

Transcript

00:00:00 Speaker 1

We have our next speaker, Dr.

00:00:01 Speaker 1

Scott Abel, and he will be looking at piracy and pahang in the 19th century.

00:00:09 Speaker 1

Thank you all for coming.

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I really appreciate you being here and inviting me.

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I recognize that this might be a little touchy subject, but I'll let Charlie .

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All right, so when we're looking at piracy, we also kind of have to note that there is a--

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blurred line a lot of times between the merchant mariner, the pirate, the pirate hunter.

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And it's at times difficult to distinguish between these actors.

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But we also have to recognize that wealth seized through these actions played an important part in redistribution of wealth in the late states through cruising.

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I generally use the word cruising if I want to be eagerly.

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non-judgmental about it or non-legalistic in my view.

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Particularly in the early part of the 19th century, slavery played an important role in piracy, as captive slaves bolstered political support for elites.

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So the more people you had supporting you, the greater your power and prestige was.

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There also is another issue with this, is that while pirates are acting on behalf of the regional states, contrary to oftentimes the interests of people living within those countries, the system that existed at this time oftentimes is at odds with a lot of post-World War II

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national identity and the way that people wanted to view or write about history.

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And I'm going to discuss a potential reason why that might be, and also keep it in the framework of why scholar, other reasons why scholars might be

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hesitant to talk about the subject or talking about it in a manner that is different from what I'm doing.

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All right, next slide, please.

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So this is usually something that pops up whenever I talk about the subject.

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I personally use this word, piracy or pirate.

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Oftentimes it's good as a reflection of the sources of void, especially by the victims of it.

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I think it's the least we could do for the people who lost everything and were brave enough to actually have their words recorded.

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Admittedly, a lot of the testimony is through the transcriptions and translations of the colonial system, whether it be police stations, Royal Navy officers,

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for others.

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And I feel this also compounds the need to use piracy or the acceptability to use this as a word, because you're also suggesting in that context, if you're going to the police station, that implies that some sort of crime has happened or something that you feel is illicit.

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Another reason is that at this time, there were treaties between

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Malay states and European powers, particularly the Netherlands, and the East India Company or Great Britain.

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And these treaties pretty clearly specify that piracy is going to be prohibited, although the treaties evolve on how that is enforced.

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And the third, in my research, I've seen

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At least a couple of instances, while this is fairly rare, that even if you were of the elite class, if you were captured, you could be held ransom if you were engaging in these activities.

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And one of the most famous cases in 1874 in the Song War resulted in execution.

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But I do want to keep in mind

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that being called a pirate at this stage was a pretty serious insult and was not something that you would do lightly.

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One source that I found suggests that Sultan Hussein Shah Al-Jabour was himself one of the people captured during these sort of activities.

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So I decided to pick

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These pictures, the one on the left, is from the National Library of Spain.

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And the one on the right is from the National Museum of Malaysia.

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That is the one on the right of the figurehead.

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If you notice on the one on the left, the picture of this tambu, you can see toward the valves section over here, you can see the guns.

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These are called, at least in English, bow chasers, and they usually are behind opulons or bulwarks to protect the crew.

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As you can see, there's a pretty well-decorated vessel, as Parahu and other vessels, my dear Sergeant Pimachajo, were symbols of the state or symbols of prestige and power.

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and would play a defensive role potentially as well in keeping it close safe from attack.

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So I know this is usually the boring part where we're talking about historiography, but I do think I can at least make it somewhat interesting.

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One of the things that I've kind of noticed is that mid-19th century liberal narratives, they're kind of similar to a lot of the post-war narratives.

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A lot of these materials you can find for free if you'd like.

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Sheriff Ogborn, he was a Royal Navy officer.

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He blamed European powers, particularly the Dutch, for the oppression of malaise as being the cause of disruption and chaos.

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Samuel Cogleton, through Reverend Wallace, he blames the head of money system for increasing piracy.

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This is actually Maxwell Benson, not the other Maxwell.

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and he was critical of the expansionist policies predicated on piracy.

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So these actors, they tended to try to persuade Europeans and others to treat Asians with greater compassion and try to engender a sense of restraint.

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Fast forward a few decades,

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I'd say the two, at least, most famous English language writers on this subject are Tarlang and Trocky.

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Tarlang argues that British forces are using piracy for justification, for expansion.

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And Trocky is arguing that counter-piracy operations effectively destroy the Malay shipping industry.

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The first one for Tarlang, there is some element of truth to that, but my own research does not suggest that that is

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at the core of the issue, and I have not seen any significant evidence to support Trocke's assertion.

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And I don't necessarily want to get too speculative on these individual motivations, but I do want to talk about the overall general context in which this is operating.

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So why is there this sort of similarity between the two?

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Well, some of the research that I have done suggests that, particularly during World War II, there was a spread of a particularly aggressive form of nationalism.

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I pick these two figures as being important.

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There are many others, but I felt that these were the two most compelling cases.

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The man to the left is Shumai Okawa.

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He is a

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important Japanese intellectual and pan-Asianist.

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He was also a propagandist during the war and tried to promote Japanese aggression and Asian unity.

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He portrayed Japan's imperial mission during this time as a divine mission to unify Asia and also destroy both the United States and Great Britain.

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He sought to mobilize agents for the struggle.

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And the individual on the right, Indonesians will know, is Bungtumo.

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He was also a Japanese propagandist before the war ended.

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And I feel that he's been-- plays an important role in the story of the

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trend, shifting his charisma and his historiographical narrative to try to promote mass mobilization, particularly against British Indian forces, during the temporary British occupation in 1945.

