

BARRACKS-CONCUBINAGE IN THE INDIES, 1887-1920*

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The Indies Army

In 1830 a situation unique for a colonial territory developed in the Netherlands Indies. Up to that time the Netherlands Army, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of War, had supplied the troops assigned to serve in the Netherlands Indies, supplementing them on the spot with native soldiers. After 1830, the army in the Netherlands Indies became a separate organization, called the East Indies Army, and was placed administratively under the Minister of the Colonies. Only in 1933 did it assume the name KNIL--a name still so famous in the Netherlands.¹

In 1890 the Colonial Reserve was established, because it was believed that the quality of the forces going to the Netherlands Indies needed to be improved. That same year began the dismantling (completed in 1907) of the Colonial Recruiting Depot at Harderwijk, which, up to that time, tried by every available means to maintain the proportion of Europeans in the East Indies Army.²

Up to 1909 the Minister of War was responsible for this organization; after that it too came under the authority of the Minister of the Colonies. The general opinion of the quality of the soldiers sent out is strikingly illustrated by the name given to the Harderwijk depot: "The sink-hole of Europe."³ After the transfer of sovereignty to the Republic of Indonesia there was no longer any place for the KNIL, and the army was abolished on July 26, 1950. Some Netherlands, however, still think fondly of "that good old KNIL. . . ."⁴

* This article was originally prepared as a seminar paper at the Vrije University in Amsterdam and is based exclusively on materials available in the Netherlands, particularly the archives of the former Ministry of the Colonies in The Hague. The author has not had the opportunity to supplement this with Indonesian source materials and the major focus is thus on Dutch attitudes and policies. The article, which was written in Dutch, has been translated by the Editors, who wish to thank Professor Heather Sutherland both for bringing the text to their attention and for her help in the translation.

1. In 1944 the "I" came to stand for "Indonesian" rather than "Indies." H. L. Zwitzer and C. A. Heshusius, *Het Koninklijk Netherlands-Indisch Leger 1830-1950: Een Terugblik* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1977), p. 10.

2. Ibid., p. 84.

3. *Verbaal* 20-1-1902, no. 4, p. 6, Archives of the Former Ministerie van Koloniën, Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague [henceforth MvK].

4. Zwitzer and Heshusius, *KNIL 1830-1950*, p. 77.

Organization and Place within Society

The Dutch colonial army was distinguished from others of its ilk in that the indigenous peoples were posted and housed together with Europeans. This did not mean that there was no racial segregation, but that this was practiced at the regiment, battalion, and sometimes the company level. The army leadership saw this style of organization as organic, and hoped thereby to compensate for the generally deprecated martial valor of the Javanese by the supposedly superior fighting capacities of the European. Moreover, by 1913 at least, there were certainly doubts as to the reliability of the Javanese as soldiers.⁵

Despite the close cooperation among the various ethnic groups within the army, its inner structure was markedly hierarchical. The categories European, African, Ambonese, and Native corresponded to progressively limited privileges. The "ethnic" status of the man colored that of his wife and any children they had, as is demonstrated by the differing educations that the boys received.⁶ The status distinctions between the women were also revealed in their transportation. Moreover, there were differences in salaries, food supplies, and equipment. Shoes were a luxury that the indigenous soldiers were first allowed in 1908.⁷

Until 1895 European soldiers made up more than half the male Europeans in the Netherlands Indies.⁸ This high percentage did not give rise to proportionate prestige. "Certainly in the nineteenth century, the European soldier in the Indies Army was a figure whose place on the fringe of colonial society resulted from the simple fact that he was a military man. While his bravery was rewarded with the highest honors, he was socially a pariah, rejected by the Europeans in the colony and treated as a leper. Only officers were received in society, and then merely to increase the marriage opportunities for the young daughters of the Europeans. But even an officer could often not guarantee himself a bride, in view of the exorbitant demands made on his financial resources."⁹ The lower ranks were seen as the dregs of society, as social irredeemables of low birth and trifling value, fit only to serve as cannon fodder.

Military resentment towards the civilian society was nothing unusual. It was sometimes perceptible even in the army leadership, particularly when it felt itself frustrated in pursuing a desired course of action by civilians, who liked to play the moralizer, and yet to whom the principle of the pot calling the kettle black could well on occasion be applied. But also, indeed especially, the lower-ranking soldiers had their complaints. One NCO wrote: "No one concerns himself with our lot. The Europeans here--officers, officials, and merchants with their families--whom we are supposed to protect from danger, are so ungrateful for our sacrifice that they shun us completely. Clergymen themselves often set the tone. When we greet them (really they should greet us first, knowing that no one else has a friendly word for us), usually we get either no greeting in return, or at best a very stiff

5. Exhibitum 24-2-1913, no. 111, p. 24, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

6. Letter from the Army Commandant to the Governor-General, 1902, p. 2, in *Mailrapport* [henceforth *Mr.*] no. 91, 1904. It was thus principally natives who attended the Corps schools, while the other barracks children attended government schools.

7. Zwitzer and Heshusius, *KNIL 1830-1950*, p. 10.

8. A. van Marle, "De Groep der Europeanen in Nederlands-Indië, iets over ontstaan en groei," *Indonesië*, 5 (1951/1952), p. 485.

9. Zwitzer and Heshusius, *KNIL 1830-1950*, p. 11.

nod. On the whole, there is no cordiality. The clergymen never appear in the barracks. For us there is no other place than the canteen. They never invite us to their homes. Not just their houses but even their hearts, are closed to us."¹⁰

Drink and concubinage were, then, seen as solaces for such underprivileged soldiers. The square bottle of jenever and the native woman were as oases in the desert that European society represented for Jan Fuselier.

Living Conditions within the Barracks

Already in the time of the Company, natives reinforced the Dutch armed forces as auxiliaries. Following that tradition, their wives and children accompanied them wherever they went. The European took over this custom, and, although not every European lived with a native woman, at least by 1836 his right to do so was acknowledged.¹¹

The picture one gets of barracks life in the Netherlands Indies is thus not that of a typical all-male society. On the contrary, one gets a diverse picture, in which women and children had their place. In the small warungs within the barracks the soldiers could buy delicacies--although naturally things only got really lively after their daily tasks were done. These daily tasks for the lower ranks were as follows: in the morning from 5 to 11:30, they were on duty. After that there was a rest period, which, however, was to be used for mending clothing and cleaning their weapons. Illiterates took lessons from five to six in the afternoon. By 9:30 they were in bed.

Provisioning was not handled everywhere in the same way for each group. The native soldier's wife and children could accompany him to the mess; a European's concubine could not do the same, unless he was on field duty, in which case all women and children received a rice and salt ration from the government.¹² Usually the soldiers got their provisioning in kind. Extras, for example cheese, were paid for from a canteen fund, built up from monetary contributions by the European soldiers themselves. At outlying posts and in small garrisons, canteens were provided only for the non-Europeans.¹³ It seems fair to ask whether all this increased a European's need for a concubine, i.e., whether at the very least she guaranteed him good and not too expensive meals. The question, however, is easier to pose than to answer.

Housing was characterized by a basic separation between the quarters provided for Europeans and those reserved for non-Europeans, beyond which a soldier's rank played a certain role. European NCOs had separate quarters, either all to themselves or shared with others, whenever there were too many of them for the available space. Bachelors were normally housed together.¹⁴ The European lower ranks lived together in a barracks dormitory. In 1889 a regulation was promulgated by Minister Keuchenius that those living with a concubine had to be separated from

10. *Een Onderzoek naar den toestand van het Nederlandsch-Indisch Leger, uit een zedelijk oogpunt beschouwd, ter ernstige overweging aangeboden door de Vereeniging tot bevordering der Zedelijkheid in de Nederlandsche Overzeesche Bezittingen en de Nederlandsche Vereeniging tegen de Prostitutie* (n.p., n.d.), p. 86.

11. Exhibitum 7-10-1912, no. 131, p. 17, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

12. Exhibitum 24-2-1913, no. 111, p. 8, in *ibid.*

13. Exhibitum 10-7-1916, no. 109, p. 2, in *ibid.*

14. *Mr.* no. 91, 1904, p. 14, MvK.

those who were single--a regulation implemented by placing movable partitions in the dormitory. The married lower-ranking soldier had a somewhat better lot. He was, as far as possible, assigned quarters of his own. In granting permission for marriages, the space available in the barracks was always taken into account. The wife received from the government a bed, pillows, and straw mattress, and perhaps a blanket. A report of 1893 sketches the situation as follows:

With regard to the European companies--only a minority of which possess a mess--the aim is to provide the married men their own quarters as far as possible. Where there is sufficient room, they are allowed (naturally after duty) to use cord and cloth to form a kind of little retreat where a bed can be placed. . . . A daytime visit reveals no trace of the European soldiers' native appendages; indeed this is also the case with the native troops. Besides, one of the first priorities in building camps is the provision of so-called "women's sheds" with countless braziers. These make it possible to bake and cook the delicacies so cherished by the soldiers, and enhance the tastiness of the otherwise excellent food rations issued by the government.¹⁵

There were also separate sanitation facilities for the women. Whether the native women were always happy to share a narrow bed with their husband is rather doubtful. For example, in the novel *Halfcaste* Ma Sarinah decides to sleep on a mat after the departure of her Jan.¹⁶ This must also have happened in the dormitory.

In the non-European companies, the NCOs lived either in rooms of their own or in separate parts of the soldiers' quarters. The natives were provided with *balai*, two soldiers for each *balai*. During rest periods colored cloths were hung between the *balai* forming little dens for as many couples as were present. The majority of the natives, all those who were not officially married, lived together. The children slept mostly on top of the *balai*, their parents underneath.

Whenever the men were off in the field, the women remained behind. They were organized into so-called Women's Companies, each led by an officer and the "most necessary" cadres. It seems that there was a hierarchy among the women which mirrored the ranks held by their husbands. "To exercise supervision over the women, a Moentji Majoor (Sergeant Major) is appointed as overall head. She is the senior reporting officer and has under her the Moentji Sergeants. This pair of powerholders usually (even if often jointly) live in the rooms assigned to their men (if only they could be of a better type!); the subordinate Moentji-corporals function as group commanders, and live with their groups."¹⁷ This quotation reflects the typically disdainful attitude of the European soldier towards the native concubine.

