

**School of Design and the Built Environment**

**The Silent Past of the Buitenkampers and  
Their Lost Identity**

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of  
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## DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgement has been made.

This thesis contains no material, which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

**Human Ethics.** The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007, updated March 2018). The study received Human Research Ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC 00262) – approval number # HR96/2009.

Signature:

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018

## Silent Past of the *Buitenkampers* and their Lost Identity

### ABSTRACT

This creative Master of Philosophy (MPhil) thesis combines an exhibition entitled “Landscape of the Soul” and a written work, referred to as exegesis. It reveals the experiences of *Buitenkamper* children, residents of the Netherlands East Indies, who were not incarcerated in internment camps during the 1942-1945 Japanese Occupation. Many of these children of Dutch, Dutch/Indonesian and Dutch/Chinese origins also endured the first violent months of the Indonesian Revolution for Independence (August 1945-January 1946). Later on, they were subjected twice or thrice to migration before resettling in Australia.

The exhibition was shown in Coffs Harbour, New South Wales from 11 May to 7 July 2018 (see Appendix 1); Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre in Sydney from 24 November 2018 to 3 February 2019, and the Museum of Indonesian Arts, Melbourne from 24 April to 19 May 2019. A permanent record of the exhibition is created as a pdf file, which forms an integral part of this creative practice MPhil. The exegesis provides the historical background to the *Buitenkamper* children’s experiences. Extracts from the oral history interviews, which were recorded for the first time, reveal the impacts of war, revolution and diaspora on the *Buitenkamper* children’s sense of place, identity and belonging.

The word *Buitenkamper* (from the Dutch words of ‘outer’ and ‘camp’) only recently entered the historiographical lexicon, to define this cohort’s distinctive identity and experiences compared to the interned ethnic Dutch during these troubled times. Although the *Buitenkampers* may not all personally know each other, they share mutual connections and represent a distinctive community, which so far has attracted limited research attention. The artworks, mainly wall hangings, visualise their lived experiences. Jointly, the artworks, archival research and interviews facilitate the lifting of the long-lived silence surrounding the *Buitenkamper* children’s experiences and enable their history to be shared and better understood.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Firstly, I would like to give my sincere thanks to all my interviewees for generously giving me their time, their thoughts and memories, and their hospitality. I hope you approve of how your stories have been interpreted and that, in spite of the pseudonyms, you recognize yourselves in this thesis.

Many thanks also to my supervisors, Professor Nonja Peters, Dr Ann Shilo and Professor Dora Marinova, for taking the long, sometimes difficult, yet exciting journey with me. Your valuable advice, and your understanding of how challenging it is to explore something that is so personal, is much appreciated.

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## INTRODUCTION

I am a Dutch female of 37 years.  
Why do I know so little of what happened?  
I am trying to remember what I learned during my history lesson.  
Nothing, I can't remember a thing. Why has our history been kept quiet?  
I have experienced this, but the feeling is that it was always my business.  
I could never talk about it; nobody would listen.  
Now that I am older all these feelings come to the surface and I feel the need to tell my  
Story (Anonymous cited by Beatrijs van Agt)<sup>1</sup>

The research focus for this creative Master of Philosophy, which combines an exegesis and an exhibition of artworks representing textile wall hangings, is the experiences of young *Buitenkampers* (from the Dutch words *buiten* meaning 'outside') and *kampers* ('meaning not incarcerated in Japanese internment camps'). The oral history research sample is comprised of seven mixed-race Dutch-Eurasians and two Caucasian Dutch who grew up in the Netherlands East Indies (NEI)<sup>2</sup> during the 1930s and 1940s, and were children during the Japanese Occupation and Indonesian Revolution for Independence. What is specific about them is that first, they were not interned during the Japanese Occupation of the Indonesian archipelago (see Map 1) from March 1942 to 15 August 1945, and second, they also survived the *Bersiaptijd* (stand prepared time in Dutch), which covered the first violent months of the Indonesian Revolution for Independence commencing from 17 August 1945. During the Indonesian Revolution for Independence, extremist youth freedom fighters, called *Pemuda*, specifically targeted and gruesomely killed Dutch-Eurasians, ethnic Dutch, well-to-do Chinese, members of the Indonesian aristocracy and eventually also Indonesians considered to have pro-Dutch attitudes. The *Buitenkamper* children experienced the *Bersiaptijd* described by the Dutch as a more violent period than the Japanese Occupation, above all its gravest phase between September 1945 and end of February 1946. The Revolution ended - so say the Dutch - with the official handover and recognition of the archipelago's sovereignty in December 1949.

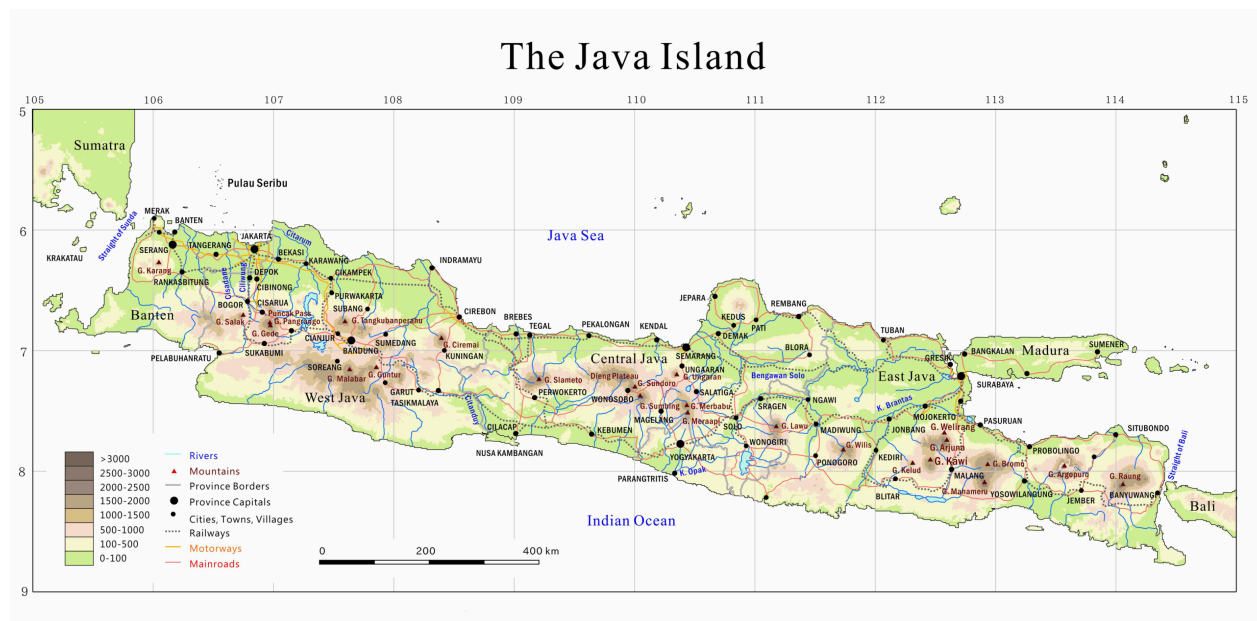
Both, the Japanese Occupation and the *Bersiaptijd* severely impacted the *Buitenkamper* children. After the Japanese invaded and occupied the Netherlands East Indies they began immediately to incarcerate ethnic Dutch military personnel as well as indigenous members of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (*Koninklijke Nederlandse Indische Leger* or KNIL) in prisoner-of-war (POW) camps. Over the next months the Japanese put away ethnic Dutch women and children into civilian

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<sup>1</sup> Agt, Beatrijs van, Koning, Florine, Tak, Ester Wils, 'Het Verborgene Verhaal- Indische Nederlanders in Oorlogstijd 1942- 1949', *Stichting Tong Tong*, 1995, p.98, 73.



internment camps. Non-military ethnic Dutch men and boys who had reached the age of fifteen were interned in separate work camps. Later the Japanese would start taking boys from their mothers as young as ten years old and treat them like men.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, Dutch-Eurasians were allowed to remain outside the camps. The Japanese hoped to persuade them to be loyal to their Asian rather than their Dutch origins.



Map 1: Map of Java, Indonesia

Available free from: <http://www.orangesmile.com/travelguide/java/high-resolution-maps.htm>

Violence amplified with the start of the Indonesian revolution and remained characteristic, though more sporadic over time, for the entire revolutionary period. Eventually all sides were involved: Indonesians, Dutch and British who initially backed up the Dutch. Skirmishes of more and less intensity, would last until the official handover of the NEI to the Republic of Indonesia in The Hague on 27 December 1949.<sup>3</sup> Dutch-Eurasians would eventually become interned in Republican-run 'protection camps' during the *Bersiaptijd* to secure their safety. Many Dutch and Dutch-Eurasian children are reported to have died or disappeared during the worst months of the *Bersiaptijd*.<sup>4</sup> According to UNESCO:

The Second World War was a watershed when civilian victims were as numerous as combatants. In this carnage, more children were killed or orphaned than at any

<sup>2</sup> Peters, N., 'From Tyranny to Freedom Dutch Children from the Netherlands East Indies to Fairbridge Farm School 1945-1946', Black Swan Press, Curtin University.

<sup>3</sup> Willems, Wim, 2001, 'De Uittocht uit Indie, 1945- 1995', Bert Bakker, Amsterdam, Netherlands.p.98.

<sup>4</sup> Naaijkens, Hetty and Helmrich, Retel,' Buitenkampers: De verzwegene geschiedenis van Nederland- Indië 1942-194', documentary film produced by Scarabee films, 2014. This film depicts the horrific stories of a group of Buitenkampers in the Netherlands, who, as children were experiencing the upheaval and uncertain times in their lives during the 'Bersiaptijd'. This documentary is very relevant to my research and it gives an insight into the experiences of my interviewees and a better understanding of the period. In particular, as the violence that characterized the war and revolution left a traumatic effect on their lives and some of these now elderly adults still cope with nightmares (Hewitt, Rosalind, 'Children of Decolonisation', in *The Journal of Indonesia and the Malay World*, Volume 43, 2015 - Issue 126, pp.191-206).

other time in history. A child is particularly vulnerable to the ravages of war, the physical, sexual and emotional violence to which they are exposed shatters their world. War undermines the very foundations of children's lives, destroying their homes, splintering their communities and breaking down their trust in adults. After treating bullet and shrapnel wounds, providing prosthesis for mine victims, housing the displaced and refugees of ongoing conflicts we are still faced with the nutritional environmental, emotional and psychological rehabilitation of those most vulnerable and least able to cope with the effects of conflict.<sup>5</sup>

*Buitenkamper* children were exposed to all the vulnerabilities described in the UNESCO quote. In addition, they experienced diaspora and resettlement, which for some was in up to three countries.

I was one of those children. Although my family was of ethnic Dutch origin, we were also *Buitenkampers*. The Japanese interned my father, leaving my mother to take care of four small children without means of financial support – me aged five years and three younger brothers: a newborn, one aged three and the other aged four. My 'insider'<sup>6</sup> status benefits this study, as I underwent the same experiences as my interviewees. Consequently, I am very aware of the extraordinary levels of trauma and violence they experienced or witnessed, their sense of dislocation, the loss of a sense of self, place, identity and belonging associated with having to leave behind our country of birth forever and become twice or even thrice migrants before finally resettling in Australia.

The Japanese war, Indonesian Revolution and rise of the Republic of Indonesia resulted in around 300,000 Dutch – mostly Indo-Europeans but also ethnic Dutch, fleeing the NEI to resettle elsewhere, mainly in the Netherlands, which we considered our fatherland (*Patria*).<sup>7</sup> However, some 20,000 would later remigrate to the USA and Canada and another 10,000 to Australia. Around 1500, Indo-Europeans fled first to New Guinea, which was then still a Dutch colony, followed by the Netherlands when it became Indonesian territory in 1962.<sup>8</sup> Some of these made Australia home having migrated for the third time.

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<sup>5</sup> (UNESCO, cited by Nonja Peters, in her Memorial Address 2008, 'Children in War, delivered in the Dutch Enclave Liberation Day (5 May in the Netherlands)'. The Dutch Community celebrates annually in the Dutch Enclave Perth Defense War Cemetery where some of the Dutch killed in the attack on Broome 1942 are buried there.: "According to the UNICEF, 2 million children have been killed by conflict over the last decade, 6 million children have been made homeless; 12 million have been injured or disabled; and there are at least 300,000 child soldiers operating in 30 different conflicts across the globe: ([http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-science/theme/fight-against-discrimination/education-of-children-in-need/children-victims-of-war-and-natural-disaster:/](http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-science/theme/fight-against-discrimination/education-of-children-in-need/children-victims-of-war-and-natural-disaster/))

<sup>6</sup> Callan, H., & Ardener, S., *The Incorporated Wife*. London: Croom Helm, 1984, p.10.

<sup>7</sup> Willems, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Cote, J., 'The Indisch Dutch In Post-war Australia' in *Tijdschrift voor Sociale en Economische Geschiedenis* 7, 2010, nr. 2, pp.103-125.

Throughout this thesis I use the term Dutch-Eurasian instead of the more familiar term Indo-European to denote persons of mixed race – Dutch European or Indonesian or Chinese Indonesian origins, to overcome the negative connotations Indo-European has attracted over the years<sup>9</sup>. Only one informant who is of Indonesian and Swiss European ancestry does not fall within this definition and this is clearly specified.

## AIMS

The main aim of the investigation is to shed light on this little-known period of NEI, Indonesian and Australian history via the experiences of the Dutch-Eurasian and ethnic Dutch *Buitenkampers*, who settled in Australia after the Second World War. This also allows me to record their experiences in a scholarly manner. There is an urgency to do this research given that this cohort of erstwhile *Buitenkamper* children are now aged in the 70's, 80's and 90's.

The experiences of the Dutch incarcerated in Prisoner of War (POW) and civilian internment camps during the Japanese Occupation of the NEI have to-date attracted the most research.<sup>10</sup> In comparison, little is known about the experiences of the Dutch-Eurasians and ethnic Dutch *Buitenkampers*, particularly those who made Australia home. Their experiences differed significantly from those of the incarcerated Dutch, although they occasionally overlap, such as post-war during the *Bersiaptijd*. The *Buitenkampers* were subjected to much more discrimination and violence leading to life-long consequences.<sup>11</sup>

The study shows that the *Buitenkampers* and their families encountered racial prejudice at every stage of their journey, beginning with racial stigma pre-war, during the Japanese Occupation, the Indonesia's Revolution for Independence, arriving in the Netherlands and ultimately in seeking to emigrate to Australia where the White Australian policy dominated entry until 1973<sup>12</sup>. I maintain that fully comprehending the impact on the Dutch-Eurasians and ethnic Dutch *Buitenkampers* of the war, Japanese Occupation, *Bersiaptijd* and the diaspora out of the NEI, requires to also understand the

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<sup>9</sup> Meijer, Hans, *In Indie geworteld: De twintigste eeuw*, Amsterdam Bakker 2004, pp.244-252.

<sup>10</sup> Wagtendonk, van Jan, *Testimonies of the Japanese Occupation of the Dutch East Indies*, Foundation for Japanese Honorary Debts', 2007. See also their website: [www.jesinfo.org](http://www.jesinfo.org); Ricklieds, M.C., *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c.1200*, Palgrave third edition, Basingstoke Hampshire, UK. 2001; Delden, Mary C. van; 'De Republikeinse Kampen in Nederlands Indië Oktober 1945 – Mei 1947', 1995. [www.japaneburgerkampen.nl](http://www.japaneburgerkampen.nl); Vickers, A., 'A History of Modern Indonesia' (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>11</sup> This is based on conclusions by leading historians, who have researched the period in the last few years, and testimonies of people who lived through it, e.g Delden, Mary C. van; 'De Republikeinse Kampen in Nederlands- Indie, Oktober 1945-Mei 1947', 1995.

<sup>12</sup> Willems, Wim; 'De Uittocht uit Indie, 1945-1995', Bert Bakker, 2001, p.98.

differences in the way it was experienced by children as opposed to their parents. The parents were grappling with the problems of having to flee their country of birth, possibly forever, and the conflicting emotions regarding the loyalties they felt towards the Netherlands and Indonesia. At the same time, the children were dealing with their own emotion, feeling estranged in the environments of all the host countries of migration into which they had been catapulted. The confusion this created, left many children, especially the younger ones whose sense of self was not yet so firmly rooted in their country of origin as those of their parents and older siblings, feeling unsure of where they belonged. The racism many encountered in the various host environments, served to alienate them even further <sup>13</sup>.

The impetus for undertaking this project was to also investigate my own family history, to better understand the difficulties my Mother faced, during this troubled period in the NEI, caring for us children, without access to appropriate resources. In her later life, this may have been the cause of repeated depressions. My second eldest brother, who was three years old at the start of the Japanese Occupation, is also frequently beset with depression. I argue that similar psychological experiences in the recorded interviews of some of my informants, constitute an additional gap in the Australian literature about the *Buitenkampers* in their midst. The thesis, therefore, provides relevant information for mental health specialists treating these conditions in *Buitenkamper* 'children' and perhaps even some of their descendants.

The research sheds light on the distinctive differences in impact of the major occurrences: Japanese Occupation, Indonesian Revolution of Independence, multiple migrations, leaving behind the country of birth forever and hoping to start a new life with a better future, as these were experienced by my informants, depending upon their age. Their stories belong to the rich mosaic of historical narratives this exegesis records about being *Buitenkamper* children who made Australia home. The expressions *Buitenkampers*, Japanese Occupation and the *Bersiaptijd*<sup>14</sup> are thus indicative to these informants, of the chaos, murder and uncertainty that characterized their lives at that time.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Nibbs, Faith G., and Brettell, Caroline B., (eds), *Second Generation: How Children of Immigrants Find Their Space*, Nashville: Vanderbilt, University Press, 2016.

<sup>14</sup> The exact period of the "*Bersiaptijd*" is contested. However, my interviewees' experiences occurred mainly in the timespan I have noted.

<sup>15</sup> Captain, Ester, 'Golven van Herinnering: Memoirs van Vrouwen over de Internering in Ambarawa' in Willems, Clem and de Moor, Jaap, 'Het Einde van Indië', SDU Uitgeverij, Den Haag, 1995, p.10.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

The research addresses the following question:

- How can the history of the *Buitenkamper children* be captured and narrated?

This research question is addressed using the language of history which includes narration, interpretation and an orientation perspective, following Jörn Rüsen (2008), combined with creative practice. I follow the praxis–exegesis model as an independent process of research, synthesis and reflection of practice and texts (exegesis), which also elaborate my creative work. The outcome includes; (1) an exegesis based on participant observation; in-depth oral history interviews with nine people who were children at the time these events took place; analysis of relevant archival documentation and a documentary film; secondary literature and (2) a series of artworks, namely nine textile wall hangings, which form the basis of the exhibition ‘Landscape of the Soul’ shown in Coffs Harbour (2018), Sydney (2018-2019) and Melbourne (2019). Both, the exegesis and artworks narrate the story of this fraught period in the lives of the *Buitenkamper* children interviewed for this thesis – in different but complementary formats.

The remainder of this thesis is structured in the following way: Chapter One contains my: literature review; analytical perspective and methodology, including the methodology underpinning my creative practice (wall hangings). In chapter two, I describe the Japanese Occupation and the strategies *Buitenkamper’s* invoked to deal with this unpredictable and fearsome period. Chapter three is about the impact on *Buitenkampers* of the *Bersiaptijd* (stand prepared period) of the Indonesian Revolution for Independence, that commenced two days after the Japanese capitulation. It includes the British South East Asia Command (SEAC) care-taker period of the Archipelago. In chapter four, I trail the diaspora out of the NEI into the Netherlands and the reception on arrival and the *Buitenkamper’s* subsequent migration to Australia. Chapter 5 contains the research findings, including the key themes my research uncovered, their connection to the research question, and in particular the *Buitenkamper* children’s sense of place, identity and belonging. The conclusion also contains lessons learnt and future research directions.

# CHAPTER 1- LITERATURE REVIEW, THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I review the literature; describe the methodology employed to gather the empirical data; and present the historical approach: narration and interpretation orientation adopted in this study to analysis the data.

## 1.1. LITERATURE REVIEW

I wish to mention two important issues 'up-front'. Firstly, it was difficult for me to access the Dutch language research literature. There was little available in Australian Universities that explicitly claims *Buitenkampers*, as its central theme. I was informed, that this was a consequence of the "low demand". As a result, I have delved into anything and everything I could get my hands on. Secondly, a major government funded study by the *Nederlands Institute Oorlogs Documentatie* (NIOD, a Dutch equivalent of the Australian War Memorial) is currently underway which may bring out some of the issues analysed in this thesis. There is a reasonable body of literature in Australia on the Japanese Occupation of the NEI from the perspective of interned Dutch, but much less on the Indonesian Revolution for Independence and the two military actions undertaken by the Netherlands known as *Politioenele Acties* (police actions from Dutch) 1947 and 1948.<sup>16</sup> In the last few years there has also been more information on the diaspora out of Indonesia to the Netherlands.<sup>17</sup> The *Bersiaptijd* has received more consideration in recent times while the earliest studies on various aspects of these topics include the comprehensive volumes by De Jong 1969-1988<sup>18</sup>, Anderson (1983), Deldrin (1989), Rickliefs (2001) and Cribb (2001), to mention some. Due to the word limit, this review covers only selected and most relevant literature.

In 1996, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (*Nederlands Wetenschappelijk Organisatie* or NWO) funded a study on the decolonisation of the NEI which produced three books, namely by Wim Willems (2001), Ube Bosma and Remco Raben (2003) and Hans Meijer (2004). Other important publications since include

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<sup>16</sup> In the late 1960s, Joop Heuting alerted the Dutch to the war crimes of Dutch soldiers in the NEI and went public. It took many years of research, by the military, to unearth these crimes and appreciate the extent to which they were anchored in the military culture. Despite the many studies since on the topic of the Dutch in the Indies, researchers felt it needed further more extensive studies (<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2018/11/13/nederlands-indieklokkenluider-joop-hueting-overleden-a2754986>).

<sup>17</sup> The Diaspora out of Indonesia exhibition, by Margaret Ledermeijer on display at the *Tong Tong Pasar Malan* festival 2018 and in Town Hall, The Hague 2019.

<sup>18</sup> De Jong, Dr L., ' *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereld Oorlog 1939-1945*': Deel Ila eerste helft , Nederlands-Indië, S'Gravenhage: Staatsuitgeverij 1984.

Bussemaker (2005), Bosma, Raben and Willems (2008), Oostindie (2011), Manuhutu (2014) and Captain (2014). However, the topic remains charged and research is still ongoing.

On 9 February 2017, Professor Frank van Vree, the Director of the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (*Nederlands Institute Oorlogs Documentatie* or NIOD)<sup>19</sup> announced on behalf of the Cabinet, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence and the State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sport that the House of Representatives had made a three million euros grant available for NIOD along with the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (*Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-Land- en Volkenkunde* or KITLV)<sup>20</sup> and the Netherlands Institute of Military History (NIMH) to undertake a broad-based investigation into the decolonization, violence and war in Indonesia 1945-1950. This study should yield more reliable figures on the number and ethnicity of the fatalities related to the period of investigation which to date are sketchy. At the time of writing of the exegesis, this information is not yet available.

