

The First Modern Diaspora Community  
In the Netherlands:  
Lessons from the Moluccan Experience

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## Preface

Throughout the paper, I have used the Netherlands and Holland interchangeably. This is somewhat historically inaccurate, as Holland only refers to two provinces, North Holland and South Holland (Noord and Zuid). I have left many terms and phrases in Dutch, using modern spelling. Phrases in Malay, the language of the Moluccans, are mostly spelled using modern Indonesian Malay, which is not always the same as the dialect used in the Moluccan community here in the Netherlands. The exceptions to this are Moluccan names and Dutch Moluccan institutions. Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, I use “Ambonese” to refer to some of the Dutch citizens. This refers to the island of Ambon, where most of the refugees to the Netherlands came from and was the preferred term for the immigrant group during the 1950s and 1960s. The Dutch government officially switched from using “Ambonese” in the late 1960s, opting for the more inclusive Moluccan moniker. It is important to note that while all Ambonese are Moluccan, not all Moluccans are Ambonese.

I want to thank the many people who helped me along the way in writing and researching this paper. A great debt of gratitude is owed to my advisor, Professor Karel Steenbrink, for patiently working with me and sharing with me a great deal of knowledge. I would like to thank Omar Nahas, my academic director, for always giving me perspective about this paper and reminding me to stay calm, composed and focused. I would like to thank the *Maluku* Museum in Utrecht and specifically its director, Wim Manuhutu, for graciously opening the doors of the institution to my research and allowing me to poke around in all the corners of this beautiful and important museum. Special thanks also go to Professor Hans van Amersfoort and Joss Wibisono for taking the time to meet with me and for adding many different angles to my research. I also want to thank the eight fellow students on this SIT trip. They kept me motivated and became important friends to me. Because of each and every one of them, this semester has been unforgettable and an incredibly important chapter of my life.

Lastly, I want to thank and dedicate this paper to my grandfather, my Opar, Reinout van Wagtendonk. It is not easy to share ones life story or open up old chapters that are emotional and complicated. I am thrilled that I was able to explore his story with familial and academic context built around it and I have become more aware about myself and my family through work with my grandfather.

**Introduction: Studying the Past to Learn for the Future**

The Netherlands has undergone a stark transformation since the Second World War. Left in physical, economic and cultural ruin after the devastating conflict, the Netherlands has been rebuilt and rejuvenated, emerging as an economically strong and nationally vibrant western European country and serving as a cornerstone nation for the construction of the European Union in this second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Intertwined with this phoenix-like resurrection of the Netherlands is the story of immigration in Europe. The Continental Netherlands was an ethnically homogenous society before the war. While there were small pockets of non-indigenous people living in the Netherlands along with religious minorities, including a Jewish population that was decimated during the war, there was an almost complete lack of non-western cultural diversity in the Netherlands. However, through a series of world events and economic needs, this has rapidly changed. Today, it is estimated that almost twenty percent of Dutch citizens have a foreign background and that, out of the over three million people classified this way, more than one and a half million have a “non-western” background.<sup>1</sup> The societal fabric of the Netherlands has been rewoven during its rapid transformation into a multicultural, diverse country. The newspapers are filled with articles and statistics about the increasing population of immigrants. Bruising political battles are being waged over the influx of different cultures, different religions and foreign languages. The country often seems unable or ill equipped to solve the problems and conflicts that have risen out of the hastily created Dutch melting pot, a sudden diversity that has caught many indigenous Dutch by surprise. Holland is a small, densely populated country and tensions are magnified here. It is this incredible speed at which cultures have collided and rubbed against each other in Holland that has caused many of the problems that show up in today’s newspapers.

In order to slow down the discussion, avoid some of the hysteria emerging from many different sides, and to delve into the complexity and nuances of the immigration issues, I believe it is essential to explore some recent history of the Netherlands and focus on one of

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics from *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* report – March 8, 2008  
See Appendix 1.0 for specific numbers and statistical background

its first immigrant groups. The non-western migrants who came from Indonesia at the end of World War II, specifically the Moluccans, went through many of the problems, struggles, misconceptions and acts of intolerance that are occurring today with immigrants mainly from Turkey and Morocco. These former subjects of the Dutch Indonesian colony have in many ways managed to become accepted in Dutch society, despite their cultural and ethnic differences. The Dutch and all students of immigration issues can learn from the history of this group of people and can, in studying the past, solve problems more effectively in the future. The study of immigration history in the Netherlands and in the other former colonial powers is “Janus-faced”, according to French Islamist scholar Jacques Berque.<sup>2</sup> This image of the two-faced Roman god, always looking backwards and forwards alludes to the importance of history in shaping the future. The most important task is to see “the shadows thrown by the past on the present and future” and escape from these shadows.<sup>3</sup> It is imperative that there be a concerted effort to apply lessons learned from the Moluccan Diaspora experience in the Netherlands in order to move forward and proactively solve contemporary immigration issues.

The Moluccan experience is quite distant from that of the Moroccans and Turks who came to the Netherlands beginning in the 1970s. The Moluccans were an essentially finite group, drawn from the ranks of the Dutch colonial army and, along with their family, forced by political circumstances to move to the Netherlands. These 12,578 Moluccans arrived in 1951, hoping to return to an independent homeland in the Moluccas, but destined to settle and eventually build families in their new home.<sup>4</sup> They were political exiles, in a sense, longing and, in many instances, fighting for their homeland in what is now Indonesia. Therefore, many of the problems of integration and cultural tension between the Moluccans and their indigenous Dutch neighbors were partly due to external political strife and not, as is often the case today, solely due to internal cultural differences. After all, many of the first generation Moluccans were fluent or at least somewhat learned in Dutch upon their arrival, having picked it up in the army. Most had received at least a basic Dutch colonial education and many felt socially connected to Dutch colonial culture. The second wave of migrants to

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<sup>2</sup> Hourani, Albert. *Islam in European Thought*. Cambridge, Cambridge UP, 1992. 130

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> *Documentatiemap Molukken*. 1980. pg. 48,49

See Appendix 1.1 for more detail on the Moluccan population in the Netherlands

the Netherlands, consisting of guest workers (in Dutch, *gastarbeiders*) mostly from Turkey and Morocco, began arriving in the 1970s and were mostly in search of a better life. They were recruited by Dutch companies and by the Dutch government to fill the employment void that was created during a time of Dutch economic growth and so many came from rural areas with little or no formal education and certainly no cultural ties with the Netherlands or even rudimentary Dutch language skills. This group has also led to the first large Islamic population in the Netherlands. Though a very small segment of the Moluccan population in the Netherlands is Muslim, the guest workers and their descendants constitute a much larger group in the Islamic faith. Therefore, religion has also taken a central role, certainly since the early 1990s, in the discussion about modern day immigrants in the Netherlands. Islam and, unfortunately alongside it, the idea of radicalism, is part of the constant debate about immigration law. The majority of Moluccans came with a hybridized Christian religion, which fit more easily into the religious tapestry of the Netherlands. Thus, because of all these differences, it is impossible to directly equate the Moluccan experience with that which is embroiling the Netherlands today.

In the study of history, however, differences are often not the most important tools of study. In learning from the past, I have found that the similarities are more important. Interestingly, there are quite a few striking parallels between the evolution of the Moluccan community in the Netherlands and the current search for a balance between the many cultures living in the Netherlands and this has yet to be fully explored in contemporary debates. The parallels can be especially seen in the physical and mental isolation of the Moluccan community, the colonial mindset that has tinged Dutch society's relationship with the newcomers, and the radicalization and subsequent violent actions of the second generation in the Netherlands. It is through these similarities, weaving its way through the complex history of colonialism, Indonesian independence and subsequent Moluccan immigration, repatriation of Eurasians in the Netherlands and the deep struggle of the Moluccan community to find a home and establish roots, that one can learn. By following this timeline under the surface, learning from the nuances of multiculturalism and struggling with the complexity of cultural coexistence, one can begin to affect real change upon the problems of today and the future.

### **Isolation: From Japanese POW camps to Dutch housing camps**

There must have been a great swell of ambivalent feelings for the Moluccan refugees as the *Kota Inten* slowly steamed into the Rotterdam port on March 21, 1951.<sup>5</sup> Photos show young Dutch soldiers hurriedly guiding the new arrivals off the ship, some carrying Moluccan children under the careful eye of their mother and followed by their fathers, many still in their army uniform. It had been almost a month since the rickety old boat, originally built in 1927 and frequently used during Dutch colonial times as a transport for Muslim Indonesians to travel to Mecca for the hajj, left the port of Surabaya, an important coastal city on the island of Java where the Moluccan soldiers had been stationed prior to the establishment of the newly independent Indonesian republic on August 17, 1950.<sup>6</sup> Finally, this first small contingent of Moluccan soldiers and their families could see land again and did not have to worry if the rust-covered, antiquated transport ship would survive the voyage almost all the way around the world. However, the landscape that welcomed them was unlike anything they had ever seen. Their first view of Holland, appearing over the bow of the ship, was the wasteland of post-World War Two Rotterdam. Most of the city had been flattened during the war and outside this port, the country's infrastructure had been devastated, much of the countryside flooded by Allied bombs or Nazi sabotage. The Netherlands lacked the economic resources to financially aid its own citizens, much less the newly arriving colonial subjects. It was, for most, not a joyful arrival. The Moluccans had not wanted to leave their homeland, nor had they desired to watch the Moluccan islands become part of the Indonesian republic, but after Sukarno, the new leader of Indonesia had successfully and, in the eyes of the mainly Christian soldiers, violently quashed the rebellion in these islands, the Dutch government had no choice but to bring home its soldiers. For the next year, the Moluccan remnants of the Dutch colonial army, comprised of a diverse group of soldiers from various islands and backgrounds, would make the long and arduous journey from the archipelago formerly known as the Dutch East Indies to the Netherlands. This group, along with other Moluccan political refugees, came to constitute the first concentrated immigrant group entering the Netherlands and established a strong Diaspora community here, albeit one that is remarkably heterogeneous and distinct in its makeup.

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<sup>5</sup> Visit to Maluku Museum. April 26, 2008. Utrecht, The Netherlands

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

One of the greatest problems that faced the Moluccans in the Netherlands and one that was created both by the policies of the government and by the, in retrospect, unrealistic beliefs by the community leaders, was an isolation from the general Dutch population. The Moluccan men who arrived in 1951 were, almost without exception, members of the KNIL, the *Koninklijk Nederlands Indisch Leger* or the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army.<sup>7</sup> Many of these men had fought against the Japanese in the early 1940s when the latter took over the Dutch colony during its Pacific conquest. They had suffered the consequences along with their ethnically Dutch comrades, sentenced to years of hard labor in the Japanese prisoner of war camps. While some Indonesians from other parts of the massive archipelago worked or were impressed to fight<sup>8</sup> with the Japanese against the joint Dutch and Australian army in the Dutch East Indies, a great number of Moluccans joined in the fight with their colonial sovereign against these Indonesian nationalists. However, when the soldiers and their families arrived on the shores of the Netherlands, they were immediately discharged from the army “in the form of a stenciled slip of paper.”<sup>9</sup> The Netherlands, still reeling from the destruction of World War Two seemingly did not know what to do with the new arrivals. The Dutch government finally set about hastily preparing camps around the country that would serve as a “temporary” home for the Moluccans before they were repatriated to their homes in the Moluccas.<sup>10</sup> The Dutch government continuously proclaimed that it had never intended for the Indonesians to stay in the country and “maintained that they would be returned to Indonesia as soon as possible.”<sup>11</sup> The sixty camps, spread out throughout the country and often well removed from Dutch cities and towns, were the welcome for the Moluccans in the Netherlands. These drab refugee camps, often in a great deal of disrepair, and including two former Nazi concentration camps, were the physical manifestation of the Dutch governmental policy that served to isolate the Moluccans from the indigenous Dutch and the

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<sup>7</sup> Bartels, Dieter. *Moluccans in Exile*. Leiden, C.O.M.T 1989, pg. 12

<sup>8</sup> Between 200,000 and 500,000 “*romusha*”, or Indonesian “economic soldiers”, were forcibly drafted to fight for the Japanese. Only 70,000 survived the war.

