



Under the Shadow of Curfew: Urban Combat in the Aftermath of the First Dutch Offensive (1947-1949)

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Abstract. The Indonesian War of Independence is associated with asymmetric warfare, particularly in urban areas such as Semarang, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and Malang. However, few historical studies have examined in detail how urban guerrilla resistance concluded, based on eyewitness memories. Cities, with their narrow streets and alleys, drainage systems and underground sewers, concrete walls, and the darkness of kampung neighborhoods, posed distinct challenges for military operations. This contrasts with conventional open-field warfare typically characterized by deserts, forests, and coastlines. This article examines the forms of resistance carried out by fighters of the Republic of Indonesia after the city of Malang was occupied by the Dutch. The analysis draws on archival documents, newspapers, and oral sources. The destruction of factories, warehouses, shops, and workshops diminished the asset value of their owners. This loss and devaluation of assets slowed the economic recovery and the restoration of security in Malang following the occupation. Meanwhile, urban guerrilla actions, sabotage, armed criminality, and targeted killings prevented economic activities in occupied areas returning to normal. The article focuses on how this asymmetric warfare was portrayed in the local newspaper, how resistance was conducted through the city's alleyways and passageways, and how it is remembered in eyewitness accounts. The Dutch military victory and the subsequent establishment of a municipal government in Malang, along with the imposition of a curfew in 1948, did not in themselves bring an end to urban guerrilla resistance.

Keywords: Indonesian Revolution, Asymmetric Warfare, Urban Combat, Malang Post-Occupation.

1 Introduction

Urban areas around the world—with their labyrinths of residential spaces, streets, densely populated neighborhood alleys, drainage ditches, invisible underground sewers (riool), solid concrete walls, towering towers, and vast slums—present significant challenges for urban military operations. Urban combat is characterized by fighting that occurs on three levels. The first level is the top level, which encompasses high terrain including multi-story buildings, rooftops, monument/church/house towers, and other structures that offer strategic positions for snipers. The second level is the surface level, which includes highways, alleys, squares or wide yards, and inter-building connections. The third level is the subsurface battlefield, which

includes bunkers, tunnels, drainage systems, trenches, and pillboxes. This final section allows forces to move undetected (Kilcullen, 2013).

In urban warfare, radio functions are often ineffective, particularly at the lower levels. Furthermore, direct line of sight is highly restricted, causing urban combat to occur between small, scattered units that are disconnected from one another. (Kilcullen, 2013) These techniques include room clearing and the use of explosives to breach concrete walls to avoid using doors and hallways that are easily monitored by the enemy. Urban warfare is always accompanied by humanitarian crises resulting from the absence of electricity, water, and medical supplies. Mass displacement and disease outbreaks accompany the crises arising from these conditions (UN DESA, 2018). One unique aspect of urban warfare during the Indonesian revolution was that the war did not trap the civilian population. However, civilians became victims once the fighting subsided and the Dutch deemed conditions to be safe.

For decades, there are episodes of urban warfare that have become epics celebrated across the nation. This particular conflict was the Indonesian War of Independence, which occurred during the period from October 1945 to November 1945. This war erupted because the Dutch wanted to control key cities in Java and outside Java as the primary capital to restore colonial administration after Indonesia declared independence in August 1945. The first conflict broke out when Allied Forces tried to reoccupy these former Dutch colonies. Suddenly, the situation turned chaotic when Mallaby, a British Brigadier General, was killed in Surabaya. This sparked the first urban war in Indonesia since the proclamation of independence on August 17, 1945. The war resulted in massive and dramatic destruction of the city, as the British attacked Surabaya with naval bombardment and airstrikes. On land, the British relied on their infantry power through the British Indian Army. This imbalance of power and weapon technology caused a huge number of casualties among the people of Surabaya.

A second massive urban battle occurred in 1947, but after that, the nature of the warfare began to shift. Following the conquest of the main cities in Java, the war transformed from strict urban combat into a combination of urban and jungle warfare. One of the urban battlegrounds that is particularly interesting to examine in this article is the form of resistance that occurred after the city of Malang was successfully occupied by the Dutch. What strategy was used by both sides during the ten-day urban combat and nearly one and a half years of guerrilla warfare in the aftermath?

2 Method

Most writings regarding the war of independence focus heavily on heroic narratives. Few works concentrate on the mechanics of how a war takes place within an urban space and how combatants utilized the urban layout during the conflict in the city of Malang. To uncover this question, this research was conducted using the historical method. The historical method consists of four steps: *heuristics* (source collection), source criticism, synthesis/interpretation, and the presentation of the written results.

The primary sources used in this article come from colonial reports, war archives, and contemporary newspapers. Other primary sources derived from contemporary newspapers include the *Nieuw Surabaja Courant* and *Pelita Rakjat*,

published from 1948 to 1949. Secondary sources come from various magazines serving as information hubs for families of the Tentara Republik Indonesia Pelajar (TRIP/Student Army) veterans, as well as books discussing Indonesia-Dutch relations from 1947 to 1949.

