

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

INTRODUCTION 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 looks at how they were received? Who looked after them and at whose expense, and what happened to them when hostilities ceased? The paper's highly descriptive orientation reflects its status as a work in progress. Therefore, it does not as yet proffer a clear-cut theoretical direction. Broadly speaking, however, it is about the contradictions of war. The reality, that a move to support one or other stakeholder is often at the expense, wellbeing or worse demise of other innocent victims. In this instance Dutch women, children and men who having survived three and a half years of Japanese POW camps in the Occupied Netherlands East Indies, on liberation found themselves targets for the extremist factions of the Indonesian Nationalist Movement. For it was their plight that was ignored when the Australian Waterside Workers's Union and Australian Communist Party gave their wholehearted support to the Indonesians in their fight for Independence from Dutch Colonial Rule. The paper is also, albeit indirectly, about Australia's stance on refugees in the 1940s.

MOTIVATION

Two concerns motivated the research: my interest in the history of

the NEI where my father Jan Jacobus Peters was born in 1920 and where my name Nonja (woman, lady) originated, and a reference I found among his Australian papers that contained negative observations about *Dutchness*. Written by his first Australian employer, President of the prestigious Claremont Yacht Club, at the termination of his employment as steward there from January 1949 to January 1950, it noted ‘despite his Dutch extraction he has shown himself to be a “good mixer”...!. It seemed to me incongruous that a mere 5000 Dutch (240 in Western Australia (WA) scattered around the country), at the 1947 Census 1947, had managed to generate that level of negativity. However, it also confirmed that the tens of thousands of Dutch who immigrated to Australia following the signing of the Netherlands Australian Immigration Agreement in early 1951, had indeed entered a society that included powerful members who held 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 emergence?

THE AMERICAN, BRITISH, DUTCH AND AUSTRALIAN ALLIANCE

My search took me to the outbreak of the Pacific War in early 1942, which marked the beginning of the three and a half years of allied American, British, Dutch and Australian (ABDA) military alliance in the interests of the defence of Australia. A time when according to Jack Forde, in his PhD thesis ‘Allies in a Bind’, relationships habitually difficult were eased by the fears incited by the Japanese occupation of what we now refer to as the Asia

Pacific Region, that prompted the loss of the *HMAS Sydney* in 1941 and the bombardment of Broome and Darwin in February and March 1942. As it concerned the NEI and Australian, it was an alliance between governments who, until that time, had virtually ignored each other (Forde 1999??). However, wartime circumstances provided the context for the relationship to flourish to the point where it became possible for the NEI to become the only foreign government administration-in-exile on Australian soil. Its 17 administrators and staff were,, based at Camp Columbia, Wacol Queensland. This allegiance was unfortunately destined to shift from amicable to antagonistic allies in the period 1941 to 1945 (Ford1999:5). *Anip-Aneta*, the official NEI wireless station, in a transmission on seven March 1942, laid the blame for the downward spiral to the fall of Singapore and Occupation of the NEI. It noted,

in the NEI there has 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).

Forde Notes that at the time this message was being transmitted plans were already afoot by the Australian government to deal with any Dutch hostility that might arise over feeling 'left in the lurch' by the ABDA alliance. In fact a document entitled: "Proposed measures to offset Dutch resentment at Allied failure to send reinforcements" had already been circulated by the Australian Department of External Affairs before the Dutch had capitulated to