In Wim Willem's (2001) monumental history of the Dutch Indies after the Second World War, he notes how war and revolution forced Dutch-Eurasians to leave their homeland forever. The shelter they sought in the Netherlands led to turmoil on countless fronts, but mostly in the Fatherland's negative attitudes to its overseas compatriots. It is the story of half a century of misunderstanding. According to Willem (2001, p.328) "while a lot may have been written about colonial times, ... concurrently a lot has been kept 'silent' about the war and revolution". He traces the journey of Indo-Europeans from their departure to the attempts to assimilate to become 'Western', specifically model-Dutch citizens. This he observes had to happen in a context in which their treatment more readily had them feel like 'outsiders'.<sup>21</sup>

In his book *Entrenched in the Indies (In Indië Geworteld)*, Hans Meijer (2004) gives an 'Indo-centric' perspective. He traces the history of Dutch-Eurasians to show how their mixed roots race had them generally forced to occupy lower positions on the NEI status hierarchy from the early 1600s when the first mixed race were born.<sup>22</sup> He also tracks the

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<sup>19</sup> NIOD is the Netherlands version of the Australian War Memorial (AWM) archives.

<sup>20</sup> English name: Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies.

<sup>21</sup> Willem's notes that it was this treatment that would eventually lead tens of thousands to leave for America or Australia, in the hope of recreating the atmosphere of the homeland via climate or the nearness to Java.

<sup>22</sup> Social Darwinism and Eugenics studies which set out to establish the inferiority of mixed-race peoples were influences in the NEI in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, see Peters, N and Snoeijer, G., *Verlander: Forgotten Children of the VOC/Dutch East India Company*,

growing awareness of Dutch-Eurasians as an 'imagined community' in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century against the inequalities they suffered at the hands of the status hierarchy that were impacting on all aspects of their lives including education, the employment sector and being denied land ownership.<sup>23</sup> The first Union (Bond) to appear to represent the interests of the Dutch-Eurasians was the *Indische Bond* established around 1898. A number of others followed, with the one to last longest and achieve the most being the *Indo-Europees Verbond* (IEV).<sup>24</sup> The IEV did not develop into a trade union, or a branch of the Dutch Labor Party. However, when in 1898, a number of socially prominent people took it under their wing, it gained official recognition by the colonial government, and people then thronged to join it. Its main focus was defending the interests of Dutch-Eurasians, in particular to Dutch-Eurasians' access to quality educational facilities, which IEV saw as the key to being considered equal to Europeans. Meijer (2004) also notes how the lobbying by IEV helped Indigenous Indonesians gain access to education in the Netherlands, such as Hatta and Sjahrirs' studies at Leiden University where their sense of striving for an independent Indonesia developed.<sup>25</sup>

According to Meijer (2004), the rise of these unions to fight for equality in education, land ownership rights and better job prospects had many Dutch-Eurasians feeling compelled to make a choice, as to whether they belonged to the European or the Asian side of their ancestry. However, as Robert Cribb (2001) notes, ultimately it would be the Japanese who determined this decision when WWII came to the NEI. Broadly speaking, they interned the ethnic Dutch and left the Dutch-Eurasian in the community assuming they would be loyal to their Asian roots.<sup>26</sup>

Bosma et al. (2006, p.188) point out that similar demands for 'loyalty' of the Dutch Eurasian to their 'Asian roots' were made by *Pemuda* (extremist Indonesian youth freedom fighters) during the Indonesian Revolution:

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2016.

<sup>23</sup> The Indies Party founded in 1911, by the Eurasian Eduard Douwes Decker, great uncle of E.F.E. Douwes Dekker (1880-1950), famous for his novel: *Max Havelaar or The Coffee Auctions of the Trading Company* (1868), initially reflected a growing feeling in parts of the Dutch-Eurasian community that their primary ties were with Indonesia rather than the Netherlands. It was, however, soon joined by the Javanese intellectuals, when it became one of the first political organizations explicitly to transcend ethnic, religious, and regional divisions within the colony that called for the independence of the Indies ('Indie los van Holland') from the Dutch rule. The party collapsed in 1913, after government refused it official recognition and sent its leaders into exile, though a few members continued party activities, first in the National Indies Party (1918) and from 1937, under the name of *Insulinde*. It must be stated here that the majority of the population was not politically minded so in terms of numbers the movement is small.

<sup>24</sup> *'Stem van de Indies'* (Voice of the Indies) a social economic weekly union magazine was the main organ of the *Indies Bond* (1898-1905). In 1915-16, this union combined with *Insulinde* (Indies Archipelago), a Party, which had been founded in 1907. After 1913, it absorbed most of the radical Dutch-Eurasian membership of the Indies Party. *Insulinde* had 6000 members including some leading Javanese, but it was clearly not the ideal means of access to a mass base. Political parties emerged from these early movements, but these stopped when the war began.

<sup>25</sup> Meyer, Hans *'In Indie Geworteld: De Twinstigte Eeuw'*, Amsterdam Uitgeverij, Bert Bakker, 2004, pp.244-252.

<sup>26</sup> Cribb, Robert, Kahin, Audrey, *'Historical Dictionary of Indonesia'*, 2004, p.184.



Many Dutch [Eurasians]... could hardly be distinguished from Indonesians. However, because of their name and lifestyle, they carried with them the inheritance of Dutch rule... [which] was not an expression of racial discrimination, but rather a political act to, which feelings of distrust and resentment were not foreign. However, just as the Japanese authorities had exerted pressure for them to conform to their Asian revival, Dutch-Eurasians were now being asked to unconditionally join the Republic.<sup>27</sup>

The recurring 'loyalty dilemma' created an enormous amount of angst for Dutch Eurasians, given that at the start of the Indonesian Revolution for Independence they could only guess who might win power to govern their country in the future. In many ways, the problem they faced developed from the Netherlands East Indies colony's system of being *gelijkgesteld*. Conceptualised in the 1850s, this made it possible for Indigenous people, Chinese and other foreigners to apply for equalization – the right to obtain the same legal status as that of Europeans, for example with a view to trading and access to certain European schools. In addition, there were other considerations to make the transition to the European population, such as wanting to be eligible for a state scholarship for a certain education and because people no longer felt at home in an Indigenous society as they had adopted a European lifestyle. Those 'assimilated' in this way were also referred to as "Gazette-Europeans" (*Staatsblad Europeanen*).<sup>28</sup>

During the Japanese Occupation and Indonesian revolution for Independence for the many Dutch-Eurasians located more on the Dutch side of their cultural identity created an addition crisis, as noted by Bosma et al (2008), for although '...many...were hardly distinguishable from Indonesians.... by their name and lifestyle, they carried the inheritance of Dutch domination'. Bosma et al (2008) considered this was less an 'expression of racial discrimination, and more a political act to which feelings of distrust and resentment were not alien. Just like the Japanese authorities had exerted pressure to conform to the Asian revival, Dutch-Eurasians were now being asked unconditionally to join the Republic.'<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Bosma et al, p.188: Many interned Dutchmen were hardly distinguishable from Indonesians. By their name and lifestyle, however, they carried the inheritance of Dutch domination. The internment was not an expression of that racial discrimination, but a political act to which feelings of distrust and resentment were not alien. Just like the Japanese authorities had exerted pressure to conform to the Asian revival, Dutch-Eurasians were now being asked unconditionally to join the Republic.

<sup>28</sup> Beets, G, Huisman, C., van Imhoff, E., Koesoebiono, S and Walhout, E., *De Demografische Geschiedenis van de Indische Nederlanders*, Report: Nederlands Interdisciplinair Demografisch Instituut (NIDI), 2000, p.23.

<sup>29</sup> Ulbe Bosma, Remco Raben, *'Being Dutch in the Indies'*, 2008, p. 304.

For those for whom the level of violence perpetrated on them and their families by Pemuda during the Bersiap-tijd, who were now seriously considering to resettle in the Netherlands, it often meant leaving behind the Asian side of their family as Bosma et al (2006) note: "[Many]...had parents, grandparents, half-brothers and sisters and other family who had never gained European status and would certainly [have to] stay in Indonesia".<sup>30</sup> In addition it was not possible to always rely on the family's *gelijkgesteld* status to resettle in the Netherlands as the Dutch Government, wishing to curb their entry by only accepting *gelijkgesteld* status gained before 1892.<sup>31</sup>

While the above texts are highly relevant to understanding the Dutch-Eurasian history, none deals directly with the *Buitenkamper* concept or the experiences of children, both of which are central to this investigation. As many were forced to leave the place where they originally belonged, their migration journey is also of interest.

The only research literature that explicitly claims *Buitenkampers*, as its central themes are the articles written by the research journalist and art historian Griselda Molemans (2014). In *Caught up in the smell of Endive (Opgevangen door Andijvieuw)* – a study of Indo- Europeans based on interviews and archival research, she records the silent plight of the evacuees. She also points out the negative depiction of *Buitenkampers* and their families on arrival in the Netherlands during the 1950s.

A documentary entitled the *Buitenkampers (see image 1)* by the directors Hetty Naaijken and Retel Helmrigh utilises the film method to make a major historical contribution to knowledge about the everyday life world of these people. Launched in 2016<sup>32</sup>, it gives a rare on-camera insight into *Buitenkampers'* experiences via filmed interviews. The interviewees describe their lives during WWII, and the Indonesian Revolution for Independence, expressing emotionally the difficulties they had to cope with to survive. Naaijken and Helmrigh (2016) incorporate archival film footage that has not been seen before depicting the procedures used by the Japanese to 'indoctrinate Indonesian youth' and young children to hate the white European race, particularly the Dutch.<sup>33</sup> The documentary also notes as key themes war, invasion, angst and

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, p.189, De overhead in Den Haag liet weten dat Indische Nederlanders niet welkom waren. Bovendien koesterden velen de hoop dat zij, ondanks de ervaringen in de revolutietijd, in het jonge Indonesie een nieuw leven konden beginnen. Zij waren dan wel Nederlands, maar zagen Nederland niet als hun thuis. Ze hadden ouders, grootouders, halfbroers en-zussen en andere familie die nooit de Europese status hadden gekregen, en dus zeker in Indonesie zouden blijven.

<sup>31</sup> Peters, Nonja, *Depok: De Droom van Cornelis Chastelein*, LM Publishers, Volendam, 2019.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2709038/>

<sup>33</sup> Journalist and famous author Johan Fabricius, makes a similar observation in his 1947 books '*Java Revisited*' and '*Hoe Ik Indie Terug Vond*', H.P. Leopolds Uitg. Mij. N.V. Den Haag, 1947.

uncertainty, especially the anxiety attached to what happened to fathers taken prisoner by the Japanese. It depicts the time and energy spent in the everyday lives of the *Buitenkampers* combatting starvation to ensure survival.

The research by Loes Westerbeek for her 2007 PhD 'Dutch Indonesians in Australia: Second Generation Identity in the Diaspora', delves into the lives of children of Dutch-Eurasians in Australia. Although this is relevant to this study, her focus was not specifically on their *Buitenkamper* experiences. Nevertheless, some of her observations support themes emerging from this study. For example, Westerbeek notes that first

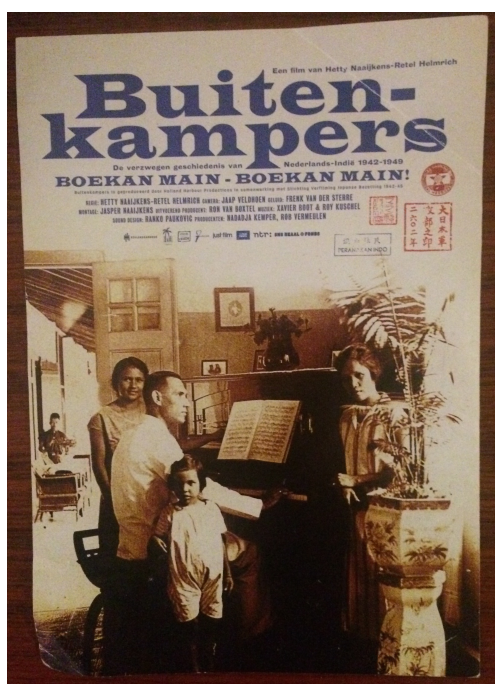


Image 1: Leaflet advertising the *Buitenkampers* documentary (2016).

generation NEI emigrants in Australia felt unable to share their wartime stories in the Netherlands East Indies with the Dutch from the Netherlands.<sup>34</sup> The main reason is that their life experiences under the Japanese and during the Revolution had been so vastly different from those of Netherlands Dutch under the Nazis. Westerbeek (2007, p.103) notes further, that the awareness of the impact of the war on the family was reluctantly conveyed to the second generations through stories. Humour was another way that some *Buitenkamper* children's parents avoided talking about the war's realities. However, most parents preferred to 'keep silent' about what happened during the war

<sup>34</sup> Westerbeek-Veld, Loes; 'Dutch Indonesians in Australia - Second Generation Identity in the Diaspora', 2007, p.103.

and revolution. In many instances, the trauma of these events was conveyed to the children more by the way their parents left these matters 'untold'.

Susan Sontag (2015, n.p.) convincingly argues that 'silence remains, inescapably, a form of speech.' It is important to approach silences as an element in narrative, not as an absence of narrative. The silence narrated in this thesis and also represented through the artwork of the exhibition relates to the burden parents unwittingly imposed on the *Buitenkamper* children by the non-telling of their experiences during the Japanese Occupation and the Indonesian Revolution for Independence which nonetheless influenced their daily lives and had long-term mental health impacts.<sup>35</sup>

## 1.2. ANALYTICAL PERSPECTIVE - GROUNDED THEORY

Developed in the 1960's by the sociologists Barney G. Glaser and Ansel L. Strauss (1967) and later advanced by Strauss and Corbin (1990; 1998), grounded theory argues that researchers need a method that allows them to move from data to theory, so that new theories (analysis) could emerge. They called their new perspective grounded theory and described its preferred methodological tools: in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation, archival documentation and secondary sources.<sup>36</sup> Applying this approach, they noted, would ensure that the analysis evolves and develops throughout the research process itself. It is, therefore, a product of the interplay between data collection and data interpretation.

Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 12), also note that, while using a grounded theory approach, unlike other theories, the researcher does not begin a project with a pre-conceived theory in mind (unless the purpose is to elaborate and extend existing theory). Rather the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the interpretation to emerge from the data.<sup>37</sup> Creswell and Creswell (2014, p.14) describe grounded theory as 'a design of inquiry from sociology in which the researcher derives a general, abstract interpretation of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants.'<sup>38</sup> They also recommend this approach as suitable for qualitative social science research drawing on a multitude of sources. Being iterative and comparative, grounded theory demands a steady movement between concept and data across the

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<sup>35</sup> <https://www.brainpickings.org/2015/07/06/the-aesthetic-of-silence-susan-sontag/>

<sup>36</sup> Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p.1; See also Charmaz, 2006 and Creswell 2014).

<sup>37</sup> Glaser, B.G.Strauss, A.L; *'The Discovery of Grounded Theory Strategies for Qualitative Research'*, 1999,p.6; Strauss, Barney G. and Corbin, : *Basis of Qualitative Research; Grounded theory, Procedures, and Techniques*, 1998, p.12.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p.14.

various types of evidence to control the conceptual level and scope of the emerging understanding before being utilized in any way to developing an understanding of the problem and in this instance, the artistic representation through the creative practice wall hangings.

For this thesis, I utilised the grounded theory methodology to gather my data and understand the themes which emerged. However, I processed this data with reference to Jörn Rüse's (2008) historical narrative interpretation orientation. Making use of this form of inquiry enabled me to identify emerging patterns and develop a more complete understanding of Buitenkamper children's experiences which are central to both the exegesis and artworks.<sup>39</sup>

### **Historical Narrative Interpretative Orientation**

Jörn Rüse (2008; p.2) asserts that narratives transform the past into history; they combine experience and expectation. Narratives create the field where history lives its cultural life in the minds of people, telling them who they are and what the temporal change of themselves and their world is about. According to Rüse (2008, p.3), '[h]istory' combines past, present and future in a way that human beings can live in the tense intersection of remembered past and expected future'.

Rüse (2008, p.3) further explains: "A historical narrative is tied to the medium of memory. It mobilises the experience of past time, which is engraved in the archive of memory, so that the experience of present time becomes understandable and the expectation of future time is possible....it establishes the identity of its authors and listeners and creates continuity". However, as McCulley (2012, 156) explains: "examination of evidence and a range of perspectives has greater potential in helping... scrutinise deeply held community positions, than does the teaching of a single narrative, even if the latter claims to be inclusive of all groups in society". In this thesis the focus is the points of view of Buitenkampers, who were children during the war and revolution.

Interpretive research is based on the assumption that social reality is not singular or

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<sup>39</sup> Creswell, John W and Creswell, J. David, Research Design: 'Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches', SAGE Publications, Fifth Edition, 2014.

objective, but is rather shaped by human experiences and social contexts and consequently, is best studied within its socio-historic context. The broader historical-narrative in this thesis (war, revolution and migration) is derived from secondary sources and presents a western perspective on the events that unfolded in the Netherlands East Indies during the Japanese Occupation and the Indonesian Revolution for Independence.

### **1.3. METHODOLOGY**

This section explains first the research design in terms of techniques used to obtain data followed by how I artistically represent the emerging themes. It then describes the participants in this study. Issues related to administration and logistics of identifying, locating and recruiting interviewees are also discussed.

#### **1.3.1 Research Design**

Based on grounded theory, the research represents a qualitative inquiry in its approach and design.<sup>40</sup> It is a form of inquiry which explores and aims to understand the meaning **of a social problem hidden by ‘the complexity of a situation’<sup>41</sup>, such as the experiences** of the *Buitenkamper* children. There are three specific steps adopted in the research design for this creative MPhil, namely: 1) empirical data collection using archives, oral histories and secondary sources; 2) artistic representation through an exhibition, 3) chronological history development and development of a historical narrative interpretation (see Figure 1). They are explained below.

##### **1) Empirical data collection: Interviews and recruitment of participants**

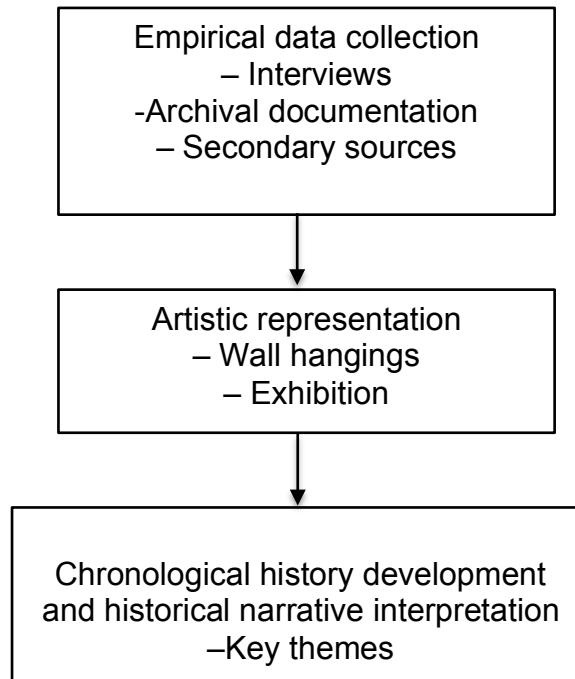
The participants interviewed for this study are a group of ethnic and Eurasian Dutch who were former children-residents of the NEI and were not incarcerated in internment camps, and consequently settled in Queensland’s Sunshine Coast in Australia. They were recruited using the snowball technique and represent the *Buitenkamper* children. Given the long time, which has passed since the events in Indonesia, which preceded and eventually caused their migration to Australia, the interviews relied very much on oral history.

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<sup>40</sup> Creswell and Creswell, 2014.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid* p.4

**Figure 1: Research design**



### **Research Participants and the Interview**

Table 1 lists the participants in this study who all (but one) have given their consent for this information to be made publicly available. Hence, one of the listed names, namely Juliana Deventer is a pseudonym. The recruitment of the participants entailed not only an interview with them but also asking the recruits to provide names of other ethnic and Eurasian Dutch, who might be willing to be interviewed for my research. The first were contacted via a Dutch-Eurasian community group and the *Bambu* – a Dutch-Eurasian magazine. My aim was to conduct conversational interviews, allowing the participants to discuss and raise questions pertaining to their childhood and personal experiences of pre-war, wartime, the Indonesian Revolution of Independence, their migration to the Netherlands, sojourn in that country and their (re-) migration to and resettlement in Australia (see Appendix 3: interview schedule and Curtin ethics clearance no 5323).

Name	Date of Birth	Birthplace
Alfred Amrein	9 of May 1937 (5)	Bandung Java
Rob van den Byl	3 October 1937 (5)	Jakarta
Benny Bernadine	16 June 1925 (12)	East java
Juliana Deventer	1927 (15)	Semarang
Andreas Flack	1 March 1929 (13)	Sumatra
Meta Flack	1 April 1928 (14)	<u>Soekaboemi</u>
Kindry Jaeger	2 June 1929 (15)	Bandung
Andre Marks	27 February 1937 (5)	<u>Temanggung</u>
Gerard Meyser	4 June 1929 (13)	Bandung

Table 1. Interviewees. BIRTHDATE, AGE and place of birth.

The interviews took place in the interviewees' homes and lasted up to two hours. I used a handheld recorder, which digitally recorded the interviews for later transcription and interpretation. In the preliminary meeting, each interviewee was provided with and asked to read through an information sheet outlining details about my research, before being asked to sign a consent form to take part in the study.

During the interview, demographic details, such as date of birth, age, place of birth, education were recorded first and then I moved onto questions about personal and family background and childhood experiences in the NEI as well as details about their diaspora. As the interviews progressed, the questions were modified to further suit the emerging themes. Being recognized as one of their own, most participants felt very comfortable talking about their childhood experiences. However, some had emotional difficulty discussing their past despite the passing years. The acknowledgement of victimization, miserable circumstances of that time, and many who had died, is etched in their memory. Others are still haunted by what happened to them and their families.

At the time of being interviewed my informants were aged between 79 and 92 and comprised 5 men and 4 women. Seven are Dutch-Eurasian and two women - Meta Flack and Kindry Jaeger - of ethnic Dutch origin. They were aged between 5 and 14, when the Japanese occupied the NEI and between 9 and 18 when the *Bersiap* erupted. Their advancing age was the impetus to undertake the research now and to record and interpret their personal experiences before all memories were lost or faded, to gather the information to develop the historical knowledge of this period that has so far eluded academic investigation. Although nine respondents do not constitute a representative sample of the Dutch-Eurasian population of Australia, as they all provide a slightly different story, they nonetheless show that the history of these



Dutch/Eurasian Australians is highly complex. This research could be used as a first step in conducting more interviews over a longer time span to address this complexity in more detail.

Oral history also reveals the emotion of the individuals who lived through the experiences by utilizing active listening skills. According to Alison Doyle (2017), this is a process which involves taking steps to draw out information that otherwise might not be shared by the participants.<sup>42</sup> The historian Paul Thompson<sup>43</sup> alleges that oral history is particularly suitable for projects, which focus on learning the historical background of an issue that has significance for the current environment.