Ricklefs, M.C. *A History of Modern Indonesia*. London, Macmillan Press. 1981. Pg. 193

<sup>9</sup> Bartels, 14

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 13

<sup>11</sup> Van Amersfoort, Hans. “Waxing and Waning of a Diaspora: Moluccans in the Netherlands 1950-2002.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Vol. 30, January 2004. 156

painfully slow movement to rectify this isolation set back any hope of true integration for decades.<sup>12</sup>

When the Japanese army finally took over the Dutch East Indies in early 1942, it set up a string of camps spread out across the thousands of Indonesian islands to house prisoners of war and the Dutch civilian population. Conditions were terrible and as the war continued, these prisoners were faced with grueling work loads, little medical care, malnourishment and eventually, the famed and terrible “death marches.” Many Ambonese soldiers who had fought under ethnically Dutch commanders against the Japanese were placed in these camps as well. The Moluccan community suffered heavily under Japanese rule. Entire families were killed for possessing Dutch language books or pictures of Queen Wilhelmina and many more were forcibly moved from their village so that the Japanese authorities could control the population better.<sup>13</sup> For the KNIL soldiers who arrived in the Netherlands in 1951, it immediately appeared to them, in a tragic irony, that the Dutch were placing them right back into the same camp situation that they had recently been released from. While the Dutch government did provide a great deal of services for these camps, the restriction of movement, the separation from other Moluccans in the Netherlands and inability to interact with the rest of Dutch society must have felt painfully reminiscent of the four-year Japanese occupation. Aerial views of Japanese prisoner of war camps look eerily similar to Westerbork and Vught, the two former Nazi concentration camps that were used to house some of the Moluccan soldiers and their families.<sup>14</sup> Upon arriving in this new situation, anger began to grow in the Moluccan community. The soldiers were enraged by what they perceived as a betrayal by the government they had fought for and suffered for. The Moluccans felt “sold out” and this seething resentment of the Dutch government established many of the problems in this and future Moluccan generations in the Netherlands.<sup>15</sup>

In his doctoral dissertation written in 1955, Tamme Wittermans goes to great lengths to describe the situation of the Ambonese soldiers and their families in the Netherlands. Formerly a Dutch teacher in Batavia on the island of Java in the Dutch East Indies,

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<sup>12</sup> Bartels, 13

<sup>13</sup> Vreeswijk-Manusiwa, Jeanny. *Riwayatku: Then, and What Now?* Amsterdam: Netwerk Molukkers Educatie en Arbeid Regio Noord en Zuid Holland, 1996. Pg. 15

<sup>14</sup> Van Dulm, J. et al. *Geillustreerd Atlas van de Japanse kampen in Nederlands-Indie*. Amsterdam: Asia Major Publishing, 2000

<sup>15</sup> Bartels, 14

Wittermans survived the war and became interested in the Moluccan community during his brief stint in the Royal Dutch Air Force. Part of his dissertation gives a historically relevant and intriguing picture of camp life for the Moluccans. This description shows two sides of the isolation that the Moluccans experienced in the Netherlands. On the one hand, they had the ability to keep their culture intact and there was very little interference in this. However, ultimately, the Moluccans had essentially no control over their lives in the Netherlands.

Camp Schattenberg is a pre-war army camp, situated at the end of a secondary road and surrounded by heath and woodland. The nearest Dutch village is three miles, the nearest provincial town, fourteen miles away...The built-up area of approximately 75 acres is surrounded by a fence. A few buildings have been converted into a church, a mosque, a hospital, a school, a shop and a canteen...The offices of the Dutch administration, a post office, and a registrar's office are on the road just outside the fence. Financial affairs, supply and preparation of the daily meals of the population, accommodation, travel and transfer, all are in Dutch hands.<sup>16</sup>

There was a reason for the initial housing situation. Both the Dutch government and the Moluccan leaders in exile believed that their stay in the Netherlands was temporary. The migration of the ex-soldiers was only to protect them in the short term, but both sides hoped and, in many ways, unrealistically wished that a political solution could be found in Indonesia that would allow the Moluccans to return to an independent Moluccan nation. This mentality benefited the Dutch government in the short-term, but ultimately led to the greatest failure towards the Moluccan community. By essentially letting time run its course and hoping that a political solution would drop out of the proverbial sky, the Dutch government could ignore the plight of the Moluccans in the country. They did not have to provide permanent housing, jobs or real education to the migrants because this group of people was, in the bullheaded view of the Dutch government, destined to leave after a few years. There was no need for them to integrate or become part of Dutch society because, in essence, they already had a home waiting for them. This, according to Professor Hans van Amersfoort, was

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<sup>16</sup> Wittermans, Tamme. *Social Organization among Ambonese Refugees in Holland*. Amsterdam, Het Spinhuis, 1991. Pg. 16

one of the great mistakes of the Dutch government in terms of the Moluccan history in the Netherlands and one that is repeated itself somewhat with the Islamic immigrants of today. With both groups, the initial understanding was that the immigrants were only temporary. Tongue in cheek, van Amersfoort, a professor in the University of Amsterdam Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, notes that when “politicians find an immigration problem difficult, they postpone the solution.”<sup>17</sup>

This is exactly what the Dutch government did. In setting up the *Commissariaat Ambonezenzorg*, the Directorate for Ambonese Welfare, the Dutch government’s sole goal for this immigrant group was to take care of them for as little time as possible and then ship them back to the Moluccas.<sup>18</sup> There was even a fear in the Dutch government about the minority group. Even though they had been trained by the Dutch military, it bothered some government officials to have so many militarily trained “foreigners” in the country. One member of the *Commissariaat* even remarked that “the Dutch Colonial Army was nothing, but a band of outlaws and hoodlums.”<sup>19</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that it took the Dutch government a painfully long time to realize that these new residents in the Netherlands were there to stay. This pause, while allowing politicians in the 1950s and 1960s to skirt the issue of Moluccan integration, also created a greater split in between the Moluccan community and its Dutch neighbors and eventually led to a great eruption of anger and violence in years to come.

### ***Republik Maluku Selatan***

For a while, however, this idea of separation was not only a governmental policy. It was also a preferred situation for many Moluccan leaders. Because the Moluccan community was a diverse one, the split amongst camps throughout the Netherlands was not always regarded as a negative one. It was similar, in some ways, to the system of villages back in the Moluccas. However, apart from what Professor van Amersfoort describes as the usual desire for immigrant groups to form “some sort of enclave culture”, the political makeup of the Moluccan immigrants in the Netherlands played a strong role in the self-isolation from the

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Prof. Hans van Amersfoort. Amsterdam, April 14, 2008

<sup>18</sup> Bartels, 17

<sup>19</sup> Gouda, F. and Zaalberg, T. *American Visions of the Netherlands East Indies/Indonesia*. Amsterdam, Amsterdam UP, 2002

rest of Dutch society.<sup>20</sup> Nationalistic sentiments ran high in most Moluccan communities in this first generation of the 1950s and 1960s. The *Republik Maluku Selatan*, the RMS, had been declared independent on April 26, 1950. Quickly thereafter, the tiny nation had been, in the eyes of the mostly Christian independence movement, invaded and violently absorbed by the Sukarno-led Indonesian government. The Moluccans in the Netherlands, however, believed that one day the RMS would regain its independence and would provide them a home back in the Moluccas. This belief was held quite strongly by the first generation in the Netherlands and many Moluccan communities would shun anyone who would suggest compromising with the Indonesian government or working together with the Dutch society to make the Moluccan presence permanent. Early leaders of the Moluccans in exile “had a great fear that people would emancipate” and so they used nationalistic rhetoric to strengthen isolationist sentiments in the group.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, similar to the guest-workers from Morocco in the 1970s, this immigrant community had “an illusion” that they would return home.<sup>22</sup> One Moluccan immigrant described buying new kitchenware in the Netherlands and then boxing it up and writing her address in the Moluccas on it. “We left everything packed up. After all, we were going back in a year’s time.”<sup>23</sup>

Thus, it was not only the Dutch government who failed to foresee the permanence of the Moluccans in the Netherlands. This pervading hope of return was used by Moluccan leaders to discourage interaction with Dutch society and certainly was used to glorify and amplify ethnic roots and heritage. This meant, however, that the Moluccans were in a constant “state of suspension.” There was no permanence, either in the physical living situation or the in the mental conception of the Moluccan Diaspora. The Moluccans were *statenloos*, stateless.<sup>24</sup> This meant that the Moluccans were, at once, completely dependent on the Dutch government, especially economically, but at the same time, constantly struggling to remain independent from Dutch cultural influences.<sup>25</sup> The economic dependence also had deep rooted consequences for the future of the Moluccans in the Netherlands. Men who had previously served with a great deal of pride in the army were

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with Professor Hans van Amersfoort. Amsterdam

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Manusiwa, 39

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 41

<sup>25</sup> Wittermans, 10

reduced to working in the few local and often menial jobs in the camps. They could not take pride in providing for their families because the Moluccan camp life was one of forced welfare. All food and clothing were subsidized and gas, electricity and water were free.<sup>26</sup> This may seem positive, but it fostered a sense amongst the first generation of economic impotence.

Not all Moluccan first-generation immigrants rejected interaction with their new Dutch neighbors in the 1950s and 1960s. Some of the younger soldiers, especially those who had bad experiences back in the Moluccans were excited to visit the country of their Dutch officers and see a new part of the world. One young soldier, in an interview forty-five years after his arrival on the shores of the Netherlands, recalls this exuberance, beginning on the ship to Rotterdam. “I found everything exciting. I was only nineteen.”<sup>27</sup> He remembers being speechless as white snowflakes started to fall from the sky, covering the ground with a “white surface” that he had never seen before.<sup>28</sup> Alongside some of the other bachelors of the KNIL army unit who were all housed in the Fledder camp in Drenthe, he explored the small town of Norg. There, the Dutch villagers were so surprised to see what the Ambonese soldier jokingly described as “an army from another planet”, that the customers in a bakery “hid behind the counter.”<sup>29</sup> Thus, while this young man still believed at the time that he would only stay in the Netherlands for “five years” and then return to an independent RMS, he and many of his comrades wanted to “get acquainted with the local community.”<sup>30</sup> So, from the beginning, they shared their Ambonese culture with the Dutch locals by singing songs and giving performances, while at the same time, adopting some Dutch culture. He even learned to eat “soepm’brei”, an old-fashioned name for a traditional Dutch rice pudding, something that this soldier proudly remembers as his first introduction to his new country’s cuisine.<sup>31</sup> However, at least at the beginning, this experience was mostly an exception to the norm as many Moluccan first-generation migrants treated their Dutch home and their Dutch neighbors as temporary.

### **Separated and Dependent: The Moluccan Wards**

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<sup>26</sup> Verschuur, Paul. *Moluccans Still Await Repatriation in Dutch Camps*. Associated Press. September 1, 1989

<sup>27</sup> Manusiwa, 37

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 38

Today in the big cities of the Netherlands, there are certain neighborhoods known for their ethnic composition. Walking through Sloterveer in Amsterdam, Lombok or Kanaleneiland Zuid in Utrecht or Delfshaven in Rotterdam, one notices an increase in Arabic on the signs in shops and small store-front mosques appear nearby the usual Dutch Calvinist churches. These neighborhoods are majority Islamic areas in the Netherlands, often derogatorily labeled as ghettos and seen by some as places to avoid. Through a combination of government policy, housing zoning and desire by immigrant groups to stick together, these semi-segregated neighborhoods represent the modern physical representation of ethnic separation. In a country that frequently discusses the fate of *zwarte scholen*, literally translated as black schools and referring to schools which have a majority of students from non-western foreign backgrounds, there is a struggle in the political and societal realm as to how physically integrated those with a foreign background should be with the indigenous Dutch population. It is important to note that this is not an original debate. It was held on a much smaller scale with the Moluccan population in the Netherlands. By the time the Dutch government came around to the idea that the Moluccan immigrants were here to stay, they decided to abandon the temporary camps and offer permanent housing in Dutch cities and towns.<sup>32</sup> However, due to opinions that also have contributed heavily to the current urban segregation of ethnicities in the major Dutch cities, the Dutch government decided that the Moluccan immigrants should have their own wards.

