

The subjective factor in cultural change

Between political strategies and ethical idea(l)s:
D. A. Rinkes, a 'Marginal Man in the colonial Context'

by Doris Jedamski

The Netherlands Indies in the year 1917: D.A. Rinkes, until this time the acting Adviser for Native Affairs, takes over as Director of the *Kantoor voor de Volkslectuur I Balai Poestaka*. With that Rinkes advances to a position that had not been in existence beforehand. In the 10 years prior to this it had been the - primarily honorary - responsibility of the Commissie voor de *Volkslectuur* to supply the indigenous population with approved reading matter.

It would hardly appear to be a spectacular historical event that this task, which had developed from the demands of the Ethical Policy, was now to be transferred to a formally independent colonial institution. Despite the ensuing costs, the official justification for this decision seemed quite plausible:

"The urgent demand for reorganization has gradually grown in order to intensify the work of Volkslectuur and to allow a more systematic line of action. For this reason a well-organized and sufficiently equipped office has to be established and the Office for Popular Literature separated from the Office of the Adviser for Native Affairs."

In fact, however, this seemingly rationally motivated decision was one of those "historic accidents" (Herskovits 1948:490) capable of changing the course of historical developments. Internal documents reveal that the *Kantoor voor de Volkslectuur* was by no means intended as an ethically motivated measure for the benefit of the indigenous population, but rather a 'welcome accident' instrumentalized by the colonial administration to achieve desired consequence in matters of personnel policy.

When G. A. J. Hazeu departed for Europe in connection with his home-leave in 1913, evidently nobody seriously reckoned with the possibility that he would afterwards return to the Netherlands Indies. But to the surprise of the personnel planners, the former Adviser for Native Affairs announced his intended return and thereby posed an embarrassing problem for the administration. In the meantime, D. A. Rinkes, the former Adjunct Adviser and previously subordinate to Hazeu, had taken over his position. It was out of question in either of the two

In an interview in 1988 Pramoedya emphasized the role of Rinkes so that I began to extend my search for material beyond the measure originally planned. The results of this documentation have partly been handled in my dissertation which was completed in 1990 and partly in an article which has appeared in 1992 in *Archipel*. In addition to this already utilized material this paper discusses material which to my knowledge has not yet been published. I would like to express my gratitude to Pramoedya.

² *Het werd van lieverlede een dringende eisch in de organisatie zoodanige verandering te brengen dat de belangen der Volkslectuur intensiever en meer systematisch ter hand konden worden genomen, daarvoor een goed georganiseerd en geoutilleerd bureau in te richten en het bureau voor de Volkslectuur of te scheiden van dat van den Adviseur voor Inlandsche zaken" (Mededeelingen 1926:43). This and following other translations are by the author unless specifically labelled "Original".*

cases to give notice or to demote someone to a lower-ranking post. So it became necessary to quickly provide a second position of at least the same rank and pay-level.

Rinkes' handling of his official duties as well as his private conduct had, however, in the meantime provoked the displeasure and distrust of his superiors. As it happened, Rinkes had to spend a relatively long period in Jeddah in an official connection just at the time that negotiations were taking place regarding the new administrative structure. Without having to fear his direct -- and presumably vehement -- contradiction, his opponents had a favourable opportunity to promote the politically undesirable adviser to a remoter position. Hardly any nook of the colonial administrative structure could better serve the real intention than Volkslectuur(which had until this point been rather insignificant) -- namely to put great distance between Rinkes and the extremely sensitive political decision-making process.

In a letter from March 10, 1917, Hazeu informed the General Governor about Rinkes' activities in Jeddah and suggested that the Colonial Ministry should be requested to extend the Jeddah-mission and thereafter send Rinkes on a trip to Europe.' The General Governor reacted on April 12 of the same year with the following telegram to the Colonial Minister

"Rinkes would be most usefully employed after leaving Djedda on study British islam policy in Egypt and India. I suppose Snouck will assent this very important, stop. If this impossible he can be charged here volkslectuur and press relation and find time scientific work, stop. Hazeu becoming political Adviser including technical mohammedan affairs but most important work will so fall to Hazeu - it seems necessary (... illegible, DJ) prewarn Rinkes what his position will be, stop. Also in case he agrees all will go more smoothly if his return delayed some months!"

Since Rinkes evidently had no desire to leave the Netherlands Indies in order to pursue Islamic studies elsewhere, the suggestion of the General Governor was carried out in September 1917: the Office of the Adviser for Native Affairs was divided into the *Kantoor voor de Volkslectuur en aanverwante aangelegenheden* on the one hand and the *Kantoor voor Inlandsche en Arabische Zaken* on the other hand. The original suggestion of the Governmental Secretary for the title had been: *Kantoor voor Persaangelegenheden en Volkslectuur* and *Kantoor voor Inlandsche en Mohammedansch Zaken* -- a description that more directly expresses the genuine interests of the colonial government. But the Council of the Netherlands Indies feared negative reactions from the indigenous population which could presume on the basis of the mention of the touchy items press and Islam that the intention was interference in these contested fields.⁵ Rinkes was instead designated *Hoofdamtenaar* of *Volkslectuur*(because the Council had made the tactful recommendation that a title be chosen that would not be reminiscent of *kantoorchef*); Hazeu received the title *Regeringscommissaris*. The Council of the

^a Openbare Verbalen 821; 5 May 11-52 (1634/10).

⁴ Openbare Verbalen 1673; 12 April 17-13 (Agenda 142/17). Orig.

⁵ Openbare Verboten 1771; 22 Dec. 17-45 (*Bijl.*4. 28.8.17).

Netherlands Indies had particularly emphasized that:

*"with a view to the indigenous public the impression has to be avoided that Hazeu's official position has been weakened or that the government was less interested in his function than was previously the case."*⁶

Thus the obligations of the colonial hierarchy and the indispensable tokens of respect were fulfilled. Regarding Rinkes' new position, the Council laconically determined:

"For Dr. Rinkes a field of activity has been created that in the future should better harmonize with his personal capabilities, a position that will help bring his obvious talents and good qualities to bear."

When the above-mentioned episode on the periphery of the Dutch colonial politics is viewed as a point of departure for a closer consideration of the following developments and the historic context, basic insights into the structure of cultural change come to light. The object of this paper is to provide an approach to structures of this type, not to provide an individual biography of Rinkes or to discuss his position on *Sarekat Islam*.⁸ Rather, the person Rinkes will be used to illustrate the importance of the subjective factor in cultural processes. In this connection the phenomenon of *Ungleichzeitigkeit*⁹, time lag, deserves particular attention -- a process which confronts historical developments with one another and proves to be a prerequisite for the effectiveness of the subjective factor.

