

DUTCH AND INDONESIAN REFUGEES FROM THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES 1942-1946

INTRODUCTIN AIMS & OBJECTIVES

This paper explores the social, political and cultural context that evacuees from the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) fleeing the Japanese Occupation of the NEI encountered in Australia during and after the Pacific war from 1942-1947. It examines how they were received? Who looked after them and at whose expense? What happened to them when hostilities ceased? The paper's highly descriptive orientation reflects its status as a work in progress. Consequently, it does not as yet proffer a clear-cut theoretical orientation it is about the contradictions of war?

1 min

FATHER'S REFERENCE OVERHEAD

MOTIVATION

Two things motivated the research: my continuing interest in Indonesia where my father Jan Peters was born and where my name Nonja originated, and a letter I found among his papers. A reference from his first Australian employer which contained negative observations about *Dutchness*. It intrigued me that such a stereotype of the Dutch was already operational in 1949/50. The following extract is from a reference written by the President of the prestigious Claremont Yacht Club, at the termination of his employment there as a steward, from a few weeks after his arrival in WA in January 1949 to January 1950. States: 'Despite his Dutch extraction he has shown himself to be a "good mixer" ...'. Consequently, the tens of thousands of Dutch who emigrated to Australia following the signing of the Netherlands Australian Immigration Agreement in early 1951 entered a society, which had already formulated a negative assessment of them. How had this come about? Could any particular segment of the Dutch or Australian communities be held responsible for its appearance? It seemed incongruous that a mere 5000 Dutch (240 in WA) at the 1947 Census, scattered around the country had managed to generate this level of negativity. My search took me to the Pacific War and Japanese Occupation of the Netherlands

East Indies (NEI) – 8 March, 1942, when a large contingent of Dutch, military personnel, bureaucrats and families were sent or evacuated to Australia. Their appearance marked the beginning of three and a half years of allied American, British, Dutch and Australian (ABDA) defence.

2 min

AUSTRALIAN DUTCH RELATIONS

Prior to the Japanese Occupation the Dutch colonial and Australian governments paid little attention to each other and interaction between the two countries was limited (Scott 2004 cites Watts 1967, 1972). In 1940 Allied efforts in support of Second World War initiated closer relations between and these intensified with the war in the Pacific. Especially leading up to the fall of Singapore followed by the fall of the NEI (Scott 2004:34).

O.5 min

OVERHEAD PLACATION POLICY

PLACATING THE DUTCH

At the outbreak of war Dutch/Australian diplomatic relationship had never been so high and in fact the NEI became the only foreign government in exile to be established on Australian soil. However, during the period 1944-1945 the relationship shifted from amicable allies in 1941 to antagonistic allies in 1945 (Ford1999:5). Events surrounding the fall of Singapore may have started the process:

A wireless transmission from Anip-Aneta, the official NEI wireless station, intercepted on seven March, 1942 had this to say about Allied efforts. In the NEI there have been some criticism [Sic] of the allies in their conduct of the campaign in Malaya.... A great part of the Dutch air force was lost in the unavailing defence of Malaya. This policy was one, which carried with it the risk of the quick exhaustion of Dutch forces but the risk was taken in the expectation that reinforcements would soon arrive in the Far East.... But those reinforcements never came (Ford 1999:35).

Ford notes, at the time this transmission was sent, that plans were already afoot by the Australian government to, deal with the Dutch hostility over their feeling that they had been left in the lurch by the other ABDA nations. A document entitled: “Proposed Measures to Offset Dutch Resentment at Allied Failure to send reinforcements” was circulated by the External Affairs Department just prior to the surrender of Java since this resentment could cause problems in both London and Australia. It was feared that the Gerbrandy Government might, as a result, choose to hold back on the co-operation of the large Dutch merchant fleet still in existence. It was also felt that those NEI officials and forces that eventually escaped to Australia would retain a ‘certain hostility which may make co-operation difficult (Ford 1999:35).

