked distinctively not to use the term war crimes and you concurred. You acknowledged it's on tape, it's on video. So, have you since changed your mind, I am very curious, because just now, you, on my question, said I use the term all the time, but do you mean that you will acknowledge that war crimes have been committed all the time 45-50 by the Dutch military, by the Dutch state. Ok...uh...

[1:40:07]

To the director, Mr. Van Vree, I have been the editor of a website on World War II for eight years and I've written about World War II many times so I know your institution well and I revere Dr. De Jong, who wrote, of course, the series describing the history of Holland during the occupation and from which perspective, that we all know, was the perspective of the victim, that's necessary. And now you have entangled yourself in a study that's using the perspective of the perpetrator as has been already put here.

[1:41:01]

So, are you aware that you have changed over? And is this the institution that is fit to do that? I think that concludes my points... Just checking... I guess I'll leave it at that. Most of the other parts have been covered already. Thank you

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** My reaction in 30 seconds. This institute has always dealt with perpetrators and victims. The Jong's *Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog* (The Kingdom of the Netherlands in World War II) consists of 28 volumes. I think half of those are about victims, and half of them are about perpetrators. So that's what history is, it's about processes. It's about, indeed, to understand what happened. So I don't agree that Lou de Jong was only working on victims, particularly on his work on Indonesia.

[1:42:05]

**Arthur Graaff:** Just to be sure, I didn't imply that. And I didn't say it. So of course, he included reactions from the Nazi side. Of course, he did that. And he studied all their documents, of course he did that. But he drew the line. He made the conclusion. And of course, in this case, for everybody here, the Nazis were the perpetrators. The Nazis were wrong from 1933 on, from 1926 on, etc. Okay, I don't have to tell you that... it's just for the record. So De Jong never was in trouble with any of the victims. Of course, here and there some people differed. But in general, people were glad. And he could continue his work and he finished it. And of course criticism on details is possible. But, he gave the story from the victim's point of view.

[1:43:02]

And it's like you said, it would be like the Germans coming here especially, for instance, former Nazis coming here to write... the history of the Nazi occupation of Holland

**Peter Romijn:** Okay, so, many German historians who are written with support of the German state or German private organizations about the occupation of the Netherlands, the most famous one is lately Katja Happe's book on the persecution of the Dutch Jews. Nobody objects to that. We're working with Germans... like professional historians. And they have a keen eye, in particular, on the issue of perpetratorship.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Yeah, but blaming the victims to be the perpetrators is different. Yes I know, we are talking about the Bersiap in this relation.





**Arthur Graaf:** I wish we were in the position of the German historians...

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Dutch people remain Dutch people.

[1:44:00]

**Rogier Meijerink:** Would those German historians also write this history like the Grebbeberg as an excuse for the German violence in the Netherlands?

**Arthur Graaff:** The Germans have gone through a process of moral cleaning, and we have not. I was in Roermond last September. [Annual Veterans commemoration]. I stood there amidst the aging veterans. All of them 80, 85, 90, years old who still salute the perpetrators - their colleagues who died in Indonesia, killing tante Francisca's family.

**KITLV director Gert Oostindie:** Perhaps I should answer, you have three questions. First, I would like to set a record straight on something. There's nothing... I have never said there's anything wrong with activism, I said there, I have different responsibility. We all know that an activist like Hueting in 1969 or Jeffry Pondaag in the last two decades have been crucial in bringing this whole war back into a public debate.

[1:45:03]

So there's only appreciation for activists...

**Arthur Graaff:** Okay well, that's clear then.

**KITLV director Gert Oostindie:** Well, I've written that down also. Anyway, what I've said in public is that our responsibility as academic scholars is something else. So that's one. Second, we don't do justice. What I've said in response to questions like 'what's the next step in lawsuits', whatever, I said: well that's not our primary concern. Our primary concern is to feed debate on this war and all war crimes and so on with solid empirical research. Finally, about war crimes, I do not remember what I did say, so I of course I believe you. But, I should remind you that two years before that debate, I published a book in which I'm talking about war crimes. It did not make me particularly popular. I use 'war crimes' all the time...