The person Rinkes proved to be a point where the political and literary discourses of his time coincided. They had to do both with his personality structures and various sorts of time lag; as a result he brought about unexpected innovations. Rinkes was by no means the first colonial official in a political function who was also active in the literary field. But even though there were numerous examples of people who in personal union were both civil servants and culturally interested individuals, there was hardly any other case where the political and the literary discourse were consciously put into relation to one another and provided with new

⁶ *"Al weder in het bijzonder met het oog op het Inlandsche publiek, van overgroot belang dat alles de indruk worde vermeden als zou de ambtelyke stelling van dr. Hazeu zyn gedruht en de Regeering aan zyne functie niet meer de beteekenis van vroeger hechten"* (*Openbare Verbalen* 1771; 22 Dec 17-45).

⁷ *"Voor Dr. Rinhes zal aldus voorts een met zyn persoonlyhen aanleg beter harmonieerende werkkring zyn weggelegd, welke ooh zyn onmishenbare talenten en goede eigenschappen tot hun recht zal doen komen"* (*Openbare Verbalen* 1754; 20 Nov 17-43. 2169/15).

⁸ For a brief biography of Rinkes see Drewes (1961). Rinkes' position on *Sarekat Islam* is discussed in Shiraishi (1990), Korver (1982) and in greater detail in Pramoedya (1985). Selected archive material documenting the political attitude of the Adviser Rinkes towards *Sarekat Islam* can be found in Kwantes (1975-82) and Van der Wal (1967); here in particular regarding the first *Sarekat Islam* Report from the year 1913. Rinkes' second report from Nov. 30, 1915 is archived along with other related documents in the Orientalistic Department of the University of Leiden.

⁹ I trace the concept *Ungleichzeitigkeit* (non-simultaneousness, implicating a time lag between two events) back to Ogburn's term "*cultural lag*", coined already in the year 1922. Ogburn regarded for the most part the disparate course of development between scientific and technical innovations on the one hand and the social attitudes to these changes on the other hand. In contrast to this usage I would like to extend the term to include the subjective factor, i.e. the individual outlook on social phenomena as a possible pole. In the case to be handled here the specific subject Rinkes is in sociopolitical and cultural aspects ahead of his time.

intentions. Rinke represented -- and this is to be shown in this paper -- a social analysis and political tactics that were far ahead of his time; they were not understood and therefore met with rejection. This first *Ungleichzeitigkeit* plus Rinke's personality traits led him to turn the measures of subtle discrimination into their opposite so that he was finally able to exert enduring influence on segments of the colonial politics. In the process, a further *Ungleichzeitigkeit* came about, namely in connection with the socio-politically oriented appraisal of cultural artefacts in the colonial context. His position as an outsider opened up insights and vistas for Rinke that enabled him to try out the familiar in new constellations.' It was novel to conceive literature as being capable of being politically utilized. The majority of the colonial officials in Rinke's vicinity remained, for the most part due to their socialization, imprisoned in the thought and behaviour patterns of the 19th century. For this reason they could hardly regard Rinke's approach other than as strange or even threatening. His curriculum vitae had made Rinke to a "marginal man": a person between two eras and cultures." "It is (...) in the mind of the marginal man that the process of civilization is visibly going on, and it is in the mind of the marginal man that the process civilization may best be studied" (Park 1928:881).

Whenever the colonial official D. A. Rinke receives attention in research studies -- which only occurs very seldom -- his activity is reduced either to his function as the Adviser for Native Affairs or to his role as Director of the *Kantoor voor de Volkslectuur I Balai Poestaka*. Up until the present no attempt has been made to investigate the coordination of the two positions with one another. Rinke was a student and successor of Snouck Hurgronje's and G.A.J. Hazeu's and therefore he is generally regarded as being an upholder of their tradition; at the same time he (in contrast to the two above-mentioned personalities in the colonial politics of the Netherlands Indies) is regarded as being politically uninteresting and is therefore usually ignored. The lack of research interest is surprising when considering that Rinke for several years held high-ranking positions in politically explosive and culturally important fields. Pramoedya Ananta Toer deserves credit for having first drawn attention to the colonial-political importance of Rinke, in particular with reference to the Indonesian press:

"After examining numerous confidential documents Rinke produced, the question inevitably arises: Who exactly was Rinke?"¹²

D.A. Rinke as a man with an unconventional career

Do uwe Adolf Rinke was descended from an old established trade-oriented

¹⁰ According to Barnett the new element of an innovation lies in the re-configuration of the familiar. In turn it is in innovation that Barnett sees the basis of cultural change (1953:81).

¹¹ This concept is borrowed from Park (1928), but I would like to use it in an extended sense, not limited to the inter-ethnic context. Rather, I believe the concept offers a possibility for describing intra-ethnic experiences of foreignness like those of individuals who happen to fall or break out of the still dominant value pattern within the framework of processes of cultural change.

¹² *"Setelah banyak mengihut surat-surat rahasianya tentu timbul pertanyaan : siapasebenarnya Rinke?"* (Pramoedya 1985:169)

family in Joure, Friesland. On his own initiative the 21-year-old Rinkes travelled to Java in 1899 where he first found employment in the Botanical Garden in Bogor due to his agricultural and forestry training. Following a three year training in Batavia for service as a colonial official with Hazeu and Ph. S. van Ronkel as his major instructors, he was sent to the west coast of Sumatra at the end of 1903 as a candidate for a controller position in the domestic administration. But after a single year Rinkes had to return to Java for health reasons. There he was assigned to the General Secretary's Office for a short time. Thereafter he was released from colonial service for a time and he used this period for university studies in Leiden. Despite his illness he managed to complete a course of studies which generally required five years in only three years. With astonishing speed Rinkes succeeded (under the guidance of prominent instructors such as Snouck Hurgronje, Ophuijsen, Vreede and Speyer) in gaining knowledge of Sanskrit and the cultural history of India, in Malay and Arabian Studies, in Islam, and Javanese philology.

After achieving his doctor's degree, Rinkes returned to the Netherlands Indies early in 1910 and took up a job as a teacher for the Javanese language at Department B of the *Koning Willem III* secondary school in Batavia. Now Rinkes was a colleague of the same instructors he had received his own colonial training from a few years earlier. Toward the end of the same year, Rinkes was appointed consultant in indigenous languages. It was in this connection that he for the first time came into direct contact with the *Commissie voor de Volkslectuur* where he now began working as General Secretary. Together with the Department of Education and Religious Affairs he was at this point responsible for the compilation of reading matter and the development of public libraries for the indigenous population. His office and a secretary were provided by the Adviser for Native Affairs, responsible for the administration of the *Commissie*.

In July 1911, Rinkes was dispensed from his teaching load and could therefore devote more attention to the activities of the *Commissie*. His appointment to the position of Adjunct Adviser for Native Affairs a mere half year later presented him with new and tactically important duties, e.g. the observation of *Sarekat Islam*. Soon thereafter Rinkes took over the position of Adviser as Hazeu's successor and became the head of the *Commissie*. Rinkes had become a relevant figure on the chessboard of colonial politics.

