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Library Notes

The Strange History of a Book

Amry Vandenbosch

One of our Korean students at the University of Kentucky entered the foreign service of his country. He did very well, serving for a time as Minister of Foreign Affairs and later as prime minister. A few years after he left the University he came through Lexington. With a grin he accused me of having helped the Japanese rule the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia after independence in 1949). When I protested that I had done nothing of the kind he insisted I had, that proof of the fact was a Japanese book in the library of the Korean Foreign Office entitled *The East Indies* by Amry Vandenbosch. That was the first time I had heard of a Japanese edition of my book. Neither the publisher nor I had authorized its publication.

Naturally I was eager to obtain a copy. When I was in Tokyo with the Brookhaven Mission in 1956 I shopped around for one, but had no luck. A few years later Prof. William J. Chambliss of the History Department went to Japan for a year of research. He found a copy and sent it to me. I am also indebted to him for preparing the "Translator's Preface" which is included in this account.

This preface tells a very interesting story. A copy of the second edition of my book, *The Dutch East Indies: Its Government, Problems and Politics*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1941) came into his hands "shortly before the outbreak of the greater East Asian War." It is this edition which he translated. (The first edition had been published by William Eerdmans in Grand Rapids in 1933). The translator dropped "Dutch" out of the title to meet the

present realities in the East Indies. That is, in March of last

year the elite and unsurpassed imperial army under the august virtue of His Imperial Majesty suppressed disorder throughout the entire territory of Java and Sumatra, bringing an end to three hundred years of Dutch power. This action has provided the foundation for the greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere and gigantic strides are now being made in the brilliant construction of this sphere.

This he regarded as sufficient justification for dropping "Dutch" out of the title. It is a bit surprising that he did not go a step further and substitute "Japanese" for "Dutch."

The translator obviously had a considerable knowledge of colonial policy and administration in South East Asia. He refers to the scientific studies the Dutch had made and how their policies differed from those of other colonial powers. The Dutch made these studies, the translator stated, "because their national existence has depended exclusively on the control of their colony, research in colonization problems has been comparatively more developed than in other countries." It was a gross exaggeration to state that Netherlands existence was exclusively dependent on control of the East Indies. The Netherlands has survived very well without the East Indies. (That colonies were profitable was a widely accepted idea, but a false one. I examined it in "The Netherlands Colonial Balance Sheet," *Southern Economic Journal*, 7 [January 1938]). In spite of his literary piracy I have a kindly feeling toward the translator who spoke highly of my book. He hoped to publish a revision which would take account of the changes under Japanese control. The glorious expectations he harbored of Japanese rule of the East Indies and the high benefits which would come from the greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere were not realized. The extension of Japanese power into South East Asia ended in a terrible national disaster for Japan.

During the war I spent some time in the China-Burma-Indian theater of war to obtain information out of the East Indies and Malaya while indirectly and unknowingly I was aiding the Japanese through my book.

My copy of the Japanese version of the book has been placed in the archives of the University of Kentucky Library. Here are the remarks of its Japanese translator as interpreted by Dr. Chambliss.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

This is a translation of the second edition of Amry Vandebosch's *The Dutch East Indies*.

First published in 1933, the book has been out of print for several years. Yet because of the increasingly grave international situation in the East Indies—attendant upon the recent precipitous change in global political conditions—the second revised edition was published in the summer of last year in response to the general demand of persons with scholarly interests. A copy of the revised edition along with a variety of other new publications relating to the East Indies came into the translator's hands shortly before the outbreak of the Great East Asian War on 8 December of last year. Needless to say, this translation is based on the second edition.

The title on the cover of this translation has been slightly modified as a result of present realities in the East Indies. That is, in March of last year the elite and unsurpassed imperial [Japanese] army under the august virtue of His Imperial Majesty suppressed disorder throughout the entire territory of Java and Sumatra, bringing an end to the three hundred years of Dutch power. This action has provided the foundation for the Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere; and gigantic strides are now being steadily made in the brilliant construction of this sphere. In view of these developments I think the elimination of the word "Dutch" from the title of the original book and the simplification of the title to *The East Indies* is justified.

