



# REFRAMING WARTIME FINANCIAL PROPAGANDA: MEDIA, BEHAVIORAL COMMUNICATION, AND THE SAVING MOVEMENT IN JAPANESE-OCCUPIED JAVA (1942–1945)

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**Abstract:** *This study reexamines the saving movement during the Japanese occupation of Java (1942–1945) by reframing it through contemporary perspectives on media, behavioral communication, and state-driven financial persuasion. Using historical methods combined with a systematic literature review, the research investigates how the Japanese administration orchestrated a multi-platform communication campaign through newspapers, magazines, radio broadcasts, films, songs, stage performances, and kamishibai to embed saving behavior into daily social routines. The novelty of this study lies in interpreting wartime financial propaganda as an early form of behavioral engineering, revealing patterns similar to today's media convergence and state-controlled persuasive communication. The findings show that while propaganda messages successfully constructed narratives of duty, discipline, and economic nationalism, their effectiveness was limited by low public financial literacy and the reliance on coercive institutional mechanisms. By reframing historical propaganda through a modern behavioral lens, this study contributes to contemporary discussions on financial communication, media influence, and the ethics of state-led behavioral interventions.*

**Keywords:** *Saving Movement; Media History; Japanese Occupation; Wartime Propaganda.*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji kembali gerakan menabung pada masa pendudukan Jepang di Jawa (1942–1945) dengan menempatkannya dalam perspektif kontemporer studi media, komunikasi perilaku, dan persuasi finansial yang dikendalikan negara. Dengan menggunakan metode sejarah dan tinjauan pustaka sistematis, penelitian ini menelusuri bagaimana pemerintah Jepang mengorkestrasi kampanye komunikasi lintas media melalui surat kabar, majalah, siaran radio, film, lagu, seni pertunjukan, hingga kamishibai untuk membentuk perilaku menabung sebagai bagian dari rutinitas sosial masyarakat. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada interpretasi propaganda finansial masa

perang sebagai bentuk awal dari rekayasa perilaku (behavioral engineering), yang menunjukkan pola serupa dengan konvergensi media dan komunikasi persuasif yang terpusat seperti pada era digital. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun pesan propaganda berhasil membangun narasi kewajiban, disiplin, dan nasionalisme ekonomi, efektivitasnya tetap terbatas oleh rendahnya literasi finansial masyarakat dan ketergantungan pada mekanisme institusional yang bersifat koersif. Dengan merekontekstualisasikan propaganda historis melalui lensa perilaku modern, penelitian ini berkontribusi pada diskusi kontemporer mengenai komunikasi finansial, pengaruh media, dan etika intervensi perilaku oleh negara.

**Kata Kunci:** *Gerakan Menabung; Sejarah Media; Komunikasi Perilaku; Pendudukan Jepang; Propaganda Masa Perang.*

## INTRODUCTION

Japan's series of initiatives to realize the goal of building an environment of shared prosperity in Greater East Asia begins with creating a society that shares the same vision and mission and is willing to collaborate fully. The purpose of this initiative was for Japan to be able to easily mobilize all its people and its colonies to participate in the programs that had been set. Japan realized this through the process of indoctrinating its colonies, which aimed to change their mindset and behavior in order to become a reliable partner in the framework of the Greater East Asian Common Prosperity.<sup>1</sup> Japan tried to shape Javanese society to fully follow the Japanese pattern of behavior and way of thinking, so that as one of the supporting elements in the war, the Javanese people were willing to be involved in programs designed to achieve this mission.<sup>2</sup> One of the programs implemented by Japan in Java between 1942 and 1945 was the saving movement.

The Japanese occupation of Java (1942-1945) was a period filled with significant changes in various aspects of people's lives. One of the economic policies carried out by the Japanese occupation government is the promotion of saving, which aims to support Japan's war efforts in the Asia-Pacific region.<sup>3</sup> In this case, the media and communication play an important role in disseminating the policy and encouraging public participation. Japan utilizes various communication channels, including newspapers such as *Asia Raya* and *Harian Tjahaya*, Javanese radio broadcast *Hoso Kanriyoku*, as well as *kamishibai* theaters, to spread propaganda about saving in Java.<sup>4</sup> This movement not only

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<sup>1</sup> Imam Barnadib, "Mobilitas Sosial dan Pendidikan Pada Masa Pendudukan Jepang (Suatu Tinjauan Selintas)," *Dinamika Pendidikan* 6, no. 1 (1999): 39–44, <https://garuda.kemdikbud.go.id/documents/detail/355835>.

<sup>2</sup> Aiko Kurasawa, *Mobilisasi dan Kontrol: Studi Tentang Perubahan Sosial di Pedesaan Jawa, 1942-1945* (Jakarta, Java: Gramedia Widiasarana Java, 1993).

<sup>3</sup> Rosmaida Sinaga, Nadiyah, and Hiu Yuri Manik, "Kebijakan Ekonomi dan Politik yang Diterapkan Jepang Selama Pendudukan di Jawa," *Jurnal Review Pendidikan dan Pengajaran* 7, no. 3 (2024): 7899–7906, <http://journal.universitaspahlawan.ac.id/index.php/jrpp>.