One of the informants was an eyewitness to the Battle of Salak Street in 1947. Given that this informant is the sole surviving eyewitness, source validation was conducted by cross-referencing their account with existing written records. This information was interpreted and placed within a chronological framework before analysis. The results of the research are presented in this article. During the interpretation stage, information from the newspapers was grouped into specific sub-themes based on the type of case. In conclusion, several forms of urban combat occurred during the 1948–1949 period, including attacks against enemy police and military forces, disrupting security, assassinating spies or collaborators, disrupting transport networks, and sabotaging economic activities. The urban guerrilla movements utilized local *kampung* alleys, which were generally poorly lit.

3 Literature Review

The themes of war and social unrest are long-standing areas of study in Indonesian history. William Frederick, in his book *Gejolak dan Revolusi* (Upheaval and Revolution), reveals the social conditions of Surabaya's population during the revolutionary era, highlighting the crucial role played by the *Pemuda* (Youth). He attempts to examine the links between the revolution and the social layout of Surabaya, which was highly segregated. The *Pemuda* of the Revolutionary era were a blend of a highly segmented social structure encompassing the *priyayi* (gentry), bureaucracy, and colonial laborers, combined with the radicalizing effects of Japanese semi-military education. On the other hand, Robert Cribb writes that the revolution provided space not only for youth but also for bandits and thugs to emerge as elites controlling local social conditions. During the revolution, the enforcement of civil order became incredibly weak, ultimately opening up power vacuums for bandits whose primary capital was violence.

Meanwhile, Ari Sapto provides a slightly different perspective in an article titled "*Keterlibatan Bandit, Pelacur dan Seniman dalam perjuangan Kemerdekaan di Jawa Timur 1945-1950*" (The Involvement of Bandits, Prostitutes, and Artists in the Independence Struggle in East Java 1945–1950). While criminal groups during the colonial era would be captured for imprisonment or execution, their existence was actually highly sought after during the revolutionary period. In East Java, the military attempted to tame and utilize them, and some were even granted official positions within the military hierarchy. Their bravery, skills, and ruthlessness in the underworld were highly advantageous to guerrilla warfare strategies. Some were even capable of carrying out espionage duties. They were ready to serve whoever could provide payment. These criminal actors possessed extensive networks, through which they knew a great deal about what was happening in specific regions. In another piece titled "*Republik dalam Pusaran Elite Sipil dan Militer*" (The Republic in the Vortex of Civil and Military Elites), Ari Sapto describes the military dominance within the civil

bureaucracy. The military controlled the distribution of goods and monitored all communications within civil society. (Ari Sapto, 2019)

The aforementioned view aligns with Robert Cribb's concept of banditry. In his study of criminality in Jakarta during the revolutionary period, he notes that bandits originated from groups within the traditional rural and urban social structures of Java. They served as power brokers operating between the colonial authorities and the grassroots population. Furthermore, he argues that bandits were groups of local strongmen (*jago*) recruited to exercise authority during power vacuums. These bandits subsequently transformed into leaders of the people's militias (*laskar rakyat*). The authorities leveraged their proficiency in violence—a skill set deployed both to resist Dutch forces and to maintain local security." (Cribb, 1991)

Gert Oostindie writes about the war from a unique perspective in the book *Serdadu Serdadu Hindia* (Soldiers of the Indies). While authors generally view the revolution through the lens of the TNI (*Indonesian National Troops*), Geert Oostindie tries to look at the converse perspective based on the personal accounts of Dutch military personnel deployed to Indonesia. Many of them did not realize why they were being sent to Indonesia to fight the local population. The book also describes their daily lives, such as having breakfast, interacting with the Indonesian people, and communicating with their parents back in the Netherlands. Additionally, Oostindie provides vital data regarding the Dutch military, such as the number of conscripts, KNIL soldiers from Ambon, Minahasa, and Java, volunteers, and a small portion of professional soldiers.(Oostindie, 2018)

Another study on the revolution was conducted by Anak Agung Bagus Wirawan, focusing specifically on the Lesser Sunda region (Bali). Wirawan's dissertation is highly intriguing because it examines how the revolution was viewed from the perspective of a small island society with deep-rooted traditions. This discussion becomes fascinating as Bali is often seen as an island that did not receive much intervention from capitalist economic interests, meaning its economic structure was not as sharply segmented as that of Java. (Wirawan, 2014)

Modern warfare represents an important episode in history that altered the patterns of conflict in human civilization. At the beginning of World War II, Western, Eastern, and Islamic nations held differing concepts of war. According to Nordin & Oberg in 2014, Western nations viewed war as a distinct divider between crisis and peace. (Gintautas Razma, 2019) Meanwhile, Eastern nations had a different understanding of what constituted war. China, for instance, understood war as something without regulatory boundaries (Fleming, 2011).