Beginning in the 1960s, the Moluccan housing camps throughout Holland were slowly shut down. Sixty-five Moluccan wards, controlled, organized and subsidized until the early 1980s by the Dutch government, were built around the country.<sup>33</sup> Consisting of assigned streets, often, notably, on the outskirts of a town or city, the original governmental plan called for all wards to be uniform, and, at the outset, they were supposed to have fifty houses designated for Moluccan families. However, due to local government opposition and the diversity of the Moluccans in the Netherlands, this regulation quickly fell by the wayside as certain wards swelled in size quickly while others shrank below the fifty house quota.<sup>34</sup> The idea behind the ward system, was two-fold and it is these ideas that form another

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<sup>32</sup> See Appendix 1.2 for a map of the camps and wards  
Bartels, Dieter. *Can the Train Ever be Stopped Again? Developments in the Moluccan Community in the Netherlands Before and After the Hijackings*. *Indonesia*. Vol. 41, April 1986

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Wim Manuhutu, Utrecht. April 26, 2008

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

important problem with the integration of the Moluccans in the Netherlands. As the Dutch government could see no resolution to the Moluccan independence movement in Indonesia in the near future, they realized that the Moluccans should live in permanent houses. However, in one of the most important and detrimental opinions about this first major immigrant group, the Dutch government decided for the Moluccan community that they should live separately. The Dutch government felt that it knew that the Moluccans were not ready to live side by side with indigenous Dutch families, that “the rift between Moluccans and Dutch was still too big in order for them...to bridge the gap individually” and so “people were housed in groups.”<sup>35</sup> The Moluccans, for the most part, were not allowed, even after ten years in the Netherlands, to determine their own living situation.

The differences in the ward system further diversified the experience of Moluccans in the Netherlands. Some of the wards were located in small towns, ensuring that Moluccans would immediately constitute a large percentage of the population there and, in many cases, cause resentment amongst the original population. Still others were isolated from old neighbors and friends in new wards spread out through the country. School tended to be a place where either the classroom was filled with ethnically Moluccan children or contained only a few, far outnumbered by their ethnically Dutch classmates. This seemingly arbitrary spreading out of the population, which disrupted friendships and forced relocation to distant reaches of the country created more resentment and angst in the first and the second generation.<sup>36</sup> Thus, the isolation of the Moluccans continued in the wards, similarly to the ostracism in the camps, and ensured that, at once, the Moluccan community would have to rely on itself for support and communal ties, while still needing governmental economic support. Almost without exception, the Moluccans continued to live at the whim of the Dutch state with limited opportunities for upward financial and educational mobility.<sup>37</sup>

It is this mindset, the way of thinking that institutionalized the problem of isolation, which has contributed a great deal to the problems of integration in the Moluccan community in the Netherlands. The Dutch mindset, one built in the colonial, western model, presumed to know what was best for the Moluccan community. This “old patriarchal” relationship between the government and the immigrant group served to damage hopes of integration for

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Bartels, D. *Can the Train...?*

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Wim Manuhutu, Utrecht

many years to come.<sup>38</sup> In the end, the isolation was the initial foundation of the problems faced by the Moluccans in the Netherlands and it helped create a great deal of anger and resentment that boiled over in acts of violence and terrorism in the 1970s and 1980s. However, it was the Dutch mindset, forged by acting as a colonial power in the Dutch East Indies, that truly ostracized the immigrants from their new home and ensured that there was a lack of true understanding between the Dutch government and the Moluccan people living in the Netherlands for a long period of time.

### **The Colonial Mindset: Tolerance and Paternalism**

The Netherlands owned the Moluccan Islands and the rest of the East Indies for almost three hundred and fifty years. For this period of time, a small minority of Dutchmen living in the colony ruled the lives of their Indonesian colonial subjects, utilizing both benevolent and violent, oppressive tactics to do so. Strict scholars of post-colonial theory argue that this relationship, repeated by most western nations in what is today known as the third world, ensured a certain level of European superiority in modern political and cultural philosophies. After all, the Europeans were the ones to explore the non-western world and, to a certain extent, successfully rule it for a long period of time. Without overstating the mark of colonialism on modern Europe, this period of history set up a dichotomy between the east and the west. Since the Europeans, and in the case of the Moluccans, the Dutch, had an upper hand in the relationship, it makes sense that a certain level of beliefs of western superiority would develop. The colonizing Europeans, correctly and incorrectly, perceived their civilization to have progressed further than the non-western world and so, in actions both benevolent and paternalistic, opportunistic and gracious, sought to grant the non-western world the cultural practices that had come to be essential in European life. Unfortunately, in some ways, this desire to deliver European culture to foreign groups of people has seeped into the 20<sup>th</sup> century debate about immigration in the Netherlands. Though the Moluccans served with distinction in the Dutch colonial army, they were still different from their Dutch superior officers. Of course, in the army, they were also in lower ranks than their ethnically Dutch counterparts.

Once the group arrived in the Netherlands, there was also a constant sense of “otherness”. It would be a simplification to say that the problems faced in the integration of

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<sup>38</sup> Bartels, *Moluccans in Exile*. 20

the Moluccans was mostly due to the colonial past. The initial issues were due almost exclusively to outside political problems. The Moluccan stay was supposed to be temporary and so, correctly, Professor van Amersfoort, among other Dutch scholars of immigration, is hesitant to connect the Moluccan experience to post-colonial sentiments.<sup>39</sup> However, despite the concrete political issues which shaped most of the Moluccan immigration paradigm here, it is a mistake to completely discount the underlying feelings that the Dutch and most other European countries had for groups of immigrants coming from third world nations. In the 1951 immigration of the Moluccans, the Dutch saw, essentially for the first time in its modern history, a different ethnic group enter its borders and immediately separated itself from the Moluccans. The relationship was a top-down one, where the former Dutch masters still controlled the lives of the Moluccans and constantly acted in what it perceived was the best interests of the Moluccan immigrants. Often ignored were the actual opinions of the Moluccans, not to mention the important fact that the new immigrant community was not homogenous. The Moluccans had come from different islands, different educational backgrounds, different religions and practices, and as the group became more permanent, different socio-economic standing in the Netherlands. Therefore, not all the Moluccan residents desired one particular outcome to their situation. This understanding of the immigrant group has repeated itself today with how the Dutch government looks upon the guest workers who have stayed in the Netherlands, searching, for example, to form one uniform Islamic organization with which the Dutch can discuss issues of culture and faith. The colonial mindset, somewhat fading in recent generations, still causes the Dutch to work in a top-down manner instead of forging a peer relationship with the new ethnic groups that enter its borders. To fully understand this mindset, one must look at the three hundred years of colonial history that built the original relationship between the Dutch and the Moluccans. One must travel “from the surface of society to the depths of the ideas which move and explain [the society]”.<sup>40</sup> In this case, many of the ideas that have created the modern Dutch relationship with immigrant populations is the Dutch colonial history.

### *Het Eeuwig Verbond*

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Professor van Amersfoort, Amsterdam

<sup>40</sup> Hourani, 131

Just as the Moluccans were shocked by the strange new land that they arrived at in the 1500s, Dutch sailors who first stepped foot on the Moluccan islands of the East Indies must have felt that they had entered a different world. Spreading out their exploration to the east, Dutch ship captains encountered for the first time in March of 1599 a massive cluster of islands, nine-hundred and ninety nine that is today categorized as the Moluccas, most of which were teeming with agricultural life and thus, for the colonial explorers, containing a great deal of trading wealth. Unfazed by the fact that the Portuguese had arrived almost one hundred years before them in 1522, the Dutch trading vessels, in conjunction with Dutch naval boats set about to take over the islands and set up a trading colony there.<sup>41</sup> In 1605, the Dutch for the first time allied themselves with an ethnically Ambonese tribe of the Moluccas, the Hitus, in a battle against the Portuguese.<sup>42</sup> The result of this action was the establishment of the famous “*Het eeuwige verbond*”, an oft-repeated Dutch phrase meaning “the eternal bond” that was formed between the Ambonese and the Dutch. Interestingly, the Hitus were Muslims, whom, shortly after the Portuguese left, were terribly repressed by the Dutch who switched alliances to more Christian villages and tribes.<sup>43</sup> A famed 20<sup>th</sup> century leader of the Moluccan government in exile, A.Th. Manusama, described this initial relationship as one that was mutually beneficial and completely accepted by the Moluccan people. “We have brought the Dutch flag, under which we now stand, voluntarily into our country and entrusted our land to the hands of the Dutch not as a conquered people but as ally to a generous protector, so that we could never be enemies.”<sup>44</sup> Once the Portuguese had been successfully defeated, the Dutch set about to build up their new colony. Utilizing the newly formed *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*<sup>45</sup>, the famed Dutch East Indies Company, as the commercial enterprise operating the trade from the Indies, the Dutch government gained an incredible amount of profit from products harvested in the Indies and sold throughout the world. Specifically in the Moluccas, cloves, nutmeg and mace became the most profitable crops and eventually, through shrewd planning and underhanded, violent power struggles in the area, the Ambonese islands in what is today the central Moluccas became the only place in the world that produced cloves for trade purposes. The Dutch had created a monopoly in

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<sup>41</sup> De Graaf, H.J. *De geschiedenis van Ambon en de Zuid-Molukken*. Uitgeverij T. Wever, 1977. pg. 45-46

<sup>42</sup> Chauvel, Richard. *Nationalists, Soldiers and Separatists*. Leiden, KITLV Press. 1990, 19

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Shortened to VOC in the paper

the Moluccas and were vicious in protecting this seemingly inexhaustible source of income.<sup>46</sup> This clove trade “resulted in the extinction of independent political and economic life in the Ambonese islands.”<sup>47</sup> Through the business practices of the early colonial power in the East Indies, any semblance of being an ally, as the leader A. Th. Manusama stated above disappeared. As with most colonial relationships, the Moluccans became the property of the Dutch colonial authority and, for three hundred years, lived subserviently to them.

Dutch historians frequently cite this concept of *het eeuwig verbond* as essential to understanding the loyalty of the Moluccans to the Dutch colonial authorities. Indeed, over the more than three hundred years of Dutch rule, the Ambonese and most of the other Moluccans remained tenuously supportive of the Dutch. However, in the glorifying texts about Dutch and Moluccan relations, much of the trauma of colonial rule has slipped from the pages of Dutch history books. The VOC was a particularly violent organization and it prided itself on taking as many profitable resources from the Dutch East Indies at the lowest cost. This meant that, for centuries, the Moluccans and other Indonesians were terribly repressed. One tool that was used specifically in the Moluccas which shaped its history was conversion of the native population to Christianity. Promoting Christianity, specifically Dutch Calvinism, in the Moluccas was seen as one of the best ways to “promote the loyalty of the population”.<sup>48</sup> When this conversion did not work, violence was the next resort. In a thirty year period, between 1630 and 1660, the Ambonese population shrank by a third, from seventy-five thousand to fifty thousand.<sup>49</sup> More than a century later, the VOC finally went bankrupt and the power hierarchy was replaced by a more traditional colonial structure. The Dutch government, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, used the Indies islands as a “goose that laid the golden egg”, taxing all the land on the major islands and reaping the profits from the local people who were, in essence, agriculturally enslaved to the land. This led to major uprisings in the Moluccas and other parts of the Dutch East Indies, when Christian and Muslim villages banded together to fight Dutch rule. The brutality in which the uprising was put down was

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<sup>46</sup> De Jong, L. *The Collapse of a Colonial Society*. Leiden, KITLV Press, 2002. pg. 7

<sup>47</sup> Chauvel, 19

<sup>48</sup> Chauvel, 20

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

almost unimaginable, even by colonial standards, and it left wide swaths of the countryside destroyed and the Moluccan population decimated.<sup>50</sup>

### **The Ethical Policy of Colonialism**

Oddly, the culmination of this uprising and the Dutch oppression throughout the war produced some positive changes in the relationship between the Dutch and their colonial subjects, including the Moluccans. Combined with uproar back in the Netherlands, in part due to the publishing of the famous colonial novel *Max Havelaar*, which revealed some of the travesties being committed in the name of the Dutch flag, the home government decided to implement new “gentler” colonial policies. This so called “ethical policy” at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century argued that the Dutch owed a “debt of honor” to the Dutch East Indies for contributing so much to the small empire. In her speech of 1901, the Queen of Holland announced that it was the “moral duty” of the Netherlands to “improve the welfare of people in colonial Indonesia.”<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, in a way, nothing changed due to this ethical policy. The exploitation of the islands could continue, but the Dutch would invest part of the profits from the islands in establishing European schools and other forms of infrastructure in the islands. In some ways, these new steps in the islands helped the Indonesians and other colonial subjects. Education rates increased and the standard of living in some of the cities rose quickly. However, the population also grew wildly at the time, which the Dutch attempted to solve in the ethical policy sense by forcibly moving people from the main island of Java to some of the eastern reaches of the colony.<sup>52</sup>