Between generations

During the period of his studies in Leiden at the latest Rinkes had become a *figure* between two generations. The first generations of colonial officials had shown, if anything, a merely hobby-type of interest in the indigenous cultures. In general, they pursued their studies without specialized training and without claim to explicitly scientific exactness, although some demonstrated a good deal of diligence. Their main interest was the material exploitation of the colony. As

¹³ In a literary form the novel tetralogy by Pramoedya Ananta Toer (1980-88) based on historical material offers a vivid description of the manner in which this colonial establishment functioned. It had a character comparable to a secret service.

the complexity of the social structures increased, more efficient methods of securing power became necessary. Military dominance alone no longer seemed adequate to guarantee dominance. "Only imperfect, amateurish imperialism needs weapons; professional imperialism is based on structural rather than direct violence" (Galtung 1971:91). For this reason it was necessary to accelerate the 'intellectual annexation' of the indigenous population. Under the cloak of the Ethical Policy Dutch cultural imperialism not only developed mechanisms of subjection that were of a very subtle nature. At the same time it created the necessary frame of acceptance within the indigenous population, because:

"a nation or a people will not choose to be economically exploited or culturally dominated. They must be colonized to accept that role".¹⁵

In this context it is of interest to investigate the manner in which the subjects come to accept the existing system of class and racial dominance -- a system that continues to be operative even in periods of crisis. Such a mass acceptance cannot be bred by repressive measures alone. Rather the active role that the institutions and structures of a society play in coining the ideological and cultural self-view at any given time must be taken into account.

In this connection the social sciences, which had up to this point played a relatively marginal role in the colonial political context, gained an immense increase in importance. Their most pressing task was to formalize the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized people at the level of individual or group contacts, "giving them a logic that makes reasonable the unreasonable" (Carnoy 1974:29).

Just as in the economic field, in the cultural area raw materials were also gathered and exploited. Linguistic, literary, anthropological and ethnological investigations were performed. Scientists with various specialities set out in great number to observe the colonized, to record events, to collect all sorts of artefacts and to gather the results in the centres of power. There the findings were transformed into collections and exhibitions, into scientific theories, school books and news reports. It was not seldom that the product finally returned to its point of origin and there served to help patterns of occidental culture to predominate or they were absorbed as an expression of western civilization.

The training as a colonial official reflects the increasing necessity for culture experts. Following several reform attempts, the culture work was finally taken into government hands in connection with the Ethical Policy. Locally established institutions, e.g. the Javanese Institute in Surakarta or the training centre in Batavia, proved not to be capable of supplying all the specialists required. So the previous half-academic training for colonial officials in Delft, Utrecht and Leiden was improved and reorganized to a full academic course of studies. After they

¹⁴ Snouck Hurgronje presented this claim in 1911 (see Fenders 1977:159). He is regarded as the father of the association politics in connection with the so-called Ethical Policy.

¹⁵ Carnoy (1974:19). Considering the problematical decolonization attempts and neo-colonial tendencies (in present-day Indonesia as well) this approach is of particular importance. The evaluation criteria and behaviour patterns implanted by the colonizers continue to exert influence up to the present, even though the presence of the colonial power has long since come to an end. In this connection see also Memmi (1980), Fanon (1967), Amadi (1981).

had completed their schooling and university studies the first academically qualified Orientalists concluded their training as colonial officials in the late twenties. As humanistic scholars they were sent to the Netherlands Indies; among them was G. W. J. Drewes, one of Rinkes' colleagues and later successors. They brought back with them to the colonies the '*cultural raw material*' from the first generation which had in the meantime been professionally processed.

More and more vehemently the fragmentary modernization affected the indigenous processes of enculturation and deculturation. The result can be described for Indonesia, just as for every other colonized society, in terms of Freire's concept of a "*culture of silence*" (1985) or in fact as "*colonial brainwashing*" (Amadi 1981).¹⁶

Rinkes neither belonged to the first generation of '*self-made collectors of raw material*' nor to the entirely academically trained *full Orientalists*'. His career had undergone an unconventional development which combined elements of both traditions. The nature of his above-summarized career reveals some fundamental characteristics without which not even his education would have come to such a successful conclusion. Contemporary eye-witnesses describe Rinkes as being stubborn, resolute, persistent and with a tendency to hold grudges! Aman Madjoindo, a long-standing employee of *Volkslectuur*, stated concerning Rinkes with regard to the rapid reorganization and expansion of *Volkslectuur*:

"Those were all results of the director, Dr. Rinkes, who can be termed the father of Volkslectuur. He was a man who paid strict attention to discipline - - not only with regard to our native people; he even demonstrated severity when dealing with the Dutch population. But in this strict attitude there lay an incomparable justice. That's why all the employees feared him and showed him respect; nobody dared to defy his directives."

When Rinkes '*advanced*' to Director of the *Volkslectuur*, he was painfully conscious of the fact that he was actually being transferred out of the way. This personal offence became an incentive for him to form *Volkslectuur* to a politically important instrument with which he intended to achieve his rehabilitation in the end and to wrest acknowledgement from his adversaries. The fact that Rinkes at this seemingly hopeless point of his career did not give up but rather accepted the challenge is understandable considering the insoluble dilemma in which Rinkes was bound: on the one hand his longing to be a respected member of the colonial power structure -- and on the other hand the fact that he was at the same time incapable of abandoning his own nonconformist world view.

With a sometimes seemingly childish obstinate fury and despair Rinkes struggled for recognition from his colleagues in the civil service and his superiors from 1917

¹⁶ Jedamski (1992), esp. chapter 2 in which these approaches are described in greater detail.

¹⁷ I would like to express my thanks to Prof. G.W.J. Drewes, a long-standing colleague and later director of *Volkslectuur* as well as to the son of Rinkes, Mr. Willem Klerkx, and his wife for the information they were kind enough to supply me with in several interviews. I found the description of Rinkes supported in various letters and documents.

¹⁸ "*Semua ini adalah berkat perjuangan pemimpinnja, Dr. Rinkes, fang heras memegang aturan, tidak terhadap kepada bangsa kita sadja, hepala bangsa Belanda sendiripun diapun bersifat keras. Tetapi didalam kekerasan itu keadilannja tidak dapat dibanding. Karena itu semua pegawai gentar clan hormat kepadanya, tidak berani melanggar aturan-aturan fang telah ditetapkannja"* (1947:194)

on. Rinkes himself documented in numerous official letters his feeling of being slighted and not taken seriously. For instance, as late as the year 1925 he criticized that some office holders had spoken of the achievements of his department and his personnel in a deprecatory manner! In the same letter he applied for a promotion for himself in order to at least financially achieve an equivalent position to that of the Adviser for Native Affairs, the residents and professors. Again and again he complained about the insufficient willingness to support him and *Volkslectuur*. He made repeated attempts to gain the cooperation of other departments. In circulars Rinkes appealed to the colonial responsibility while he at the same time mocked the colleagues for their formalism and short-sightedness.

