

Interview with Batara Hutagalung, (co)initiator of KUKB

Date: 18.10.2015

Place: Jakarta, Hotel lobby WISMA PDI

Respondent (R): Batara Hutagalung

Interviewer (I): Nicole Immler (joined later by photographer Suzanne Liem)

Transcriber: Tedy Harnawan (part 1)

Transcriber: Nicole Immler (part 2)

R: You see, we explained our goal, not about money, but dignity. Because if you received money as Dutch citizens, why should they die for to defend the independence. 1 million. The Dutch government stated approximately 150.000 Indonesians were killed. But here stated the victims and you see in Rawagede is Rawagede only 20. But you see 451 in Rawagede. And also in West Sulawesi in galung Lombok. And many cases were not stated at all. 2.500 in Kranggan. So, Steph was there at Kranggan. I introduced her to persons in Kranggan about this killings at the second for us the Military Aggression December 1948. Well, how would you say if you know he Dutch government also signed the universal declaration of human rights on December 10th 1948. And 9 days later, they launched the biggest military aggression and 10 of thousands civilians were killed without any persis. How would you say this?

I: Hmmm

R: And also the Klewang sword killing in August 11th 1949 in Solo Surakarta also stated here. The ceasefire from 1949, so took place at August 10th 1949 at 12 pm. But on 11th in the morning the Dutch soldiers killed around 20 persons in a house of physician that used as a small clinic. The massacre around 20 persons with swords.

I: Clearly civilians?

R: Yes, civilians

I: I want to know about this contradictions that people, widows who received the veteran pension from the Indonesian state, is this then saying that you were veteran, fighting for the independence when they get the pension? But now some of them claim compensation from the Dutch state. So is this kind of contradiction?

R: It is very sad in Indonesia. Very very sad. And also the widows and the family of the victims they did not know about the vonnis of the Dutch court or they know or heard about it. Because all the widows in Rawagede or in many villages, they are illiterate. They cannot read or write. As I get the mandate from them, they give the fingerprint. I think I have a picture of it as I handed it over to the Ben Koenders.

I: But this widows pension paid by the Indonesian states, no?

R: NO, not at all

I: But the veterans pension, no? for widows from.....?

R: NO, not at all. Only from veterans, the registered veterans recognized as veterans. But most of the victims, they were not veterans, they were only villagers. It was not registered.

I: But nevertheless I met some who were registered as veterans and I saw some contradictions that I want to know how it is.....So you say that individual compensation is not a good solution?

R: So I could explain to you why we refused it a hundred percent. Because for instance in Rawagede, the victims were 431. And I think it is the most strange law for.....how do you call it.....only living widows have the rights to claim compensation. I also express it to Jeffrey at that time, it is funny why only living widows, only 9 from 431. And I said, "Look, this will bring turbulence and quarrel between those who receive the money and those who don't receive the money". It happened. The 9 widows.....It studied well from the Human Rights activists from Jakarta or from the districts, from the government and so on, they all involved to solve the problems. You know the widows they are all over 80 years. Some of them were fated. And then they had the solution. Okay it is divided 50:50. 50 percent from the widows, 50 percent to the (port) and give to the others. In Rawagede, from 431 only 9, in Galung Lombok more than 700 victims only 1 person. So I said it created a new in social, and also in social jealousy, because the others they ask why only this widows, because our husband also killed...our father also.....so I said to my friend this is the Dutch of politic of divide et impera still exist until now.

I: What is it? Again?

R: Divide et impera

Edited part

I: It's important point what you say is that the court case is read as a kind of progressive dealing with the past. Where she stated more, "No, it's more of kind of a new kind of power politics. It's also shaping the facts in a way". You acknowledge a few which you could easily forget the rest. And you know I am....