the Japanese to avert any resentment since this might cause problems in both London and Australia. Australia's main fear was that the Gerbrandy Dutch Government-in-exile in London might, as a result, choose to withhold the co-operation of a large still operational Dutch merchant fleet (Ford 1999:35). In an effort to mollify the *Australian* public, offset world (India, Russia, China) opinion on the NEI loss and ensure remaining resources - naval and merchant ships, military planes and the oil and bauxite of *Suriname* and *Curacao* - were placed at Australia's disposal, the Department of External Affairs invoked a series of placatory actions. Directed at Dutch, ethnic Indonesians and Eurasian military personnel evacuated into Australia from the NEI prior to the Japanese Occupation of that territory, these were designed to: avoid Australians resorting to 'lame excuses' and propaganda about it having been impossible to send adequate reinforcements by promoting co-operation with Dutch Authorities in "Salvage" operations; promising support to Dutch authorities when the time came to re-organise in the NEI after hostilities had ceased; giving Dutch officials appropriate positions in Australia; re-equipping the Dutch forces that had escaped the Occupied NEI; giving full recognition to the status and worth of troops including native troops; protecting Dutch assets in NEI as a gesture of confidence in the restoration of authority; and by giving the Dutch representation on Australian Shipping and civil Aviation Boards (1999:35 see also Appendix 1 - The Placation Policy).

EVACUATION OF NEI

Although there was a reasonably large-scale evacuation out of the

NEI just before the Dutch capitulated and it had been an important part of the planning there was no government plan for a general evacuation. Largely because too many of the population, 280 000 in fact (80,000 Dutch and 200,000 Indo Europeans) were of Dutch origin – and thus by far too many to evacuate - and equally because the Dutch thought Japanese Occupation would be much like it was in Europe under the Nazis. Life there had gone on as before but now under the victor's authority. Moreover it was considered the duty of Dutch military personnel to fight to the end. Given these customs, beliefs and values it was perfectly natural that *Starkenborgh Stachouwer*, Governor General of the NEI, should give orders that wherever possible Dutch civil and military officials should remain behind to share a common fate with the Indonesians. A major factor influencing this decision was the fact that transport for a mass evacuation was simply not available and also because constitutionally, the NEI being part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands an official evacuation would be perceived as abandonment of home territory. Then of course there was the additional fact that few NEI-born Dutch would wish to abandon their homeland (Ford 1999:26). Consequently, when war became imminent, as planned, only selected people - government and military personnel with relevant skills such as knowledge of warfare and the equipment to sustain it would be evacuated. Everyone else stayed in the NEI (Hurst 2000:41)m and where possible, bachelors, 'Indos and Indonesians' in uniform would go in preference to married men who should stay behind to be with their families in the Occupied Zones. Official evacuations did not start in earnest until after the NEI and Australian governments had reached an agreement that all financial responsibilities for any Dutch personnel, women and children evacuated to Australia would fall to the NEI government.

The seemingly arbitrary nature of selection procedures understandably caused much argument and ill feeling among families and loved ones. First to leave were the wives and children of ship's crews, KNIL (*Koninklijke Nederlandse Indische Leger*, Royal Netherlands Indies Army) pilots and Army Air Service aircrew opposed to *Starkenborgh Stachower's* policy who had managed to force a back down from him. Official evacuations did not begin until two days after Singapore fell, on 19 January 1942. By which time the NEI government had redirected all available ships not needed for the war effort to evacuations. The first ships left *Cilacap* (Tjilatjap?) four days later full to overflowing with distressed human cargo. Between 27 February and 4 March, all told six naval vessels and fifteen merchantmen were lost in evacuation attempts. The Japanese captured or sank another three merchantmen plus a hospital ship jam-packed with the wounded (Ford 1999:27). The evacuation route was mostly via Broome (Hurst, 200:171) although a few vessels and aircraft also arrived unexpectedly in other parts of WA, Queensland and the Northern Territory airports and harbours much like the boatpeople of today.

BROOME – TJILATJAP

An evacuation center was hastily organized at Broome on the northwestern coast of Australia because it was one of the closest points to Java and could take both land-based aircraft and flying boats (in Roebuck Bay). By the evening of March one, 1942, when all Air bases in Java, apart from *Jogjakarta* had been abandoned or demolished 260 Dutch officers were hurriedly distributed between the last five B-17's and three LB-30's (each LB-3 took thirty-five

passengers and each B-17 thirty-one). As the last plane took off just before midnight, when the Japanese were only eighteen miles away, the remaining Dutch troops prepared to explode demolition charges.