In the early generations of human civilization, warfare relied heavily on the sheer volume of soldiers. The primary targets were military bases where masses of troops gathered. In subsequent generations, developments in firearm technology marked a new generation of warfare. The primary target of war remained military headquarters and places acting as the center of gravity. Linear tactics were still employed in this second generation. The next technological leap marked a new form of combat based on maneuver, cutting off, and destroying the enemy from behind. In this third-generation warfare, troop parameters were more varied and modified within operational areas for contact and non-contact scenarios. Although this strategy was considered outdated, during World War II and the Korean War, the Soviets and

Communist China still utilized "human wave" strategies to demoralize and break the psychological resolve of enemy forces.

Modern warfare is identical to total destruction, alongside humanity's capacity to create mass destructive weapons, harness information, and deploy it to formation units at precise moments. In other words, combat power can be defined as the capacity of military forces to execute effective action across a precise space and time. Modern warfare blends many components of conflict that are often incomprehensible within traditional frameworks of war. Modern warfare frequently provides strategic advantages that surprise an enemy that is technologically unprepared and thus unable to predict or anticipate movements. Success in modern military strategy relies heavily on who can identify their enemy's weaknesses and exploit them before the enemy even realizes it. This is where the term *convergence warfare* emerges, integrating physical, psychological, kinetic, non-kinetic, combatant, and non-combatant elements. Thus, we see a convergence between military power and the interagency community, state and non-state entities, and the capabilities of armed forces.

The Indonesian-Dutch war, which lasted from 1947 to 1949, was far removed from the warfare models featuring linear horizontal and vertical formations that had become common tactics in conventional military doctrine. Frequently, fighting occurred without clear parameters. This is a hallmark of asymmetric warfare. Asymmetric warfare is a conflict between two sides with highly unbalanced military strengths (Arreguín-Toft, 2001). Typically, one side is a state with a regular army, modern weaponry, an air force, and massive funding. Meanwhile, the opposing side is a non-state group, such as guerrillas or insurgents, with far more limited resources. Because they cannot win directly, the weaker side opts for alternative strategies. The goal is to find enemy vulnerabilities, make the political cost of the war unsustainably high, and endure until the enemy loses the will to continue fighting (Mao, 1937).

4 Discussion

The Indonesian-Dutch war was an asymmetric conflict due to the imbalance between the two conflicting parties (Arreguín-Toft, 2001). Unlike the Republican side, which merely inherited war machines, equipment, and even military uniforms from Japan, the Dutch possessed aircraft, tanks, artillery, communication equipment, and United States Marine standards. They were also backed by trained troop skills and military organization, whereas most soldiers and militias (*laskar*) in Indonesia were not yet proficient with modern weapons and modern tactics. During the Battle of Surabaya in 1945, Indonesia utilized a defensive strategy that relied on numerical superiority in personnel. This strategy is considered weak because the majority of *laskar* lacked adequate training in utilizing modern firearms. Therefore, during the war in the Malang region in 1947, Indonesia relied more on guerrilla warfare, which confounded the Dutch. This led to unavoidable violence impacting the civilian population.

Aside from being occupied with facing Dutch forces, the Republican military lacked a strong *esprit de corps*. Harry A. Poeze and Henk Schulte Nordholt observed that at the start of the Proclamation, the public placed immense hope in the new government. However, after a few months, the people began entering a period of deep uncertainty. The failure to form a solid military was exacerbated by internal frictions

within the Republic, and criminal gangs were given a platform within society, making conditions increasingly unstable. The internal conflicts that occurred from February to November 1948 illustrated the lack of internal unity, including within the armed forces of the young Republic.

On the other hand, the Dutch required revenue from the plantation zones still under the control of the Republic of Indonesia. These territories lay in the Eastern Salient of Java, where the city of Malang was located. Occupying this city was critical. As stated by Clausewitz, war is collective controlled violence and a force to compel the enemy to submit to our will; thus, it can be certain that war is waged for the sake of state security interests. According to Clausewitz, state resilience is supported by three elements—society, government, and the military—which can be visualized as the "Corners of State Security". Therefore, according to Clausewitz, operational steps in warfare involve occupying the city (government), destroying central military headquarters, and eliminating the enemy's allies.

As a military hub and administrative center, Malang was considered a Corner of State Security. Moreover, since 1939, the Dutch had built the Bugis airfield, which earned the moniker "*Schiphol van Oosthoek*". A second strategic factor was that after November 1945, this city became the most important urban center in East Java Province. The city hosted the meeting of the Central Indonesian National Committee (KNIP) in February 1947. Connected to the railway network in 1871, the city was only heavily developed between 1920 and 1931. The construction of schools, banks, and government buildings turned the city into a focal point for parents sending their children to study. From an economic standpoint, Malang was vital as it served as a nexus for coffee, sugarcane, rubber, and cocoa plantations located in the surrounding districts. Accordingly, Malang was dense with brick and mortar buildings, forming an effective defensive fortification for urban warfare. The only natural wall protecting the city from armored cavalry tank incursions was the steep and deep Brantas River. Only a single bridge connected Malang with Singosari to the north, from where the Dutch forces would enter. Aside from steep rivers, the mountain ranges stretching across the east, south, and west of the city hindered the advance of Dutch forces while offering effective terrain for guerrilla warfare.