In an effort to placate the Dutch and the Australian public, plus offset world (India, Russia, China) opinion on the loss of the NEI, External Affairs suggested a number of prompt actions be taken to ensure that the remaining Dutch resources - their naval and merchant ships and military planes and the oil and bauxite of Surinam and Curacao were placed at the disposal of Australia (1999:35 see also Appendix 1 - The Placation Policy).

3.5 min

EVACUATION OF NEI

As for the evacuees, although evacuation was an important part of the planning there was no government plan for a general evacuation. Largely because 280 000 of the population (80,000 Dutch and 200,000 Indo Europeans) were of Dutch origin – thus far too many to evacuate, but equally because the Dutch thought”

- Occupation would be much like it was in Europe under the Nazis;
- That it was their duty to man the posts or, in the case of the military, fight to the end.

Accordingly, when evacuations started in earnest 19 January 1942, after the NEI and Australian governments had reached an agreement that all financial responsibilities for Dutch women and children evacuated to Australia would fall on the NEI, Starckenborgh Stachouwer, Governor General of NEI declared that wherever possible

Dutch civil and military officials should remain behind to share a common fate with the Indonesians. His decision was based on the following considerations:

1. Constitutionally, because the NEI was part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands an official evacuation would be abandonment of home territory.
2. Transport available for a mass evacuation was not available,
3. and NEI-born Dutch would not wish to abandon their homeland (Ford 1999:26).ⁱⁱ.

First to leave, albeit, unofficially were the wives and children of ship's crews, KNILM pilots and Army Air Service aircrew, opposed to the policy they had forced a back down from the Governor General. However, when official evacuations began on 17 February, two days after Singapore fell, only selected people and equipment were moved internally or overseas where they could continue the fight. Thus those government and military personnel with relevant skills and knowledge and where possible bachelors and 'Indians' in uniform in preference to married men who could stay in the Occupied Zones with their families. Understandably, the seemingly arbitrary nature of selection procedures caused much argument and ill feeling from families and loved ones left behind.

Between 27 February and 4 March the Dutch lost 6 naval vessels and 15 merchantmen and had three merchantmen and one hospital ship jam packed with wounded refugees captured or sunk by the Japanese while trying to evacuate (Ford 1999:27). Most were travelled through Broome (Hurst, 200:171).

3.5 min

BROOME - TJILATJAP

Broome was chosen because it was one of the closest points to Java on the Australian coast and could take both land-based aircraft and flying boats (in Roebuck Bay). An evacuation center was hastily organized under the direction of Col. E. S. Perrin. And planes moved people night and day. The last plane took off from Yogyakarta just before midnight on the 2nd of March.

However, because manifests were not always filled out, the exact number of allied servicemen and Indies Dutch who made it to Broome is not known. The most reliable reports are those of Douglas Gillison, the RAAF's official historian who wrote: as many as 57 aircraft arrived in Broome in one day, and in 14 days between 7,000 and

8,000 passengers passed through the base. ... The sleepy pearling port of Broome was quickly transformed as local people did all they could to help the new arrivals and aircraft kept coming at a rapid rate.... The population temporarily exploded and one US Army Air Corps officer remarked that the so overcrowded airfield looked “like *La Guardia Field* (New York’s airport) at its busiest, the entire airfield is covered with planes (2001, p.49)!”

Broome did not, however, prove to be a safe haven for everyone. On three March 1942 as nine Japanese Zero fighter planes on orders to close the evacuation route attacked. First to go were the squadron of fifteen flying boats - *Catalinas*, *Dorniers* and *Short Sunderlands* - in Roebuck Bay, fourteen crammed to the gunnels with Dutch women and children who had fled Java the night before and were waiting to refuel before going onto their final destination. Having destroyed these and caused a serious loss of lives the Japanese fighter pilots shifted their focus to Broome airfield and destroyed all the aircraft waiting there.ⁱⁱⁱ

Around 35 American Service men and 67 Dutch military and civil persons died and another 30 were wounded that day (Ford 1999:27-28).^{iv} According to the Dutch government the remains of 5 children and 3 women were never identified (see Karrakatta cemetery). Two days later the Japanese attacked Tjilatjap, damaging most of the remaining ships and harbour (Ford 1999:28).

