THE DIRTY WORK OF EMPIRE: MODERN POLICING AND PUBLIC ORDER IN SURABAYA, 1911–1919

Marieke Bloembergen

The colonial state in Indonesia has been characterized as a violent state. It built its colonial territory and power upon military force, resulting in thousands of Indonesian victims, and held the maintenance of law and order by means of the military and the police as one of its most important goals.[1] Some authors have referred to the colonial state in Indonesia as a police state. At least, they described a state that reduced the twentieth-century political problem of the *pergerakan* (indigenous emancipation movement) and the nationalist movement to a police problem, a state in which politically active Indonesian subjects were permanently restricted in their movements by the police, so that they experienced the colonial regime as a police state.[2] These scholarly characterizations of a "state of violence" and a "police state" are

[1] H. Schulte Nordholt, "A Geneaology of Violence," in *Roots of Violence in Indonesia*, ed. Freek Colombijn and J. Thomas Lindblad (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), pp. 33–62. Compare the reaction of Elsbeth Locher-Scholten, "State Violence and the Police in Colonial Indonesia," in ibid., pp. 81–82.

[2] P. J. A. Idenburg, "Het Nederlandsche Antwoord op het Indonesische Nationalisme," in *Balans Van Beleid. Terugblik op de Laatste Halve Eeuw Nederlandsch-Indië*, ed. H. Baudet and I. J. Brugmans (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp, 1961), pp. 121–51; Harry A. Poeze, "Political Intelligence in the Netherlands-Indies," in *The Late Colonial State in Indonesia: Political and Economic Foundations of the Netherlands-Indies 1880–1942*, ed. Robert Cribb (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1994), pp. 229–46; Takashi Shiraishi, "Policing the Phantom Underground," *Indonesia* 63 (October 1997): 1–46; Takashi Shiraishi, "The Origin of Modern Surveillance Politics in Indonesia," in *Southeast Asia over Three Generations: Essays presented to Benedict R. O.'G. Anderson*, ed. James T. Siegel and Audrey R. Kahin (Ithaca, NY: Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2003), pp. 47–74; Marieke Bloembergen, "Koloniale Staat, Politiestaat? Politieke Politie en het Rode Fantoom in Nederlands-Indië, 1918–1927," *Leidschrift* 21,2 (2006): 69–90. For a contemporary view of the Netherlands-Indies as a police state, see Philippo-Soekasih and G. van Munster, *Indonesia, Een Politiestaat* (Amsterdam: De Schijnwerper, 1938).

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interchangeable in the sense that they all point to organized violence directed by the colonial government against the state's subjects.

While the violent character of the colonial regime can be taken for granted, there is still much that we do not know about the actual practice of implementing state violence in colonial Indonesia. One important institution that has been largely neglected is the police, generally characterized as one of the state's monopolized instruments of violence.[3] A study about the colonial police might enable us to assess how and to what extent the colonial state governed through violence.

The subject is also relevant for our understanding of Indonesian history, including the colonial period. For not only did the Indonesian republic inherit structures and personnel from the colonial police (continuities which are not elaborated here) but also, the colonial police was almost entirely staffed by "Natives"; in this way, it differed from the colonial army, which was only 75 percent indigenous. In the 1930s, 96 percent of the police, out of a force of 34,000, were Indonesian.[4] In colonial society, which organized its political, juridical, and economic structures along racial and racist categories—Europeans, Chinese, and Indonesians/Natives—these Indonesian policemen were the face of the colonial state. They show us, as former colonial police officer Eric Blair (George Orwell) has described it so well, "the dirty work of empire at close quarters."[5]

This article concentrates on the early history of the modern colonial police force in colonial Indonesia, in particular on the practice of policing in colonial Surabaya, 1911–1919. In this period the colonial state implemented important police reforms that shall be analyzed as well. The article aims to understand the specific problems and dilemmas of *colonial* policing, or of policing in the context of the social, ethnic, and political relations of colonial society. How colonial were these problems? And what do they tell us about the functioning of the colonial state?

By definition, security is a precondition of effective government and a necessity for any society.[6] Ideally, this double guideline also determines the way in which a modern state organizes and uses its police force in order to maintain law and order, and to guarantee security for its citizens. In a colonial state, where a minority of foreigners (here Europeans, including Dutchmen, Eurasians, and Germans), with specific economic and political interests, rule a large majority of an indigenous population,

[3] This lack of interest is especially remarkable considering the fact that, since the appearance of David Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule: Madras 1859–1947* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), the history of policing in other former colonial empires has been the topic of a growing number of academic studies. The interest in the colonial police in Indonesia is reflected in an MA thesis and a few articles that have appeared since the end of the 1990s: R. J. M. van Hooff, "De Politie in Nederlands-Indië," MA thesis, University of Amsterdam, 1985; Cyrille Fijnaut, "Politiemodellen Beïnvloeden Elkaar Wederzijds; Het Beleid aangaande het Politiewezen in Nederlandsch-Indië," *Het Tijdschrift voor de Politie*, 7,8 (1998): 4–21; Locher-Scholten, "State Violence and the Police in Indonesia"; Shiraishi, "The Origin of Modern Surveillance Politics in Indonesia"; Bloembergen, "Koloniale Staat, Politiestaat?"

[4] Locher-Scholten, "State Violence and the Police in Indonesia," p. 97.

[5] George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant," in *Orwell and Politics: Animal Farm in the Context of Essays, Reviews, and Letters Selected from the Complete Works of George Orwell*, ed. Peter Davison (London: Penguin Books, 1929; 2001), pp. 17–24, 18.

[6] Compare Alison Dray-Novey, "Spatial Order and Police in Imperial Beijing," *Journal of Asian Studies* 52,4 (1993): 885–922.

these concerns are balanced differently. In his study on the colonial police in Madras, the British historian David Arnold has argued that, from the perspective of colonial rulers, every form of indigenous crime or social unrest could be perceived as a menace to the status quo.[7] In other words, maintaining safety was a specific problem for the colonial administrators, who felt threatened themselves—not for the indigenous population. The police figured as a tool to solve that problem.

In response to these views, it should be noted that the process through which social or political unrest was made illegal by law was not exclusive to colonial states, but takes place in every state that wants to cope with perceived domestic unrest or social agitation among its citizens: it is not typically colonial. Moreover, one could add that consent is a condition for effective rule by both non-colonial and colonial governments. The modern colonial police force was, in this perspective, meant to function as a *civil* security tool, at least as a more civilized tool than the army. Ideally, and according to modern police regulations, the police should be guided in their work by the principle that they are committed to postpone or prevent violence. This was in the interest of the colonial state, since the police were the face of the state: they brought colonial government most deeply into society and nearest to its subjects. Moreover, while conducting surveillance, the police were also watched by the subjects. It is therefore relevant to look closely at the relation between the police and the public, to understand the characteristic dilemmas of colonial policing.

Operating on behalf of an authoritarian government, in the context of the racially discriminative relations of colonial society, the modern colonial police were, more than police forces elsewhere, sharply hampered by their two potentially conflicting tasks—to ensure public safety, which required the support and cooperation of the population, and to enforce (political) order, actions that tended to incite resentment and resistance from the population.[8] Stretched between these contradictory tasks, the colonial police carried out an impossible job, and thus one of the dirtiest jobs of empire.

The predicament faced by the colonial police has led some scholars, who have written about the colonial police force in British India, to conclude that police violence was much more the result of a weak and inefficient state than the result of the brutally effective use of police power by the state.[9] To test whether a similar argument holds true for Indonesia, I will, after a brief analysis of changes in Surabaya and the reorganization of the Surabayan city police (1911-1919), take a closer look at three cases of modern colonial policing in Surabaya: the police and their relation to so-called Chinese riots; police surveillance and the Sarekat Islam; and police regulation of modern traffic and public order on the streets. All three cases deal with interactions between the police and the public. Also, in all three cases other means of security control that competed with the police played a significant role: the army (in the first and the last cases), Sarekat Islam's security support (in the second case), and a private

[7] Arnold, *Police Power and Colonial Rule. Madras 1859–1947*, pp. 3, 131.

[8] David Andrew Campion, "Watchmen of the Raj: the United Provinces Police, 1870–1931 and the Dilemmas of Colonial Policing" (PhD dissertation, University of Virginia, 2002), p. i.

[9] Campion, "Watchmen of the Raj," pp. 1–2; Rajnarayan Chandavarkar, "Police and Public Order in Bombay, 1880–1947," in *Imperial Power and Public Order in Bombay* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 180–233.

person armed with his Browning revolver (also in the second case). They questioned the police's authority and their monopoly of state violence.

The period in focus marked the establishment and testing of a new city police force. In 1912 and again in 1914, the colonial state invested for the first time in its history in a relatively expensive police reform, and this after a long period of apparent indifference toward insecure, unsafe conditions in Java's interior regions. This action had been preceded by endless discussions—ongoing since the 1870s—concerning the loose, ineffective policing system then in place, an infamous and hybrid aggregate of *gardu* (security posts),[10] village police, state police institutions, and private security bonds. These 1912–1914 reforms (see below) were meant to be an important step in the colonial state's efforts to make the colonial police more centralized and uniform, and thus to gain better control over security.

Predictably, however, there was a huge gap between the idealized vision of such a modernized police force and the actual practice of "everyday policing," a gap that seems to indicate the colonial state could not supervise its own police force as effectively as it might have wished.[11] The colonial territory was too large to establish centralized police control, which meant that policing remained, to a large extent, a matter handled through local administrations. Moreover, the police remained in competition and sometimes even in conflict with other, formal and informal, tools for maintaining security and political control. Furthermore, the colonial police failed to function as a monolithic, effective tool of the state for administrative and organizational reasons. Since the policemen were both recruited from and embedded in local society, they faced a huge and complex task when attempting to satisfy the colonial state's ambitions and perform their two conflicting jobs convincingly. To convince potential recruits of the benefits of joining the police was another challenge.

On Being Modern: The Police and the City, Surabaya

Policing in the Netherlands Indies was a complicated matter, and modern policing perhaps even more so, as a new crop of students from the Osvia (*Opleidingschool voor Inlandsche Ambtenaren*, School for Native Officials) in Blitar must have realized in October 1918. That month, they went on an educational trip to Surabaya, where they visited, among other places, the city police headquarters. One of the students, Raden Rachmad, reported his impressions of this visit in *Neratja*, a Malay-language, pro-government daily. He described how the highest officials of Surabaya's city police—the chief superintendent, a superintendent *first class*, and a *hoofdoppasser* (a rank comparable to inspector of police), all of them Dutch—treated the students to verbose lectures on the modern organization of the police force in Surabaya. It was a bit too much for the students who, after their long journey from Blitar, had walked straight to the police office. Some of the information did prove interesting, however. The students

[10] See on the role of the *gardu* in Indonesian urban life Abidin Kusno, "Guardian of Memories: *Gardu* in Urban Java," *Indonesia* 81 (2006): 95–149.

[11] Bloembergen, "Koloniale Staat, Politiestaat?," p. 74; Justin Willis, "Thieves, Drunkards and Vagrants: Defining Crime in Colonial Mombasa," in *Policing the Empire. Government, Authority and Control, 1830–1940*, ed. David M. Anderson and David Killingray (Manchester/New York, NY: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 219–35.

learned that Surabaya, which was at that time the largest city in the Netherlands Indies, could boast of a police force that—although not yet perfect—resembled European city police forces, on which it was modeled, which meant it had a hierarchy and specialized police departments, conducted organized patrols, and initiated a complicated modern system of identifying suspects, called dactyloscopy. Rachmad also learned a bit about the daily practices of and regulations governing the indigenous constables. He was informed that *pribumi* Indonesians could reach the intermediate rank of *posthuiscommandant* (commander of a group of patrolling constables connected to one post). In his report, he wondered cynically what sort of Indonesian would do this kind of job—be it as constable or a higher-ranking officer—"*dengan soenggoeh-soenggoeh hati*," (wholeheartedly). He expected no *pribumi* would step forward, at least not so long as the salary failed to reward officers adequately for the responsibilities of the job.[12]

The students' introduction to the functioning of Surabaya's city police force, perfunctory as it might have been, was meaningful. Since they originated from different parts of the Netherlands Indies, these students were not only confronted by the busy life of the metropolitan city, Surabaya, but they were also introduced to new forms of policing that were characterized as "modern," forms with which most of them—unless they came from Surabaya, Batavia, or Semarang—were unfamiliar. They were, in effect, standing at a crossroads. If they came from small towns, villages, or relatively isolated places in the Netherlands Indies, they were used to other, diverse forms of security control. The modernized police force described in the lectures was supposed to be different from the old policing system, which was constituted of *gardu* and *oppasser* ("caretaker," a term that identified police constables before the reform of 1912–1914) and associated with the *streep kuning* (yellow stripe, indicating the uniform and rank of the *oppas*), all familiar terms that were still common in newspaper reports concerning the police at that time.[13] Rachmad's cynical reaction indicated, however, that there were reasons to believe that this modern police force was not functioning perfectly or wholeheartedly—yet.