The barracks' rooms were kept clean in the first instance by a custodian. Beyond that, once a week a major cleaning took place. Beds and *balai* were given a thorough cleaning outside the barracks, and the rooms were scrubbed down. Once a week inspections for venereal disease were carried out. These involved only the men. For the women, examinations were performed only when they were suspected of being infected.

Taken as a whole, barracks' society was relatively well ordered. The wild stories, emanating principally from Christian informants, about the smuggling in of whores and very young girls, undoubtedly--and fortunately--belonged largely to the

15. Report dated 18-3-1893, in *Verbaal* 21-1-1903, no. T^I, MvK.

16. J. Fabricius, *Halfbloed* (The Hague: Leopold, 1946), p. 31.

17. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, p. 72.

realm of fantasy. With one exception: "There is one barracks in the East Indies where not a single woman was allowed in, that of the cadets at Gombong. Several years ago, it transpired that *far more than half* of the young men quartered there were guilty of practicing unnatural vice."¹⁸ In its polemic with The Hague, the army leadership felt that this kind of situation fully demonstrated the value of concubinage. Officials in the Netherlands, however, found the thought of 12 to 16 year olds having regular sexual association with women so shocking that possible homophile activities appeared innocuous by contrast.

*Barracks-Concubinage between the European Soldier
and His Concubine*

Concubinage, including military concubinage, has a long history in the Netherlands Indies. Already in 1617 marriages between ex-Company servants and non-Christians were forbidden. Marriages with Christians were also subject to restrictions, so that living with a slave-woman soon became a very common phenomenon, so much so that in 1620 the Christian authorities issued a ban on keeping mistresses.¹⁹ Indirectly, concubinage was strongly encouraged by a regulation of 1617, under which anyone, married to a native or mixed-blood woman, was barred from returning to Europe. The fear of "multiplication" in the Netherlands must have played a role in this ban.²⁰

Even Coen, who imposed very strict rules in the field of sexual morals, could not stop the growth of concubinage. His ban proved a paper tiger. Illustrative of his severity towards extramarital sexuality is the sad story of Ensign Kortenhoeft, who was executed for consorting with a daughter of the future Governor General Specx and a Japanese woman. For the girl, things fortunately turned out better since she later married a clergyman.²¹

Interracial concubinage achieved recognition in the civil law code of the Netherlands Indies. Retired Lt. Col. J. I. de Rochemont formulated it in this way: "The nyai are numerous and belong to all strata of our Indo-European society. Not only the soldiers in the barracks, but also most of the generals, field and other officers, governors of territories, residents, senior and other officials, have a nyai if they are not married. Both in the Netherlands in our Colonies one finds prominent people who are the children of Nyai."²²

Yet in the second half of the nineteenth century a slow change began to take place in the attitude of the Europeans towards this type of cohabitation. W. L. Ritter, who first went to the Netherlands Indies as an officer in 1815, noted a decline half way through the century. "What we have in mind here, we acknowledge it frankly, is the cohabitation of Europeans with native women, something that is, not unreasonably, a thorn in the side for so many, and yet in some instances excusable and difficult to avoid. We by no means wish to appear as defenders of such cohabitation--far from it; we too welcome the current signs of its decline. But it

18. Postscript to Report dated 1893, in *Verbaal* 21-1-1903, no. T^I, MvK.

19. W. E. van Mastenbroek, *De historische ontwikkeling van de staatsrechtelijke indeeling der bevolking van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Wageningen: Veenman, 1934), p. 27.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

21. Van Marle, "De Groep der Europeanen," p. 483.

22. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, p. 5.

must be conceded that when a man leaves the motherland for the Indies, he takes no vow of chastity nor undertakes to lead a monastic life."²³

Another indication of a changing attitude toward concubinage was the regulation of Governor-General Duymaer van Twist (1851-56) that, in confidential personal records on lower- and higher-ranking soldiers, note should be taken of whether or not they lived with a mistress; behind this regulation lay the threat that the soldier's "civil status" would be taken into account when he came up for promotion.²⁴

Nevertheless, in the final quarter of the nineteenth century half the European men in the Netherlands Indies were still living with concubines. A decline in this number is only perceptible after 1890, and it occurred along with an increase in prostitution. Those who still lived with a nyai tried to do so as unobtrusively as possible.²⁵ We may note in any case that passionate Christianity and concubinage were naturally antagonistic. Both the age of Coen and the end of the last century, times when Christians felt strongly that their beliefs ought to find political expression, were characterized by a disapproving attitude towards concubinage. Most writers also see a connection between the growing number of European women going to the Netherlands Indies and the gradual retreat of concubinage. Naturally, these attitudes also affected ideas about, and the very existence of, barracks-concubinage.

The European Noncommissioned Officers and Lower Ranks

In the Netherlands Indies it was generally felt that sexual activity was a *sine qua non* of a man's life. "The moral standards of the soldier can be so elevated that his conduct is excellent and he refrains from drink. Yet no matter what height he may attain the woman remains indispensable to him, and thus the degree of abstinence is more a question of natural inclination and financial circumstances than moral standards."²⁶

It was the government, however, that in practice eliminated the possibility of a sexual life in wedlock for the vast majority of soldiers, in that it gave its consent to marriage only under very restrictive conditions. This consent was governed by General Order no. 62 of 1872, in which we can read the following:

- I. Consent to the contracting of a legal marriage can be granted to:
 - a. all NCOs above the rank of *sergeant major*;
 - b. all gunsmiths, guards, bandsmen, qualified clerks, artillery and engineering personnel, hospital staff; in general, all military considered as belonging to the regular army; and
 - c. the residual NCOs and army rank and file, not listed under a) and b), who may be considered as covered by General Order no. 21, 1878.²⁷

The conclusion is obvious that, where a soldier could not fulfill his sexual needs within marriage, he had to look for satisfaction outside the institution. He could take a concubine or visit a brothel; the women employed in the government's brothels had the reputation of being free of venereal disease.

23. W. L. Ritter, *De Europeaan in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Leiden: n.p., 1856), p. 19.

24. Exhibitum 7-10-1912, no. 131, p. 7, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

25. Van Marle, "De Groep der Europeanen," p. 491.

26. *Verbaal* 29-12-1903, no. 47, p. 13, MvK.

27. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, pp. 189-90.

It was the soldiers with the highest incomes, i.e., those who performed special functions, who could afford a concubine. Almost all of them belonged to the category of those who, in principle, were permitted to contract a marriage. Most had been in the Indies for a relatively longer time and often had renewed their contracts.²⁸ In 1888, the army totaled 13,062 European soldiers, of whom 147 were married, and 2,930 (22.5 percent) cohabited.²⁹ This percentage remained relatively constant. Of the 12,621 European soldiers in the army of 1901, 2,794 (22.1 percent) had concubines.³⁰ In 1911, the figure was 2,372, or 23 percent, of a total of 10,320. The number of married men in those years were 554 and 1,005.³¹

The figures show that the percentage of marriages increased, yet this seems to have had no effect on the pressure for cohabitation. If the income of the average trooper was insufficient to enable him to keep "even" a mistress, that of an NCO did not, on the whole, permit him to maintain a family.³² It is unlikely that a soldier's marrying his concubine would result in an increasing need for material goods, unless one assumes that a marriage would less often prove childless than a concubinage. It is thus almost impossible to escape the conclusion that the lives of the soldiers were certainly no bed of roses.

The legitimate question remains, whether the morality of a cohabitative-relationship tie is increased by marriage. This was clearly the reasoning in The Hague. Yet from the fact that the government was prepared to raise the salaries of NCOs to put them in a better position to marry, we may conclude that it was anticipated that most of the marriages would be contracted with European women. A native *nyai* had fewer needs; the material and moral standards of European women were much higher--so it was reasoned.

The Nyai

Nyahi or nyai is a Javanese word, that denotes both a respectable woman of middle age, and the mistress or concubine of a European.³³ According to Koks, it is a word of Balinese origin, arriving with the Balinese girls, who for a certain period were all the rage among Europeans.³⁴ The *tangsi*-maid or concubine of a soldier in the barracks was often called by the Europeans simply Sarina[h]. In *Halfcaste*, Johan Fabricius gives the typical history of a European soldier's concubine. Ma Sarinah lived with her man, Jan Camphuys, in the barracks, cooked his food,

28. Ibid., pp. 39-40.

29. Exhibitum 7-10-1912, no. 131, p. 19, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

30. Exhibitum 5/13 1902, no. 89, MvK.

31. Mr. 10/9/12 1068/3, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

32. At the end of the last century a trooper earned f.0.85 every five days. A first-class trooper received twenty cents more. This pay could rise to f.1.45 (for the first-class trooper, to f.1.65). A drink cost six cents and a visit to the government brothel made the soldier ['s pocket] twenty-five cents lighter. In 1897 a pension fund for soldiers was established, but the pensions were not transferable to widows and orphans. In 1906-7 an adjutant NCO earned f.1,710.50 (if not on active duty f.1,491.50). The earnings of a sergeant-major were f.1,121.50; those of a sergeant or a fourier f.900.50. In 1913, these salaries were respectively f.1,893.00; f.1,765.25; f.1,267.50; and f.991.25. These increases must in any event have been to some extent real.

33. *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 3 (The Hague/Leiden: Nijhoff/Brill, 1917).

34. J. Th. Koks, *De Indo* (Amsterdam: Paris, 1931), p. 7.

mended his clothes, and received his blows. When he returned to the Netherlands, she was expecting their fifth child. At their parting on the quay he felt too ashamed to embrace her in front of the other whites. Jan never came back and the money he had promised never reached Ma Sarinah, from which she concluded that Jan must have died. She could claim no pension, for Jan had never thought of marrying her. It sounds like a cheap theme from a dime novel, but, alas, it was only too true for many women and children.

The legal rights of the nyai were nil, even less than those of the lowest household servant.³⁵ She could, from one day to the next, be discharged at the request of her man, and be left standing with her offspring on the street. The soldier who returned to Europe had three options. He could follow the example of Jan Camp-huys: simply leave his family behind unprovided for. Or he could try to turn the family over to some other soldier remaining in the Indies. This soldier would then take responsibility for their care. Finally, he could try, before leaving for Europe, to place his children in one of the various charitable institutions. The mother of his children would then go back to the kampong or try to earn a living as a babu or seamstress.³⁶

In the eyes of many Dutchmen the kampong was seen as a vast sponge. It could provide the labor force the Europeans needed, but it could also reabsorb with the greatest ease those who became the redundant and thus unusable. Conveniently, the elasticity of the kampong was seen as inexhaustible. That, for the native woman a return to the kampong was not always an attractive proposition is suggested by this pronouncement of General Boetje, acting Army Commandant in the Netherlands Indies.