4.1 Attack at the Beginning of the Dry Season

The end of June generally coincided with school holidays. Many students studying in Malang had returned to their hometowns. Consequently, many members of the Tentara Republik Indonesia Pelajar (TRIP) were absent from the city. The TRIP unit was the only resistance group possessing a highly organized structure. Outside of TRIP, other resistance factions fighting on the side of the Republic were united solely by shared ethnicity or party ideology. The motivations of each individual involved in this warfare were highly varied, with many joining out of sheer spontaneity (Soebijanto: 2010).

On the Dutch side, young men were recruited under conscription laws. Diverse viewpoints existed among them. Some Dutch soldiers felt that the war lasting from 1947 to 1949 was not a conflict against disciplined military personnel sharing a unit bond or esprit de corps, but rather against youth driven merely by a hatred of the Dutch. On the flip side, these Dutch soldiers often held vague motivations for

fighting, one of which was to avenge the deaths of their comrades killed by the TNI or militias. Nearing the end of the war in July 1949, many Dutch soldiers experienced depression, forcing them to occupy themselves with sports, watching movies, and drinking alcohol.

Under the framework of the Linggadjati Agreement, on July 21, 1947, the Dutch deployed their largest armada to invade Republican territory via Pasir Putih Beach, Situbondo Regency, Besuki Residency. For the Dutch, selecting the Besuki region as the initial entry gate for the invasion was because this area was not considered a stronghold of the Republic. The population of this residency was deemed to contain the most pro-Van Mook Federalis sympathizers, leading to the assumption that resistance would be weaker in this zone. Secondly, maintaining the Dutch military alongside its war machinery required continuous funding. Those funds could only be secured by reclaiming the plantations in the Besuki Residency area. In this war, the Dutch mobilized three forces: the *Koninklijke Landmacht* (Royal Army), *Mariniersbrigade* (Marine Brigade), and the *Koninklijk Nederlandsch-Indische Leger* (KNIL) (KITLV).

In addition to being backed by regular troop strength, this assault was supported by air power. The city's defense zones had been monitored by reconnaissance aircraft days prior to the invasion of Malang. Starting on June 27, 1947, or six days after the Dutch landing at Pasir Putih Situbondo, TNI forces had conducted holding actions along the line stretching from Pandaan and Lawang to Singosari. On July 31, Dutch forces reached Blimbing—a village area on the northern border of Malang—and subsequently, by 5:00 AM, Dutch troops had approached the eastern sector of the city. At that front, an engagement occurred with the TNI at 10:00 AM, after which the movement continued toward the southern part of the city. This battle caused fires and heavy damage. In this southern sector, there was resistance from snipers targeting Dutch soldiers. Other forms of resistance came via infrastructural destruction, in which six bridges were demolished. Important buildings were sabotaged or burned, including schools, the city hall, stations, houses, cloisters (*klooster*), parsonages, and convents. ("*Kota Malang didoedoeki pasoekan Belanda*", *Pelita Rakjat*, August 2, 1947).

The forces holding out in Malang consisted of the Celebes Republican Militia (Laskar Sulawesi), the Hizbullah Militia, and TRIP. They formed defenses within the city. The defensive framework was executed by erecting barricades, burning structures, and blowing up bridges. The primary military unit bolstering Malang's defense was TRIP. TRIP was a student unit with an exceptionally good organizational system. This force divided its units in each region into battalions. Each residency consisted of one battalion. This unit originated from the Student BKR on September 23, 1945. As student soldiers, they often overthought wartime situations. In some accounts, their physical conditioning frequently fell short for field operations. According to Soebijanto, fatigue was one of the factors leading to the battle on Jalan Salak on July 31, 1947.

The armored vehicle convoy unexpectedly arrived from Jalan Semeru. Immediately upon reaching the boulevard, all enemy armored vehicles unleashed heavy fire through their .50 inch (12.7mm) heavy machine guns toward the defensive positions of the TRIP forces along the Ijen highway. The enemy armored column was dominated by LVT-4 Amtracs (*Landing Vehicle Tracked, Amphibian, Tracked, Assault*

and Personnel Carrier), with the remainder composed of other armored fighting vehicles, troop transport trucks, and Bren carriers. These Amtrac vehicles were not actually designed for standard land assaults. Unlike Sherman or Chi-Ha tanks, these vehicles were intended to transport marines from ship to shore. The vehicle was considered the primary killing machine during the events of July 31, 1947. The superiority of this weapon made the battle entirely unbalanced.