For Rachmad and his fellow students, the educational trip to Surabaya's city police headquarters involved certain obligations. As the future indigenous administrators of the colony, the so-called *pangreh praja*, they would all have to work with this colonial police-force-in-progress. For the moment, the impressive sight of Surabaya might have diverted them from thinking about future challenges, for this modern police force described by the Dutch officers was part and parcel of a city that seemed so rapidly on the move that it was hard to follow.

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[12] *Neratja*, October 26, 1918.

[13] That both Dutch and indigenous newspapers after the police reform still wrote about the *oppas* or *oppasser*, rather than the "constable," is an indication of the fact that either some journalists were not aware of this change in titles, or that in their eyes the police reform was not that meaningful. For examples, see *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 6, 1914, on *streep kuning* being too afraid to deal with drunken Europeans in dokars and cars. Or *Oetoesan Hindia*, February 25, 1914, on an *oppas* reporting a car accident; *Oetoesan Hindia*, December 22, 1919, on an *oppas kuning* posting at the red bridge. Or *Pewarta Soerabaia*, January 29, 1914 and February 2, 1914.

Moving Surabaya

Strategically located for economic and colonial military purposes, the northern harbor city, Surabaya, had been known since the end of the nineteenth century as the most important economic centre in the Netherlands Indies. Already a large town by 1900, in the second decade of the twentieth century Surabaya was undergoing visible change, both on a physical and social level,[14] and the appearance of a modern police force was part of this transformation. Of course, the transformation was still more a concept—a blinding projection of a European institution—than a reality,[15] but with Surabaya's burgeoning industrial activity, its warehouses, banks, clubhouses, pastry shops, dry docks, modern harbor (under construction in 1912), and increasing number of automobiles (77 in 1906, 3,761 in 1917, 12,000 in 1930) filling up the sandy roads, Surabaya was being dressed up in European fashion. Signs of physical growth included the rapidly expanding network of asphalt-paved roads, the installation of streetlights, a water-treatment system, an electric-supply grid, and an electric tram system. The completion of the modern harbor facility in 1916 brought in a flow of laborers who settled in new, densely populated *kampong* (neighborhood) areas nearby, which quickened the city's expansion in all directions.[16]

An important characteristic of Surabaya was its ethnically mixed population. The number of inhabitants had grown steadily since the end of the nineteenth century, mounting from 124,000 in 1893 to 148,710 in 1915 to more then 200,000 in 1920.[17] The different population groups lived more or less separated in the city, divided by their ethnicity. There were the so-called *arek* neighborhoods, inhabited by Surabayan natives, located and formed in the city *kampongs,* mostly downtown. Together with the more recently arrived Javanese and Madurese residents, who were attracted to Surabaya because of its growing wage-labor market and relatively high pay rates, these residents constituted the indigenous population, the largest group in town: 80 percent (117,585) of the total number of inhabitants in 1915. The other 20 percent of the city's population consisted of almost 70 percent Chinese inhabitants (18,957 in 1915), who had their own quarters in the northeastern part of town, around Kembang Djepoen and between the rivers Sawa Poelo and Kali Mas. They were restricted in their movements due to the so-called *passen-en wijkenstelsel* (system of identification passes connected to neighborhoods), which forced them to live in certain quarters in town and to apply for identification passes to be used whenever they ventured outside their neighborhood or traveled in Indonesia. In 1911, the *passenstelsel* was abolished, but it was only in 1919, with the ending of the *wijkenstelsel,* that the Chinese were permitted to settle in other parts of town.

[14] See on these developments William Frederick, "Indonesian Urban Society in Transition: Surabaya, 1926–1946" (PhD dissertation, University of Hawaii, 1978), ch. 1 and 2.

[15] Compare D. Canadine, *Ornamentalism. How the British Saw Their Empire* (London: Penguin Books, 2002) on the blinding effect of the colonialists' drive to replicate sameness and similarities originating from home.

[16] Frederick, *Indonesian Urban Society in Transition*, p. 13.; H. Buitenweg, *De Laatste Tempo Doeloe* (Den Haag: Servire, 1964), pp. 162–165; G. H. von Faber, *Nieuw Soerabaja: De Geschiedenis van Indië's Voornaamste Koopstad in de Eerste Kwarteeuw sedert Hare Instelling* (Soerabaja and Bussum: N. V. Boekhandel en Drukkerij Van Ingen, n.d.); *Verslag der Gemeente Soerabaja over 1917* (Soerabaja: E. Fuhri & Co., 1918); *Verslag der Gemeente Soerabaja over 1920* (Soerabaja: E. Fuhri & Co., 1922).

[17] Faber, *Nieuw Soerabaja*; Frederick, *Indonesian Urban Society in Transition*; *Verslag der Gemeente Soerabaja over 1917*, pp. 9, 10; *Verslag der Gemeente Soerabaja over 1920*, p. 15.

In addition to indigenous residents and the Chinese, there was a relatively small, very slowly growing group of Arabs (around 2,600 in the period 1900–1920). They also lived in their own quarters, along both sides of the Kampementsstraat in the northeastern part of town, north of the Chinese quarters. (At around Songojoedan, the Chinese quarters ended and the Arab quarters began.) Finally, there were the Europeans, consisting of descendants of the old residents who had lived in Surabaya since the eighteenth century, in addition to the recently arrived *totok,* who had emigrated to the Indies in growing numbers—including an increasing number of women—at the end of the nineteenth century. They settled mostly in new European quarters that took shape in the south: one between Simpang, Karjoon, and Kaliasan (for the well-to-do), another around Scheepmakerspark—the so-called Embong quarter—and, finally, the neighborhood around the central Palmenlaan.[18]

For members of these different ethnic groups, the question of location and ethnic identity, and of who encircled whom—or who controlled whom—mattered if they were to feel themselves secure. The European's sense of insecurity was heightened after 1904, when a violent popular religious uprising against the European presence took place in Sidoardjo, a subdistrict only an hour's train-ride from Surabaya.[19] Even though European women and children from rural Sidoardjo fled to the city to escape the uprising, this revolt effectively blurred the imagined boundaries between a "Europeanized" city and an unknown, unsafe, indigenous "other" rural area. This same blurring of borders was taking place *in* town. Despite the principle of ethnic division that determined the character of most city neighborhoods, some Europeans lived between the *arek kampongs* downtown, and some members of the well-to-do indigenous elite found places for themselves in the chic neighborhood to the south. Among European citizens, such integration must have brought about an awareness—more acute than previously—of the presence of "the other" indigenous world, and perhaps the sense that they were being encircled and even invaded by it.

As Europeans became more aware of their precarious position, the indigenous population was itself on the move. Influential elites became involved in the *pergerakan* (movement), which focused on social, economic, and political emancipation. This *pergerakan* was most visible in the cities and resulted not only in an increasing flood of books, newspapers, and theatrical performances (all in the indigenous language), but also in the development of schools and youth clubs, societies, and political parties promoting social and economic progress for the indigenous population.[20] Widespread awareness of the *pergerakan,* spread through improved means of communication and infrastructure, caused more distrust and reciprocal tensions among the different ethnic groups in the city—and not necessarily only between European and "natives," but also

[18] J. R. Broeshart and J. R. van Diessen, eds., *Soerabaja: Beeld van een Stad* (Purmerend, Asia Minor, 1994); Faber, *Nieuw Soerabaja.*

[19] Frederick, *Indonesian Urban Society in Transition,* pp. 33–34. On this uprising, see R. Fernando, "The Trumpet Shall Sound for Rich Peasants: Kasan Mukim's Uprising in Gedangan, East-Java, 1904," *Journal of South East Asian Studies* 26, 2 (1995): 242–62; Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Protest Movements in Rural Java: A Study of Agrarian Unrest in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 45–57.

[20] Takashi Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion: Popular Radicalism in Java, 1912–1926* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1990).

between Chinese and Javanese citizens who engaged in economic as well as ethnic and racial competition.

How safe was Surabaya during these years? It is generally hard to give concrete, objective figures that would measure crime or the lack of safety, above all because the definitions of crime are in general not fixed, but depend on the perceptions of those in power, on law, on administration, on time, and on place.[21] There is a related problem with the sources that might be expected to provide such figures. Official colonial reports only tally crimes that have been reported, so that they are best used either as evidence of the colonial administration's positivistic belief that counting would lead to control, or of its determination to create a positive picture of conditions in its jurisdiction.[22] News reports of Surabaya crimes in the local newspapers mostly reflected the nuisances that troubled the population group each newspaper represented, providing indirect evidence of the audience's fears of and reactions to their changing —and therefore troubling—society. One can deduce from these reports that Surabaya coped with problems of insecurity to be expected in a colonial multi-ethnic city, divided along racially discriminatory lines, and undergoing a transformation of social and political conditions. In this situation, the police were considered responsible for combating petty crime, burglary,[23] robbery and raids, murder, and traffic problems, and also for controlling perceived forms of indigenous social unrest and potentially disruptive public meetings.[24] At the same time, the police—the face of the state—were being critically observed and commented upon, both in the European and the indigenous press, and this criticism continued as the Dutch administration was attempting to reform the city police.

These reforms, implemented during the period 1911–1914 in Batavia, Semarang, and Surabaya, and the discussions concerning reform that had been ongoing since 1870, coincided with the growth of the European community on Java, especially in those three main cities and their hinterlands. It is tempting to deduce from this "coincidence" that the new, modernized city police force was primarily intended to sustain the Europeans' perception of public order—that is, to protect European interests, European power, and the colonial status quo. However, police reform cannot be related to European security interests alone. Bound by the Dutch Ethical Policy, formally aiming at the development of the Indonesian population, the government had

[21] Vicente L. Rafael, ed., *Figures of Criminality in Indonesia, the Philippines, and Colonial Vietnam* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1999), pp. 9–13.

[22] See the *Koloniale Verslagen* and *Crimineele Statistiek van Nederlandsch-Indië over het Jaar 1913. Samengesteld door het Hoofd van het Gevangeniswezen* (S.l., 1913) and later years.

[23] The judgment of value always being a very personal thing: among the stolen objects reported in the European local newspapers that I checked (*Soerabajasch Handelsblad, Javabode)* were (besides money and watches) a violin, a gramophone player, many articles of clothing, towels, and furniture (taken from a porch).

[24] A detailed discussion of the information on crime provided by these sources is beyond the scope of this article. I conducted random checks of various issues of the available European, Javanese, and Chinese-Malay newspapers published during this period (1911–1919) and of stories concerned with the specific cases analyzed below, from: *Soerabajasch Handelsblad, Javabode, Neratja, Oetoesan Hindia, Pewarta Soerabaja, Sinar Djawa, Sinar Hindia,* and the sections from the indigenous press in *Koloniaal Weekblad* and *Overzicht van de Inlandsche en Maleisch Chineesche Pers* (Weltevreden: drukkerij Volkslectuur) 1918/1919. My focus has been on crime and police in general, not only in Surabaya. I investigated these sources to get an indication of the interest shown in crime during this period and, also, the nature of crimes featured in the indigenous newspapers.

an interest in providing an effective, *civil* means of control—at least more civilized than the army—that would satisfy its subjects' need for security, and thereby generate consent. Moreover, state security measures would help the administration come to grips with the radical changes people perceived taking place in those cities. The ongoing visible material and social changes in Surabaya made citizens feel a sense of progress, yes, but also a sense of dislocation, an agonizing awareness of modernity, of being caught in a maelstrom of contradictions.[25] Somehow, the police needed to catch up with the developments in these cities so that they could function not only as an effective and pointedly *civil* tool of safety control, but also as a modern colonial "civilizing" mechanism, following the intent of the Ethical Policy.

