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Calls to Join the Fight

Propaganda material played a key role in the call to join the fight in Indonesia. In the Netherlands, it was decided to recruit volunteers for the war effort, initially “to liberate fellow members of the empire” and later to bring “peace and order”. On the Indonesian side, *merdeka* (freedom) was the key term used to mobilize the masses. The brand-new republic called on its people to defend their independence.

When we look at the material in this collection, there are striking differences not just in the message but also in the technical production of the Indonesian and Dutch propaganda. The Dutch material was developed professionally and centrally whereas the Indonesian groups were forced to produce their propaganda locally, with fewer technical resources. The Dutch material was often manufactured in large print runs using reputable printers, sometimes even foreign companies, while many of the Indonesian objects in this collection are one-off, hand-drawn and hand-coloured items. To a certain extent, the differences between the propaganda material of the two sides illustrate the general military situation in Indonesia, where relatively small Indonesian guerrilla units fought much more heavily armed Dutch troops.

The aim of this theme too is to show the various perspectives. The war of independence in Indonesia was fought by two camps with diametrically opposed views on the future of the country and the role that the Netherlands should play there. The material also shows that there was some support in the Netherlands for the Republic of Indonesia.

1.1 And Now the Indies!

“En nu Indië!” (And now the Indies!) was probably what many Dutch people thought after the Netherlands had been liberated from the occupying Nazi forces. In autumn 1944, a propaganda effort started in the southern Netherlands after that part of the country was freed to recruit volunteer soldiers to fight against Japan. This poster for the United East Indies Volunteers (*Verenigde Indië Vrijwilligers*) states that the time has now come to free the East Indies. The typographical design emphasizes the goal by making the words “En nu” (and now) and “Indië” (the Indies) jump out. The word “rijksgenoten” (literally ‘fellow members of the empire’) is an interesting choice. It suggests a bond between the people of the Netherlands and the inhabitants of the colony and implies that the liberation of these fellow imperial citizens is a patriotic duty. In the initial phase in 1945, the Dutch government focused mainly on finding voluntary recruits; around 30,000 young men responded to the call for soldiers. Later, long after the Japanese had been driven out, a further 100,000 conscripts were sent to Indonesia.

EN NU....

GAAN WE ONZE RIJKSGENOTEN IN
INDIË
BEVRIJDEN!

Meldt U als Vrijwilliger

EN SLUIT U AAN BIJ DE

VERENIGDE
INDIË
VRIJWILLIGERS

MET & MEYLINK - HAARLEM

'En nu Indië'. Recruitment poster for the Verenigde Indië Vrijwilligers, c. 1945.
Printer: Met & Meylink Haarlem. Or. 27.011-12.

1.2 The Battle of the Flags

In this poster, the Dutch flag pierces the flag of the Japanese navy (Japan is the land of the rising sun), which casts a shadow over the Indonesian archipelago. The message is clear. Notably, the semicircle on the Japanese flag is yellow rather than the usual red. Yellow was often used in anti-Japanese propaganda; the colour had a racist connotation as Japan was referred to as the ‘yellow peril’. The image of the Dutch flag planted in the archipelago reflects how it was taken for granted that the Dutch administration would take over again in Indonesia – or from this perspective, in the ‘Dutch East Indies’ (*Indië*). There was no acknowledgement of how much had changed since the Japanese occupation: the nationalist movement, which had already existed before the war, had now become much more powerful.



‘En nu Indië! Meldt u als vrijwilliger’. Poster, July 1945. Design: Zino Salverda. KITLV 50B3.

1.3 See the World

This propaganda poster (*“Zie de wereld”* – see the world) keys into the yearning for adventure among many young Dutch people after five years of occupation by the Germans. Many volunteers said afterwards that they had been attracted by the promise of adventure. Some had never even been outside their own city or province and now they would be travelling to the distant East Indies!