Given that manifests were not always filled out in the midst of the chaos we can only estimate the number of allied servicemen and Indies Dutch who made it to Broome. The most reliable reports, by Douglas Gillison, the RAAF's official historian, claim as many as 57 aircraft arrived in Broome in one day, and between 7,000 and 8,000 refugees passed through it in 14 days. He notes,

... 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 overcrowded airfield looked "like *La Guardia Field* (New York's airport) at its busiest, [since] the entire airfield [was]... covered with planes (2001, p.49)!

Broome did not, however, always prove to be a safe haven. On three March 1942 nine Japanese Zero fighter planes, on orders to close the evacuation route attacked 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. Eye witnesses describe the carnage as horrific, given that some of the larger Dorniers had up to 40 refugees aboard (Xav 1998). Most having spent the previous night on board because of the difficulties associated with being ferried ashore in eight metre Broome tides

and given the limited accommodation available in the town (Ford 1999:27;Xav). After destroying the flying boats and causing serious loss of life the Japanese fighter pilots shifted their focus to Broome airfield and also destroyed all the aircraft waiting there.

Sgt H.M.Juta, navigator on one of the Dutch Catalina flying boats, who was sitting on the wing of his aircraft to escape the crowded quarters, pushed his wife into the water and told her to swim for her life, then dived in after her to ensure she dived under the surface as each enemy fighter attacked. These survivors had also to battle the Broome tides. Many heroic acts took place that day. Captain Lester Brain of Qantas, in another boat helped save two young aviators, the young exhausted woman they were supporting and another Dutch serviceman who was swimming on his back supporting a young baby on his chest (Xav 1998). Eleven-year-old Ellie Koen recalls swimming ashore with her parents and brother after a shark had attacked them (pers.com). Exact figures are difficult to find but around 48-52 people lost their lives, 38 went missing and another 32 were wounded. Around 35 American Service men and 67 Dutch military and civil persons died and another 30 were wounded (Ford 1999:27-28). According to the Dutch government the remains of five children and three women were never identified (35 are buried in the Dutch enclave at Karrakatta cemetery in Perth). Two days later the Japanese attacked Tjilatjap, damaging most of the remaining ships and its harbour (Ford 1999:28). The NEI Administration-in-exile complained bitterly that US aircraft had been held back for the defence of Australia rather than being sent to Java. The Americans who rejected this assertion claim only 47 of the 160 fighter aircraft

allotted to the ABDA Alliance had been able to fly over the war site. The Japanese associate the defeat of the NEI with the change of Allied Command from Dutch to British leadership. The Dutch, so said Japanese General Imamura who lead the assault, would have given the Japanese a much tougher battle (Ford 1999:29). This statement was of course to add to the Dutch sense of betrayal by the ABDA Alliance.

NIWOE

To administer the 8-10,000 refugees in Australia, the NEI administration established the Netherlands Indies Welfare Organisation for Evacuees (NIWOE). From their offices in all major cities the NIWOE organised accommodation, documentation and health care for their sojourn in Australia. To this end they requisitioned hotels, boarding houses, holiday camps and residences in suburban city and country areas and organized for Dutch children to attend local schools (Hetherington 1997).