Inasmuch as the Dutch, over a long period, have eagerly made scientific studies of the colonization problem, they have adopted colonial policies clearly distinguished in many respects from those of the other powers. And because their nation's existence has depended exclusively on the control of their colony, research in colonization problems has been comparatively more developed than in other countries. Consequently a superabundance of books has been written by the Dutch on the history of colonization, colonial policy, colonial government, and all other colonial problems. Yet, strangely enough, substantial works by outsiders on the East Indies have been relatively few. It is only necessary to mention four that have appeared in the past fifty years: 1) Chailley-Bert's *Java et ses Habitants*, 2) Day's *The Dutch in Java*, 3) Angoulvant's *Les Indes Neerlandaises*, and 4) Furnivall's

Netherlands India. However, since the appearance of Chailley-Bert's and Day's books the conditions in the East Indies have undergone a remarkable change. Thus both books are today somewhat out of date. In that respect, of course, this book too may be in that category.

With changes in administrative policies and with a consequent influx of an enormous amount of foreign capital, the East Indies have experienced a truly astonishing economic transformation in the past twenty years. Moreover the social and economic awakening of the East Indies has drastically changed the appearance of the Indies in contrast to the description of earlier writers. Mindful of these actualities the author [Vandenbosch], though holding firmly to academic objectivity, has dealt with all the problems of the East Indies in the hope of achieving a systematic understanding of his subject. G. H. Bousquet, the recognized specialist of the Muslim problem in the East Indies, has, in the introduction to his *La Politique Musulmane et Coloniale des Pays-Bas* (Japanese translation, November 1941), recommended this [Vandenbosch's] book with the statement that "at present the very best work that I can recommend for reading is *The Dutch East Indies* by the American Amry Vandenbosch. His book makes extensive use of documents and touches upon all problems large and small."

The author, Amry Vandenbosch, is presently Professor of Political Science at the University of Kentucky and has a worldwide reputation as a specialist on the problems of the East Indies. He conducted a detailed on-the-spot investigation of all the problems in the East Indies in 1929 and 1930, and also has received some important materials, viewpoints, and suggestions in Holland directly from the late Professor van Vollenhoven, the world renowned authority on East Indies problems at Leiden University. Furthermore, while in the East Indies he received some valuable materials from such figures as Dr. von Asbeck, Professor of International Law at the East Indian Law School, and from Dr. Meyer Ranneft who was formerly the chairman of the Volksraad and vice-president of the Council of India. Lastly he received considerable assistance and suggestions from such authorities on colonial policy as Drs. De Kat and Haga and Mr. Van Helsdingen. The vast amount of materials provided by such representative East Indies specialists are all quoted as references in this book.

As we [Japanese] are now pacifying the Dutch East Indies and

are taking the first great step forward in building up the Great East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere our most urgent task is to conduct completely realistic and scientific research on East Indies problems. Of necessity, therefore, I believe that we must make public significant materials that will permit exhaustive studies.

To this end the translator, despite his limited abilities, has undertaken the translation of this book. It will be my greatest good fortune if the book can furnish to the nation [Japan] any guidelines that may contribute to the attainment of national policies.

The original text included a preface to the first edition and an index, but owing to limited space I have intentionally, though grudgingly, omitted these parts of the book. In this matter I would appreciate the reader's sympathetic understanding. However, the substance of the preface of the first edition is generally similar to the first paragraph of this preface.

This translation was completed prior to the outbreak of the Great East Asian War and was in press during the mopping up operations in the Dutch Indies. Consequently many place names cited in this translation are presently being replaced and many institutions are being reorganized under our military administration. In a second edition I hope to make the appropriate revisions.

10 March, 18th year of Enlightened Peace [i.e., 1943]