The TRIP forces retreated to join their comrades along Jalan Gunung Salak, where they attempted to hold out amidst and between rows of houses in the residential zone on the south side of the street. However, at that exact moment, while leading his men to the new position, Soetjipto, the Subsector Commander, was struck by enemy fire in the abdomen and collapsed, dying instantly. Along with pressure from the forward elements of the Dutch forces infiltrating toward TRIP positions, they moved silently and undetected through small streets, alleys, narrow pathways, and spaces between adjacent houses near Jalan Ijen and Jalan Salak, then quietly wheeled around and advanced back north, closing in to encircle TRIP from the rear of their defensive lines (Cone Jarot: 2014). TRIP forces held out there, seeking cover behind low embankments or shallow ditches, which were not highly effective as they remained targets for the opponent's automatic weapons. The fighting raged on until almost all unit members, except Soebiantoro, were killed or wounded. Soebiantoro himself was ultimately forced to halt his resistance when he found himself entirely out of ammunition. After surrendering, he was captured alive, still wearing a uniform splattered with the blood of his fallen comrade, Soesanto (Soebijanto, 2010).

The primary cause for the high number of casualties within TRIP was the complete lack of coordination between forces, caused by the absence of radio communications. Yet, in urban warfare, combat is carried out by small units. With numerous artificial barriers inside the city, without radio communication, troop coordination was impossible to execute. This caused uncoordinated retreat maneuvers and meant no reinforcements arrived, as other units had already withdrawn out of the city. Another cause for the vulnerability of TRIP forces was their lack of knowledge regarding camouflage techniques. On July 31, at 8:00 AM, a PB5Y-5 Catalina aircraft flew low over the provincial capital. From its movements, it was evident that the aircraft was on a reconnaissance mission and observation to detect the strength, location, and battle alignment, as well as troop concentrations of the Indonesian forces.

A fatal mistake was made by a member of "Pasukan O" (O Force) who attempted to shoot at the Dutch reconnaissance plane using a Bren gun. This action had terrible consequences because it allowed the Dutch to pinpoint the defensive positions from the sound of the Bren gun's fire. The next error was a celebration by troops who had managed to hit a Dutch target, which revealed their defensive positions to the Dutch, who held advantages in weapon caliber and elevated positioning. Most of the Dutch military strength during the invasion of Malang relied on the Landing Vehicle Tracked (LVT) Amtrac. Though not equipped with cannons like those found on Sherman or Chi-Ha tanks, this vehicle was highly effective for fighting TNI forces because it featured machine guns mounted on the upper section of this relatively tall vehicle.

The next factor was the low skill level in utilizing both light and heavy firearms. They lacked sufficient time and facilities to practice shooting, assembling,

and cleaning weapons. Soebijanto's testimony indicates that during the clash on Jalan Salak, one personnel member ran into trouble when his machine gun jammed, and he was unable to fix it. This proved fatal because when the gun jammed, he was unable to return fire or provide suppressive cover fire during forward and backward maneuvers. The third error was the weakness of TNI intelligence, which failed to detect the direction of Dutch troop movements and did not prepare a secure retreat route. For example, Susanto's Battalion was unable to detect the arrival of Dutch forces from the north, east, and west. The retreat path was a racetrack field that separated Jalan Salak from the sugarcane fields to its west. The open space between the sugarcane fields, the sugar cane transport rail tracks, and Jalan Salak left the TRIP units completely exposed with no cover from the machine guns of the Dutch Amtracs.

4.2 Retaliating in the Darkness: Urban Warfare Strategy and the Dutch Failure of Restoring City

History learning is essentially oriented not only to deliver the facts of the past, but also furthermore aims to build historical awareness, national identity, and students' ability to think historically. Therefore, the use of authentic learning resources is one of the important elements in creating contextual and meaningful learning. In this context, post-independence monuments in Greater Malang have great potential to be integrated into historical learning because they represent material traces of various events, figures, and values of struggle that shaped the journey of the Indonesian nation after the Proclamation of Independence.

The results of the study in the previous subchapter show that most of the monuments in Greater Malang were built to commemorate the struggle to defend independence, especially during the Dutch The First Military Aggression and II. The Hamid Rusdi Monument, the Student's Brigade (TGP) Monument, the Pahlawan TRIP Monument, and the Juang '45 Monument, are all visual representations of the resistance of the people of Malang against the Dutch colonial efforts to regain control of the state. These monuments can be used as contextual learning resources in the historical material of the independence revolution. Moreover, it can especially be used as an instrumental to understand the chronology of the battle, the local actors involved, and the sacrifices of the former younger generation, such as students who are members of the Student Genie Army and the TRIP Battalion.

On August 4, operations formally concluded. The outcome of the assault was the creation of a Dutch occupied zone spanning parts of the Malang and Besuki Residencies. The result of this battle established a demarcation line situated between Sanggariti and Pujon. Following this, the Dutch established RECOMBA (*Regeringscommissaris voor Bestuursaanlegenheden* / Government Commissioner for Administrative Affairs). The Malang municipal government was restored, and rehabilitation began on the buildings that had been subjected to scorched-earth tactics. The first building restored was *De Javasche Bank*, with the hope that the facility would kickstart economic reactivation in the Malang *Afdeeling* (division). Even though the city was occupied by the Dutch, a curfew remained in effect. By the end of 1948, a curfew was enforced in both the city and the regency areas from 10:00 PM to 5:00 AM. However, in the Malang Regency area within a distance of 2.5 km from the

status-quo demarcation line, the curfew ran from 7:00 PM to 5:00 AM. ("*Peroebahan Djam Malam di Karesidenan Malang*", *Pelita Rakjat*, August 12, 1948).