The evacuees included several thousand ethnic Indonesians comprised of civilian government employees, uniformed members of the NEI forces, merchant seamen on Dutch ships that had escaped from the NEI, a few were nannies and other servants of the Dutch and high-born Indonesians, and some were people who had no intention of fleeing but were 'scooped up' by the Dutch and brought along with them, presumably as labourers (Hardjono and Warner 1995:27). They were joined in June 1943 by 502 Indonesian men, women and children from Tanah Merah a political prison camp in Dutch New Guinea to prevent their falling into

Japanese hands (Merchant seaman and these prisoners were the most highly politicized Indonesians). The Indonesians were admitted despite the White Australia Policy, which prohibited the entrance of 'non-whites', and was administered through the Immigration Restriction Act (Bennett 2003:21). This waiver by the ALP then in power, was conditional on the removal of the Asians and other non admissibles six months after the end of the war, at the initiative and expense of the sponsoring country. In a table prepared for the Commonwealth Aliens Classification and Advisory Committee classifying all categories and nationalities of Aliens in Australia (April 1943) the Dutch were classified 'Allies' meaning neither 'enemy' nor 'neutral'. There was no listing for Indonesians but the remarks column for the Dutch there a statement notes – includes Javanese (Lamidey 1974;27-28). The Tanah merah prisoners were interned in Cowra Interment Camp.

ALIENS REGISTRATION

In February, Security Services was asked what action was being taken to check the bona fides of these evacuees. In reply, it was stated that a number of persons had arrived in Australia from the Netherlands East Indies without visas, passports, and some without documentary credentials at all. However a careful check had been made with whatever records they had or had been supplied with by the Netherlands East Indies authorities. Concurrently it was reported that everything possible was being done about the matter under difficult circumstances. The situation is reminiscent of that created by current day boat people and highlight the fact that under similar unsettled conditions little has changed in the intervening 62 years. The following extract from a security document then

demonstrate similarities:

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 were landing in Australia from Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies without documentation. At the same time they were 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 was readily available.

Instructions were given, that in the case of British (subjects, every effort should be made to keep under surveillance any persons whose political allegiance was doubtful, even though they were able to establish their British nationality. It was also requested that particular attention be given to taking any Security precaution considered necessary whenever suspicion against a refugee was 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 a NEI registration form. They were subsequently given a passbook by the NIWOE. This document, conceptualized by the NIWO was accepted by Australian authorities in lieu of a passport throughout the evacuees sojourn here (PP6/1/0, item 1945/H/595 Aliens registration).

On arrival, Dutch evacuees from the NEI 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. However, if they decided to request

permanent settlement in Australia they were required to register until they were able to effect naturalization which in 1946 required a waiting period of five years. However this was not the case for the ethnic Indonesians – bureaucrats, military personnel and political prisoners from Tanah Merah Prison Camp in Dutch Papua New Guinea - evacuated here. There numbers are difficult to establish with Linguard claiming 5000 and Bennett several thousand. To date I have been unable to establish if the NIWO also gave Indonesians and mixed blood persons from the NEI a passbook identity.

INDONESIANS IN AUSTRALIA

Jan Linguard who is researching the Indonesian experience notes:

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 evacuated from the prison settlement at Boven Digul in Dutch New Guinea. A handful just happened to be working at ports or airfields in Java, and in the confusion were gathered up and brought against their will. Upon arrival, the Indonesians were dispersed to many different cities and country towns, particularly in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. They went to military camps, internment camps, seamen's hostels, ships or ordinary houses. Here Australians and Indonesians met one another in ways that neither had dreamed of....

Among the first were a group of Indonesians who came on their own - the first 'boat people'. In March 1942 a group of 67 Javanese men, women and children who had been living in Sumatra attempted to sail back to Java. 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, in Western Australia. There 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. Of particular interest was the fact that these were 'brown' people, whom the boys had never seen before.

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. Small rooms off the main hall were allotted to family groups. Single men used the hall itself. Dutch authorities and the Red Cross provided furniture, bedding, clothing and equipment. A communal kitchen was set up.

Aided by some of the local community, the Freeman family helped the refugees settle in to daily life in their temporary home. A kindergarten was established, attended by both Indonesian and Australian children. The older children attended the Nott Street primary school, where they soon learned English and excelled at their studies. Mrs Freeman

took particular care of the women, taking them shopping, arranging hospitalisation when babies were born and generally looking 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.