Leaving aside the question of whether these concubines were born and brought up in the barracks, we can be confident that any native woman who has abandoned herself to follow a European soldier, has sunk very low in the eyes of her fellow-countrymen. If such a woman is expelled from the barracks, owning nothing, and usually in no position to work to support her children, it seems to me very doubtful that there will be a place for her or her children in the kampong, that is, in native society. None of the men will be eager to take her as his mate, and in most cases it can be predicted that, in dire need, she will be forced to turn to prostitution for her livelihood.

For those who may think that the general wrote these words out of human compassion for the fate of the discarded nyai, I append the remainder of his comments: "If only the mother were willing and able to hide from her child the fact that it had a European father, there would be no further need to take account of her fate, no matter how miserable in many cases it must be."³⁷

Before a nyai was permitted into the camp, she had to be able to produce a certificate of good conduct. For serious infringements of the rules she could be expelled by the military authorities. We have already noted that, if suspected of suffering from venereal disease, she was obliged to undergo a medical examination. It was usually the woman who controlled the household purse-strings. It was she

35. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, p. 15.

36. Letter from the Governor-General to the Raad van Indië, p. 17, in *Mr.* no. 91, MvK.

37. Letter from Gen. Boetje to the Governor-General, p. 6, in *ibid.* This remark was written in response to a recommendation by the Commission on Pauperism that the concubine and her unacknowledged child be expelled from the barracks.

who went to get the necessary food supplies from the market. Mostly there would be a bit of pocket money left over, to pay for the man's drinks and tobacco. If he was away in the field, usually half of his salary was turned over to his concubine, as well as the government rations of rice and salt.

I estimate the probable ages of the women in the barracks as between 12 and 35 or 40. The marriage age for a girl in the Netherlands Indies was 14-15.³⁸ But even younger girls seem also to have served as barracks concubines. A case in point was Suzanna, a ward of Pa van der Steur, who at 11 years of age began to live with a Dutch sergeant, who however soon died. She had meanwhile become pregnant by him.³⁹ Middle-aged or elderly women typically had long been living, with or without their man, outside the camp.

When the first doubts began to arise regarding barracks-concubinage the army leadership was horrified by the prospect of the concubine being replaced by the spouse. In 1888 de Rochemont expressed the fear that, if the concubine were able to gain the status of lawfully wedded wife, order and discipline would disappear forever from the barracks. After all, one could not expel a married woman, standing thus under the protection of the law, from the camps. There would be absolutely no way left to keep refractory married women within the bounds of propriety.⁴⁰ As late as 1903 this opinion remained unshaken. A married woman was only too conscious of the rights her marriage brought her!⁴¹

The question of where the nyai came from and what moved them, if only temporarily, to tie their fates to those of European soldiers, is very difficult to answer. Javanese of lowly origins evidently formed the lion's share of the group; Indo-Europeans, also coming from the lower strata of society, were typically the concubines of NCOs. As such they enjoyed a somewhat higher status than their native counterparts. Around the turn of the century, there was a general growth in the number of Indo-European girls living as concubines, a development connected with the pauperization of the Indo-Europeans as a social group.⁴² Were they barracks children? Former whores? Former wives of native soldiers? Or did most of them come directly from the kampong? What role did charitable organizations play as providers of young Indo-European girls? An exact answer cannot be given to the question of the social origins of the barracks concubine. And what lured the women into such relationships? The European soldier was known to be rough, at least rougher than the native. His language, religion, and habits were different from hers. Did any of the European's "prestige" reflect on her?

We have repeatedly encountered the view that, unless she was in need in the material sense, the native women would never become involved with a European soldier. In many instances poverty was definitely the reason for entering such a relationship. Occasionally want pinched so hard that Javanese mothers were forced to sell their children, sometimes by advertisement. As late as 1919 we find reference to the sale of women in Komering Hulu, because of rice shortages. A mother brought f.50--her daughter somewhat more, around f.150.⁴³ Some women from the village

38. Koks, *De Indo*, p. 53.

39. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, p. 169.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

41. *Exhibitum* 11/18/1903, no. 57, p. 8, MvK.

42. Van Marle, "De Groep der Europeanen," p. 485.

43. *Inlandsche Pers Overzichten*, 5 (1919), p. 3. Islam was sometimes seen as a

preferred to seek succor in the barracks rather than in the brothel.⁴⁴ Perhaps old Javanese women could throw more light on the subject, as also could veterans living at Bronbeek.⁴⁵

The Children

The native nyai was also the mother of a lot of mixed blood children, born out of her relationship with a European. From the moment that they were born the mixed-bloods in the Netherlands Indies were discriminated against by the government with respect to both military and civilian matters. This discrimination extended to the entire group of those born in the Netherlands Indies, the so-called "Indies children" even if they were "pure-bred" Hollanders.⁴⁶ The society that these Indies children formed, was certainly no homogeneous whole. The transition from what was at one point called Indo-European society to a European one was a gradual process. Typical of this society was its exceedingly sharp sense of status, in which, however, the criterion of color played a role only in the nineteenth century. In addition, money and social position were decisive determinants. Taking all this into account, we can get a rough idea of what it must have been like to be born a barracks child, a so-called *anak tangsi*. The low social status of both father and mother, and the living conditions under which these children were brought up, made their position anything but enviable.

Many observers saw in barracks-concubinage the real source of pauperism among the Europeans in the Netherlands Indies.⁴⁷ The army leadership, however, took strong exception to this view. The root of the evil lay not in barracks-concu-

factor restraining women from becoming concubines. West Sumatran women, for example, would enter into no relationships with Europeans. Were the reasons for this religious or something else?

44. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, p. 66.

45. Situated on the outskirts of Arnhem, Bronbeek is a veterans' hospital for Dutch soldiers who served in the East Indies.

46. Van Mastenbroek, *De historische ontwikkeling*, pp. 35-36; *Rapport der Pauperisme-commissie ingesteld bij artikel 2 van het regeeringsbesluit van 29 juni 1902*, no. 9 (Batavia, 1903), p. 9, states: "One should not ignore the fact that the present generation of Indo-paupers derives in part at least from an earlier generation who were not in a position to develop themselves culturally, because at that time intellectual improvement was little valued, and the Company had no inducement to meet the necessary cost. Nor was the Indo in a position to work in a manual field and to assure himself a place in European society as a skilled artisan, because of the exclusive character of the once so prosperous Dutch artisanate in Batavia and elsewhere, which was composed almost entirely of craftsmen recruited by the Company in the Motherland. . . . Government service was largely closed to him; trade languished; there was no activity; nonnatives had no significant role in agriculture; there were no industrial enterprises; and after the collapse of the European artisanate skilled handicrafts gradually fell into the hands of natives and Chinese." On p. 10 he remarks on "the unsatisfactory state of education during most of the last century, in fact even further back; also the favoritism exercised in behalf of the Europeans seeking work, directly, through legal provisions that discriminated against those born here. . . ."

47. *Rapport der Pauperisme-commissie*, p. 39.

binage, but in the inability of the military to give up sexual contacts.⁴⁸ The only contribution that the barracks made to the community of paupers was a number of invalids and those Ambonese children who wanted to pass as Europeans. Soldiers' children (read boys) after all, certainly received an education.⁴⁹ The factor determining whether a child became a pauper or not was not his legal status, but his ability to pursue an education.

However, the selfsame army leadership, in another context to be sure, let it be understood that this education was not of the best quality. "Even under favorable financial circumstances and where the parents really desire to give their children a proper education, their efforts often are in vain. Many live in garrisons where good schools are lacking, and the inevitable service transfers mean that the children's education is repeatedly--and frequently at very inopportune moments--interrupted for short or long periods of time."⁵⁰ Poor is poor, whether you are a European or not--everyone would agree on that. But possession of European status was not unimportant, materially as well as psychologically, even for those who came from the lowest strata of Indo-European society.

Acknowledged children. Recognition meant becoming European and guaranteed a certain attention from European society, which for political and ethical reasons could not completely ignore the fact that a group of Europeans in the Netherlands Indies was forced to live in very straitened circumstances. Being European was one of the conditions for pauperdom--such was the definition of the Commission on Pauperism.⁵¹ Poor natives and unacknowledged half-castes were not classed as paupers and thus merited no special attention from the government.

The obligations of the European who recognized a child, whether or not he was the real father, do not in practice appear to have had much effect on his life. "To be sure according to the law he is obliged to support and bring up his acknowledged child, but the law can do absolutely nothing if the father is unwilling to carry out his responsibilities properly, nor can these duties be performed if the father is himself a pauper."⁵² Moreover, many of the acknowledging fathers returned to Europe. "If one takes into account the fact that the duties involved in acknowledgement of the child, in practice do not have to go further than tolerating its proximity, and that, on return to Europe, those duties are as easily shaken off as they were assumed, so it is obvious that often the child is only recognized in order to keep the concubine."⁵³ In principle, recognition as European had nothing to do with the

48. Letter from the Governor-General to the Minister of Colonies, p. 2, in *Verbaal* 29-12-1903, no. 47, MvK.

49. Note from Gen. de Bruyn to the Governor-General, p. 7, in *Mr.* no. 91, 1904, MvK.

50. Note of the Governor-General to the Minister of the Colonies, p. 3, in *Verbaal* 29-12-1903, no. 47, MvK.

51. ". . . People, therefore, who, although in the strict sense of the word, do not belong to the 'personae miserabiles' of the European community, yet who, because of the situation and special requirements of the European race's way of life and because they have not yet sunk to the level of the mere natives from whom they are descended, represent in themselves and in their children an element which requires the special attention of the government." *Rapport der Pauperisme-commissie*, p. 7.