The ethical policy, therefore, is more important for a study of post-colonial immigrants in Holland as to the impact on the Dutch mindset in how the government regarded its colonial subjects. As it entered into a more civilized existence, the Dutch colonial authority was, at once, attempting to moralize and to make money. While by no means an exclusively Dutch trait, as most of the other European powers also attempted some form of Christian conversion and Europeanization of their colonies while simultaneously exploiting the people and the resources of the third world, the Dutch are often spoken of historically as wanting to be “a Minister and a Merchant” in its colonies. It was even turned

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<sup>50</sup> Bartels, 10

<sup>51</sup> Van der Eng, P., *Ethical Policy*. South East Asia: A Historical Encyclopedia. Ooi Keat Gin (ed.). Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO. 2004

<sup>52</sup> De Jong, 10

into a Dutch adage, *De koopman en de dominee*, a phrase that can be applied to Dutch colonial practices after the implementation of the ethical policy. Building up to World War Two, this phrase about the mix of religion and economics also has had long lasting consequences on how the Dutch perceive new immigrants in their country, beginning with the remnants from the Dutch East Indies colony, the Moluccan immigrants of the 1950s.<sup>53</sup> This is the essence of the colonial mindset that was pervasive in the Netherlands and other European countries long after the end of the Second World War. The top-down approach by the Dutch Colonial government in the Dutch East Indies continued in its relationship with new immigrants in the country. There was a sense in the colonies that the Dutch always knew what was best for their Indonesian and Moluccan subjects and this sense often appears in the contemporary debate about immigrants in the Netherlands. This can also be seen in the mindset of some of the older generation in the Netherlands, one that has taken on a personal note for me as a researcher and one that I have explored by attempting to piece together the story of my grandfather, an ethnically Dutch man born and raised in Indonesia, along with the societal factors that have, through no fault of his own, shaped the Dutch mindset into one that looks down upon those people coming from the non-western world.

### **Opar**

It has begun to rain in Den Helder, one of the northernmost cities in the Netherlands and home to the Dutch naval fleet. It had always been part of my plan while researching Dutch colonialism and the Moluccan community in the Netherlands to sit down with my grandfather and discuss his childhood in Indonesia and his subsequent life in the Netherlands. However, as the day approached, I found myself more hesitant to make the research personal. When I had explained my initial study to my grandfather, he had expressed joy, as he often does, that I had taken up an interest that intertwined with his life story, yet, under the surface, I could feel the tension that often comes up when discussing the immigrants of Holland. Though my grandfather is quite proud of his Indonesian birthplace and the history of the Netherlands in Indonesia, we have frequently and not always gently tangled over the role that non-western Dutch citizens play in the country. In one breath, my grandfather proclaims himself to be one of the first “*allochtoon*”, a Dutch phrase allocated for those who have a

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<sup>53</sup> Hoebink, P. *Hoe de dominee de koopman versloeg: Nederlandse ontwikkelingssamenwerking gewogen. Internationale Spectator*. Vol. 60, 2006

non-ethnically Dutch background, yet also argues that the large influx of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in the Netherlands is quite detrimental to Dutch society and that the spread of Islam is a danger that “the younger generation will have to deal with.” It is through this familial relationship that I became interested in the subject of Islam in the Netherlands and, through broader research, the Moluccans and the colonial residue that continues to affect the relationship between the indigenous people of this small, proud Western European country and the new immigrants who voyage over long and dangerous distances to have a chance at a better, safer life for themselves and their families. I wanted to explore my grandfather’s world, but also understand it from the other side and complexly delve into the under the surface reasons for my grandfather’s, and so many other Dutchmen’s, attitudes towards the immigrant population here.<sup>54</sup>

My grandfather’s story begins unlike most Dutchmen because he was born on a hill. Unlike the flatland of the Netherlands, west Java is filled with great, rolling hills and sharp, densely forested mountains and it was there, in the small town of Tjiandjoer (today, spelled Cianjur in Malay) that the son of two Dutch colonial citizens was born in 1930. He grew up playing in the dark quinine plants of a plantation that his father managed, getting in the way of the Indonesian workers as they hunched over to gather tea plants in the woven baskets on their backs. These two plants, once processed and cleaned were loaded onto the large diesel trucks that would make the eighty kilometer trek monthly to and from the city of Bandung, where the produce, begot by the hard labor of the Indonesian laborers, was prepared for export. In the attic of memory, my grandfather looks back quite fondly on this early period of life, proudly presenting a picture of him as a child in a toy car near the “bungalow” home of his family. It is described, in Dutch-Indonesian post-colonial literature as a nostalgia for “*tempo doeloe*”, an Indonesian phrase for the “old days.”<sup>55</sup> He remembers, though he was only eleven when the Japanese invaded Java in early 1942, that his father was quite comfortable with his Indonesian workers and “never had a conflict with them.” Once the invasion occurred however, the Dutch were stuck between the Japanese war machine and Indonesian nationalism and this, according to grandfather, is when the idyllic life on Indonesia ended and the dream of establishing an ethical colony, one meant to help the

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<sup>54</sup> Interview with Reinout van Wagendonk. Den Helder. April 23, 2008

<sup>55</sup> Helsloot, Alina. *Reflections in a Post-Colonial Mirror*. Research Masters Thesis. Universiteit Utrecht. March 30, 2007

Indonesians as well as the Dutch faded. “We were still having the idea, the idealistic idea, that we could bring Christianity and education. We are not against you [as if speaking to Indonesians in 1940], we want only to have you together in the nicest colony ever.”<sup>56</sup> Weeks later, my grandfather, along with the rest of his family, were placed in various prisoner of war camps on Java. In the last days of the war, as it appeared that the Japanese would not win the war and as supplies became increasingly scarce, my grandfather watched his father die of malnutrition in 1945.<sup>57</sup>

The Moluccans were only a small fraction of the population that came from Indonesia after the declaration of independence of the Indonesian republic. My grandfather was one of the approximately 250,000 “Indo-European” colonial citizens who came to the Netherlands over the fifteen years after the fall of the colony.<sup>58</sup> Similar to the Moluccans, many of these people had never left the East Indies and had certainly never ventured into western Europe. This was a difficult part of my grandfather’s life. Though he was a “*belanda Totok*”, the Indonesian phrase for a fully ethnically Dutch person living in the Indonesian colony (as opposed to *Indo*, which was usually used to classify those people with mixed European and Indonesian ethnicities), it was still relatively difficult for him to feel at home in the Netherlands. Reminiscing with the booming laugh that often punctuates his stories, my grandfather remembers being told that he “was not speaking proper Dutch” and being awed by the odd Dutch children whose cheeks turned red in the January cold.<sup>59</sup> Luckily for him, along with his mother and brothers, my grandfather was able to live with Dutch family members in Doordrecht when they arrived in the Netherlands in 1948, a luxury that the Moluccan soldiers and most *Indo* repatriates did not have.

Here, one can see an interesting difference between the *Indos* and the Moluccans. The Moluccans were separated much more from Dutch society than the *Indos* were, due primarily to the belief that the Moluccan community was temporary here in the Netherlands. Thus, despite the pain, confusion and loneliness experienced by the newly arriving *Indo* community in the Netherlands, the Dutch government took many impressive policy steps to make these new Indo-European countrymen feel welcome and enable them to integrate into Dutch

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Reinout van Wagtenonk, Den Helder

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Van Amersfoort, H and Niekerk, M. *Immigration as a Colonial Heritage: Post-Colonial Immigrants In the Netherlands 1945-2002*. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Vol. 32. April, 2006

<sup>59</sup> Interview with Reinout van Wagtenonk, Den Helder

society properly. One striking action, beginning in the early 1950s was the “five percent rule.” This housing zoning code “obliged all municipalities to reserve five percent of newly-constructed houses in the social sector for repatriates from Indonesia.”<sup>60</sup> This ensured that not only would the new residents in the Netherlands have permanent houses, but also that they would not establish enclave communities. My grandfather and others like him had the opportunity to live in mixed neighborhoods, a system that was much more conducive to integration than the majority of the Moluccan wards and later, than the neighborhoods reserved for the Turkish and Moroccan guest workers, who were also believed to be temporary.<sup>61</sup>

On a more personal level, my grandfather does recognize that he was accepted quickly in the Netherlands, a place that he had never visited but always felt a strong connection to even as a child in Indonesia. “My room had many Dutch things,” he proclaims proudly. “I loved the Dutch sailboats.”<sup>62</sup> He says, in a matter of fact manner, that this acceptance was because he looked like most of his Dutch neighbors and had learned the importance of education from his mother. He even admits, when regarding his integration in hindsight as comparison, that this is one of the major problems of integration today. The immigrants from Turkey and Morocco came from “poor schools or no education” and so they do not fit in here in Holland as he did in the early 1950s. This recognition is essential to seeing how the colonial experience has affected, but not completely structured my grandfather’s perception of immigration and the minority groups that live with him in the Netherlands. While there are still remnants of a European-superior mindset, as when he wonders out loud whether the Indonesians were capable after their independence of running the plantations as efficiently as the Dutch had, he still can, when pressed, acknowledge the difficulties faced by immigrants in western countries.<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately for the Moluccans and for the guest workers later on, there are still these traces of European superiority in the way that they are approached.

### **Superiority and Collective Memory Loss**

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<sup>60</sup> Van Amersfoort

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Reinout van Wagtenonk, Den Helder

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

As the important 20<sup>th</sup> century scholars of post-colonialism have explored, this idea of foisting western government, western culture and western capitalism on the far reaches of the third world served to set up a mental dichotomy between the two places. Scholars, especially over the past half-century, have examined the complicated history between the colonizers and the colonized and many argue that the relationship between immigrants and their new home in a western nation is deeply colored by this historical epoch. “White superiority was implicit in the very mobility of the Europeans. They were the ones controlling [and] initiating the encounter.”<sup>64</sup> Well after the initial exploration and conquering of the East Indies, the Dutch faced another part of history that had an incredible impact on their relationship with the third world and specifically Indonesia. Just as many other European nations did, the Dutch faced a colonial war shortly after World War Two ended. This is an oft-forgotten period of history. During a series of military actions euphemistically coined “*politioenele acties*” in 1947 and 1949, approximately one hundred thousand Indonesians were killed along with six thousand Dutch and KNIL soldiers.<sup>65</sup> It has been suggested that the Dutch have experienced a collective memory loss about the war in Indonesia, a war where most of the future Moluccan immigrants fought for the Dutch and where they lost many of their comrades fighting for the Dutch colonial power. Some contemporary Dutch scholars have begun to recognize this absence of acknowledgement about the brutality of the Dutch colony. “The violent nature of Dutch colonial practice, its far-reaching effects on the lives of the colonized people as well as the Dutch failure to accomplish a peaceful process of decolonization are themes that are often silenced in social and political discourse.”<sup>66</sup> This silence, extending even to 2000 when the Dutch Prime Minister, Wim Kok, was forced to apologize for criticizing Dutch policies in the East Indies colony, has further increased the colonial mindset that has been established in the Netherlands in regarding new migrants.<sup>67</sup>

The goals of Dutch colonialism revert back to the idea of the *De koopman en de dominee*. Crudely put, the Dutch felt they were “enlightening the backward, civilizing the savage, and Christianizing the pagan.”<sup>68</sup> These paternalistic tasks the Dutch colonial

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<sup>64</sup> Eigenraam, A et al. *The Dutch Know Best? Paternalism in the Netherlands Past and Present*.