[1:46:03]

...and I sort of like make calculations and so it's quite clear that these war crimes are not an incidental thing.

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Yeah but also about the Indonesian side!

**Arthur Graaff:** So I can write to general Scheffer: 'sorry Mr. General Scheffer but Professor Oostindie has changed his mind, war crimes are going to be included.'

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** Look, what I've said in my book, I've used the word 'war crimes' all the time. That's the center, the score of the book. So, what else do you want?

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** And I think one last remark, I consider the way the Germans deal with their past and went through their guilt history, the history of guilt, should be an example for the matter for example.

**Arthur Graaff:** An example to be copied as quickly as possible? and that's not happening. We did not do. Because when you started this process, have you asked yourself are we the right people to do this or should we let this one pass?

[1:47:00]

And give it to the Swiss, or the Liechtensteiners, or the Venezuelans or the indigenous Australians to judge us?

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** But wouldn't you think that it's sort of like a matter of you're 'that' if you do and you're 'that' if you don't? If we don't take up the challenge, everybody's going to say 'this is colonial' or 'the establishment...'

**Arthur Graaff:** So, you shouldn't, so pass this one.



**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** ‘...fails to take up the responsibility...’ we decided to take up the responsibility.

**Arthur Graaff:** You put your finger on the wound. Exactly. You should have said in that case, is there so much doubt? Okay, not this one for us.

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** If we don't, then everybody will say: ‘look they shy away, as always.’

**Arthur Graaff:** Well, too bad. Would you like my handkerchief?

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** The NIOD institute also dealt with Srebrenica and the Dutch policy on Srebrenica after which the cabinet fell.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** Yeah but in case of the research on Srebrenica the NIMH was excluded, for a reason!

**Rémy Limpach:** The NIMH didn't even exist.

**Frank van Vree:** That is why we should go through our history, if you don't...

[1:48:07]

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Just keep defending...

**Arthur Graaff:** I'll put it bluntly, you are not the people who are fit to do this, simply. It's as simple as that. Don't you get the message?

**KITLV-director Gert Oostindie:** It's just your opinion that you think we're not able to do this.

**Arthur Graaff:** Not me alone, I'm not alone here, but it's as simple as that.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** 137 people signed the open letter, share the same concern. It's a serious thing. I think the last speaker today is Michael [van Zeijl].

**Arthur Graaff:** In any case thank you for your answers.

**Michael van Zeijl:** There it says that's about the 4.5 billion Guilders. Actually, that's not completely correct because I will explain, and I'm going to ask you not to interrupt me because I know there will be a lot of things that might trigger you to interrupt me.

[1:49:01]

Please save it until I'm done. Because this derailing really takes time. Okay, I'm just going to start. ‘*Indië verloren, rampspoed geboren*’ (When The Indies are lost, disaster will happen.) Of course this is about the financial side of the violence and colonization. And it's an essential part of the research about independence of Indonesia. You cannot seriously do research about the end of colonialism without telling the story about the end of 350 years of economic exploitation which resulted in the *Roofstaat* (Robbery State). This is a research about the end of the colonial oppression. Colonial oppression was driven by exploitation...

[1:50:03]

...and by stealing, on big scale. You cannot describe the end of colonial oppression without describing the end of this stealing. This end started at 1949 as a central point. You should describe it not only in your next research, but also in this research. Because the money is the beginning, the end, and the middle of a colony. Dutch Indies was considered to be a company meant to make profit. It is also for that reason, for me, unexplainable, that this money issue wasn't a separate part of your research to begin with.