Anthropologist Elizabeth Tonkin (1992) notes that oral histories are representations of the past and that there are advantages and disadvantages to the oral history interview.<sup>44</sup> It is, for example, said to be a less reliable method than written documents, primarily because it relies on memory; specifically, the personal knowledge of mostly older people, who may have the tendency to be emotional and/or unclear. Moreover, people can lie in interviews.<sup>45</sup> However, as Tonkin (1992) also notes, interviewees are, in fact, telling a truth, 'their truth', at a specific moment in time. The information gathered from this method, is derived from the things people do and do not say, in conjunction with the questions posed by the interviewer. Participants may emphasize different aspects of a question depending upon the research focus and /or the manner in which a question is formulated.<sup>46</sup> In this research, I use interviews as an important source of information on the pre- and post-migration experiences of the Dutch/Eurasians who settled in Australia.

While I am aware that oral history interviews do not provide the absolute truth of how history has happened, they nonetheless gives 'the person on the street' a platform. It is also worthwhile mentioning that memories are shaped by their past and more importantly, they are told differently - each time – depending on the various/particular audience being addressed. Moreover, they can be interpreted differently by each audience.<sup>47</sup> Memory is at the centre of the oral history interview.

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<sup>42</sup> Alison Doyle (2017): <https://www.thebalance.com/active-listening-skills-with-examples-2059684>

<sup>43</sup> Paul Thompson (2000,p.10)

<sup>44</sup> E. Tonkin,' *Narrating our Pasts. The social construction of oral Depression*', (New York 1970),p.3.

<sup>45</sup> S. Terkel, *Hard times: an oral history of the Great Depression* (New York 1970) 3.

<sup>46</sup> E. Tonkin,' *Narrating our Pasts. The social construction of oral Depression*', (New York 1970),p.3.

<sup>47</sup> Hajek,A and Davis,A . 'Oral history', *International Encyclopedia of the Social& Behavioral Sciences* 2 :17 (2015) p. 284-290,285.

## Memory

Walter Benjamin (2008, n.p.), a Jewish German philosopher notes: “To articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it, the way it really was. It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger”.<sup>48</sup> The narrative in this exegesis relies on the memory of its informants. According to Assman and Czaplicka (1995), ‘communicative memory’ refers to everyday communication pertaining to the ‘lived past’, and therefore it is temporarily limited. The interviews were designed specifically to capture information about the past that addressed the research question of this study. The relevance of Benjamin’s remark to this research is to recognize how the experience of the dangerous events, the interviewees were asked to recall, relating to this thesis, impact on the rest of their lives. Also, on a more conceptual level the study acknowledges that the sharing of these dangerous times with the present generation redeems the past for all who suffered at the ‘slaughter-bench’ of this traumatic history.<sup>17</sup> In particular, following Benjamin (2008), there is no possibility of redemption to improve the future if we allow the annihilation of the very memory of such dangerous events.<sup>49</sup> This thesis preserves these memories in text and artworks. This however does not mean that we should ignore the negative aspects of (re)membering.

The respondents in this study were young children or teenagers when the traumatic events described in this thesis took place. They are now elderly citizens; hence the possibility of memory distortion becomes a realistic consideration. Frederic Bartlett (1932) demonstrated how telling and retelling a story distorted information recall. With each repetition, the stories were altered. Even when participants recalled accurate information, they filled in gaps with false information. He attributed this tendency to the use of *schemas*, which he defines as a generalization formed in the mind based on experience. He claims that:

...people tend to place past events into existing representations of the world to make memories more coherent. Instead of remembering precise details about commonplace occurrences, they use schemas to create frameworks for ‘typical

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<sup>48</sup> Walter, Benjamin; “Theses on the Philosophy of History”, <https://frankfurtschool.wordpress.com/2008/02/06/class-summary-february-4-2008-theses-on-the-philosophy-of-history/>. The relevance of Benjamin’s remark to this project is to recognize how the memory of the interviewees also recalled the impact danger had on recollection of the traumatic events for the rest of their lives.

<sup>49</sup> Hewitt, Marsha, ‘The Redemptive Power of Memory: Walter Benjamin and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza’ in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (Spring, 1994), pp. 73-8, p77, cites Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, trans. Harry Zohn, edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 255.

experiences', which shape their expectations and memories. The common use of schemas suggests that memories are not identical reproductions of experience, but a combination of actual events and already-existing schemas.<sup>50</sup>

Historical trauma (HT), as used by social workers, historians, and psychologists, refers to the cumulative emotional harm of an individual or generation caused by a traumatic experience or event . Mohatt. N.V, 2014<sup>51</sup>. Furthermore, historical Trauma Response (HTR) refers to the manifestation of emotions and actions that stem from this perceived trauma (Mohatt, N.V). 2014. The interviewees in this thesis mentioned having or having had mental health and identity issues in their lives that they associate with recall of the dangerous events of war, revolution and grappling with identity related to resettlement in the diaspora. The Buitenkampers 'trauma' informs the imagery in my artworks and I describe the iconography metaphorically in the captions under each wall hanging. The wall-hangings are laden with images and symbols that represent the experiences of the Buitenkampers on arrival in Australia – gates representing both entry barriers such as the White Australian policy, and welcome, the sense of integration enabled by the home with security, freedom and peace offered by Australia and its flora and fauna as seen in the last wall hanging.

### **Secondary sources**

An essential part of the use of grounded theory in this research is the analysis of participant narratives in combination with data drawn from a variety of existing texts and documentary sources, such as official records in national archives in all countries involved: Indonesia, the Netherlands and Australia, newspapers, books, theses, reports and journal article. The amalgamation of original empirical data from interviews with information from secondary sources builds a broader perspective on the *Buitenkampers* in Australia and contributes to a standpoint missing in existing bodies of knowledge.

## **2) Wall Hangings - Artistic Representation and Memory**

Cultural memory refers to texts, images, monuments and rituals that transfer and sustain a society's self-image over time and enable the constitutive role of historical foundation events including an exhibition. Halbwachs (1992) stated that "collective

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<sup>50</sup> <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/boundless-psychology/chapter/memory-distortions/>:

<sup>51</sup> Mohatt N.V., Thompson A.B., Thai,N.D, Tebes,J. K.' *Historical trauma as public narrative; A conceptual review of how history impacts present day health*, Volume 106, April 2014, p. 128-130.

memory is always selective and that various groups of people have different collective memories, which in turn give rise to different modes of behaviour”.<sup>52</sup> According to the philosopher James Booth (2006, p.114), “memory (with all its limitations) is centred on an absence, tries to make it present, and in doing so answers the call of the trace”.<sup>53</sup> Archivist, Eric Ketelaar (2008, n.p.) calls these traces “memory texts”. Memory texts can be a map, a story, a landscape, a building, a monument, a ritual, exhibition, a performance or a commemoration. For Ketelaar (2005), ‘memory texts’ are also ‘a space’ of contestation, because invariably, it is a space that different people have different perceptions of...that they want to focus on different historical truths or myths about.”<sup>54</sup> Contestation in this thesis is created by the difference in experiences of the space by perpetrator(s) – Japanese and Pemuda, and the Buitenkamper children; and the inter-generational failure to transmit information that might have eased the trauma in the second generation created by the silences rather than discussion about the traumatic events they experienced by their parents.

A way to capture and express the memories of the participants for the creative production component of this MPhil on Buitenkampers who were children in the period 1940s to the 1960s, was via textile wall hangings. The wall hangings were designed to reflect the stories they told of highly traumatic experiences and how these were remembered by them. The war was about the tragedy and drama of the modern world – ‘a period of violence, flux, blood and death’ including grand themes of life, loss and nationhood, as well as alienation and despair, inherent to war (Heywood, 2014, p.10).<sup>55</sup> These themes I portray in nine art pieces, in which I sought to reflect both the *Buitenkamper* children’s stories and the psychological impact and changes to their lives brought about by war, revolution and diaspora.

The two pieces of work talk to each other throughout: the exegesis contextualises and expresses the experiences of the nine individual Buitenkampers interviewed in their own words for this MPhil while the creative tapestries utilise anthropological semiotics – signs, symbols, landscapes and actual archival documents to communicate the

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<sup>52</sup> Rigney, Ann, ‘Plenitude, scarcity and the circulation of cultural memory’, *Journal of European Studies*, Utrecht University, Sage Publication, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/170b/bfe2d3e7a4bd923df18d483f4353c28512bd.pdf>: ‘Cultural memory evolves according to distinctly cultural mechanisms. Foucault’s ‘scarcity principle’ is used to show the role of media in generating shared memories through processes of selection, convergence, recursivity and transfer’

<sup>53</sup> Booth, James.W., ‘*Communities of Memory: on Witness, Identity and Justice*’, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2006.

<sup>54</sup> Eric Ketelaar, “Sharing: Collected Memories in Communities of Records”, *Archives and Manuscripts* 33 (2005) 44-61; Ketelaar, E. ‘From DeVlamingh’s Plate to Digital Records’, paper presented at the Centre for Advanced Studies in Australia, Asia and the Pacific (CASAAP), Curtin University, 7 August, 2008 (<http://artsonline.monash.edu.au/mai/files/2012/07/nonjapeters.pdf>).

<sup>55</sup> Heywood, Warwick (curator), ‘Reality in Flames’, Australian War Memorial, 2014, p.10.

experiences described by the interviewees during the Japanese Occupation of the Netherlands East Indies, the revolution for Indonesian Independence, the diaspora out of Indonesia and resettlement in one or more countries before coming to Australia. As noted by surrealist artist *Rene Magritte*: ‘What one must paint is the image of resemblance—if thought is to become visible in the world’ (Magritte 1937)<sup>56</sup>.

The meaning making of semiotic anthropology (Singer 1991) is through art signs and symbols, which I use either individually or grouped in sign systems to engage and give insight and meaning to the story in exhibition spaces, where it is necessary to translate the written words into imagery to engage audiences. However, I have also stitched archival documentations onto the tapestries where relevant. These illustrate some of the more poignant violent occurrences that characterised the Japanese Occupation of the Netherlands East Indies and the Revolution for Independence which lead to the decolonisation of Indonesia and the diaspora to the Netherlands or other migration countries. The responses to the exhibition have shown it to provide a positive learning curve about these little-known events and how they were experienced by Australia’s Dutch Indo-European migrants.

To achieve this I utilise collaged images, partially hand-stitched, printed and background painted. These textile images represent the idea that memories are fragile and can easily fragment or fade. Quilting has a long tradition of recording personal histories and special events. Heirloom quilts were a way of transmitting family history to future generations. Quilting is still widely popular medium for preserving memories, for raising awareness of social issues and as commemoration for important events in contemporary history. In this instance it is used for the historical lived experiences of the *Buitenkamper* children that I curated as an exhibition.

### ***Exhibition***

The exhibition of the nine wall hangings was firstly shown in Coffs Harbour, New South Wales in May 2018. It was then exhibited in the Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre in Sydney from 24 November 2018 to 3 February 2019 and is currently planned to also visit the Museum of Indonesian Arts in Melbourne from 24 April to 19 May 2019. The wall hangings are accompanied by a description, which shows the title of the exhibit, materials used to create the artistic object and a short narrative explaining the artist’s

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<sup>56</sup> Magritte, R. ‘*Words in Images*’. 1937, <https://courses.washington.edu/hypertext/cgi-bin/book/magritte>

work and embedded symbolism. A permanent record of the exhibition is created as a pdf file, which forms an integral part of this thesis.

The experience of the visitors to the exhibition is existential as with all exhibitions, from the perspective that: 'All of life is filled with competing narratives, and the burden of interpretation is ultimately on the viewer and his or her subjectively arrived-at sense of the truth' (Merkin, 2018).<sup>57</sup> The accompanying text to each wall hanging directs the visitors to how the depicted events were experienced and presented by the study informants.

### **3) Chronological history development and development of the historical narrative interpretation orientation**

In chapters 2–4 I develop the chronological history of the experiences of the *Buitemkamper* children. It covers respectively, the Japanese occupation, Indonesian Revolution of Independence, the migration and resettlement in the Netherlands followed by Australia. The study draws from all data sources used in this study, including interview excerpts, archival materials and secondary sources. The aim is to construct a narrative about the silence surrounding this historical period and communicating the experiences of the then young people caught-up in it.

In chapter Five, I develop an historical narrative interpretation of the children's experiences, especially why the stories were never told until now. By doing this, the research question of this study is answered but most importantly, the voices of the *Buitemkamper* children are entrenched in the explanation offered about these historical times in Indonesia and the countries of their diaspora and the impacts on their lives. I conclude by reiterating key themes exposed by the research on the experiences of the *Buitemkamper* children and elaborate on lessons learnt for future research. Chapter two begins the chronological history.

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<sup>57</sup> Merkin, Daphne 'Introducing Yi Previn', *New York Magazine*, 17 September 2018.

## **CHAPTER 2: 'TEMPOE DOELOE', THE WAR AND JAPANESE OCCUPATION OF THE NEI**

In this chapter I give a brief account of the Dutch Europeans' history and describe the impact of the Japanese Occupation on their lives. *Tempoe Doeloe* or 'the olden days' is a retrospective assessment made by the *Buitenkamper* children about their lives in the NEI before WWII. The chapter begins by putting into perspective the Dutch presence in Indonesia and then describes the changes that took place during the Japanese occupation.

### **2.1 DUTCH-EURASIANS' BACKGROUND HISTORY**

The history of the Dutch connection with Indonesia goes back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, between 1602 and 1800, when the United Dutch East Indies Trading Company (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie* or *VOC*) operated in South-East Asia. Being the largest and most impressive of the early modern European trading companies, it was authorized by the States General of the Republic of the United Netherlands to conduct trade in the zone between South Africa and Japan, where it could also erect fortification, appoint governors, keep a standing army, and conclude treaties in its name, which it did in the form of trading posts. There were numerous wars and disturbances across the archipelago as various indigenous groups resisted the efforts to establish a Dutch hegemony. They tied up their military forces and in turn weakened the Dutch control.

The trade in spices and other products generated by the time of exploration was responsible for the development of the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic, which witnessed an unparalleled flourishing in almost every aspect of society. The riches unleashed also activated a movement of people and economic, technological, scientific, and socio-cultural development. Dutch art and the sciences blossomed. Though research was primarily conducted at the universities, quite a few amateurs, collectors and private scholars were particularly active in the fields of history and the natural sciences interested in peoples, animals and plants. The period could also be hailed 'first-wave globalism'. However, corruption saw the *VOC* bankrupt by 1795. Indonesia became an unofficial colony of the Netherlands during 1800-1806 when, like the

Netherlands, it came under French rule (1806-1811), followed immediately by British rule (1811-1815).<sup>58</sup> In 1816 it became officially a Dutch colony.

The VOC trading relations in various parts of SE Asia also resulted in an exchange of DNA, as its mariners, soldiers and administrators began to enter into (temporary) relations with local indigenous women. Consequently, many trading posts were soon peppered with their mixed-race offspring. Most of these children remained in the country of their birth and were subsumed into the local community or else entered the service of the European merchants and companies. The VOC made good use of such people, born and brought up locally, they could speak the language of their birth country and understood the conventions. As such they proved excellent middlepersons for the Europeans. For the same reason, these Eurasians were also extremely useful to the Asian rulers.<sup>59</sup>



Figure 2: 'Landscape of the Soul'

Indonesia is a country of great environmental and ethnic diversity. My first wall hanging "Landscape of the Soul" (Fig. 1) depicts the rural life, it highlights the diversity of the landscape, using textile and stitching techniques, that helped recapture the childhood memories, the interviewees all talked about as underpinning their 'sense of place'. I remember seeing the scene of the rice paddies on my way to school and noticing the changing colours of the landscape, which is bathed in a pure and ethereal light, transfiguring the landscape into a dream world, remote and innocently beautiful. This is what this wall hanging captures.

<sup>58</sup> Rickliefs, M.C., 'A History of Modern Indonesia since c. 1300', 2001, p.48.

<sup>59</sup> Peters, Nonja and Snoeijer, Geert, *Verlander: Forgotten Children of the VOC*, Verlander Press, 2017, p. xxx



Most VOC employees returned to the Netherlands, however, a portion threw their lot in with *Nederlands Indië* referred to in the literature as ‘*blijvers*’ (stayers) and made it their homeland (see Figure 2). Countless unions between Dutch men and local indigenous women took place over the next three centuries.<sup>60</sup>

The consciousness, Benedict Anderson (1983) would say, as an ‘imagined community’, to fight for Indo-emancipation appeared in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first Union – *Indische Bond* appeared in 1898. More would appear over the next 20 years including the radical *Indische Partij* (1912) established by Ernest F E Douwes Dekker – a great uncle of the famous *Multatuli* (pen name of Eduard Douwes Dekker) author of *Max Havelaar*.<sup>61</sup> He wanted Dutch-Eurasians and indigenous folk to join forces. This was not appreciated by the Dutch-Eurasians. Neither was the NEI government keen on the party’s focus. However, these were all short-lived attempts except for the *Indo-Europees Verbond* (Eurasian Union) established in 1919, which managed to attain access to better education for the Dutch-Eurasian. The IEV came to an end when Japan occupied the NEI.<sup>62</sup>

Brighter students of Indigenous origins also benefitted from the IEV activism. Some were even sent to Leiden University in the Netherlands to be educated to become civil servants. Once in the Netherlands, they established or joined political organisations with a focus on an independent Indonesia<sup>63</sup>. On return home from Leiden, the organisation, was quickly quashed by the NEI government. Hatta and Sjahrir, were imprisoned in isolated, malaria-carrying mosquitos infested *Boven Digul* in New Guinea, and Sukarno, in Bandung. Following the Japanese Occupation, those imprisoned in Java or Sumatra, were released.<sup>64</sup> Hence a spread of nationalism was able to take place by Sukarno and

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<sup>60</sup> After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, more ethnic Dutch people arrived. They were readily accepted and soon found jobs within the government and military, or became planters. More, and more often their spouses accompanied them. This resulted in many more white Dutch women influencing Indies society. The changing social situation obliged Dutch-Eurasians to conform to the European style to access better jobs with higher status.

<sup>61</sup> Russell Jones, *Archipel Année* 1973 6 pp. 93-118 cites G.W. Earland and J.R. Logan as having first used the term Indonesia in 1850, in two long articles in the *Ethnological Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia*, and The term ‘Indonesians’ as introduced by Logan and Hamy [1877]: [https://www.persee.fr/doc/arch\\_0044-8613\\_1973\\_num\\_6\\_1\\_1130](https://www.persee.fr/doc/arch_0044-8613_1973_num_6_1_1130).

<sup>62</sup> The Indies Party founded in 1911, by the Eurasian Eduard Douwes Dekker, great uncle of E.F.E. Douwes Dekker (1880-1950), famous for his novel: *Max Havelaar* or *The Coffee Auctions of the Trading Company* (1868), initially reflected a growing feeling in parts of the Dutch-Eurasian community that their primary ties were with Indonesia rather than the Netherlands. It was, however, soon joined by the Javanese intellectuals, when it became one of the first political organizations explicitly to transcend ethnic, religious, and regional divisions within the colony that called for the independence of the Indies (‘Indie los van Holland’) from the Dutch rule. The party collapsed in 1913, after government refused it official recognition and sent its leaders into exile, though a few members continued party activities, first in the National Indies Party (1918) and from 1937, under the name of *Insulinde*. It must be stated here that the majority of the population was not politically minded so in terms of numbers the movement is small.

<sup>63</sup> The term ‘Indonesia’, which had been bandied around since the 1850s, was invoked after and its alternative ‘*Insulinde*’ was rejected.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Those imprisoned in NG in the town of *Tanah Merah* in the Regency *Boven Digul* were transported to Australia by the NEI government in exile and released at the insistence of Australian Unions, with whom they worked with to have KPM ships stopped from going to the NEI by a boycott from 1945-1947.

Hatta albeit controlled by the Japanese, who were willing to allow it as an inducement to keep the Indonesians 'on side' for the Japanese war effort. Once they capitulated, the Japanese also helped set the Indonesians on the road to independence. The Japanese supported more Nationalist activity during their Occupation, but controlled it too. The wording of the Declaration of Independence was constructed with the help of the Japanese; in his pamphlet "**Ons Strijd**' (Our Struggle) Sutan Sjahrir notes that during the Japanese Occupation they had taught the Indonesian youth to hate Europeans.<sup>65</sup>

The Dutch-Eurasian population continued to increase after the region became, officially, a Dutch Colony. In 1925, when the NEI had been a colony for over a hundred years, around 28 per cent of all Dutch marriages were mixed, a reflection of the continuing stream of newcomers still coming to the NEI from the fatherland. The Dutch-Eurasian offspring of these unions received Dutch citizenship if acknowledged by their Dutch fathers.

However, despite the acknowledgement, mixed-race people rarely achieved full and equal status to Europeans even when declared *gelijkgesteld* (equated officially as equal) to ethnic Dutch.<sup>66</sup> Consequently they seldom belonged to the top social level of the white population.<sup>67</sup> In the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, job positions and income were still being determined by race and this gave access to only lower levels of the education system, accompanying lower rungs on the job hierarchy and lower social status of the Dutch-Eurasians.<sup>68</sup> The categories of class and race intermingled. Racism also existed within the Eurasian group, showing that it was a complicated issue to address.

The ethnicity of the interviewees' parents depended on their racial and social status. Difference in appearance, religion, language and the likelihood of being educated created special statuses and a distinct sub-group identification. This elevated them to an elite social position during colonial times, which made it possible to get access to

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<sup>65</sup> Adrian Vickers, "A History of Modern Indonesia" Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Japan surrenders, Indonesians declare 'independence'. The catalyst prompting Japan to capitulate was the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima on sixth and Nagasaki on ninth August 1945. These events also induced Indonesians to finally pursue Indonesian Independence. In a way it was the one successful aim they could still provoke. On 7 August they convened a committee headed by Sukarno, Hatta and 20 other members, representing a cross-section of opinions and interests of the nation as a whole. A day later, Sukarno, Hatta and Radjiman were flown to Japanese headquarters in Saigon, where Marshal Terauchi urged them to speed up their preparations as Indonesia would be granted its independence in the immediate future. Sukarno, sensing the event to be close at hand, in a now-famous speech, told Indonesians "that their country would be free before the corn ripened."

<sup>66</sup> [https://www.stamboomforum.nl/subfora/127/2/43735/0/gelijkstellingen\\_met\\_europeanen\\_in\\_nederlands\\_indie](https://www.stamboomforum.nl/subfora/127/2/43735/0/gelijkstellingen_met_europeanen_in_nederlands_indie)

<sup>67</sup> Ulbe Bosma, Remco Raben, 'Being Dutch in de East Indies, A history of Creolisation and Empire', 2008, p.293

: The community of Europeans, which included those born in the Indies, became more clearly defined, not only juridically but also culturally. At the same time, the internal dividing lines became more sharply drawn. This phenomenon revealed itself chiefly in urban centres, where differences in culture and prosperity could be most plainly seen.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid, p. 228

<sup>68</sup> Ethische beweging: <https://www.historici.nl/ethische-dilemmas-in-nederland-indie>.

European education. However, the interviewees described their Dutch/Indonesian culture as consisting of cultural elements that were either Asian or Dutch, bearing in mind that the NEI was considered to be a Dutch colony, where the rule of law, the language and the educational system were founded on Dutch principles and bureaucracy. This was corroborated by a couple of my interviewees, who identified family members (grandparents or parents) as German or Swiss, but never describing their family customs and values as typically German or Swiss. It was their Dutch upbringing that was brought to the fore.<sup>69</sup>

It was also difficult to assess with another couple of my interviewees whether they would define themselves as Dutch/Indonesians. They felt uncomfortable to provide a straightforward answer to this question and found it to be racially sensitive. The interviewees displayed a stronger desire to explore the Dutch/European connection. Their parents also primarily instigated this. It appeared that their connection with the Netherlands was a much stronger tie, because of the parents' open and proud identification with the Netherlands. Their families wanted to bring them up in the western way. Identification on racial ground was clearly embedded in the childhood memory of many, .