Attacks against the Dutch military in Malang continued into early 1949. One example of these attacks was an incident in Kampung Kota Lama. Around ten o'clock at night on the 13th to the 14th of this month, a platoon attacked the Kottalama Police Post near the station. Prior to the attack, a truck carrying KNIL troops sped to Kottalama to reinforce the Navy and Police guard post there. The resistance group consisted of no fewer than 50 men. They emerged from various neighborhood alleys in Kottalama, mostly from Alley 5. Around eleven o'clock, an informational report surfaced stating that a group of 200 men had been spotted in Klayatan, en route to Soekoen to attack the Police Post in Dinoyo. Here, they began firing upon the police post, which was subsequently returned by the police. This group was reported to be shouting the slogan "*Merdeka, Merdeka*". Some climbed onto the roofs of ethnic Chinese residential homes and began firing from above ("*Gevecht in Kottalama*", January 17, 1949).

Another form of resistance from the Republic was the sabotage of rail transport. Sabotage in Wonokerto caused serious disruptions along the Surabaya-Malang railway line ("*Onveilig traject Malang Soerabaja*", *Nieuwe Soerabia Courant*, January 8, 1949). Several landmines had also been planted by the Indonesian side in some structures. One was discovered inside the *Societeit* building. These mines were suspected to have been intended for scorched-earth strategies (*Nieuwe Soerabaja Courant*, August 4, 1948). Ambushes against Dutch patrols by Republican soldiers also formed a component of the wartime strategy during that era. This took place southeast of Malang on October 31, 1948, right near the Republican Status Quo line. The attack was executed using *zware mitrailleur* (heavy machine guns) and *karabijn* (carbines). Casualties amounted to 4 killed and 3 wounded ("*Patrouille beschoten*", *Nieuwe Surabaja Courant*, November 1, 1948).

However, not all attack targets were Dutch patrols and military personnel. In one case, an attack was directed at an objective that was more social in nature but viewed as a propaganda office for the Dutch. This occurred on a Tuesday afternoon in December 1948. At that time, a number of men disguised as soldiers raided the distribution and ration office in Malang. A number of Malang-Federal officials (pro-Dutch) who were busy counting money were forced to step aside under the threat of firearms. Meanwhile, the three individuals seized a large sum of money. A guard managed to sound the alarm, which prevented the raiders from taking all the available money ("*Overval op distributie-dienst*", *Nieuwe Soerabaja Courant*, December 31, 1948).

Other resistance methods involved sabotage via landmines. A police truck and a Dutch armored car struck a landmine on a Sunday night while traveling between Malang and Bululawang. The convoy was then ambushed and fired upon by a group of individuals. The next day, on Monday, a bus traveling between Malang and Kebon Agung was halted by nine armed groups. They robbed a large sum of money from the passengers. After completing their action, the bus was allowed to continue its journey ("*Terreur in Lawang en Malang*", *Nieuw Soerabaia Courant*, March 30, 1949). The next instance of sabotage was the blasting of railway tracks. For example, the last express train departing from Malang toward Surabaya yesterday afternoon passed over a mine on the bridge between Lawang and Sengon. Due to the mine explosion,

the locomotive, a freight car, and two passenger carriages were severely damaged. According to unconfirmed reports, 5 people died in this crash. Yesterday afternoon, immediately after the accident and again this morning, emergency materials and rescue personnel were dispatched to the crash site from both Malang and Surabaya. The rail connection with Malang had not yet been restored at the time of writing (*"Malang Trein op een mijn gereden"*, February 22, 1949).

Other forms of violence leaned toward creating an insecure environment for residents living within the Dutch-occupied city of Malang. This resistance targeted the core of the occupied zone. The following are incidents of ambushes and terror. This occurred when 9 KNIL soldiers were ambushed by 50 armed guerrillas, presumed to be Republican soldiers, in the Sukorejo area in the eastern sector of Malang on Monday morning at 10:00 AM. In the ensuing firefight, the group was aided by other forces that happened to be passing by. Based on Dutch newspaper reports, out of the 8 men, 3 were killed. The seized booty included: 2 rifles, 1 short-barreled rifle, and 1 carbine rifle (*"Gevecht bij Soekoredjo"*, *Nieuwe Soerabaja Courant*, March 30, 1949). Another attack was carried out by Republican soldiers on a police-owned truck, causing the vehicle to overturn, though it resulted in no casualties (*"Overval"*, NSC, March 30, 1949, photo 8846). Another act of terror was carried out by an armed gang against a police officer in Lawang. The officer, identified as S., was confronted at his home in Lawang by a group of armed men. He shot dead one member of the bandit gang, after which the others fled (*"Terreur in Lawang en Malang"*, *Nieuw Soerabaia Courant*, March 30, 1949).