3.5 min

NIWOE

To administer the 8-10,000 refugees in Australia, the NEI established the Netherlands Indies Welfare Organisation for Evacuees (NIWOE). The NIWOE had an office in the major states. They organised documentation and accommodation in hotels, boarding houses, holiday camps, orphanages, boarding schools and residences in suburban city and country Australia for the many Dutch and ethnic Indonesians evacuated.

0.5 min

INDONESIANS IN AUSTRALIA

Jan Lingard, who has researched the Indonesians' notes:

(When) in March 1942 the Dutch capitulated and senior members of the Indies administration fled to Australia they brought with them several thousand evacuees. Between then and 1948, when the last remaining handful were repatriated, the five and a half thousand 'coloured' Indonesians among them had, through the exigencies of war, been brought to a country which had enshrined its 'White Australia' policy since 1901 through the Immigration Restriction Act.

The Indonesians came from all parts of the archipelago. They comprised merchant seamen, members of the army, navy and air force, clerical workers, civilian refugees, domestic servants, and political prisoners ... Upon arrival, they were dispersed to military camps, internment camps, seamen's hostels, ships or ordinary houses in many different cities and country towns, particularly in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. Here Australians and Indonesians met one another in ways that neither had dreamed of...

Incidentally the first to arrive, in March 1942, a group of 67 Javanese men, women and children who had been living in Sumatra attempted to sail back to Java could be called our first boat people. Trained fitters and turners, the men were required to report for work at the Dutch arsenal in the town of Bandung. However, the speed of the Japanese invasion made this impossible, and the group turned south. After a hazardous journey they reached Fremantle, where they were told to continue to Port Melbourne, arriving in April. As their ship docked, local Melburnians were treated to a sight they had never seen before. The Javanese were gathered on deck, wearing traditional dress: colourful sarongs, sashes and long lace blouses for the women, some of them suckling babies; sarongs, black jackets and caps and ceremonial kris for the men. John Guthrie, a young boy living at Port Melbourne at the time, recalls the excitement as word spread and he and his friends raced to the dock.

Dutch officials met the ship, but were at a loss to know what to do with these unexpected arrivals. Finally they asked the advice of Rev John Freeman, minister of the Port Melbourne Methodist Church, who agreed to help. With permission from the church authorities the church hall was turned into home for the refugees for the next three years. Dutch authorities and the Red Cross provided furniture, bedding, clothing and equipment. A communal kitchen was set up. Some members of the local community helped them establish a kindergarten and the older children attended primary school. Locals also took the women shopping, to hospitals when babies were due and generally looked after their welfare. A journalist from the newspaper The Argus, who visited the hall commented: 'In this little corner of Port Melbourne, East has met West'. The men, meanwhile, had much-needed technical skills. so Rev Freeman had no trouble finding work for them in the government aircraft factory at Fishermen's Bend.

However, the bulk of the Indonesians were housed by the NIWOE in the hotels and hostels and guesthouses like the Metropole Hotel, at 377 Bourke St Melbourne and the Lido Guesthouse in Sydney.

5 min

In June 1943, the Daily Telegraph reported that it was impossible to teach Lascars and Javanese billeted at the Lido guesthouse to be clean by Australian standards. Mr van den Baars, who managed of the Lido for the Dutch Royal Packet Navigation Company, alleged that guesthouse was filthy and that local women had complained of being terrorized by coloured seamen slinking about the streets. Another woman, who described them as harmless, nonetheless remarked found their letting off of fire-crackers before meals to drive the devil away' objectionable. The complaints led to the North Sydney Council directing the health Inspector to close down the Lido. He had found 192 billeted-men, living in only 24 of the 75 rooms although the council had fixed the maximum at 188. With another 190, in the last stages of tuberculosis, due shortly from the Belvedere in King's Cross. Mr Trinckett, the health inspector noted there were often as many as 30 men in one room and that floors were slimy with muck, and littered with debris. Lavatories were filthy, bathroom floors covered with evil smelling liquid and seamen found parading semi nude in front of the building in full view of passersby.