Linguard sees this as significant given that before war broke out in 1942 much Australian opinion about Asia focused on preserving a 'White Australia'. Its vast spaces, it was assumed, could be nothing but an irresistible attraction for the 'teeming millions' to Australia's north. To most Australians Asia was China and Japan. Most seemed unaware that the British, French, Portuguese and Dutch colonies in the region were also part of Asia. When war broke out in the Pacific, and Malaya and Singapore fell to the Japanese, Australians suddenly realized the Asian countries to the North had strategic importance. Newspapers were filled with previously little known place names, as one by one the islands, cities and towns of the NEI fell. Finally in March 1942 the Dutch capitulated and senior members of the Indies administration fled to Australia. They brought with them several thousand evacuees - Dutch, Eurasian and particularly Indonesian subjects of the Royal Netherlands Colonial Empire. Between then and 1948, when the last remaining handful were repatriated, some five and a half thousand 'coloured' Indonesians 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.

INDONESIAN REPATRIATION

The Indonesians made many friendships in the Port Melbourne community. John Guthrie and other young men

took the opportunity to explore a new culture. They even learned to speak 'Malay' (Indonesian). In return, they took their new friends to Australian Rules football matches, ice-skating and the theatre. These friendships later led Guthrie to take part in demonstrations and marches in support of Indonesian Independence. They were held in Melbourne after the world learned of Sukarno's '*proklamasi*' of 17 August 1945.

When war was over and the refugees were eventually repatriated, there were tearful scenes at Spencer Street railway station when they left.

Lingard (2004) writes from an activists position displaying pride in the support at grass roots level that came from within the Australian community and the role the Australian government played in eventually supporting the recognition of the new Republic of Indonesia by the United Nations. In particular from the Communist Party and the Labour Union Movement but also from individuals like the Freeman family quoted above who shunned the racist attitudes of White Australia. She notes that despite Australians being instructed not to fraternise with the 'native' members of the squadron or families that many Australians seized the opportunity to learn about and enjoy friendships with Asian people:

There was a constant stream of visitors to the 'open house' they held every Sunday. In turn they often visited 'Indonesia House' which the Dutch had established at the Hotel Metropole. Here with other interested citizens of Melbourne, they enjoyed Indonesian food and cultural performances.

The Australian press tells a different story.

RACISM IN AUSTRALIA

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 that she 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 employees to undercut by making leather goods in a private home where it was difficult for union officials to uncover the breach.

Julius Tahija

The Indonesians evacuated to Australia included military and government personnel, illiterate peasants, bureaucrats and a few intelligentsia like Julius Tahija. A 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 he had also headed up Caltex Indonesia for over 15 years. During WWII he risked his life many times as a member of the Z Specials – an allied force that undertook dangerous commando sabotage actions and intelligence missions behind Japanese lines in Asia. Tahija believed independence could only be won from the Dutch by a combination of military and political action. He represented Sukarno at The Hague at Independence talks. Jan Lingard observed that Indonesian children were born and went to school here, adults married here - occasionally to Australian girls - and others died here (Inside Asia 2004). Tahija,

who married Jean the Australian dentist he had met while based in Australia during WWII in 1942 (Scott 2004:208) observed that, Intermarriage between the Dutch colonists and the local people was relatively commonplace. Whilst the Dutch did little to ensure that indigenous Indonesians received a proper education, and senior civil service posts were all reserved for Dutchmen, there were exceptions, for Julius had gone to a Dutch school and had never felt inferior (Scott 1998:65).

Despite his self-assurance his Australian wife recalls the couple were often subjected to racist taunts and unsavoury behaviour. For example, it was usual for Australians to turn and stare at them when they entered a room. Their relationship was even reported in The Herald Newspaper under the caption - Black Hero Returns for White Wife (Scott,1998:64). Many Dutch military men also returned after demobilisation in the NEI or Netherlands to marry their Australian sweethearts.

