

Translated transcription of public debate at Spui25/ University of Amsterdam

Event: '[Van en voor wie is de Nederlandse geschiedenis?](#)' (From who and for whom is Dutch history?)

Date: May 18, 2022

Original video recording (Dutch only): [https://youtu.be/ BwTLjq9gMU](https://youtu.be/BwTLjq9gMU)

[1:04:05 – 1:05:45]

Hanco Jürgens: At this moment, that what Ewald van Vugt started has become much more important... and his story is - and to some extent this is your story too - listened to more than in the past. So it isn't that bad, though still a lot has to improve. And that is why I give you room to speak.

Jeffry Pondaag: Well... that is bad. In the first place I am not part of this society as I am not a Dutch man.

Hanco Jürgens: But you are here

Jeffry Pondaag: Yes, but I am not Dutch, I am Indonesian. So the history that is written by white natives is not my history. And it is history falsification too... [Hanco Jürgens trying to interrupt Jeffry Pondaag] Wait a minute, wait a minute! And that is what this study of €4.1 million did as well. Where did the Netherlands get the right to consider a country 18.000 km away as Dutch property?

Hanco Jürgens: That is not the case?

Jeffry Pondaag: Yes! Nederlands-Indië (The Dutch East Indies).

Hanco Jürgens: Yeah it was like that, of course.

Jeffry Pondaag: It was??? Until today!

Hanco Jürgens: I find this a bit difficult, it will be difficult to have a discussion...

Jeffry Pondaag: Well, check that study! This is how they talk about it and how they write!

[1:06:39 – 1:08:20]

[Hanco Jürgens pointing to Christa Wongsodikromo from K.U.K.B.]

Hanco Jürgens: No, there! Yes, behind that pillar.

Christa Wongsodikromo: Hello, I want to introduce myself first, I am the secretary of the K.U.K.B. foundation.

Hanco Jürgens: What is that?

Christa Wongsodikromo: We launch court cases against the Dutch state for war crimes in Indonesia between 1945-1949. Somebody said that it is very difficult to talk about this, about the history. But if you ask a 6-year old child: 'is stealing bad?' Then it will say yes. 'Is rape bad?' 'Is invasion bad?' 'Is robbery, is that bad?' 'Is killing, is that bad?' The child will say yes. So I don't get it why you all make it so complicated and that you are going to talk about 'multi-perspectivity'. Because 'multi-vocality' and 'multi-perspectivity' is actually, it is a new form of divide-and-conquer. Because you are partitioning the table...you put one person with another perspective on that table. I am also Indonesian and our community, when there is a table we are being placed next to Dutch people, Moluccan and Indies-Dutch people. And colonialism is about power. (Yes, I do have a question!) Colonialism is about power. So if you put one person on the table with those power relations...then there is no... there is no multi-perspectivity. There is only one perspective and that is that those crimes were wrong.

[1:08:40 – 1:09:00]

Remieg Aerts: I wouldn't mind when you or other historians would conduct thorough research...or legal experts... conduct thorough research into... Dutch war crimes throughout the entire colonial history. Do it! I think it's important. It has to be done. For too long we haven't dealt with these topics.

...

[1:09:05 – 1:09:18]

I would encourage it when in the coming years... And the report, at least the books that are published as a result of this report are already a first step in that direction. Let's do a lot of this kind of research.

...

[1:10:20 – 1:11:11]

I can only encourage it when we continue on that path.

Jeffry Pondaag: But we are being excluded!

Remieg Aerts: In what way?

Christa Wongsodikromo: With his words.

Remieg Aerts: In what way do you feel excluded?

Christa Wongsodikromo: In this room alone, we are being interrupted...

Hanco Jürgens: No, you are getting a lot of space!

Christa Wongsodikromo: Yes, because we are taking it!

Hanco Jürgens: No, because you are getting it! No, because you are getting it! No, because you are getting it.

Jeffry Pondaag: That research, we wrote an open letter about that research.

Hanco Jürgens: About which research?

Remieg Aerts: The big NIOD-study.

Hanco Jürgens: Aah...

Jeffry Pondaag: Which is just finished.

Hanco Jürgens: Yes.

Jeffry Pondaag: But we are not being involved. There is this Social Focus Group, but we are not part of it! All these Dutch Indies people... the traitors are part of it!

Hanco Jürgens: Well, they are angry too. No, I want to continue, there, in the back.

- **Hanco Jürgens** is a researcher, teacher and member of staff at the Institute for German Studies at the University of Amsterdam. He specializes in the history of the Eighteenth and the Twentieth Century. His fields of interests in Eighteenth Century history include: concepts of Enlightenment, religion, center and periphery, Europe and the non-European world, natural history, colonialism and anti-colonialism, mission, and the history of India. His Twentieth Century work focuses on concepts of modernity, democracy, and the welfare state, ideologies, political parties, questions of continuity and change, borders, and Europeanization. See: <https://www.uva.nl/en/profile/j/u/h.j.jurgens/h.j.jurgens.html#?cb>
- **Remieg A. M. Aerts** is a Dutch historian and Professor of Dutch History at University of Amsterdam. Aerts was born in Amsterdam. After secondary school he briefly considered studying Chinese, but instead of that he started studying history. After he finished his PhD, for which he took ten years, in 1997 at the University of Groningen Aerts became assistant professor in Philosophy of History at that same university. Later he became professor of Political History at Radboud University Nijmegen. In 2000 he won the Dr. Wijnaendts Francken-prijs for his work *De letterheren. Liberale cultuur in de negentiende eeuw: het tijdschrift De Gids*. In 2003 Aerts was one of the starters of the *Omstreden Democratie* (Controversial Democracy) project of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, which involved dozens of scientists doing research on Dutch democracy. He was elected member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2011. In 2017 Aerts transferred from the Radboud University to the University of Amsterdam where he became professor of Dutch History. Three years later he received the "*Nederlandse biografieprijs*" (Dutch Biography Price) for his book *Thorbecke wil het* about the 19th century Dutch liberal statesman Johan Rudolph Thorbecke. See: <https://www.uva.nl/profiel/a/e/r.a.m.aerts/r.a.m.aerts.html>