The Dutch-Eurasian history is about skin colour and its correlation with socio-economic status. On one side of the spectrum were the light-coloured Dutch-Eurasians, who felt strongly Dutch European and were permitted to work in better-paid jobs in the diplomatic service. On the other side stood the so-called '*little boeng*' (literally 'little brother') with his darker colouring', who was, in comparison socially disadvantaged.<sup>70</sup> Although bureaucracy and family ties with ethnic Dutch families and businesses played an important role in society as a whole, they could not overcome the hierarchy of skin colour, which also operated intra-group.

Seven of my nine informants are of Dutch-Eurasian origin, and all mentioned this hierarchical social class structure in their interviews, while reflecting on how their skin colour had impacted on their education and employment opportunities. Alfred Amrein's (Dutch-Eurasian) statement is representative:

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69 Beatrijs van Agt Florine Koning, Ester Tak, Ester Wils, '*Het Verborgen Verhaal – Indische Nederlanders in Oorlogstijd 1942-1949*', Stichting Tong Tong, 1995, p.12; Hans Meyer, p.23.

'My parents forbade my brothers and me to play with other children, who didn't come from the same *milieu*. Children with a darker skin were looked down upon. I was also forbidden to play with children living outside my neighbourhood'.<sup>71</sup>

Meijer (2004) and Bosma, Raben and Willems (2006) note how the divide between indigenous Javanese and other indigenous minorities, mixed-race and ethnic Dutch impacted on an individual's sense of place, identity and belonging and informed the company they kept. They also claimed it was these inequalities that motivated Indonesian and Dutch-Eurasian intellectuals to separately establish organisations to fight the injustices they perceived as spawned by the racial divides.<sup>72</sup>

Being children, however, my *Buitenkamper* interviewees recall the pre-war years in the NEI as a time of *tempoe doeloe* – the old good life. The feeling they describe that to them represents 'the good life' is what is reflected in Figure 3 depicting the *Waringin* tree. This was the image the Japanese invasion and occupation of the NEI, shattered as it changed their lives forever.

## 2.2. THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION OF THE NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES

The Japanese Occupation of Asia during WWII was as great in dimension as the Nazi occupation of Europe. For the Dutch government, it was a twofold blow: the Netherlands being occupied by the Nazis despite its neutral stance<sup>73</sup>, and the NEI by the Japanese. Even so, WWII in Europe has always loomed much larger in the Dutch public's memory and imagination than the Japanese Occupation of the Indies. Moreover, the Nazi Invasion and Occupation of the Netherlands, having begun in May 1940, meant they were unable to offer military support to the NEI against the Japanese.

Why were the Japanese so eager to invade South East Asia? The beginning of the war in the Pacific created multiple strategic and tactical issues for the allied coalition leaders and their military units.<sup>74</sup> Japan's imperialist goals in Manchuria, which began in 1937, were to maintain a secure supply of natural resources and to install a puppet government in China that would not act against Japanese interests.<sup>75</sup> In an effort to discourage Japanese militarism in the area, the NEI stopped selling iron ore, steel and oil to Japan, thus denying it the raw materials needed to continue its activities in China

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<sup>71</sup> Alfred Amrein's interview by Frances Larder, 2016. He stated: 'Class distinction played an important role among the Eurasians'.

<sup>72</sup> Ulbe Bosma, Remco Raben, Wim Willems, 'De Geschiedenis van Indische Nederlanders', 2006, p.33.

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.netinnederland.nl/en/artikelen/dossiers/overzicht/tweede-wereldoorlog.html>

<sup>74</sup> Dr. L. De Jong, 'Het Koninkrijk Der Nederlanden in the Tweede Wereld Oorlog', p.499.

<sup>75</sup> Tomey, Christina, Koh, Ernest, 'The Pacific War', 2015, p. 4.

and French Indochina. In Japan, the government and nationalists viewed these embargos as acts of aggression; imported oil made up 80 per cent of domestic consumption and without it Japan's economy, let alone its military, would grind to a halt. Faced with a choice between economic collapse and withdrawal from their recent conquests, the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters began planning for a war against the Western Powers around April-May 1941.<sup>76</sup>



Figure 3: *Waringin tree*

'*Waringin Tree*' is a reflection of our childhood in the NEI. Markets were a daily event and often held around *Waringin* trees, which stood in the middle of the village. Many of the interviewees noted how as young children they were often allowed to accompany the *Baboe* (servant) to purchase food for that day's cooking. The *Waringin* tree was regarded as a 'holy tree', so the children mentioned how they were told they had to be very good, otherwise the 'Spirit' of the tree would punish them. 'Holy trees' were often considered by many ancient cultures as the 'essential symbol', the axis of the world and the centre of the cosmos.<sup>1</sup> I also utilized images of the *Wayang* puppets (shadow puppets) in this wall hanging to recapture the spiritual context of the landscape and the people's relationship to it.

The economic and trade sanctions imposed on Japan in July-August 1941, by the Americans and then the British and Dutch led to the conclusion that a hostile Japanese response was now only a matter of time. The impact of the American oil embargo and freeze of Japanese assets would hit home.<sup>77</sup> As the Japanese war machine pushed

<sup>76</sup> Immerzeel, B.R. van Esch, F., ' *Verzet in Nederlands-Indie tegen de Japanse Bezetting 1942-1945*', 1993, p.19.

<sup>77</sup> Donovan, Peter, Mack, John, ' *Code breaking in the Pacific*', p. 81.

deeper into South-East Asia the interaction between Western nations increased, culminating in the Singapore Conference 22-25 February 1941, when they began the imported task of planning an allied American, British, Dutch and Australian (ABDA) Command to hold back the Japanese.<sup>78</sup>

This set in motion a series of exchanges of military missions, the establishment of liaison officers in each country, and agreed-upon schedule about where forces, resources and defences should be deployed.<sup>79</sup> However, the ABDA alliance was no match for the highly trained, well equipped and well-led Japanese (Vickers 2005). The huge losses inflicted by the rapidly oncoming Japanese army motivated Hubertus van Mook, Head of the Government of the Netherlands East Indies, to leave NEI for Australia on 18 February 1941, to plead for Allied forces to organise an offensive in defence of his country<sup>80</sup>. However, General Wavell, having classed the military situation in Java as hopeless, had decided against reinforcing the small British and Australian contingents stationed there with more troops and armour. His decision was to undermine even further the Dutch colonial army's morale, already badly battered by the British and Australian defeat in Malaya and Singapore.<sup>81</sup>

The concept of a unified East Asia took form based on an Imperial Japanese Army concept originated by Hachiro Arita, who served as Minister for Foreign Affairs from 1936 to 1940. The outbreak of WWII in Europe had given the Japanese an opportunity to demand the withdrawal of the European powers in China in the context of Foreign Minister Yosuke Matsuoka promoting 'Asia for Asiatics' with the European powers unable to effectively retaliate.

Many of the other nations within the Japanese proposed sphere of influence were under colonial rule and elements of their populations were sympathetic to Japan as was the case with Indonesia and Manchukuo in Northern China. These factors helped to make the 'Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere' a Japanese reality.<sup>82</sup> Since racial and

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<sup>78</sup> <https://www.brittanica.com/event/World-War-II/Japanese-policy-1939-413ref5111980>.

<sup>79</sup> Bussemaker, Herman, 'Australian-Dutch defense cooperation, 1940-1941' in *Journal of Australian War Memorial*, 1996, Issue 29, p.31

<sup>80</sup> Post, Peter; *'The encyclopedia of Indonesian in the Pacific War'* – in cooperation with the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation, 2010, p. xvii.

<sup>81</sup> Peters, N., 2008, p.26: The interaction also increased trade relations with the NEI, who supplied Australia with petroleum products, rubber, tin, hemp, quinine, mineral turpentine, and gum benzene in exchange for military supplies.

<sup>82</sup> [https://www.jstor.org/stable/20071764?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/20071764?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents) Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" is remembered largely as a front for the Japanese control of occupied countries during WWII, in which puppet governments manipulated local populations and economics for the benefit of Imperial Japan: <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/of/authority.20110803095905411>: The pseudo-political and economic union of Japanese-dominated Asian and Pacific territories during WWII. In the aftermath of Japan's dramatic conquest

blood ties connected other Asians to the Japanese, and with Asia economically weakened by colonialism, Japan saw, as its self-appointed role, their incorporation after the liberation from the Western colonial oppressors.<sup>83</sup> The Japanese Foreign Minister Shigenori Togo (1941-1942 and 1945) maintained that if Japan was successful in creating this 'sphere', it would emerge as the leader of Eastern Asia and consequently that the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere would be synonymous with the Japanese Empire.<sup>84</sup>



Figure 4: WWII - the Japanese Invasion

Benny Neirinckx's story gave me the impetus to create this wall hanging, signifying the approach of the Japanese army. The red shards depict the Japanese flag, representing this country's imperialism, power and violence. Black strips of barbed wire represent imprisonment and torture. Through this creative process I have tried to provide images that also reflect the other interviewees' stories, using painting, fabric collage, hand and machine embroidery.

### ***Dutch Capitulation: Internment or Buitenkamper Status***

In January 1942, the Japanese army invaded the NEI. The NEI Government had little choice but to capitulate, which they did officially on 8 March 1942.<sup>85</sup> Initially the

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of 1941-42, some nationalist leaders (for example, Indonesia's Sukarno and Burma's Aung San) collaborated with the Japanese for tactical reasons.

<sup>83</sup> Dower, John W., 'War without Mercy: Race & Power in the Pacific', p.24.

<sup>84</sup> Iriye, Akira, 'Pearl Harbour and the coming of the Pacific War': A Brief History with documents & Essays, 1999, p.6.

<sup>85</sup> Hollander, Inez; 'Silenced Voices', 2008, p. 123.

Indonesians greeted the Japanese with open arms but rapidly the feeling that they were the liberators disappeared and they came to be seen instead as the new oppressor.

All the interviewees hold memories of the Japanese invasion and occupation. Benny Neirinckx, one of my interviewees (now deceased) first became aware of the Japanese occupation, when she witnessed a whole army of Japanese soldiers being dropped by parachutes, carrying big backpacks containing bicycle parts that were assembled once they landed (see Figure 4). She recalled however that life continued as before, but then there were rules: “We had to do all our own housework. There were no *Baboe* (housemaids) allowed”.<sup>86</sup>

For Andre Marks, another Dutch-Eurasian I interviewed:

The memory of the invasion remains deeply etched in my memory. I noticed how dramatic it was when the Japanese troops rolled in with their tanks, *Isuzu* dual wheeled trucks, Toyota troops carriers and large motorbikes, which looked like Harley Davidson, with a sidecar that had its own draft shaft. The Japanese always travelled in twos on these motorbikes. He noted that the soldiers’ uniforms were a colour between green and khaki with black boots. These boots had a separation between the big toe and the others, which was so designed to enable them to climb trees and telegraph poles, so they could listen in to messages in Morse code.<sup>87</sup>

The Japanese occupation brought four major changes. Firstly, during Japan’s rule, the NEI was to become part of the Japanese Empire. Secondly the government of the NEI was destroyed. Thirdly the government’s leadership was taken over by the Japanese, including trade and industry. Lastly the Japanese only had the interests of Japan at heart, the Indonesians too had to comply with the demands of the foreign masters that became more unreasonable as the war progressed.<sup>88</sup>

Personnel of the Dutch military (*Koninklijke Nederlands Indische Leger* or KNIL) and members of Allied Forces were immediately incarcerated in POW camps. After having imprisoned the men, over the next six months, they rounded up ethnic Dutch women and children and interned them in increasingly more overcrowded civilian internment camps.<sup>89</sup> The Japanese would establish around 1500 civil and POW internment camps during their occupation of the NEI. Wilma van der Maten recalls that internment camps also housed:

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<sup>86</sup> Benny Neirinckx, interview with Frances Larder, 2016.

<sup>87</sup> Andre Marks interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

<sup>88</sup> De Jong, Dr. L., ‘*Het koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*’, p.499.

<sup>89</sup> Hollande, Inez, ‘*Silenced Voices*’, 2008, p. 156-157.



... children, including *Buitenkamper* children, who had become orphans, having lost a mother or other family member, were grouped together in camps where Dutch and Dutch-Eurasian women became their adopted mothers.<sup>90</sup>

Many of these children died of malnutrition and disease, others pining for their deceased mother.

Both ethnic and Dutch-Eurasians had to register with the Japanese forces. To do so required them to purchase a blue card for 80 guilders per adult, a large amount of money for that time. This gave them a registered identity (ID) document (see Figure 5) that also had all their demographic details on it, including the ethnicity they had been allocated. The document was often disregarded by the Japanese regime and many registered people ended up being taken prisoner.<sup>91</sup>

登録番号(A) No. G.P. 1697	原籍(1) 国籍 (2) 出生地 (3) 出身地 (D)	職業 (E)	在留年数 (F)	配偶者ノ有無 (G)	家族数 (未登録)	昭和 18 年 IV 月 12 日	大日本軍ニ對スル誠意ノ宣誓ヲシテ外國人居住登録ヲナシタルコトヲ證明ス
姓名(年齢) (B) Bernardine, Freda 17 taheen.	現住所 (C) Djember van Houtz, G.C. Malang.	Tidak bekerdja	(1) Blanda Indo (2) Malang (Indonesia)	(1) Tidak kawin.	(2) ----	登録料 Oepah mendaftarkan P80.-- (Delapan poe- loeh roentjah).	

Keterangan: (A) nomor (B) nama dan oemoer; (C) alamat sekarang; (D) (1) bangsa (2) tempat lahir, (3) tempat asal; (E) pekerjaan; (F) berapa taheen tinggal di negeri ini; (G) (1) berkahin atawa tidak, (2) banjaknja kelocarga (jawa) beloeom didaftarkan.

Figure 5: Copy of an Identity registration document costing 80 guilders

*Romusha* – indigenous forced labourers, were also drafted by the Japanese Authorities to work for them in various parts of South East Asia. The imprisoned ethnic Dutch men, members of the KNIL and *Romusha* were sent to work on the Burma-Siam railway, where they suffered or died as a result of ill treatment and starvation.<sup>92</sup> Others became forced labour in factories or mines in Indonesia, on projects in Japan or other parts of

<sup>90</sup> Van der Maten, Wilma, 'Vergeten door het Vaderland', 2015, p. 100.

<sup>91</sup> Marsman, van Deventer, 'Harryet;', 'meer dan Alles', 1985, p. 55.

<sup>92</sup> Cribb, Robert & Kahin, Audrey; 'Historical Dictionary of Indonesia,' 2004, p. 377.

Japan-occupied Asia, including in defence projects for the military. The social dislocation caused by the removal of *Romusha* from the Javanese society would eventually contribute to the hatred of officials involved in recruiting. Only a quarter would return.<sup>93</sup> Because Sukarno was responsible for helping the Japanese recruit *Romusha* for forced labour, at the war's end the Dutch looked upon him as a collaborator in the same way as members of the National Socialist Movement in the Netherlands who had collaborated with the Nazis.<sup>94</sup>

The three-and-a-half-year occupation of the NEI by Japan changed the lives of the Indonesians in the archipelago forever. As the Dutch disappeared, Japanese and Indonesians took over their positions in public life. Lesser bureaucrats suddenly found themselves promoted immediately to positions three or four ranks higher than had formerly been reserved for the Dutch. From its onset, intense pressure on the population was in force. This included local people being forced to adopt *Malay* as the *lingua franca* instead of Dutch, with few Indonesians being able to speak Japanese. Japanisation was especially strong in schools, where pupils were duty-bound to be loyal to the Japanese symbols and ideology. The currency and the years of the annual calendar also changed to Japanese.<sup>95</sup>

At the beginning of the occupation, the Dutch-Eurasians were allowed to stay in their homes. They were, according to the Japanese, of Asian background and could be persuaded to make a difference, by agreeing to sign up to belong to the Japanese co-prosperity sphere vision.<sup>96</sup> However, particular criteria governed the category *Buitenkamper*. Dutch-Eurasian women, the elderly, and children were only allowed to stay out of the camps if their Blue Identity Card proved that they had more than 50 per cent Asian blood. This meant ethnic Dutch fathers were imprisoned while their Indo families were left outside of camps. Families in which all members were Indo Europeans were not generally imprisoned. The families of imprisoned fathers became highly vulnerable to all manner of abuse. Eventually all Dutch-Eurasian families were at risk.

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<sup>93</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>94</sup> <https://www.tweedewereldoorlog.nl/themas/alomvattend-karakter-conflict/collaboratie/nsb/>

<sup>95</sup> Peters, N., 'Netherlands East Indies Dutch: War, Occupation, Revolution, Evacuation and Rehabilitation in Australia 1942 -1946', in Nonja Peters Coordinating Author, *A Touch of Dutch: Maritime, Military, Migration and Mercantile Connections on the Western Third 1616-2016*, Communication Press, Perth, 2016, pp.120-144.

<sup>96</sup> De Jong, Dr. L 'Het koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog', p.499.

The interviewee Andre Marks, who was aged three when the Japanese entered the NEI, recalls:

My memory of the early war years... was when my father came to say goodbye. I was sick in bed, and he had been drafted into the land defence... I was not to see him again until 1950. After my father left, my mother was the only breadwinner, and we lived off the money from the sales of our wares.<sup>97</sup>

Another *Buitenkamper* child, Juliana Deventer, an Indo European whose father was Dutch recalled:

My father was taken to work in a sugar mill. My mother and I had to flee into the mountains from the Japanese and also dangerous prisoners (*Rampokkers*), who the Japanese had freed and were plundering Dutch properties.<sup>98</sup>

The historian Robert Cribb (1994, p.18) explains: 'gangsters (*Rampokkers*) are an ancient feature of the social landscape on Java. It was typically in time of war, rebellion or economic crises, when the state was under threat, that brigands conducted their activities with the greatest of boldness, plundering not just individuals, but whole villages and when the Japanese interned the Dutch there was much to plunder.'<sup>99</sup>

An additional complication arose when in May 1942 the Japanese issued Regulation 17, which rendered all private estates Japanese property.<sup>100</sup>

The Japanese demanded loyalty to the new Asia from the Dutch-Eurasians. However, according to one of the few authors who specifically mention the term *Buitenkampers*, Okke Norel, most Dutch-Eurasians ended up supporting and aiding the Dutch, to the point whereby in 1944, the Japanese retaliated by stopping their education and confiscating their money and belongings.<sup>101</sup>

### ***Finding Enough Food – Survival***

Survival – thus finding enough food and accommodation then became major daily concerns for the *Buitenkampers*. Kindry Jaeger, a Dutch *Buitenkamper* child, who was 12 years old when the Japanese landed north of Medan where the family lived, recalled her school closing and her mother being forced to sell belongings, linen and jewellery to

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<sup>97</sup> Andre Marks interview with Frances Larder, 2016.

<sup>98</sup> Juliana Deventer, interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

<sup>99</sup> Hollander, Inez, *'Silenced Voices'*, 2008, p.154.

<sup>100</sup> Cribb, Robert; 'Gangsters and Revolutionaries, The Jakarta People's Militia and the Indonesian Revolution 1945-1949', p.18

<sup>101</sup> Norel, Okke; *Hoe was het Daarbuiten?- Buiten de Japane Kampen en Bersiap, 1941-1949*, 2001, pp.10-13.

rich Chinese, so she could obtain food. Her father had been imprisoned for underground activities.<sup>102</sup>

Andre Marks remarked how, eventually, during the Japanese Occupation:

Food was in very short supply, causing famine and epidemic diseases that killed thousands of people, both in and outside the camps.

We usually went scavenging for food, and my sister also did odd jobs for rich people in the village, such as babysitting. We always requested to be paid in food.<sup>103</sup>

Andre and his brother used to scavenge rice from the fields, or sweet potatoes during the dry season. They were allowed to pick the ones that weren't collected by the harvester. Hunted field rats became their source of protein. Once they caught a brown snake, which they cooked after stripping off its skin. It didn't taste very nice, tasted like mud, but the stomach was happy to have something to digest. Their diet also consisted of nodding violet flowers, weeds, edible ferns, dwarf crotons, and hibiscus flowers. They even ate wasp larvae of flying ants. Andre also notes that:

Fuel was in short supply, so castor beans were distributed [by the Japanese] among *Buitenkampers* and natives, ordering them to plant them, so that the castor pods would produce fuel. However, this proved to be a failure that gave little help to the fuel shortage.<sup>104</sup>

Alfred Amrein, one of the younger sons of a Swiss-Indo family whose father was also interned, has a similar story to tell of hardship and the search for food:

My mother and siblings were allowed to stay out of camp after father was taken prisoner. We moved in with our grandfather. The hardest part was to survive, as we had no financial aid. My mother exchanged linen and goods with the Chinese for food. I often tried to help my mother by searching for food for us. Nobody stole from one another. The Japanese had a strict rule that anybody who stole would get their hands chopped off or undergo strong punishment. These rules also applied to the Japanese. The Japanese treated the younger children with kindness and friendliness and we often received treats.<sup>105</sup>

Many Dutch-Eurasian families were also forced to share houses, because they were unable to afford to live on their own. As the Japanese also confiscated houses they were soon in short supply. Any food obtained was also shared among the Dutch-

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<sup>102</sup> Kindry Jaeger interviewed by Frances Larder, 2016.

<sup>103</sup> Andre Marks interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

<sup>104</sup> Andre Marks interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

<sup>105</sup> Alfred Amrein, interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

Eurasian families. Some families survived by moving in with Indonesian families in local villages and kampongs.<sup>106</sup>

The *Buitenkamper* families were without the income security that their fathers had provided in the past. The effect on the women and children was drastic, including the uncertainty of ever seeing their husband/father again.

### **Comfort Women**

An additional concern for families with teenage daughters, was the fear of them being picked up by the Japanese to be comfort women. Throughout Asia the Japanese army created sexual mayhem. In her book, *Forgotten by the Fatherland (Vergeten door het Vaderland)*, Wilma van der Maten (2015) notes that the Japanese violated Dutch and Indonesian women alike. This is also mentioned by Brigitte Ars in her book *Comfort girls, rape in the name of the Kaiser (Troostmeisjes, Verkrachting in naam van de Kaizer)*. The Japanese abducted and raped women on a grand scale forcing many to become sex slaves. These women were labelled 'military comfort women' (Wianbu). Van der Maten (2015, p.166) writes: "In the whole of Asia, ... around 200,000 women were violated and raped by the Japanese. These could have also included official comfort women according to the Japanese records." Conversely official Japanese documents claim that most of these were Japanese.