The Dutch lion wearing a soldier’s uniform and standing proudly on top of the globe has the coat of arms of the city of Batavia (Jakarta) hanging from its bugle. This coat of arms would also become the emblem of the 7 December Division in which the first group of conscripts served in Indonesia. The name of this division referred to a speech by Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands on 7 December 1942 in which she spoke of the reform of colonial relations after the war, albeit still within a broader imperial union.



'Zie de wereld'. Recruitment poster for military volunteer forces, c. 1945. Design: Frits van Bemmelen. Printer: Van Roessel & Co Amsterdam, for Delamar advertising agency. Dimensions: 87.5 x 111.5 cm. Or. 27.434.

1.4 Women in the Military

The last major war in Indonesia was the first time that the Netherlands sent women to serve in the military. During the Second World War, when many Dutch men were called up for the *Arbeitseinsatz* (forced labour in Nazi Germany), women took over the work they had done in the Netherlands. This drove a post-war wave of emancipation. The first women to serve in the military were not armed. As members of the women's navy corps (*Marine Vrouwen Afdeling*, MARVA) or the ancillary women's army corps (*Vrouwen Hulpkorps van de Landmacht*, VHK), they were mainly used for support activities. Under the slogan "free up a man for the fleet", the MARVA women carried out administrative, communication and healthcare tasks. So while these women were not directly involved in the fighting, they did play a facilitating role.



‘Neemt dienst bij de Marva’s’. MARVA recruitment poster produced by Marine Voorlichtingsdienst (MARVO). 1946. Printer: James Haworth & Brother Ltd, London. Dimensions: 74.5 x 49 cm. Or. 27.832.

1.5 Strengthen Our Ranks

This imposing Dutch propaganda poster with its message from the Royal Dutch East Indies Army (*Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indisch Leger*, KNIL) to “Strengthen our ranks” (*versterkt onze gelederen*) is from 1945. Not only is the KNIL soldier depicted as large in proportion to his surroundings, but the poster itself is also an impressive one metre in height. This poster is typical of the professional nature of the Dutch propaganda: the posters were usually large, designed by professional graphic artists and printed by leading printers. This poster was designed by Wim Oepts, a Dutch artist who fled from the Nazis, and printed in the UK.

The soldier in the poster is resolutely guarding the beach. On his helmet is the national symbol of the Dutch lion, while a black cloth that was a feature of the KNIL uniform hangs down his neck. The peaceful ‘typically’ Indonesian scene in the background suggests that the KNIL has restored order – a huge contrast with the raw reality of the war and its effect on daily life.



‘Versterkt onze gelederen’. Recruitment poster for the KNIL. c. 1945 Design: Wim Oepts. Printer: Waterlow & Sons Ltd, London England. Dimensions: 101 x 75.5 cm. Or. 27.429.

1.6 Dutch Communists for an Independent Indonesia

Not everyone in the Netherlands supported the military action in Indonesia. The Dutch Communist Party (*Communistische Partij Holland*, CPH) was the only party to have advocated independence for Indonesia from 1918 onwards, with the slogan “Indonesia independent of Holland now!” (*Indonesië los van Holland nu!*). Starting from the bottom right, the poster shows a European and an Indonesian dockworker and a European and an Indonesian sailor. Fraternally, they all hold a red flag that sports the face of Lenin. With a quote by Marx, the poster calls on the people of the Netherlands to agitate for the immediate independence of Indonesia. The ship at the bottom left recalls a previous incident when European and Indonesian sailors rose up together: the mutiny on the Dutch naval vessel the *Zeven Provinciën* in 1933, which was suppressed violently by the colonial regime.

1.7 Indonesian Nationalists Campaign in the Netherlands

The PI (*Perhimpunan Indonesia*, meaning ‘Indonesian society’) was a political association for Indonesian students in the Netherlands. The PI was the first Indonesian political association with an explicitly nationalist agenda. While the PI was quite small, it had a large impact on the nationalist movement in Indonesia. Its most famous member was Mohammad Hatta, who went on to become Indonesia’s first vice president.