<sup>4</sup> Dewi Yuliati, "Sistem Propaganda Jepang di Jawa 1942-1945," *Jurnal HUMANIKA* 15, no. 1 (2012): 1–26.

aims to raise war funds through compulsory savings, such as *Osamu Sane*, but also to instill the values of discipline and obedience in the midst of increasingly difficult economic conditions due to the exploitation of resources by Japan.<sup>5</sup>

The effectiveness of media and communication in encouraging the saving movement in Java during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945) remains an interesting topic to be researched. Japan's strict control over the media ensures that messages about austerity can be widely disseminated. Japan is keenly aware that arousing public interest in setting aside some of its income and storing it in official financial institutions requires a difficult task. Therefore, propaganda to support this saving movement is carried out systematically by utilizing various means. To reach all levels of society, Japan utilizes mass media such as newspapers, magazines, films, and radio, as well as performing arts such as plays and songs, to involve formal and informal institutions such as schools, government offices, and Javanese community organizations.<sup>6</sup>

Previous research on media and communication in Java during the Japanese occupation (1942-1945) has been conducted by many researchers, including: (1) Poster and film media as an instrument of Japanese military propaganda in Java 1942-1945 by Gema Budiarto (2021);<sup>7</sup> (2) The use of the Romusha Propaganda Film Archive during the Japanese occupation in Java by Dio Yulian Sofansyaha (2021);<sup>8</sup> (3) Japanese propaganda against Muslims in Java in 1942-1945 by Tendi (2021);<sup>9</sup> (4) Japanese propaganda in Java through *Djawa Baroe Magazine* in 1943 by Raisa Hashina Rosalini and Desi Dwi Prianti (2022),<sup>10</sup> and; (5) The influence of Japanese propaganda on Javanese society in 1942-1945 by Karlina Kusuma Putri, Putut Wisnu Kurniawan, and Ozi Hendratama (2022).<sup>11</sup> However, this research has not examined the saving movements during the Japanese

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<sup>5</sup> Titin Apriani Putri, "Propaganda Jepang Dalam Melancarkan Kebijakan Pendudukan di Jawa Tahun 1942-1945" (Universitas Lampung, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> Agus Achmad Hariyadi, "Media Komunikasi Java-Jepang" (Yogyakarta, Java, 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Gema Budiarto, "Media Poster dan Film sebagai Instrumen Propaganda Militer Jepang di Indonesia 1942-1945," *Agastya: Jurnal Sejarah dan Pembelajarannya* 11, no. 1 (2021): 35-56, <https://doi.org/10.25273/ajsp.v11i1.6206>.

<sup>8</sup> Dio Yulian Sofansyaha, "Penggunaan Arsip Film Propaganda Romusha Masa Pendudukan Jepang," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah Indonesia* 4, no. 1 (2021): 114-27, <https://doi.org/10.17977/um0330v4i1p114-127>.

<sup>9</sup> Tendi, "Propaganda Terhadap Umat Islam Jawa di Zaman Jepang, 1942-1945," *Jurnal Tamaddun: Jurnal Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Islam* 6, no. 1 (2021): 56-82, <https://doi.org/10.24235/tamaddun.v6i1.3266>.

<sup>10</sup> Raisa Hashina Rosalini and Desi Dwi Prianti, "Propaganda Jepang di Jawa Melalui Majalah *Djawa Baroe* Pada Masa Kependudukan 1943," *Jurnal Komunikasi* 16, no. 2 (2022): 223-38, <https://doi.org/10.20885/komunikasi.vol16.iss2.art8>.

<sup>11</sup> Karlina Kusuma Putri, Putut Wisnu Kurniawan, and Ozi Hendratama, "Pengaruh Propaganda Jepang Terhadap Masyarakat Jawa Tahun 1942-1945," *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pendidikan Sejarah* 5, no. 1 (2023): 231-41, <http://eskripsi.stkipgribl.ac.id/>.

occupation of Java (1942-1945) through the media and communication. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of media and communication in the historical context of the Japanese occupation of Java (1942-1945), as well as how propaganda tools were used as a control mechanism by the Japanese. This research provides a new perspective by emphasizing the analysis on the role of media and communication as the main instruments in driving the saving movement during the period. In contrast to previous studies that focused more on the economic or political aspects of Japanese policy, this study specifically reveals how communication and propaganda strategies through various media, such as newspapers, radio, films, and songs, are used to shape the perception and behavior of people in Java.

## **METHOD**

This study applies a historical method with a systematic literature review approach to explore the role of media and communication in the saving movement during the Japanese occupation in Java (1942-1945). The research process consists of four main stages: (1) heuristic, which involves the collection of primary sources such as the Djawa Baroe Magazine, newspapers from the period 1942-1945 (such as Asia Raya, Sinar Matahari, and others), as well as relevant memoirs and historical records; (2) source criticism, which includes verifying the authenticity of documents through triangulation techniques between sources, serves to ensure that the facts and data used in this writing are indeed true and trustworthy;<sup>12</sup> (3) interpretation, using a critical discourse analysis approach to unravel communication strategies in propaganda materials through several media to identify their impact on society,<sup>13</sup> and; (4) historiography, which aims to compile an analytical narrative.<sup>14</sup> Secondary data from textbooks, scientific journals, and related research are used as comparative materials.<sup>15</sup> The analysis is carried out in a hermeneutic-historical manner by considering the socio-cultural context of the Japanese occupation in Java (1942-1945), so as to reveal power relations in the practice of mass communication.<sup>16</sup> This method was chosen to provide

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<sup>12</sup> Edi Susanto, *Studi Hermeneutika Kajian Pengantar* (Jakarta, Indonesia: Kencana, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Atik Abidah, "Diskursus Interpretasi Linguistik (Ragam Kejelasan dan Kesamaran Makna dalam Ushul Fiqh)," *Justitia Islamica* 4, no. 1 (2007): 1-16, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14710/wjsbb.2024.21564>.