52. Letter of Gen. Boetje to the Governor-General, pp. 2-3, in *Mr.* no. 91, 1904, MvK.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 3. Such was the reaction of the army leadership to the above-

"race" of the child. "Pure" Ambonese children could acquire European status, which offered the boys the advantage of higher bounties and better salaries should they serve in the army. On the other hand, a large number of mixed-blood children were known as natives.⁵⁴

In 1889 around 2,238 natural and 215 lawfully recognized children were living in the barracks. The majority of these children must have had native fathers.⁵⁵ In 1901, 7,107 children lived in barracks in the Netherlands Indies, 1,237 of them with European fathers. Of this number 410 (198 boys and 212 girls) were legally acknowledged and 827 (434 boys and 393 girls) were not.⁵⁶ In 1900 these children of graduated and lower-level military personnel who were classified as European or equivalent reached a total of 1,746 (918 boys and 828 girls).⁵⁷

The number of children living in the barracks over the age of 12 was small. This is attributable to the fact that it was preponderantly older soldiers who lived in concubinage. At the age when the child's education was most important, most of these fathers left military service.⁵⁸ In other words: at this age the responsibility of the army leadership for these children usually came to an end. Of the total of 2,384 household heads classified as paupers, European soldiers made up 17 percent. About a third of the pauper class consisted of veterans,⁵⁹ most likely because a majority of retired soldiers who remained in the Netherlands Indies were reduced to poverty. Some of them, particularly in Batavia and Magelang, tried to increase

mentioned recommendation of the Commission on Pauperism that, in case of nonrecognition by the father, both the child and its mother should be expelled from the barracks. Another of the commission's proposals was that European soldiers be discharged only in Harderwijk (i.e., in Holland). This would prevent the possibility that at the end of their period of service, they would beget (still more) half-caste children in the Indies. The army leadership appeared suddenly to perceive that recognition brought with it certain responsibilities. At the end of his service the soldier would take his children with him back to Europe. This would have two main disadvantages. First was the high cost of the children's transportation. Second was the shame that he would suffer in Europe as the father of a brood of illegitimate, colored children. Reason enough, felt the army leadership, not to recognize the newborn child.

54. *Rapport der Pauperisme-commissie*, p. 35; van Marle, "De groep der Europeanen," p. 488; and *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, p. 170. Recognition by someone other than the natural father was, according to the Commission on Pauperism, one of the causes for the increase in the numbers of Europeans in the Netherlands Indies. According to van Marle this increase amounted to 320,000 between 1881 and 1940 (not including immigrants). Of these, 48,000 were "recognized" children. In 1918, so-called "false recognitions" were made criminal offenses. The importance the commission assigned to such recognitions seems to me somewhat exaggerated, all the more so in that many children of European fathers vanished into the kampongs.

55. *Rapport der Pauperisme-commissie*, Appendix B, p. 1.

56. Official letter of the Army Commandant, dated 22-6-1902, 1st Section, no. 8, in *Mr. no. 91*, 1904, MvK.

57. *Verbaal* 30-10-1901, no. 20, MvK.

58. Communication of Gen. Boetje to the Governor-General, p. 4, in *Mr. no. 91*, 1904, MvK.

59. *Rapport der Pauperisme-commissie*, Appendix C, p. 2.

their incomes by illegal sale of liquor, prostitution, and gambling.⁶⁰ Others found jobs in civilian society. This group could thus assimilate to Netherlands Indies society.

The question of what happened eventually to the barracks children can thus only be answered approximately. Some of them disappeared into some charitable institution or other. Others were brought up by their parents; how and where the children finally ended up in society depended largely on these parents' circumstances. Apparently a large number of the boys eventually found themselves back in the barracks. Koks attributes this to the "upbringing" and the adventurous bent of the Indo. In time of war more Indos would report for duty than in peacetime.⁶¹ After 1861 they were given the opportunity to learn a trade or serve an apprenticeship with the corps or other military establishments, and thereby earn a small wage. In 1900, however, only four youngsters took advantage of this opportunity.⁶² The question remains whether this low interest is attributable to the low wages or to the general indifference of the Indo towards this sort of work, or to both. In 1902, the authorities made a new effort to stimulate interest in such training.⁶³

With regard to the future of the girls we are even more in the dark, unless we content ourselves with the general observation that most of them must have become wives and mothers. Most of them would not have had any training. To be sure, it was already customary in the Netherlands Indies, at least among the better off, for a girl to learn a number of basic skills; but there was still no question of continuing education. In those circles the most valued accomplishments were speaking French, playing the piano, and, above all, the management of a household. The barracks girls learned this latter skill from their native or Indo mothers. In addition, they probably mastered a number of other accomplishments, such as sewing. Studying for or practice of a profession was evidently completely beyond their horizons. Van der Steur gave a number of these girls a Christian upbringing and tried to train them to be "simple and virtuous housewives" to avert the possibility that they would sink to a "lascivious" life.⁶⁴

In general, opinion regarding these children was unfavorable. "These are children who are brought up as natives, yet who later have the rights of Europeans and must live as Europeans. One must regard their life-style as a congeries of peculiar, often contradictory, ideas, in which the bad qualities of both the native and the European are combined. Few or none of the good qualities of the native are taken over; and the higher culture of the European, or a false picture of what it means to be a European, serves merely to accentuate even more strongly the vices taken over from the Native."⁶⁵ Relations between the Indo and the purebred

60. Ibid., p. 4.

61. Koks, *De Indo*, p. 215. W. H. Bogaardt, *Bijdragen tot de kennis van de Oeconomische en sociale toestanden in Nederlandsch-Indië* (Haarlem: van Alfen, 1905), p. 12. The army leadership regarded the enlistment of barracks-born youths as one of the fortunate side effects of concubinage.

62. *Verbaal* 30-10-1901, no. 20, MvK.

63. *Rapport der Pauperisme-commissie*, p. 66. The apprentice would earn f.6.00 in the first year, f.8.00 in the second, and f.10.00 in the third.

64. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, p. 27.

65. *Rapport der Pauperisme-commissie*, p. 58. The commission also noted that the

European were not always friendly. Many Indos nourished a grudge against the *tokok*, who had made them [the Indos] European, but who in practice almost always looked down on them. "I cannot bear the arrogance of the Dutch ladies and gentlemen towards the *sinyos*. I have witnessed it for years in Batavia. You can not imagine anything more heartless or conceited than the arrogance of the Hollanders vis-à-vis the colored. If a *sinyo* becomes even slightly prominent, the true Hollanders immediately close ranks to work against him. They find their greatest amusement in treasuring up the linguistic errors of the *sinyos*, so that at night on the front verandah they can crack all kinds of jokes at their expense."⁶⁶

The enmity between the two groups did not stop at the barracks-gate. Bogaardt described the relationship within the barracks as follows: "Puffed up with self-conceit and pride, these Indos are the very opposite of the rough, yet good-hearted European fusileers. They form two categories of soldiers, who absolutely do not understand each other. Racial hatred is very pronounced among these Indos."⁶⁷

Wertheim states that the qualities of a mixed-blood community are in large part determined by the societal position the group occupies. "The insecure social position of a person, who looks down on his grandmother on account of her race, can be taken as responsible for a certain falsity in his attitude to life and the reliance on privileges linked to his European paternal ancestry accounts for a certain lack of energy."⁶⁸

If we add all this together: the often negative self-image of the mixed blood; the generally disparaging attitude of the European towards the Indo, let alone the *anak tansi*; the poor training that the barracks boys generally received--one cannot help but come to the following conclusion. If your cradle was in the barracks, then most roads to respectable positions in society were blocked off.

Unacknowledged children. With regard to this group, the majority, we can be brief. Legally, they were natives, as they assumed the status of the mother. The army leadership, the government to a certain point, and many others who were involved were particularly well aware of the existence of this group of people, but found it convenient just to let the situation largely continue as it was. The opinion of Army Commandant de Bruyn as to the negative social consequences of a large number of illegitimate children is illustrative. "These consequences, however, do not outweigh the great advantages of the concubinage-system, and I myself would be unwilling to see even a part of these advantages sacrificed."⁶⁹ Exceptions to the rule were people who thought like van der Steur and such organizations as the National Christian Officers Association. Members of this association are recorded as believing that unacknowledged Indo children ought not simply to end up in the *kampong*. All such children should become legal Europeans, and receive a European

government too had played a part in the rise of pauperism among the Indo-European community.

66. J. ten Brink, *Oost-Indische Dames en Heeren. Vier Bijdragen tot de kennis van de zeden en usantiën der europeesche maatschappij in Nederlandsch-Indië* (The Hague: "Dienst der Volksgezondheid in Nederlandsch-Indië," 1881), pp. 173-74.

67. Bogaardt, *Bijdragen*, p. 13.

68. W. F. Wertheim, *Herrijzend Azië. Opstellen over de oosterse samenleving* (Arnhem: van Loghum Slaterus, 1950), p. 66.

69. Letter of the Army Commandant to the Governor-General, p. 8, in Exhibitum 5/13/1902, no. 89, MvK. Note that the fate of the children was of absolutely no concern to the army leadership.

upbringing, so that they could take their place in the society of the Netherlands Indies.⁷⁰ It was the unacknowledged children in particular who had to pay the piper. If the following saying applies to anyone, it applies to them: "The Lord made the Whites, the Lord made the Blacks, but the devil made the half-castes."⁷¹

Attitudes toward Barracks-Concubinage

The correspondence between administrators in Holland and the Indies shows with remarkable clarity the shift from official approval of barracks-concubinage to disapproval, and thus the gradual abolition, of the institution.

