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Sourabaya, 12th December 1946.

To the
Commander in Chief of
the British Forces
at Sourabaya.

Sir,

Now that things have settled down somewhat for most of the Dutch-
men who until November 10th were held in jail by the Indonesians under
rather trying conditions, we want to give expression to our feelings
of gratitude for the cautiousness and the deeds of bravery you and
your troops have displayed in liberating us and most of our women and
children.-

We will never forget November 10th when in the morning your artillery
laid down a barrage so accurately that notwithstanding it was con-
centrated upon the Indonesians at only a few hundred yards distance
from our jail, not one shell did actually hit our jail clearing all
resistance.-

We still marvel at your organization which rendered it possible to
at once transport those roughly 3500 prisoners by motorcar to the har-
bour and to feed and house them.-

We beg to tender you our sincere thanks for all the above and re-
main, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Ex-Prisoners of Werfstraat-jail
delegated.

REPORT ON HAPPENINGS AND CONDITIONS IN SOURABAYA DURING THE
INDONESIAN "REVOLUTION".004
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What has happened in Sourabaya as from September 19th in its full extent has not appeared in the news.-

No doubt there can be strategic reasons why full particulars at this moment are not revealed to the public.-

But we, citizens of Sourabaya, who have been able to closely watch part of the events and whose wives and children eventually were taken along by the Indonesians in the interior, we often wonder whether the full seriousness of the case is fully known to those who have to clear up these chaotic conditions.- That's why we composed a summary of events as far as we have been able to check them up i.e. based upon facts.-

This summary is not destined for publication as a great many Europeans are still into the hands of the Indonesians and might suffer reprisals from particulars mentioned.-

The business was started on September 19th when the Indonesians started to exploit an incident at Toendjoeng where Dutch boys, rather foolishly, had tried to hoist the Dutch flag at the Orange Hotel whilst there were no troops available to warrant such a deed.- A row arose in the street before the hotel as a result of which the flag was pulled down by the Indonesians and a few Dutch and Indonesians were killed.-

(see Mr. Ploegman (1EV))

From that date the show was on.- Bands of Indonesians appeared in the streets in motorcars and upon trucks (of which mysteriously enough they suddenly could dispose in big numbers) displaying rifles, shotguns and grenades; a few days later (towards October 1st) these bands managed to "liberate" what was left of the Japanese Army, who gave over their weapons and ammunition almost without any resistance.-

In those days a great many Indonesians began to arrive from the interior by train, apparently all men who had been trained by the Japanese, the so-called Heiho and Soekarelas; they were housed and concentrated at various central points in the city and were abundantly provided with Japanese arms.-

By about that time the Indonesian organisation "B.K.R." (Beian Kemerdekaan Rakyat) appeared upon the stage and at about the same time the "P.R.I." (Pemerintah Republik Indonesia).- From the beginning it seemed as if the B.K.R., although being rather a composite organisation, harboured the more moderate elements and the bystanders, whereas the P.R.I. was for the larger part composed of non-thinking former Japanese soldiers (all Indonesian nationality) and for a small but by far the most important part of terroristic Japanese-educated youth with blind hatred against white people irrespective of nationality.- Killing and looting is their object and they have no ideal at all.- They are the fellows who are called "extremists". A most ridiculous name in this case.- As far as we know extremists are people with an ideal who are willing to go to the extreme point of a political theory whereas these nihilistic

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Gangsters have negative qualities only, hatred and greed.-
These bands are a danger to any community.-They are guided by a broad
cast of their own, the "Pembrontak"-sender, which in the evening pours
its screaming, terroristic propaganda over the streets through the
loudspeakers erected by the Japanese.- (Hung Tono (Jelmo) A

Indonesian politics has always been a complicated and badly affair
continually new parties are appearing and a great many of them are at
the same time upon the stage.-The same so during the last few months
when political and pseudo-political organisations arose like mush-
rooms, such as the B.K.R., P.R.I., T.K.R., K.N.I., The Black Fan, The Black
Banton, etc. whilst also existing parties displayed some activity.-
Upon paper these organisations are said to be mutually connected to
some extent, but in practice they always have appeared to represent as
many different combinations all working for their own; the whole re-
sults in anarchy, official functionaries like governors and residents
holding nominal power only.-