Many members of the PI had been in the resistance against the Nazis during the Second World War. In this manifesto, which is actually dated 5 May 1945, the day when the Netherlands was officially liberated, the PI calls on the Dutch to work now to liberate Indonesia, where “sixty-five million subjects are still crushed by the yoke of Japanese barbarism”. Referring to the “historic links between the Netherlands and Indonesia”, the PI calls on the Dutch: “Support our fight for liberation from Japan! Help us to establish Democracy in Indonesia!” The text links this to a political position – albeit in a moderate formulation: “Only once Indonesia is an independent member of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on an equal footing, will the future of Indonesia and the Netherlands be assured”.

MANIFEST

der

PERHIMPUNAN INDONESIA

Aan het Nederlandsche Volk.

Vijf jaren van harde en verbitterde strijd tegen de dwingelandij van den Nazi-besetting met haar fascistische handlangers is ten einde. Nederland herademt in Vrijheid!

Wij, Indonesiërs, wenschen U geluk met deze dag, waarop Gij Uw zo lang verbode bevrijding viert; een dag, die aanbraken kon door de krachtadige hulp der Geallieerde Volken en de onverzettelijke strijd die Nederlands beste Dochteren en Zonen voerden in de zwaarste tijd Uwer historie. Wij delen in Uw vreugde, omdat wij met U de strijd voor de Democratie voerden en voeren, omdat Nederlands bevrijding een noodzakelijk voorsmaad is voor de bevrijding van ons Vaderland: I n d o n e s i e.

Wij hielden in oerbiddige hulde die talloze gevallen Nederlandsen strijdvaarders, wier onbuigzame wil tot verzet het mogelijk maakte, dat wij thans de dag beleven waarop Uw vlag over Stad en Land vrij wappert.

Wanneer Gij thans in de door de strijd gekregen eenheid de handen ineen slaat om Nederland weer op te bouwen, vrede, welvaart en geluk te brengen over Land en Volk, bedenkt dan dat op ons nog rust de taak om Indonesië te bevrijden.

Vijf-en-zestig miljoen Indonesiërs, honderdduizenden Nederlanders, en miljoenen Chinesen, Arabieren en andere bevolkingsgroepen zuchten nu nog onder het juk ener Japanse barbarij, wier methoden goetsdins verschillen van die welke Gij in de bezettingsjaren hebt leren kennen. Zij voeren hun verbeterde strijd tegen het Japanse militair-fascisme, voor een democratisch Indonesië.

De historische lotverbondenheid van Nederland en Indonesië en het gemeenschappelijk doel - de strijd voor de bevestiging van de Democratie, voor een vrij, welverend en gelukkig Land en Volk - behoren U houding in deze strijd tegen Japan te bepalen.

Uw toekomst hangt nauw samen met het lot van Indonesië.

Dorhalve: STAUNT OOK ONZE BEVRIJDINGSSTRIJD TEGEN JAPAN! Helpt ons de Democratie in Indonesië te bevestigen! Alleen wanneer Indonesië een zelfstandig en gelijkwaardig deel van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden wordt, is de toekomst van Indonesië en Nederland verzekerd.

OP TEN STRIJDE VOOR INDONESIË!

WEG MET HET JAPANESE IMPERIALISME!

LEVE NEDERLAND!

LEVE DE DEMOCRATIE!

LEVE DE VRIENDSCHAP DER GEALL. VOLKEREN!

Nederland, 5 Mei 1945.

'Manifest der Perhimpunan Indonesia'. Netherlands, 5 May 1945.
Stencil. Or. 26.999-8.