Reclaiming the city of Malang since August 1947 evidently did not mark the end of armed violence. A commonly encountered form of armed violence was armed robbery. An example of this was a robbery in Jagalan on the night of Thursday to Friday, January 1st. At around 9:30 PM, 4 masked men appeared inside the house, this time after the occupants opened the door themselves following a knock. The masked men were dressed in black. The leader demanded identification cards and money from the residents, but after a resident named S.D. stated he had no money and his ID card had already been requested, the gang leader made another demand. This time he requested medicine, black cloth, and red-and-white paint, but these items were not present in Mr. S.'s house. The named individual recognized who the leader of the group was and reported the incident the following day. By the next afternoon, the gang leader was successfully apprehended and turned out to be a resident of the exact same village. While executing his actions, Mr. S.D. did not carry a real firearm, but rather a toy pistol. His accomplices were arrested later. Presumably, these four individuals were part of a ring consisting of about 13 people. Mr. B. broke in and took 1 typewriter valued at over 2,000 guilders (*"Bende in Djagalan"*, NSC, March 29, 1949).

A subsequent case occurred from Saturday night into Sunday, but this robbery failed because the homeowner immediately called the police, who arrived directly at the scene. The robbers fled instantly (*"Driemaal scheepsrecht"*, March 22, 1949). A third case occurred in Kasin Kulon, where the house of Mr. T.I.T. was targeted by a number of robbers during the night from Saturday to Sunday. They entered through a side window, breaking stained glass to unlock it. One of the thieves stood on a chair and peered through the keyhole of the front room door, where Mr. T.'s sister was watching. He called out to her and threatened to use his weapon if she did not open

the door. She complied. Access to the inner room was not as easy for them. One of the robbers fired a shot, and Mr. T. also fled the house to go to the police station. Meanwhile, the police station in Oro-rodowo had been called for reinforcements, which in turn requested military assistance. The thieves had pried open cabinet doors and taken loot worth 28,000 guilders consisting of cash, jewelry, clothing, a typewriter, and three pen cases. A few hours later, five soldiers appeared, followed by the chief commissioner, but it was too late. The robbers could not be found (NSC, *Brutale Roof*, March 7, 1949).

On Saturday morning, 6 bodies of Indonesian citizens were discovered in different locations. They were dressed in civilian clothing, and some wore green sandals. They bore gunshot wounds to the head, buttocks, and chest. The identities of five of the victims could not yet be determined. One among them was a TNI captain ("*Lijk gevonden*"). It was reported from a reliable source that a Parabellum pistol was also found on an "insane person" who was shot dead by an Ambonese soldier in the market. According to eyewitnesses, the deceased had intended to stab the soldier with his knife, but the soldier was too quick and shot him ("*De moord op de Pasar*").

The Dutch failure to restore security was also proven by the assassination of a police officer at the Regent's (*Bupati*) house in Malang. On Wednesday, January 1st, police left the barracks heading toward the Regent's residence to take over the guard shift there. Along the way, one of the officers requested permission from the commander to return home briefly because he had forgotten something. Shortly thereafter, an Indonesian man, Si-min, dressed as a policeman, asked to speak with the mayor. Before speaking with him, the mayor called the police to ask why Simin had come, as such behavior was highly unusual. The police commander informed the mayor that neither he nor his subordinate commanders had sent a policeman to the mayor, and that in fact, Police Agent Simin was entirely unknown to him. Needless to say, after this phone conversation, Simin was not seen again. Tarman, the policeman who had asked for permission to go home, also failed to appear. The following day, Tarman's body was discovered in Gading Village ("*Politie Agent vermoord*", March 4, 1949). "*New Soerabaja Courant*, has named that Matrawi, an Indonesian, was brutally murdered during the night between Friday and Saturday. The body was found in the morning in Alley 7 of Kottalama with a gunshot wound behind the ear. However, it was suspected that the extremists intended to target Matrawi's neighbor, a soldier, who was not present that night ("*Moord*", February 28, 1949).

The Dutch failure to restore urban security was also marked by a high incidence of theft. Thieves had visited a shop on the night of March 28 to 29. The missing items from the shop were: 200 packs of matches and 1,300 cigarettes, totaling f. 300 (NSC, "*Zware Rooker*", March 4, 1925 [sic/2025]). This insecure situation continued, as occurred every night in Kampung Betek. Almost every night, the residents of Betek experienced thefts or other disturbances. Mrs. D.B. subsequently decided to move to another part of the city that was safer after dusk. However, during the night from Tuesday to Wednesday, an arson attempt was made on her house. First, the door was knocked upon, then broken down, and a trunk containing clothing was taken. Before the house was abandoned, the criminals set a bed on fire, but neighbors arrived quickly to extinguish the flames immediately ("*Poging tot Brandstichting*", March 24, 1949). Another robbery occurred in Lowokwaru Gang 1 on October 28, 1949. A subsequent robbery case took place in the elite residential quarter of

Bergenbuurt. In a robbery on Jalan Slamet, the perpetrators were caught and found to possess 3 Parabellums, 2 F.N.s, and 1 Colt. The looters confessed to having struck targets on Jalan Jagalan, Jalan Bromo, Jalan Tennis, and Taman Slamet. The looting was carried out under instructions from three ethnic Chinese individuals who provided the addresses of their compatriots and details on what could be obtained ("*Razzia onder de rampokkers*", September 28).