In Sourabaya you were held up in the street by a B.K.R.-man who
searched you and a few yards further you had to undergo the same by a
Femosa who was not interested in the B.K.R.-man's proceedings etc.-
Your house was searched by a band of Indonesians sometimes carrying
fantastic weapons like e.g. a swordfish-tooth. A few minutes after-
wards another gang came running in for the same purpose. At first they
felt rather ashamed to steal openly, but by about October 10th they
calmly entered houses taking away curtains, cutlery, money and other
precious things. And every day the Pembrontak-radio was yelling over
the streets at about 11 p.m. sewing the seed of murder and looting.-

On October 15th when a few days earlier some arrests had been made
of Rasol-connected people, the Indonesians proceeded to definite action

The whole male European community was collected from the houses
and from the streets. Those coming from Goebeng- & Darmo-district were
transported to the Simping Club where the "P.R.I." had prepared some
kind of salistic feast along Japanese lines.- The Europeans had to
sit down upon their knees, were kicked and beaten with swords after
some kind of idiotic interrogation; all their clothes and boots were
taken away and they were only allowed to retain their underwear. Sev-
eral men were beaten to death and although reliable estimates are not
available we take their number to be at least 40.-

Afterwards these men were loaded upon trucks and were dispatched
to the Werfstrat-jail where also men from other quarters were being
assembled.- They were arriving towards and during the evening of Oc-
tober 15th.-

Hordes of Indonesians, multitudes of them, were running savagely
through the streets, yelling "Merdeka" and "Death to the Whites" and
brandishing their spears.- That was our last impression of Sourabaya
into the hands of the mob.- These street scenes regularly occurred
when something of importance occurred during the first few weeks to
come and it broke further down the nerves of our women and children.

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It is definitely known that in several instances women and children were then used by the Indonesians as shields against the Gurkha's. We know of four Dutch women being posted upon the road when the Gurkha's were reported to be coming; the Indonesians levelled rifles at their heads so that they could be shot at the very instant the Gurkha's would start firing upon the Indonesians. Only by keeping down their weapons did the Gurkha's succeed in preventing European bloodshed in those instances. Afterwards a truce was made between the British and the Indonesian and evacuation to the harbour of European women and children was started on November 2nd. 1/2

As usual no discipline could be maintained among the Indonesians and evacuating trucks were attacked with rifles, handgrenades and burning gasoline resulting in the death of between 100 to 150 women and children. - (Embry Sumokembang/Palmerton) 1/2

At last in total roundabout 4600 women and children were evacuated

Under the given circumstances this ~~extraordinary~~ evacuation was a great tactical success and we are very grateful this could be brought about. But as far as we know on the radio and in the newspapers it never was disclosed that this was only a small part of the total European population of women and children in Sourabaya and in East-Java. In Sourabaya alone there remained at least another 5000 women and children who had to face the effects of streetfighting in the coming days. When we take the whole of East-Java a further 15000 women and children are running extremely great risks to say the least of it. (As rumours from the interior indicate a great part of them seems to have been concentrated in Indonesian camps). -

On November 10th ^{10/11} hell was started for the remaining Sourabaya women and children. -

We know that the British have displayed great skill in trying to avoid hitting houses and other places where European people was living, but nevertheless in due course bullets and shells were flying everywhere. Planes were dropping their bombs and were diving with their machine-guns playing over the houses. Food could not be bought and they had to rely only upon the stock they might have into the house; excited and badly behaving Indonesians were continually entering the houses for all sorts of searching during which many things of worth were stolen. -

Every evening the sky was red with flames of neighbouring objects.