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Both used their voices and radio technology to indoctrinate the masses.

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And their narratives focused a lot on grievance narratives,

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iterating different atrocities committed by Western powers against Asians.

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Bungjumbo, I think what his main difference is, is he starts to elevate this character of the anti-colonial hero.

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And his favorite seems to have been Ditorno Goro, who was famous for fighting the Java War in 1825 to, I believe, 1830.

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So I couldn't resist.

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I had to put what happened to these individuals.

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Mr.

00:10:47 Speaker 1

Okawa, he had a nasty case of syphilis, which caused his brain to go insane.

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So this is him during his war crime, trying to renal.

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And I don't know if you can recognize the man on the bottom right, but that is the former Prime Minister Hideki Tojo.

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And if you notice,

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He is slapping Kideki Tojo on the back of his head during his war crime.

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And you can see the American soldier trying to restrain him somewhat futilely.

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Tsutomo, he, after the war, he kind of avoids politics as best I can tell, but during the Suhardo regime, he protested against

00:11:33 Speaker 1

the corruption of that regime, which ended him in prison, as you can see.

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So I'm kind of wanting to shift away from these particular narratives and focus more on autonomous history method, and just be a matter a bit more critical of those who professionally deprived others of their freedom, livelihood, and human lies.

00:11:59 Speaker 1

So we're going to switch over to the next slide, please.

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switch over to the 19th century again.

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And there was a British policy to suppress piracy and slave trade.

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However, in my experience, it tended to be a bit more cautious in how they went about this.

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is a lithograph of HMS Wolf and the East Indian Company vessel Zephyr.

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And there are boats and gunboats engaging a fleet, Malay Parahu, off upon Romania.

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So that's, for those who don't know, that is east of Singapore.

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It's still part of Jabar.

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I believe the original currently is at the NLB in Singapore.

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But they did try to coerce using blockades, sanctions.

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over a foreign invasion itself, as that would be costly and kind of go against their overall policy in the region.

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However, by the year 1836, the situation in the region becomes fairly untenable, and there are too few East India Company warships in the region to actually do much about it.

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Malay cruising offered opportunities for

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people to seize loot, which in turn was redistributed, particularly to patrons and the sovereigns, and granted combat experience to those naval forces.

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So it could be a sort of training session, if you will, for those willing to engage in this activity.

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All right, so the man on the left is Henry Duchy Chadds.

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He is a commander, or captain,

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of HMS Andromache, which if you look at the bottom, is one of those two European ships in the middle.

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And on the right, top right, is a sister ship of HMS Raleigh, a Briggs sloop, so similar to the one that was dispatched and the operation that I'm talking about.

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So

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The governor general of Bengal or India wanted to institute a pass system.

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So this system where you essentially carry a pass saying how many weapons you had, your cargo, and various details.

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And that this system would help keep track of legitimate traders and make sure that they were obeying the rules.

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So the Dutch had already sort of started to implement a similar system, although it doesn't look like there was much details or as many details.

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In this particular operation, where both these vessels had gone to Baham, they were seeking the freedom of slaves or captives who were placed there.

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Oftentimes, when

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boats would sail into the region under the protection or crew by the Royal Navy.

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You would have captives try to jump into the boats, swim to the boats, to try to tame to slavery.

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Many of the prisoners were actually from what's today southern Vietnam.

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So looking at the Hong at this time,

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It was ruled by Bendahana Tunali, and he's mainly using ministers of Arab descent to run his government.

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At this time, it seems that Bahan's overlord was actually the Sultan of the Kingdom of Rialinga.

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Sultan Hussein Shah had already passed away in 1835, and it seems like his son lacked sufficient legitimacy to rule all that much territory.

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Also, east coast of Malaya had more trade at this point than the west coast.

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So for the records that I have seen, there's a lot more commerce going on over here.

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It seems that pirates' favorite targets was the commerce headed between Singapore and Cochin, China.

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And they would sell the crews in slavery, often at very low prices.

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the Chinese and others who were there might purchase them, they would justify this as an act of mercy, and they would act more as indentured servants, where if they had not done so, they would be executed.

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So if we just take a look at these, the one in the top right corner is from the World Museum Lighted, the others are

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actually from the Smithsonian Museum.

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The top left one is, I believe, a royal vessel.

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And as you can see, a lot of them are armed.

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Some of the, at least at the Smithsonian, for whatever reason, the cannons seem to be either missing or lost or disintegrated.

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I'm not entirely sure.

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But I felt like these models were good representations of the vessels that were operating

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and conducting these sorts of activities during this time.

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So I put together these stats.

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The top one was compiled by customs officials in Singapore.

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The bottom one I compiled, so it's still a work in progress.

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As you can see, around 1836, '35 is when you see a

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large increase in pirate attacks.

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These are not necessarily successful attacks because if it were successful, then, well, nobody's really reported it.

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So there may be some statistical issues because there was increased reporting, at least on the export side, because of the implementation of the past system.

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But regardless of this, you can still see an increase of trade after

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this operation.

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So in conclusion, I argue that cruising played a critical role in supporting Malay states, such as Bahang, by providing the state with plunder, naval experience, and slaves necessary to function.

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I'm still open to suggestions, comments, and eventually hope to

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write a monograph that's focusing more on the states rather than as Charlie had done it by ethnicity.

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And I frankly did that with my dissertation.

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So thank you.

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I really appreciate your patience and your time.

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I think, again, a fascinating story of piracy and counter piracy.