To understand the functioning of the modern city police force and its effect upon Surabaya, a short summary of the history and functioning of policing and security care in the Netherlands Indies, or, in this case, Java, is needed.

Old and New Systems of Policing

Policing in Java in the nineteenth century was interlaced with the colonial administration and therefore characterized by the principle of dualism, the key for effective colonial rule, as Eric Blair (George Orwell), once explained it.[26] Briefly, the establishment and maintenance of security for the indigenous population in Indonesia were assumed to be the responsibilities of the indigenous administrative employees, the *pangreh praja*, from the *regent* at the top to the *lurah*, or the village head, at the bottom of the indigenous hierarchy. The *desa* (village) police, a compulsory service, made up of the male inhabitants of the *desa*, who were all required to participate, was seen as the core of the colonial security system.[27] The security of the European inhabitants was the responsibility of the European administration (Binnenlandsch Bestuur). With this regard, the colonial police organization consisted of *politieoppassers* or the so-called *bestuurspolitie* (administrative police), attached to the local European administrators and the *pangreh praja*. According to this dualistic hierarchy, European and indigenous administrators supervised their own respective *oppassers*; the governor (*resident*), and the *assistent-resident*, had the final responsibility for supervision.

Although the security systems in the three main cities of Java, with their relatively large European communities, were each arranged a bit differently, they were also built on the dualistic principle. For, besides the governmental police, the different ethnic communities were responsible for their own security surveillance. The basic system consisted of four different organizational strata:

1. The official governmental or *Algemeene politie* (general police). This force was under the authority of the department of Binnenlandsch Bestuur and was paid by the colonial administration. It had a simple hierarchy: the superior and intermediate ranks

[25] Regarding the experience of "maelstrom" in The Netherlands Indies, see Henk Maier, "Maelstrom and Electricity: Modernity in the Indies," in *Outward Appearances: Dressing State and Society in Indonesia*, ed. H Schulte Nordholt (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1997), pp. 181–82.

[26] George Orwell, "How a Nation Is Exploited: The British Empire in Burma," in *Orwell and Politics: Animal Farm in the Context of Essays, Reviews, and Letters Selected from the Complete Works of George Orwell*, ed. Peter Davison (London: Penguin Books, 1929; 2001), pp. 1–8.

[27] W. Boekhoudt, "Centralisatie van de Politie," *Indische Gids* II (1914): 1476.

(European) consisted of bailiffs, water-bailiffs, adjunct-bailiffs, *politieopzieners* (comparable to a police inspector in function), and *hoofdoppassers* (chief constables). The subordinate personnel (Indonesian) consisted of *oppassers* and specialized *oppassers* for guard duty and traffic control. In addition, so-called *ronda prijaji*—which only existed in Semarang and Surabaya—can be defined as part of the general police. The *ronda prijaji* were neighborhood groups in charge of conducting patrols and controlling *gardu* (guards, stationed in guardhouses) in the kampong. They included the superior and subordinate members of the *pangreh praja* and the heads of the *kampongs*.

Besides this official police service, other unofficial police forces were active in the various segregated neighborhoods, where night watches took care of internal security. They could be divided into three categories:

2. Indonesian night watches (*gardu*) were stationed in the European neighborhoods. Originally, the *gardu* used a form of forced labor to muster recruits, but, by 1904, in Semarang and Surabaya, the local *residents* had determined that guards should be compensated for their work.

3. Chinese and Arab inhabitants (or the so-called *Vreemde Oosterlingen*) took care of guarding their respective neighborhoods. Though in theory all male residents were expected to volunteer, these duties were mostly carried out by paid substitutes recruited through the mediation of the local Chinese heads.

4. Finally, there was the *kampong* police in the indigenous *kampongs*, made up of the male inhabitants and comparable—both in its organization and method of recruitment—to the village police in the rural areas of Java.

It had been known for years—by the colonial authorities, private entrepreneurs, the European press, and the indigenous inhabitants—that, in fact, this security system did not work. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, critics of the system focused on the lack of safety in the rural areas of Java and Madura. After 1900, the Europeans began to express more worries about the growth of thievery and crime—sometimes carried out by *rampok* (armed robbery) gangs—closer to and inside the cities.[28] Governmental reports and individual critics summed up the main reasons for the defective system of policing: the poor supervision and the low quality of the police, which were due to the local administrators' lack of time and the recruits' insufficient training and low pay.[29] Although similar criticisms had been heard since the 1870s, it

[28] See on the perception and actual activities of *rampok* and crime in and around Batavia: Margreet van Till, *Batavia bij Nacht: Bloei en Ondergang van het Indonesische Roverswezen in Batavia en Ommelanden* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2006).

[29] See, for example, Boeka, *Uit Java's Binnenland: Een Koffieopziener* (Amsterdam: F. van Rossen, 1901); Johannes Bool, *De Politie: Haar Wezen en Organisatie in Frankrijk, Duitschland, Engeland* ('s-Gravenhage: Mouton, 1887); R. Boonstra, "Het Indisch Politiewezen," *Indisch Militair Tijdschrift* 33 (1902): 45–58; 119–26; C. Bosscher, "De Openbare Veiligheid op Java en de Handhaving der Politie onder den Inlander," *Verslagen der Vergaderingen van het Indisch Genootschap* (1882): 4–40; P. J. F. van Heutsz, "De toenemende Onveiligheid op Java, Hare Vermoedelijke Oorzaken en de Middelen tot Redres," *Orgaan der Vereeniging Moederland en Koloniën* 5,1 (1904–1905): 1–34; S. C. H. Nederburgh, *Tjilegon-Bantam-Java: Iets over des Javaans Lasten en over zijne Draagkracht* ('s-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1888); *Nota over de Reorganisatie van het Politiewezen* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1896); J. J. Roël, "Politie," *Tijdschrift voor het Binnenlandsch Bestuur* 1 (1887/1888): 379–82; H. E. Steinmetz, "Praktische Aanteekeningen," *Tijdschrift voor het Binnenlandsch Bestuur* 14 (1896/1897): 47–66; 442–51; R. Wijnen, "De Toestand in de Vorstenlanden," *Verslagen der vergaderingen van het Indisch Genootschap* (1887): 43–74. See also the series of articles on the police in Java by H. A. de Groot in

was only after 1904 that the government decided serious, costly reforms had to be implemented. (The police force had been reorganized in 1897, but that reorganization cost nothing.) In 1904 the colonial government appointed the former *assistent-resident* for the police in Semarang, L. R. Priester, to prepare recommendations for a thorough police reform in the three main cities of Java: Semarang, Surabaya, and Batavia. Two years later, the government asked W. Boekhoudt, president of the law court in Serang, to offer advice regarding the possibilities of implementing police reform for the rest of Java and the island of Madura—outside the three main cities. The two reports provided by Priester and Boekhoudt, published in 1906 and 1908, laid the basis for the city police reform implemented in 1911.

In his report concerning police reform, which also analyzed the state of crime and the police on Java and Madura, Boekhoudt dwelled on the relationship between the growth of crime and the modernization of society, *and* upon the danger of the first of five categories of crime that he had discerned in the Netherlands Indies, namely "the crime against the state."[30] By highlighting this category, Boekhoudt called attention to Chinese and others' local expressions of indigenous nationalism, as well as local violent protests that had arisen after the turn of the century, such as the uprising that took place in Gedangan in 1904. Since the analysis fitted social and political protest into a general analysis of crime, Boekhoudt's report might be taken as evidence supporting David Arnold's theory that crime and political protest were indistinguishable from the perspective of the colonial state and were therefore approached with the same methods. Yet this interpretation would fail to recognize certain significant aspects of the Boekhoudt report. In his recommendations, Boekhoudt followed two lines of thought. One clearly supported the colonial state's perceived need to enlarge its control over security by centralizing and unifying the police, while the other examined the motives of a modern police force and showed an interest in "civilizing" the police as a way to make them more effective in providing security. Out of this twofold reasoning, Boekhoudt concluded that three main actions be undertaken: 1. the centralization of the police organization; 2. a concomitant increase in European control over the security system; and 3. professionalization of the police, which would involve refining the police hierarchy and implementing guidelines to make the force more unified, replacing the old bailiffs with professional chief superintendents, and raising salaries for recruits and offering them incentives by increasing opportunities for advancement.

New Police: The Modern City Police

By the end of 1911 Surabaya got its own, revamped city police force that was reorganized, at least on paper, in accord with characteristics identified as "modern." There is, in the historical debates about "modern policing," a general consensus about the requisite distinguishing marks: 1. a hierarchical framework; 2. uniformity in regulations, rank, salary, and uniforms; 3. a system of organized surveillance

De Locomotief in 1893, published December 14, 15, 20, 21, and 22, and by Pieter Brooshooft (P. B.), *De Locomotief*, September 16, 1893.

[30] W. Boekhoudt, *Rapport Reorganisatie van het Politiewezen op Java en Madoera (uitgezonderd de Vorstenlanden, de Particuliere Landerijen en de Hoofdplaatsen Batavia, Semarang en Soerabaia) 1906–07* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij, 1908).

implemented through security guards and shifts of patrol; 4. monopoly control over surveillance; and 5. a specialized and subdivided criminal investigation service.[31]

The organization of the new city police force was supposed to represent a clear break with the past system of policing in the city. In 1911, the most obvious new feature of the city police in Surabaya was the strict and refined hierarchy at the top, where the new chief superintendent (a European recruited from the army) now replaced the former bailiff. This new city police force was part of the centralized *Algemeene politie* (general police); the department of Interior Administration was given authority over its management, and the Attorney General handled general control of the force. At the local level of this hierarchy, the city police worked under the direction of the local governor (the *resident* of Surabaya, and, through him, the *assistent-resident*). The head of the police, the European chief superintendent, who had an office in the newly created police headquarters, was in charge of the police force's daily routine. The *resident* and the *assistent-resident*, though officially the superiors of the chief superintendent, intervened only if necessary and were restricted to supervision. Here was one of the weak points in the plan for police reform: the unclear division of responsibilities would become—as one could expect, and depending on personalities—a source of friction between the *resident* and the chief superintendent.

Another relatively important feature of the police reform was the enlargement (by more than 25 percent) of the force: from 297 members in 1905 (9 European superiors and 288 indigenous *oppassers*, responsible for an urban population numbering 124,000, according to the 1893 census) to 380 policemen in 1912 (11 European superiors assisted by 16 Europeans in the intermediate ranks, plus 353 indigenous constables, responsible for a population numbering approximately 148,710, according to the 1915 census). The police-to-population rate therefore improved only slightly, from about 1:417 in 1905 to 1:391 in 1912. In 1917, the police in Surabaya came to number, in total, 1,358 members, responsible for an urban population of approximately 160,355 persons, bringing the police-to-public ratio to approximately 1:118. Over the years, this ratio remained only a fraction smaller than the ratio of police-to-population in cities in Europe and the United States at the time.[32]

The new city police's hierarchy reflected the racial division and discriminations of colonial society. To man the superior ranks of this force, the colonial authorities recruited European "professionals" from outside (either from among high-ranking army officials or from the intermediate ranks of the police in the Netherlands), this in

[31] See on this matter, for example, David H. Bailey, "The Police and Political Development in Europe," in *The Formation of National States in Europe*, ed. Charles M. Tilly (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975); Cyrille Fijnaut, *De Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Politie. Een Staatsinstelling in de Maalstroom van de Geschiedenis* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2007); Guus Meershoek, *De Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Politie: De Gemeentepolitie in een Veranderende Samenleving* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2007); Clive Emsley, "A Typology of Nineteenth-Century Police," *Crime, Histoire, et Societé* 3,1 (1999): 29–44; Eric H. Monkkonen, *Police in Urban America 1860–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 59; P. Rawlings, *Policing: A Short History* (Devon: Wilan, 2002).