<sup>14</sup> Sartono Kartodirdjo, *Pendekatan Ilmu Sosial Dalam Metodologi Sejarah* (Jakarta, Java: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 1992).

<sup>15</sup> Sirajuddin Saleh, *Analisis Data Kualitatif* (Bandung: Pustaka Ramadhan, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York, USA: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 1980).

originality in the approach to media studies during the Japanese occupation of Java (1942-1945), which has been discussed more from a political or economic point of view.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study applies the theoretical approach of mass communication and propaganda to explore the role of various media in supporting the saving movement during the Japanese occupation of Java (1942-1945). Mass communication theory encompasses a series of concepts and frameworks that seek to explain how mass media works and its impact on a broad and diverse audience.<sup>17</sup> Meanwhile, propaganda theory studies the use of messages and symbols to influence public opinions, attitudes, and behaviors for certain interests.<sup>18</sup> Mass media such as newspapers (Asia Raya, Sinar Matahari), radio (Hoso Kanriyoku), as well as magazines and posters play a role as the main means in disseminating the Japanese government's message to the colonized people, by utilizing agenda setting theory to shape community priorities and framing to present austerity as a patriotic obligation.<sup>19</sup> These media were chosen because of their ability to reach different walks of life effectively. Newspapers such as Asia Raya and Sinar Matahari, as well as Djawa Baroe magazine, spread the message through writing, short stories, and engaging illustrations, while Hoso Kanriyoku radio reached rural communities and the illiterate through live broadcasts.<sup>20</sup> Arts and literature, including propaganda songs, traveling performances, *kamishibai* (paper theater), and short stories in print media, are effective tools for conveying messages emotionally through an edutainment approach, which combines education with entertainment to make it more acceptable to the general public.<sup>21</sup>

On the other hand, government offices and mass organizations play a frontline in the implementation of policies through collective oversight, which demonstrates the practice of two-step stream communication in which information from the government is filtered and amplified by

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<sup>17</sup> Kun Wazis, *Komunikasi Massa: Kajian Teoritis dan Empiris* (Jember, Java: UIN KHAS Press, 2022).

<sup>18</sup> Juariyah, *Opini Publik dan Propoganda* (Jember, Java: LPPM Universitas Muhammadiyah Jember, 2019).

<sup>19</sup> Ika Brianti Hadi S, Endang Pratiwi Kurniawan, and Irwansyah Irwansyah, "Agenda Setting Dalam Isu-Isu Kontemporer di Seluruh Dunia," *Jurnal Teknologi dan Sistem Informasi Bisnis* 3, no. 1 (2021): 105–19, <https://doi.org/10.47233/jteksis.v3i1.188>.

<sup>20</sup> Widya Fitria Ningsih, "The Forgotten Medium: Hoso Kanri Kyoku and the Beginning of National Broadcasting in Indonesia," *Lembaran Sejarah* 12, no. 1 (2017): 36–43, <https://doi.org/10.22146/lembaran-sejarah.25518>.

<sup>21</sup> Agus Maladi Irianto, "Kesenian Tradisional sebagai Sarana Strategi Kebudayaan di Tengah Determinasi Teknologi Komunikasi," *Nusa: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa dan Sastra* 12, no. 1 (2017): 90–100, <https://doi.org/10.14710/nusa.12.1.90-100>.

community leaders before being conveyed to the people.<sup>22</sup> This approach to total war communication creates a comprehensive communication ecosystem, where all channels, from formal media to social interaction, are coordinated to form a collective consciousness.<sup>23</sup> The theory of media system dependence is also relevant in this context, where Javanese people in the World War II situation in the Pacific region are becoming increasingly dependent on information from official media that is strictly controlled by the Japanese government.<sup>24</sup> Through this multidisciplinary study, this study aims to uncover how these various communication channels not only convey information, but also actively shape the socio-economic reality of Javanese society under Japanese occupation.

## **Mass Media**

In an effort to promote a culture of saving, Japan took advantage of various media channels that were growing rapidly at that time. As explained by Barak Kushner in his book *The Thought War, Japanese Imperial Propaganda* (2006)<sup>25</sup>, Japanese propaganda during the war relied heavily on the consumption of mass media that had developed in the era of Taisho democracy in the 1920s. This propaganda includes print media such as newspapers and magazines, as well as electronic media such as radio broadcasts and the production of videos or short films. The following is an explanation of these media.

