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***The Policy and Administration of the Dutch in Java.* By Clive Day. With an Introduction by John Bastin. Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, New York, London, Melbourne 1966. Pp. xxi, 434. Index. Price M\$17.00.**

Harry J. Benda

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and in recent years it has been accessible only in a few specialised libraries. It is one of the most welcome of the "Oxford in Asia" reprints, and in its attractive appearance lives up to the high standard set by this series, although an index would have added to its usefulness.

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The Policy and Administration of the Dutch in Java. By CLIVE DAY. With an Introduction by JOHN BASTIN. Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, New York, London, Melbourne 1966. Pp. xxi, 434. Index. Price M\$17.00.

I must apologize to the editor and readers for the tardiness in delivering this brief review. The book itself is, of course, a well-known minor classic in the literature concerning colonial Indonesia, and I actually believe that it is the first book ever written on the Indies by an American scholar. What we now have before us is not just a reprint, but a most handsomely turned out facsimile of the original, and long since out of print, edition published by Macmillan in New York and London in 1904. What a wonderful idea of Dr. Bastin, the overall editor, and the publishers to bestow on us the bounty of these "Oxford in Asia Reprints"! Rejoice, ye scholars, tremble ye antiquarian book dealers! For there is much, much more that has already been done, including Raffles (yes, *Raffles* in the first, 1817 edition!) and Marsden, and, among the moderns, Mills and Emerson, with others yet to come. We truly never had it so good, to use current American slang.

Back then, to my apology. When I received the invitation to review Day's book, I felt duty-bound to accept the honour. For, I reflected, I must be the first historian on the Yale faculty to be concerned with Indonesia since Professor Day's time, half-a-century ago. In fact, I planned to write a different kind of review. I wanted to ascertain and tell my readers why Clive Day, in those far-away days, long before the world had become as uncomfortably small as it now is, long before something called the "National Interest" would generate the interest — and the funds! — that would call forth Southeast Asian "area centers" on these shores, long before American students would flock to lectures and seminars on Indonesian history — well, if not *flock*, at least *come* in fairly substantial numbers — why, in short, an American scholar at the turn of this

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century should have immersed himself in the affairs of the Dutch colonial empire in Asia. To someone like myself, usually more prone to writing institutional and social history than biography, these seemed intriguing questions, rendered the more tempting by the fact that some of my senior Yale colleagues were students of Day's. (So much for continuity, tradition, *et. al.*) But my project barely got off the ground, and, having waited too long and in vain for the reasonably leisurely hours which would be required to follow the meagre leads I got (including, perhaps, interviews with some of Day's family members still domiciled in the New Haven area), I sadly concluded that it simply couldn't be done. Not now is the time for an academic on active multiple duty for such an idle inquiry, alas!

The Dutch in Java was not Day's doctoral dissertation nor did he, as far as I have been able to ascertain, ever teach a course on Asia at Yale. Whether Day spent some time in Holland in preparation of the book I cannot tell; but it is fairly certain that he did not visit the Indies for this purpose. Yet he apparently had enough of an impetus to pursue the sizeable Dutch printed records, primary and secondary, to write a thorough and careful treatise on the Cultivation System (*cultuurstelsel*), by which the Dutch finally managed to escape from virtual national bankruptcy after 1830. "Throughout his discussion the author expresses a very unfavorable opinion of the culture system," wrote a contemporary reviewer, "as well with regard to its effects upon the natives as to its general economic efficiency." (P. S. Reinsch, in *American Historical Review*, Vol. X, 1904/05, p. 392). That period in Indonesian colonial history is still, or has again become, quite controversial, one eminent Dutch historian having in our days, and contrary to Clive Day, concluded that the *cultuurstelsel* was the biggest boon ever to have been bestowed upon the people of Java by their erstwhile overlords. Undeniably, however, Day's book has in many respects stood the test of time magnificently, as Dr. Bastin's illuminating Introduction emphasises. And his *laissez-faire* frame of reference to one side, he provides the careful reader with a large number of suggestive observations. I was particularly struck by his discussion of the effect of the system on what he called the "internal organization" of the Javanese village. For here, in a nutshell, he gleaned the key to the phenomena which Clifford Geertz has in recent years termed "agricultural involution" and "shared poverty:" "Claims to satisfy individual rights disappeared," so Day wrote, "with the decrease in the individual interests and voluntary labor of the natives. In spite of an abundance of free land the population *heaped itself up* in the villages, to *divide*

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the burdens among more families, and the land share of each family grew smaller and smaller." (Page 303, emphasis added.)

It's good to have this fine book available and within the financial reach of students and teachers. Though less excitingly written than some more recent works on Indonesia (Geertz's especially!), it fully deserves a place of honour on our book shelves and, more important, in our heads.

HARRY J. BENDA

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The Transition to Guided Democracy: Indonesian Politics, 1957-59. By DANIEL S. LEV. Modern Indonesia Project, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 1966. Pp. iii, 298. Appendix. Price US\$3.50.

The political history of independent Indonesia, which had already been covered for the years 1945-57 in two earlier standard works from Cornell University by Kahin and Feith, is carried through the crucial years 1957-59 in this excellent study by Dr. Lev. It is a worthy addition to the series and my only complaint about it is that some of the sparkle and originality which has characterised many of Dr. Lev's other contributions on things Indonesian has been submerged by the necessity to present his material comprehensively for the purposes of a doctoral thesis.

Although Dr. Lev is a political scientist, whose main concern is to explore the political processes which led to the establishment of Guided Democracy in 1959, this is contemporary history in the best sense. Virtually all available sources appear to have been thoroughly sifted and a mass of valuable detail is presented, as well as a clear over-all interpretation. The author combines objectivity with an impressive degree of insight and empathy into the predicaments of all the main actors in the drama of those years. (Admirable character sketches are given of Soekarno and that insufficiently appreciated man, Prime Minister Djuanda.) The reader is given a sense of the remorseless logic of events which led to the abandonment of "liberal democracy" in 1958-59, yet the interplay of ideas which contributed to the shaping of Guided Democracy is one of the most illuminating parts of the book. Future historians would do well to note the very fair appraisal of the Communist Party's role as a defender of parliamentary institutions (for its own tactical reasons, no doubt, and without any commitment to "liberal democracy" as such — not that its