1.8 Propaganda in Enemy Hands

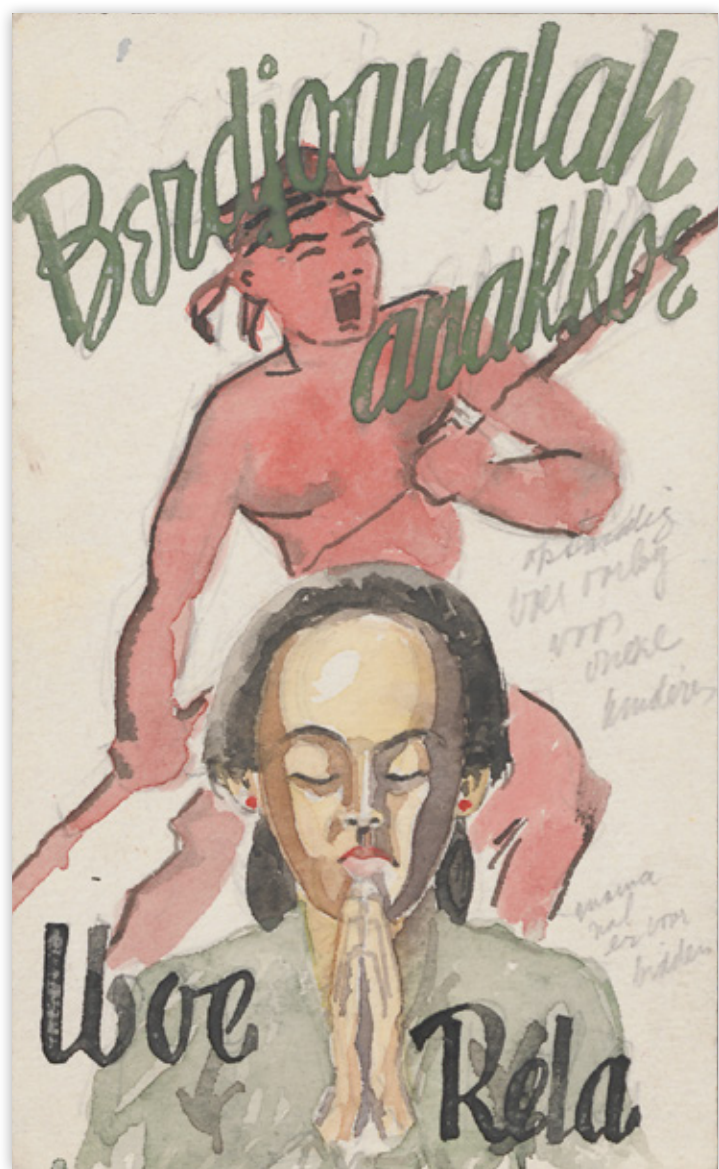
The Dutch soldier in the foreground is showing the photographer an Indonesian propaganda poster produced by the Indonesian National Army (*Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, TNI). This poster was probably hidden in one of the wickerwork baskets at the bottom of the photo. During the war of independence, Dutch soldiers were ordered to actively hunt down and collect Indonesian propaganda so that counter-propaganda could be produced. The poster says “*Basmi!! Provokasi Moesoen!*” (Put an end to the provocation by the enemy!), so it is a call to battle. In the background of the poster are threatening silhouettes, a reference to the danger posed by the Dutch army. Now that this Indonesian propaganda poster has come into Dutch hands, it takes on another layer of meaning: the silhouettes have become people of flesh and blood.



A marine with a TNI propaganda poster. Java, c. 1946. Photograph taken by Frans de Waard. KITLV A1363, KITLV 169039.

1.9 Mother and Son

In this poster, Indonesian propagandists have used the traditional strong bond between a mother and her son to encourage Indonesian youths to support Indonesia's struggle by taking up arms. The mother conveys at least two messages: first, "*Berdjoanglah anakoe*" (Fight, my son), and second, "*Iboe Rela*" (Your mother is willing [to let you fight]). This poster represents the importance of a mother's blessing for the anticolonial struggle. Indonesians often refer to Indonesia as the *ibu pertiwi*, which literally means 'motherland' rather than 'fatherland'. Hence, this poster depicts a mother who is willing to let go of her son so he can fight for the motherland.