In March 1927 Rinkes officially resigned from the colonial service and departed from the Dutch East Indies forever.

The 'political discourse': Rinkes as adviser for native affairs

A large quantity of preserved correspondence and confidential reports provide a vivid impression of Rinkes' activity as Adviser.²⁰ He repeatedly offered his evaluation of possible and actual inter-ethnic conflicts, whereby his direct attention was particularly directed toward the relationship between Indonesian Chinese and Arabs. In the majority of the documents Rinkes describes in great detail the indigenous organizations or their personnel and medial multipliers. He emphasized the developments in the consciousness of the colonized who were no longer willing to accept the colonizers as being an undoubtedly superior race. In this context Rinkes referred to the special role of the Chinese, in whose political development he feared a catalytic impetus for the Indonesian nationalistic movement (1912). Rinkes emphatically warned more than once not to underestimate such a danger and not to regard the Indonesian population as being dumb or underdeveloped (1915).

Rinkes generalized from the political organizations to the functional groups of the indigenous society. He clearly recognized that the background for the indigenous groups lay in fundamental reaction patterns of colonized peoples such as Memmi described half a century later and from the point of view of those directly affected (1980).

Depending on their acceptance and possibilities for insight, the colonized develop various behaviour patterns that can initially be classified as being basically affirmative or disapproving. The desire for equality with the *'white superiors'* is in many cases the point of departure for adaptation, overcompensation and deep identity crises. In the process, the feeling of inferiority imposed by the colonial power plays a significant role. At the same time a tendency toward division and competition among the indigenous social groups (as Rinkes also indicated in his reports) prove to be important factors for assimilation processes of this type. The modernization and progress orientation of the colonizers offers enough means of

¹⁹ *Openbare Mailrapporten* 174; 3589/21 (28. Sept 21-81/2320).

²⁰ In this section it is not the aim to describe various individual measures that Rinkes suggested or brought about. For this type of data see the commented publication lists by Van der Wal and by Kwantes.

differentiation and discrimination and thereby seemingly the possibility for them to secure positions for themselves. The psychological and power-political impulses usually go hand in hand with servility on the part of the colonized.

The non-opportunistic variant of an inclination toward assimilation is basically directed against the colonizers. In this context the western culture is recognized as being the decisive weapon of the adversary. From the tactical point of view its acquisition is the actual goal for the subjugated people in order to gain the opportunity to beat the enemy with his own weapons. Western education and the command of western manners received the status of instruments of power. From Rinkes' evaluations it can be concluded that he calculated both the risks and the advantages of an expanded western educational offering.

The genuinely oppositional forces refuse any form of convergence with the colonizers. Just as Memmi did at a later period, Rinkes also conceived of this behavioural strategy as being a possible expression for two basic attitudes: With their increasing orientation toward traditional values the residual forces set against the western claim to universality an equally strong demand of their own for particularism. They demonstrate a rigorous bond to tradition, in part combined with a reactivation of even archaic elements. The actually innovative impulses, however, proceed from the emergent forces. They refuse neither the traditional nor modern western cultural elements, but rather consciously work against a fragmentarizing modernization that only serves the interests of the colonizers. Their goal is instead a self-determined modernization corresponding to their own needs ²¹

Seldom did Rinkes embed his individual observations in a generalized theoretical frame of analysis proceeding from a total view of the colonial society as he did in the missive of December 18, 1914 addressed to the Governor General.' In accord with the above-mentioned model Rinkes came to the conclusion that the indigenous population of the Netherlands Indies could be classified in four groups: a) the conservative noble houses, b) the *Boedi Oetomo* association, c) the *Sarekat Islam* movement, and d) the *Indische Partij*. Rinkes emphasized that his concern was by no means limited to the organizations or their members, but rather was meant:

"To characterize with a single term the mentality of the groups in the same way it is possible to speak in Holland about the liberals or the clergy without necessarily implying that a liberal is liberal in all his thought or that a clergy-man is per se a God-fearing man."

²¹ The terms "residual" and "emergent" used here date back to R. Williams (1977) who coined them in connection with his model of a hegemonial cultural dynamics, a concept based on work by Antonio Gramsci.

Openbare Verbalen 1412 (26 July 15-66), hereafter quoted as Rinkes (1914). In the 31-page document the question is handled as to what extent the officer's career should be accessible for indigenous military ranks, in particular in the marines. The societal analysis described in detail below was also presented by Rinkes in concise form in an article with the title "*Maatschappelijk-politieke stroomingen in Indië*" which appeared in *De Amsterdammer Weekblad* in Oct 1916.

-Met een enkel woord de mentaliteit der groep te kenschetsen, dus op soortgelijke wyze als men in Holland kan spreken van de liberalen, of clericalen, zonder te bedoelen, dat een liberaal vrijzinnig is in al zyn denizen, dat de clericaal per se een god-vruchtig man is" (Rinkes 1914:14).

The categories Rinkes established (as will be discussed in further detail below) are, as he himself emphasized, not to be regarded as firmly established but rather as the outline of a description in which the gray zones and transitions are not explicitly absorbed.

The first group which included the nobles, was labelled by Rinkes as being strictly conservative. Social change was avoided if at all possible, in particular when power privileges were affected which had been achieved by collaboration. Rinkes ascribed a *"traditional feeling of devoteness toward the Dutch authorities"* to the nobles which was primarily *"based on their mentality and on previously granted support and privileges"* (1914:10). However, he ascertained quite clearly that the former power elite termed 'nobles' in his opinion had no significant authority any longer. For this reason he saw every further political attention or even intensification of the cooperation as a waste of strength -- even though he regarded it as advisable not to endanger the already achieved successes in the association politics. Although a numerically small group, the nobles nevertheless occupied important functions in the civil service. And finally, the associated regionalistic-traditionalistic groupings also served as a bullwark against nationalistic forces.

With this -- for the first time already in January 1913 and later repeatedly presented -- evaluation of the vanishing influence of the nobles, Rinkes took a position opposing the still dominant policy of Snouck Hurgronje's who had helped develop the Ethical Policy. He had in particular set the political goal to incorporate the traditional power elite, namely the Javanese aristocracy (see Penders 1977:162). Hazeu, Snouck Hurgronje's successor in office, defended noble descent as a criterium of selection for a political incorporation into the mechanism of dominion. Rinkes, on the other hand, emphasized the steadily increasing importance of the indigenous intellectual elites. In this context he represented a view that was rather unpopular during his era, that the indigenous society deserves a differentiated evaluation every bit as much as the European society. Therefore:

"One should finally stop treating all 'natives' who are not descended from some regent, sovereign or another as being alike: an individual may, after all, have experienced a respectable, honest, 'bourgeoise' education (...) or he may be the child of a soldier or have a farm laborer or a houseboy for a father."