[1:51:05]

That is also why we are very pleased with Mr. De Vree's promise from the 13th September that the research for this year will focus on the financial side. But because of this research, we have some demands. Because we do not know what you're going research. So we better make these demands now so you can add them in your research and keep them for consideration. We want to add some research questions to your research about

the financial interest of the Netherlands and the Dutch Indies. This should be a separate part in your conclusion...

[1:52:00]

...a conclusion that is written by an independent person, for reasons that some people already mentioned, but also because Mr. Oostindie doesn't understand racism, he doesn't recognize his privileges, and he dismisses the narratives of non-white people of profound anti-racists and of academics. Another demand that we make is that your publication about 45-49, out of respect for human rights, has a clear part about the Dutch stealing they did, and about racism. That was a reason for this, or legitimizing this ceiling. This should topic should be researched very thoroughly.

[1:53:03]

That is your job we would like to help you with our perspectives, because we also did some research and found documents. But we also expect that our call, our demands will be publicly announced. We will do this right after this meeting on social media and through a press release. Since the end of colonialism only starts after the financial oppression stopped and because the economic situation before the period you are investigating, was influential for the situation during the period you are researching. The period of your research is too short, too constricted, but this should not be a reason for you to dismiss these research questions, considering the importance of this subject and the continuation of the research.

[1:54:00]

These financial issues are also important because your research is focused on violence. Violence is not just physical violence but it is also emotional violence or economic violence, which also has a huge impact on people. But also money can be a reason for the excessive violence that was used. There are too many situations where it's plausible or even assumable that money played a very important factor in the violence and in the amount of violence that has been used. Central was that the Dutch tried to get back something big, that they saw as their property to restore the prewar income they have. So an obvious research question would be:

[1:55:00]

How big was the prewar income from the Dutch Indies and how dependent was post war Netherlands of this income? The mindset of that time or, the narrative of that time was that the Dutch Indies was responsible for 13.7 percent of the BBP (Bruto Binnenlands Product = GDP, Gross domestic product.) But this is actually disproved by academics in a more recent past. It is clear that the 13.7 percent were considered as a fact in that period. We all know the expression '*Indië verloren ramspoed geboren*' (when the Indies are lost, disaster will happen) a slogan from a [...] from the 1930's that was because of this mindset very popular during the period that you're investigating. The last of substantial part of the GDP, is, or, was a factor in the decision to start the first police action.

[1:56:04]

Therefore it should be a very important part of your research according to Leiden historian professor Klein, The Netherlands was in 1947 on the edge of bankruptcy by its shortage of foreign currencies. So everything was put to get this colony, to win this police actions and to get rid of the [Indonesian] resistance warriors, actually, that were occupying agricultural land. So, they start the export again from Indonesia to the US from agricultural products. They succeeded also in this.

[1:57:02]

So there's a clear economic factor for the violence. At the second, I would call it an attempt for invasion, this restoration of the export was not necessary anymore and they also received the first payment of the Marshall plan. Still, the same Marshall plan turned into a reason or a factor that could have contributed to violence. Because the international resistance against the second 'politioenele actie' (police action) and because of the pressure of the US not to start a second police action and the Netherlands did it anyway, there was more pressure on winning this war because otherwise...

[1:58:02]

...well, they would lose a lot of income. So a possible question should be: What influence did the economic interests have on the increase of violence. The US threatened the Marshall help as I said. They eventually also did this for the part that was reserved for Indonesia. When they would also stop the help to the Netherlands, the Netherlands would have two financial dramas. Because then they would miss the income of the colony but they would also miss the money from the Marshall plan. We can assume that this situation put extra pressure on the succeeding of the invasion where extreme violence might have been tolerated or even considered necessary. So a more specific question would be: Was the threatening with the...

[1:59:00]

...ending of the Marshall plan a decisive factor for the use of excessive violence. Also, there should be research if the money of the Marshall help has been used for these military campaigns. And if not where were these campaigns financed with? Because the Netherlands had a debt of 23.6 billion in 1945 this was so high because it became 6 times the amount before the war, because of the war. Netherlands also lost the substantial part of their income. Also, there was a country that needed to rebuild. And Netherlands lost their very important part of income from the German economy. Of course because that collapsed due to war.