<sup>65</sup> Doolan, Paul. *Time for Dutch Courage in Indonesia*. *History Today*. Vol. 47, March 1997. Pg. 3

<sup>66</sup> Helsloot

<sup>67</sup> Ken'ichi, Goto, *Multilayered Postcolonial Historical Space: Indonesia, the Netherlands, Japan and East Timor*. Waseda University, 2003

<sup>68</sup> Eigenraam

government tried to put in place with the ethical policy and other colonial measures have been repeated with the immigrants in the Netherlands today. For example, the government set up “assimilation and resocialization” policies for immigrants coming from the defunct East Indies colony. They, including my grandfather and some Moluccans who expressed interest in staying in the Netherlands, could learn “proper Dutch” and were expected to immerse themselves in Dutch culture.<sup>69</sup> When specifically looking at the Moluccan experience, even as the population became permanent in the 1960s and 1970s, the Dutch government continued to refer all issues of the Moluccans to the Department of Social Welfare. Problems were not handled in the same way that issues arising from various other Dutch groups were. The Moluccans were given no control over their lives, even after living in the Netherlands for more than a decade.<sup>70</sup> This process seems to be replaying itself in contemporary Holland with the new implementation of *imburgering* classes, where immigrants are expected not only to learn the Dutch language, but also take courses in Dutch history, geography and culture. “Integration is an obligation” in the Netherlands.<sup>71</sup> The language has even been expanded to distinguish between “us” and “them” in the usage of the phrase *autochtoon* (meaning an indigenous Dutch person) and *allochtoon* (a person with a non-western background, even if they were born and raised in Holland). Furthermore, similar to the way in which the Moluccans were handled, the initial reaction to the guest worker immigrants was to grant them subsidies and social welfare programs “because the immigrant workers from Turkey and Morocco were expected to return to their original homes.”<sup>72</sup> Once, however, they became permanent, a repetition of the colonial mindset continued somewhat in the governmental thinking. There continues to be an established dichotomy between the natives and the immigrants; one where integration is ultimately hampered by the top-down and, in many ways, paternalistic relationship.

These colonialist sentiments pepper the conversation with my grandfather, just as they are sprinkled throughout much for the immigration debate in the Netherlands. Most often, they are benevolent. Sometimes, they are not. When the subject of the Moluccans returns to the forefront of our discussion, my grandfather became agitated. “I feel so guilty

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Wesseling, H.L., *Post-Imperial Holland. Journal of Contemporary History*. Vol. 15, January 1980. Pg. 137

<sup>71</sup> Eigenraam

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

for them” he said mournfully. “We promised them that they could go home. They did a fantastic job as Dutch soldiers to protect us.”<sup>73</sup> Interestingly in the history of the Netherlands, for pro-colonial Dutchmen, the Moluccans became a symbol of the failure of the Dutch to keep their colony. Right-wing politicians used the Moluccan cause, not as a way to better the lives of the immigrants, but to attack the moderate Dutch government for working together with the new Indonesian nation.<sup>74</sup> However, lost in the World War Two and the war for independence in Indonesia where the Moluccans were largely regarded as traitors by the Indonesian nationalists and as loyal comrades by the outnumbered and beleaguered Dutch soldiers, was the fact that most Moluccans were ambivalent at best about Dutch rule in the East Indies. They fought for the Dutch against the Japanese and then against the armies of Sukarno because there was a sense amongst the leaders of the various islands that Dutch rule was preferable. An image of the Moluccan soldier slowly emerged over the centuries since the proclamation of *het eeuwig verbond*, one that promoted the concept of the Moluccan culture as being one of warriors, “the loyal and gallant upholder of Netherlands authority in the archipelago.”<sup>75</sup> However, many KNIL soldiers, especially in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were forced to fight for the Dutch. Some were lured with alcohol while others were simply kidnapped and sent to a far-away Indonesian island with no hope of return unless they completed military service for the Dutch.<sup>76</sup> Even this image was cultivated in colonial times and has been misconstrued in modern Holland. “I try to remind the teenagers here that we were originally farmers and traders,” Wim Manuhutu says in his office as the director of the *Maluku* Museum in Utrecht. “The population here in the Netherlands is different because most of the men were soldiers.”<sup>77</sup> The Dutch colonial authority culled many of its recruits for the KNIL army from the Moluccan Christian population because it was felt by many Dutchmen that Islam was the main enemy in the Indonesian colonies. This colonial glorification of the Moluccan community continued, despite the historical truth that the Moluccans were not unquestioning loyalists to the Dutch crown. Even in their existence here in Holland, an assumption was made that the Moluccans would accept what the Dutch gave them since they had been so loyal before. However, as the Dutch government ignored the Moluccans over

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<sup>73</sup> Interview with Reinout van Wagendonk, Den Helder

<sup>74</sup> Interview with Prof. van Amersfoort, Amsterdam

<sup>75</sup> Chauvel, 39

<sup>76</sup> Bartels, Dieter. *From Black Dutchmen to White Moluccans*. 1990

<sup>77</sup> Interview with Wim Manuhutu, Utrecht

time, the myth of loyalty and humble submission to the will of the Dutch government was eventually shattered with the terrorist actions of the 1970s.

### **Radicalization of the Second Generation: Alienation and Terrorism**

One had worked as a social worker in Amsterdam. The other worked as a dental assistant in Assen, in the north of Holland. The Amsterdammer had been born there, raised in a moderately religious home and attended Dutch schools. He was “known as a good kid in school”, and had spent much of his early 20s as a role model for other second generation teens, working with them to find positive after school activities and writing for a neighborhood bulletin. The second young person had been born in the east of Holland and was described as a hard worker, happy and never late. She came from a pious, traditional household. Both people’s mother did not speak Dutch and though their fathers had worked hard to build a home in the Netherlands, the youths were constantly reminded of their ethnic and social roots. Her father had been a soldier, but was reduced to physical labor when he moved to the Netherlands. The father of the Amsterdammer had become crippled during his years of menial jobs and was no longer able to kneel and pray. He had to pray sitting in a chair.

The similarities between these two young people’s brief biography reveals an enlightening historical overlap. The woman, born in 1955 in the Westerbork camp and raised in the evangelical Moluccan church was Hansina Uktolseja, one of the nine Moluccan train hijackers who held train passengers hostage for three weeks near her home in Assen in 1977. The man, born one year after the train hostage crisis ended in bloodshed and in Hansina’s death, is Mohammed Bouyeri, the now infamous murderer of Dutch filmmaker and critic of Islam, Theo van Gogh. Shortly before their acts of violence, both had become more radical. Hansina had become “soaked in Christian belief” and had changed from being “a sweet, modest girl” to becoming “more Moluccan.” She began dating Rudi Lumalessil, another one of the to-be train hijackers and one whose brother was already in jail for participating in a Moluccan terrorist action in 1975. Mohammed, shortly after his mother died in 2002, quit his job, went on welfare and became increasingly religious. He joined a fundamentalist mosque in Amsterdam and befriended other young religious Muslims who also felt angry and disconnected from their homeland. Both of these people viciously and angrily lashed out against Dutch society, becoming terrorists in order to further their political cause and

personal beliefs. The similarities, therefore, of the wave of terrorism by members of the Moluccan second generation in the 1970s to the increased radicalization of some Islamic second-generation youth is striking and revealing. By placing these two people next to each other in the confines of anthropological history, the Netherlands and perhaps researchers of terrorism can learn a great deal. The rage that both these young people felt was not because they belonged to the same religion, read the same inflammatory texts or fought for the same cause. Instead, they felt trapped by circumstances, felt stuck between the world of their parents and the world of their peers and felt victimized by their new homeland. It is this sense of alienation; the feelings of having no power and no voice in their own country that contributed to their individual radicalization. While these circumstances in no way excuses their violence or their vitriol, it does offer a glimpse into the foundations of radicalization and once again, the Moluccan case lends a historical palette from which the western world can learn when debating Islamic immigration today.<sup>78</sup>

### **Violence of the 1970s**

The first jolt through the collective conscience of Dutch society occurred on August 31, 1970. For most Dutchmen, the Moluccan immigrants were a distant group and most were unaware of any problems. This changed when a group of young Moluccans took over the Indonesian Embassy in Den Haag, the day before the President of Indonesia, Suharto, was scheduled to visit. During this hostage crisis, named the “Wassenaar Incident,” one Dutch policeman was killed. There had been an aborted attempt to light the embassy on fire four years previous, but this was the first act of overt violence and one that stunned the Dutch public.<sup>79</sup> However, this did not prepare them for the actions five years later near the small town of Beilen. Police arrived and surrounded a train that had been reported to be hijacked. Many of the local law enforcement were completely baffled by the demands of the hijackers, who wanted a swift declaration of Dutch governmental support for an independent Moluccan state along with the release of sixteen Moluccan youth who had been convicted for plotting to kidnap Queen Juliana the previous year.<sup>80</sup> When this did not occur, along with the failure to produce a plane to the hijackers, the local Dutch policemen watched in horror as the young

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<sup>78</sup> Information about Hansina Uktolseja: De Graaf, Beatrice and Van Riel, Maarten. *Treinkaapster uit liefde*. Historisch Nieuwsblad. Vol. 4, May 2008.

Information about Mohammed Bouyeri: Buruma, Ian. *Final Cut*. The New Yorker. January 5, 2005

<sup>79</sup> Bartels, D. *Can the Train...?*

<sup>80</sup> *Murder on the Milk Train*. Time. Dec. 15, 1975

Moluccan men, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-eight, flung the bodies of two murdered passengers from the train doors.<sup>81</sup> On the third day of the hostage situation, broadcast on live television around the Netherlands, the Moluccan terrorists brought a man in a yellow shirt and a red tie outside of the train and shot him dead. “Soldiers standing a few hundred yards away openly wept at the cruel sight.”<sup>82</sup> Almost simultaneously, young Moluccans also took over the Indonesian consulate in Amsterdam, where one person was killed. The rage of the Moluccan second generation was spilling over. For those young men and women who became radicalized in this time period, discussion about a future in the Moluccas was no longer a workable option. They wanted to take action. Two years later, it was Hansina Uktolseja’s turn as she, along with eight Moluccan men, hijacked a train in a similar fashion. The Dutch government’s reaction was fierce.<sup>83</sup> Perhaps because the second train hijacking, in 1977, was done in conjunction with the taking over of a Dutch school in Bolvensmilde by Moluccan militants, the Dutch government was not willing to listen to the demands of the hijackers, nor were they going to let their soldiers stand by and watch violence unfold. The government forces did wait twenty days to storm the train near Assen, which is home to one of the largest Moluccan populations in Holland, but when the command was given, the soldiers used deadly force unflinchingly, resulting in the death of six of the Moluccan hijackers and two of the hostages. Hansina was one of them, killed a few miles away from the home where she was born and grew up in, but in a country where she never felt like she belonged.<sup>84</sup>

The Netherlands, through the *Comissariaat Ambonezenzorg*, controlled the lives of the Moluccan immigrants and had, as an official policy, the necessity of Moluccan repatriation to Indonesia until 1970.<sup>85</sup> This means that for 19 years, and thus for most of the lives of Moluccan second generation youth, the government was constantly reinforcing the concept that these young people did not belong in the Netherlands. Absurdly, the Dutch government mentioned the hope, in official documents, that the Moluccans will return to the Indonesian islands as late as 1980.<sup>86</sup> This mindset of not belonging was also routinely

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<sup>81</sup> Bartels, D. *Moluccans in Exile*. 17

<sup>82</sup> *Murder on the Milk Train*.

<sup>83</sup> De Graaf and Van Riel.

<sup>84</sup> De Graaf and Van Riel.