R: You know, Nicole. Actually, for us is also this chapters is also closed, actually. So I came back from Germany in 1992. I wrote the transcripts of parts of the experience of my father about his experience between 1945-1950 especially about British bombing of the city of Surabaya November 1945. I asked my father and also his friends. After that, what is the follow-up from this bombing. Approx. 20.000 people were killed during the battle in October 28-29. And the bombing in October- December 1945. They said, 'No, nothing'. Because I was fresh from Germany so I know at that time 1968 from the United Nations from the Security Council they issued the convention for the for War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity. It was first world fair from Statuta Roma for crimes no stature of limitation genocides, war crimes and crimes against humanity. So I told my father and his friends we could still sue the British government. And he did.

I: You did?

R: He did. Then I wrote a book.

I: You wrote a book?

R: I meet a LSM, why Britain bombed the city of Surabaya. About the battle it's only 20-25 pages. Most of it I met analyzes. so it was 1999 because I had some documents that the British Ambassador stated that it is valid this document. Interesting.

I: (reading document) "And keeping with the progress of the conference you will reestablish civilized truth return the colony to the Dutch administration to maintain services.....It is stated too late. you are instructed to the island of Java and the East Indies to accept to surrender of Japanese.....as you are no doubt aware the local natives to the Republic but we are bound to maintain the status which existed before the Japanese invasion."

I: [laugh] That was cool

R: That's from the Potsdam Statement from July 26th 1945. On October 27th 2000 we held an international seminar. We invited the British Ambassador and I was the moderator. And there was one of the freedom fighters so the statement from the British Ambassador was here.

I: You wrote first this book. You wrote book and you organized this conference to bring those people together?

R: The statement from the British Ambassador. In Indonesia without text, so this book is after the conference

I: Yes

Oh, okay. So what is the effect of this conference?

He said frankly. It was the British to help the Dutch to gain back Indonesia as colony. And he said regret about what happened because few months before this, I had a correspondence with prof Ben Anderson. I wrote him and he wrote back and he said, the British.....he's from Ireland, Ben Anderson. Ireland is under British colony more than 700 years. And the Britain they never feel guilty about this. And they will never say apology. They will only say regret. Exactly that word.

They said regret to them?

About what happened in Surabaya

But to you at the conference

He said regret about what happened so we could not judge what happened 50 years ago with the eyes from today. But he said this documents is clear. The document is clear.

But has it any consequences with regard of reparation?

Actually at that we did not talk about the money, it's not all about money, but the dignity. Before this, he was appointed as ambassador in august 2000 and our seminar was in October. So before that he invited me to the office. And I told him, "we are friend, we are no more enemies". But we would like to know what actually happened if someone made mistake and I think it is easy to say sorry. And then, the judge hook us from our.....from our sheets so I still follow the news in Europe, Netherlands. And I follow the news that in the Netherlands they were so.....they gave so much...what do you say....not only Papua, but also....it was April 2000

For lobbying Free West Papua and the report...

It is from April 2000, in Leiden also in December 2000, they also held a seminar talk about all violence in Indonesia and also about 1965. For me it is a national tragedy what happened in 1965. Every time the Dutch Parliament control the progress of human rights in Indonesia and so on, it was 2001, and then why I think it is strange. Why the Dutch always talk and discuss about what happened in Indonesia, but never....about what we have done to our...what you say....landsloited....but never discuss about what the Dutch has done to the Indonesians.

I don't understand

Look, as I wrote....as I read about this. I was asking myself it is strange why for many years the Dutch give so many attention to what happened to Indonesia, after 1940, 1965 and so on. But never about what happened in 1945 and 1950.

So you see the you are interested in Indonesia apart from this spirit.

For me at that time it is strange. Why?

Yes. Yes

That's why I said. They woke me up

They woke you up and then you said you have to move the attention...

Yes. And then I start to dig about the past, about what happened in 1945 and 1950. That's at the beginning.

So for you started actually all around 2002 or so what is the moment? Finding this report?

Yes, yes. And then, in 2002 for the whole year, the Dutch celebrate the 400 years of VOC. So, of course we are asking the Golden Age of VOC. Ohhh....I think it's sounds very strange of how the way of thinking of the Dutch because they always dig about what we have done to our landgenoten but never about what they have done to us. And celebrate the beginning of the colonialization as the Golden Age. The whole year 2002 they made big celebration, 400 years.