[2:00:01]

Also, these military campaigns were even larger than the French military campaigns they sent to Algeria to prevent decolonization there. So, this is a massive invasion and it should have been very expensive. So, a possible research question would be: Where did the money for these military campaigns come from? In the RTC (Round Table Conference) negotiations, which resulted in independence, the *finec* (the financial-economic agreement) was a very important issue where they argued long about. The *finec* resulted in a very disadvantaged position for Indonesia because they had to pay 4.5 billion to their occupiers.

[2:01:01]

Because the period of the second invasion attempt and the RTC negotiations overlapped it's possible that the one might have influenced the other so... yeah, I don't have to explain this. So a possible research question would be: did the financial demands of the Netherlands cause or influence, or maybe made these invasions longer? This question we can only answer when there's an exact overview of all financial obligations the Netherlands had or started until that moment. Because those obligation can also be the reason that the Netherlands, persisted...

[2:02:00]

...of those demands of those billions which they want from Indonesia for the independence. That's why there also should be an overview of how the Netherlands fulfilled these financial obligations. Three possible research question would be: How dependent was the Netherlands of the Marshall help? How dependent was the Netherlands of the 4.5 billion they wanted from Indonesia? How much did the *politioenele acties* really costs? This research doesn't acknowledge that Indonesia paid because there was a lot of speculations about this. And actually, for example Giselda Molemans, journalist...

[2:03:03]

...wrote the book "Opgevangen in andijvielucht", claims that she found documents in the National Archive in Washington which state that Indonesia never paid. Well, you say that it's not true, do you, or? This is not true. So. Did Indonesia pay?

**Peter Romijn:** How do we answer your paper? I mean is this your final question or?

**Michael van Zeijl:** No no, this is just a question that I need to go further.

**Peter Romijn:** It's one of the research questions that comes up when you're trying to get the general picture of economic history of the conflict.

**Michael van Zeijl:** So, you did not research this yet, you mean? Or?

**Peter Romijn:** There are a lot of publications on this issue and we will certainly weigh them in, for instance if you discussing Marshall plan impact.

**Michael van Zeijl:** I'm just talking about did Indonesia pay parts of this 4.5 billion? That's not a hard question!

[2:04:02]

**Peter Romijn:** It's a very hard question because there are several possible answers.

**Michael van Zeijl:** There is one answer possible. Because we found the proof.

**Peter Romijn:** Yes but there are several conflicted opinions on that.

**Michael van Zeijl:** There is no opinion! We have found evidence in the National Archive. State documents that state the exact amount of the...



**Peter Romijn:** ...and several authors have different opinions on that and we are very happy to take the results of your research as well but you should for instance make a difference between...

**Michael van Zeijl:** I should do nothing!

**Rogier Meijerink:** It is a yes or no question, can you stop derailing?

**Michael van Zeijl:** So the answer is that you don't know? Ok. We do know.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** But Michael, we take it very seriously.

**Michael van Zeijl:** No! you do not take me seriously because in the beginning I asked not to interrupt me!

**Peter Romijn:** yes but...

**Michael van Zeijl:** I asked you a question yes or no and you started derailing immediately. No that is not answering that is derailing. Yes or no would be sufficient.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** On the contrary, I only wanted to say...

[2:05:00]

**Michael van Zeijl:** you can respond later.

**Mariëtte Wolf:** How much later?

**Michael van Zeijl:** When I'm done. I'm sorry. You were the ones that put pressure on the time and wanted us to do all this in two hours. So, don't steal my time. It's your turn later.