### **1. Newspaper**

The savings campaign disseminated through print media, such as *Asia Raya* in Jakarta, *Harian Tjahaya* in Bandung, *Soeara Asia* in Surabaya, and *Sinar Matahari* in Yogyakarta, includes various writings in the form of appeals, news, and short stories. The goal is to encourage people to set aside some of their money and entrust it to financial institutions. Some of the news in the newspaper also reported on the formation of savings communities in various regions, both in cities and villages, as well as savings activities carried out by students, employees, soldiers, and even groups of rice traders who have the habit of saving.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Sujin Choi, "The Two-Step Flow of Communication in Twitter-Based Public Forums," *Social Science Computer Review* 33, no. 6 (2015): 696–711. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439314556599>

<sup>23</sup> Douglas C Youvan, "The Total War Speech: Analyzing Joseph Goebbels' Propaganda in Context" (Cambridge, UK, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.30506.43203>.

<sup>24</sup> Nurliya Ni'matul Rohmah dan Endang Rahmawati, "Interpretation of Media System Dependency Theory on Financial Technology," *Jurnal ASPIKOM* 8, no. 1 (2023): 153–68, <https://doi.org/10.24329/aspikom.v8i1.1186>.

<sup>25</sup> Barak Kushner, *The Thought War: Japanese Imperial Propaganda* (Honolulu, USA: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006).

<sup>26</sup> Maman S. Mahayana, "Japanese Occupation Government Policy in Java on Culture and Literature: A Case Study of Asia Raja Newspaper (1942-1945)," *Humaniora* 25, no. 2 (2013): 129–42.



Other newspapers such as Soeara Asia also carry articles related to savings. One of them is the writings that encourage the formation of savings communities.<sup>27</sup> The Harian Tjahaya also raised the theme of saving several times in its publications. One of the reports discussed saving activities among farmers. It is reported that the farmers, thanks to the encouragement of the Jawatan Pertanian, have formed a savings association to accommodate the spirit of saving to meet their needs in the future.<sup>28</sup> In addition to news, advertisements, and short stories, newspapers also contain advertisements for postal savings customers' lotteries, procedures for participating in the lottery, and announcing lottery winners. In addition, through newspapers, it is also reported the amount of savings collected from the community every certain period. This kind of report aims to provide an idea that Javanese people are increasingly fond of saving, and it is hoped that the target to reach a certain nominal amount can be achieved with an increasing spirit of saving.<sup>29</sup>

## 2. Magazine

Even though it is not published every day, magazines have their own advantages as a print media that is able to display images in more detail and provide columns with longer narratives. Therefore, the use of magazines in savings propaganda strategies in Japan is no less interesting than newspapers.<sup>30</sup> In an article entitled "Nasehat Jang Bermanfa'at" in the Djawa Baroe edition on July 1, 1944, there is a short story accompanied by a caricature depicting a Javanese ese named Sastrowikromo who has just received a salary and received advice from his leader. The advice reads as follows.

*"Ingat, kang Sastro oeang ini djangan dibelikan barang jang tidak sangat perloe. Ingat, sekarang kita dalam peperangan jang hebat; hidoep sederhana dan hemat haroes mendjadi tjara hidoep kita. Ingat djoega, djalan dari kantor ini sampai roemahmoe djaoeh sekali, dan moengkin ada orang pendjahat merampas oeangmoe. Maka dari itoe djanganlah ragoe-ragoe, pergilah teroes ke kantor pos, simpanlah oeangmoe disana. Djikalau kamoe memerloekan oeang, sewaktoe-waktoe bisa diambil kembali."*<sup>31</sup> (Keep in mind, Kang Sastro, don't buy things that are not really necessary. Today, we are in a serious war situation; A simple and frugal life should be our way of life. In addition, the journey from this office to the house is very long, and there may be bad guys who will steal your money. Therefore,

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<sup>27</sup> "Penerangan Tentang Menaboeng," *Soeara Asia*, Juli 1943.

<sup>28</sup> "Lagi Jalan Penghematan," *Harian Tjahaya*, Juni 1943.

<sup>29</sup> Roby Pratama dan Indriyanto, "Nasionalisme dalam Surat Kabar di Pulau Jawa dan pada Masa Pendudukan Jepang," *Historiografi* 3, no. 1 (2022): 102–11.

<sup>30</sup> Shafaat Rouzei Waworuntu and Indah Tjahjawulan, "Kulit Muka Majalah Djawa Baroe: Representasi Propaganda Pendudukan Jepang Di Java," *JSRW (Jurnal Senirupa Warna)* 8, no. 2 (2020): 198–226, <https://doi.org/10.36806/v8i2.90>.

<sup>31</sup> "Nasehat Jang Bermanfa'at," *Djawa Baroe* (Surabaya, Java, July 1944).

don't hesitate, go to the post office immediately and keep your money there. If you need the money, you can take it back at any time).



Figure 1. Djawa Baroe magazine which contained the text "Nasehat Jang Bermanfa'at" on edition July 1, 1944, page 33.