END OF THE PACIFIC WAR

When war ended on 17 August, 1945, Sukarno, pressured by students, declared Independence. 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).

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).

INDONESIAN NATIONALISTS, AUSTRALIAN

UNIONS BLACK BAN DUTCH SHIPS

When the war ended and the Dutch wanted to re-establish their administration in Indonesia they were confronted by powerful opposition. 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 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. Wharves 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).

It is well documented that when the leading Indonesian nationalist prisoners soon came into contact with Australian trade unionists and Australian communists, and were able to use Australian facilities to re-establish links with their homeland. Indonesian seamen 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).

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).

POSTWAR EVACUATIONS

On 29 November 1945 the Australian the Melbourne Herald noted that Australia had agreed provisionally that accommodation could be found for about 6000 (50 000 were in need of care) evacuees needing recuperative care from long sojourns in Japanese POW camps before being returned to the Netherlands or back to the NEI. Shipping was the most urgent problem and that Australia would send all the food ships it could get to the NEI. And that it was understood that the Dutch were to pay for any food sent by Australia for the relief of starving Europeans in the Indies.” Mr McMahan 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.

However, as 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 (HYPERLINK "http://www.neswa.org.au/Library/Books/Footsteps_1.htm" www.neswa.org.au/Library/Books/Footsteps_1.htm). “

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; we 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 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.

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.

OVERHEAD 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 Workers'

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).

OVERHEAD POW EVACUEES WACOL REHABILITATION

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.

In Western Australia evacuees were accommodated in the Cloisters buildings in central Perth, boarding schools and Fairbridge an orphanage for migrant children in 100 kilometres the west of Perth. Evacuees were accommodated all over Australia.

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 for the deputy Director of security for Queensland).

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. Japanese brides married to Australians were also repatriated.

CONCLUSION CONTRADICTIONS OF WAR.

I conclude with an observation made by Doug Hurst author of the Fourth Alley:

The Australian/American war memorial is one of Canberra's best-known landmarks. Sited in Blamey Square within Defence Complex, its eagle atop a soaring column makes it easily seen, even by those just driving by. Few live in Canberra, or visit there, without at least catching a glimpse of it. Much less prominent is the other occupant of Blamey Square, the Royal Netherlands and East Indies Memorial. Of low construction it is seen only by those who leave their car to walk across the square. A modest but moving structure, it has four panels commemorating the naval, army, air and merchant marine components of the Dutch forces who fought out of Australia in WWII, and a larger panel displaying a bronze lion from the Netherlands coat of arms. Its placement in Blamey Square symbolizes the fact that the Netherlands and the USA were the only non-Commonwealth allies with forces based in Australia during WWII (2001:171).

In many ways the disparity between the size and position of these two monuments reflect the difference between relationships as perceived by Australia as to the assistance given by the USA compared to the NEI. However, after the war Australia was to gain

greater benefits from its relationship with the Dutch despite wartime strains.

Dutch

The placation policy must have had an impact. 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, Dutch servicement would 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.

Australian Indonesian

Elisabeth Scott, in her PHD Threads of Significance: Indonesian-Australian Relations 1945-1975, At both governmental and general public level Indonesia and Australia have, since 1945, been “good friends and enemies”(Sheridan 2000). They share some extremely important events such as the ongoing issues regarding the independence of Timor from Indonesia as well as economic partnerships in the fields of mining and education (Scott 2004:35 cites Kinhill Mining and AusAid). Yet relationships are often acrimonious because they do not understand each other and in spite of the major contribution Australia made to the formation of Indonesia’s nationhood (Scott 2004 cites Tahija 1998 in her Abstract).