In Holland

On June 30, 1887, Minister Sprenger van Eyk requested the advice of the Indies' administration on how to improve living conditions in the barracks. His inquiry was stimulated by the concern developing in the Dutch Protestant community as a result of certain articles in its denominational press. *Getuigen en Redden*, organ of the Dutch League against Prostitution, printed parts of the charges about domiciliary arrangements in the barracks launched by the former missionary E. Haan. According to Haan, these barracks, at least in Batavia, were virtually indistinguishable from brothels. It was thus appropriate for morally alert Protestants to warn every Dutch youngster intending to undertake military service in the Indies of the dangers that there awaited him. Protestant dailies and weeklies should reject all recruitment advertisements. The fact that many soldiers and their concubines actually shared the same quarters elicited the following remark: "And that, Mr. Editor, is what I call an outrage, an immorality of indescribable horror and bestiality, nay it goes far below the animal level."⁷² In 1888, parliamentarian van Vlijmen brought the issue to the attention of the Second Chamber.⁷³ The Minister for Colonies, Keuchenius, concluded that the sanctioning of concubinage was fundamentally evil, and that, accordingly, the gradual elimination of the institution had been decided upon.⁷⁴ Most likely following the recommendations of the Army Commandant in the Indies, the decision was taken to do away with the most embarrassing conditions by constructing movable partitions to create some privacy for cohabiting couples in the barracks.⁷⁵

Meanwhile van Vlijmen continued his energetic campaign against barracks-concubinage. In November 1896 he condemned the institution once again before the Second Chamber;⁷⁶ and in 1903 he presented a proposal setting a fixed date after which new soldiers arriving in the Indies would no longer be permitted cohabitation.⁷⁷ In the meantime, the Minister of Colonies had once again requested the advice of the Indies government, accompanying his request with a copy of *Een onderzoek naar den toestand van het Nederlandsch-Indische Leger*, a highly confidential

70. Exhibitum 24-2-1913, no. 111, pp. 35-36, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

71. Cited in Koks, *De Indo*, p. 5.

72. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, pp. 2-3.

73. Exhibitum 7-10-1912, no. 131, p. 10, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

75. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

76. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, p. 1.

77. *Verbaal* 21-1-1903, no. T^I, MvK.

report issued in 1898 by the League for the Promotion of Morality in the Dutch Overseas Possessions and the Dutch League against Prostitution. Van Vlijmen's 1903 proposal was not accepted, since the Minister feared an increase in the number of marriages, which would undermine the battle-worthiness of the army, especially on campaigns.⁷⁸

In 1904, Dr. Adriaanse, another opponent of concubinage in the Indies, proposed a change in the law which would have made a child legitimate only if the father was willing to marry the mother. This proposal, however, was rejected out-of-hand as impractical.

Still another member of the Second Chamber to be counted as an opponent of concubinage was de Waal Malefijt. To the observations of de Waal, Idenburg, the then Minister of Colonies, reacted in the *Hollands Kerkblad* of January 23, 1904 as follows: "I agree with the respected Member and consider it from a political point of view of great importance that what the Holy Scriptures brand as sin and what is inadmissible before the court of morality not be sanctioned for civil servants and military officers."⁷⁹ Yet this very same minister evidently found the Holy Scriptures less relevant for NCOs; nothing was yet said about lower-ranking soldiers. He continued to express his concern that too large a number of marriages would have an unfavorable effect on the functioning of the army. Furthermore, the education of children in remote military posts would meet with great difficulties.⁸⁰

After a few quiet years interest in the life-style of the soldiers in the Indies reared its ugly head once more. In the first instance, the issue primarily concerned the officers. For them the rule requiring official consent to marriage remained in force. Here the underlying argument was that the senior officers in the Indies had to be able to entertain in order to function effectively in society. The rule requiring official consent was meant to guarantee the social standing and presentableness of their spouses.⁸¹ Irreproachable conduct was, however, a requirement which prospective wives of NCOs or lower ranks also had to fulfill. Marriage with one's concubine was not thereby automatically ruled out. A member of the Dutch parliament had indeed wondered whether there was not some internal contradiction between concubinage and "irreproachable conduct," but the Dutch government saw in this comment more carping than genuine moral concern.⁸² In 1911, the status difference between a legally married wife--even if she was a native--and a concubine was strongly emphasized. The latter was, after all, a servant and nothing more than that.⁸³

In the Preliminary Report of the Second Chamber of 1912 we find the desire expressed for a complete ban on barracks-concubinage. One parliamentarian requested a thorough investigation into the life-style of the concubines, inside and outside the barracks.⁸⁴ Meantime, the position of the Dutch government had hardened. Marriage had now to be promoted. To be sure, such a policy would be expensive, but the government was prepared to follow through, provided the burden on the

78. Ibid.

79. *Verbaal* 12-3-1904, no. 50, MvK.

80. Exhibitum 24-2-1913, no. 111, p. 28, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

81. *Verbaal* 17-4-1909, no. 23, MvK.

82. *Verbaal* 29-1-1910, no. 21, MvK.

83. *Verbaal* 19-12-1911, no. 14, MvK.

84. *Verbaal* 13-1-1912, no. 27, MvK.

budget was not excessive. For example, official housing would have to be constructed for the NCOs, since they would be the first group to benefit from the new, more liberal policy on military marriages. Although the Minister certainly did not find demands for the construction of these living quarters immoderate, still, he was of the opinion that "under the circumstances" economies had to be made. These plans by Minister Idenburg--who meantime had been named Governor-General of the Indies--were generally applauded in The Hague. However, the gradual abolition of concubinage did not go hand in hand with the construction of new housing for NCOs. Even though preparations for such housing were still insufficient, a start could be made with the elimination of concubinage for corporals and lower ranks;⁸⁵ the abolition of the concubinage system was to be "compensated for" by the fact that from now on there were to be no obstacles to marriage. Such was the drift of a telegram from Idenburg that the Minister of Colonies received on March 20, 1914.⁸⁶ In 1915, there were still a few questions raised in the Second Chamber concerning possible evasions of the ban on concubinage.⁸⁷ But the Indies regime was well aware of this and handled the problem thereafter in a manner satisfactory to The Hague.

In the Indies

If no proponents of concubinage were to be found in Holland, the same was not quite the case in the overseas territories. In spite of an increasing "Europeanization" of social intercourse in the Indies, attitudes with regard to sexual behavior remained relatively less narrow-minded. At least with respect to the European male. In the first place, both the Indies regime and the Army High Command saw in concubinage an unavoidable evil--with the emphasis on unavoidable--whereas their opponents in The Hague stressed as sharply as possible the "evil." Even the Protestants in the Indies were generally somewhat more "liberal" than their pious opposite numbers in Holland. However, there were exceptions.

Opponents. The first figure we will bring on stage is the Archbishop of Batavia. On being asked for his opinion, this prelate opined in 1887 that concubinage could not stand the test of sound principles of Christian morality. He waved away one anxiety aroused among the Army High Command by the prospect of the abolition of concubinage--namely that it would encourage homosexual activity--with the following observation: "Close supervision and severe punishments should ensure that unnatural desires are, if not rooted out, at least strictly controlled."⁸⁸ He therefore advocated abolition, if necessary by stages. On the confidential personnel files of military men a record should be kept of whether or not they lived with concubines. In 1894, the League of Christian Military Youth, in possession of the happy motto "Close Ranks! Fear God, Honor the Queen"--thus expressed its disapproval of concubinage by noting that the distinguishing mark of such relationships was their exploitative, master-slave character. The double standards of the Army High Command were roundly denounced: on the one hand, it regarded the women as "of irreproachable conduct," while on the other, it effectively defined them as whores because, after all, all Javanese women really deserved this title of opprobrium. Keuchenius' ordinance had not fully achieved its purpose; for whenever the section where the soldiers resided with their concubines was full, those

85. *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, pp. 5-12, MvK.

86. *Verbaal* 9-4-1914, no. 15, MvK.

87. *Verbaal* 13-12-1915, no. 6, MvK.

88. Exhibitum 7-10-1912, no. 131, p. 5, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

for whom there was no room had to sleep in the open barracks, the so-called whores' den.⁸⁹

Disapproval was also voiced by Koot, editor of the Indies Circle of Vegetarians, who opined that anyone living with a native concubine enjoyed an animal rather than a human relationship with her. A European who associated too much with colored women should be ashamed to be in the company of "ladies." "He who seeks his pleasures in the kampongs, is, so to speak, in the hands of the Devil of devils; but this does mean that concubinage itself does not remain a devil."⁹⁰ Mr. Koot seems to have cherished somewhat contradictory views on women in general, and in particular on the native woman. Insofar as, like Eve, she seduced the European male, she was regarded as the embodiment of every kind of dark and sinister force. "Whatever the abominable means employed--whether they mingle their spittle or blood or some other filth in his food; or whether they know how to invoke and use secret powers unknown to us to make him a supine tool in their hands--they dominate him completely, still more fatally than the hypnotist dominates his subjects."⁹¹ But he also saw her as the representative of a people who ought to be morally uplifted by Christian Dutchmen--a people who, after all, knew no better and deserved to be educated. At the same time, he saw the native woman as a victim. "And if the woman cherishes some love for the man and motherly affection for her offspring (even if she is not highly civilized, still the human feelings slumbering within her can, up to a certain point, be awakened), how bitter the cruelty when she, like some old clothing a man throws away, is left in the harsh, abandoned lurch with her--and his--offspring."⁹²

The League of Christian Soldiers for the East and West Indies allowed that barracks-concubinage should be fought by lodging those Europeans who lived with concubines among the natives, so that the feelings of shame thereby aroused would have an educational effect on the other European soldiers.⁹³

Another proposal on quartering came from the National Christian Officers' Association, which forwarded to the Minister a "Report on Concubinage in the Netherlands Indies." It argued for a gradual elimination of concubinage, and separate quartering for European and native soldiers. According to the NCOA, there was, among the officers in the Indies, no general consensus that concubinage was to be deplored. But a note written by an unknown hand in the margin of one copy of the Report makes us think otherwise: an officer living in concubinage would be ostracized by married officers, avoided as a family friend, and regarded as a pariah.⁹⁴ Meanwhile, at least with regard to this group, the regime had already taken anticoncubinage measures in the form of a secret circular of 1904, in which high-ranking administrators and military officers were warned of the deleterious consequences concubinage would have for their future careers. General Boetje also expressed the view that open cohabitation of officers with their concubines scarcely

89. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, pp. 33-35.