On 16/6/43, The Sun also publicized conditions at the Lido with an added remark by the manager that "he did not have any trouble with the Javanese but that the Indians were filthy in their habits, arrogant, and would not do as they were told.

A few months later in August 1943 The Sydney Sun noted that Unions, who feared that Australian labour standards may be weakened by secret evasion of awards urged the Federal Government to investigate alien refugee labour conditions. While acknowledging that most refugees were earnestly attempting to uphold Australian industrial laws, union leaders declared that vicious assaults on employment conditions are made by aliens. "The enemy alien menace is a real one." Said the secretary of the Furnishing Trades Union Mr Otto Schreiber. The belief was that refugee employers were in a conspiracy with refugee employee to undercut by making leather goods in a private home where it was difficult for union officials to uncover the breach.

Some Indonesians, like Julius Tahija (former officer in the NEI and also later the Republic of Indonesia armed forces, wartime hero, politician, winner of the *Militaire Orde* (Dutch equivalent of the Victoria Cross) and Indonesian Independence fighter, entrepreneur, philanthropist and well-know businessman in Indonesia, USA and

Australia who headed up Caltex Indonesia for over 15 years) married here. He married Jean the Australian dentist he had met while based here (Scott 2004:208). She observed that ‘racism’ was probably at its peak during WWII and that ‘everyone turned and stared at them when they entered [a room]. Their relationship was even reported in the Herald Newspaper under the heading - Black Hero Returns for White Wife (Scott,1998:64). Despite these responses many of the Indonesians were unhappy to leave when repatriated. Some took Australian wives back to the Kampong to live.

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OVERHEAD BONDI DAILY

OVERHEAD BRITISH ON REFUGEES

NO TO AUSTRALIAN EURASIAN BABIES

At the same time Australian authorities were denying helpless Indo-Australian children entry. T.H.E Heyes – requests Secretary of External Affairs to send a telegram to the Australian Consul general to the effect that the Eurasian children of Australian mothers not be allowed into Australia even if the mother had died and the Indonesian father did not want them. 1949 The Australian legation in the Hague is told to discourage erstwhile Indo European members of the of the Netherlands Navy from applying for admission to Australia (NAA A433,Item 49/2/2092).

0.5 min

OVERHEAD MR SPENDER

ALIENS REGISTRATION

The fear of the ‘other’ appears in legal documents following this influx of people, Security Services issued the following warning:

The Attention of all Commands and the 7th and 8th Military Districts has been drawn to the fact that large numbers of evacuees and refugees are landing in Australia from Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies without documentation. At the same time they are reminded of the necessity for applying the Aliens Control Regulations as rigorously to refugees as to

resident aliens, and of the fact that the co-operation of the Immigration Officers in the various states is readily available.

Instructions are given, that in the case of British (subjects, every effort should be made to keep under surveillance any persons whose political allegiance is doubtful, even though they are able to establish their British nationality.

It is also requested that particular attention be given to taking any Security precaution considered necessary whenever suspicion against a refugee is excited because of his refusal or inability to give satisfactory account of the circumstances of his arrival in Australia, or because of any other doubtful features of the case (A2684, Item 874)

Evacuees who arrived without passports were required to fill out the NEI registration Form 48 adopted by the NIWOE and accepted by Australian authorities. They were then issued with a passbook in lieu of a passport (PP6/1/0, item 1945/H/595 Aliens registration). NEI Dutch evacuees were exempted from the Aliens Control Regulation for a period of six months. The Regulation further allowed Dutch to extend the exemption period if the NIWO supported it.