Source: Leiden University Libraries-Digital Collections

It is said that Sastro followed all the advice from his leader. He went to the post office to save his money and get a passbook. On his way home, he is ambushed by a group of criminals who ask him for money. Sastro explained to them that all his money had been deposited at the post office and only had a passbook in his hand. The criminal then snatches the book and pretends to be Sastro at the post office. Upon arrival at the post office, the criminal felt confused when asked to sign. The officers immediately became suspicious of his behavior and reported the incident to the head of the post office. Eventually, the criminal was arrested and Sastro's passbook was successfully secured and returned to him. The message that can be taken from this story, which is accompanied by caricature images, is that Sastro now fully believes that saving at the post office is the safest way. From this article, we can see how Japan is trying to encourage Javanese s to prefer to save in financial institutions rather than saving money at home.



In addition to the short story, Djawa Baroe in August 1944 also contained news equipped with photos about the saving movement at the *tonarigumi* (neighborhood association) level. Among the photos displayed were images of a parade or procession celebrating the collection of postal savings of ten million Netherlands Indies Roepiah. Furthermore, there is a picture of a group of residents who deposit their savings to the officer at *Kumicho's* house (the head of the *tonarigumi* or the head of the neighborhood association) while carrying a passbook. In the column, it is stated that similar activities are carried out every week in each *tonarigumi* (neighborhood association). The next picture shows the savings officer (*Chokin-Hanchou*) who has been appointed in each *tonarigumi* (neighborhood association) doing his duty to receive and record savings from the citizens.



Figure 2. 3. 4. Djawa Baroe magazine which contains pictures of saving activities at the *tonarigumi* or level neighborhood association on edition August 1, 1944, pages 14-16.

Source: Leiden University Libraries-Digital Collections

### 3. Audiovisual Media

In addition to newspapers and magazines, Japan also uses various other media to spread propaganda, including invitations to save. Japanese propaganda experts realized that the level of education of the Javanese people was still low and many were illiterate. Therefore, one of the hallmarks of Japanese propaganda schemes is the effective use of audiovisual media, such as films and radio broadcasts, which are able to reach rural communities who cannot read. Since the beginning of the Japanese occupation of Java, the government has sought to fully control the film industry and make it an important war propaganda tool. In October 1942, a temporary organization was formed to implement film policy, namely Jawa Eiga Kōsha. However, shortly thereafter, control

of the film industry was transferred to two Japanese companies, Nichi'ei and Eihai, both of which were headquartered in Tokyo. Since then, the film industry has been united in a large network that spans the entire region of the Greater East Asia Shared Prosperity Environment.<sup>32</sup>

At that time, the Japanese film industry in Java prioritized the making of documentary, cultural, and news films. One of the categories of films produced by the Japanese in Java is the emphasis on increasing production and war campaigns.<sup>33</sup> One example is a video or film that campaigns the importance of saving money and using local products. This video is about seven minutes and twelve seconds long as well as divided into two sessions. In the first session, Japan tried to attract the interest of the public to entrust their money to government institutions, in this case saving through the post office. In the second session, Japan sought to instill a love for domestic products and describe the changes that have been made in Java, especially in the fields of health and transportation.



Figure 5. 6. 7. Scene of the film "Manaboenglah di Kantor Pos" in 1944.

Source: [https://youtu.be/7Q9Rjv-ZyCg?si=h2hGPb\\_DkXehVkJFH](https://youtu.be/7Q9Rjv-ZyCg?si=h2hGPb_DkXehVkJFH)

Based on the figure; to attract the attention of the public to save at the post office, Japan depicted that Java had been freed from the influence of Western imperialism. In the struggle for Asian independence and freedom, the participation of all people is very important, one of which is through the behavior of saving gradually for a better life in the future. One of the narratives conveyed was about how to save at the post office. Interestingly, to build an understanding that keeping money at the post office is a wise choice, this video shows that keeping money at home is risky against theft. In addition, there is an illustration depicting a pedicab driver who was able to buy his own pedicab after saving little by little, which made him smile happily. It is important to note that the illustrations in

<sup>32</sup> Kurasawa, *Mobilisasi dan Kontrol: Studi Tentang Perubahan Sosial di Pedesaan Jawa, 1942-1945*.

<sup>33</sup> Aiko Kurasawa, "Propaganda Media on Java Under The Japanese 1942-1945," *Java* 1, no. 1 (1987): 59-116.

this video use attractive caricatures to help the public understand and remember the message conveyed.<sup>34</sup>

#### **4. Radio**

Radio functions as one of the means of propaganda that is intensively used by the Japanese occupation government to reach various levels of Javanese society. In fact, the recommendation to listen to radio broadcasts inside the prison is also applied. This is listed in the *Asia Raya* daily as follows.

*Didalam pendjara diadakan radio boeat orang-orang jang kena hoekoem, soepaja mereka itoe dapat poela mendengarkan siaran jang berfaedah. (Inside the prison, radios are provided for those who are convicted, so that they can return to listening to useful broadcasts.)*<sup>35</sup>

The radio transmitting station, which was fully controlled and controlled by the Japanese government, was established on October 1, 1942 under the name Jawa Hosokanriyoku (Java Broadcast Supervision Bureau) under Sendenbu (Japanese propaganda department). Jawa Hosokanriyoku has eight local transmitter stations spread across various regions, including Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surakarta, Banyumas, Semarang, Surabaya, and Malang.<sup>36</sup> Various broadcast themes are broadcast every day through these transmitting stations, ranging from news in Indonesian, Sundanese, Javanese, and Japanese, to government announcements, music, and religious lectures.<sup>37</sup> Related to saving propaganda, the invitation to save is also conveyed through radio transmitters. In addition, in the context of the competition for creating songs with the theme of saving, the conditions and results of the competition were announced over the radio. The songs selected in the competition were also played regularly in radio broadcasts.<sup>38</sup> Thus, it is clear that radio functioned as one of Japan's propaganda tools to encourage the spirit of saving among the Javanese people at that time.