90. W. D. Koot, *Het Concubinaat* (Soerabaja [?]: n.p., 1905), p. 13.

91. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

93. Exhibitum 30-7-1912, no. 39, in *Verbaal* 9-8-1912, no. 60, MvK.

94. Exhibitum 24-2-1913, no. 111, pp. 21, 22, and 26 in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK. I am assuming that this association represented officers both from Holland and from the Indies. I have placed it in the subsection "Opponents in the Indies" for organizational reasons.

existed any more. Cohabitation now occurred only in secret, so that the moral sensibilities of the surrounding society need no longer be wounded. These sensibilities appeared to be wounded only when a concubine "appears openly in those parts of her residence visible to public view from the street, or goes out in a vehicle belonging to her master, or gives offense in any other way."⁹⁵

Finally, we present the views of Mr. Bogaardt, editor of the *Java-Post*. He too rejected concubinage as un-Christian and immoral. "As for concubinage in the barracks, it needs only to be said that in nine cases out of ten it is simply disguised prostitution."⁹⁶ Concubinage in the Indies by its very nature could not be a voluntary tie, since such a tie could exist only where spiritual communion existed, something unthinkable between the two races. He regarded concubinage as a transaction between two parties in which the male acted as buyer and the female as seller.⁹⁷

The Army High Command. The attitude of the Army High Command was characterized by great consistency. As early as 1887 the Army Commandant opined that marriage should not be encouraged for the lower ranks, since this would be deleterious to the service. No fundamental change in this position occurred thereafter. The then Head of the Medical Corps pointed to the inevitability of sexual relations, at least those between men and women. Barracks-concubinage, he averred, prevented homosexual contacts. He was not alone in this opinion. The great majority of officers shared his views. In 1899, of ninety-six officers whose opinions were asked, eighty-eight were for retention of barracks-concubinage, eight for its abolition, and two for stricter limitations. To soothe the conscience of the Catholic community, the Army High Command had in that selfsame year invoked the support of a number of Roman Catholic spiritual authorities. It claimed that these people and most theologians permitted association with women to prevent more heinous sins. (It is rather doubtful whether many Catholics felt satisfied with this Pauline reasoning.) In 1899, the Army Commandant let it be known that the sole possibility of raising the moral level of the soldiers lay in a general improvement in the virtue of the Dutch people.⁹⁸

In 1908 Commandant de Bruyn underscored once again the importance of concubinage for the viability of the army. The two greatest enemies of battleworthiness, he said, were alcoholism and venereal disease. It now appeared that those soldiers who lived in concubinage were proportionally less afflicted with venereal diseases

95. Secret communication from Gen. Boetje to the Governor-General in *Mr.* no. 685, 1904, MvK:

"However, it seems that this circular has not always been implemented tactfully and has sometimes caused bad blood--since it has been carried out by military authorities who themselves do not always have spotless pasts. The circular has had its own disagreeable consequences in that someone who has lived for years with wife and children has been faced with the following choice: either separate from them in order to safeguard his career prospects; or take the consequences of remaining with them. Some have tried to get round the regulation by renting houses in the kampongs where the wife and children can go to live."

96. Bogaardt, *Bijdragen*, p. 54.

97. Ds. S. C. van Hoeve, Protestant clergymen in Banjarmasin, found that: "there can be no question of any 'honorable, beautiful, pure love-relationship' between Europeans and native women." Cited in *ibid.*, p. 70.

98. Exhibitum 7-10-1912, no. 131, pp. 2, 3, 17, 23, 26, and 33, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

and less often reached for the bottle. Only 14.4 percent of cohabiters were punished for drunkenness, while the figure for those living alone ran as high as 40.9 percent. Married soldiers, however, ran off with the crown, for only 3.4 percent of them had proved guilty of this offense. With regard to venereal diseases, the following data were presented. Of the cohabiters 0.7 percent, while of "single men" 6.64 percent were infected. An average of 5.09 percent of the troops on Java suffered from one form or other of venereal disease.⁹⁹ Another argument in favor of concubinage was the better food and care received by soldiers who lived with a concubine. Furthermore, a ban could only be enforced within the barracks, and the prediction was voiced that removal of the women from the barracks would merely mean their transfer to the kampongs. In view of certain bad experiences in the past, this latter eventuality alarmed the army authorities more than anything else. Still other advantages afforded by concubinage, so the military leadership argued, were willingness to serve longer in the army and easier recruitment to it. Perhaps this was indeed true for those born in the Indies, but it seems unlikely to have been relevant to the recruitment situation in the Netherlands.

All ideas and proposals which worked in favor of making *marriage* easier, received a decidedly cool welcome. "And may I make the following observations, making use of an image that above all in Holland speaks volumes, with regard to a situation that, in my view, only too clearly threatens--under pressures exerted particularly by feminists, who fortunately have not the faintest understanding on this subject--to become a shibboleth in the competition between the political parties: so that, as I see it, the Government ought to act as levelheadedly as possible vis-à-vis these dangerous pressures."¹⁰⁰ Words which might well have come from the hearts of the army leadership. General Boetje pointed out at length the great expense that marriages would involve. It is evident that the army leadership assumed that most of the marriages would be with Europeans. Whatever the case, it is certain that a sudden interest was manifested in proper care for the wives and children of NCOs and lower ranks whenever these men put their sexual relationships on a legal basis. Above, we pointed out the army leadership's anxieties with regard to the legal rights of married women. Other disadvantages attached to marriage were the higher salaries that had to be dispensed to married soldiers; the expanded construction in the camps to provide decent quarters; rising transportation costs (to Europe and back), since these would now also have to be assumed for spouses; and the establishment of pensions for widows and orphans. The native woman would certainly also profit thereby, in the event that she was married to a European.¹⁰¹

Another, scarcely less important, if certainly less "material" drawback, was the conduct of the European woman. "The presence of a large number of full-blooded European women would make the maintenance of peace and order in the camps very difficult. Whatever the acknowledged failings of Indo-European and native women, they nonetheless without exception possess the quality of being able to preserve an outward appearance of modesty. This is why in our camps, where immoral exhibitions are not tolerated, such women only in exceptional cases, and only to highly sensitive people, give any offense. This modesty is generally foreign to full-blood

99. Exhibitum 5/13 1902, no. 89, MvK.

100. *Verbaal* 21-1-1903 T^I, MvK. Evidently the writer's level-headedness was to be measured by the number of underlinings he used to amplify the persuasiveness of his argument.

101. Communication of Gen. Boetje to the Governor-General, p. 6, in Exhibitum 11/18/1903, no. 57, MvK. The assumption was that even married couples would have to live within the camps, in order to permit tighter supervision.

European women from the milieu from which most of the lower ranks come. For this reason, any sizeable import of such women would inevitably give rise to situations which, far from promoting good morals, would seriously undermine them, and consequently the martial discipline of the men."¹⁰² In just as explicit language were depicted the horrifying eventualities that could follow from a growing number of marriages. Divorces would be caused by these women, who, being Europeans, would covet more luxury than their husbands could offer, and so would turn to prostitution. And even where divorce did not occur, in those cases where the wife was a native, the woman's return to Europe would cause much grief, since she and her colored children would suffer from discrimination there. The army leadership saw no ray of light in the midst of all these darkneses.

Thus the General Order No. 28 of 1908 gave the European soldier permission to marry his concubine only if the latter was of irreproachable conduct and had had one or more children by him.¹⁰³ The latter part of this regulation was, however, revoked by the Governor-General in 1912. The military frankly conceded that this part had been included to thwart marriages between European soldiers and native women (and women of similar status).¹⁰⁴

The military authorities tried by every means available to stem the incoming tide, but to no avail. It was in this period that the quarters for those living in concubinage were arranged in such a way that their "offensive" character was completely removed, with each cohabiting soldier having the right to a separate compartment in the barracks. Permission for NCOs to marry was more liberally granted than hitherto.¹⁰⁵ But nothing worked. Governor-General Idenburg intended to move to a complete abolition of barracks-concubinage by refusing permission for any further relationships of this kind. Still, in 1915, the acting Army Commandant, Kronauer, made an effort to reverse the regulations which had just been issued for NCOs. But his arguments seemed more sensational than convincing. He asserted that among the consequences of the elimination of concubinage were the known facts that NCOs were increasingly consorting with prostitutes, and that this in turn had resulted in rising levels of venereal disease. "In all honesty it has to be noted that an NCO who previously lived in concubinage, and was then transferred to a garrison where he had no chance of contacts with local women, was caught in the act of pederasty. I would not be prepared to wager that this is an isolated case."¹⁰⁶ In 1916, the new Army Commandant expressed his support for Kronauer's campaign. He averred that, in some garrisons, long sexual abstinence had caused single men to molest the wives of their colleagues. The latter no longer dared to leave their wives alone, and accordingly, instead of going on patrol, called in sick.¹⁰⁷ Such arguments, which, by the way, totally contradict the picture of the peaceful barracks, in which soldiers with and without concubines lived harmoniously together, reveal once again the dogged opposition that the army leadership offered to the regulation. Through all this one detects a lack of realism with respect to the

102. Ibid., p. 7.

103. Exhibitum 15-7-1910, no. 75, in *Verbaal* 27-10-1910, no. 24, MvK.

104. Letter from the Army Commandant to the Governor-General, *Verbaal* 26-2-1912, no. 43, MvK.

105. Letter of Gen. van Daalen to the Governor-General from 1912; p. 5 in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

106. Mr. no. 17/5-16-474/15, p. 3, in *Verbaal* 14-3-1916, no. 23, MvK.

107. Mr. no. 2177/16, p. 2, in *Verbaal* 7-6-1917, no. 24, MvK.

attainability of their proposals--the annulment of the regulation. We now leave the military authorities to turn and have a look at the position of the civil government.

The Indies Government. The standpoint taken by the Indies government was for the most part identical with that of the military leadership. In 1889 the Raad van Indië [Council of the Indies] expressed itself explicitly in favor of the continuation of military concubinage. After all, since the institution had a relatively large number of good points, it would be irresponsible to tamper with it.¹⁰⁸ In 1903, the Raad once again expressed its full support for the viewpoint of the army leadership, seeing no need to issue any extra regulations for raising moral levels and the number of marriages.¹⁰⁹ Rooseboom, who was Governor-General from 1899 to 1904, declared himself a proponent of the maintenance of concubinage.¹¹⁰ In 1903, he opposed the ordinance proposed by van Vlijmen, since he saw no better means than concubinage to limit the spread of venereal diseases among the European soldiers.¹¹¹ The Commission on Pauperism, set up by the Indies regime, disapproved of barracks-concubinage from a moral point of view, but accepted it in practice as a necessary evil. Concubinage outside the barracks it viewed as twice as bad.¹¹²

It is only in 1912 that we see for the first time clear signs of friction arising between the views of the government and the army leadership. After a relatively peaceful period (at least with regard to barracks-concubinage) while van Heutsz wielded the scepter, i.e., from 1904 to 1909, we observe a renewal of concern. Naturally enough van Heutsz, as an ex-military man, cherished no objections to the institution. In 1912, however, Governor-General Idenburg (1909-16) took a position directly opposed to that of the army leadership by revoking the ban on marriage with a childless concubine. In 1913, there followed a statement of principle on barracks-concubinage, and a decision to eliminate it gradually. It was seen as the government's duty to require of its representatives conduct which did not violate the basic principles of morality as manifested in the laws and in public opinion. "Given this conception of the duty of the government, the sanctioning--through recognition and regulation--of concubinage by European and native Christian soldiers in military encampments can no longer be tolerated. Instead of preventing it, the Government has been acting in effect to protect this moral--and in its consequences also social--evil, and by sanctioning it has undermined moral consciousness in wide segments of the population. Thus on grounds of principle, barracks-concubinage cannot be supported in the long term, and must gradually disappear."¹¹³

108. Exhibitum 7-10-1912, no. 131, p. 21, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK. This opinion was expressed in 1890 and again in 1898.