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OVERHEAD TEMPORARY ADMISSION

END OF THE PACIFIC WAR

When war ended the Dutch, who wanted to re-establish their administration in Indonesia were confronted by powerful opposition. On 17 August, 1945, Sukarno, pressured by students, declared the Independent Republic. Three weeks later fierce fighting broke out between the Republican guerrilla fighters based in Jogjakarta, Central Java, armed by the Japanese and the Dutch and British troops that had landed in Java to supervise the Japanese surrender (Tahija 1998).

0.5 min

REHABILITATION EVACUATION

On 10 September 1945, in a memo to the Collector of Customs Fremantle, Mr A.R. Peters Acting Secretary of the Department of Immigration wrote in response to representations by the Netherlands Minister in Australia, the Government approved of his being advised that Netherlands subjects from the liberated Netherlands could be

sent to Australia for recuperative purposes for any period up to six months, provided satisfactory arrangements could be made for their accommodation and provided also:

- that the Netherlands Indies Government will be responsible for their maintenance whilst in Australia and for their ultimate return to the Netherlands Indies, and will supply personnel for looking after them where such care is necessary.;
- that no persons suffering from dangerous or communicable diseases will be sent here unless prior authority is obtained from the Minister after consultation with the Commonwealth department of health;
- that this general approval was to be subject to further agreement as to numbers to be sent here.
- The NEI authorities proposed to take up with the department of the Army the question of using military camps (around Australia) for the purpose of accommodating people....
- it is not expected that many, if any, Indonesians will be sent to Australia under this arrangement, but if they are they should be asked to complete applications (Form 16) for certification of exemption and their arrival reported.
- No action need be taken in regard to white Netherlands subjects who are not suffering from dangerous or communicable diseases except to report their arrival and to take a record of their names....(PP6/1.0 Item 1945?H/595 Aliens Registration).

2.5 min

INDONESIAN NATIONALISTS, AUSTRALIAN UNIONS BLACK BAN DUTCH SHIPS

On 24 September 1945 shortly after Indonesian nationalists declared the independent republic, the Australian maritime unions imposed a boycott of all Dutch shipping. They refused to load and repair all Dutch naval and merchant vessels. The ban lasted until 1947 and was re-imposed twice before the Dutch finally abandoned their former colony at the end of 1949 ('Black Armada' affair Lockwood 1982). Australians sympathetic towards Indonesians demonstrated against the Dutch in spite of strong racist attitudes. Jean and Julius Tahija and the friends of the boatpeople Indonesians recall attending meetings of republican supporters in Melbourne and that,

This struggle received widespread - if sensational – coverage in Australian newspapers. Australian trade unions put bans on the movement of Dutch goods to Indonesia. Wharfies refused to load Dutch ships and in virtually every Australian capital city, university students organised street demonstrations against Dutch rule in Indonesia. There were horror stories in the newspapers of people who supported the republicans being killed by the Dutch in central Java and even Jakarta. Republic guerrilla units attacked Dutch soldiers and police towns throughout Java, killing scores of people (Tahija 1998:113).

The leading Indonesian nationalist prisoners evacuated here by the NEI had come into contact with Australian trade unionists and Australian communists, and were able to use Australian facilities to re-establish links with their homeland. Indonesian seaman on Dutch warships also established close contact with Australian maritime trade unions, who were appalled by the way they were treated by Dutch superiors (van Velden 1999:82). Vanvelden notes:

Although social relations in the Dutch navy were generally good between Indonesians and the Dutch, there were underlying political tensions caused by post-war aspirations (1999:89). From early 1943 Indonesian crew-members on the HMNS K XV secretly met to discuss the postwar situation of the Dutch Indies. They were already planning their fight for independence, which would start as soon as the war was over. Although the meetings and their importance were known to some in the Dutch navy, higher Dutch authorities appear to have ignored them....The importance of the Indonesians organizing themselves was constantly underestimated by Dutch authorities and for them the declaration of independence of Indonesia on 17 August 1945 came as a total surprise. They had expected the defeat of Japan would finish anti-Dutch feelings (1999L89). 3.5 min