#### **Arts and Literature**

Art and literature function as effective propaganda tools because they are able to arouse people's emotions. In addition, through art and literature, propaganda missions can be conveyed in

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<sup>34</sup> Shigeru Sato, "Labour Relations in Japanese Occupied Java," *Working Paper* 8, no. 1 (2000): 6–25. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26394894>.

<sup>35</sup> "Insaf Membawa Bahagia," *Djawa Baroe* (Surabaya, Java, July 1944).

<sup>36</sup> Kurasawa, *Mobilisasi dan Kontrol: Studi Tentang Perubahan Sosial di Pedesaan Jawa, 1942-1945*.

<sup>37</sup> Widya Fitria Ningsih, "The Forgotten Medium: Hosokanri Kyoku and the Beginning of National Broadcasting in Java," *Lembaran Sejarah* 12, no. 1 (2017): 36–43, <https://doi.org/10.22146/lembaran-sejarah.25518>.

<sup>38</sup> "Simpanan Oeang Oentoek Waktoe Tertentoe Disertai Hadian Oendian," *Asia Raya*, Februari 1945.

a more subtle way. Therefore, the Japanese government places art as a crucial element in supporting the saving movement in Java. The explanation of the role of art and literature in this context is as follows.

## 1. Song

Songs function as a tool of Japanese propaganda that is used to convey ideas and arouse morals and enthusiasm among Javanese people.<sup>39</sup> There are two categories of songs that were often taught and listened to during the Japanese occupation in Java. First, Japanese-language songs that come directly from Japan, and second, propaganda songs in Javanese.<sup>40</sup> The Javanese songs include songs adapted from Japanese and those created in Java. One of the songs written in Javanese is "Menaboeng", which was created to support the saving movement promoted by the Japanese at that time.<sup>41</sup> The lyrics of this song emphasize that by saving, both old and young contribute to the back line. In addition, the lyrics also teach that by diligently saving and frugging, a person will achieve prosperity and wealth in old age.<sup>42</sup> Through the lyrics of this song, it is clear that the spirit of saving is likened to the spirit of fighting on the battlefield.



The image shows a musical score for a song titled "MENABOENG". The score is written in Western musical notation with a treble and bass clef. The lyrics are written in Javanese and Indonesian. The Javanese lyrics are on the left, and the Indonesian lyrics are on the right. The Indonesian lyrics are numbered 1 through 3. The score is for a piano accompaniment.

**LAGOE MENA-BOENG OEANG**

1. Toca dan moeda di garis belakang, Dari kota sampai ke desa, Ikoet serentak berdjoeang-perang, Dengan menaboeng serkoet tenaga.
2. Selama moeda radja menaboeng, Hemat tjermat semaksimal, Datangnja toea beralek oentoeng, Hidoep merdeka, sentosa dan kaya.
3. Pradioerit moeka angkat sendjata, Hantjoer moesoeh sampai binasa, Pradioerit belaksoeng menghimpoe harta, Membantoe oesaha, menodjoe dja'a.

Oelangan:  
Menaboeng, menaboeng segera  
Seroean Bangsa, Panggilan Nonsa.

<sup>39</sup> Aurellia Kanza Nabila, "Lagu 'Aikoku Koushinkyoku' Sebagai Media Propaganda Pada Masa Pendudukan Jepang di Jawa, 1942-1945" (Universitas Gadjah Mada, 2024).

<sup>40</sup> Kurasawa, *Mobilisasi dan Kontrol: Studi Tentang Perubahan Sosial di Pedesaan Jawa, 1942-1945*.

<sup>41</sup> Kiky Aufy dan Gandhi Moh., "Propaganda Jepang melalui Lagu dalam Majalah Djawa Baroe," *Japanology* 9, no. 2 (2022): 136-51, <https://doi.org/10.20473/jjs.v9i2.58287>.

<sup>42</sup> "Lagoe Menaboeng Oeang," *Djawa Baroe* (Surabaya, Jawa, April 1945).

Figure 8. Djawa Baroe magazine which contained the song "*Menaboeng*" (Savings) in the April 1, 1945 edition, page 34.