Many girls from the age of 18 were called up to work in factories. Their parents had to supply them with nice clothes, and later discovered that their daughters were working in brothels instead, some time later they were returned to their parents.<sup>107</sup>

The story of Meta Flack, an ethnic Dutch *Buitenkamper* child, is representative as many mothers tried to protect their teenage daughters:

My mother became mentally ill when I was three years old. She was taken to the Netherlands and placed in a mental institution. Father employed a German-Indonesian woman to take care of me, who I adopted as my stepmother. I was 14 years old when WWII broke out. When I turned 17 in April 1945, I was obliged to present myself to the registration office. Because I was so blond with a fair

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<sup>106</sup> Similar statements were told by several of the informants that were interviewed by Frances Larder. Alfred Amrein discussed during my interview, the advantage of moving in with his Indonesian grandfather, was for their safety from the Japanese soldiers and the generosity of the family to share their food with Alfred's mother brother and himself. This brought dangerous implications to the grandfather and his family.

<sup>107</sup> Juliana Deventer (pseudonym) interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

complexion my adopted mother was always worried in case I would be taken prisoner by Japanese soldiers. Many Dutch girls and women were taken prisoners by the Japanese and ended up being taken to their brothels. We managed to stay out of camp, but my stepmother was continually worried. I was well developed for my age, so was never allowed to go outside and always had to hide under my bed whenever there was a knock on the door.<sup>108</sup>

Kindry Jaeger's story is disturbing as it contains personal experience of sexual abuse while under-age:

When I was 15 years, old my mother was picked up by the *Kempeitai* (Japanese military police) for interrogation. They smashed her jaw. I was devastated and didn't know who or where to go for help. Our neighbour was a Japanese officer that often used to drop in. He kindly paid the medical expenses to get my mother's jaw repaired. I became his concubine to repay my mother's medical expenses and was unable to ever tell my mother. I was the price. Even now I still have nightmares.<sup>109</sup>

Many Japanese soldiers treated young women and girls badly. Wilma van der Maten noted that girls were frequently taken to the barracks of Japanese soldiers, and forced to stay with them until replaced.<sup>110</sup> To make matters worse, on their return to the internment camp these girls were often ostracized by fellow internees, who thought they had become whores to gain access to food or other favours. This started a cycle of shame. Even after the war, many parents and husbands could not deal with their sexual abuse.<sup>111</sup> The Japanese took the 19-year-old Jan Ruff-O'Hearne from the internment camp and forced her into prostitution as a comfort woman along with many of her co-prisoners. She broke the silence fifty years later. Jan and Wilma van der Maten continue to campaign to have Japan acknowledge and apologise to the women. As captives of the Japanese, whether in or out of internment camps, little news about what was happening came in or left the archipelago.

### ***Wartime Resistance 1942-1945***

There is little recorded information available about the resistance movement during the Japanese occupation. After the capitulation of NEI, small resistance groups from different islands decided to continue the fight against the Japanese, assuming that they would be able to pave the way for a speedy liberation. The Japanese managed successfully to undermine these resistance groups within a short time with the assistance of the local villagers.

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<sup>108</sup> Meta Flack interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

<sup>109</sup> Kindry Jaeger interview by Frances Larder, 2016

<sup>110</sup> Van der Maten, Wilma, '*Vergeten door het Vaderland*', 2015, p. 166.

<sup>111</sup> <https://indisch4ever.nu/2018/05/04/jan-ruff-oherne-95-still-waiting-for-apology-from-japanese-government/>

Immerzeel and van Esch (1993) subdivide the Dutch resistance into two groups, *Buitenkampers* and the interned civilians and military personnel. However, whereas the activities of the interned were mainly concentrated on humanitarian help for internees, the activities of the *Buitenkampers* were more military in nature. There was, however, not a clear division between the groups. The resistance activities of the people living outside the camps were aimed at preparations to provide military support to whoever - British or American - would liberate the NEI.<sup>112</sup>

The interviewee Andre Marks who experienced the risk taken by the Resistance fighters, including the horror of capture by the Japanese, recalls:

My mother was made to cook in a Japanese officer's mess. I had to accompany her, because I was too young to be left at home. One particular day I was playing in a corner of a large room with some wooden toys when two Japanese soldiers entered with a Dutch-Eurasian man in custody. The man was ordered to sit at a small table in front of a high-ranking officer. He was being interrogated about being an underground resistance member, charged with blowing up bridges and numerous other offences. The man's cuffs were removed and his wrists fastened to the table with thick leather straps. He was asked about the group he was working with 'Freedom fighters for Java'. He refused to reveal details about the headquarters or his men.

The interrogator decided to torture him by pushing bamboo skewers under his fingernails, but he still refused to talk. I became extremely frightened when the interrogator yelled and cursed the prisoner. I saw the man's face turning to a greyish-white colour as the pain increased. He was groaning and I heard him say that he couldn't bear the pain any longer. If they would free him, he would tell them everything he knew.

As soon as he was freed, the man jumped up in a flash and struck the officer's temple with his fist. The officer fell dead to the floor and the Freedom Fighter yelled in Indonesian that he would not die alone, as he knew what his punishment would be. The other two soldiers immediately turned their carbines on the man and executed him. I was frozen with terror in that corner, a boy only seven years old. When some other Indonesian men outside heard the commotion, they rushed in to find out what happened. Afterwards they requested that the man's body be released to them, so they could bury him before sundown. To them all the underground fighters were heroes.

My mother asked if she could be excused as she was in shock and took me straight home. I never went with my mother to the mess again when she had to cook, and my sister was told to look after me. I still have nightmares about what happened.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid

<sup>113</sup> Andre Marks interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

Of the 15,000 ethnic Dutch, Indo Europeans and Indonesians arrested for resistance activities, half died by executions, and the rest from the poor conditions associated with incarceration.<sup>114</sup>

The above narratives are embedded in the wall hangings, which also carry their own significance. In particular, this section is linked to Figure 6.<sup>115</sup>



Figure 6: The Ring

The image of this ring symbolizes the underground movements, and is dedicated to my mother, who used this ring to smuggle radio messages in a concealed compartment of the ring, to the underground movement. The red colour used in the wall hanging represents the danger, and the black background captures the black time of the war. Underground movements against the Japanese were poorly documented, mainly recorded by surviving members of well-known resistance groups, who documented their surviving members.<sup>1</sup>

This *Buitenkamper* experiences described above lasted for the entire Japanese occupation. In fact, until 23 August 1945, a week after Japan capitulated to the Allies, when interned Dutch and the *Buitenkampers* were finally informed the war had ended. Andre Marks recalls:

One day there were no Japanese patrols that came past and there were rumours that the war was over. We had no radio, newspaper or any other way of receiving news. Any communications were done by word of mouth. After the collapse of the

<sup>114</sup> Immerzeel, B.R. and van Esch, F. 'Verzet in Nederland – Indie tegen de Japanse Bezetting Verzet 1942- 1945', 1993, pp. 27-28.

<sup>115</sup> These memories are encapsulated in the "Japanese invasion" wall hanging. The greatest significance of the wall-hangings is the challenge that they present to the assumption regarding the traditionally separate realm of craft and fine arts.



occupation all Japanese currency (see Figure 7), which was introduced when the Japanese invaded, was suddenly worthless.<sup>116</sup>



Figure 7: Japanisation included monetary changes as above – N. Peters Collection.

The interviewee Meta Flack-Prins notes the danger that took place immediately after Japan capitulated:

At that time, we heard very vague rumours, through people who claimed to have heard from others who possessed a radio that the Ghurkhas (Nepalese-born British soldiers) had landed on Java. Then all of a sudden, one day, we heard planes and looking up at the sky realized that these were Dutch planes. They threw out pamphlets over the camp. These drifted to the ground in the camp and read: '*Houd goede moed. U zult gauw vrij zijn*' (Have courage you will soon be free). We could not believe our eyes. A few days later, there was a delegation from the Red Cross visiting our camp and we were told that there was an opportunity for women and children to leave the camp and board a train from Madioen to Solo. From there it was possible to board a DC3 aircraft on to Semarang... Quite a few people, however, did not want to take the risk of this journey, as they were afraid of being attacked by freedom fighters on the way. They stayed behind. Later on, after we were already safe in Semarang, we heard that another one of our group, who had been in Madioen and had finally made the decision to leave, was pulled off the train on its way to Solo and everyone had been murdered by the freedom fighters.<sup>117</sup> In that group was my Dutch language teacher from my school in Madioen and this news came as a great shock to us.<sup>118</sup>

The Netherlands was liberated from Nazi Occupation on 5 May 1945. In early August of that year, the Allies, in an effort to draw the war to a close, dropped two atomic bombs, one on Hiroshima, the other on Nagasaki on 6 and 9 August respectively. This action achieved the desired aim – Japan surrendered on 15 August 1945. The hardships wrought by the Japanese, principally through their requisitioning of supplies and use of forced labour, had soon disabused the local populations about Japan's intentions. By the end of the war, the Co-Prosperity Sphere had for many Indonesians become an object of hatred and ridicule. Throughout the occupation the Japanese actively tried to

<sup>116</sup> Andre Marks interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

<sup>117</sup> Locally known as *Pelopor*.

<sup>118</sup> Meta Flack-Prins interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

integrate the Dutch-Eurasians into being loyal to the Indonesian society without much success.

By the end of 1944, the Japanese administration of the region had led to a failure of the supply, which in turn caused widespread famine, malnutrition and illness. Medicine, clothing and footwear were unobtainable and many people were clad only in gunnysacks, burlap or thin sheets of rubber. *The History of Modern Indonesia* cites the renowned Indonesian writer *Pramoedya Ananta Toer*, who recalls the sartorial inelegance with clarity and remembers with sadness seeing people who had starved to death by the side of the road. This was a poignant image, given by many people at the time, he too had to survive on only one bowl of rice per day. It is estimated that as many as 2.4 million Javanese died of starvation in these years.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Adrian Vickers, 'A History of Modern Indonesia,' Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 28.

## CHAPTER 3: DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, SOUTH EAST ASIA COMMAND AND THE BERSIAPTIJD

There is no clear and undisputed interpretation of the events which took place in the NEI between 1942 and 1949. This chapter is about the aftermath of war in the NEI, when Sukarno declared Indonesian independence, the power-gap with no governance, the arrival of the South East Asia Command (SEAC) and the violent *Bersiap*tijd. At the end of the war in the Asia-Pacific region, the Indonesian nationalist leaders were presented with a challenging decision. The suddenness with which the war's end was achieved negated an Allied Dutch re-occupation of the NEI in the immediate future. Moreover, the Allied responsibility for the region, which had only recently been transferred from the US to the British, posed problems. Until these were resolved, the question on everybody's lips was: "when could they expect the care-taker government to arrive in the archipelago?"

An immediate retake by the Dutch would have posed difficulties given the Japanese occupation had shattered the prestige of the Dutch Colonial rule, and irreparably damaged the administrative capacity of the Netherlands Colonial State. While in power, the Japanese had removed the ethnic Dutch and sent them to POW and internment camps, had appointed Indonesians to much higher administrative positions than they had been allowed to occupy under the Dutch.<sup>120</sup> Although with varying degrees of success, this move had, nonetheless, installed Indonesians in positions of power in the bureaucracy. The landscape of the NEI was almost unrecognisable to the 'erstwhile interned' Dutch. More major and unexpected shocks were yet to come.

### 3.1 THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

Plans, however spurious, for an orderly Japanese sponsored independence came to a halt, when the Japanese capitulated. Sukarno and Hatta were recently sent to Japan to discuss an impending independence, which they had for so long been promised them by the Japanese.<sup>121</sup> Two days after Japan surrendered on 17 August 1945, Sukarno announced Indonesia's independence from outside his residence. The whole scenario had been driven by *Pemuda* Indonesian extremist youth freedom fighters. They had kidnapped Sukarno and Hatta to compel them to make the declaration. Ultimately

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<sup>120</sup> Cribb, Robert and Kahin, Audrey, 'Historical Dictionary of Indonesia, 2004', p. 205-206.

<sup>121</sup> Ricklefs, M.C., 'A History of Modern Indonesia since c.1300,' 1991, p. 210.

Sukarno and Hatta were assisted in formulating the words of the Declaration to be cited by the Japanese military personnel Rear Admiral Maeda Tadashi,<sup>122</sup> and Commander of the Japanese Southern Expeditionary Field Marshall Count Terauchi Hisaichi.<sup>123</sup>

Now what? In Java, the British forces were to be deployed under the supreme command of Lord Louis Mountbatten. As Richard McMillan (2009a), a British military historian, points out, the task was foisted on Admiral Mountbatten's South East Asia Command (SEAC) at short notice and at the instigation of the Americans. At the Potsdam Conference of July 1945, they suggested that the East Indies, formally part of General MacArthur's South West Pacific Area, be transferred to the British. Mountbatten asked for time to consider. However, when Japan unexpectedly surrendered on 15 August 1945, Mountbatten, was informed, by his British superiors that the transfer would take place at once. The acquisition of such a large and populous territory came to impose a considerable strain on the resources of SEAC, already overstretched by commitments elsewhere in a region ravaged by war and occupation.<sup>124</sup>

McMillan (2009a) notes further that Mountbatten told General Marshall in Potsdam that he would require 'adequate advance intelligence' before he could assume responsibility for the territories which MacArthur wished to transfer. He never received any such intelligence, for General MacArthur had none to offer, his drive on Japan had by-passed the Netherlands East Indies.<sup>125</sup>

The Netherlands Forces Intelligence Services (NEFIS) in Australia were unable to contribute useful information to the British as they too had received little. As a consequence, their response to the Declaration of Independence was to treat it as of little consequence. Neither could the Anglo-Dutch Country Section to Mountbatten's headquarters at Kandy (Colombo), established during the war to carry out operations in the NEI, as it had never done so.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> <http://www.theindonesianarmy.com/?p=413>: Rear Admiral Maeda Tadashi, navy liaison officer in Jakarta and head of Japanese naval intelligence for the Indies, was sympathetic to Indonesian Independence.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid*: Marshall Count Hisaichi Terauchi told them the transfer to the PPKI would take place on August 24. Sukarno and a solid majority (forty-five of sixty-four) of Indonesian nationalist in the BPUPKI had favoured establishing a "Greater Indonesia" (Indonesia Raya) that included the territories of the Netherlands East Indies, the Philippine islands, British Malaya, all of Borneo and Portuguese Timor- basically the combined areas controlled by the ancient Indonesian Sriwijaya and Mahapit empires.

<sup>124</sup> The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), CAB 101/69, letter from F.S.V. Donnison to H.J.van Mook, former Lieutenant – Governor-General of the Netherlands East Indies, 5 October 1951.

<sup>125</sup> Richard McMillan, Volume 37, 2009b, Issue 107. "British Military Intelligence in Java and Sumatra 1945-46: Growth and Structure of the Indonesians", p. 65-81, p.68: There is no mention of the intelligence available to South East Asia; British Military Intelligence in Java and Sumatra, 1945. Command as to conditions in the East Indies or the use made of it prior to the military deployment

<sup>126</sup> *ibid*

It was the introduction of the Repatriation of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (RAPWI) teams into Java and Sumatra in early September 1945 that improved the state of British intelligence. These teams, established to locate the camps containing prisoners of war and internees, and organize supplies and medical care for them, prior to the establishing of an Allied Military Administration, noted that in most parts of Java, the Japanese had begun to hand over responsibility for the maintenance of law and order to the Indonesians in defiance of orders from Mountbatten.<sup>127</sup> However, SEAC's hands were tied further by the Allies' decision to not move on repatriation of Japan until after the formal surrender had taken place in Tokyo on 2 September 1945. Consequently, SEAC still assumed, after the initial operations, that they would be handing over governance to the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration (NICA).

Until the arrival of the first British troops in Batavia under the terms of surrender, the Japanese forces remained responsible for: informing all Dutch that the war was over, keeping peace and order among the Javanese population; for the safety of POW's and internees; and for informing SEAC about numbers in internment camps, the status of their health, their location and the nearest airfields.<sup>128</sup>

On 29 September 1945, the Seaforth Highlanders (the first Brigade of Major General Hawthorne's Twenty third, Indian Division) and the only available battalion arrived in Batavia (Jakarta) to supervise the Japanese surrender. It was 45 days since Japan had capitulated. They were accompanied by a small detachment of Dutch military personnel who were mainly employed as officers of the RAPWI, to help the British who spoke only English communicate with the internees who spoke only Dutch and Malay.<sup>129</sup>

It took well into September and in many cases October 1945, before the British had occupied most of the Indies Archipelago. The main reason for this delay was the enormous expanse of Mountbatten's area of command for which the British didn't have enough available troops or equipment. Moreover, it soon became obvious that SEAC considered the NEI of a lower priority than British-owned colonies in South East Asia. Consequently, a six-week gap ensued between Japan's capitulation and the arrival of the first British forces.

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<sup>127</sup> McMillan, 2009a.

<sup>128</sup> Ashworth, Lucian; "The 1945- 1949 Dutch Indonesian Conflict: Lessons and Perspectives in the Study of insurgency," 1990.p.38.

<sup>129</sup> McMillan, 2009a, p.19.

The reality in the weeks following the Declaration for Independence before British troops could arrive was that a fast-growing popular movement for self-rule emerged among young Indonesians. This was fanned by comments such as those publicised by Sukarno on 1 September 1945:

*Vanaf heden zal over geheel Indonesia the rood – witte flag moeten waaien. De nationale groet voor het hele volk, waar men elkaar ook ontmoet zal vanaf heiden zijn 'Merdeka'.*

(Translation from the Dutch: As from today the red and white flag will fly over the whole of Indonesia, the national greeting wherever you meet someone shall be 'Merdeka' [Freedom]).<sup>130</sup>

The tensions were inflamed even further when a request was made by Raden Soedirman, Commander of the Indonesian army hastily established by Sukarno and other leaders, that all Japanese flags in the city be taken down and replaced with Indonesian ones. This resulted in fierce fighting with the Japanese, who were still in charge, but unable to withstand the mass attacks by *Pemuda*. However, when they came to face each other in combat, losses on the Indonesian side were at times very high, as *Pemuda* possessed fewer guns, while the Japanese could deploy battle vehicles and machine guns.<sup>131</sup>

From mid-September the *Pemuda* attitudes toward Dutch and Eurasian civilians became increasingly hostile. Indonesian propaganda became more aggressive, and Japanese soldiers were assaulted for refusing to hand over weapons. Graffiti also began to appear on walls in all major cities and on trains, trucks and anywhere possible carrying explicit slogans such as: 'Death to the Ambonese and Indos!' Death to the NICA dogs, and aggressive but less threatening: 'Indonesia for the Indonesians'. By the end of September, *Pemuda* were actively taking over government buildings and utilities: water, electricity, post office, the telephone in cities as far apart as Yogyakarta, Solo, Malang, Bandung, Surabaya and Batavia.<sup>132</sup>

The SEAC's imminent arrival and the *Pemuda*'s belief that the British would support the return of the Dutch, added increased strain. Also between *Pemuda* and Sukarno whose moderate preference for gaining independence via democracy (*democrasi*) was at odds with that of *Pemuda*'s. Impatient for action, *Pemuda* wanted to gain independence by

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<sup>130</sup> Van Delden, p. 93 cites Tanah Abang Bodezaterdag 1 September.

<sup>131</sup> Cribb and Kahin, 2004, p.289.

<sup>132</sup> *Western Mail*, newspaper, 18 October 1945, 21 (see Appendix 2).

means of aggression (*perjuangan*).<sup>133</sup> In particular the indigenous auxiliaries who had been discarded by the Japanese when the war finished, had since become increasingly guilty of bellicose behaviour. Their Japanese indoctrination had engendered a revolutionary *elan*. Now, without jobs but in possession of combat and management skills and increasingly more weapons from wayward Japanese, a feeling of patriotism gave them a new sense of purpose.<sup>134</sup>

### 3.2. SOUTH EAST ASIA COMMAND AND THE BERSIAPTIJD

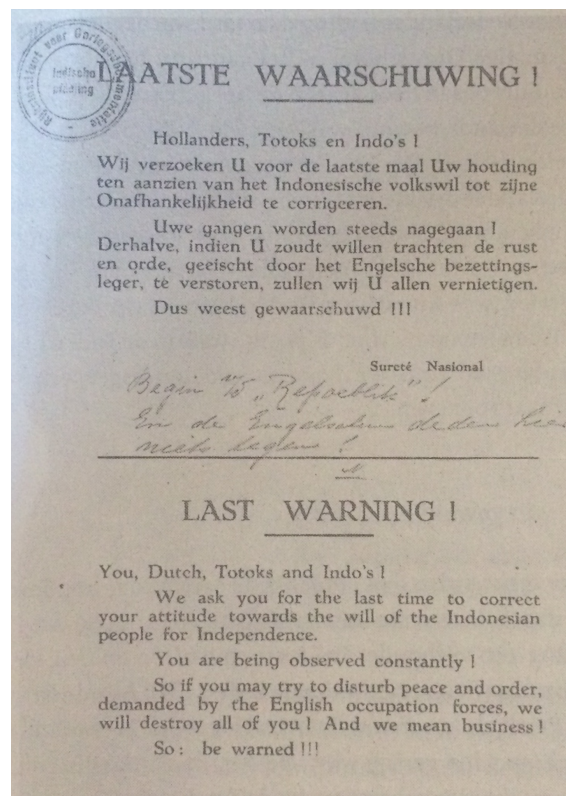


Figure 8: Pamphlet: Last warning - Indies collection NIOD - cited by Meijer, p. 243.

Hans Meijer (2004) comments that after declaring independence, the Indonesian nationalists repeatedly called upon the Dutch-Eurasian community to join them in a welcoming and friendly tone. However, as time progressed and they continued to adopt a very pro-Dutch attitude, the tenor of the pamphlets quickly became grimmer (see Figure 8).<sup>135</sup> Hans Meijer notes that *Pemuda* aggression was as a result directed mainly towards Dutch-Eurasians, thus the *Buitenkampers*. The first atrocities committed were against them.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>133</sup> Meijer, p.253.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, p. 239

<sup>135</sup> *ibid*, p.243.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*.

The Dutch and Dutch Eurasians named the ensuing months of violence the *Bersiaptijd* (stand prepared time), which was used as a battle cry by the Nationalists Indonesian group.<sup>137</sup> *Bersiaptijd* emerged from various incompatible forces and philosophies. These included the arrival of Hubertus van Mook from Australia, where he had been in the NEI Administration in exile and the arrival of the British troops.

Richard McMillan (2009a), a British military historian, describes the *Bersiaptijd* in the NEI as a time of wanton killing.<sup>138</sup> The high level of aggression by the *Pemuda* to the Dutch, Europeans and Eurasians had *Buitenkampers* voluntarily seek to be interned – for their own safety against the violence and fear – in camps established by the newly formed Indonesian Republican Army.<sup>139</sup> This posed additional difficulties as Indonesian army personnel were largely recruited from Japan combat-trained *Heiho*, and there was no guarantee this was going to be as safe as indicated by the authorities.<sup>140</sup>

Andre Marks recalls how it was for his family:

My mother died due to malnutrition and disease and both my brother and I took care of her while she was sick. After she died we tried to survive on our own. One day an Indonesian army truck stopped in front of our house. Four soldiers jumped out and we were ordered to pack our belongings, which were very minimal, and get into the truck. We were taken to a 'safety camp'. In the camp we were given rations of food, but hardly enough to stay alive. We were constantly hungry, which made us very entrepreneurial, such as swapping, with the permission of the other internees, clothing, for food with the Indonesians, making sure that I was able to get a little extra for our family. Nobody cheated or deprived each other from getting what they were entitled to.<sup>141</sup>

The Dutch Historian Remco Raben (2011, n.p.) observes that:

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<sup>137</sup> <https://www.indocentric.weebly.com/indo-hisgtory-in-depth.html.chapter14/> 'Bersiap(1945-1946);' Bersiap is the name given by the Eurasians to a particularly violent and chaotic phase of Indonesia's revolutionary period following the end of WWII. The Indonesian word '*Bersiap*' means 'get ready' or 'get prepared'. The word 'Siap' was shouted and whispered by revolutionary pemuda forces whenever pro-Dutch, either military or civilians, entered pro-republican areas and neighborhoods on Java. The Bersiap period lasted from August 1945-December 1946. The Dutch' use of the word was derived from the Pemuda.