And all this for women and children of whom a great part has just managed to escape from 2 1/2 year Japanese starvation-camps. -

As the British gradually came forward into the town of Sourabaya a number of women and children were liberated and transported to the harbour area. They were the families which had been so lucky as to hide themselves in houses or whom the Indonesians had had no time to concentrate in the old Nippon women camp. The other women and children were to

start upon a new road of misery.-From approximately November 20th until they finally left Sourabaya on November 27th in total round-about 2500 persons were concentrated in the women camp Darmo district.- In the first days a transport of estimated 500 women and children was sent by train in the interior.-destination unknown.-The food in the Darmo-camp was extremely bad; once a day a handful of rice with a few shreds of vegetables, no drinks or soup whatever; only water.- Sometimes food was distributed at night at 2 a.m. The last few days one bucket of rice uncooked for the whole house of 52 persons.- The space in the house where they were packed together was so narrow that not more than 35 cm. width available for 1 person.-

As from November 25th the fighting was approaching the women camp Indonesian guns were firing so close to some of the houses that each time the whole house shook upon its foundations and sleep was impossible.-

In the night of 26/27 November the F.R.I. ordered evacuation at 1.30 a.m. The women and children in total roundabout 2500 were driven from Darmo-camp to Wonokromo-station, a distance of abt. 2 km. They carried everything they thought they could carry, but after a quarter of an hour the road was lined with goods they couldn't carry and which in due course were stolen by the natives.-When they arrived in Wonokromo-station there was no train and they had to walk back to the camp. All the time firing was going on and grenades were whizzing over this procession of misery. Next day at 8 p.m. they had to go once more, again in rain and back to the camp. At 12 midnight they were driven out again with luggage as much as they could carry.-

About 600 sick women managed to remain in the houses and were liberated next day by the Gurkha's.-We don't know exactly to what places the other women and children were driven.-All we know is they went by foot for a long, long distance.-Part of them arrived in Sidoardjo, a village at about 15 miles from Sourabaya.-

Remember what these women and children had been through.-

In as far as they arrived in Sidoardjo they seem to have been housed in Chinese schools.-We heard that 4 picols of rice were supplied daily to them for the total of 4000 of the Sidoardjo-concentration; that means 62 grammes rice per person.-

On about December 7th they were driven out again and once more they had to travel a great distance by foot.-Some reports indicate that now they are housed in sugar factories all in the neighbourhood of Madjoray Medjokerto.-Other reports mention Trawee and Patjet, behind the defences constructed there by the Japanese.-

This is the story as far as we can reconstruct it with reasonable certainty.-

Is it sufficiently realised in Batavia and in the world what these women and children are suffering?

If you want to imagine what anxieties they have had to endure, look at the burned-out and shell-torn buildings in Sourabaya and at the livinghouses destroyed by gunfire in Sawahan-district and elsewhere.-

We do not know of any newspaperman being here in Sourabaya to signal their distress.-The news is talking only about the evacuation under difficult conditions of concentrationcamps in Middle- and West-Java. The misery there is great, but is it comasable with the misery of these women and children, now somewhere in the surroundings of Modjokerto and of the other women and children in the interior. Moreover they are starved and their nerves are broken down by the recent fighting and by the privations they had to endure during the last two years in the Japanese camps. They are unconditionally at the mercy of unscrupulous terroristic and bloodthirsty natives, who are making their chief attacks upon women and children's camps in Middle Java and in doing so clearly show what they intend to do with these East Java women and children when things are going wrong for them and when the only revenge can be made upon these hostages.

We do not want allround publicity for this situation now.-We only want those who are guiding military operations upon Java to be fully acquainted with the facts regarding the endurance beyond description of this part of the European community.-

Four months have elapsed since officially peace was declared in the East.-

No talks in Batavia with Indonesian "leaders" without any authority just puppets in the Indonesianameleon-like political theatre, no talks can save them any more.-Only quick action of modernly equipped military forces can help them.-If not too late.- That is the opinion of some Sourabaya citizens who are in "it" with their wives and children.-

We hope that everything possible will be done to save these unfortunate beings. They really have every right to it.-

It may be that we, as outsiders, are holding beliefs which do not fully cover the given circumstances from a military point of view. But, all the same we are eagerly looking forward to parachute- detachments.-They only, we believe cooperating with tank-columns, could free the enclaves of European women and children in East Java, with some reasonable chance of rescuing for the greater part of living people.

Only when help on short notice is administered can they be saved from starvation or collapse through other causes.

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