Source: Leiden University Libraries-Digital Collections

Songs as an element of art that are effectively used as a tool to promote savings, can be seen from the competition for creating songs with the theme of saving held by the Japanese government in Java. This competition carries the theme '*Njanjian Menaboeng Oeang*' (Singing to Save Money) with general requirements in the form of songs in Javanese that have cheerful melodies and lyrics and are easy to understand by many people. The Japanese government provided a total prize of f 900 for the three main winners and five entertainment winners. In addition to receiving prize money, the winning song would be announced and broadcast throughout the island of Java via radio.<sup>43</sup>

## 2. Charade and *Kamishibai*

The significant attention to performing arts by the Japanese government is reflected in the establishment of various organizations aimed at supervising and promoting theatrical activities. In the context of saving propaganda, the Japanese government through Sendenbu (Japanese Propaganda Department) organized traveling plays throughout Java to disseminate the spirit of saving among the public. This traveling play was entrusted to four theater groups initiated by Djawa Eiga Kosha. Each of the skits performed in seven different locations each time they visited a city. In this case, the plays they presented raised the theme of the importance of saving activities for each individual.<sup>44</sup>

Another stage art used by the Japanese as a propaganda tool is *kamishibai*, which means paper theater. *Kamishibai* was a popular form of entertainment among Japanese people at the time, where the performance involved the presentation of a series of pictures made of cardboard with a narration. The images in this *kamishibai* are not printed, but are drawn manually one by one. Each painting has a size of about one square meter.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> "Moried-Moried Haroes Menaboeng," *Asia Raya*, Mei 1943.

<sup>44</sup> "Tentang Menaboeng Oeang Pendapatan Kapas," *Asia Raya*, Juli 1943.

<sup>45</sup> Gema Budiarto, Dewi Yuliati, and Dhanang Respati Puguh, "Kamishibai dan Propaganda Jepang di Jawa Pada Masa Perang Asia Timur Raya," *Jurnal Sejarah Citra Lekha* 8, no. 1 (2024): 56–69, <https://doi.org/10.14710/jscl.v8i1.61988>.





Figure 9. 10. Djawa Baroe magazine which contains the process of making *kamishibai* and *kamishibai* performances in the public edition on November 15, 1944, pages 22-23.

Source: Leiden University Libraries-Digital Collections

In Java, especially in Java, the production and performance of *kamishibai* at that time was under the supervision of Sendenbu (Japanese Propaganda Department). Various themes were produced, many of which raised stories with the theme of the spirit of saving and promoting postal savings.<sup>46</sup> There are at least three *kamishibai* performances that highlight the theme of saving, namely "*Nasehat Jang Bermanfa'at*" (Useful Advice), "*Insaf Brings Happiness*" (Aware Brings Happiness), and "*Menoedjoe Kemenangan Dengan Giat Menaboeng*" (Towards Victory with Saving Diligently).<sup>47</sup> These three themes have also been published in several editions of Djawa Baroe magazine as illustrated stories.<sup>48</sup> The pictorial story conveys a moral message about the importance of frugality and living simply, as well as emphasizing how crucial it is to save for the future.

<sup>46</sup> Rouli Esther Pasaribu, "Absent But Present: Propaganda Strategies of the Japanese Occupation in Java As Narrated in Kamishibai in Djawa Baroe Magazine," *International Review of Humanities Studies* 9, no. 1 (2024): 282–96, <https://doi.org/10.7454/irhs.v9i1.1289>.

<sup>47</sup> Kurasawa, *Mobilisasi dan Kontrol: Studi Tentang Perubahan Sosial di Pedesaan Jawa, 1942-1945*.

<sup>48</sup> Budiarto, Yulianti, and Puguh, "Kamishibai dan Propaganda Jepang di Jawa Pada Masa Perang Asia Timur Raya."



### 3. Short Story

In the field of literature, Japan significantly utilizes short stories and illustrated stories to disseminate the spirit of saving, especially among readers of magazines and newspapers. The production of short stories, illustrated stories, and poems is not only carried out by the Japanese government, but also involves the participation of the general public through writing competitions with the theme of saving.<sup>49</sup> One of the competitions was held in Puwokerto and won by Johan Anwar with a work entitled "*Menoedjoe Kemenangan Dengan Giat Menaboeng*" (Towards Victory with Saving Diligently). The competition assessment criteria explain that the work produced must contain elements of invitation to the public and provide a clear explanation so that the general public can easily understand the meaning of saving.<sup>50</sup>



Figure 11. Djawa Baroe magazine which contains the short story "*Menoedjoe Kemenangan Dengan Giat Menaboeng*" (Towards Victory with Saving Diligently) in the October 1, 1944 edition, page 27.

Source: Leiden University Libraries-Digital Collections

The work written by Johan Anwar raises the theme of the importance of saving as a strategy to achieve victory in war. He emphasized that saving money at the post office is a safer option than at

<sup>49</sup> Ratna Prasasti Ningrum, "Propaganda Jepang Terhadap Jawa Melalui Cerpen Tonari Kumi Dalam Majalah Djawa Baroe Edisi 1 Mei 1944" (Universitas Brawijaya, 2016).