Hazeu dissociated himself explicitly from the *"very radical views of Dr. Rinkes"* (see Van der Wal 1967:135), even though he conceded that experience had taught him how quickly conditions could change, even if they had formerly endured for centuries (*idem*).

The composition of the second group, *Boedi Oetomo*, was described by Rinkes as being a mixture of gentry, often impoverished nobles, various low-ranking

officials and teachers. They were, according to Rinkes, modern, had a secular education and access to the Dutch language. The objective of the forces that were gathered here were the equality with the aristocrats and the Europeans, equal chances for promotion and social prestige as well as the political development of the colony Netherlands Indies with the aim of self-government. Rinkes associated no danger with these ambitions, however, even though he in another context expressed the reservation that, in the case that autonomy should be granted the nationalistic tendencies along the lines of '*Java for Javanese*' could hardly be expected to be positive for the Europeans (*idem:20*). The colonial government, however, could on the basis of its reforms precisely in the educational field feel assured of the loyalty of the *Boedi Oetomo* group. Rinkes judged the group's followers as being:

*"Very well-meaning and, to a large extent, willingly cooperative in the defense of our rule over these regions since they expect positive results from our authority and can put their education (...) more advantageously to use under our control than under a foreign power. They trust the government which they honoured with the expression asotya betara."*²⁵

In this context Rinkes suggested the idea of creating a public council. The establishing of a controlled political forum (which was in fact established in **1918**) was intended to offer the most active of the indigenous power movements a range of action and at the same time to help collect and direct their political potential. Following 1917, Rinkes also structured the *Kantoor of the Volkslectuur* as a site of political incorporation with a ventile function, as will be shown below.

The third group, the *Sarekat Islam* movement, was described by Rinkes as being much more heterogeneous and therefore harder to define unmistakably. In contrast to group b), the modern orientation was combined with a religious point of view. Rinkes reckoned primarily wealthy merchants to this group, in general with a strictly islamic orientation. The majority of them strove to avoid social tumults since they feared the associated restrictions of their trade possibilities. There were only a few unruly elements who, however, were not to be considered revolutionary. Rather, they also strove for social recognition and legal equality and criticized arbitrary acts of the colonial power. Rinkes came to the conclusion that not even these forces were negatively oriented toward the government, although a positive attitude was less visible than for group b). Here he gave the advice to build up trust, but in return it could not necessarily be expected that they would actively support the colonial government. Possible moral support in the form of a positive attitude could in itself be regarded as a valuable asset.

The fourth and last group, the *Indische Partij*, had in Rinkes' eyes the greatest power of resistance. To be sure, it had an extremely heterogeneous group

²⁵ *"Van harte goed gezind, en een vry groot deel hunner zoude gaarne meewerken tot de verdediging van ons gezag over deze gewesten, omdat zy van dat gezag thans alle goeds verwachten en zy bovendien door hunne opleiding (..)meer arbeidswaarde hebben order een Hollandsch, dan order een ander bestuur. Zy hebben vertrouwen in de Regeering, die zy met de uitdrukking: asotya betara (...) eeren" (*idem:11*). Rinkes explains the word *asotya* as a respectful term for 'eye' and *batara* as 'prophet'. It must be added that in the Javanese language *batara* can also stand for 'deity'.*

of followers and their numbers had, according to Rinkes, in the last years greatly declined as a result of the honest and successful colonial politics. But they were active, highly developed elements who knew how to express themselves frankly and with talent. Therefore their influence was in fact much greater than their limited numbers would lead one to expect. Attempts to integrate them would, according to Rinkes, have little chance for success. Rather he regarded it advisable "to keep the worst of them separate from the other population groups" (*idem*:13).

Rinkes rounded up his social analysis as follows:

"(...) Soon the entire domestic society could be in this type of *Sturm und Drang*. However the government -- providing its politics are sufficiently attentive -- will for the most part continue to be able to influence the future course of developments, canalizing the movements into clear-cut governmental paths.""

When one abstracts from the given case, the concept of hegemony provides a possibility for a concise description of the strategy for power maintenance Rinkes stood for. Understood as a principle organizing society, hegemony describes the struggle of the various social forces for predominance. In this process the dominant force at any given time prevails with its own conception of reality, i.e. it forms and stabilizes value and behaviour patterns as well as social roles. In order to secure its influence the dominant force cannot avoid constant confrontation. It seeks to bind as much as possible large segments of the other (primarily residual and emergent) forces to itself and thereby neutralize them. The resulting assimilation and discrimination processes take the form of cultural dynamics (cf. Williams 1977).

Rinkes ventured in this assimilation and discrimination measures very much farther than was planned within the framework of the 'Ethical Policy'. Rinkes neither shunned the consensus and intensive cooperation with indigenous organizations (above all with *Sarekat* nor did he hesitate to rigorously persecute and destroy individuals who were in his way (as documented in the example of Tirto Adhisoerja, see Pramoedya 1985). The already allied forces -- like the Javanese aristocracy -- were to be held compliant, those willing to adapt themselves (e.g. *Boedi Oetomo*) were integrated. For those forces currently rejecting the colonial power the strategy was to consider whether chances exist at all for future incorporation or whether discrimination and persecution would appear to be more advisable.

In Dutch circles Rinkes had few friends. Rumours circulated that Rinkes had secretly become a member of *Sarekat Islam*; doubts were expressed about

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"(...) haast de geheele inlandsche maatschappij is in een zoodanig stadium van *Sturm und Drang* dat de Regeering, by beleidvolle politiek, nopens de richting van verderde ontwikkeling der stemmingen haast overwegendennwoed kan uit oe fenen, en hen grootendeels in zuiver Gouvernementeel banen zal kunnen koersen" (*idem*:20).

In publications it was repeatedly reported that Rinkes took part in conventions of indigenous organizations and even held speeches there. Rinkes supposedly build up Tjokroaminoto as a contact man (Shiraishi 1990:126; *Neratja* March 13, 1919, according to IPO 10/1919).

his loyalty.²⁸ Hazeu hesitated to support Rinkes in important questions. Finally in 1917 Rinkes was '*transferred out of the way*'. In certain circles, however, this did not suffice to cause the annoyance about Rinkes to subside. Genuine indignation is expressed in an (authentic?) letter to the editor published in the *Java Bode* in 1921: "*Dr. Rinkes, the right hand of Dr. Hazeu and an over-personification of the abnormal ethic direction - director of the education department?!*" (13. Oct. 1921, lb1) The report that Rinkes might, following his '*deportation*' to *Volkslectuur*, be appointed to an important official position causes the author of the contribution to speak of a waste of energy and the undermining of authority. Has not Rinkes already caused enough damage? the author asks. With regard to the change in function in the year 1917, the author expresses his theory that the government then was afraid to allow Rinkes to remain in a high-level position because of a general shift of public opinion. Instead they had given him high salary and a position in which the worst damage he could possibly do would be to '*mess up*' the finances (*idem*).

