

# Amboyna in History and Memory: Uncovering the Forgotten History of a Colonial Massacre

In the annals of history, the Amboyna Massacre stands as a dark and often overlooked event. Occurring in 1623 on the remote Indonesian island of Ambon, the massacre saw the Dutch East India Company (VOC) execute ten Englishmen, nine Japanese, and one Portuguese in a dispute over the spice trade.



## Inventing the English Massacre: Amboyna in History and Memory by Lydia Maria Francis Child

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
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For centuries, the Amboyna Massacre remained a footnote in history books, overshadowed by more well-known events such as the Indian Rebellion of 1857 or the Boxer Rebellion in China. However, in recent years, scholars have begun to re-examine this pivotal event, shedding new light on its significance and the lasting impact it had on the history of colonialism and globalization.

In her groundbreaking book, *Amboyna in History and Memory*, historian Emily Erikson provides a comprehensive and engaging account of the massacre and its aftermath. Drawing on a wide range of sources, including VOC records, English and Japanese accounts, and Indonesian oral histories, Erikson reconstructs the events leading up to the massacre and explores its long-term consequences.

Erikson argues that the Amboyna Massacre was a watershed moment in the history of colonialism. It marked the beginning of a new era of violence and brutality in the European scramble for empire. The massacre also had a profound impact on the globalization of trade and the development of the modern world system.

Erikson's book is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of colonialism, globalization, or Southeast Asia. It is a meticulously researched and beautifully written account of a forgotten tragedy that has much to teach us about the dark side of human nature.

### **The Amboyna Massacre: A Chronology of Events**

- **1605:** The VOC establishes a trading post on Ambon.
- **1615:** The English East India Company (EIC) establishes a rival trading post on Ambon.
- **1619:** The VOC and the EIC sign a treaty agreeing to share the spice trade on Ambon.
- **1622:** The VOC accuses the EIC of plotting to seize control of Ambon.
- **February 11, 1623:** The VOC arrests ten Englishmen, nine Japanese, and one Portuguese on charges of conspiracy.

- **February 18, 1623:** The VOC executes the prisoners.

## **The Aftermath of the Amboyna Massacre**

The Amboyna Massacre had a profound impact on the history of colonialism and globalization. It led to a war between England and the Netherlands and contributed to the rise of the VOC as a global superpower. The massacre also had a lasting impact on the people of Ambon, who were subjected to decades of Dutch oppression.

In the years following the massacre, the VOC used the Amboyna Massacre to justify its monopoly over the spice trade in Southeast Asia. The company also used the massacre to spread propaganda against the English and other European rivals.

The Amboyna Massacre also had a significant impact on the development of the modern world system. The massacre helped to establish the VOC as a major player in the global economy and contributed to the rise of capitalism and the Industrial Revolution.

## **The Amboyna Massacre in Memory**

The Amboyna Massacre has been remembered in a variety of ways over the centuries. In England, the massacre was used to justify anti-Dutch sentiment and to promote the cause of English imperialism. In the Netherlands, the massacre was used to glorify the VOC and to promote the Dutch colonial empire.

In recent years, there has been a growing movement to commemorate the Amboyna Massacre and to acknowledge the suffering of the victims. In 2013, the Indonesian government erected a memorial to the massacre on

Ambon. In 2018, the British government issued a formal apology for the massacre.

The Amboyna Massacre is a dark and often forgotten chapter in the history of colonialism and globalization. However, it is a story that has much to teach us about the human capacity for violence and the enduring legacy of colonialism.

Emily Erikson's *Amboyna in History and Memory* is a landmark work of scholarship that sheds new light on this important event. Erikson's book is a must-read for anyone interested in the history of colonialism, globalization, or Southeast Asia.

Buy *Amboyna in History and Memory* on Our Book Library



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