<sup>50</sup> "Menoedjoe Kemenangan Dengan Giat Menaboeng," *Djawa Baroe* (Surabaya, Java, October 1944).

home. This emphasis suggests that keeping money at home is high-risk, while at the post office provides benefits. Johan Anwar also explained with illustrations the various advantages of saving at the post office, as well as the risks that may arise from saving money at home. For example, in a fire or robbery situation, saving money at home can be a very detrimental decision, while saving at the post office not only offers security and benefits, but also provides an opportunity for the community to contribute to the development of the country.<sup>51</sup>

Another example is a short story published in the daily Asia Raya, which raises the theme of the importance of saving, written by S. Ozoe. This short story tells the story of a soldier who has a habit of saving. With his savings, he can immediately help those around him who suddenly need help.<sup>52</sup>

### **Institutions in Society**

Recommendations to save have been implemented for civil servants in all regions of Java in stages. Employees with the lowest rank are required to save 25 cents, while employees with the highest rank are required to save 20 Roepiah every month. The savings funds are stored at the Post Office.<sup>53</sup>

Meanwhile, at the Bogor regional office, a special deliberation was held to discuss the savings program. Participants in the deliberation consisted of Regional Heads and their devices, as well as representatives from various population groups up to the level of *tonarigumi* (neighborhood association). The meeting began with a speech emphasizing the importance of saving to strengthen the community's economy. Then, reports from the head of the post office and the director of the bank were submitted about the amount of money that had been saved by the residents. After that, the meeting agenda continued with a discussion of ways to increase public participation in the savings program. Finally, several decisions were agreed, including the installation of posters throughout Bogor to motivate people to save. To support this effort, a special commission will be formed in charge of producing savings posters, including the selection of words and images that attract the public's attention. In addition, in the meeting, it was also agreed that to strengthen the savings program, an activity called "*Pekan Penaboeangan*" (Savings Week) throughout the Bogor area.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> "Menoejoe Kemenangan Dengan Giat Menaboeng."

<sup>52</sup> "Mari Kita Menaboeng Oeang! Semangat Menaboeng di Djawa.," *Asia Raya*, June 1943.

<sup>53</sup> "Banjaknja Penaboeng Dalam Kediri-Joebinjokoe," *Asia Raya*, September 1943.

<sup>54</sup> "Penaboeangan di Bogor Shuu," *Asia Raya*, January 1943.

In the monthly meeting of the Pangreh-Praja of Blora Regency, in addition to discussing other important issues, one of the agendas discussed was the importance of saving for all Javanese people, especially the people of Blora. The speech emphasized that saving is a key element in improving the economic welfare of the people, because it is closely related to daily life. On that occasion, the procedure for saving at Chokin Kyoku (State Savings Bank) was also explained. Blora officials were reminded that they have an important role in encouraging a culture of saving, so it is hoped that they can be an example for the community in implementing a frugal lifestyle and diligent saving. In addition to Blora, saving activities are also carried out by Pangreh Praja in Garut Regency, where every month, ranging from ordinary employees to Regents, save at the post office with the amount of savings ranging from 0.25 Roepiah to a maximum of 2,250 Roepiah.<sup>55</sup>

Several other government agencies are also actively encouraging their employees to save. One example is at the office of Hooki Kyoku (Court and Legislative Hall) headed by Supomo. In the judicial office, a savings organization was formed for all employees.<sup>56</sup> From various explanations of the programs implemented in various government offices in various regions, it can be concluded that in an effort to carry out savings propaganda, Japan utilized its government organizational structure hierarchically from the top to the bottom.

## CONCLUSION

This research reveals that the propaganda of the saving movement carried out by the Japanese during the occupation of Java (1942-1945) was part of a planned strategy to mobilize economic and social support for the benefit of World War II in the Pacific region. Through various channels such as newspapers, magazines, films, radio, as well as art such as songs, dramas, and short stories, Japan has succeeded in instilling the values of saving as a form of participation in the Greater East Asian Common Prosperity. The results of the study show that this propaganda is not only aimed at raising funds, but also to create a change in people's behavior by emphasizing the safety and benefits of saving in formal institutions such as the post office. In addition, government institutions are also used to strengthen this movement, which shows how organized Japan's efforts are in controlling the daily lives of Javanese people related to saving activities.

This research has a number of limitations, including its reliance on archival sources, most of which come from the mass media of Asia Raya and Djawa Baroe, so it may not fully reflect the views

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<sup>55</sup> "Oeang Taboengan Pendoedoek Jawa," *Sinar Matahari*, Februari 1944.

<sup>56</sup> "Oesaha Memperkokoh Perekonomian dan Penaboengan Rakjat," *Asia Raya*, Februari 1945.

of the Javanese people towards the propaganda of saving activities. In addition, the lack of direct testimony from the Javanese people who lived in that period makes the analysis of the social and psychological impact of the saving movement less comprehensive. Limited access to primary sources, such as radio recordings that may have been lost or damaged, also hampered a thorough reconstruction of the saving-propaganda strategy implemented in Java. Finally, the limited focus of research on Javanese society may not reflect the dynamics that occur in other regions of Java, which have different social and cultural contexts.

For further research recommendations, it is recommended to delve deeper into the long-term impact of saving propaganda on the saving culture of Javanese people after the Japanese occupation. This research can also be extended by comparing Japan's propaganda strategy on the island of Java with other occupied areas in Java, such as Kalimantan and Sumatra, to understand the differences and similarities in the approaches applied. Multidisciplinary approaches, including social psychology or political economy, can be used to analyze how propaganda influences an individual's financial decisions. In addition, it is important to explore more local archival sources or direct testimonies from historical actors to complement the narrative that has been dominated by official sources from Japan. Thus, the results of this study can be used as comparative material to enrich the complexity of the research conducted.

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