From the point of view of the indigenous population, Rinkes originally met with many friendly reactions and was considered a friend and supporter, in particular of the *Sarekat Islam* (Shiraishi 1990). Critical publications like *Darma Kondo*, however, accused him of being responsible for the schism in *Sarekat Islam*. Fearing that Rinkes could once again be appointed Adviser, the paper even called for large-scale demonstrations in favour of retaining Hazeu in office (Oct 20, 1919; according to IPO 42/1919). It was not until Rinkes had, by way of the *Kantoor voor de Volkslectuur*, begun massively intervening in the indigenous press market that indigenous press organs in greater numbers joined in in the indignation and protest.

The kantoor voor de volkslectuur: dialectics of discrimination

With the unlimited control over *Volkslectuur* new possibilities opened up for Rinkes. He quickly realized this and made use of them, while his adversaries for a long time underestimated his influence. In his new position Rinkes at first had a free hand for the most part. Evidently efforts were being made to avoid any further insult or provocation. Above all, however, nobody took Rinkes' new sphere of influence anywhere near seriously enough to regard it as justified -- let alone necessary -- to deal intensively with it. The prevalent view of literature and culture denied *Volkslectuur* any societal or colonial-political relevance. The dialectics of discrimination opened up an uncontrolled area in which Rinkes could continue in his political course without disturbance -- although with different,

²⁸ The fact that he had secretly been wedded according to Islamic law to a Javanese aristocrat named Soetinah gave additional nourishment to these rumours. I thank W Klerks for providing this information.

²⁹ In this paper it is only possible and intended to provide an overview over the extent to which the text production of *Volkslectuur* corresponded to Rinkes' own view of society. Therefore this is not the context in which to discuss the activities of *Volkslectuur* beyond the field of literature, in particular with respect to product advertisement and public service information. For a detailed discussion and individual examples of the aspects and arguments to be touched upon in the following see Jedamski (1992).

though perhaps more effective means than before.

When the 'Ethical Policy' at the beginning of the century had seemed compelled to expand its education-political measures with a governmental supply of text material, flaws began to reveal themselves in the dominant western bourgeoisie literary conception. According to this view, literature (synonymous with art) was seen as being the product of individual geniuses and as *l'art pour l'art*, bar any societal relevance. The texts supplied for the indigenous reading population, on the other hand, were by no means intended to be lacking in social reference or relevance but had didactic and entertainment functions to fulfill. In the eyes of their colonizers the colonized were, however; not considered capable of appreciating *'true art'*. But in order to avoid disqualifying their own cultural activity (and unmasking the Ethical Policy) the texts had to fulfill certain quality standards the colonizers had set for themselves, for otherwise the texts would perhaps have had to be combatted as being *'bushy'*. *'Literary trash'* was all that did not meet the political, moral and aesthetic standards set by the colonizers. The initial hesitation in the activities of the early years, the indecisiveness and their hermit-attitude indicated the dilemma in which the *Commissie voor de Volkslectuur* was entrapped. Nevertheless, these matters were not openly discussed.

The phenomenon of *Ungleichzeitigkeit*, here the cultural lag which sets in as a result of the technical influences on the conditions of production and reception (beginning already in the early years of the *Commissie* activity) was personified in Rinkes. He offensively advocated a conception of the text media that differed radically from the conventional view. In contrast to the other members of the *Commissie* his point of view neither exhausted itself in the study of *'traditional'* and *'classical'* literature⁶, nor was his work limited to the production of simple reading texts for the indigenous school instruction -- until this point the main fields of activity for the *Commissie*. The *Commissie* never discussed the pedagogical function of literature, the distribution problems or the addressee groups, but Rinkes made just these very questions to his central concern from the very start. he concentrated on leading *Volkslectuur* out of its self-imposed ivory tower. With the help of *Volkslectuur* and all of its modern technical capabilities, Rinkes wanted to influence the indigenous society in his own sense all the way into its deeper structure. His primary goal -- in addition to his own personal rehabilitation -- was to keep the modernization of the indigenous society, which was then in progress, under control, to structure it and in the future to steer it as well. All this should, if possible, occur with a great degree of active support from the side of the indigenous population.

Already in the circular from the year 1911 addressed to all the regents in Java and Madura Rinkes' aim was mentioned: The population would have to

Rinkes' scientific publications and his dissertation make evident that it was by no means a lack of knowledge or capability that caused Rinkes to withdraw himself from the exclusive study of literature. In an 18-page article written in 1912 Rinkes specifically acknowledged the merits of the Dutch scholars (and demonstrated his knowledge of the field). But at the same time Rinkes showed that he regarded this type of work with Javanese literature more or less as a burden. He considered it to be time for the Javanese authors not simply to take notice of the conservation efforts of the Dutch scholars but rather to take adequate (measured in terms of western standards) steps of their own to preserve and modernize their literature (1921a).

signalize with their willingness to cooperate whether they were ready, willing or even worthy of being led into the terrain of progress. If the population genuinely wanted the modernization, then the government would continue its empathetic and conscientiously begun cultural work; in time the more capable members of the population would themselves be in a position to take on leadership roles (Rinkes 1911).

Rinkes concentrated his energy for the most part on two fields of action: 1) The domination and organization of the indigenous press market had for a long time been for him a matter of great importance. 2) He wanted to deal with the subtle possibilities of influence of the text mass media, whereby the book production was rapidly gaining importance.

After Rinkes' visions of a concealed takeover and functionalization of the indigenous publications had failed, he finally intervened in the press market with periodicals belonging to *Volkslectuur*.³¹ The popular science weekly *Sri Poestaka* which had been published since 1918 was very important to Rinkes but had little success. It was not until *Pandji Poestaka*, a Malayan-language magazine with yellow press character, came out in 1923 that *Volkslectuur* managed to penetrate into the indigenous press domain. Three years later a Javanese variation of it, *Volkslectuur*, was launched, which was in Rinkes' eyes little more than a concession to the Javanese aristocracy. The extra issues in honour of the sultan family emphasized what was the major duty of *Kedjawèn*, namely to keep the formerly powerful allies 'in a good mood'.