OVERHEAD X 2 SYDNEY NOV 28

POSTWAR EVACUATIONS

The Union's black ban was to cause intolerable suffering to the thousands of Dutch who had been Japanese POWs. In November 1945 Mr McMahon Ball the Australian Government representative in Batavia noted the distress in Java and the NEI:

The view that the food situation in Java is critical, with the prospect of widespread starvation by February 1946... There is considerable disorder in Java and even in Batavia there has been sporadic violence...lack of efficient local administration has worsened the situation...sickening atrocities and that approximately 190,000 persons hitherto internees of the Japanese ...their condition is pitiful. There is a humanitarian appeal of the most urgent and genuine kind. Approximately 190,000 persons want temporary asylum somewhere. Australia should at least provide a temporary home for some of them. Some British authorities have asked that Australia should receive at least 50,000 ex-internees in order to enable them to recuperate. Apart from helping Europeans there is a strong case for providing shipping to move from Batavia to the outer Indies some 10,000 Ambonese who have incurred the hostility of the Javanese (A1838 Item 401/3/6/1/8).

A1838 Item 401/3/6/1/8

Letter from Hon. N.J.O Makin, Acting Minister for External Affairs, Canberra, 28 December 1945.

OVERHEAD MELBOURNE HERALD ASYLUM

Mary Briggs-Koning (2004) writes,” while people around the world celebrated the end of the war, we ... who had survived [Japanese concentration camps]..., were now at risk of being killed as we were thrust into another war - The Indonesian Nationalist Revolution. Consequently the banning of Dutch ships in Australian ports by the Australian wharf labourers, was greatly diminishing assistance to provide us with much needed supplies of food, medicines and a means of leaving the country (www.neswa.org.au/Library/Books/Footsteps_1.htm). “

2.5 min

LETTER FROM MRS ZULOG

A letter from Sgd R Zulog, Ex president Allied Canteen and ex-president V.A.C corps to Australians dated 27th January 1946 some five months after war had ended is heartrending:

One and a half years before the invasion of Japanese in Java, Mrs Walsh, the wife of the British Consul General in Batavia, Invited me to have lunch with a group of men from the Australian Air Force. That was the first time I came in contact with the Australian Fighting Forces. So we had a most pleasant day, everybody was very pleased to have met each other and very sorry that the day was over and they had to leave. From that day on I did nothing but organize party's of Dutch and English to meet with private cars and buses, the groups of Australian and New Zealand men in Priok, who were passing through Batavia on their way to Malakka.

When more and more men came through Batavia I started an Allied Canteen and the Dutch army gave us our own bus, which was driven by other men and women and myself, with on all sides the flags of our Allied nations.

The canteen was everyday crowded with soldiers, sailors, and airmen. I personally have spoken with hundreds of men – several stayed for days in my house, and from the very beginning to the very end we all liked and respected them immensely. Sailors, soldiers alike; w found them kind, generous and very likeable. We know what good soldiers they were and felt very deeply grateful for what they did and sorry for their wives and children to be left at home. We did what we could to make them feel at home with us and to show

our gratitude. We even learned to sing “Waltzing Matilda” which we found not at all easy. All Dutch people made the same resolution to see more of these pleasant Australian people and their country, after the war. We suddenly found out that we had friendly neighbours, close by, and that we know each other and like each other, was very true. I received countless letters from Malakka and from Australia where they said the same thing about us, and we believed them.

From Malakka they asked me for books and gramophones and records to help the men to get through the boring time war really is most of the time. I sent at least a thousand books, each book had a little picture in it, where a very grateful Dutchman with a friendly smile handed a book to an Australian soldier. I had group photos made into postcards so that they could send them home by post as a pleasant surprise. One mother wrote me a very (SYM)pathetic letter, she was ever so happy with that card showing her boy smiling and cheerful because he never came back.