109. *Verbaal* 29-12-1903, no. 47, MvK.

110. Exhibitum 5/13-1902, no. 89, MvK.

111. Exhibitum 11/18-1903, no. 57, MvK.

112. *Rapport der Pauperisme-commissie*, p. 45. "The moral condemnation herein expressed towards concubinage within this policy-framework applies no less, in fact doubly so, to relationships initiated, not out of force of circumstances, but completely by free choice. In addition, concubinage outside the barracks must be repudiated on sociological grounds since cohabitation by couples of utterly disparate characters and dispositions gives rise to progeny who are, so to speak, destined for a life-struggle under less than favorable conditions, not least because, if not both the parents, then certainly the mother, normally lacks any aptitude for child rearing in the higher sense of that word."

113. Note from the First Secretary of the Government to the Army Commandant,

By using religion as its criterion, the government put the army leadership in an awkward position, since the latter utilized a racial criterion with regard to quartering and was not inclined to make exceptions for married native Christians in the form of separate housing for this group. But the Governor-General stuck firmly to his guns. All the more so since a number of native Christians had expressed the desire for living quarters of their own when they married--witness the expressed wishes of the "Wilhelmina" association of "Anak2 Ambon-Menado" in Magelang.¹¹⁴ Not all inhabitants of the Netherlands Indies shared Idenburg's views. On July 23, 1913 the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* wrote that the money now being used to eradicate concubinage would be better employed for the general improvement of conditions in the Indies barracks. Every soldier living with a woman, whether married or not, and no matter what his religion, should have at his disposal a separate living space.¹¹⁵ The *Locomotief* declared: "We are no proponents of artificially encouraged marriages."¹¹⁶

The die was by now cast, however, and from this time on we can detect an ever more thorough implementation of the government's statement of principles. In 1917, Governor-General van Limburg Stirum wondered himself, and asked others, whether the officers were paying sufficient attention to the situation of lower ranks when off duty. Were there enough diversions for them? Were the officers promoting healthy and educational "time off" for the men? He suggested that the troops could be put into action on the occasion of natural calamities. ". . . as also happens in Holland, where with the greatest cheerfulness they offered their assistance under the most adverse weather conditions during the flooding at Nijkerk in January 1916. . . ."¹¹⁷ The response of the military authorities was inter alia to send over to the highest official in the Netherlands Indies an exhaustive list of possible, existing, and still-to-be initiated activities for the educational diversion of the lower ranks. In 1919, the Governor-General declared publicly for an overall abolition of barracks-concubinage. He even considered the possibility of removing all concubines as quickly as possible from the camps. It seemed to him that it would take too long before all the women disappeared from the barracks by the processes envisaged in the existing regulations.¹¹⁸

One of the arguments produced to make the overall abolition acceptable and understandable was the fact that a so-called European militia was to be instituted. Since this would mean greater contact between the military and civil society, what was condemned in the latter could no longer be tolerated openly in the former. The larger expenditures required by the implementation of the new rules were regarded

p. 2, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK. "It follows that permission to marry is envisaged for all NCOs. Idenburg sees no problems in the fact that some of these marriages will be with native women. He wants to offer more provisions to married couples than to unmarried ones."

114. Mr. no. 5/2-13-118/18, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

115. *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad*, July 23, 1913, p. 1, appearing in *ibid*.

116. *Locomotief*, August 12, 1913, p. 1, appearing in *ibid*.

117. Mr. no. 369/17 in *Verbaal* 7-6-1917, no. 24, MvK. The question arises as to whether the Governor-General had himself observed the cheerfulness in the terrible weather. An Indies official could not refrain from noting in the margin of one copy of this circular that these diversions (i.e., natural calamities) ought then to be arranged for by the government.

118. Mr. no. 1962/18, in *Verbaal* 15-1-1919, no. 14, MvK.

as fully justified. Administrative wheels grind steadily, but also slowly, so that van Limburg Stirum's wishes remained, for the time being, unrealized. But their realization was now only a matter of time.

The Natives. "Native" is a vague concept. It accommodates all groups of inhabitants of the then Netherlands Indies without distinction of rank or station. The earliest firsthand reactions I have come across--i.e., directly from the indigenous population--date from 1918, almost the end of the period here under study. Furthermore, they were voiced by people who came virtually exclusively from a quite different social niveau than that of the majority of concubines. Nonetheless, I am reluctant to ignore the topic of the attitude of the "native population" with regard to sexual intercourse with Europeans, and the institution of concubinage. Still, what is presented here is merely a tentative, incomplete attempt to lift one small corner of the veil.

According to Koks, in Coen's time the native was averse to permitting his daughter to have any social intercourse with a European, at least if the latter fulfilled a military function. Evidently there was no real change in this attitude thereafter. The social position of the European and the place of origin of the native seem to have been decisive for determining attitudes with regard to mixed marriages or cohabitations.¹¹⁹ Sundanese, Menadonese, and Ambonese seem to have been willing to allow their daughters to marry Europeans. Van Marle writes that in the second half of the nineteenth century the number of mixed marriages increased. These marriages were concluded primarily with Javanese girls from the popular classes. Marriages with the daughters of the Javanese aristocracy practically never occurred, since these girls had to remain at home and thus practically never had contact with Europeans. The parents of such girls picked their prospective spouses for them, and religious differences between marriage partners proved to be a crucial obstacle.¹²⁰ Kartini (1879-1904), who came from this milieu and who is one of the very few women whose views I have come across, wrote that her family would find it a horrifying scandal if she were willing to share "love and sorrow" with a European.¹²¹ Other European sources believed that a religious criterion for marriage was also operative for Javanese of lower social standing. A woman who betrayed her religion (by living with a Christian?) would be driven out of family and kampong life by respectable Javanese.¹²² In 1919, we find a direct native rejection of barracks-concubinage. "Concubinage brings with it disease and ruin. Mina, hunted out of the camp at Senen, returns without difficulty to the Petojo barracks provided she pays f.1.50 for a 'certificate of good moral conduct' from one or other kepala kampong."¹²³ The writer of this text urged the conclusion of legal marriages.

Non-Europeans also shared the doubt as to whether true love could really develop between persons belonging to different "races." The desirability of mixed marriages turned out to be worth an exchange of views in the press between a number of well-to-do Javanese.¹²⁴ Many of them looked down on the concubine. In reference to Sri Aminah Mu's opposition to polygamy, one man wondered which was

119. Koks, *De Indo*, pp. 251-52.

120. Van Marle, "De groep der Europeanen," p. 317.

121. Rob Nieuwenhuys, ed., *In de Schommelstoel. Nederlandse Letterkunde over Indonesië van 1870-1935* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1975), p. 101.

122. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, pp. 67, 68.

123. *Inlandsche Pers Overzichten*, 1 (1919), p. 10.

124. *Ibid.*, 2 (1919), p. 25.

the more shameful--to be a second wife or a concubine?¹²⁵ Yet, however low the esteem in which she was held, she was still a fellow countryman. Dr. Tjipto Mangunkusumo wrote that an Indonesian woman ought not to be an "extraordinary maidservant" (i.e., concubine) and deserved even less to pass her days hidden away "deep in the kampongs as the mother of well-to-do children."¹²⁶ We have here arrived at an era in which Indonesian nationalism had already taken root.

Attitudes toward the Native Woman

At the end of the nineteenth century most Europeans looked down on the native. It does not take much imagination to get an idea of the status of a person who, in addition, belonged to the female component of mankind. "The regulations with regard to the children of mixed marriages were symptomatic. If the mother of a child born out of wedlock to a European man was a native, then her consent to that child's subsequent marriage was not required. In the event of the father's death, the mother was also not regarded as the child's legal guardian--a judge had to provide for guardianship. The mother was not considered capable of looking after the interests of her own (but born into the European caste) children!" And Wertheim continues: "The difference in status became even more obvious in sexual relationships. If a European wished to establish a permanent alliance with a native woman, then he did not marry her, but simply took her as his concubine. If he had guests, the concubine stayed in the background, as if she were merely the head-maid. Quite often too the attitude of the children towards their mother was that of social superiors to an inferior."¹²⁷ The story "Een Indisch oudejaarsavondstukje [An Indies New Year's Eve Story]" is very revealing in this regard. In it we see described every sort of honest Dutchman, the "uplifting of the Native" forever on their lips, while they address their servants with such unflattering names as "monkey" and "son of a pig." A third character claims that "The Javanese must be our equal before the law, before society, and before the tribunal of moral feelings," while half an hour earlier he has been regaling the assembled company with the most intimate details of how he summarily kicked out onto the street a young Malay concubine of whose embraces he had had enough."¹²⁸

Naturally there were men who were genuinely concerned for their women and children. Naturally, such men were not among those who enjoyed the greatest respect from Europeans of their own sex. Such "degeneration down to the level of the woman" was not in the least esteemed. On the contrary: strong, as yet undegenerate men with high standards would do better to treat their concubines as instruments than to permit themselves to be "subjected" to them. "In opposition to such deplorably weak creatures (we judge them not) who remain incorrigible slaves of lust, there are some men who regard the concubine simply as part of the household furniture, no less than spoon and clock, knife and cooking range, sustaining the master's health and happiness."¹²⁹

These are not the imaginings of an unrepentant diehard. On the contrary, they come from a writer who undoubtedly saw himself as a good Christian, and

125. Ibid., 3 (1919), p. 16.

126. Dr. Tjipto Mangunkusumo, in *Expres*, June 7, 1913, cited in van Marle, "De groep der Europeanen," p. 491.

127. Wertheim, *Herrijzend Azië*, p. 51.

128. *In de Schommelstoel*, p. 11.