It was regarded as particularly effective to draw attention in the journals to meritorious employees and officials -- preferably with their pictures. This was justified in a document from the year 1925 with the argument that it was good for those affected to see that their loyalty was awarded recognition in greater circles. (Of course the honoured employees received an editorial copy for themselves). In addition "it is also good for the general public (...) to see that the government appreciates its faithful servants"³²

What is nowadays the most obvious characteristic of modern media and information politics was already put to use par excellence by *Volkslectuur*: the steering of the public perception of reality by way of topic selection. Undesired aspects were faded out and surrogate topics were built up. If the film and tinseltown-world, newest technical advances or sensation of other kinds were not able to offer enough distraction -- e.g. during the period of the 1926/27 riots -- then at least pre-fabricated structures of argumentation were brought into circulation.

The book media (fiction and non-fiction) also presented a world view and outlook on mankind that was quite remote from the reality of the colonized society; it favoured the colonizers and served their interest. Surprisingly, *Volkslectuur* proceeded from the early concept of combining educational and entertaining

³¹ Documents prove Rinkes' persistent attempts to take charge of the *Evolutie* print shop and in particular the newspaper *Neratja* produced there by Datoek Toemenggoeng. For a further discussion of this point see Jedamski (1992).

³² "Voor het publiek zal het eveneens goed zijn, to zien dat de Regeering hare trouwe dienaren weet to waardeeren" (*Geheime Verbalen* 313; 29 May 28-H/9. 7x/25).

literature which had failed in the Age of Enlightenment in Europe. However, the here promoted didactic goals were limited to the 'civilizing' aspects of the colonial politics: health and hygienic measures, work morale, planning for the future, suggestions for consumer behaviour. The ideals of thrift, diligence, discipline -- but also honesty, modesty and patience -- were propagated.

The text production consciously drew upon the reading expectations of the indigenous population. The intent was to serve the entire spectrum of social groups, both the residual and the emergent forces. For the traditionally Malayan-influenced reading interests *Volkslectuur* offered among other things *s jair-verses* and *hikayat-texts*. Editions of the *Mahabharata* or *Ramayana* epics in several volumes and *babad-* and *pandji-texts* evidently attracted the various levels of Javanese nobles more than the adaptations and translations of western originals. Works of this type, however, were increasingly produced by *Volkslectuur* and were meant to meet the life-style of the *kaum muda* generation.

Behind the publication policy of *Volkslectuur* was concealed a pronounced intention to modernize the society. Naturally even the traditional texts were modified in terms of western conceptions of narrative structure, chronology, morals etc. The conversion to the Latin alphabet can also be regarded as an expression of this striving for modernization. Gradually the indigenous reading public was to become accustomed to 'modern' and universally accepted forms. *Volkslectuur* could therefore at first hardly reject mixed literary forms. Modern subject-matter was transported in *hikayat-texts*; advertising slogans were written in *s jair-verses*; at the same time traditional themes were presented in the form of western epics. With outstanding success the popular *wayang* characters *Petruk* and *Gareng* presented the important things in modern life: cars, visits to the doctor, soccer, lottery

Rinkes sought a literary form with the far-reaching effect of mass or pattern literature for the indigenous literature industry. The *Kantoor voor de Volkslectuur* served Rinkes as a text factory and a training institution for indigenous authors. His ultimate goal was the psychological novel according to the model of the western bourgeois developmental novel. Instead of literary genius Rinkes expected from the text production above all professionalism and -- reproducibility. Both free-lance and staff text-writers had clear objectives to fulfill. By way of the stages translation and adaptation the imitation of western models was expected to lead up to the 'original' modern Indonesian novel.

Within a very short time Rinkes managed to build up an impressive distribution network for the text products. Once more Rinkes demonstrated his instinct for modern culture management: with a very wide-spread network of public libraries, sales agents, promotion stands and salesmobiles, an intensive self-advertisement, extensive subscription procedures -- but also with the assistance of the indigenous *Volkslectuur* colleagues, Rinkes established a huge distribution machinery that extended with many arms deep into the indigenous society, circulating and collecting information and public attitudes.

But production control and a distribution network alone could not guarantee acceptance on the part of the addressees. Rinkes knew this and he not only took the reception habits into account but also made use of sales-promoting measures like contests or advertising campaigns. At the same time he strove to achieve the (in part ostensible) participation of the reading public in the form of 'letter to the

editor columns and surveys -- methods which help to create the impression of democratic public discussions. Rinkes set particularly high hopes in the positive influence expected from the integration of so-called opinion leaders. Indigenous intellectuals, usually activists in the regional or supra-regional national movements, educators, authors and journalists in personal union, were the major target people of Volkslectuur. Here Rinkes' knowledge of the political scenery served him well - and presumably also his reputation as a supporter of Sarekat Islam. He managed to set a considerable number of prominent names on the salary list of Volkslectuur.

The resonance from Rinkes' assimilation successes was not entirely positive, however. Already in 1920 the argument was raised by the Dutch side that Volkslectuur was sheltering revolutionary elements. Rinkes' reply once again underlines his political strategy of 'neutralization' by means of incorporation:

"Extremely rebellious elements are understandably not employed in the Kantoer, although there are a few more or less active persons. They generally quiet down relatively quickly, however, being surrounded by all the rather moderate co-workers who bring them to better understanding and encourage them to devote their energy to useful work."³³

From the Indonesian side, on the other hand, Volkslectuur was criticized for supporting the interests of the colonial government and harming the Indonesian people. Volkslectuur countered along Rinkes' lines by emphasizing how many well-known personalities from the nationalist movement had joined them, arguing.

"If Balai Poestaka genuinely poses a danger for the people, then why do a Dr. Soetomo, a H.A Salim, a R.A A Wiranatakoesoema, a Raden Ajoe Abdoelrachman, a R. Sosrosoegondo, a R. Sosro Danoekoesoemo, a Adi Negoro, a Mohammad Jam in, and many other renowned men from Indonesian circles willingly become staff-members of Balai Poestaka?"³⁴

Other free-lance or staff employees of Volkslectuur who should be added to the list are: Abdoel Moeis, Abdoel Rivai, A.H. Wignjasastra, Nur Sutan Iskandar, Sutan Perang Boestami, Sastrahadiprawira and St. Pamoentjak. They were and had been all journalists writing for publications like *Neratja* or *Bintang Hindia*. They had been active members or even in leading positions in indigenous political organizations like *Sarekat Islam*, *Boedi Oetomo*, *Jong Java*, *Jong Sumatranen Bond*, *Indonesia Moeda* or the *Partindo Party*. These activities ended in general with the employment in *Volkslectuur*. Finally, there were a number of politically less prominent, but very popular authors who should be mentioned, e.g. A. Damhuri, Moh. Kasim and Suman HS. The fact that they were with *Volkslectuur* made a trustworthy impression on the indigenous population.

