

Hi my name is Ligia Giay. I am so sorry that I cannot be there live. Like so many people, covid got me. I apologise if anything I say sounds disjointed or unclear, I have not finished thinking about this. When Suzanne invited me to speak, it took me a while to think about whether I can say anything of use. Let me just begin by saying I am not a colonial apologist; I believe colonialism was a violent oppressive system that spared very few, and I am not surprised that dismantling it took violence. People who were involved had fervour, anger and desperation which not a lot of us have experienced. I am not certain people that experienced it at that time could replicate or return to the feeling. I suspect it is one of those you had-to-be-there moments.

Yet it evokes so much emotion. Recently Bonnie Triyana's article on the term *bersiap* caused a lot of furore in NL. The backlash against it caused anger among Indonesians. The period is sensitive and loaded with meaning for people in NL and Indonesia, but very pointedly not among Papuans. I could not find one single Papuan angry about this. I am a Papuan who studies history and I am still trying to figure out why this period means so little to me emotionally.

For me, the Revolusi period is a precursor to the eventual Indonesian takeover of Dutch New Guinea in 1963. There is a part of me that guesses that it has to do with Indonesian national history which taught me that Papua was saved and integrated to a post-colonial state that was almost complete in the 1960s. Papuans were mostly absent in Indonesian national history before this. I suspect this is why even after nine years of Indonesian history education in school, I cannot muster a reading where this period means more for Papuans. At its core is perhaps my strong ambivalence of current Indonesia combined with deep understanding that Dutch colonialism was violent and exploitative. The Revolusi period saw the clash between the two, both were and are institutions I have no investments in, and their collision as violent and emotional as it was, feels very remote to me. This is Dutch colonial history, this is Indonesian colonial history, it is just not mine. I am a fragment in both, but I feel nothing.

This is not to say that I do not understand the emotion around this period at all. I think I do a little. But my emotional understanding of 1945-1949 does not have roots in the events itself, but in present Papuan circumstances. It is through current circumstances in Papua that I understand what it feels like to be immensely unsatisfied with a daily life filled with violence, injustice and impunity. Living in Papua, with all the land grabs, journalist restrictions, restrictions on freedom of expression, refugee crises, and military operations make you sense a seething anger bubbling beneath the surface of everyday interactions. I wonder whether people felt that way during Dutch colonisation. I suspect they did. Here, now, at the margin of Indonesia, a lot of Papuans are keenly aware that Indonesia is not final, we don't have to make do or accept things as they are. The legitimacy of the state does not hinge on outsiders, it hinges on us. This thing is not legitimate, it is not done until we say it is. I suspect people living under Dutch colonisation felt the same.

For me the violence of Revolution is not an outlier; colonial societies are violent and the only measure available to hinder its outburst was the prospect of violence too. Hence, even in my most detached I agree with Bonnie Triyana. The word *bersiap* evokes in me the same sense that the word 'run amok' in the archives do; it is an admission of the outburst and the obfuscation of everyday violence. The word and the designation of the period sequesters

and removes it from the violence that was always there to maintain colonial order. To me what occurred was not a society descending into chaos; it was a society that revealed itself.