129. Koot, *Het concubinaat*, p. 15.

someone who had reflected seriously on life. He and his spiritual kinsmen could also on occasion express some esteem for the woman. But the terminology is revealing. Women, *even those of Indies origin*, possessed a number of natural and social rights.¹³⁰ Many men rated the moral level of the Javanese woman none too high. It was precisely this low moral level, they opined, that accounted for the great number of concubines. The European soldier, after all, could always find a new concubine.¹³¹ Evidently venereal diseases were only transmittable from the female to the male, for we never encounter a man who seems responsible for spreading them. On the other hand, women were often regarded as carriers of such bacteria. In short, the European, at any rate before he encountered a Javanese woman, was a good bit healthier and more moral than the native woman.

A few characteristics of the native concubine did of course engender a certain respect--especially among the military. The description provided by Lt. Col. de Rochemont is rather moving, making us think in some ways of a man's recollections of a much loved household pet; he praises the concubine's self-sacrificing devotion to her master. In time of war, she performed her servile tasks in an outstanding manner. Many military men had their nyai to thank for their lives.¹³² Koks' verdict, too, was not wholly negative. Even though in the first instance he affirmed that only "trash" were willing to get involved with soldiers, he still believed in the possibility of a change for the better, especially when the involvement took place within a long-term cohabitative arrangement. Being the mother of a European child was, he felt, a great source of pride for the nyai. And even though he certainly attributed to the barracks-girl no motive higher than self-interest, he still declared that she could lead a moral life under certain circumstances.¹³³ But this sort of motherhood was not without its cares. A Christian soldier described the typical nyai with children as follows: "She knows that she has no rights in her offspring; she suffers, and can suffer, a great deal, for the sake of the children--the most bitter sorrow and the grossest lack of appreciation--because she is 'Mother.'"¹³⁴ Those qualities so esteemed by de Rochemont deserved, according to this soldier, no further mention. They belonged to the "eternal feminine." Even the nyai could not withstand their natural womanly compassion and impulse to help.

Inside the household, the woman typically wielded the scepter. This was no occasion for surprise, if we remember that native women from the lower social strata had a great deal of say in family matters. This influence was connected to the fact that they often brought in money, by undertaking physical labor on the land or engaging in petty trade. They were, with one notable exception, extremely thrifty. Their (one) great monetary "vice" was their desire for pretty clothes. In most cases the women were not at all, or only marginally, supported financially by their husbands. They had their own businesses and generally brought what profits they made to their spouses. This situation caused a high rate of divorce. The woman then usually took up with another friend, or, after a certain time, returned to her former mate. In a "Study of the Declining Welfare of the Native Population on Java and Madura," we find a European characterization of Javanese women from the popular classes to this effect: "they are not given to stealing, but they are

130. Bogaardt, *Bijdragen*, p. 49. Koot formulated this as follows: "Honor all that lives. Animals too. Women too. And yourself."

131. Exhibitum 24-2-1912, no. 111, p. 4, in *Verbaal* 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

132. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, p. 6.

133. Koks, *De Indo*, pp. 207-9.

134. *Een onderzoek naar den toestand*, p. 16.

also not to be trusted."¹³⁵ This judgment is in fact relatively mild. The woman is depicted more or less as a child whom one shouldn't blame for everything, especially given the milieu from which she comes. The Ethical Policy was beginning to gain ground.

The native male had trouble with self-emancipating women. This problem arose particularly with regard to women from the upper strata of the native population. The men were afraid that a greater degree of freedom for women would result in their acquiring "too free" an attitude in sexual matters. "Beware, native girls!" was an oft-repeated warning.

It was against this attitude that the above-mentioned Sri Aminah Mu took her stand. She fiercely raked over the coals those people who saw in the free woman the first step towards the immoral woman. Furthermore, she affirmed that, although marriage was a worldwide norm, it was in fact more advantageous for the woman to earn her own keep, for example as a factory worker, than to function as a plaything for the sexual lust of the man who saw to her maintenance.¹³⁶ We can detect here a difference between her situation and that of her poorer fellow women, who after all were forced to work for their bread. Such native women generally exhibited the typical traits accompanying the beginnings of social awareness. Even though they saw marriage as an oppressive institution and complained about the conduct of men, they were still by no means proponents of any radical change. The prime task remained supporting the men in their nationalist struggle; higher education for women would guarantee a better upbringing for their children. Bondage to husband and child evidently could not be abandoned in the twinkling of an eye.

To be sure it was urged that the minimum legal age for marriage be raised to twenty-one, and that polygamy be forbidden. Yet on this latter subject a certain Djowoloegoe wrote that it would lead to an increase in prostitution, since women outnumbered men.¹³⁷ The attitude of males was more kindly in matters where they did not feel threatened. When in 1919 an association for mutual help was established, of which the members, and thus the leadership, was composed exclusively of women, the general response to the question of whether any good could come of it was that the women might as well have a try.¹³⁸ In summary, it can be said that, where the woman was of service to the man, she could reckon on a certain degree of esteem. It is striking that it was, above all, Christian men who linked the native woman and sexual intercourse inextricably together--shoving other aspects of her life into the background or ignoring them altogether. Eroticism and sexuality belonged in marriage. A native woman was generally not regarded as the most ideal marriage partner, even though one notices a certain change in this attitude after the beginning of this century, when the number of mixed marriages rose rapidly.¹³⁹

135. *Onderzoek naar de mindere welvaart der Inlandsche bevolking op Java en Madoera*, IXb (Jakarta, 1914), vol. 7: I *De vrouw in de Inlandsche Maatschappij*, p. 4.

136. *Inlandsche Pers Overzichten*, 5 (1919), p. 15.

137. *Ibid.*, 7 (1919), p. 19.

138. *Ibid.*, 4 (1919), p. 28.

139. Van Marle, "De groep der Europeanen," p. 321. He notes that, if such marriages formed about 15 percent of all marriages in c. 1905, the percentage had risen to more than twenty by 1917.

Conclusion

"There once was a time in the Indies when ideas on the permissibility of extra-marital sexual intercourse were very flexible. Alongside marriage, concubinage enjoyed in those days so considerable a degree of civil law status that a man living with his concubine might not appear with her in public, but still in all other respects would not conceal his situation."¹⁴⁰ By the end of the last century this era had passed. Facilitated by the opening of the Suez Canal, closer contacts with the motherland slowly developed. The number of European women steadily grew and Indies society became more and more "totok" in character. In 1890, mixed marriages were not yet in vogue. "This problem was very sharply formulated by an official commission of c. 1890, when it said that it was almost exclusively Europeans from the lower orders, at the least those not born or raised in Europe, who actually married the 'mother of their children.'"¹⁴¹ It was only after 1905 that mixed marriages became more popular. To the extent that the possibility of marriage to a European increased, so the respect accorded to the native concubine declined, and after 1890 the number of such relationships fell away. This decrease, however, went hand in hand with a rise in prostitution.¹⁴²

We can detect, alongside the Dutchification of Indies society, a change in the views prevailing in Holland; or, to put it more happily, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the more puritanical views of, *inter alia*, the Christian community became, via political channels, more effective in the secular sphere, and indeed began to put their stamp on decision making. To an increasing extent, pressures were exerted, from within and without, on the European man who insisted on living in concubinage. The institution of concubinage was still generally tolerated in the Outer Possessions, where the shortage of European women was most sharply felt. The results of these pressures and increasing social controls were clandestine liaisons and, as already mentioned, a rise in the number of ephemeral sexual contacts with native women. If we look at the officers, for example, we note that in 1904 70 percent were married.¹⁴³ Long-lasting extramarital cohabitation was by then a rare exception in this group. In view of the incomes they enjoyed and the growing numbers of European girls available, it was becoming ever more possible to marry a socially suitable woman. At the end of the century we find the most open form of concubinage in the barracks. What took place there came down to a direct sexual exploitation of the native woman. She was completely dependent on the decisions that her "man" took. She had no legal rights, and even if she had had such rights, it is highly doubtful whether in practice she would have been in a position to make use of them. It was unimaginable for a native woman to initiate legal proceedings against a European soldier. ". . . we need not lay out the reasons for this impossibility. . . ."¹⁴⁴

Even though we should not forget that social conditions and mental universes were then very different from today's, we still cannot overlook the hypocrisy of a number of contemporary arguments and ideas. To give one example, what are we to think of the brilliant idea held by the majority of the Pauperism Commission that if

140. Communication of Gen. Boetje to the Governor-General, in *Mr.* no. 685, 1904, MvK.

141. Van Marle, "De groep der Europeanen," p. 320.

142. *Ibid.*, p. 491.

143. Communication of Gen. Boetje to the Governor-General, in *Mr.* no. 685, 1904, MvK.

144. Exhibitum 24-2-1913, no. 111, p. 36, in *Verbaal*, 8-4-1913, no. 71, MvK.

a newborn child was not recognized by the European father, mother and child should be hunted out of the barracks? This was supposedly in the interest of the child, who could now grow up peacefully as a native. It is more realistic to assume that the Pauperism Commission was alarmed by the growth of the Indo-European population, whose pauperization threatened serious political and financial consequences. It was thus thought wise to keep this group as small as possible. If this meant that children of mixed blood "disappeared" into the kampongs, well, so be it. The responsibility for these children was thus removed from the shoulders of European society.

The government saw in marriage the only moral form of cohabitation and gradually prepared to assume the financial consequences of this view. Apparently, care for women and children could only be undertaken if these were ensconced within relationships sanctioned by the government. Even though barracks-concubinage was tolerated and protected by the government, it never offered the nyai and her offspring any security--and besides scarcely cost the administration a cent. The battleworthiness of the Indies army was certainly assured--on the backs of the native women and their children. Abolition of barracks-concubinage was ultimately the consequence of a change of standards within the European world, which then desired to see its new ideas about morality put into practice in all sections of Indies society.