In spite of all the -- evidently successful -- activities of *Volkslectuur*, years

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"Bepaald oproerige elementen zijn begrijpelijkerwijze niet op het bureau werkzaam, wel enkele min of meer roerige typen, doch deze komen meestal spoedig tot bedaren, omringd als zij zijn door de meer gematigden, die hen tot beter inzicht brengen, en tot daadwerkelijk nuttigen arbeid aansporen" (Rinkes 1920:172).

"Kalau Balai Poestaka benar-benar berbahaja kepada ra jat, apakah satoe Dr. Soetomo, satoe H.A Salim, satoe R. A A Wiranatakoesoema, satoe Raden Ajoe Abdoelrachman, satoe R. Sosrosoegondo, satoe R. Sosro Danoekoesoemo, satu Adi Negoro, satoe Mohammad Jamin, dan banjak lagi toean-toean jang ternama di kalangan Boemipoetera, akan maoe mendjadi medewerker (pembantoe) Balai Poestaka?" (Pandji Poestaka. 14.4.1931:467).

were necessary before the other segments of the colonial administration recognized the potential of this colonial institution. It may be regarded as an example of the irony of history that with this (belated) insight the historical *Ungleichzeitigkeit* was by no means eliminated and Rinkes media politics were nonetheless still denied due recognition. In fact, Rinkes even got into difficulties due to the suddenly budding interest in his text media. The historic constellation of the mid-1920's illustrates the lead that Rinkes still had over his contemporaries. Already in the early years Rinkes had propagated his concept of a subtle pacification using media. But his tenaciously proposed suggestions to intensify the use of text media in the regional language as a tranquilizer, e.g. in rebellious Atjeh or in Bali, met with rejection.

In the eyes of the colonial government *Volkslectuur* had for a long time been little more than a comfortable mouthpiece for governmental announcements. In addition, in the course of the years the concentration of language skills met with recognition and the employees were called to perform officially valued functions, e.g. interpretation in court or the translation of espionage reports. Other than that *Volkslectuur* was regarded as a mere public relations department for the Ethical Policy. It was not until the political situation in the Netherlands Indies became critical that the demand for an effective Counter-Lecture grew louder and louder. But not only did Rinkes refuse to give the desired black-and-white propaganda a chance -- he saw his entire previous work endangered. It cost great effort for him to preserve the patiently woven cloak of neutrality and to prevent negative intervention in his publication politics.

Presumably it was this consistently uncomprehending view on the part of the colonial administration that caused Rinkes to once again venture a step onto the political parquette: Together with A. de Geus and W.A. Penard he founded the *Midden-Partij* on May 25, 1923.

The final round

In the platform of the *Middenpartij*³⁵ all the central points of Rinkes' concept of society turn up again. The primary concern was the political, economic and social strengthening of the middle class in the Netherlands Indies. The news agency Aneta published an announcement about the founding of the *Middenpartij* in which the party presented itself as a future melting pot for all liberal forces. Potential followers of both the left and right wing were to be attracted, in order to diminish the political basis of 'extremism' (*Een Middenpartij* 1923:6). Offers of association to indigenous groups were extended and efforts were undertaken to win their cooperation and thereby flatten the conflict-laden political landscape. In the political field greater participation in the decision-making processes was promised and the improvement of the educational and health systems advanced to become the central social issues. Programmatic positions concerning the free

Before the actual party platform was circulated it was particularly Penard who, with the aid of a number of articles which appeared in *De Locomotie f*, worked to make the issue they represented widely known. A Malay translation of the platform text was published in *Kaoem Moeda*. ††† (1923:1).

market, private ownership of resources, state support for the middle class and the civil servants were to also attract the liberal-minded members of the Dutch community.

Every single one of the propagated programmatic measures corresponded exactly with Rinkes' image as *an 'ethicist'*. A negative reaction beyond the usual degree was provoked by his long-term political goal, which he now for the first time declared in this clarity: the autonomy of the Netherlands Indies from the *'motherland'*. In order not to frighten the moderate target group (in particular among the Dutch) it was repeatedly emphasized that this aim was to be achieved by way of an evolutionary development in the society, not by revolutionary upheaval. But this assurance evidently did not make a strong enough impression. The distrust against Rinkes had found further nourishment and the long-preserved doubts concerning Rinkes' responsibility and loyalty now seemed conclusively confirmed. The *Maasbode* described the members of the Middenpartij as *"naive-arrogant dreamers"* and as the *"last Mohicans of the dying tribe of Dutch-Indian liberals"* (*De Middenpartij* 1923). One of the central demands of the party, namely to extend the competence of the Peoples' Council in order to open the way to self-government, was dismissed by the anonymous author of the article with the comment that the Peoples' Council could, to be sure, be regarded as a classical example for political quarrelsomeness.

The party platform did not get any applause from the Indonesian side, either. Rinkes was accused of once again trying to deceive the Indonesian population. After having for many years worked hard to shut the mouth of the indigenous press, he was now trying to lead everyone to believe he had developed tender sympathy for them (*Sinar Hindia* Oct. 17, 1923 according to IPO 44/1923:206). With an accurate evaluation the article pointed out the *'black doors'* of the platform through which all the generous association offers could always be taken back again. On the one hand the party platform demanded:

"The right of every citizen, regardless of race or nationality, to have a voice in the decision concerning the government of the country, providing his development has rendered him sufficiently qualified."

But on the other hand it was, of course, the colonizer who made the decision about the level of development and the qualification of the colonized.

In accord with the hegemony concept, Rinkes was attempting -- just as he had with his *Volkslectuur* activities -- to make offerings for social groups which he considered potentially important, this time by way of the *Middenpartij*. But though Rinkes had up until this point used politics as camouflage and had successfully managed to disguise his own interests as being general interests, he now departed from his strategy with the outspokenness of the platform of his party. Contradictions came to light that diminished his trustworthiness in all directions.

Soon it became clear that the *Middenpartij* was doomed to failure. At the same time Rinkes displayed more and more bitterness with regard to his *Volkslectuur* function. Completely frustrated he finally in mid-1926 applied to go into retirement. In March 1927 he departed from the Netherlands Indies in

^{as}
van *"Van Iedereen staatsburger, ongeacht ras of landward, op medezeggenschap in het bestuur het land, naarmate zijn ontwikkeling hem daartoe de geschiktheid Beef"* (*Beginselverklaring* 1923:1).

order to spend his final years on a yacht in southern France. Rinkes' successors at the head of *Volkslectuur* (T.J. Lekkerkerker, G.W.J. Drewes and finally K.A.H. Ridding) for the most part carried on Rinkes' politics. Only a few years after his retirement from colonial service and benefitted by the upheavals in the colonial society, his successors received the recognition and support that Rinkes himself had been denied. The influence of *Volkslectuur I Balai Poestaka*, however, can be traced even as far as the cultural life of the present.

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