<sup>138</sup> McMillan, Richard, 'British Military Intelligence in Java and Sumatra, 1945-1946', in *Indonesia and the Malay World*, Vol.37, Issue 107, 2009, Routledge, published online 16 March 2009: <http://www.tandonline.com/loi/cimw20>, Mountbatten War Diaries 1988, <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Personal-Diary-Admiral-Mountbatten-1943-46/dp/0002176076>.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> <https://www.quora.com/What-are-the-differences-between-PETA-and-Heiho-> 'While the 37,000-man PETA was the most prominent of the new educational institutions created by the military authorities, it was paralleled by a variety of other institutions of scarcely less significance for the future. In mid-1943 the Heiho (Auxiliary Forces) was formed as an integral part of the Imperial armies. By contrast with the PETA, which was stationed in the areas of recruitment, the Heiho was liable to service wherever the interests of the Japanese required it. Also, unlike the PETA, its officers were Japanese: it contained no Indonesians above the rank of sergeant. By the end of the war it had grown to an estimated 25,000 men'.

<sup>141</sup> Andre Marks Interview with Frances Larder 2016.



....the Dutch who experienced the Japanese Occupation of the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) often find it difficult to explain that it was the months after the end of the war in August 1945, that were the most threatening and sinister.<sup>142</sup>

The Dutch repatriated in Western Australia 1945-1946, interviewed by Nonja Peters describe their experience of the *Bersiap* as existing in an atmosphere of mortal fear.<sup>143</sup> It was in this period, before the South East Asia Command (SEAC) could arrive to restore law and order, that the Indonesian Revolution established a strong foothold and thousands of Dutch, other Europeans and Eurasians plus Indonesians and Chinese, considered disloyal to the Indonesian independence movement, were murdered.

McMillan (2009a) comments how on British arrival ostensibly all seemed well, trams were in operation and trains were running but slogans were daubed in their sides, such as: to hell with van Mook, *Merdeka*, freedom and many more. Also, the Indonesians were friendly but this soon changed. The British and Indian troops on the ground soon found themselves embroiled in an urban guerrilla war, for which they were not trained.<sup>144</sup>

The SEAC quickly realized that the situation in Java was entirely different from that surmised by the Allies, including the Dutch government, due to the lack of intelligence to reach them as noted above. Charles Wolf (1948), the American Vice-Consul at Batavia, February 1947-June 1947, records that the intelligence concerning Indonesia during the Japanese occupation was, in fact, the most meagre in all occupied South East Asia.<sup>145</sup> At the time Japan capitulated, the lack of intelligence out of Japanese occupied NEI made it possible for the Netherlanders to hold onto pre-war ideals. Though uncorroborated, the expectation therefore persisted that life would return to its pre-war reality in both the Netherlands and NEI.<sup>146</sup>

The increasing intensity of fighting and violence over the months of October and November 1945 became known as the Bersiap period, from the warning cry *Bersiap* (Stand Prepared), with which young nationalists used to summon their members to battle with an approaching force, considered hostile. This was followed by the nationalist salute *Merdeka* (*freedom*), their ferocious war cry for freedom, which they

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<sup>142</sup> Koninklijke Bibliotheek National Library of the Netherlands: <http://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/nl/artikel/27900/het-geweld-van-de-bersiap.html>; Peters, 2016.

<sup>143</sup> Peters, N., 'From Tyranny to Freedom'.

<sup>144</sup> McMillan, 2009a, pp.21-22.

<sup>145</sup> Wolf Jr., Charles, 'The Indonesian Story: The Birth, Growth and Structure of the Indonesian Republic, 1948', p. 10.

<sup>146</sup> McMillan, (2009b).

would shout as the fighters entered a street accompanied by noisy beating of iron stakes against fences and light poles before surrounding the houses of their victims who they would torture and murder.<sup>147</sup>

Johan Fabricius (1947) – a BBC correspondent and later famous Dutch author, notes that many Indonesian vendors, selling their wares to Dutch at the markets or trying to elicit *Becak* rides from them, were intimidated by *Pemuda* as this was considered pro-Dutch behaviour. Hence local Indonesians also came to fear these youths. On Monday 22 October 1945, the journalist reporting on conditions in Indonesia for the *Morning Bulletin* in Rockhampton, Queensland (page 8), described the Indonesian Peace Corp (*Badan Keamanan Rakyat*) as mainly composed of immature youths wearing bright green uniforms and carrying swords as big as themselves: “They are like boy scouts, but such scouts are dangerous “, he added (see Appendix 2). Although *Pemuda* are generally described as young, lower class boys, some were girls called *Pemudi*. Remco Raben (2011) notes that they were not all that young, however most were from the lower class from *Kampongs* (villages).<sup>148</sup>

For example, it was noted on page 1 of the *Daily News* (Perth, Western Australia) on Thursday 18 October 1945 that:

Extremists of Indonesian Nationalist youth have got completely out of hand in many areas in Java. Taking advantage of the lack of sufficient European forces, they are killing and looting in frenzied zeal to show their hatred for Europeans. At Depok (now a suburb of Jakarta), 15 Netherlands Christian Indonesians were killed and 1050 women were herded into two houses and threatened with torture and death when extremists ran amok. The four-day terror ended when Johan Fabricius a BBC correspondent, and other correspondents arrived with an escort of British and Indian troops to investigate rumours of looting. They rescued the women, who were being menaced by a mob of fanatics. The village was a mass of horrible wreckage. In one house seven men and women had been forced to line up facing the wall while two fanatics, armed with swords went down ‘the line’ beheading them. One of the women escaped death only because she collapsed, fainting, just as the sword whistled past her neck. She came to, several hours later, and found herself bathed in the blood of her friends and family (see also Fabricius, 1947 and 1952).

The Dutch claim the *Pemuda* hardly experienced any counterinsurgency from the British. The Indonesian saw the British as trailblazers for the return of Dutch governance. Conversely, the Dutch blamed the British for not acting convincingly

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<sup>147</sup> Van der Maten, Wilma, 2015, p.28.

<sup>148</sup> Koninklijke Bibliotheek: <http://www.historischnieuwsblad.nl/nl/artikel/27900/het-geweld-van-de-bersiap.html>

enough against the *Pemuda*. The fact remains that there were not enough British troops in the NEI, during September and October 1945, and those there were certainly not prepared for the massive armed conflict by the Indonesians that confronted them in Java. Moreover, given the small number of troops, they were powerless to prevent the massacres committed on the Dutch by the *Pemuda* during the first months of the *Bersiaptijd* (see Figure 9). The determination by *Pemuda* to kill Dutch European and Eurasians internees, and any locals suspected of being pro-Dutch that included rich Chinese and aristocratic Indonesians, came in part from their Japanese combat training and nationalist propaganda.



Figure 9: Bersiap I

The wall hanging *Merdeka* depicts the physical dispossession, violence and bloodshed of the revolution. The red applique is used as a metaphor of spilled blood and the painted background relates to the traumatic period, so does the photo release images depicting the violence as described by Alfred Amrein.

Constant violent skirmishes and riots initiated by *Pemuda* characterized the following months (see Figure 10). A great deal of violence was unleashed when the Dutch flag was hoisted onto a hotel flagpole in Surabaya by Dutch-Eurasian youth, it was seen as a gross provocation by Indonesian *Pemuda*. Soon thousands of them from other parts of the country gathered. Encouraged by a fierce anti-Dutch speech by some of their leaders and with the aid of ladders, they managed to reach the flagpole, where they tore

off the blue part of the Dutch tricolour leaving the remaining red and white of the Republic hoisted on the flagpole.



Figure 10: *Bersaptijd II*

This wall hanging describes the violent massacre of the Permudas as witnessed and described by Alfred Amrein and his brother. The speared bamboo implements used to kill, the blood red flowing river, the skull and white crosses – all tell the tale.

Sutan Sjahrir's pamphlet *Struggle (Ons Strijd)* implies that the Indonesian youth had been indoctrinated by the Japanese to fight to the death, to hold a sort of Japanese Kamikazi mind-set.<sup>149</sup> News about the violent events in the NEI were soon broadcast around other parts of the world via newspapers (Appendix 2) and radio.

Lieutenant General Sir Philip Christenson (Commander, Allied Forces Netherlands East Indies) said that he would hold the Nationalist leader Sukarno responsible for violent disturbances such as those reported that day. Sukarno, however, refused to take responsibility. In fact, according to a nationalist spokesman, he was scouring the countryside in an attempt to persuade the people to win freedom by peaceful means.

Most internee killings by *Pemuda* took place on Java and Sumatra. The majority were women and children of both ethnic and Eurasian Dutch origins. Early September there

<sup>149</sup> [https:// en.wikipedia.org/Our/Struggle](https://en.wikipedia.org/Our/Struggle) - Soetan Sjahrir: "Onze Strijd (Our Struggle)" published 1946, p.3-4.

were already reports of violence on internees in camps by *Pemuda* and these escalated when the first SEAC Forces arrived to accept the Japanese surrender. *Pemuda*, now in possession of Japanese weapons, became even more threatening. This was especially the case when the seriously undermanned RAPWI began employing Dutch ex-POWs and internees to help them shift the more severely debilitated Dutch internees and POWs in Central Java to recuperative spas in the hills or repatriate them to other countries for rehabilitation. Militant combat units of the independence movement then embarked on even more murderous rampages directed at the Dutch, wielding improvised weapons, including bamboo spears, machetes and firearms, stopping food supplies to the internees and throwing hand grenades into their barracks. Consequently, instead of the freedom they longed for, Dutch internees were confronted with extreme unrest and guerrilla warfare.<sup>150</sup>

In 'The Forgotten Killings', in *Inside Indonesia*, Rosalind Hewitt (2016, n.p.) writes:

Like the 1965 communist massacres, in Indonesian historical writing, the 1945-47 killings – if mentioned at all – have generally been portrayed as unfortunate but necessary for the sake of the nation. Autobiographies and popular histories in Indonesia portray *pemuda* actions against gangs of armed Dutch and Indo (Eurasian) men and former Japanese colonisers as an extreme but necessary response to colonial oppression, and one that was vital to prevent colonial rule from taking hold again after the Japanese surrender. These accounts do not mention that the victims included unarmed women, children and the elderly. Nor do they mention that a significant number of victims were from ethnic groups now considered to be Indonesian. The few mentions of incidental killings that were not part of clashes between armed groups are explained as unfortunate incidents that were perpetrated by an out-of-control *rakyat* (populace), just like the 1965 killings.

Dutch and British archives tell a different story. These indicate that the *Pemuda* deliberately rounded up and killed or forced other Indonesians to kill unarmed men, women and children, and that a good proportion of victims were from groups that are now considered Indonesian – they formed perhaps a greater percentage than the Dutch and Indo victims. Most of these were Ambonese and Mandonese, but some were also Timorese, Chinese Indonesians, Javanese and Sundanese women married to European men, adopted Indonesian children of Dutch families, and Indonesians who had served as colonial administrators. Autobiographies and personal accounts suggest that *pemuda* groups targeted European, Indo, Ambonese and Manadonese families in Java based on their appearance, whether they were loyal to the Dutch or not.<sup>151</sup>

The informants for this thesis tell the same story. Alfred Amrein noted how:

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<sup>150</sup> Australian, Indonesian and Netherlands: "Media Coverage and Personal Experiences during the 'Bersiap tijd' (Stand Prepared) period of the Indonesian Revolution for Independence, 1945-1946, p.14-15

<sup>150</sup> Hewitt, Rosalind; 'Forgotten Killings inside Indonesia'. 2016.

Life became more difficult after WWII and the start of the *Bersiaptijd*. Japanese soldiers defended Dutch and Dutch-Eurasian Dutch families. Many families disappeared or were slaughtered and seen floating in the river (Figure 10). The Ghurkhas arrived and protected the Dutch [Eurasian] families by placing them in concentration camps in Bandung for their own safety, 'Tjihapit Camp'. Lot of innocent Dutch-Eurasians were slaughtered and beheaded. My brother and I witnessed all this, including the killing of the elderly. Twenty houses were burned to the ground in the street behind where we lived. Some owners were still inside, others managed to escape, but were killed. Bodies and heads were scattered. Many of these were Dutch and Dutch-Eurasians who were loyal to the Dutch. Eurasians to murder, plunder and rape, parents and grandparents were hiding their children to protect and save them. In Jogjakarta the Sultan made the decision to remove all the Dutch children from their mothers. Indonesian soldiers took these children to an orphanage for protection. Some of these children were later moved and eventually settled in the Netherlands.<sup>152</sup>

After Andre Marks' and his brother's mother died, at first they were put in 'safety camps', following this they were taken to several orphanages:

... until our father found us. He had been searching for some time after he was released. After the return of my father we stayed in Indonesia until 1950, when Sukarno ordered all Dutch people to leave Indonesia. We moved to New Guinea where we stayed for nine years. We were promised that New Guinea was the land of the future. I worked for the Dutch dockyard. Life was very primitive, with no electricity and other everyday comforts. We worked hard to improve our living standards there. In 1959 we were ordered by Sukarno to leave New Guinea.<sup>153</sup>

Alfred Amrein recalls that:

Plans were made to evacuate to the Netherlands as soon as possible. We didn't know whether our father was still in a Japanese prison or still alive. We were re-united with our father after his return via Singapore in 1946. My family lived in Indonesia until we had enough money to leave for the Netherlands. I felt very sad leaving

Indonesia. It had also been very hard to accept a different language from the Dutch language to *Bahasa Indonesia*, which we were expected to speak while in an Independent Indonesia.<sup>154</sup>

The hatred of the *Pemuda* for the Dutch, stirred up by the Japanese during their occupation of the NEI, placed an enormous pressure on the Dutch. This would eventually lead to most choosing to flee their country of birth, when Indonesia gained its independence.<sup>155</sup>

Kindry Jaegar recalls:

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<sup>152</sup> Van der Maten, p.100.

<sup>153</sup> Andre Marks interview by Frances Larder, 2016,

<sup>154</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>155</sup> Hetty Naaijken and Retel Helmrich, 2014.

We experienced lots of skirmishes during the *Bersiaptijd*. All the storage buildings near my home were burned. So ....for safety reasons I was placed on a ship bound for the Netherlands to continue my education. I didn't see my mother for three years. She was forced to leave Indonesia by Sukarno.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Jaegar, Kindry interview by Frances Larder, 2016

## CHAPTER 4: EXODUS OUT OF INDONESIA

In this chapter I trace *Buitenkamper* children's exit from the NEI, their arrival in host countries and the problems they faced with adjustment. Issues related to identity and belonging, are also discussed.

### 4.1. THE DIASPORA

During 1946-1964 approximately 350,000 Dutch POW's, ethnic and Dutch-Eurasians, Moluccans, and KNIL soldiers left Indonesia for the Netherlands after Sukarno gave the order for all Dutch citizens to return to their own country. In 1962 the United Nations (UN) ordered the Netherlands to hand over New Guinea to Indonesia. In the aftermath 14,000 Dutch people were evacuated from this colony.<sup>157</sup>

Between 1957 and 1964 the last group of Indo Europeans known as the *spijtoptanten* (people who changed their minds about staying in Indonesia) left to resettle in the Netherlands. These were people, who, after the Indonesians take over in December 1949, had chosen to accept the Indonesian citizenship, a decision they later regretted. More than 25,000 were given a Dutch passport and allowed to come to the Netherlands. However, many others stayed behind, because they had not been accepted by the Netherlands and others because they preferred to live on in Indonesia.<sup>158</sup>

The Dutch government explained that the depleted condition of the Netherlands from the five-year Nazi occupation was making it difficult to house large groups of evacuees from its colonies. Even so, the majority of my interviewees and families moved to the Netherlands during this period (see Figure 11). Meta Flack- Prins told me:

Having lived in the NEI most of our lives, we did not possess anything in the way of warm clothes or jumpers. However, the Red Cross was able to offer help to all the evacuees, who had lost everything during the war, arranging assistance near the main shipping route. Along the Suez Canal, [in] a place called *Ataqah (Egypt)*, we were allowed to go ashore. We were taken to some big sheds and the Red Cross provided us with shoes, jumpers, coats and other clothes, fitting us with the essential clothing for our arrival in the Netherlands.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Willems, Wim; "De Uittocht uit Indië- 1945- 1995", 2001, p. 12.

<sup>158</sup> Van der Maten; " Vergeten door het Vaderland", 2015, p. 133-136

<sup>159</sup> Meta Flack-Prins interview by Frances Larder, 2017.





Figure 11: Exodus

The wall hanging depicts the mood of the interviewees, having to leave Indonesia, facing an unknown future. This is reflected in the blue background, representing the ocean, the suitcases and passports, expressed in photo release, fabric collage and embroidery stitches.

## 4.2. SENSE OF PLACE, IDENTITY AND BELONGING

The post diaspora issues the *Buitenkamper* children encountered were not always so different from the ones Dutch-Eurasians had to deal with in Indonesia when it was the NEI. Even assimilation was not so different from trying to be accepted into the upper levels of the NEI society.

The children repatriated to the Netherlands after the war were faced with three years of missed education. Most of them had to attend extra classes and private tuition to catch up to their Dutch counterparts. Schools in the NEI were closed at the start of WWII by the Japanese. During the Indonesian revolution the school curriculum changed. Alfred Amrein mentioned how hard it was to learn the curriculum in the new national language "Bahasa". Many came to believe that this education gap contributed to feeling alienated in their new (old) country and to making the assimilation process much harder.<sup>160</sup>

Meta Flack-Prins recalled after the war:

...having to finish two grades at school in one year was not an easy task. After all, we were approximately 17 or 18 years old when we started, had been interned in camps throughout the war years, and had not been free to go and do what young people

<sup>160</sup> Hollander, Inez, 2008; "Silenced Voices" p.163.

usually do at that age. That is, go out to the pictures, birthday parties or even shopping. Therefore, it was not easy to sit down after school to study for hours and work hard for exams.<sup>161</sup>

What Kindry Jaegar remembered most was how many of the Dutch people in the Netherlands were racist towards Dutch-Eurasians. She would defiantly stress: “I am not Eurasian, I was born in Indonesia, both my parents are Dutch, and we were brought up as Dutch.”<sup>162</sup>

However, colour of skin definitely played a part in the Netherlands as Inneke McIntosh found out:

After leaving Indonesia when I was about ten years old, and settling into a school in the Netherlands, I was always called *Aapje* (Monkey [Face]) by the Dutch school children, which made me feel very uncomfortable.<sup>163</sup>

The Japanese occupation followed by the Indonesian takeover initiated the downward spiral of Dutch-Eurasians' lives. Since the influx of white newcomers, around the turn of the century, many Eurasian families in the Indies were being disrespected. The white newcomers looked down upon them far before WWII. Besides the Japanese Occupation followed by the Indonesian takeover initiated a further downward spiral for the Dutch Eurasians. This was not entirely a new experience. Its prevalence increased with the flux of white newcomers, around the turn of the century. These newcomers denigrated mixed race peoples. Their behaviour was in part, probably driven by the eugenics movement which was popular at the time. Advocates of eugenics in the Dutch East Indies were particularly interested in Indo-Europeans, a group of mixed European and Indonesian descent who were perceived threats to the quality of the Dutch population. Many Eurasian families in the Indies were being treated disrespectfully. Besides, not all Eurasian families were not that poor.<sup>164</sup>

Andrew Goss writes how:

Eurasians especially were exposed to racial criticism, they were loyal to the Dutch and the empire, but they were poor in the Indies, caused by the circumstances during the war, and nearly destitute on arrival in the Netherlands.<sup>165</sup>

According to Stoler:

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<sup>161</sup> Meta Flack-Prins interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

<sup>162</sup> Kindry Jaegar interview by Frances Larder, 2016.

<sup>163</sup> Inneke McIntosh, one of the volunteers that worked on the “Odyssey Project” with me in 2001 and is now deceased. See also Westerbeek-Veld, 2007; Peters, 2008; Cote, J., and Westerbeek, ‘*Recalling the Indies: Colonial Cultures and Post Colonial Identities*’, Amsterdam : Aksant, 2005.

<sup>164</sup> Pols, Hans; *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Eugenics*, edited by Alison Bashford and Philippa Levine.

<sup>165</sup> Goss, Andrew; ‘From Tong Tong to Tempoe Doeloe,’ in *Eurasian Memory and the Bracketing of Dutch Colonial History*, 1957-1961, p.14.

....In the Indies and the Netherlands itself, many people considered all Eurasians whether legally Dutch or indigenous, to be the embodiment of European degeneration in the tropics.<sup>166</sup>

The interviewees noted that during their time spent in the Netherlands, they became aware of the differences between the European Dutch and their own colonial culture in which they were brought up while living in the NEI. The differences most often mentioned, which they needed to get used to, related mostly the use of the Dutch language, sense of humour, foods they ate, ideas of hospitality and also hygiene. Andreas Flack and Alfred Amrein in particular mentioned the different expressions within the Dutch language that were unfamiliar, the food was so different, so were the Dutch sense of humour and their ideas of hospitality.

Adapting to a new environment, customs and climate, which they had never experienced before, also took some time while growing up in the Netherlands. These experiences had a direct impact on their sense of place, identity and belonging.

Instead of appreciating the difficulties of *Buitenkamper* children's in-between status, they were presumed to be active agents, wishing to exercise informed, autonomous responsibility in relation to their destiny. However, in reality they were not given the choices needed to do so. Stephen Hall proposes a theorization of identity as a 'form of representation, which is able to constitute us as new kinds of subjects, and thereby enable us to discover places from which to speak'. He notes:

One thinks of identity whenever one is not sure of where one belongs, that is, when one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behaviour, styles, patterns and how to make sure that people around the world accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other's presence.<sup>167</sup>

A great deal of complexity surrounds the identity of Eurasian *Buitenkampers*, given their double heritage as located 'in-between' the Dutch colonizers and the indigenous Javanese or those of Chinese heritage. Before 1900, nearly all Europeans were of mixed descent. Most European migrants to the Indies were men. In the colonies they secured their social status by marrying into prominent Indo-European families. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and the advent of the Ethical Policy in 1901, changed this situation. Increasingly, European professionals moved to the Indies only temporarily and brought their families with them. These families maintained their distance from both Indo-Europeans and the indigenous population in order to maintain their white, upper-middle class status. As a consequence, Indo-Europeans became

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<sup>166</sup> Stoler, Ann, 'Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers; European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial South East Asia' in; *'Comparative Studies in Society and History'*, 34, 2 (July) 1992), p. 515

<sup>167</sup> Hall, Stuart and Paul du Gay; 'Question of Cultural Identity', p.4.

increasingly marginalized within the European sphere. In other words, ‘inbetweeners’ were increasingly confronted by racism. Indo-Europeans generally occupied lower positions in the colonial administration because they lacked the educational credentials - only obtainable in the Netherlands, to access higher positions. Concurrently, they experienced increasing competition from educated Indonesians who commanded much lower wages <sup>168</sup>.