I received hundreds of letters and I am very sorry that I can't show them any more, They were destroyed by the Japanese and I barely escaped being sent to prison on account of them. In prison where I stayed the last ten months of the war, we had a terrible time. They beat us every day, we got nearly mad from hunger. Several women had their hair shaved off in public and they were beaten by the native soldiers on the slightest occasion. In one camp they got two days without food and had to bury that same in the ground, They lived on water and a little sugar. We had no news and every day several women died and we had to stand by the gate and watch them going out of prison.

I don't know how many times I tried to console those who lost all hope to remember how near Australia was and that as soon as the war was over we could go to Australia and get rest and peace and good food and send our children there. I had received invitations from I don't know how many soldiers, who asked us to come to Australia after the war and see how grateful they could be.

They felt really too tired and weak to believe that fairy tale, but it was such a relief and such a pleasant secure feeling, that although our own people were far away, with nothing but enemy's around us, absolutely helpless and forgotten, there was at least Australia. 7.5 min

AND NOW:

Where are the men who liked us, and where are the men who remember us. Is this Australia? Where they keep the food we need so badly and encourage the Indonesians with their murdering of women and children. Why should a man's war be fought against women and children. And is there a war? Is it not over then? Why should all those prisoners of war, women suffer still six months after the war is over. What have they done except endure impossible degradation, unspeakable humiliation, starvation, sickness and death. Is it for that, that the world calls us free, to have a war, when they felt so full of trust and friendship. It is a stab in the back. I appeal to any woman of all the women of Australia to clear this up. To do something for women in Java.

There are still hundreds in danger of their lives, treated worse than any enemy of ours ever did us.

We could take camps and prisons, we know our enemy and expected nothing better. We can take this underground work of the Japanese. God will judge them and the Indonesians. But we cannot take this attitude of Australia. It is worse than anything that happened to us. It is a deep psychological error from the people who are responsible. I hope fervently that you may be able to do something for the women and children in Java who are still prisoners of war. I remain dear madam yours faithfully Sdg R. Zulog ex President Allied Canteen. 3 min

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN INTERCEDE

Letter to Prime Minister Chifley from Vida Breckenridge Hon. Secretary National Defence League of Australia 16 January 1946.

At a committee meeting of the National Defence League of Australia, Women's Auxiliary the following resolution was passed:

“In the cause of humanity, it is suggested that the Government be asked to do something to succour the women and children who are suffering so intensely at the present time in Java. It has been stated that the holding up of ships in Australia has had the effect of intensifying this suffering. Without commenting on the political aspects of that hold-up, our Auxiliary feels most strongly that prompt action by the Government is called for.

It was not until 1950 following the return to government of the Liberal Prime Minister Menzies that the Waterside Worker's Federation and Seaman's Union were forbidden from placing 'black bans' on foreign vessels. However, unions continued to intervene in foreign policy under Liberal-Country party rule” (Scott 2004:211 cites Lockwood 1982:231). AROUND 10,000 EVACUEES EVENTUALLY MADE IT TO AUSTRALIA.

1.5 min

OVERHEAD Sunday Telegraph
Jan 20th 1946

Grim picture at Dutch refugee camp

There will be 1000 refugees at the Dutch camp at Wacol when the first Dutch hospital ship arrives – in Australia next week. Hundreds have been arriving by plane during the last few months. Some of the people are the most pitiable cases the war in the Pacific has produced. Camp Commandant Colonel De Stoppelaar says most are women and children and some are mental cases. Many women did not know where their husbands were and some of the children had seen terrible atrocities. Many were suffering from beri-beri and malnutrition. Many children aged eight and nine looked four years old, and many would remain dwarfs.

1 min

REPATRIATION

When repatriation began six months later the lack of documentary identification became a problem for the Australian authorities. They insisted that movement orders be given to Collector of Customs well in advance of departures. Security Control Officers at airports and harbours were according to the deputy Director of Security for QLD) given a ‘considerable amount of latitude for the exercise of tact to handle passenger that did not meet the national security Regulations that departing travelers should be in possession of a passport and exit permit (27 Feb 1945 A373 item 9971).