[32] The city of London in the middle of the nineteenth century provided one policeman for every 350 inhabitants. New York in the same period had a ratio of 1:800. Amsterdam around 1900 had 1,100 police personnel for approximately 317,000 people (population in 1880), which gave that city a ratio of 1:288. It should be noted that the figures for the police in Surabaya do not include the ethnic security guards in the Chinese and Arab neighborhoods, nor the *kampong* police, supplementary forces that continued to exist officially until 1915. Dray-Novey, "Spatial Order and Police in Imperial Beijing."

an endeavor to strengthen European control over the security system in the city. At the top of the new police hierarchy stood, as planned, the chief superintendent, followed by five superintendents first-class (this rank replaced the rank of bailiff)—all Europeans—and five European *politieopziener* (rank comparable to that of police inspector). New, in addition, were the sixteen European chief constables, who followed the *politieopziener* in rank. This initiative to recruit Europeans to supervise the city police did not necessarily guarantee unity within the force. Officers who had formerly worked as Dutch police inspectors were not (yet) acquainted with local circumstances and languages, and they brought with them a system riddled by nepotism. These conditions would have nasty consequences for the organization in the 1920s.[33]

Perhaps more significant, however, was the fact that European superiors remained a small minority perched above the mass of mainly Javanese subordinates. Javanese constables did most of the policing in the city. For them, changes in the force perhaps seemed to take place gradually, although their sense of belonging to a single colonial police force must have begun with these reforms. The title for the subordinate police changed from *oppasser* into *agent* (constable), and this category was hierarchically divided into first- and second-class constables. To motivate, and thereby raise the quality of the recruits, the salary was raised (slightly) and opportunities for advancement promised. Finally, the police force in the three cities was enlarged by 33 percent, increasing from 943 to 1,275 police functionaries. This measure was supposed to shorten the hours of duty (which, before the reorganization, could mount to thirty-six hours in one round).[34]

Never Sleep on Duty

With regard to the practice of city policing, the aims of reform were fundamental. Generally speaking, the task of policing consists of two components: prevention of crime and criminal investigation. As a result of the reform, these two aspects were more clearly organized and divided—a sign of modernization. Crime prevention would no longer be carried out through the rather static framework of fixed *gardu*, but—following the example of the police in the Netherlands—would be organized according to a dynamic system based on neighborhoods (*wijkenstelsel*). Here, we see the introduction of another element of a modern police force: surveillance organized through security guards and shifts of patrol. Surveillance would be the task of the street police, consisting of indigenous constables and their supervisors, European chief constables. These would be assigned to patrol specific neighborhoods, starting their rounds from the post houses according to a fixed route that, if carried out in accord with the neatly measured prescription of the time (which stipulated a marching tempo of 3 km per hour),[35] would bring them back to the post after an hour to report to their superiors, the police inspectors first- and second-class. The idea behind this measure

[33] M. Bloembergen, *Uit Zorg en Angst: Politie, Orde en Veiligheid in Nederlands-Indië, 1897–1949* (2008, forthcoming), Ch. 6; "Het Politieschandaal Te Batavia," *Indische Gids* 45, II (1923).

[34] C. de Groot, "De Politie in de Grote Handelssteden op Java in het Algemeen en die te Soerabaja in het Bijzonder," *Koloniaal Tijdschrift* 2,1 (1913): 266; See on the city police reform also: Hooff, "De Politie in Nederlands-Indië," pp. 22–27.

[35] See the yearly reports of Surabaya's city police in *Verslag der Gemeente Soerabaja over 1917*; *Verslag der Gemeente Soerabaja over 1920*.

was to increase the visibility of the police presence in the cities, and therefore enhance security control over public life.[36] The department of general control at the headquarters was responsible for supervising street surveillance.

The hierarchy of the police, described above according to ranks, was also spatially organized. Central to this system were the police headquarters.[37] Next, the city itself was divided between two departments, each responsible for police surveillance.[38] Each department was under the authority of a European police superintendent first-class. These departments were subdivided into sections (*secties*).[39] The head of the department mediated between the top authority (the chief superintendent) and the section chiefs (all newly trained European superintendents second-class). Finally, every section had a number of post houses, each supervised by a European police inspector, from which the constables started their patrols. For the time being, temporary buildings were used or constructed for this purpose. In the years 1913–1918, the construction of permanent post houses was completed.[40]

Alongside this crime-prevention hierarchy, the police reform established a special department for criminal investigation in the cities, subdivided into divisions of criminal investigators, detectives, a vice squad, immigration police, photographic and dactylographic analysts, and the opium police. The investigative police in these divisions needed knowledge of the local terrain and wore plain clothes rather than uniforms, thus distinguishing them from police involved in crime prevention. Members of the *pangreh praja* (situated below the superintendent and three European police inspectors in the hierarchy) were responsible for the therefore mostly indigenous police detectives who filled out the department of investigation (in

[36] Fijnaut, "Politiemodellen beïnvloeden elkaar wederzijds," p. 17.

[37] Information in this paragraph is based on A. van Lieshout, "Het Politiewezen in Indië," *Weekblad voor Indië*, August 27, 1916; September 3, 1916: 64–66; 92–94; *Verslag der Gemeente Soerabaja over 1917*; *Verslag der Gemeente Soerabaja over 1920*, p. 129. The headquarters were first located at Grisseesche weg in the north of Surabaya, but soon moved to the upper town (the southern part of the city, where the mostly European quarters were located), to Simpang (on the corner of Kaliasan). Then, in 1918–1919, the office was moved again, closer to the center of Surabaya, in Baliwerti.

[38] The first department operated in the *Bovenstad*, or upper town in the south, with its main headquarters located at Genteng 14, and the second department in the *Benedenstad* (downtown), in the north, with its headquarters at Griseesche weg (or Herenstraat).

[39] In the beginning, there were six sections in Surabaya, the first two in the upper town (Kaliasin and Kawattan), and numbers three, four, and five stationed downtown, in Frederik Hendrikstraat (or Kampement), which was located in the Chinese and Arab neighborhoods, and in Griseesche weg and Oedjoeng (located by the harbor). The sixth section was assigned to police the river. This last section was dissolved in 1914 and its members redistributed among the other sections, at which time the fifth section (Oedjoeng) became responsible for the harbor / roadstead. In 1920, in response to the expansion of the city toward the south, the first section was split into two parts, so that Surabaya again had six sections.

[40] In 1920, the first three sections each counted four post houses, the fourth section had three, and the fifth only one. First section (Kaliasan): posts at Wonokromo, Kepoetran, Kedon-anjar, and Sawaän Koepang; second section (Kawattan): posts at Patjarkling, Simpang-Doekoeh, Penéléh, and Kalianjar; third section (Frederik Hendrikstraat): posts at Kapassan, Kalimas-Oost, Pegirian, and Passar Bong; fourth section (Grisseesche weg): posts at Willemsplein, Babaän, and Missigitplein; and fifth section: a post at Tandjong-Perak. One might conclude from the number of posts in each section, and the way they were distributed, that more importance was attached to the first three sections (most of the Europeans lived in the first and second sections) and the Chinese and Arab quarters (the third section).

Surabaya, investigation was supervised by a *wedono*[41] of police and three *assistent-wedonos*). This particular department was enlarged in the years after 1914.[42]

The Face of the State

Though evidence suggests that the authorities were serious about this reform initiative of 1911, in the first years of the reorganization citizens tended to be cynical about their new, allegedly modern city police forces; this cynicism peaked after the Chinese riots in February 1912 (discussed below).[43] In Surabaya especially, public complaints about the cruel or insolent attitude of the police poured in. The Hochfeldt case was notorious in this regard. The German police inspector, G. K. Hochfeldt, used fumigation to cross-examine his Chinese detainees (a method that he had learned from a former colleague, who had since then been promoted to the position of adjunct superintendent in Solo). This case, a public scandal in April 1912, deeply embarrassed the colonial authorities. The subsequent publicity brought to light other cases of abuse by the police and heralded a more expensive reform of the institution, which was to be initiated before the end of the year; complaints from the outraged Chinese community made it necessary to act with speed. Hochfeldt was fired.[44]

Public criticism focused on the most visible representatives of the police: the uniformed street police, including both the indigenous constables and the European head constables. Since the constable's salary was not high, few sophisticated or well-educated applicants sought the job. These relatively low-qualified recruits were required to work long hours, sometimes twelve hours a day, which made it difficult for many to remain alert or even awake. Due to such conditions, there was a lot of turnover both among constables and European chief constables, another factor that lowered the quality of the police. By the end of 1912, Governor General A. W. F. Idenburg had therefore decided that Surabaya would dispense with the European head constables. He then raised the salaries and increased the number of the indigenous constables.[45] Despite these measures, European, Javanese, and Chinese reporters kept complaining in the local press about the rough, discriminatory behavior

[41] Ranking in the *pangreh praja*, directly below the *regent*.

[42] Nota (official memorial) dated December 1, 1917, from A. Hoorweg, the official who from 1912 was in charge of the further development of police reform at the department of Binnenlands Bestuur: "Voorstel omtrent wijziging van de formatie der algemeene politie van de drie groote hoofdplaatsen (met inbegrip van Meester-Cornelis) in 1918 en nopens de voor het jaar 1919 noodig geachte uitbreiding." See December 1, 1917, 30/AP in National Archives, The Hague (hereafter NA), Ministry of Colonies (hereafter MvK), Mailreport (hereafter Mr.), 475/1918; and Lieshout, "Het Politiewezen in Indië," p. 493.

[43] Groot, "De Politie in de Grote Handelssteden op Java," pp. 274–77; *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, June 7, 1913; *Resident* of Surabaya, April 18, 1912, in NA, MvK, Verbaal (hereafter V) September 28, 1912, p. 5.

[44] See *resident* of Surabaya to the Governor General July 9, 1912, and other correspondence on this case in NA, MvK, V September 28, 1912, p. 5.

[45] Governor General A. W. F. Idenburg to the Minister of Colonies, J. H. de Waal Malefijt, July 23, 1912, 872/45, in NA, MvK, V September 28, 1912, p. 5. See, however, *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, May 27, 1913, concerning a plan to reintroduce European chief constables because police superintendents and inspectors were too busy to supervise the Javanese constables.

and the violence, corruption, and nepotism of the police force; and the general failure of the superior officers to prosecute or penalize guilty subordinates.[46]

A second reform followed in 1914–1915. It consisted, first, of a further expansion of the force. In the superior ranks, the number of officers was increased from approximately 100 to 250 men, and the number of subordinates multiplied, from 1,300 to 4,500. This meant that it was possible to work with three patrol shifts—a morning-, afternoon-, and nightshift—each of which was on duty for eight hours. Second, for the sake of discipline and in order to decrease turnover, an effort (half-hearted and ultimately incomplete) was made to provide barracks for the constables in Semarang and more permanent post houses in all three major cities. Third, and for the same reasons, a police school was installed in Batavia, initially to provide courses in modern policing for the highest ranks, but after the reform of 1918–1920 also for the subordinate ranks. This was a rather progressive measure, since no such institution existed yet in the Netherlands (and would not until 1924).[47] Finally, the *kampong* police force was officially abolished, giving the general police a monopoly over security surveillance—an important characteristic of what has been defined as a modern police service. This particular measure was only partially carried out. The *kampong* police did not disappear until the end of the colonial regime—or later, in many cases—and kept on working alongside, sometimes encapsulated by, the general police.[48] This illustrates that the formation of a completely centralized security force was never a realistic aim of this colonial state because it would not and could not provide the means to achieve it.

We should, moreover, bear in mind that the colonial police force was only one of several means to ensure security in the Netherlands Indies. Others were the *desa* and *kampong* police, the army, the so-called *cultuurpolitie* (police stationed to guard European enterprises, who were paid by those enterprises but appointed by the

[46] See for example, on police corruption: *Pewarta Soerabaia*, February 21, 1914, and *Oetoesan Hindia*, January, 15, 1914; on police violence and nepotism: *Pewarta Soerabaia*, October 11, 1913, November 14, 1913, February, 2, 1914, February 14, 1914, February 16, 1914, February 19, 1914; on ineffective police in the local neighborhoods: *Oetoesan Hindia*, February 7, 1914, January 28, 1914; on police failing to protect citizens against burglary: *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 6, 1914; on police stealing, *Oetoesan Hindia*, February 25, 1914; and on discrimination by police (European offenders): *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 6, 1914. The reactions to the police response to the Chinese riots will be discussed below.