<sup>85</sup> Van Amersfoort, 331

<sup>86</sup> Interview with Prof. van Amersfoort, Amsterdam

reinforced at home, as the first generation was less likely to look upon the Netherlands as their home, but more as a temporary refuge. This generation, the generation of soldiers and their family, wrapped themselves in the trauma of the Indonesian experience as a way of feeling less isolated and could not entirely, even after having a family in the Netherlands and eventually finding work and a permanent life, consider themselves at home.<sup>87</sup>

As the second generation grew up and as the Dutch government began to get used to the concept that the Moluccans were here to stay in the Netherlands, the families began to move into different parts of the Netherlands. Suddenly, the youth began to interact with non-Moluccan Dutch and attend heterogeneous, multicultural schools and social gatherings. Their quest for personal identity was quickly transformed by one dutifully connected with their parents struggle to return to the Moluccan Islands to one with opposing sides. In essence they faced the same questions that many Turkish and Moroccan youths do today; a clash between the “old and the new, between loyalty to their own community and the quest for modernity.”<sup>88</sup> The Moluccan second generation was stuck “betwixt and between.” This topic of the “in-between generation” elicited a wide range of responses. Joss Wibisono, a Javanese political exile and the current head of the Indonesian Radio Netherlands Wereldomroep describes this feeling as “living a double life.” One has a different life at home than at school, a different life in the Moluccan church than at work, in the Moluccan ward than in a mixed neighborhood.<sup>89</sup> Professor van Amersfoort sees the isolation of the camps as somewhat responsible for creating these feelings of estrangement. “They all had to live in camps and neighborhoods where there was no opening or perspective for the younger generations. That was a big mistake.”<sup>90</sup>

### **Wim Manuhutu**

Wim Manuhutu offers one of the most revealing opinions about this generation and is a biographical reminder that most of the second generation, as in any case of immigration, did not radicalize in the 1970s. Today, Wim Manuhutu is the director of the *Maluku Museum* in Utrecht. A tall, lanky man, immaculately dressed and appearing younger than his forty-nine years, Manuhutu has been the director of the most important institution of Moluccan

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<sup>87</sup> Van Amersfoort, *Waxing and Waning*. 332

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Joss Wibisono, Amsterdam. April 19, 2008

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Prof. van Amersfoort, Amsterdam

culture and history in the Netherlands since its inception in 1986. Intimately involved professionally with the cause of Moluccan culture as well as with an ongoing cultural dialogue with the indigenous Dutch population in Utrecht and throughout the Netherlands, Mr. Manuhutu also has a distinct and revealing personal biography. He, of course, is one of the Moluccan second generation, born in a Dutch housing camp and sent through the Dutch school system, attending both a majority Moluccan primary school and an almost completely indigenous Dutch secondary school. He was born in the Lunetten camp in Vught in 1959, but shortly thereafter moved with his family to Leerdam. The Dutch town, famous for its glass and crystal industry, quickly built a neighborhood of one-hundred twelve houses for the arriving Moluccans and this is where the young Mr. Manuhutu grew up.<sup>91</sup> His story is somewhat unusual for Moluccans in the Netherlands because his father, while one of the original Moluccan immigrants, was not a soldier, but a teacher in Macassa who sought refuge with the Moluccan soldiers when Indonesia declared its independence. Mr. Manuhutu's mother is not Moluccan, but rather was of mixed European and Indonesian ethnicity. She met his father while teaching Moluccan immigrant children in one of the earliest camps here in the Netherlands. Therefore, having two parents with an education background, Mr. Manuhutu acknowledges that education was always stressed in his household and this propelled him to mix with indigenous Dutch students and strive to achieve academically and professionally. He remembers that this was not always easy, recalling teasing from both the Moluccan kids in his neighborhood who thought of him as strange for working so hard as well as some bullying by indigenous Dutch kids who reacted to his different appearance.

The late 1960s and early 1970s were a difficult time for the Moluccan community in the Netherlands. Mr. Manuhutu remembers that, increasingly in the wards, there were problems with drugs, crime and poverty. These problems led to increased violence in the wards as well. Most of the second generation came from families with a military background and so, "one of the codes was you don't run away from fights."<sup>92</sup> All around the Moluccan community, Dutch society was improving and growing. Economically, the Netherlands was growing rapidly in the 1970s, adding almost three percent of growth a year.<sup>93</sup> However, this was not positively affecting the Moluccan community. It is perhaps of little surprise,

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with Wim Manuhutu, Utrecht

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Prof. van Amersfoort, Amsterdam

therefore, that the major advent of radicalization occurred around the same time the second generation was emerging out of the shadow of their parents and the Dutch government was beginning to acknowledge the permanence of the Moluccans, while at the same time, failing to take any meaningful steps to further aid and integrate them into Dutch society.

Unemployment increased greatly during this time for the Moluccans and as the community fell into economic instability, it became increasingly isolated and self-reliant. “In times of tension, you close ranks,” Mr. Manuhutu suggests.

All these problems should seem familiar to students of the Islamic immigrant population in the Netherlands today. The Moluccans of the 1970s were facing a crisis of identity and were not offered the support that it needed as a whole to pull itself out of the wave of economic destitution. Out of these troubles rose the violence and terrorism that spanned the decade. Mr. Manuhutu also notes the similarities between this period of rage in the Moluccan community and what is occurring in the Moroccan and Turkish communities today. The more the Moluccans felt ignored and alienated from their Dutch society, the more they withdrew. “This is a parallel to Muslims right now. The more you marginalize a group, the more there is a sense to solidify.”<sup>94</sup> The second generation developed during this time of marginalization and experienced an identity crisis strong enough that some of its members became terrorists and violently lashed out against Dutch society.

### **Spiritual Radicalization**

Religion also played a signature role in the radicalization of the second generation Moluccan youth. The Moluccan community was, generally, a religious one. The vast majority, over 90% of the original immigrants, were Protestant Christians and affiliated themselves with one of two churches in the Netherlands, the *Geredja Indjil Maluku* and the *Badan Persatuan Maluku*.<sup>95</sup> Although the Moluccas themselves are split evenly between Muslims and Christians today, the soldiers recruited by the Dutch were mostly Christian, leading to the difference in make-up of the Dutch Moluccans. This Christianity was not strictly aligned with the Dutch Calvinist Church, which had attempted to proselytize and convert Moluccans during the colonial period. Instead, it weaves tradition Calvinism in with tribal traditions, for example, by still setting out money wrapped in paper, a tradition called

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Prof. Karel Steenbrink, April 11, 2008. Utrecht

*Piring Nazar*, for the Moluccan ancestors. Many of the young Moluccans, like Hansina Uktolseja, grew up attending the *Geredja Indjil* church, which was the more political institution in the Netherlands and often referred to itself as a church “in exile.” Therefore, the sermons of the 1970s were often filled with anger over the treatment of the Moluccans by the Dutch government and some of the teenagers, looking for role models in the Moluccan community, found this politicized faith appealing. In the villages of the Moluccas, “the church did not have such a prominent position.” The youth would often turn to village elders or other local leaders for identity crises and personal struggles. However, here in the Netherlands, “the clergy had the power.”<sup>96</sup> This also reveals an interesting twist on the current debate that has revolved so much around the role of Islam in the radicalization of the Moroccan and Turkish youth. It would seem from the history of the Moluccans that Islam is not the only faith that lends itself to radicalization. Rather, when the second generation does not feel comfortable turning outside to Dutch society or inside to their parents, there is a void that needs to be filled and this can often be achieved through increased religious faith. However, this faith can easily be politicized and lead to the violence that erupted in Hansina Uktolseja and, years later, in Mohammed Bouyeri.

### **Fighting for and with the Older Generation**

One other essential aspect to scrutinize in the identity crisis of second and third generation immigrants is their relationship with the first generation. This is no different in studies of Moroccan and Turkish youngsters today and it certainly applies to the radicalization of Moluccan adolescents in the 1970s. Culturally, and also due to the historical nature of militarism in the Moluccan immigrant population, the Moluccan took strength and military might seriously. It was a point of honor to serve in the military and to actively fight for the Moluccan homeland. Most of the second generation of Moluccans had grown up in families where the father had been an officer in the Dutch colonial army and yet, upon arrival in the Netherlands, had been discharged and forced to find other means of work. In a way, the entire generation of fathers in the Moluccan community had been demoted, forced out of the military profession that they had taken so much pride in and left to their own devices in a foreign country with foreign customs and different labor practices. Many of these men were reduced to menial labor, well below their physical expertise or their educational background.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

Thus, the teenagers, especially the Moluccan boys, grew up watching, unconsciously for the most part, their father being emasculated, in a sense, by the Dutch government. Their strength and their job of honor had been taken away by the lack of thoughtfulness and action of the Dutch immigration authorities. This led the Moluccan teenagers, as it did in some ways with Mohammed Bouyeri as he watched his father become crippled and unable to pray properly, to both anger against the Dutch government and, on a sub-conscious, psychological level, resentment of and embarrassment by their parents. They felt powerless in Dutch society and they were furious that their parents did not take decisive action about the wrongs that had been committed against them. It is partially for this reason that the second generation was more likely to be radical and lashed out against the Dutch society in violent, destructive ways. One way of handling marginalization and ostracism is to force others to pay attention and this is exactly what the Moluccan youth did. This unbelievable fury of the young men manifests itself in the absolute brutal violence of the train hijackings in 1975 and 1977. It is important to note, on top of this, that while at the end of the 1970s, the older generation had rejected entirely these acts of violence, initially, the young men were hailed as “men of action” by their community.<sup>97</sup> They were reclaiming, in a sense, the power that had been taken from their fathers in the mishandled immigration of the 1950s and made sure that the Dutch paid attention to the Moluccan minority. While their actions were reprehensible and certainly detrimental to their home community in the long run, it showed how many problems had been caused by the Dutch government’s lack of action in building a fair and even-leveled relationship with the Moluccan community.

### **Reactions and Attempts at Reconciliation**

In a way, the series of Moluccan terrorist actions worked. All of sudden, twenty-six years after the first Moluccans immigrated to the Netherlands, the indigenous Dutch population took real notice of their neighbors. However, it was not a positive reaction from the general population. This increased radicalism led to a strong political backlash and nationalist politicians were quick to call for increased checks on Indonesian immigration and stricter rules regarding Moluccan communities. “The immediate repercussions ranged from Dutch civilians cursing Moluccans on the streets to police harassing young Moluccans or anybody who faintly resembled them, including many Dutch-Indonesians. A more long-term

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<sup>97</sup> Van Amersfoort, *Waxing and Waning*. 335

effect resulted from stereotyping Moluccans as violence prone, leading to widespread discrimination, particularly on the labor market.”<sup>98</sup> One man, a father of one of the children held in the school take-over, famously remarked upon arriving at the scene “I’m going to get my gun and make sure this never happens again. We hate those black bastards.”<sup>99</sup> Wim Manuhutu remembers that for a while, people would not sit next to him on busses or trains. “They thought that I must be one of them, one of the hijackers.”<sup>100</sup>

There were other interesting reactions to the terrorism in the late 1970s. My grandfather, perhaps because of the guilt that he feels for the early treatment of the Moluccans in the Netherlands, did not react in anger to the train hijackings. This, he says, was not really terrorism. “It was claiming interest for the situation here.” Even though he says that the use of violence was wrong of the Moluccans, it is not similar in his eyes to the Islamic terrorism today. “They [the Moluccans] claimed their rights. They were also Dutch. The Dutch government had to give them a better place.” He says he comprehends the rage that these young Moluccans felt because they were Dutchmen who were not treated as such. “I understand their complaint.”<sup>101</sup>

The Moluccan community was rocked by the events of the late 1970s. Many were stunned by the actions of their relatives and neighbors. Early on, there were more mixed feelings about the violent acts. In 1970, when the embassy was taken over, the young men were “celebrated as heroes by a majority” of Moluccans.<sup>102</sup> “One day of violence was more effective than twenty years of peaceful negotiations.” However, this changed as the attacks intensified in violence. The wake left by the murdering of the train passengers was immense. In 1977, especially, many in the community felt deeply ashamed that its members would take over a school and terrorize children. They were as horrified as other Dutch citizens at the images on the television of frightened children appearing in the windows of the seized school. However, imaginably, while the community rejected the radical violence that swept the country, it also felt deeply connected to the young men and women who perpetrated the crimes. They were part of the Moluccan family after all and despite their horrible deeds, were mourned. The deaths of the six hijackers in 1977 was the most painful for the community. “It

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<sup>98</sup> Bartels. *Can the Train...?*

<sup>99</sup> Caroll, R. et al., *Children of Terror*. *Newsweek*. June 6, 1977

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Wim Manuhutu, Utrecht

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Reinout van Wagtenonk, Den Helder