'Iboe Relat'. One of a set of 13 sheets of original Indonesian drawings, probably designs for propaganda posters. C. 1947. Watercolour on stiff paper. Or. 27.649.

1.10 Ready to Fight

This poster depicts a *pemuda* (youth, or young freedom fighter) with long hair and a rifle. His jungle hat, made of woven bamboo, signals that he is ready for guerrilla warfare. Behind him is a piece of paper with the title “*Nota Belanda*” (Dutch note), while at the bottom it says “*Dibalik nota belanda pemoeda siap-sedia!*” (Behind the Dutch note, the youth are totally ready). The ‘Dutch note’ was a proposal delivered by the Dutch representative P.J.A. Idenburg to the Indonesian Republic on 27 May 1947. It was regarded by the Indonesian premier Sjahrir as a Dutch invitation to either capitulation or total war. It is clear that the Indonesian government chose the latter. This poster calls upon the armed *pemuda* to support the Indonesian refusal to meet Dutch demands.



'Nota Belanda'. One of a set of six Indonesian designs for propaganda posters, c. 1946/47. Probably originated from the Indonesian propaganda centre Poesat Propaganda (PESINDO). Or. 27.011-14.

1.11 Freedom Over Peace

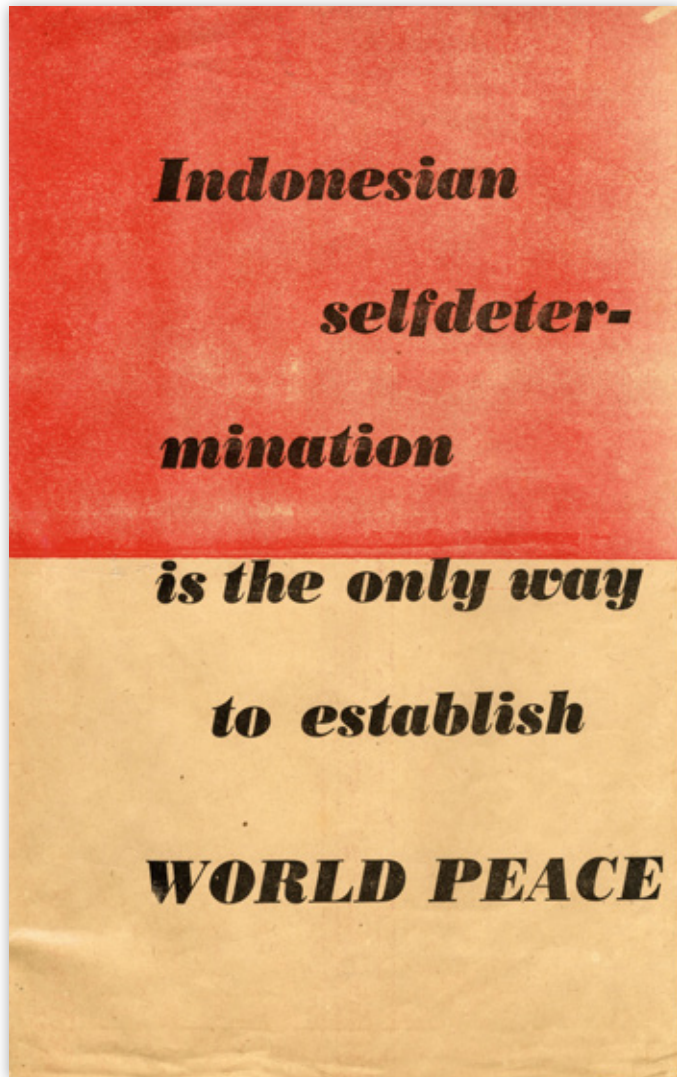
This is a poster disseminated by a local branch of the Indonesian ministry of information. The left panel shows two Indonesian peasants working in a rice field. This picture shows the ideal world that Indonesia aspires to create: Indonesians working safely in their own land without the intervention of foreigners. In the second panel, two Indonesian fighters are portrayed, representing the Indonesian army and *laskar* (people's militia) members. The bomb explosion reflects the horror of the war, but the two fighters are depicted as ready to fight even so. A text reads: “Kita tjinta damai tetapi lebih tjinta kemerdekaan” (We love peace but love freedom even more). Consequently, anyone who obstructs Indonesian independence will have to face Indonesian fighters like these. In this way, Indonesian nationalists legitimized the use of force and violence in their struggle for independence.