This experience was characteristic for Eurasians in the NEI and the ‘racism’ continued on arrival in the Netherlands, where they were immediately also classified as lower in the social order. Social groups were formed and organized in their new adopted homeland with other Eurasian people where they could share some of their experiences and/or enjoy Indies cuisine (Peters 2014)<sup>169</sup>. However, the more emotional experiences of violence and horrific murders resulting in the loss of family or friends were never discussed – they were so far removed from the wartime experiences of those in the Netherlands, that they stayed silent buried deep inside.

According to my interviewees, throughout most of the 1950s, any reminiscences about the former Netherlands East Indies society, was not encouraged by the Dutch. The NEI as a subject was avoided by most. Juliana Deventer recalls:

I could only talk about the horrific experiences with people who have had similar experiences. I saw some horrible things and still can’t talk about it. I often have a recurring nightmare.<sup>170</sup>

Kindry Jaeger talked about her experiences with me, albeit reluctantly:

I couldn’t talk about the years of WWII and the Bersiap period for a long time, and kept the memories buried deep down, these memories still worry me and I still find it very hard to live with. It has robbed me of my teen years. I still have recurring nightmares and my husband had difficulty coping with it.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> <http://eugenicsarchive.ca/discover/tree/5454098bc5159e4c76000001>

<sup>169</sup> Andreas Flach’s interview by Frances Larder, 2016; He mentioned that by ‘sharing Indonesian recipes and participating in enjoying the cuisine, it brought the members of the “Bambu” Club Newsletter closer together at their kampulans’.

<sup>170</sup> Juliana Deventer, interview by Frances Larder, 2017.

<sup>171</sup> Kindry Jaeger interview by Frances Larder, 2017.



Figure 12: A new Beginning

The wall hanging relates to the White Australian Policy, depicts the Australian iconic images of Ayers Rock, kangaroos and hand-painted background representing the outback, relating to the sparseness of this continent that the Dutch/Eurasians were greeted with. The army barracks and army huts show the accommodation where most of the migrants were placed on their arrival. The gates represent entry into Australia.

The sociocultural, political and historical events that shaped the lives of the *Buitenkamper* children have received sparse investigation. In fact, they have been seriously neglected. No one listened to the Dutch-Eurasians' experiences of war, occupation and revolution in either the Netherlands or Australia.

The majority of my interviewees migrated twice as refugees from the NEI to the Netherlands and then to Australia. Some of them were not able to enter Australia until the late 1960s, when integration policy reigned and selected mixed race people and some educated Indians were coming in via a sort of 'back door' arrangement (see Figure 12). The too dark skinned came to Australia after the White Australian Policy was abandoned in 1973.<sup>172</sup>

<sup>172</sup> Established in 1901, as a means to deter coloured Europeans from migrating to Australia, the Immigrant Act became the basis of the White Australian Policy as one of the newly- formed Australian Federation's earliest pieces of legislation. Parliamentarians heralded the immigration restrictions Act as a necessary safeguard for the future of the Australian nation from being overrun with presumably incompatible immigrants who could not assimilate into the Australian ethos. It was finally abolished in 1973, Ana Dragojavic; *Haunted by Miscegenation, Gender, the White Australian Policy and the Construction of Indisch Family Narratives*, p. 64.

The other eight interviewees spent most of their childhood and adolescence in the Netherlands. All female interviewees married and arrived in Australia with their husbands.

Willem and Meta Flack were able to enter Australia, because Willem worked for the Dutch Merchant Navy and was given a transfer to Australia. However, his twin brother Andreas made seven attempts before finally being allowed into the country. My own family was able to come to Australia directly from Indonesia, but my father had to pay for our passage. Andre Marks arrived in Australia directly from New Guinea without his family, but accompanied by his teacher, who had assisted him in filling in the required emigration forms. On arrival, he obtained a job immediately working in an abattoir.

Australia offered new opportunities for the *Buitenkamper* children and their families (see Figure 13). The change to multiculturalism in the 1970s assured they were treated no differently from any other migrants.

The long, cold and dark Dutch winters were an important factor in their decision to move and live in Australia once they had completed their education and became adults. Australia being the next-door neighbouring country contributed to their decision to make it their final home destination. Their trip was funded by the Dutch government under the emigration scheme.

During their first year of settlement in Australia they became aware of the difference between Australian culture and their own cultural practices developed in the NEI and the Netherlands. The lack of understanding of Australian customs, combined with little knowledge of the English language or Australian slang, made their integration into the new society more difficult. Cultural traditions and customs, their ethnic characteristics and the language they spoke at home were all different from the Australian culture. These differences were most prominent during the period of Australian assimilation.

Children, who arrived with their parents directly from the NEI (I was one of them) with disrupted or minimal school education, were suddenly immersed in a new education system. Another significant factor was that they grew up in an environment where there were no or few extended family members, as most of these members primarily still lived in the Netherlands - and first country of diaspora and for Guus Marks, the second country of migration. However, whereas settlement for these interviewees in Australia

was challenging in that they had to get used to a whole new life and adapting to a whole new culture, particularly in the earlier days. They reflected on this process with a sense of pride, and that they were able to build a secure future for their children and themselves. They made Australia their permanent home and this research offered them the opportunity to break the narrative of silence.

There were many positive comments and below is an overview. Our history is important as by accessing the experiences of the past, doors that had remained closed for many, whether in our minds, our hearts, or in our society can be opened. Such was the case of my interviewees. This can be a painful process, but it can also have many rewards. Historically, we humans do not seem to learn by our own experiences. However, I believe, that if something in the past touches us in some way, we gain an understanding, which infiltrates our consciousness and can thereby engender change.

I would like to think that through my research and interviews others may come to understand the issues and challenges, as well as the advantages of being the child of refugee migrants in Australia and hopefully this understanding can then somehow soften current attitudes within Australia toward our current refugee families who appear to face similar issues as did the families of the interviewees.

Some of these similar issues are:

- Adjusting to the Australian culture, slang and English language. This has now changed since Australia introduced English language classes.
- Different currency, and unable to find ingredients for preparing the food that they were accustomed to eating. In Australia, now being a multicultural country, these ingredients are readily available for the refugees and migrants, which was not the case when the interviewees arrived in this place. They had to adapt to the English fare.
- Finding employment. This has now also changed slightly with Australia assisting in finding suitable employment.
- Racism or resentment towards the migrants for taking employment opportunities away from the locals. This to a certain extent is still happening.
- Misunderstanding towards refugees'/migrants' culture, the traumas they witnessed in their war-stricken homeland. Consequently, they were unable to discuss their emotions. I think that there seems to be a slight change towards a

better understanding. Access to easily available news currently is one of the advantages that has contributed to a better understanding.



Figure 13: Life among the Gum Trees

This wall hanging depicts the assimilation of the newcomers to Australia, how it became integration and is now classed as multiculturalism. The gum trees and birds represent life in the bush, presenting a kaleidoscope effect of colour, shape and line. The trees symbolize growth and proliferation. It is generative and regenerative: an inexhaustible and phallic life symbol. The birds in flight symbolize freedom and release of the spirit.



## CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This creative MPhil study combining an exegesis and artworks representing textile wall hangings is the experiences of *Buitenkamper* children. The research sought to identify the impact on the Buitenkamper children of war, revolution and diaspora and why their stories had not been told until now. Many of the issues the participants in this study encountered and articulated were similar to the seven key themes that I recorded in earlier Dutch research of the wider context as I identified in the literature review. They are articulated on page 18 and throughout the thesis.

What is new, however, is the revealed long-term implications from trauma. It has been more than 70 years since the end of the harrowing events depicted in the stories of my participants. They cannot simply be put to rest without learning the lessons of history. Conflict and violence are present in many parts of the world today. Many people are being displaced because of political and social turbulences and emergencies. In 2017, 25.4 million refugees were fleeing wars and persecution across national borders and a further 40.0 million were forcefully internally displaced<sup>173</sup>. The experiences of the *Buitenkamper* children can inform not only international policies to prevent atrocities and protect vulnerable populations but also offer insights about the psychological burden such experiences bring to people of all ages.

The remainder of this chapter summarises the key themes identified in the interviews and the lessons that can be learnt from the experiences of the *Buitenkampers*. It concludes by outlining possible areas for future research.

### 5.1. KEY THEMES IDENTIFIED IN THE INTERVIEWS

Where this study differs from the literature reviewed is its emphasis on recollections of war, revolution and diaspora as they were experienced, remembered and articulated by people who were *Buitenkamper* children at the time. The themes that emerged relate specifically to them having involuntarily experienced situations relating to death and survival that no child should have to endure as noted by the UNESCO quote in the introduction to this thesis. These include:

- Underage concubinage in lieu of payment for a parent's medical bills;

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<sup>173</sup> UNHCR, 2017 FROM <https://www.unhcr.org/globaltrends2016/>.

- Losing one's childhood to the responsibilities of providing food and caring for a dying parent without support services;
- Witnessing the torture and killing of a Dutch resistance fighter by the Japanese;
- Witnessing the beheadings and other gruesome killings of Dutch by *Pemuda*;
- The loss of a sense of identity associated with the bewilderment and embarrassment produced by the lived experiences.
- The impact of assimilationist migration policies in the Netherlands and Australia, incited racism and discrimination in the host community;
- Feelings of 'otherness', of not belonging, of living in-between two worlds and not fitting in;
- Recurring nightmares, depression and other physiological reactions to past trauma that are not well understood by experts who have never heard this story.

The research is set up to find answers to the following problems related to:

- Memory and historical trauma
- Victimhood and genocide
- Memory and history
- Identity and the national narratives
- Colonial identities in postcolonial contexts.

My research included finding answers to these questions by interviewing nine willing participants from the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, determining what were the short- and long-term impacts on these *Buitenkamper* children of the events predating their settlement in Australia and what prevented them from telling their story until now. This is a two-pronged question and a short summary of the answer is given below:

- (1) The short-term impacts relate to the ability of survival, including finding food, shelter and being socially accepted; the long-term impacts, however, are deep psychological trauma which has not healed with the passing of time;
- (2) Being so far removed from most other children's everyday life experiences, there was no reference point for the *Buitenkampers*. Consequently, the children have had to suppress the triggered emotions and remain **silenced**.
- (3) This also raised issues related to their:

- Sense of homeland and loss
- What it means then and now to be *Indisch*.
- Experience of racism in post-war migration (in the Netherlands as well as Australia, and elsewhere).
- The interviewees' own reading of 'their' history.
- Contemporary physical and emotional connections retained to Indonesia and the Netherlands- and Australia.

In Australia, the *Buitenkamper* children's own memories of war further informed the interviewees' sense of "otherness", as the conversations in most Australian households did not include a discussion on internment camps in Asia. However, this 'otherness' was not experienced as something awful, rather as a matter of frustration, given the little knowledge and understanding about the Japanese occupation and internment camps in the Australian media and general community.<sup>174</sup>

Another factor that surfaced from the interviews shows, no matter how different their stories were or in which localities the cruelties were performed, the *Buitenkamper* children were all innocent bystanders caught up in a situation that was not of their making, yet they all were emotionally damaged. Many of this cohort, including myself, had to endure the death of a parent due to internment, and/or had one or two parents suffering the after-effects of war and displacement. This manifested in many ways, such as: depression and anxiety, overly strict discipline, lack of trust in people around them, fear of bureaucracy, and nervous breakdowns.<sup>175</sup>

The result of living with a traumatised parent was that children in effect became the 'keepers of the secrets' within the family. Children had to take on extra responsibilities due to this. The culture of secrets and silences seemed to have also contributed to the damage. As has been shown in this study, the interviewees were sometimes unwilling to participate due to the shame they felt about what had happened to them and their parents, and how this then, was perceived by others.

For the first generation, experiences of loss, dislocation and translocation can be both fraught and emancipatory given the prism of understanding. For the second and third generations, experiences of turbulence and loss may be distant enough, but losing the

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<sup>174</sup> Westerbeek-Veld, Loes, 2007; 'Dutch Indonesians in Australia; Second Generation Identity in the Diaspora' PhD Thesis, pp.154 -156.

native language and a sense of place can be as heartfelt down the tunnel of assimilation. In reflecting on my own cultural dislocation, I feel a sense of responsibility to remember – following Walter Benjamin (2016) - as a gesture to those, who experienced physical and emotional connections to Indonesia, the Netherlands and Australia.

During the interviews, an intrinsic factor such as hope and will to overcome, having a purpose or motivation to survive was identified as important for building strength and resilience. Personal qualities which became evident during the interviews, such as: insight, independence, commitment to family relationship, initiative, humour and their apparent versatility/adaptability and morality, are all indicative of resilience.

The oral interviews I conducted in respect to the research question presented similar experiences. The younger *Buitenkamper* children, including myself, were unaware of the traumas and upheaval surrounding them when WWII started, but over a period of time realized the drastic changes that were becoming part of their daily lives. However, because of the limitations of their recall, their stories present only a partial view of the entire spectrum of events. The older children, especially older males, were more aware of how, from the onset of the Japanese occupation, everyday life became a struggle to survive. These young boys tried to contribute financially, as noted above, by working at menial jobs, for long hours, for a pittance, or searching for food. However, all struggled to construct a sense of place, identity and belonging in a fluid, constantly changing landscape of countries and cultures. This experience did not abate until the *Buitenkamper* children settled in Australia long-term – and even then, they were being constantly plagued by the events of the past.

War is also about the tragedy and drama of the modern world, including grand themes of life, death and nationhood, alienation and despair. This I have tried to portray in my wall hangings. Some of the interviewees, who had come down from the Sunshine Coast for the opening of the exhibition at Coffs Harbour (Appendix One), had an instant response to these artworks, and seeing their stories reflected in the images was quite emotional for them. I hope that these wall hangings have given them some closure. The wall hanging about the opportunities of life under the gum trees was also a glimpse of hope for a future without violence, conflict and racial discrimination.

By way of conclusion, it is worth noting that art can provide us with a deeper socio-historical understanding and can also be a platform for portraying an accurate and enduring record of this unknown part of the Australian history.

## **5.2. LESSONS THAT CAN BE LEARNT**

Lessons that can be learnt from the research are the need for the host environment to be aware and have trained experts available to assist with the emotional and psychological rehabilitation of people who are traumatised by war violence. Discarding assimilationist ideals is long overdue as it is impossible to achieve this – integration is the more realistic philosophy that would enable newcomers to Australia to achieve ‘life among the gum trees’ more readily and also share their life stories with the locals.

The research shows *Buitenkamper* experiences were part of history that up to now has been largely overlooked, particularly in Australia. What is typical about it is that neither the Indonesians nor Dutch historians have given it the kind of weight it deserves. The extreme forms of violence against non-Indonesians have not been properly documented (besides the Dutch and other Europeans, the Chinese, the Japanese, Eurasians, and the Arab population in Java were just as much a target). There has been a tendency to downplay or ignore the excesses while largely committed to a good cause – Indonesian independence. For me this has been a complicated personal journey of realization, unusually mindful of the ways in which past memories and present considerations can be intermingled when we seek to understand a difficult past.

## **5.3. FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

There are still many questions raised to find out exactly what happened during the decolonization in Indonesia from 1945 to 1950. The director of NIOD Frank van Vree, who is in charge of the large Dutch Government grant directed at researching the decolonization of the NEI, stated: “It is important to recognize the complete history, even though in many aspects this can prove to be very painful.”<sup>176</sup> The MPhil study revealed the pain of the *Buitenkamper* children.

Many other areas deserve further interest from researchers. They include:

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<sup>176</sup> Kluivers, Sophie, ‘Eindelijk onderzoek naar dekolonisatie oorlog Indonesia- What gebeurde er nu echt?’, *Dutch Courier* newspaper, October 2017, p.5.

- The impact of the psychological trauma described in this thesis on second and third generation Dutch-Eurasians and the ethnic Dutch that underwent these experiences, who live in Australia.
- Ways of communicating to health professionals and educational facilities the issues that Dutch-Eurasian and ethnic Dutch from the NEI endured, as this knowledge can help to produce better treatment outcomes.
- More research on the 'stigma of difference' as this seriously disturbed the experiences of Dutch-Eurasians and continues to make resettlement experiences stressful for newly arrived refugees from non-European origins.
- Research on why Australian Unions came to boycott KPM ships (Dutch company from the NEI) from leaving Australia during the Indonesian revolution for Independence. This also meant much needed food did not get to the NEI that would have helped alleviate the famine.

This thesis adds to the academic literature and scholarship related to the *Buitenkampers*. However, this area of study deserves further investigation as its relevance transcends historical and national boundaries.

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## APPENDIX 1: THE EXHIBITION AT COFFS HARBOUR INCLUDING SOME PUBLIC RESPONSE

The wall hangings were on display at Coffs Harbour Regional Art Gallery: 11 May-7 July 2018. They were described thus:

The wall hangings featured in this exhibition are created images, exploring the changes brought about by war, revolution and diaspora and the effects on the lives of the *Buitenkampers* caught up in it. Each wall hanging is accompanied by an uncompromising description. The first two wall hangings captures the idyllic, post war way of life in the NEI, through to WWII. The next five wall hangings express the foreboding and the cruel reality and violence of the war. The *Bersiaptijd*, wall hangings are about the mortal fear *Buitenkampers* experienced during the most violent month of the Indonesian Revolution for Independence - considered even worse than the Japanese Occupation - plus the destruction and disintegration of the colonial period. The flames, blood and violent images portray the damaging and unnatural forces of war and its immediate aftermath. The intention of this exhibition is to reveal the intensity of the period as seen through the eyes of the *Buitenkampers*, depicting tragedy, period of violence and hope, then re-settlement in a new country. The outcome of public response to this exhibition, relating to this unknown part of Australian/Indonesian history, has been unexpectedly overwhelming (Figure 14).<sup>177</sup>

For centuries embroidery has played an important role in both secular and ecclesiastical European textiles, documenting different periods of artistic developments. Quilting also has a long tradition of recording personal histories and special events and is widely popular medium for preserving memories, for raising awareness of social issues and as commemoration for important events in contemporary history. This then let me to adopt this medium for this body of works.

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<sup>177</sup> Coffs Harbour Gallery message book and the Art Space in Melbourne both recording visitors comments related to the exhibition, May 2018.

## PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE EXHIBITION AT COFFS HARBOUR GALLERY

The response from the public showed, overwhelmingly, that Australians were unaware of the experiences of this cohort of migrants whose stories should also be enshrined in Australia's national migration narrative.

I conducted several public speeches in the exhibition space, including to 120 schoolchildren, who were very interested in the stories and the artworks.

The artworks attracted the following publicity at Coffs Harbour a regional town:

- NBN Channel 9 Television during Refugee week,
- Dutch Courier Newspaper June/July 2018,
- Mid-North Coast Community *Bell Bottom Magazine* June 2018.
- See also message book Figure 14 and the letter from Ron Whitton further down.

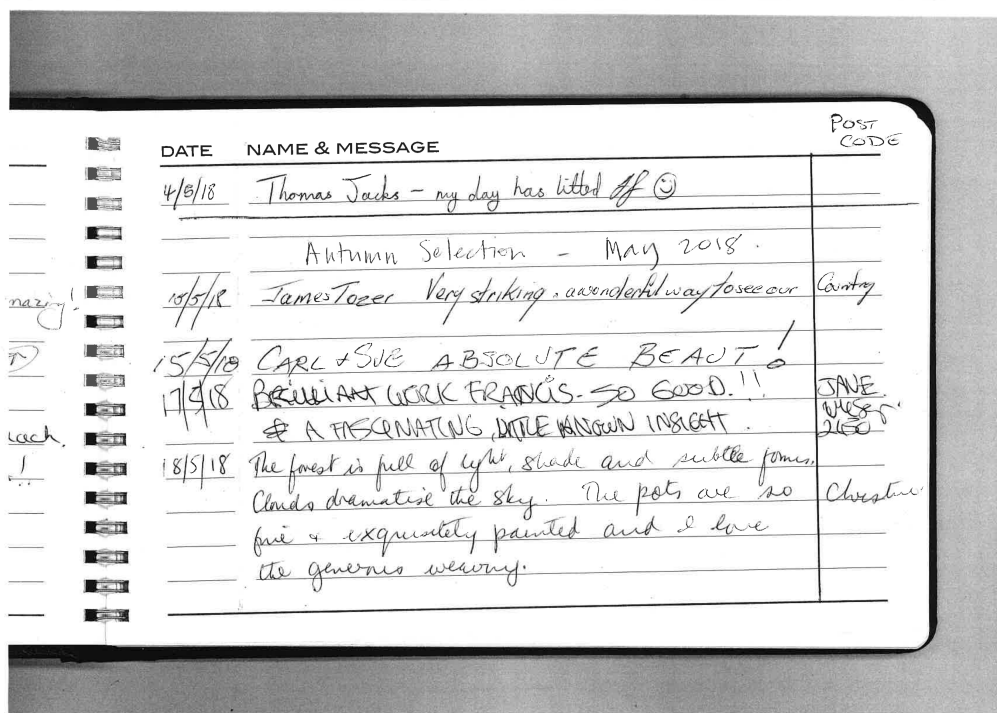


Figure 14, Coff's Harbour Gallery's message book.

The following letter, was sent to me by a visitor to the exhibition in Coffs Harbour.

Ron Witton

[rwitton44@gmail.com](mailto:rwitton44@gmail.com)

In the 1960's I completed BA and MA honours degrees in Indonesian and Malayan Studies from the University of Sydney and then went on to gain a doctoral degree from Cornell University focusing on Indonesia. Since then I have taught Indonesian social sciences and have also worked as an Indonesian interpreter and translator. I have

continued visiting Indonesia since my first visit in 1962 and taught for a while in post graduate social sciences at Gajah Mada University in Yogyakarta. With that background, I thought I had fairly good grounding in Indonesian history and society.

However, this confidence was profoundly shaken when, by chance, I was in the NSW country town of Coffs Harbour and happened to visit the town's art gallery. There I was confronted by an exhibition entitled "*Landscape of the Soul: A Mixed Media Exhibition Illustrating the Experience of European Dutch and Eurasian People in Indonesia During the Japanese Occupation, the Revolution and After*".

What I learnt was that soon after Indonesian independence was declared on 17 August 1945, there occurred the most horrific massacres of men, women and children who were of mixed Dutch and Indonesian descent, a profoundly important historical event but one that has hardly entered academic, let alone popular, historical consciousness. Since then, I have begun reading about what happened in that period. I have come to realise that the main reason I was unaware of those events is that it is only in the in the last ten years that academic scholarship has begun to examine those events and their significance. At the end of this article, I have listed some of the materials that have helped me begin to understand what moved Frances Larder to create the wall hangings that artistically re-create this forgotten period of Indonesian history.

In my readings about this period I was soon introduced to two terms: *Binnenkampers* and *Buitenkampers*. *Binnenkampers* (i.e.in-campers) refers to the over 100,000 Dutch nationals who were held from 1942 to 1945 in Japanese internment camps while *Buitenkampers* (i.e. out of-campers) refers to the over 250,000 Dutch nationals who remained outside the camps for the duration of the war. The majority of this latter group were those of mixed Indonesian and European descent ("Eurasians"). It should also be remembered that among the Eurasians there was a comparatively small number who were of mixed Chinese-European descent.