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Wim Manuhutu, Utrecht

was our Kennedy moment”, Wim Manuhutu remarks, invoking the John F. Kennedy assassination. “Everyone knew where you were on June 11 when the [hijacked] train was attacked.”<sup>103</sup> Mr. Manuhutu remembers as a young college student attending their funeral up in Assen. He estimates that over seven thousand Moluccan community members made the trek to the north of Holland. “Six of our people had been killed and we needed to pay respect. They had paid the ultimate price.” It was a moving experience for the young Mr. Manuhutu, one that he took a few lessons away from. “There was a general feeling of togetherness.” It reminded him of the sense of community that he felt amongst his Moluccan peers. Simultaneously, there was a realization that “nobody wins from violence.” While the community came together at this incredible event in Assen and still, to this day, commemorates the death of these six second-generation Moluccans, it also initiated a time where the community could ponder their role and their place in the Netherlands and this led to a great deal of positive change heading into the 1980s and beyond.<sup>104</sup>

In the wake of the terrorism, there was a great deal of soul-searching throughout the country. While there was anger and distrust in the Netherlands, sixty-two percent of the Netherlands favored “strict surveillance of South Moluccans” in 1977<sup>105</sup>, moderate politicians began the process of stabilizing the Moluccan communities, including investing more in the schools, providing better housing and job opportunities and opening up the society to the second and third generations. There was a realization by the Dutch government that something had to change and remarkably, the governmental response was moderate. The Prime Minister in the early 1980s, Ruud Lubbers, famously said that it is time “to turn the page” and extend Dutch prosperity to the Moluccan community.<sup>106</sup> Unlike the reactionary tone of politics today, there was recognition, even by the government, that “you cannot always be one hundred percent safe”, but that there were ways to help integrate immigrant populations and make them feel more welcome.<sup>107</sup> Lubbers set out a plan to do just that. For example, in the early 1980s, the government set up a program to provide one thousand civil servant jobs for Moluccan Dutch citizens.<sup>108</sup> It was realized that the period of “non-

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> De Boer, C. *The Polls: Terrorism and Hijacking*. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*. Vol. 43, 1979. 415

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Wim Manuhutu, Utrecht

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Prof. van Amersfoort, Amsterdam

<sup>108</sup> Van Amersfoort, *Waxing and Waning*. 168

communication” with the immigrant population had to end.<sup>109</sup> There was a dire need for cultural contact and interaction. In 1986, a major step was taken in this direction with the creation of the *Maluku* museum in Utrecht. While originally intended only to be a monument in the city to the Moluccans, the community argued for and eventually received a cultural center where, at once, the history of the Moluccans in the Netherlands could be on display both for the community itself and for indigenous Dutch visitors. Mr. Manuhutu became the director in 1987 and set out to show the diversity and distinct nature of the first Diaspora community in the Netherlands. Physical, mental and even verbal divisions had been built up over the years in the Netherlands and the museum has worked tirelessly to tear these down.

### **Moving Forward as a Community**

Beyond this increase of cultural communication and understanding on the part of the Dutch government, there was also work done from the Moluccan side to facilitate this cultural interaction. This effort, seemingly of equal importance to the governmental initiatives, started as the Moluccan immigrants began to tire of radicalization. They themselves sought to moderate after feeling marginalized by the radical factions in their midst. Moluccan leaders emerged to speak out against violence and in favor of improved relationships with their Dutch neighbors.<sup>110</sup> Wim Manuhutu watched this transformation on a personal and professional level. The 1980s served as a time of “self reflection.” The community as a whole began to focus on internal problems, the drug use, the violence, the poverty, instead of being singularly focused on the outside political issues of the RMS and Indonesia. There were some rapid changes. Unemployment dropped from a staggering 40% to a much lower, yet still problematic 20% in the span of a few years. This trend would continue and today, the Moluccan community is much closer to the indigenous Dutch average of unemployment.<sup>111</sup> Religiously, young Moluccans put out an important text about the *Piring Nazar* tradition, titled “The Value of Identity in a Secular World.” There was an attempt, inside and outside the church, to hold onto Moluccan roots while understanding returning to an independent state in the Moluccas was impractical and ultimately, not what much of the community wanted. The Moluccan church no longer claimed to be an exiled

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 166

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 166

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Wim Manuhutu, Utrecht

entity.<sup>112</sup> Young Moluccans began to find places in the professional and academic realms and established themselves in new communities throughout the country. By the end of the 1980s, the descendants of the original immigrants from Indonesia tended to be highly educated with a high rate of marriage with non-Indonesian spouses and a birth rate on par to the average indigenous Dutch family.<sup>113</sup> While the boundaries are still being tested, even today, to see how far the Moluccan minority has embedded itself into the Dutch societal fabric, it is clear that after a period of radicalization in the immigrant community and governmental ineffectiveness in adapting to the presence of an immigrant group in the country, both the immigrant population and the government reached a balance allowing for a relatively favorable integration outcome.

History has changed the debate about immigration in the Netherlands and the influx of Turkish and Moroccans into the country is on a much greater scale than the Indonesian and Moluccan experience. However, it is still quite relevant, despite the changes in policies and the repeated mistakes by the Dutch government to note the difference in the Moluccan community between the second and third generation and how time, along with positive steps both by the government and by the immigrant group itself as a whole, has allowed for a mostly positive present situation for Moluccans in the Netherlands. Following the end of terrorism in the beginning of the 1980s, during the heyday for economic immigration in the Netherlands, the Moluccan community settled more comfortably into Dutch society. In studies of this third generation, it is clear that the youth feel much more comfortable amongst their Dutch peers, but also wish to keep hold of some of their Moluccan heritage. This process of grasping onto cultural roots, procedurally named “cultural maintenance”, is often referenced in interviews with teenagers with Moluccan ancestry as part of their identity search.<sup>114</sup> Almost all interviewees in a particular study reject their grandparents desire to return to the Moluccans. While the first generation referred to trips back to the Moluccas as “going home”, the younger generations now usually consider such a trip as a vacation.<sup>115</sup> They foresee their future in the Netherlands, yet struggle proactively to remain culturally connected to the Moluccas. Some do this by becoming bilingual, speaking Dutch and Malay,

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<sup>112</sup> Interview with Karel Steenbrink, Utrecht

<sup>113</sup> Steenbrink, Karel. *Colonial and Postcolonial Muslims from Indonesia in the Netherlands*. 11

<sup>114</sup> Verkuyten, Maykel et al. Third Generation South Moluccans in the Netherlands: The Nature of Ethnic Identity. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Vol. 25, No. 1, January 1999, pp. 63-80 70

<sup>115</sup> Interview with Wim Manuhutu, Utrecht

the language of the South Moluccan Islands. Even the language is slowly slipping away in the natural course of integration. “Once, your identity as a Moluccan was based on the ability to speak Malay. Now, ninety or ninety-five percent of the third and fourth generation would not count” if this was still the case.<sup>116</sup> Some of the traditional “identity markers” have been erased. Traditional Moluccan surnames are disappearing yet young men and women with common Dutch last names and Moluccan heritage will identify as both Dutch and Moluccan. A slightly off-colored anecdote related to me shows the relative comfort that Moluccans feel in being both Dutch and Moluccan. When a new Moluccan mosque, one of two in the country, was built in the town of Waalwijk, one of the leaders of the Moluccan community there was asked on a radio show by a caller of Moroccan descent why the Dutch government had given the community such a nice mosque even though the government was hesitant to help out the Moroccan Muslim community. The Moluccan leader responded “Well, we are Dutch and you aren’t yet.” This congregant keeps his religious faith, tied directly to his Moluccan heritage yet still feels Dutch<sup>117</sup>

Of course, this is not to say that the integration has been completely successful for the later generations of Moluccans. Unfortunately many of the youth still struggle with cultural differences and feelings of separation due to the color of their skin and their ethnic background. During the recent outbreak of violence in the Moluccas between Christians and Muslims, many Moluccans here in the Netherlands felt powerless to help solve the crisis, yet also felt estranged from their fellow Dutchmen who did not understand or follow the crisis in the Moluccas.<sup>118</sup> This is a reminder that, even in the best circumstances of integration, there will not be and should not be a loss of ethnic history and culture. Differences will remain. However, if the Dutch can begin to learn from the mistakes that were made with the Moluccan community, there is hope that these lessons can be applied to the Islamic immigrants of today and future groups of migrants to this small western European nation. Hopefully, this will allow for a smoother and quicker transition from an alienated, isolated and marginalized immigrant group to a full member of modern Dutch society.

### **Conclusion: Looking Forward and Applying the Lessons of History**

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Karel Steenbrink, Utrecht

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Wim Manuhutu, Utrecht

The debate about immigration in the Netherlands has erupted over the past decade. Increasingly, the only voices heard in this period have been the fanatics, the fundamentalists and the reactionaries on both sides. Terrorist attacks, perpetrated in the name of Islam, have occurred throughout the western world and radicals here in the Netherlands have been arrested and charged for plotting similar violence. Politicians like Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders have emerged, unleashing a torrent of political vitriol against the Islamic immigrants in this country. Wilders even went so far as to make a movie portraying the Islamic religion as one that is inherently violent and vile, one that should be controlled or even removed from the confines of the Dutch state. Theo van Gogh, a famed film maker and callous critic of Islam and most other organized religions was violently murdered in broad daylight by Mohammed Bouyeri, the aforementioned Dutch-born fanatical Muslim who had ties with international fundamentalist organizations. For a country that has transformed from an ethnically homogenous nation to one of the most ethnically diverse in less than half a century, it must seem almost unbearable to handle the speed and the magnitude in which problems have appeared on the political and social horizon. It is hard under these circumstances to do anything but become reactionary. Moderates are drowned out by the louder and angrier wings on each side. The media is inclined, whether for an increased audience or for pure journalistic value, to trumpet these fundamentalists offering radical, one-sided beliefs and arguments. Therefore, on the television, in the newspapers, flowing through the daily life of the sixteen million Dutch citizens is the constant collision of seemingly uncompromising, unflinching, incompatible cultures. The debate has been framed as if one culture, specifically the indigenous Dutch culture, must be forced upon the immigrants or else radical Islam will do the same to the Dutch, taking over the country and extinguishing the customs, the political beliefs and the cultural practices that have existed for centuries. It has become a black and white fight, as if there are only two sides in the debate.

There needs to be a breath. There needs to be a pause in the bickering, a contemplative silence from trying to out-shout, out-argue or control the others. Because of the speed of immigration, the changing world events and the ebb and flow of economic and social factors throughout the world, the immigration debate has become blind to nuance, blind to the intricacies of the subject and especially blind to history. This paper, exploring the Moluccan experience in the Netherlands and weaving it together with contemporary debate

seeks to take off these blinders and slow down the debate momentarily. It is imperative that the Dutch learn from its own history and delve beneath the surface of issues, exploring the reasons behind immigration difficulties. The story of the Moluccans in the Netherlands, the history of the Dutch as a colonial empire and the evolution of individuals through new generations in an immigrant population are three lines that are immensely important to understand today better. While there are many important differences separating the story of the Moluccans from the story of the Turks and the Moroccans, the striking similarities can teach contemporary scholars and actually offer hope that, by using the right tools and searching for a fair, compromise, there are actual moderate solutions that do not require violence, reactionary politics or social turmoil.

The Moluccans, like the Turks and the Moroccans were originally thought to be temporary. Thus, they were isolated, thought of as outsiders in this very small country. This is the first point to learn from. It is both the government and the group's responsibility to realize that the first assumption about immigrants is often to believe that they are temporary. However, this assumption can be dangerous and can set back integration for a long period of time. While neither the Dutch government nor the Moluccan community can be blamed for initially believing that the former KNIL soldiers and their families would return to the Moluccas shortly, it is inexcusable that this thinking continued especially on a governmental level for nineteen, and in some official documents, twenty-nine years. The steps that the Dutch government took to integrate and welcome the Indo-European immigrants after the end of the Dutch colony in Indonesia show that the country was not incapable of creating a conducive environment for immigrants entering the Netherlands. However, there needed to be a balance sooner, just as there should be a balance today, between the immigrant community wanting to learn the language, some of their new home's culture and the Dutch government making it possible for the immigrants to both interact with indigenous local people while still granting room for the group to keep cultural ties and important rituals.