'Kita tjinta damai tetapi lebih tjinta kemerdekaan'. One of a set of six Indonesian designs for propaganda posters, c. 1946/47. Likely to come from the Indonesian propaganda centre Poesat Propaganda (PESINDO). Or. 27.011-14.

1.12 World Peace

This anonymous poster seems to have been made and distributed immediately after Indonesia's independence, when the Allied troops came to Indonesia to disarm the Japanese troops. The use of English here is aimed at the Allied forces and foreign journalists. The term "WORLD PEACE" is written in capital letters, indicating that it is the most important message of the poster. Put into a historical context, the earliest theme in the Indonesian Republic's propaganda was its desire for both independence and world peace. The use of the theme of 'world peace' is an attempt to legitimize Indonesia's existence and to show the world, and especially the Allies, that the Indonesian nation values peace. This narrative was a way of countering the stereotype of Indonesia as a product of fascist Japan, an accusation frequently launched by the Dutch in the first months of post-independence Indonesia.



'Indonesian self-determination is the only way to establish world peace'.
Indonesian propaganda poster. c. 1945. KITLV 36D776.

1.13 Rift (interview)

The father of the Javanese Husein Djajadiningrat held senior positions in the colonial administration and had obtained a doctorate at Leiden University. The family was part of the Indonesian colonial elite. That elite, like the Djajadiningrat family, combined Western and traditional Javanese elements. While Husein Djajadiningrat regularly had Dutch school friends to visit, he was rarely invited into their homes. In the final analysis, he remained a 'native', someone who was lower down the colonial social ladder than them. Thus, he lived in two separate worlds: Javanese society and Dutch colonial society. When the Indonesian revolution broke out, it created a rift in his family. As the old colonial hierarchies started to give way, people were forced to recalibrate their relationships with one another. Mr Djajadiningrat himself made a modest contribution to the revolution by producing propaganda posters with a call to fight the colonial regime.



Propaganda drawing with 'Merdeka!!!' (freedom) and 'Ra'jat' (people), signed by the TNI. Date and place unknown. Or. 27.833, album 1, page 5.

TRANSCRIPTION

I: "Were you pressurized to join the revolution?"

D: "No. My cousin wrote a pamphlet criticizing my father because he joined the federal [Dutch] government straight away. There were other cousins too who said, 'Oh, aren't those your relatives?' I replied, 'They're in Jakarta and I'm not in contact with them'. They were revolutionaries."

I: "Did that create rifts within the immediate family or between other relatives?"

D: "Often it did. That changed with the Republic [of Indonesia]. At the start of the revolution, we made posters and stuck them up everywhere. We drew them ourselves because there were no printers. Of course we thought it was amazing, on those large sheets of paper, with our classmates."

I: "What would be in such a poster?"

D: "Something like 'Self-rule' and 'An end to the [colonial] yoke'. With a simple drawing of a little man. It was really fun drawing them together. But it didn't take long before they were gone. They were all torn down. But we still felt we had at least done something."

| Interview with Mr H.W. (Husein) Djadjadiningrat. SMGI 1462.1 (12). Rotterdam, 1999.



[2.2]