**Marjolein van Pagede:** But do you have your answer now?

**Michael van Zeijl:** They don't know!

**Mariëtte Wolf:** It's not a yes or no answer!

**Marjolein van Pagede:** Well, is it paid or is not paid?

**Michael van Zeijl:** Did Indonesia pay or not?

**Fridus Steijlen:** Michael, please continue your story.

**Michael van Zeijl:** Ok. I can tell you, they did!

**Peter Romijn:** nah, good!

**Michael van Zeijl:** And we also know. We have several documents that state that Indonesia had paid loyally and show exactly what the amount was, right before they stopped the *RTC treatment* payments.

[2:06:00]

Also we know that the Netherlands by guessing and by fraud actually by a person named Hirschveld, came to the amount of 6.5 billion because the Netherlands assumed that Indonesia would not pay the debts that they had at that moment. To ensure themselves that the Netherlands would get that money they demanded billions of guilders too much in the RTC treaty. Just guessing, was also most likely the reason that Indonesia started nationalizing these companies. Indonesia discovered that these politionele acties were much more expensive than were estimated by Cochran, who estimated 2 billion, which they took off the demands for the RTC. That means that Indonesia paid too much with their payments for the RTC treaty to assure themselves to get the money they paid too much...

[2:07:04]

...they started nationalizing and freezing the payments that they promised and stopped the RTC. So, you do not know if there is the answer yes or no, I do, I can show you later, but possible research question would be: are these official documents there, what Giselda Molemans claims, because that means that the Dutch deliberately committed fraud. Also nowhere in the researches about the economic recovery of the NL there is a mention of the billions from Indonesia while this amount was almost the exact amount of the complete Marshall aid.

[2:08:00]

This means that Indonesia paid a huge share to the industrialization of this country, especially when you come to conclusion that the costs of the police actions were paid with Marshall aid money. This conclusion, this is also the conclusion by the way of professor Klein from Leiden University, so a possible research question would be: where did the Indonesian billions went to, what did they spend it on. This question is relevant because the negotiations about this possibly made-up billions might have influenced the length of the police actions with all the extra violence coming out of that. The questions I mentioned are essential for your conclusions of the research and when they won't be a part of your research then your research isn't legit.

[2:09:00]

We will conduct research for ourselves also in that case, which will influence your research or your conclusions guaranteed. Finally, was Papua...how to say that... an obstacle... where in the RTC only was agreed that there will be an agreement in the next year, the Netherlands never followed up on that promise. Also here there might be a very important role for money because in 1946 [must be: 1936] In West Papua the Netherlands discovered a huge gold mine, we know by now that the Netherlands was the only party at the negotiation table who knew about this gold mine, so also this subject should be investigated more...

[2:10:00]

...because it adds to the violence if this is true. So, dear researchers, you have work to do, I think you agree with us that money was, well, connected unmistakably with the violence, JP Coen already knew this 400 years ago actually when he said 'zonder handel geen oorlog, zonder oorlog geen handel' (Without trade no war, without war no trade). Where is it in your research?

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Ok, thank you Michael, I think you raised very important questions and many of those questions we are aware that they are really important because economics played a major role not only in 1945, but also in the period before, so I would be very glad if you could give us your questions also on paper

**Michael van Zeijl:** That's why... because I changed, I added some things.

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Because most of these questions will be addressed in the research because we have to understand...

[2:11:00]

...because it was there in the policy, perhaps Peter can say something about it because we can't... we have to deal with them.

**Michael van Zeijl:** Okay, I am not going to give you the document we found, because I don't want to give away the source because I don't trust the Netherlands, sorry, but it's your job also, you should have access to it. But I can show you what is in it because it's really disgusting how the Netherlands thought of this plan to extort billions more from Indonesia and maybe even created or... I don't know... it's just connected to the violence so you should take this.

**Peter Romijn:** One of the interesting challenges, Michael, is to find out how this monetary impulse worked out on the ground, exactly like you say...

[2:12:00]

...how did it prolong for instance the military operations, did it cause excessive violence and everything, I think it's very important, that's probably one of the issues that's going to come out of the regional studies program, my colleague Roelf Frakking has written a very interesting PhD about what happened in the Pasundan in the late colonial period, during the war, and the violent aspects as well as the connection to local business and trade is very important, so yes...