Dutch colonial law provided for the Dutch citizenship of the father to be passed on to children of mixed Eurasian parenthood, and so the majority of Eurasians were considered to be Dutch nationals. Before the war, while there was very little racial strife, the "Indos", the somewhat derogatory term used to refer to Eurasians, had a sharply demarcated social position within the colonial society of the Dutch East Indies. Having often had more schooling than native Indonesians and being fluent in Dutch, they generally had relatively good employment prospects compared to most Indonesians. However, they were generally restricted to inferior or limited positions such as clerks,



petty officials and NCOs. Nevertheless, they generally felt themselves to be part of Dutch society, albeit colonial society, and had a high level of loyalty to the Netherlands.

Ironically, some Eurasians had in fact been party to a very early nationalist attempt in 1911 to form a political party to promote an independent country free from Holland. However, the Dutch government refused to recognise the party and exiled its leaders. As Indonesian nationalism grew in the 1920s and 1930s, Eurasians increasingly saw their fortunes linked to the colonial order.

This then is the background to the events immediately following the declaration of Indonesian independence when there occurred what has been described as a “brief genocide”. The Japanese had trained many young Indonesians in martial arts and had instilled in them the idea that the “enemy” were the Americans, the English and the Dutch. With the surrender of the Japanese and the immediate declaration of Indonesia’s independence by Sukarno and Hatta, the prospect of the re-establishment of Dutch rule resulted in an intense level of paranoia of the Dutch and anyone who supported the Dutch, whether that was the British troops who landed and were ordered to restore Dutch rule or local Dutch nationals who were often characterised as spies and supporters of NICA, the Netherlands Indies Civil Administration.

Ironically the Dutch who were in internment camps were to a certain extent protected from such attacks, particularly as they could return to such camps which provided them with a level of protection. However, many, many thousands of Eurasians had no protection at all and were brutally massacred by rampaging Indonesians who saw this as a way of expressing their support for Independence. It is significant that as a student of Indonesian history I was taught about Dutch soldiers such as Raymond “Turk” Westerling who massacred many thousands of Indonesian civilians in support of Dutch counter-insurgency efforts against the Indonesian nationalist movement. However, we were never taught the names of Indonesians, such as Sabarudin, who helped coordinate and carry out the massacre of Eurasian men, women and children. While there has been some attention paid to the atrocities carried out in such locations as the Simpang Club in Surabaya, there are many sites of massacres that have been lost to the historical record. The parallel with the little known locations of many of the 1965 massacres that occurred throughout Indonesia need hardly be stressed.

It is clear that only in the last 10 years has there begun to be a body of scholarship examining this period of Indonesian history and Frances Larder’s exhibition helps one to begin to comprehend the historical trajectory of events before, during and after the Japanese occupation. Of particular concern has been the effect that those horrific

events had on the children of Eurasians in that period, and indeed Frances Larder was a child during that period. Such children are now quite elderly but remain the only eyewitnesses. Their vivid recollections of that terrifying period and the effect it had on their lives is what makes the Dutch documentary (with English subtitles) *Buitenkampers*, so heartbreakingly moving.

Frances Larder's exhibition, through her wonderful wall hangings, supplemented by historical mixed media materials, records Eurasian colonial life, the privations of the Japanese occupation, the killings following the Japanese surrender, the exodus of some 100,000 Eurasians to Indonesia after independence, their alienation and isolation in Holland, and the subsequent migration of some of them to Australia.

I am pleased that the Sydney's Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre is the second gallery to host her exhibition. This is an exhibition that deserves to travel from gallery to gallery across Australia to help further Australia's understanding of both the diverse heritages that migrants have brought here and the particular experience of Australia's Indo-Eurasian citizens.

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- (2) *Landscape of the Soul: The Silent Past of the Buitenkampers and their Lost Identity*, produced by Frances Larder

## **APPENDIX 2 – AUSTRALIAN NEWSPAPERS**

These newspapers are online are all on TROVE, the National Library of Australia (NLA) website under digitised newspapers.

### **MORNING BULLETIN (ROCKHAMPTON, QLD.) MONDAY 22 OCTOBER 1945, PAGE 8.**

#### **(1) Indonesians in Batavia**

Batavia, October 20. Shooting again broke out in Batavia tonight, when a clash occurred between British and Indian troops and Indonesians. Thirteen Indonesians were killed and two Indians wounded. Dr Soekarno announced that 11 Dutch RAPWI Officers had been killed by an angry mob at Patget, between Batavia and Bandoeng, but this is not confirmed by any British source. Dr Soekarno said the officers had sought and been refused permission to go to Bandoeng. Indo-Indonesian officials warned them that it was not safe to attempt to go but they set off without an Indonesian pass and attempted to take a side road. The BKR arrested them at Patget and took them to prison. A frenzied crowd then attacked the prison and, according to Dr Soekarno, although the police tried to restrain them killed all the officers.

The Associated Press correspondent states that two companies of Gurkhas have restored the situation in Semarang, 75 miles east of Batavia, to normal, Gurkha losses were two killed and seven wounded. Three Japanese were killed; the Indonesian casualties are not known. A company of Gurkhas went ashore at 8.40 am and advanced on the town of Kebonlaup to occupy Government buildings, from which firing opened and continued till noon. The Indonesian 'Governor' then appeared, bearing a white flag. He said he had come from the Pavilion Hotel, where all RAPWI and Red Cross officials were safe including two war -correspondents- Robert Osbiston (Australian) and Ralph Coniston (American), who previously had been reported killed. The 'Governor' said the Japanese had done the shooting and that the Indonesians had been warned not to open fire but British Army Officers were sceptical of this. By 8 pm it was quiet. The situation in Surabaya is believed to be grimmer than at Semarang. Gurkha troops are racing inland to Ambarawa, where 10,000 women and children internees are reported in camps endangered by Nationalists.

#### **Black-Hole Conditions**

It was discovered today that the BKR (Indonesian Peace Corps) had been holding in Black-hole-of-Calcutta conditions at Buitenzorg nearly 1100 prisoners, mainly Dutch Nationals. Only 120 are criminals, the remainder are innocent 'ex-internees', who were rounded up on October 11 on the pretext of being registered. They had been held since then in 'protective custody'. Seven hundred and seventy one were crammed into a space suitable for 100. Another 78 were placed in a one-man cell. There were practically no washing facilities and the most primitive sanitation. The men were in low spirits, drawn and emaciated, and had been without clothes except those they were

wearing. This was announced by a British staff officer, who visited *Buitenzorg* 45 miles south of Batavia.

The officer learnt when he arrived at the prison that the party, which included 50 Dutchmen and the remainder Eurasians and Christian Indonesians, had been held. Officer ordered all guards, except two outside the prison to be withdrawn and to be replaced by Gurkas. He ordered evacuation, beginning with the sick, to the Ghurkha barracks.

The officer discovered that eight Dutchmen were spirited off last night, whereupon he visited the local chairman of the BKR and warned the chairman that such action would divorce Indonesia from all public sympathy. The officer said that the BKR was mainly composed of immature youths wearing bright green uniforms and carrying swords as big as themselves. "They are like boy scouts, but such scouts are Dangerous," he added.

## **(2) Fighting flares up again in Batavia; Slaughter of the Eurasians by Indonesians.**

While Dr Soebardjo last night sent a message to the U.S. Secretary of State (Mr Byrnes) declaring that his government had the enthusiastic support of the entire population throughout Indonesia and that the whole civil administration was in Indonesian hands the President of the "Republic" (Dr. Soekarno) sent a radiogram to President Truman appealing the American Government not to quell the Independent movement.

The radiogram alleged that the Dutch had recruited an army from Dutch war prisoners and Eurasians, wearing American uniforms and equipped with American army trucks to terrorise the population by shooting at innocent passer-by kidnapping and maltreating and even killing captives, also robbery.

Unconfirmed reports reaching British headquarters state that the mass arrest have been made by Indonesian special police, "to provide protective custody", but it is feared they will be used as hostages when the British attempt to restore order. The British have ordered the chairman of the Nationalist Movement at Buitenzorg the former seat of the Dutch Governor-General, to produce eight Dutchmen missing from the goal in which 771 male Dutch and Eurasians were found in appalling conditions.

## **(3) Indonesian Nationalists warned Death Penalty for Violence.**

Indonesians, at Pekalongang and other interior towns imprisoned all Eurasians and killed them and fatherland troops arrived. It is reported that an angry mob set upon and killed 11 Dutch RAPWI officers at Patget, in the mountains between Batavia and Bandoeng. An official statement, issued by the South- East Asia Command, declared that the Allied Commander in the NEI (Lieut- General Christison) is not authorized to interfere in the political situation. His task is limited to disarming the Japanese and the release of war 'prisoners and internees'. In no circumstances could he be made

responsible for maintaining public order unless the co-operation of the Indonesians was assured.

Soekarno, in a broadcast over the British-controlled Batavia radio, said that the Surabaya tragedy was caused by the British failure to understand the Indonesians. The Indonesians feared the British are clearing the way for the return of the Dutch. He suggested as a solution to the British Command they should give assurance that the Dutch force would not be returned to Indonesia under British protection. He added that the Indonesian Republic was ready to help the British to disarm and remove the Japanese troops and evacuate the prisoners and internees.

**THE DAILY NEWS (PERTH, WA:1882 - 1950) THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER 1945  
PAGE 1**

BATAVIA, Thurs — Extremists of Indonesian Nationalist youth have got completely out of hand in many areas in Java, says the Associated Press man. Taking advantage of the lack of sufficient European forces, they are killing and looting in frenzied zeal to show their hatred for Europeans. At Depok, 15 Netherlands Christian Indonesians were killed and 1050 women were herded into two houses and threatened with torture and death when extremists, ran amok. The four-day terror ended when newspaper' correspondents arrived with an escort of British and Indian troops to investigate rumours of looting. They rescued the women, who were being menaced by a mob of fanatics. The village was a mass of horrible wreckage. In one house seven men and women had been forced to line up facing the wall while two fanatics, armed with 'swords went down 'the line beheading them. One of the women escaped death only because she collapsed, fainting, just as the sword whistled past her neck. She came to several hours later and found herself bathed in the blood of her friends. Bandoeng Landing ' The Thirty-seventh Infantry Brigade, under Brigadier MacDonald, have begun landing at Bandoeng, which the Japanese took over from the Indonesians a few days ago. A British spokesman said that the Japanese would be relieved of their posts, and by tonight British and Indian troops would have taken over. British Commander Lieutenant General Christenson said that he would hold Nationalist leader Dr Soekarno responsible for violent disturbances such as those reported today. Soekarno, however, refuses to take the responsibility. In fact, according to a Nationalist spokesman, he is scouring the country in an attempt to persuade the people to win freedom by peaceful means.

The spokesman added that Soekarno would return to Batavia today. The Dutch meanwhile are continuing to land troops, arms, and relief supplies. Present Dutch forces in Java are unofficially estimated at 5000.

**THE MERCURY (HOBART, TASMANIA: 1860–1954, FRIDAY 19 OCTOBER 1945,  
PAGE 2,  
Ian Morrison, *TIMES, IN BATAVIA.***

With so many Dutch convinced that a native uprising is imminent and an equal number of British officers convinced that "the situation is well "in hand, old 'boy," a correspondent becomes highly sceptical of anything he does not see personally, Morrison says.

After referring to the recent disorders in Central Java, Morrison says the strongest protest against interference with relief "work has been lodged with Vice President Hatta, who announced that four members of the Cabinet had volunteered to go to Central Java to try to control the situation. Obviously the Nationalist leaders cannot control the wild extremists, who have taken the law into their own hands, and they regretfully admit they are unable even to establish communications let alone get their orders obeyed. The newly-constituted National Committee has taken over many functions previously vested in President Soekarno, says Morrison. Whether this represents a victory for the extremists will soon be seen. Events certainly suggest that Dr Soekarno is unable to curb the extremists, whose pressure is rapidly forcing the moderates in the Cabinet into a position where they must choose between throwing in their lot with the extremists or compromising with the Dutch.

**THE DAILY NEWS (PERTH, WA: 1882 - 1950)\_THURSDAY 18 OCTOBER 1945  
PAGE 1**

BATAVIA, Thurs — Extremists of Indonesian Nationalist youth have got completely out of hand in many areas in Java, says the Associated Press man. Taking advantage of the lack of sufficient European forces, they are killing and looting in frenzied zeal to show their hatred for Europeans. At Depok, 15 Netherlands Christian Indonesians were killed and 1050 women were herded into two houses and threatened with torture and death when extremists, ran amok. The four-day terror ended when newspaper' correspondents arrived with an escort of British and Indian troops to investigate rumours of looting. They rescued the women, who were being menaced by a mob of fanatics. The village was a mass of horrible wreckage. In one house seven men and women had been forced to line up facing the wall while two fanatics, armed with 'swords went down 'the line beheading them. One of the women escaped death only because she collapsed, fainting, just as the sword whistled past her neck. She came to several hours later and found herself bathed in the blood of her friends. Bandoeng Landing ' The Thirty-seventh Infantry Brigade, under Brigadier MacDonald, have begun landing at Bandoeng, which the Japanese took over from the Indonesians a few days ago. A British spokesman said that the Japanese would be relieved of their posts, and by tonight British and Indian troops would have taken over. British Commander Lieutenant General Christenson said that he would hold Nationalist leader Dr Soekarno responsible for violent disturbances such as those reported today. Soekarno, however, refuses to take the responsibility. In fact, according to a Nationalist spokesman, he is scouring the country in an attempt to persuade the people to win freedom by peaceful means.

The spokesman added that Soekarno would return to Batavia today. The Dutch meanwhile are continuing to land troops, arms, and relief supplies. Present Dutch forces in Java are unofficially estimated at 5000.

## APPENDIX 3: INVITATIONS AND INFORMATION TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS

### The silent Past of the 'Buitenkampers' and their lost Identity

A Research Project conducted  
Curtin  
Through Curtin University WA  
Committee

committee is

academic,

It's main role  
MRS. FRANCES LARDER.  
**54 FOREST DRIVE.**  
REPTON, NSW 2454.  
PHONE: (02) 6655 4905.  
EMAIL: [franceslarder@yahoo.com.au](mailto:franceslarder@yahoo.com.au)

and

Box,

This study has been approved by the  
University human Research Ethics

(Approval No HR 42/2011). The

comprised of members of the public,

lawyers, doctors and pastoral carers.

is to protect participants. If needed,  
verification of approval can be obtained  
either by writing to the **Curtin University  
Human Research Ethics**

**Committee, c/- Office of Research**

**Development, Curtin University, P.O.**

**U 1987, Perth, 6845 or by telephoning  
(08) 9266 2284, or by emailing**

[hrec@curtin.edu.au](mailto:hrec@curtin.edu.au)

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## Agreement To Participate.

### AGREEMENT BETWEEN:

Frances Larder  
Researcher)

(The

AND  
Participant)

(The

The Researcher and the Participant having agreed to collaborate in a research project to investigate the exile of the Indonesian- born Dutch from the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesian) after WWII and resettlement in Australia, to be conducted through Curtin University.

IT IS HEREBY AGREED THAT:

1. Participation is voluntary. No inducements to participate have been or will be offered and no payments will be made to the Participant.
2. The participant will be interviewed by the researcher, according to a mutually agreed schedule, and he or she will complete a questionnaire to provide some information. All information will be identified.
3. The Participant's privacy will be protected at all times.
4. Contact between the Researcher and the Participant is confidential.
5. The use of information is subject to the written consent of the Participant.
6. All reasonable steps will be taken to minimise any risk of harm to the Participant or any misuse of supplied information. A counselling service will be available, if needed.
7. The Agreement can be terminated - by either party - at any time.

SIGNED:

SIGNED:



Date: 09/04/15

**Why did the exile of the Indonesian born Dutch from the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia) after World War II (WWII) and re-settlement in Australia become such an important question of identity and belonging?**

## **PARTICIPANTS INFORMATION STATEMENT**

**Research conducted by Frances Henriette Emelia Larder, a research student in Master of Philosophy – Social Science ( CUSP) Curtin University.**

### **Introduction:**

This is an invitation for you to take part in the research project: “ The Silent Past of the “Buitenkampers” and their lost Identity.

This Participant Information Sheet/ Consent Form tells you about the research project. It explains the processes involved with taking part. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the research.

### **What is the purpose of this research?**

The research project is aiming to explore how the lives of normal people who lived in Indonesia, went through the Japanese war, then “repatriated” to the Netherlands (where many had never been before) and then later migrated to Australia.

The focus is how the children coped with all this turmoil and to what extent the occupation played a role in their lives at present? How did memory and impressions from the three countries had such an emotional impact on these children.

### **Why have I been invited to participate in this research?**

You have been invited to participate because I am interested in exploring the feelings and background experiences of the children of the “Buitenkampers”.

### **Description of study procedures and risks.**

If you decide to participate, you will need to return this completed form to Masters candidate Frances Larder at frances.larder @ student.curtin.edu.au or franceslarder@yahoo.com.au , or hand it to me before completion of the interview. I will then invite you to participate by being available for interview on the “Buitenkamp children”. Some of these experiences will need another invitation for a second interview.

Each participant will be required participate for one hour sessions to be followed up with additional one hour sessions when necessary to complete their interview.

There is a small possibility that you may find some of the questions distressing. If this happens, I will stop the interview at any time. Should you wish to discuss any anticipated or experienced distress Frances Larder will be available before and after the in depth interview. We do not anticipate any other risks from your participation. The depth to which the interview proceeds will be dependant on how you feel.

### **What are the alternatives to participation?**

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you do not wish to take part, you don't have to. Your decision not to participate will not affect your future relations with Curtin University or myself.

### **Confidentiality and disclosure of information.**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study, and that can be identified with you, will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission, except as required by law. If you give us your permission by signing this document, we plan to present the findings at conferences and be available to other research students. In any publication, information will be provided in such a way that you cannot be identified.

### **Data Storage.**

Data collected will be audio interviews and will be stored on a Curtin computer including interviews transcription and analysis. The interviews will be stored electronically and will be accessible only by myself and my supervisory committee.

All the data collected for the purpose of this research will be stored at Curtin University for a period of seven years as per section 3.6 of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (Australian Government, National Health and in Western Australia Medical Research et al. 2007).

### **Recompense to Participate.**

There are no costs associated with participating in this research project, nor will you receive payment.

### **Complaints.**

Complaints may be directed to the Human Research Ethics Committee Curtin University, Building 100, level 1 West, Bentley, Perth, West Australia. Any complaint you may make will be investigated promptly and you will be informed of the outcome.

### **Your consent.**

Your decision whether or not to participate will not prejudice your future relations with the Curtin University or the Masters candidate Frances Larder. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue your participation at any time without prejudice. You can do this by letting Masters candidate Frances Larder know, and/ or by you completing the Revocation of Consent form on the last page of this document. You can choose whether the data collected up to this point of your withdrawal is used or not. If you withdraw after the in depth has been conducted, your comments will be diluted from the transcription.

If you have any additional questions please free to contact Masters candidate Frances Larder on (02) 6655 4905, she will be happy to answer them.

You will be given a copy of the form below to keep.

**(Please see next page)**

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS ONE PAGE**

**You are making a decision whether or not to participate. Your signature indicates that, having read the information provided above, you have decided to participate.**

I have read the Participant Information Sheet or someone has read it to me in a language that I understand.

I understand the purposes, procedures and risks of the research described in the project.

I have had an opportunity to ask questions and I am satisfied with the answers I have received.

I freely agree to participate in this research project as described and understand that I am free to withdraw at any time during the project without affecting my future care.

I understand that I will be given a signed copy of this document to keep.

· Participant name: .....

.....

.....  
Signature of Participant

.....  
Signature of Witness

.....

.....  
(Please PRINT name of participant

.....  
(Please PRINT name of witness)

.....

.....  
Date

.....  
Nature of Witness (e.g. relative)

**PLEASE KEEP THIS PAGE**

**RETURN ONLY IF YOU DECIDE TO WITHDRAW**

I hereby wish to **WITHDRAW** my consent to participate in the research proposal described above and understand that such withdrawal **WILL NOT** jeopardise any treatment, or relationship, with Curtin University or PhD Candidate Diana Bogueva.

**PLEASE TICK ONE BOX:**

· I do **NOT** want you to use any data that you have collected already.

· I am happy for you to use any data that you have collected already.

.....  
.....  
Signature Date

.....  
Please PRINT Name

***The section for Revocation of consent by the participant should be forwarded to MPhil candidate Frances Larder, at franceslarder@gmail.com.***

#### **APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEWEE QUESTIONS**

1. Tell me about your background, where were you born and when.
2. What was your family situation?
3. What can you remember about the Japanese invasion in Indonesia, and how did that affect you and your family?
4. What was it like living outside the camps and how did your family cope under those conditions?
5. How did the situation change after liberation was declared and during the time of Indonesia's fight for Independence?
6. When and why did your family decide to leave Indonesia?
7. In what way did your life change after you and your family arrived in Australia?

## APPENDIX 5: BACKGROUND OF THE INTERVIEWEES

Nine people were interviewed for this project. A brief background for each of them is presented below.

1. **Alfred Amrein** – born 9 May 1937 in Bandung, Java. After leaving Indonesia, he studied in the Netherland, married, arrived in Darwin, avoiding emigration and was offered a job to work as a cameraman for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC); covered the footage for the Chamberlain case<sup>178</sup>.
2. **Benny Bernadine** – born 16 June 1925 in East Java. After leaving Indonesia, settled in the Netherlands, completed her education and married before arriving in Australia with a husband.
3. **Robert van den Byl** – born 3 October 1937 in Jakarta. After leaving Indonesia, completed his studies in the Netherlands, obtained a degree in electrical engineering, married; arrived in Australia in 1969 when he was transferred by the Dutch company for which he was working.
4. **Juliana Deventer** – born in 1927 in Semarang. After leaving Indonesia, settled in the Netherlands, completed her education and married before arriving in Australia with a husband.
5. **Andreas Flack** – born 1 March 1929 in Sumatra. After leaving Indonesia, completed his studies in the Netherlands and obtained a degree in Agriculture. He returned back to Indonesia until he was forced to leave, returning to the Netherlands for 1½ years, then moved to Ecuador for 3 years. When offered a job in Surinam to start a banana industry, he moved there for 7 years, before settling in Australia.
6. **Meta Flack** – born 1 April 1928 in Soekaboemi. After leaving Indonesia, settled in the Netherlands, completed her education and married before arriving in Australia with a husband.
7. **Kindry Jaeger** – born 2 June 1929 in Bandung. After leaving Indonesia, settled in the Netherlands, completed her education and married before arriving in Australia with a husband.
8. **André Marks** – born 27 February 1937 in Temangung. He was unable to continue his studies after primary school level. After moving to New Guinea, he took on odd jobs before arriving in Australia. On his arrival in Sydney he was offered a job to work in the Sydney abattoirs.
9. **Gerard Meyser** – born 4 June 1929 in Bandung. After leaving Indonesia, he completed his education in the Netherlands, found a job and married before settling in Australia.

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<sup>178</sup> The Chamberlain case refers to the disappearance of a two-month old Australian baby girl in 1980 taken by a dingo.