Whilst every endeavour is made not to hold up departing aircraft, and a considerable amount of latitude for the exercise of tact has been permitted to Security Control Officers both at Archerfield and Cairns, the fact remains that the requirement of the National Security Regulations in these cases is that the departing traveler shall be in possession of a passport and exit permit (Director General of security Canberra, 27 Feb 1945).

The Dutch overcame the problem by issuing a ‘Verzamel Pasport’ – Van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden uitsluitend geldig voor de reis naar NEI; De Persoonlijk bijzonderheden voorkomende in dit paspoort, berusten niet op authentieke gegens (Collective passport of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Only valid for the journey to NEI. It also states that the peculiarities taken for this passport are not taken from authentic documents NAA B6533 5701768; B6533 5701770).

The ‘collective passport’ was handed to Consul for the Netherlands who handed it to Dr Brunner who handed it to the Master of the *MS Bloemfontein*. The passport valid only for the voyage. Australian women married to Indonesians were given the option of staying in Australia without their spouses or being repatriated to Indonesia. This was also the case for Australian women married to a Dutchman.

3 min

OVERHEAD RETURN OF SUTCH TO SETTLE CRITERIA

CONCLUSION - CONTRADICTIONS OF WAR.

Vanvelden notes that Dutch servicemen billeted in Australian homes in Fremantle and Perth, claim that although Western Australians attitudes to them changed toward the end of the war, remember, almost 60 years later the warm hearted people of Perth and Fremantle who had made their stay memorable. Some returned and settle here with their Australian sweethearts. The change of attitude to the Dutch from 1941-1944-5 can be put down to the contradictions of war, failed Allied support, the Indonesians aspirations, the influence of maritime unions and the communist party who harboured strong anti-colonial sentiments and the Australian government's political aspirations for Indonesia. Perhaps compromising the lives of thousands of innocent Dutch women and children was a sacrifice for the greater good! On the other hand it is about changing allegiances?

1.30 min

DUTCH AUSTRALIAN PLACATION POLICY

- The plaction policy consisted of propaganda designed to show why it was impossible to send adequate reinforcements.
- “Lame excuses were to be avoided...and
- co-operation with Dutch Authorities in “Salvage” operations fostered.
- Every facility should be given to the N & NEI authorities in re-organising after the end of resistance on NEI soil...^v

- External Affairs also suggested specific means to help with the reorganization of NEI resources in Australia. These included: Dutch officials were to be found appropriate positions in Australia.
- Re-equipment of any Dutch forces which escape.
- Full recognition of their status and worth (especially in the case of native troops).
- Protection of Dutch assets in NEI as gesture of confidence in restoration of authority.
- Assistance in organization of NEI Government Co-Operation in control of shipping evacuated from NEI – as little haggling as possible about conditions of charter etc.
- Dutch to be asked to share control of shipping in Australian waters eg by Dutch representative on the Shipping Board.
- Co-Operation in control of aircraft, eg by use of experienced Dutch officials of KNILM on development of air-lines, and
- Dutch representative to be attached to Department of civil Aviation.

i Reference from Mr H.P. Bourke, secretary of the Claremont Yacht Club, to Jan Jacobus Peters, 11 January, 1950.

ii NAA, Series A 1608/1, Item T39/1/3, Evacuation, NEI, Burns Philip letter to the External Affairs 26 february 1942.

iii Xav, in Jenny Gregory (ed) *On the Homefront*, UWA Press: Perth, 1997; Karrakatta Cemetery has a special Dutch area dedicated to the Broome victims.

iv 25 Februar, 1942 150 woman and children from Boome, Wyndham and Derby were evacuated from 0 to Adelaide and then onto Perth.

v NAA File, Series A981, Item NEI 15, Part 2, Defence, general, "Proposed Measures to Offset Dutch resentment at Allied Failure to send reinforcements", External Affairs, 17 April 1942.