Whatever the impulse for migration, To many people there is no longer a crucial need for “identificational assimilation” with their places of settlement or residence. Home and away are connected by rapid transport, electronic communications and cultural sharing

– part of the process we call globalisation. It is now possible to have multiple localities and multiple identities. This is now not only possible but, some would argue, characteristic of the post-modern condition. Nation states can resist these tendencies and seek to stop globalisation, but they are increasingly spitting in the wind. They can alternatively go with the flow and seek to adapt to the increasing mobility and complex social identities of their home populations. In practice a double tendency seems to be emerging. Some cities are adjusting to the cosmopolitan realities, while certain politicians still seek to mobilize or exploit traditional nationalist loyalties, which still carry some conviction with threatened social groups (Cohen 1998:1). Aboriginal franchise a dream at this time.

THE POLITICAL PROPAGANDA MACHINE

Press Releases

On 4 March 1942 John Curtin released the following press statement:

“The rumours, to the effect that loss of life in the Broome raid yesterday, were very heavy is utterly untrue. It is not in the national interest to make any statement giving details of casualties at any particular place, as this would give valuable information to the enemy. I can assure the Australian public however, that while some losses have been incurred – whether they be of life or property the raid was not of a kind to give that satisfaction to the enemy which was expected.

On 6 March, 1942, Radio Tokyo announced that Japanese naval planes, which had attacked Broome on Tuesday, had destroyed 28 Allied aircraft. This report was published in the West Australian

newspaper the next day and only a few days after the prime Minister statement – and gave a far more accurate assessment of the damage caused by the raid.

EXTRA INFORMATION

The evacuation during and after the Pacific War was chaotic. A letter from the Inspector of Excise & Sub-collector recalls a discussion with the boarding inspector on May 22, 1946 two Dutch evacuees called regarding the correct entry of certain personnel. It transpired that these people had landed at Guildford on 24th December, 1945, by Military aircraft and had not been subjected to ant Customs examinations . This due to the fact that no advise of the arrival of the aircraft had been given to this office.

Interestingly the Military plane disembarked two Iraquian and two Dutch subjects. The names of the Dutch subjects suggests another nationality of origin Saul Slie Mizrahie the others Sassoon were all from Jewish origin. These people moved into 14 Thelma Street West Perth. In addition Mrs Lily Judah a British subject sister-in-law of Jack Sassoon arrived at Perth in ANA aircraft from Brisbane May 1946 from Singapore on 3.3.46 also no Customs inspection. These and others come in under the auspices of the Netherlands Indies Government, Department of Economic affairs for the Netherlands Indies Government welfare organisation evacuees scheme this was in Perth in March 1946 located in the cloisters, 200 St Georges Tce, (PP6/1/0 1945/h/595).

Repatriation to NEI in three ships and the Netherlands after convalescing in Australia after years in Japanese POW camps. When these had left there were fewer than 1000 evacuees left in

Australia. Most of these were Consulting service and buying and information officials. plus wives and children of technical and civil administration officers who had recently returned to the NEI. Volendam 3190 already repatriated, more leaving on the Volendam and Tasman and Sibajak Bloemfontein to Holland left Australia May 1946. (A 10P67 IC 46/31/1/14 Cablegram). A373 Item 9971 Dutch evacuees to Brisbane before 15/11/1945 who were given permission to remain in Australia for six months and were then to be repatriated by Dutch authorities, but owing to the illness of some and transport difficulties authorities were unable to carry this out in the prescribed time. Major Grevas at New Farm of the NIWOE requested permission for them to be allowed to stay until fit enough to travel. Its appearance is most probably related to the rapidly worsening political relationship between Australia and the Netherlands related to Indonesia's Independence that typified the immediate postwar period.

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Reference from Mr H.P. Bourke, secretary of the Claremont Yacht Club, to Jan Jacobus Peters, 11 January, 1950. NAA, Series A 1608/1, Item T39/1/3, Evacuation, NEI, Burns Philip letter to the External Affairs 26 february 1942.

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

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

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 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). Having taken care of this how was Australia going to deal with large numbers of refugees often without identification documentation.