This balance must also exist in the relationship that is forged. Clearly, when immigrants come to a western nation, they will often lack certain tools to integrate. Some may not have the desired education background, labor skills or language faculties. However, the mindset that was forged in the days of colonialism that still exists in the Netherlands and other western countries must be diminished. An immigrant group cannot be expected to truly

integrate or feel comfortable when the people are treated as an under-cultured or inferior group of people. The fact that a Moroccan, a Turk or a Moluccan can never outgrow the *allochtoon* moniker in the Netherlands, no matter how many generations live in this country, is absurd. There is no way to completely erase race barriers, ethnic differences and feelings of alienation and societal estrangement. However, the Dutch government, through the schools, job placement programs and other governmental functions, should take special care that these separations amongst groups of people is not apparent in official business. Reminding children that they go to a *zwarte scholen* does not help them feel like they are a part of Dutch society. Until 1983, the Moluccan wards and therefore all issues regarding them as a group was under the control of the government and specifically the welfare section of the government. It seems unfathomable that the Moluccans as a group would be expected to become self-reliant and proud of their place in Dutch society when they were not trusted to handle many personal affairs, such as housing, work and education, as most other Dutch citizens do.

As long as there is a top-down approach to how the government approaches immigrant groups, the latter will always be relegated to a second-class position, both in a physical, economic sense and in a psychological sense. Taking control away from the group and expecting the diverse individuals in that group to all act as one is counter-intuitive and counter-effective. This remnant of the days when the Dutch ruled the homeland of the Moluccans while other European countries much of the rest of the so-called third world must end. There are ways to help immigrants get on their feet, welcome them into society and let them become productive members of society without ensuring, through paternalistic political practices, that the relationship is top-down and that the immigrants and their subsequent generations feel powerless and unheard.

Terrorism is a horrible aspect of life in the contemporary west. It is never right. Unfortunately in all the high-pitched discussion about terrorism today, people have forgotten the lessons that can be learned from the story of the Moluccan second generation and the small section of that group that radicalized and became violent. Terrorism does not emerge from one religion, one political movement, one ethnic group or one doctrinal mindset. The violence that erupts amongst marginalized young men and women is a result of complex reasons. It is not a coincidence that there are striking similarities between the young people

who became radicalized in the 1970s as part of the Moluccan independence movement and those who have become violent today as part of radicalized Islam. These young people, among the many reasons for their wrong-headed, tragic actions, often feel that they have no voice in society. Especially for the “home grown terrorists” like Hansina Uktolseja and Mohammed Bouyeri, they are disaffected in their own country. They do not feel like they belong in the homes of their parents, the first generation, and they certainly do not feel like they belong to the general Dutch society. They have experienced perceived wrongs against themselves and their families and lash out in the one outlet that they feel, unfortunately, is available to them. This final parallel presented in the paper is essential to understanding the cyclical nature of immigration history in the Netherlands. More can be done to help young people who feel trapped between the culture of their parents and their home country. Violence can never be stopped. It was a wise and deep statement that one can never be one-hundred percent safe from violence, nor can any government hope to peacefully and democratically help and take care of all young men and women who lash out violently against their government or at people around them. However, by fixing some of the aforementioned problems, by stemming the isolation of immigrant groups and working with people on an individual level rather than attempting to lump all people of the same ethnicity together, the process of solving these problems can move forward.

The story of the Moluccans is not a closed book, nor are all the problems that the community faces solved. However, it is a book that should be read and studied. The steps that the community has taken and the struggle that has evolved into a more positive, proactive one should serve as a blueprint for current and future immigrants to the Netherlands. The study of immigration must be one that looks backwards and forwards because past human interaction, past difficulties and past successes can always guide the present and the future so that the difficulties can be avoided and the successes can be embraced.

## Appendix 1.0

### Statistics

A citizen with a “foreign background” is defined as “A person of whom at least one parent was born abroad” and a “non-western foreign background” is defined as “A person of whom at least one parent was born in Africa, South America, Asia and Turkey, excluding the Asian nations of Japan and Indonesia.”

As of March 8, 2008

Total Dutch Population	16,404,282
Dutch Citizens with a Native Background	13,188,027
Dutch Citizens with a Foreign Background	3,216,255
Dutch Citizens with Non-Western Background	1,766,154
Dutch Citizens with an Indonesian Background (includes ethnically Dutch citizens who were born in Indonesia)	387, 118
Dutch Citizens with a Moluccan Background (estimated in 2002*)	40,000
Dutch Citizens with a Moluccan Background (estimated in 2008^)	45,000
Dutch Citizens with a Turkish Background	372, 852
Dutch Citizens with a Moroccan Background	335, 208

\* - Beets, G., Walhout, E. and Koesoebjono, S. (2002) 'Demografische ontwikkeling van de Molukse bevolkingsgroep in Nederland; Maandstatistiek van de bevolking, 50(6): 13-17

^ - Interview with Wim Manuhutu, Director of the *Maluku* Museum in Utrecht

### Appendix 1.1

#### Moluccan Population in the Netherlands

#### Breakdown of arrivals in 1951

6 clergymen  
3 adjutants  
35 sergeant-majors  
372 sergeants  
821 corporals  
2341 privates  
9000 family members

#### Nationality in 1978

60% - No nationality (*Statenloos*)  
30% - Netherlands  
10% - Indonesian

#### Population in 1951

12,578

#### Population in 1957 (est.)

18,600

#### Population in 1968 (est.)

25, 456

#### Population in 1978 (est.)

32,000

#### Population in 2002 (est.)

40,000

#### Religion<sup>119</sup>

93% Protestant  
4.5% Catholic  
2.5% Muslim

#### Origin in the Moluccas<sup>120</sup>

76% - Ambonese (Central Moluccas)  
20% (est.) - Southern Moluccas (e.g. Kei and Tanimbar)

<sup>119</sup> Steenbrink, Karel. *Colonial and Post-Colonial Muslims from Indonesia in the Netherlands.*

<sup>120</sup> Bartels, Dieter. *Can the Train Ever be Stopped Again?*

## Appendix 1.2

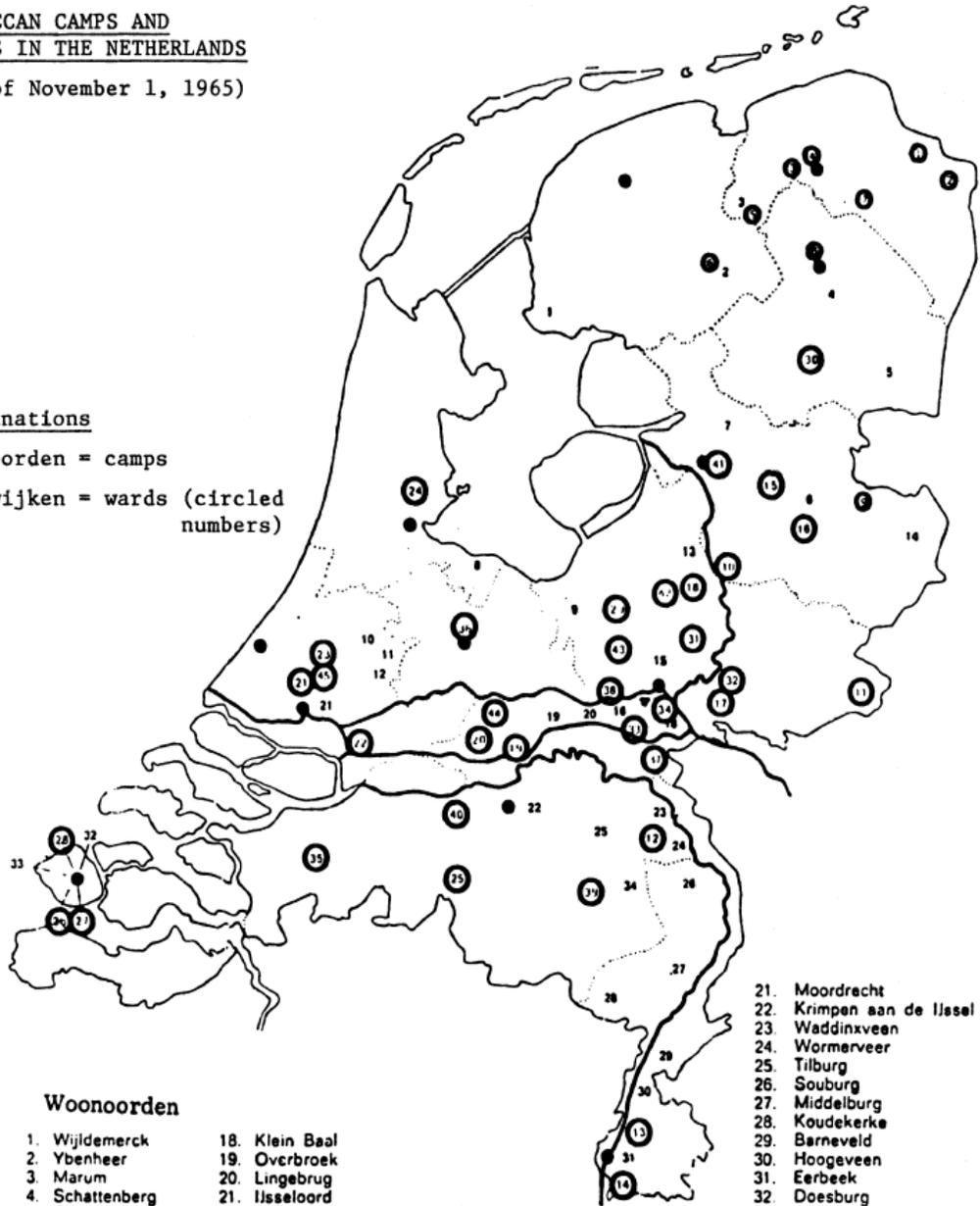
### MOLUCCAN CAMPS AND WARDS IN THE NETHERLANDS

(as of November 1, 1965)

#### Explanations

woonoorden = camps

woonwijken = wards (circled numbers)



#### **Woonoorden**

- |                         |                       |
|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Wijdemerck           | 18. Klein Baal        |
| 2. Ybenheer             | 19. Overbroek         |
| 3. Marum                | 20. Lingebrug         |
| 4. Schattenberg         | 21. IJsseloord        |
| 5. Geesbrug             | 22. Lunetten          |
| 6. Laarbrug             | 23. Genapium          |
| 7. Conrad               | 24. Oude Molen        |
| 8. Almère               | 25. Donzel            |
| 9. De Biezen            | 26. Vierlingsbeek     |
| 10. Kazerne             | 27. Blerick           |
| 11. Singel              | 28. Tungalroy         |
| 12. Utrechtse Straatweg | 29. Montfort          |
| 13. Vaassen             | 30. Op de Loop        |
| 14. Vossenbos           | 31. Rijckholt         |
| 15. Goiflinks           | 32. Middelburg        |
| 16. De Haar             | 33. Vliegveld Souburg |
| 17. Snodenhoek          | 34. Vlakwater         |

#### **De omliggende cijfers geven de woonwijken aan:**

- |                |                           |
|----------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Appingedam  | 11. Winterswijk           |
| 2. Deifzijl    | 12. Cuyck                 |
| 3. Hoogkerk    | 13. Geleen                |
| 4. Groningen   | 14. Heer                  |
| 5. Marum       | 15. Nijverdal             |
| 6. Oosterwoldc | 16. Rijssen               |
| 7. Hoogezand   | 17. Zevenaer              |
| 8. Assen       | 18. Teuge                 |
| 9. Almelo      | 19. Tiel                  |
| 10. Deventer   | 20. Leerdam               |
|                | 21. Moordrecht            |
|                | 22. Krimpen aan de IJssel |
|                | 23. Waddinxveen           |
|                | 24. Wormerveer            |
|                | 25. Tilburg               |
|                | 26. Souburg               |
|                | 27. Middelburg            |
|                | 28. Koudekerke            |
|                | 29. Barneveld             |
|                | 30. Hoogeveen             |
|                | 31. Eerbeek               |
|                | 32. Doesburg              |
|                | 33. Opheusden             |
|                | 34. Elst                  |
|                | 35. Breda                 |
|                | 36. Breukelen             |
|                | 37. Hatert                |
|                | 38. Bemmel                |
|                | 39. Helmond               |
|                | 40. Waalwijk              |
|                | 41. Zwolle                |
|                | 42. Apeldoorn             |
|                | 43. Lunteren              |
|                | 44. Culemborg             |
|                | 15. Alphen a/d Rijn       |

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