Terror and physical threats continued until early 1949. This murder took place in Jagalan, when 4 masked men entered the house of Mr. S.D. on the night of Thursday to Friday, January 1st, at around 9:30 PM, after the occupants opened the door following a knock. The masked individuals were dressed in black. The resident was asked for an identification card (ID) and money, but after S.D. stated he had no money and his ID card had already been requested, the gang leader asked for another. This time he asked for medicine, black-market money, and red-and-white paint, but even with these items, the person knew who the group leader was and reported the incident the following day. The next night, the leader was arrested and turned out to be a resident of the same village. On the night of the visit to Mr. S.D., he did not carry a real firearm, but a toy pistol. One accomplice was arrested later. Presumably, these four individuals were part of that gang, which consisted of about 13 people, and one person who had just entered the house ("*Bende te Jagalan*", March 29, 1949).

In addition to robberies accompanied by murder, another form of terror was the assassination of individuals regarded as Dutch collaborators. This happened to the stationmaster of Blimbing. He was abducted from his home by extremists and, after being beaten, was murdered. The incident occurred at around 10:00 PM when a knock was heard at the door. His wife opened the door and two strangers entered. The stationmaster, who was already asleep, was awakened and taken away under the threat of a pistol. A few days later, his mutilated body was found in Lawang. His head was found in Sengon ("*Stasionchef Blimbing vermoord*", NSC, February 18, 1948). Regarding the murder case of the Assistant Wedana of Bantaran (Blimbing), it was further discovered that the likely cause was that he had ordered many people to be arrested by the police (*Nieuwe Soerabaia Courant*, "*Motief tot moord*", February 11, 1949).

A subsequent wave of panic was caused by the sabotage of vital water facilities for the populace. On the 8th of this month, one-third of Malang's residents suddenly found themselves without water. The cause was the malfunction of two drainage pipes. Further investigation revealed the following. On Monday night, around eleven o'clock, two explosions were heard. A resistance group had blown up the water drainage pipes in a rice field near Sengkaling village. On Tuesday morning, laborers, workers, and technical officials from the water provider departed to the disaster site under military protection to repair the damaged pipes. The incident naturally sparked various rumors, including that the drinking water had been poisoned. However, the relevant authorities announced that the pipes would be repaired immediately and that the wild rumors were merely aimed at spreading terror among the population ("*Waterleiding fungeert niet*", *Nieuwe Soerabaia Courant*, April 9, 1949).

On one hand, this resistance proved effective in preventing the Dutch from ruling securely in the city. On the other hand, this resistance was frequently used as an excuse by the Dutch during truce negotiations to claim that the Republican side was

unable to control its troops. Even though the TNI provided assurances that it would take firm action against any disruption to peace and order, the Dutch still doubted that the TNI would take decisive action against infractions of law and order. The Dutch accused the TNI of secretly permitting these practices without doing anything to stop them (*Nieuwe Soerabaia Courant*, “TNI en ongeregelde benden van Oost Java”; “Onbevredigend TNI gezag veroorzaakt onhoudbare toestand”, *Nieuwe Soerabaia Courant*, October 10, 1949).

5 Conclusions

The city of Malang was a battleground that did not merely experience warfare during the initial Dutch military aggression, but saw it continue into early 1949. The occupation of the city, curfews, and the establishment of a provisional government failed to end the war. The victory of Dutch military campaign at the end of July 1947 did not completely neutralize the strength of the TNI. The volatile security conditions, acts of sabotage, attacks against police posts, and the bombing of railway lines serve as clear evidence that urban warfare can turn into a grueling, prolonged war. Generally, resistance to the Dutch was aimed at disrupting security in territory enclaves occupied by Dutch forces after the First Dutch Offensive in 1947. Two primary groups drove this resistance: active military members acting as urban guerrillas, and several non-regular groups operating in the silence of the night.

They targeted urban victims because residents in the cities often kept their wealth at home. Furthermore, the urban architectural layout facilitated both offensive maneuvers and retreats without detection by Dutch forces." The labyrinth-like village streets and the rural settlements surrounding the urban center offered distinct advantages in urban combat, acting as conduits for escape and logistics. The strategy of terror in Malang demonstrates that this asymmetric war was highly effective in crippling the security apparatus, which was a prerequisite for economic recovery in the Eastern Salient of Java. Testimonies from informants who participated in the events of Jalan Salak illustrate the psychological burden carried by student soldiers until the end of their lives. It also highlights how weak their comrades were in mastering modern warfare, specifically urban warfare.

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