[47] Initially the school offered courses for adjunct superintendents and police inspectors, later on also for chief constables. The superior police officers in turn trained the subordinate constables on location. Nota Hoorweg, December 1, 1917, 30/AP, in Mailrapport (herefter Mr.) 475/1918; Lieshout, "Het Politiewezen in Indië," p. 494. On the history of police training in the Netherlands: Ronald van der Wal, *De Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Politie. De Vakorganisatie en het Beroepsonderwijs* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2007).

[48] See *assistent-resident* of Semarang, 31-1-1916, 466/27, on police taking over the task of *wijkmeesters* in Semarang in Arsip Nasional Indonesia (hereafter ANRI), Archief Binnenlandsch Bestuur (hereafter BB), inv.nr. 3661; Nota Hoorweg, 24-3-1917, 15/AP: "Voorstel tot wijziging van enkele artikelen van het reglement van strafrecht en van het inlandsch reglement," in NA, MvK, V June 7, 1919, p. 55, mentions gradual displacement of *kampong* police with street police in the three main cities of Java. Chinese protests against "wang ronda" in Bandung indicate the continuing of kampong police in Bandung at least until 1923, in ANRI, BB, inv.nr. 3311. In 1924–25, and again in 1929, there were still discussions going on about the possibility of the abolishment of security services like the "wacht- en rondadiensten" delivered by the indigenous population, as being not proper for a modern civilized state. See circular dir BB, 30-5-1924, and related correspondence in ANRI, BB, inv.nr. 3540; "Nota inzake de afschaffing der wacht- en rondediensten van Vreemde Oosterlingen en inlanders," 22-2-1928, and related correspondence in ANRI, BB, inv.nr. 3539. On the continuous use of the *gardu* for security control in Indonesia, see Kusno, "Guardian of Memories: *Gardu* in Urban Java."

colonial government), and private (European) guards (also paid by the enterprises),[49] as well as European rifle clubs. This variety of official and unofficial security units suggests that, despite efforts to centralize and modernize security, there really was no uniformity, nor any state monopoly, in security control. Still, from 1911 on, the government did pay increasingly serious attention to the police, as evidenced by investments recorded in the colonial budget: from Fl. 3,002,548 in 1910 to Fl. 4,597,683 in 1914.[50] Also, the city police figured as a test case for modern policing in a would-be civilized colonial state.

We have described the colonial government's reform strategies as they were outlined on paper. To what extent, and how, did these reforms actually improve the system of security control, and for whom? I will try to put practice and contemporary perceptions in perspective by focusing on three significant cases: the police operations mounted in response to the Chinese riots in February 1912; police actions against Sarekat Islam demonstrations; and a violent episode involving the traffic police, who were responsible for regulating traffic and tackling problems of security on the streets, including rampant and riotous off-duty soldiers. All three cases involved interactions between the police and the public. Also, in all three cases other official and unofficial security organizations besides the police played a significant role. They have been introduced above, and include the army, the Sarekat Islam's security support, and a single armed individual. In harmony with the public critiques of police operations, these competing security tools actively questioned and challenged the police's authority and monopoly of violence. How and to what extent did these two factors influence the problems of colonial policing?

1. Beginner's Mistakes? Policing Chinese Fireworks

In February 1912, during the Chinese New Year's festivities, fierce fights occurred in Surabaya between policemen and Chinese inhabitants. The immediate cause seemed innocent. Patrolling policemen intervened to stop the fireworks and, in doing so, disturbed the Chinese festivities, prompting some of the celebrants to turn against the police. There were violent encounters at different locations in the Chinese quarters between Chinese and (predominantly Javanese) policemen. Also, the European chief superintendent, C. J. Boon, who had personally put a stop to a fireworks celebration at Kembang Djepoen, was threatened by a Chinese mob. His Javanese constables saved him from the crowd by force. Then, assisted by a few police constables and some infantry soldiers, Boon set off in pursuit of a group of the Chinese partygoers-turned-rebels who had fled into a Chinese shop. The moment the police entered, the Chinese shopkeeper turned off the light, allowing the fugitives to escape through the back door. Then he locked all the doors, trapping chief superintendent Boon inside the shop for more than an hour. That same day, a group of angry Chinese assaulted and looted the

[49] As practiced by big companies in the cities, like the *KPM* and the *Javasche Bank, Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, April, 6, 1912.

[50] "Nota Algemeene Secretarie nopens de gewapende en de algemeene politie, 1915," in NA, MvK, V November 23, 1915, p. 33.

house of the apparently unpopular Chinese Captain.[51] The police were late arriving at the scene and unable to prevent the thorough destruction of the house. After these first humiliating failures of law enforcement, the police, with the help of the army (cavalry), combed through the Chinese and Arab quarters and indiscriminately arrested hundreds of Chinese residents.[52]

How did the events in Surabaya get out of hand so easily, and what can they tell us about the functioning of Surabaya's city police? The initial police measures seemed reasonable. According to regulations on the books, the Chinese were allowed to set off fireworks in their own yards but not on the public road. This sounds like a fair measure, though it should be noted that finding a sufficiently spacious yard in the tightly packed Chinese quarters of northern Surabaya would have been difficult. At last, public response to the regulation itself was probably less important than responses to the new face of the police, to international events, and to ethnic tensions. Circumstances in 1912 differed from earlier years. First of all, city police patrols were a new phenomenon in the streets of Surabaya. The refashioned police wore uniforms and were better organized and more visible and active than they had been in previous years. Furthermore, on this particular year, the Chinese New Year celebration was backlit by a distant beacon: the recently installed Chinese Republic. In this case, Chinese indignation against the interference of the Surabaya police was intensified by the growing national consciousness of the Chinese in the Netherlands Indies. Moreover, economic and ethnic competition between the Chinese and the Javanese—in this case, Javanese policemen—helped intensify the conflict.[53] Given this reciprocal resentment, the police could not expect support from Chinese onlookers during the initial unrest in Kembang; the Chinese shop owner preferred to aid the refugees.

The forceful police response, assisted by the intimidating strength of army cavalry, apparently helped unify two previously separate Chinese factions in Surabaya.[54] After the mass arrests, Javanese policemen forced their detainees to squat, a command which the Chinese interpreted as a tremendous insult. Their outrage created a bond between the initially more openly rebellious *Macao*, or *sinkeh*, Chinese (recently arrived from China) and the *peranakan* Chinese (long-term residents of the Netherlands Indies), who together then turned against the police. In the following days, Chinese shops initiated a strike that spread across the city, paralyzing Surabayan commerce for almost a week. With this shopkeepers' strike—a method later copied by the Sarekat Islam[55]—the Chinese formed a strong alliance against the police and, indirectly, the state, and gained themselves a voice; one way or another, they now had to be listened to.

The police operations during the Chinese riots aroused fierce criticism, both from Chinese citizens and from the conservative European press. *Peranakan* Chinese

[51] Since the times of the VOC (the Dutch East India Company), the Dutch in the Netherlands Indies invested leading Chinese with military titles: *majoor* (major), *kapitein* (captain), or *luitenant* (lieutenant) to make them responsible for the supervision of their compatriots.

[52] "De Chineezen-Opstootjes te Soerabaja," *Indische Gids* 34, I (1912): 658–59.

[53] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, pp. 45–46.

[54] See on the position of Chinese in Netherlands Indies society, Lea E. Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism: The Genesis of the Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia, 1900–1916* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1960), pp. 10–13.

[55] Shiraishi, *An Age in Motion*, p. 45.

complained about the lack of police protection. A feeling of contempt for the police transformed itself into hatred following these police operations, the indiscriminate prosecutions of Chinese residents and house searches in the Chinese quarters, and the retaliatory shopkeepers' strike. The *peranakan* Chinese were indignant about the "wholesale" detention of Chinese residents.[56] This Chinese outcry over police operations in Surabaya seems to have set the tone for recurring Chinese complaints about the callous behavior of the police in following years (similar complaints could be heard elsewhere on Java).[57] In 1917, a request by several Chinese societies in Surabaya asking that the police's attitude toward Chinese citizens be reviewed did have some effect. In response, the government issued a circular to the *residents* in the three main cities of Java, which was to be distributed among the heads of the police departments and all police officials. This document stated "that, without compromising their vigor [in carrying out their duties], the police must operate with modesty and calmness, not only to European and Eastern citizens [*Vreemde Oosterlingen*], but as much to the Chinese and indigenous populations."[58]

While the Chinese complained that the police response had been too forceful, Europeans tended to see it as having been too delicate. European reporters identified three critical moments when the police had failed, or at least proved to be ineffective: 1. when superintendent Boon got himself locked up by a Chinese shop owner; 2. when the police failed to stop angry Chinese from looting the house of the Chinese Captain; and 3. during the following days, when the security forces were unable to stop the Chinese shopkeepers' strike, enabling the protesters to paralyze the city's trade. Conservative newspapers like *Soerabajasch Handelsblad* and its weekly, *Weekblad voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, and the *Javabode* argued that the police should have taken firm, armed action from the beginning.[59] Articles in the *Soerabajasch Handelsblad* directly criticized the police reform and what the authors discerned as the new "diplomatic" attitude of the police: "Soft remedies cause stinking wounds, and sedate actions give to the brute the impression of weakness."[60] The editor-in-chief of *Soerabajasch Handelsblad* also pointed out the international implications of these events: "the fact that the police were completely powerless was a shame, suggesting the weakness of colonial authority, which is dangerous both from the perspective of colonial rule and in an international context."[61] The comments in *Soerabajasch Handelsblad* and in *Javabode* reflected a general fear in the European community; this dread of "the other" and the

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[56] Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism*, pp. 40–42; *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, February 21, 1912; February 22, 1912.

[57] Unfortunately, local Chinese newspapers were not available for this particular period. But see for criticism on the Surabayan police: *Pewarta Soerabaia*, n. 46.

[58] Governmental Decree, September 13, 1917, 1 T, Circular Attorney General to all *residenten*, September 22, 1917, in ANRI, BB, inv.nr. 3597. This file also contains the complaints of Chinese mail carriers, who said they had been mistreated by a higher-ranking Javanese policeman (a *mantri-polisi*, a function that was especially meant for police investigation. *Mantri-polisi* had been part of the force before the reorganization and were integrated into the "modern" city police by the reforms).

[59] Illustrative for this perspective is a cartoon in *Weekblad voor Indië*, March 3, 1912, showing a man happily wiping away the "dirt," i.e., the revolutionary *sinkeh* Chinese, and a policeman watching, lost in amazement, too stupid to understand that this is the only effective measure, according to the editor who summarized the meaning of this drawing.

[60] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, February 21, 1912. Compare *Javabode*, February 27, 1912, and *Weekblad voor Indië*, March 10, 1912.