**Michael van Zeijl:** Not for that only, but also for generations now that are waiting for payment but the state just says no, no, backpay, blabla...



**Peter Romijn:** 10 years ago this institute published a book on backpay, which has not been dealt with properly by the government, I agree to that but this book is basically given all the facts, I agree...

**Marjolein van Pagee:** but it's not really making his point. I read that..

[2:13:00]

**Michael van Zeijl:** This is about back pay and I am not really talking about back pay.

**Peter Romijn:** You mentioned backpay.

**Michael van Zeijl:** Well... because it could be linked to it, it might solve another issue which is not my main issue.

**Patty Gomes:** Maybe the NIOD can fund his publication or his findings so you can use it in your research.

**Michael van Zeijl:** I'm going to send them that, but I'm not going to send...

**Patty Gomes:** But with the sources.

**Michael van Zeijl:** No, I'm not going to do that, I do not trust white institutes.

**Michael van Zeijl to Mariëtte Wolf:** yes, you laugh...

**Mariëtte Wolf:** Yeah sorry...

**Michael van Zeijl:** you have a history, the Netherlands and all their white institutes have a history, and you tried also to dismiss this during this meeting, you have a history of not being trustworthy about making deals and at the last moment canceling these deals or making it a trap...

[2:14:00]

...so I do not trust it and that's not you but maybe it's intelligence that I don't trust, that might get to this document and destroy it. So I can give you... what's in it, but I'm not going to give you the location.

**Frank van Vree:** What we just... you just send us your notes, your questions.

**Michael van Zeijl:** And all the proof that comes with it.

**Marjolein van Pagee:** I think we are arriving at the final conclusion. I have also one concluding note, just to summarize our main concerns once more. Of course, thank you for having us here, after such a long e-mail exchange. We have conveyed to you the serious problems with your research. We have told you that 350 years of colonialism, its illegitimacy, and its foundations in racism should have been at the center of your study.

[2:15:00]

Instead, you have taken the white perspective of taking the Bersiap as a point of departure. We have explained how this research has serious conflicts of interest that delegitimize it, and we have questioned and made demands about the planned write up of your study. Finally, we have laid out the importance of carefully examining and describing the end of the Dutch robbery of Indonesia, an examination that should start in the current study and continue as a set of future research questions. We expect a continuation of this discussion in which we are considered serious thought partners from this point forward. And I think our main concern is that, we can raise our concerns as we did and then you can say "yes we take it seriously", but as today we don't see it reflected on your website on the outline, in the questions, so I hope you will really take this into consideration.

[2:16:04]

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** Well, we are at the end, I would like to thank everybody here present for this afternoon, I don't know about you, but I think we had indeed an exchange of opinions and sometimes discussions, and I hope really and then I speak as a director of the NIOD and one of the three institutes that



form the research, I think that a lot of things that are said that we will take seriously in our research and I hope you will find a way to prolong this discussion.

**Michael van Zeijl:** Maybe you can also consider where you invite guests that are...

[2:17:00]

...descendants of colonialism because this is really offensive the building that you are inviting us in, since this is paid with money from our ancestors

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** I know and I can tell you that next week I will preview a last version of an article which describes the history of this building, which is indeed paid by one of the founders or one of the inventors of the coolie system in Indonesia and who was actually accused of killing seven of his laborers so this is built with blood but it has also performed a lot of other functions and was a tribune after the second world war...

**Michael van Zeijl:** I am talking about me being invited here ...

**NIOD-director Frank van Vree:** we are aware of this building but we can't just move somewhere else, we will take this into account

[2:18:00]

**Jeffry Pondaag:** Can I have the last word? I want to say that I still believe that an institute like the NIMH should not take part. Because it's not an independent institution. However you do your best, however you twist it, it is not right.