[61] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, February 26, 1912.

pergerakan was worsened by such events. Reportedly, fewer Europeans dared to enter downtown Surabaya following the riots, unless they were armed, and during this same period applications for gun licenses increased.[62]

The Europeans' call for the imposition of harsh measures against agitators and their criticism of chief superintendent Boon illuminate the friction between the old methods of policing and the supposedly modern methods, or between the more heavy-handed, old-fashioned police and the comparatively sophisticated, "civilized" police force promoted by Boon (who was being directed by Surabaya's *resident* and *assistent-resident*).[63] It was Boon who apparently had instructed his men to operate "decently" (*betamelijk*) when they first responded to violations of the fireworks statute in the Chinese neighborhoods. This general instruction caused some amusement in *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*. That paper suggested that the chief superintendent had essentially asked to be locked up by a shopkeeper when he promoted this "decent" policy.[64]

Clearly, this episode did not enhance the image of the new superintendent of Surabaya, a former army officer and teacher in the Royal Military Academy in Breda. Yet despite this unpropitious beginning, Boon seems to have been a man of enterprise, energetically taking charge of the police reorganization. This was not an easy task, since he had to work with a force still largely staffed by badly paid, poorly trained, and undisciplined subordinates, and friction between the old and new methods of policing was still apparent. Nonetheless, Boon strove to situate the new police force so that it would become more independent of the local authorities. This helped earn him the nickname "Napoleon Boon" (and "Bonaparte") and would cause him trouble later on, when he moved to Batavia (in 1914), in his dealings with the local authorities of Java's capital city.[65] Relationships between the new heads of police and the *residenten* and *assistent-residenten* of the three main cities, officially their superiors, more than once proved difficult throughout these years. However, in the aftermath of the Chinese riots, the *resident* of Surabaya sided with Boon, protecting him against public scandal. He reported to the Governor General that Boon had not been locked up by a Chinese shop owner, but that in fact he had chosen to instruct his men from this spot. This became the official position, and it sparked hilarity among European reporters.[66] Although a lie, the *resident*'s declaration was understandable: it would have been hard to imagine a more humiliating, damaging event for the colonial powers than the

[62] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, February 24, 1912. See also the frequent ads for weapons in *De Locomotief* in 1912.

[63] See *resident* of Surabaya to the Governor General July 9, 1912, 384, NA, MvK, V September 28, 1912, p. 5.

[64] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, February 21, 1912.

[65] On "Napoleon Boon," see *De Locomotief*, May 5, 1914; "Bonaparte," *Het Vaderland*, September 18, 1923. See also *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, January 20, 1912, on the difficult position of the new chief superintendents in general, who wished to influence and shape the reorganization of the force but remained dependent on the local *assistent-residenten* and central decisions reached by the department of Binnenlands Bestuur.

[66] "Officieel Relaas van de Chineesche Opstootjes te Batavia en Soerabaja," *Koloniaal Tijdschrift* 1, II (1912): 601–6. "De Chineezen-Opstootjes te Soerabaja," pp. 658–59. The Dutch advisor for Chinese Affairs, H. J. F. Borel, offered an alternative interpretation, which resulted in his being transferred to another post. He identified the Dutch administrators' and police officers' ignorance about Chinese culture and politics as the main source of the problems. See H. J. F. Borel, "De Chineesche Kwestie en de Ambtenaren van 't Binnenlandsch Bestuur," *Koloniaal Tijdschrift* 2, I (1913): 41–54.

detention of the chief superintendent by local "rebels," and therefore the story had to be covered up.

Contributing to the tensions, and to public criticism of the police's attitude and conduct, was the problem concerning the subordinate police (both the indigenous constables and the European chief constables). Many of these officers were the same *politieoppassers* who had joined the force during the infamous bailiff-era, and who, due to lack of training, low wages, and long working hours, did not generally conform to the "modern" ethical standards that were supposed to be the basis for the reforms. They were accustomed to the working climate of the pre-reform era, during which violence was a commonly accepted means of policing. These factors made it difficult to improve police attitudes thoroughly. In addition, police reform itself may have exacerbated existing social and ethnic tensions between the police and the public. Empowered by the new police uniform and the concomitant status now accorded to the "modern" city police, the constables might have felt themselves authorized to exert firmer control over the public, by violence if necessary. This factor might at least have played a role in the tensions between Javanese police and Chinese inhabitants.

We have already noted the specific ethnic and social–political tensions that existed between the police (most of them recognizably Javanese), on the one hand, and Chinese inhabitants, on the other. But European residents also criticized the police in a manner that suggests there were racial prejudices involved. In March 1914, the colonial authorities received an official request, signed by a number of prominent European inhabitants of Surabaya, asking them to amend the rude attitudes of the city police; the editor-in-chief of the *Nieuwe Soerabaja Courant* had his name at the top of the list. Complaints of this sort may reflect both on the unruly behavior of the police and the impatience of the Europeans, who felt themselves superior. For these "civilized" Europeans, it was hard to accept that subordinate police employees (the indigenous constables and European chief constables), who in their view were "morally and intellectually incapable of decent policing without committing violent excesses," were in charge of guarding their safety and even questioning and detaining their compatriots.[67]

In some cases, the aggressive conduct of the police seemed to have forged alliances between different groups in the city. The European petition against the police did not pass unnoticed in the Chinese press. When *Pewarta Soerabaia* heard about the initiative of the European citizens, its editors expressed the hope that they would succeed. The Semarang Chinese newspaper, *Sinar Djawa*, admonished its readers to take this as an example, and called on "Si Kromo" (a nickname used to indicate the common [Javanese] man) to do the same.[68] Indeed, as we have seen, public criticism of the police sometimes, and to a certain extent, did have an effect. The colonial government could not afford to have all these groups of citizens alienated by rude police conduct if it wanted to maintain consent and uphold its ethical pretences. The upheaval that resulted from the forceful police response to the Chinese riots, and the continuous criticism of the police—despite the additional reforms of 1912 and 1914—can be taken

[67] Request, March 2, 1914, signed by E. van Ghere, editor-in-chief of the local newspaper *Nieuwe Soerabaja Courant*, and 619 other inhabitants of Surabaya, directed to both the Minister of Colonies and the *resident* of Surabaya, in NA, MvK, V March 31, 1914, p. 99.

[68] *Pewarta Soerabaia*, February 14, 1914; "Politie dan publiek," *Sinar Djawa*, March 6, 1914.

as evidence that the colonial state was weak and inefficient, not omnipotent. It seems that in colonial Indonesia—comparable to British colonial India, as analyzed by scholars noted above—it was the state's failures to control its own police force, "rather than the brutally effective use of this organization, that fueled resentment among the population."[69]

2. Police and Sarekat Islam: Who's Policing Whom?

A specific party that represented the indigenous public and often had direct dealings with the police (just as the police had dealings with them) was the Sarekat Islam (SI). Founded in 1912, one of the first social and economic emancipation movements that took form in the first two decades of the twentieth century in the Netherlands Indies, the SI very soon found itself under surveillance by the colonial authorities. The relationship between police and SI was characterized by an interesting double tension, or ambivalence. On the one hand, the laws concerning assembly and association authorized the police to monitor SI meetings and supervise social protests in which the SI was involved. At the same time, not only was SI engaged in watching and evaluating the police efforts to control thievery and illegal gambling in the *kampong* (as the Surabayan SI newspaper, *Oetoesan Hindia*, clearly shows), in fact, the SI was also acting in competition with the police by providing alternative forms of security to the indigenous population.

The first big public meeting of the SI, which took place in the city gardens of Surabaya on January 26, 1913, proved to be another test case for the newly "modernized" police of Surabaya. This meeting attracted around ten thousand enthusiastic followers, who came from inside and outside the city, a crowd so large that several thousand people had to gather outside the park. A day before this meeting, the arrival of the popular *hadji*, Samahoedin, recognized as the founder of the SI, filled Kotta station with five thousand onlookers, all shouting with joy. The train bringing Samahoedin to Surabaya was hardly able to enter the station, and Samahoedin was carried over the heads of the crowd to the car that would transport him to the party office.[70] These two indigenous mass gatherings (and their liveliness) were unprecedented at the time and were perceived as extraordinary both by the colonial authorities and the European public in general. The police were prominently present at both occasions.

At the massive reception at Kotta station—a spontaneous gathering—the European chief superintendent and his superintendents (also European), accompanied by a team of Javanese constables, made certain that order was maintained. The next day, SI party-leader Tjokroaminoto exhorted his "brothers" not to fear the police or listen to slander (apparently spread by the police in Malang) implying that the SI had come to Surabaya just to collect money from its members. In reaction to this statement, the *patih*, representing the *regent* of Surabaya, had the final word. He in principle agreed with the

[69] Campion, "Watchmen of the Raj," pp. 1–2; Chandavarkar, "Police and Public Order in Bombay, 1880–1947."

[70] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, January 27, 1913; A. P. E. Korver, *Sarekat Islam 1912–1916: Opkomst, Bloei en Structuur van Indonesië's Eerste Massabeweging* (Amsterdam: Historisch Seminarium, Universiteit van Amsterdam, 1982) pp. 23–24.

aims of the SI, but at the same time defended the police, insisting that they were not trying to undermine the party.[71] These two interpretations of the police attitude towards the SI tell us something about the ambivalent position of the police, stretched between their tasks of enforcing political order (which often requires force) and ensuring public safety (which requires some public cooperation and trust).

SI leaders consciously watched and anticipated police responses to their meetings. Sometimes they also managed to have a say in police proceedings. The police response to a large SI demonstration that took place in Surabaya three years later, on June 25, 1916, showed just how carefully the police prepared for such events; that care in turn reveals the extent to which these mass demonstrations concerned local authorities. A few days before this huge SI gathering was scheduled, local authorities (the *assistent-wedono* of Kranang) admonished the Surabayan SI leadership to warn SI members that, following the orders of the *assistent-resident* of Surabaya, who anticipated disruptions, participants would be forbidden from bringing their *tjapil tjekoetoek* (bamboo hat, *lontar* cap) to the meeting. However, the president of the Surabayan SI, Soehardjo, convinced the *assistent-resident* that there was no need to fear any trouble, that members only brought the hats to meetings because they came directly from work, and that he would instruct people in attendance to stay calm (as he did in *Oetoesan Hindia*). The *assistent-resident* subsequently gave in and lifted the ban on the hats. Significantly, at the meeting itself Soehardjo changed his tune, expressing his wish that the *tjapil tjekoetoek* should become a symbol of the unity of the SI, thus consciously making it a weapon of the weak.[72]

On the day of this SI meeting, the police were organized by 6:00 AM, when the European superintendents and a group of Javanese constables gathered at police headquarters, all sufficiently armed. In addition, members of the *pangreh praja* had warned the heads of the Surabaya *kampongs* to stay alert and make sure that no gatherings took place. In some places, leaders forbade the wearing of *lontar* caps, apparently to no avail.[73] On behalf of the city police, ten groups of constables were dispatched to eight different bridges in town—the bridges Bibis, Diagalan, Goebeng-Pegirian, Peneleh, Simpang, Sonokembang, Willemskade, and Wonokromo—where they set up patrols and posts, assigned to break up indigenous crowds, letting people pass only one by one. Meanwhile, the houses of the *resident* and those of two influential Chinese (Tjoan King, in Nagel, and Han Tjan Goan, in *kampong* Doro) were guarded. The indigenous police personnel who had come home from the nightshift were sent back to their posts; these overtime duties earned them a reimbursement of twenty-five cents. The chief superintendent and his staff inspected the different posts by car to ensure the security forces were ready.[74]

Around 4,500 SI members, mostly from Surabaya, attended this general meeting, which was again held in the city gardens. Not all of them could have heard the speech of Semaoen, representative from the national SI congress in Bandung, on the *pergerakan* of the indigenous population within the whole of the Netherlands Indies, and all over

[71] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, January 27, 1913.

[72] *Oetoesan Hindia*, June 24 and 27, 1916.

[73] *Oetoesan Hindia*, June 27, 1916.

[74] *Weekblad voor Indië*, February 7, 1916.

Asia, and on the rights of this group to have a people's council. Neither could they all have heard Soehardjo's warning that participants should avoid confronting the police during the demonstration that would follow. After the close of this meeting, the SI members—all wearing their conspicuous *lontar* caps, marked with the initials *SI*—marched in a long row around the city gardens, singing and shouting with joy and being cheered enthusiastically by onlookers. The SI meeting ended at 10:30 AM. Again, there were no disruptive incidents, as the *Weekblad voor Indië* reported boastfully, showing a picture of "The Police Measures." This picture featured a few constables and European superintendents proudly posing at the port of the Pasar Malam, where the demonstration had passed by.[75] But however proud the European constables appeared in the photograph, it was not only on their account that this mass demonstration had gone smoothly, but also on the account of the SI-leaders' cooperation and their authority over their followers. It remains a matter of discussion who was really in charge here.

A selective reading of *Oetoesan Hindia* articles shows that the SI evaluated the police according to the norms defining a modern, civilized police force, an institution responsible for ensuring public safety not only by combating crime, but also through "civilizing" measures, preventative efforts to make unlawful citizens behave. And the judgment of *Oetoesan Hindia* regarding the police's accomplishments was not very positive. Although this newspaper registered the successes of the new city police forces in Surabaya and elsewhere—with regard to combating illegal activities such as gambling, prostitution, and public (European) drunkenness—the predominant tone was suspicious or distrustful toward the police.[76] *Oetoesan Hindia* noted the lack of (effective) policing in the indigenous *kampong*, police failures in combating gambling and thievery, police discrimination and corruption, and, worse, police dependency on private and powerful leadership in town.[77] *Oetoesan Hindia* even concluded that security in Surabaya owed more to wealthy individuals—in this case, a Chinese factory owner—hiring police than to the police force provided by the government.[78] Given this perspective, it comes as no surprise that the SI offered its own, alternative forms of security at certain public events involving its members.

More than once, SI took on the role of enforcing security, in some cases supporting local protest movements. In one such case in 1914, the residents of a private estate called Simo, in Surabaya, refused to pay half their rice harvest to the landowner as required. The SI not only took charge of defending the rights of the inhabitants and laborers on this estate, but they also installed *gardu*, guard posts, to guarantee their safety. According to *Het Vrije Woord*, the monthly newspaper of the radical Indies' Social Democratic Society (ISDV, Indische Sociaal-Democratische Vereeniging), this

[75] *Weekblad voor Indië*, July 2, 1916.

[76] On police successes in arresting thieves, see *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 8, 1914, January 15, 1914, January 28, 1914; on putting an end to gambling, see *Oetoesan Hindia*, February 28, 1914; on solving a murder case, see *Oetoesan Hindia*, November 14, 1918; and on combating prostitution, see *Oetesan Hindia*, October 3, 1919. Also, *Oetoesan Hindia* reported the arrest of a *rampok* gang by the police in Bandung, January 12, 1914. For a story on drunken Europeans, see *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 6, 1914.

[77] On the police failure to end the practice of gambling, see *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 7, 1914; on the lack of police or "weak" (*kendor*) police in the *kampong*, see *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 7, 1914, January 15, 1914; and on corrupt police, see *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 6, 1914, January 15, 1914, November 16, 1918.

[78] "Peri Hal Liem Tjien Kiet," *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 6, 1914.

action by SI worked to the disadvantage of the indigenous population, since it was illegal.[79] This case illustrates wonderfully the competition between SI and the police in taking care of public safety.

There are many other examples of the SI initiating its own security operations.[80] One problematic case involved both the police from Surabaya and the SI. The events took place on the main road from Surabaya to Grissee, just a few kilometers outside the city, near *desa* Tambakredjo. On May 5, 1913, a group of inhabitants of Tambakredjo, all armed with knives and hoes, attacked a European named Lammers Lisnet, director of the Kawi Caera Cultuurmaatschappij (Kawi Caera Plantation Company), and his Javanese driver. The villagers were outraged because the European's car had hit one of their boys as he was crossing the road. Lammers Lisnet had offered to bring the boy to the hospital in Surabaya, but his offer failed to placate the crowd. He and his driver were forcefully separated, and the driver was beaten until he bled. Then the crowd turned and went after the "Londo" (vernacular Javanese abbreviation for *Hollander*, also used as a nickname), who in the meantime had found a *pacol* (hoe) to use for self-defense, and who screamed that he would kill those who planned to kill him. A chief constable and two constables of Surabaya's city police, armed with *klewang* (swords), assisted by a member of the *desa* police, ran to the aid of Lammers Lisnet, but this company was too small to control the angry villagers. They faced a signature dilemma: how could they resolve this conflict in a professional, decent way and prevent a bloodbath without losing authority?

For a moment they seemed to have reached an impasse. The chief constable suggested getting the *assistent-wedono* to lead an investigation into the accident, adding that if the *toewan*[81] would be found guilty, he would be put in jail; in addition, at the request of the *desa* residents, he commanded Lammers Lisnet to get rid of his weapon. The villagers were not satisfied, however. They maintained that they did not care for the police or the *assistent-wedono*, but that the president of the SI would decide for them who was right and who was wrong. Then a Chinese passing by in his car, coming from Tuban, stopped and changed the balance of power with his Browning revolver. The ominous atmosphere finally dissipated with the arrival of the *assistent-wedono*, and, coming from Surabaya, superintendent J. A. van Haarlem, who arrived with four constables. The boy was brought to the hospital. The police investigation led to the arrest of 114 inhabitants of Tambakredjo, with eight of them found guilty of inciting the crowd's aggressions. After two days of interrogations, 105 of the detainees were released. They were all said to be members of SI, including the head of the *desa*, who

[79] *Het Vrije Woord*, March 25, 1917.

[80] One famous case at the time concerned the riots in Tangeran, where the police were assisted by a large group of SI members in an operation against Chinese gamblers. See *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, May 26, 1913, May 28, 1913, June 12, 1913. A secret report in NA, MvK, V August 9, 1913, p. B13 mentions seven disruptive incidents that took place in Surabaya and the hinterlands in the period March–May 1913 (including the case involving Lammers Lisnet). See also *Neratja*, December 30, 1918 (in IPO 1, 1919) or the complaints published in the *Javabode*, October 1, 1913, about Sarekat Islam taking responsibility for security instead of the police, as quoted in "Het Politiewezen in de Binnenlanden van Java," *Indische Gids* 36, I (1914): 69–70.

[81] "Gentleman," term of address used by Indonesians addressing Dutchmen, reflecting the racial colonial hierarchy.

had clearly failed in his duty to provide local *desa* police for security and maintain law and order in the *desa*.[82]

The case of Lammers Lisnet illustrates how the inhabitants of Tambakredjo, possibly empowered by their membership in SI, felt strong enough to take the law into their own hands. From their perspective, the SI was more reliable than the traditional leadership (the *assistent-wedono*) in protecting their security, and they seem to have regarded the police as adversaries rather than allies. In reporting on this incident, the *Soerabajasch Handelsblad* bluntly took sides with the European, Lammers Lisnet. The more progressive and liberal newspaper from Semarang, *De Locomotief*, however, showed some sympathy for the village men. This daily remarked on the carelessness of automobile drivers who crossed the city and *kampong* at outrageous speeds, without any consideration for the people moving at a slower pace around them.[83] All in all, it was the Chinese man with the Browning revolver who finally brought back law and order. The police in this situation proved to be a weak force.

3. The Traffic Constable: Symbol and Victim of Power

In fact, automobile traffic and automobile accidents attracted the attention of many newspapers in the region at this time, both European and indigenous.[84] Traffic control was another responsibility of a modern police force, and the traffic constable and his importance as a symbol are worth considering in this context.

In response to the quickly changing outlook and organization of the city, the police in Surabaya not only had to adjust to their own reorganization, but also to novel safety and security problems. This was most apparent in their efforts to control traffic. The growing traffic in the streets of Surabaya and the continuous developments in road building, asphalt-paving of roads, and the construction of the electric tram network all necessitated the rapid expansion of the police's traffic department (*afdeeling Voerwezen*), which fell under the authority of the main department of general control. During this period, the Javanese traffic constable made his first appearance, standing on the so-called "hatbox" *(hoedendoos)* in the middle of a busy intersection, attempting to direct the chaos around him—a showpiece of the modern colonial police force.[85] The traffic

[82] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, May 5, 1913, May 6, 1913, May 7, 1913. Unfortunately, local indigenous and Chinese newspapers either did not mention this case, or these newspapers were not available for this period.

[83] *De Locomotief*, May 7, 1913.

[84] For example: "Anak mendjalankan auto," *Oetoesan Hindia*, February 5, 1914 (on a thirteen-year-old girl driving a car and honking the horn loudly with an official driver beside her. The newspaper commented: "You see this almost everyday"); "Bahaja auto," *Oetoesan Hindia*, February 25, 1914 (Dangerous car hits European, the *politieoppas* remains passive); "Auto jang Boba," *Oetoesan Hindia*, June 24, 1916 (on Yogyakarta, the *assistent-resident* admonishes drivers not to drive too "wildly"); "Pengemoekan auto," *Neratja*, December 31, 1918, a piece on so-called "car-killings"; "Kelindas auto," *Oetoesan Hindia*, December 22, 1919 (twelve-year-old child hit by a car); "Pengemoekan auto IV," *Neratja*, January 20, 1919 (admonishing the police to require drivers to pass an exam before they get their license).

[85] Sometimes to no avail. See the short film "Het Straatverkeer op Pasar Besar, 15 Juli 1929," ed. Eerste Soerabaiasch Kinematografisch Atelier (Soerabaja: 1929), which is one of the short colonial movies on the compilation DVD *Van de kolonie Niets dan Goed. Nederlands-Indië in Beeld 1912–1942*, ed. Mark-Paul Meyer (Amsterdam, Filmmuseum, 2001). Hoorweg complained about the traffic police's apparent lack of training in a secret memorandum on the state of the city police in Surabaya, Batavia, and Semarang, "Het rapport—Van Helsdingen inzake de werking van de organisatie der politie op de grote hoofdplaatsen van

constable embodied society's new awareness of the speed that characterized this period and evoked so many insecurities, both for the public (Surabaya's inhabitants and the press, as well as the new social movements) and the police. Traffic, communication, moneymaking, the spread of ideas, and decision-making all seemed to be moving at a new, higher rate of speed. The traffic constable also symbolized the civilizing role of the police, its new visibility, and its apparent neutrality. In short, he was the symbol of the Netherlands-Indies' modern police.

In this symbolic role, it was the traffic constable, of all the constables on duty, who was the most visible, seen and often encountered by all the different population groups in Surabaya. He was the easiest to complain to or about—and the easiest to find. The traffic constable can therefore act as a yardstick in our analysis of the new police at work in rapidly changing Surabaya and of the relation between the police and the public, and between the police and Surabaya's competing tools of state security. We should bear in mind that it was not only the police who had to adjust to their new tasks and altered surroundings, but also the public, Surabaya's inhabitants, who had to get used to the appearance and responsibilities of the new police. How and to what extent did this influence daily policing?

Traffic regulations were not centralized, and, at the time, were in the process of formulation. Whether or not to enforce a speed limit was still a matter of discussion in Surabaya's city council. While the council debated, the police had to deal with speeding vehicles that were new to everyone—both drivers and pedestrians. Thus, as we have seen, car accidents were featured in the daily newspapers and were counted in the city's yearly reports. In early 1912, legal cases against three European drivers, who had each hit and killed a Javanese pedestrian, involved testimony from experts on speed, testimony concerning the possible speed of the car, and even discussions of the meaning and function of the accelerator.[86] Automobile speed was a rather vague, relative construct in a time when there was no speed limit. And it remained so; despite the continuing problems and accidents taking place on Surabaya's streets, the city council ultimately decided against imposing a speed limit, citing the city's burgeoning north–south commuter traffic as the reason for their decision. "With a speed limit, industrious Surabaya could not have coped with its traffic pressure," a former European citizen of Surabaya recalled approvingly.[87]

Java," March 1, 1924, 5 AP/insp, in NA, MvK, V March 9, 1925, p. 3. Yet note how Furnivall praises the traffic police, identifying them as evidence of the modernity of the Netherlands Indies' police: J. S. Furnivall, *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), p. 299.

[86] One of those car accidents—the case against Wijnschenk—caused great indignation in Surabaya after the police report was published in the local press. Apparently the car, which struck a Javanese water bearer near the Red Bridge (in the north), dragged the victim on its fender for a couple of meters until the man fell off and was run over and killed. After this, the driver, the European businessman Wijnschenk, continued on his way, leaving the dead body where it fell. In court, discussion about the speed of the car went on at length, as did discussion on whether the victim should have been able to see and avoid the oncoming automobile. On the case of Wijnschenk, see *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, April 2, 1912, April 3, 1912, April 11, 1912. The other two accidents I am referring to were known as "the Etty case" (*Javabode*, January 30, 1912) and "The new car accident in Surabaya" (*Javabode*, January 29, 1912).

[87] Faber, *Nieuw Soerabaja*, p. 113

Soon after traffic regulations were imposed at the Pasar Besar railway crossing, the *Soerabajasch Handelsblad* published reactions of car-owning readers, who experienced these measures as annoying "traffic obstruction."

> This morning, when a train passed at a quarter to nine, cars had to line up in a long row because of the impractical police response, which split up the route for car traffic in two parts. [...] One has to ask if this is tolerable. Time is money, in Surabaya as well as other places. It won't do to obstruct the traffic on the main road of Surabaya like that![88]

This account, rife with irritation, illustrates how the impatient time-is-money mentality of the reporter and his enterprising compatriots might color their view of Surabaya's indigenous city police.

Because of his visibility, the traffic constable was an easy target—for public criticism or for worse. Public complaints about the traffic police show that these officers often resorted to violence as a means of persuasion. At the same time, these complaints illuminate the complex task of the Javanese traffic constable working in the context of the racial bias that dominated colonial society. For what could he do with those Europeans unwilling to take orders from a Javanese constable? If the constable assumed that Europeans would ignore his commands and so made no effort to control or penalize the wrongdoers, his inequitable enforcement of the law was liable to attract the attention of the indigenous press.[89] If he did try to enforce the law—with force when necessary—the European offender could bring charges against him, and in such cases, the European was often successful. For example, in February 1913, citizen H., a European, submitted a complaint against the police, alleging mistreatment. H. had been watching workers clear away a tram that had derailed a few days before at Pasar Besar. A traffic constable, a Javanese, ordered him to move away in a rude manner, according to H. Offended by his tone, H. refused. They got into a heated argument, rough words were exchanged, and finally the constable used his baton. As proof that he had been attacked, H. showed the bloody scores on his upper body.[90] H. did not discuss the merit of the constable's instructions, only his aggression. Could it be the case that he, a European, felt it humiliating to be commanded by a Javanese? If so, he was ignoring, or refusing to recognize, whether consciously or unconsciously, with racist motives or not, the status and authority of the traffic constable.

Lost in Arms

Let us now turn to the relation between the police—in this case, the traffic police—and a very specific sector in town: the soldiers and marines housed in barracks in

[88] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, January 30, 1913. Compare *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, April 2, 1912, "The traffic at Pasar Besar."

[89] For example, see *Oetoesan Hindia*, January 6, 1914, which describes how *streep kuning* are often afraid to deal with drunken Europeans in dokars and cars; *Oetoesan Hindia*, March 11, 1918, on an *assistent-wedono*, accompanied by an *oppasser*, who complained that a European who had been speeding and hit his car had failed to apologize or pay for damages. The European involved in the case was angry because the *assistent-wedono* only kept silent (*diam sahadja*).

[90] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, February 12, 1913; compare the case of Nix against *politieoppasser* Soerokerto and Soemoredjo (who hit Nix with their *klewang*) in *Pewarta Soerabaja*, February 2, 1914.

Surabaya. What kind of complications arose when the police had to address their competitors in the use of state arms?

In October 1919, fights took place between the military and the police, in which the traffic police played an unhappy role precisely because its representatives were so easy to find. The trouble began on Saturday night, October 13, 1919, when fights broke out between about twenty non-European soldiers leaving a big public party, held in the house of an ethnic Chinese resident, and the traffic police at Boengoenan, including one European chief constable and four Javanese constables. It is likely that the traffic constables were responsible not only for regulating traffic but also for monitoring this public party (or *pasar malam,* night party).[91] Although the precise cause of the fights seems unclear—the official police and military reports told conflicting stories[92]—it seems that both sides provoked each other. This clash exemplifies a partly ethnic, partly competitive conflict between the police and another state-sponsored security force: soldiers garrisoned in a town, who by profession are charged with defending public safety, but who tend to be undisciplined when off-duty. The fact that almost all—or at least a large part—of these non-European soldiers were Ambonese, according to the reports, might have cast oil on the fire since the Ambonese held a high status in the military—above that of most Javanese soldiers—and the policemen attempting to control them were Javanese.

Two days later, on the evening of October 15 at around 6:00 PM, traffic constable Parto, who was posted at the intersection of Gatottan and Tempelstraat (in downtown Surabaya, close to the military barracks at Comedieplein), was attacked by a group of forty non-European soldiers from the Thirteenth Battalion who wanted to take revenge for the earlier clash. Two of them were armed with *klewang,* and thirty-eight of them carried *bajonets*. Helpless against this armed crowd, Parto was clubbed to death with his own baton and a *klewang*.

After the assault at Gatottan was reported (at 6:40 PM) at the nearby police section-post at Griseesche weg, the policemen available there—one chief inspector and four police inspectors (all Europeans)—bicycled to the aid of Parto. When they arrived at Tempelstraat, some soldiers who were just coming from the barracks misdirected them to Paradestraat, where they were pelted with stones by another group of soldiers. These policemen had been lured into an ambush. Chief Inspector S. fired warning shots into the air, and Inspector K. shot three times, in an attempt to stop the attack, reportedly to no avail. Then they opened fire against the soldiers, who were trying to retreat in the direction of another police post at Willemskade. Meanwhile, the group of soldiers had grown from 40 to about 150 men, all armed with *bajonets*. They followed the five policemen who were now joined by the section head of the police and another police inspector. The soldiers were marching in *tirailleur*-line, *bajonets* ready, one of them barking commands to attack. The two forces soon engaged each other, and another fight took place in Societeitsstraat. In this skirmish, one police inspector received a cut in the ribs from a soldier's *bajonet;* the section head lost his revolver. When police enforcement from the northern part of town arrived, the soldiers

[91] Both *Soerabajasch Handelsblad,* October 15, 1919, NA, Mr. 725x/1919 and *Soerabajasch Handelsblad,* October 13, 1919, mention "a party."

[92] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad,* October 13, 1919.

retreated. The police who had responded to this incident were now concentrated in the area around Societeitsstraat, Gattotan, and Bibis. Civilians passing by in automobiles offered car rides, one for the transport of the two wounded policemen and one for the superintendent from the Oedjoeng section.[93]

Violent conflicts between soldiers and marines, on the one hand, and police, on the other, occurred in a number of garrison towns, including Semarang and Batavia, in those years.[94] It must have frightened spectators in this case to see armed soldiers and police scouring the center of Surabaya, hunting for each other. The *Soerabajasch Handelsblad* reporter touched on this sore spot: "Soldiers, whose assistance the police must count on in circumstances beyond their control in order to save us, civilians, these same soldiers turned against the police."[95] *Pewarta Soerabaia* found it disturbing that such a small incident—a quarrel at a Chinese party—could lead to such a violent confrontation.[96]

In the end, constable Parto had the bad luck to be a traffic constable, a conspicuous and vulnerable figure, easy for soldiers who resented the police to pick out and attack. Of course, Parto was also a visible representative of the state, a position that earned him a lavish posthumous farewell. Resolved to demonstrate the importance of their new city police force, authorities in Surabaya honored Parto with a stately funeral. His coffin was followed by a procession that firmly underlined the colonial hierarchy: behind the police inspectors, head constables, and Dutch East Indian constables was a long line of carriages carrying the acting/temporary *resident*, the *controleur*, the adjunct-captain (as a representative of the colonel-commander of the army division), the chief superintendent of police, the superintendents and heads of the police departments and sections, the chief inspectors, and the *patih* of Surabaya. Behind the carriages marched a crowd of indigenous police constables. Present at the graveyard in Tembok were the commander of the Thirteenth Battalion, his adjutant, and a deputation of lower-ranking military men. All parties publicly expressed their regrets about what had happened. It was, all in all, an important funeral, as *Pewarta Soerabaia* concluded.[97] That night, following the ceremony, the *resident* and military commanders crossed the town by car to check on conditions in the streets, but no further clashes between police and soldiers occurred. All was quiet again in Surabaya.[98]

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[93] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, October 15, 1919; NA, Mr. 725/1919.

[94] On Semarang, see *Javabode*, April 18, 1912. On Batavia, see *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, October 15, 1919. In May 1916 a group of marines and policemen fought each other after the police attempted to suppress a marine demonstration near the marine hospital in Surabaya. This incident caused great indignation; people decried the brutal behavior of the police. Both bystanders and others who had heard about the incident sent complaints to the newspapers. See *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, May 7, 1916, May 8, 1916, and May 9, 1916.

[95] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, October 15, 1919.

[96] *Pewarta Soerabaia*, October 15, 1919. On October 22, 1919, *Oetoesan Hindia* also expressed its concerns in "Lagi satoe" (another one).

[97] "Pengoeboeroean penting," *Pewarta Soerabaia*, October 17, 1919.

[98] *Soerabajasch Handelsblad*, October 16, 1919.

Conclusion

A dreadful image of the Surabaya police appears from the cases described in this article. The police in the case of the so-called Chinese riots were powerless and laughable; the police watching the Sarekat Islam demonstration powerless and pathetic, the police regulating the traffic and facing soldiers powerless and tragic. Before we draw any general conclusions out of these dramas, we should note, however, that this dreadful image might be distorted to some extent, since archives and newspapers are more likely to leave us pictures of the rough, the powerlessness, the laughable, the pathetic, and the dramatic. When everything goes well there is no news.

In part because of such fiascos, which highlight the challenges and dilemmas faced by the police, the Surabayan city police figured as an important test case for the colonial authorities who wished to institute modern policing in a would-be civilized state: a state that felt the need to reinforce internal defense, in response to indigenous nationalist movements, but aspired at the same time to earn the consent of its subjects by preventing violence as successfully as possible. Motivated by fear and concern, the state was serious in its intentions to provide an effective, professional, and civilized police force by implementing rules and regulations considered "modern," introducing professional leadership, and offering incentives to the subordinate ranks by raising salaries, improving working conditions, and increasing opportunities for promotion. The modern police were the face of the ethical colonial state, and reformers hoped that face would be "modern." However, in practice, "modern" policing in Surabaya still required that the recruits take care of the dirty work of empire, activities that soiled their own image and marked them as tools of a violent state.

In the multi-ethnic, densely populated, and busy city of Surabaya—which was itself located in a colonial society grounded on racial discrimination—it was hard to convince the public that the newly reformed police force was accomplishing good works. This was partly because this force was not always as "civilized" in practice as it was supposed to be; its rough behavior provoked the indignation of the European, Chinese, and indigenous press and embarrassed the colonial authorities. The general public distrust of the police may also be explained by the fact that this city police force, constituted largely of European leaders and Javanese subordinates, was not representative of Surabaya's ethnically mixed population and tended to discriminate against particular indigenous ethnic groups. For this reason, many ethnic residents of the city, and the journalists who catered to them, observed the police with suspicion.

Lack of control was the main reason why this experiment in modern, civilized policing failed. Weak control over the police resulted in lax discipline, which in turn weakened the authority of individual policemen, a situation that can spark frustration and rough behavior, as demonstrated by the police officer who fumigated suspects to force confessions. Furthermore, understandable general public distrust made it hard for the police to accomplish their task of ensuring public safety, a task that demands cooperation from the public. In their attempts to control disorder (or what they perceived as disorder), the police provoked public hostility, which in turn tended to incite a violent police response. Moreover, weak points within the police organization itself help explain why ideals on paper were not successfully translated into more "civilized" police conduct on the streets. Partly for economic reasons, measures

intended to professionalize the police force were not systematically extended to the lower ranks. Low-ranking recruits were, like their predecessors in the Bailiff-era, barely trained, poorly paid, and loosely supervised. Thus, old methods of policing were perpetuated despite, and alongside, the campaign to institute a modern police force. What's more, since the force was organized with a minority of Europeans, originating from inside and outside the Netherlands Indies, occupying the higher ranks, and a majority of Javanese officers in the subordinate ranks, it was impossible to create unity or an *esprit de corps*, however much chief superintendent Boon might have wished for it.

If we consider the distance between the actual aims of the city police reformers and the practice of modern policing in Surabaya, we must conclude (following Campion and Chandavarkar) that it was the lack of adequate control over the police, more than the consciously brutal use of the police by the colonial state, that allowed violence to flourish throughout the state and thereby alienated its subjects. The question remains whether a stronger colonial state would have allowed for a lesser degree of violence.