

紛争、正義、記憶と癒し

講演者：Eveline BUCHHEIM

(Netherlands Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies)

Punishing Unwanted Female Conduct : The Trial of Kempeitai Spy No.30

Female spies in wartime appeal to the imagination, considered heroes if they work to benefit their own country, despised if they serve the enemy. In 1948 a young Dutch woman, Wilhelmina van Kooten, had to appear for the temporary court-martial in Bandoeng (Java) because she was accused of spying for the Japanese Kenpeitai during the war. Her gender in relation to her criminal offences was an important matter for the press as becomes clear from headlines like ‘Blue eyed blonde woman betrayed hundreds of Dutch people’.¹⁾ Also the judges stressed the expected female duties in times of war and they labeled her as ‘one of the worst offenders that the temporary court-martial has seen’.²⁾

The case of the Dutch spy Wilhelmina van Kooten surfaced while working on the broader topic of relationships between Japanese and Dutch nationals during the Japanese interlude on Java. More specifically on the connections between a Japanese man, Minoru Sakata, and a Dutch woman, Marie-Thérèse Brandenburg van Oltse, between 1942 and 1944 : he an avant-garde photographer before the war, she a rich member of the colonial elite. Their lives crossed on Java where he worked for the propaganda unit and she managed to remain outside the internment camps.

Both women attracted the public attention because of their wartime behavior, and more specifically because of their connections to Japanese men. Their stories reveal how gender relations change in times of great distress. We witness two women who use their agency and choose paths that caused uproar during and after the war. Marie-Thérèse and Wilhelmina transgressed existing gender lines and the ideals the nation had laid out for women, albeit with different consequences. Marie-Thérèse gets away with her behavior and Wilhelmina gets sentenced to 20 years in prison.

On the 15th of July 1948 the temporary court in Bandoeng gave the verdict in the case against the 39-year-old Wilhelmina van Kooten who was accused of having worked as a spy. Wilhelmina was accused of having written more than 500 reports between April 1943 and February 1945 for the Kenpeitai and the PID (Political Intelligence Department), involving some 100 people.³⁾ During the court sessions Wilhelmina van Kooten was described as ‘the most abject co-worker of the Japanese civil service, a person with a unique form of immorality and the reasons for her behavior have not led to mitigating circumstances.’⁴⁾

Gender played an important role in the case ; Wilhelmina’s looks got a lot of attention. Journalists tried to make the story juicier by describing her physical appearance and her clothing : ‘Blue

1) *Het Dagblad*, Batavia, 15-07-1948.

2) Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Netherland Forces Intelligence Service [NEFIS] en Centrale Militaire Inlichtingendienst [CMI] in Nederlands-Indië, nummer toegang 2.10.62, inventarisnummer 2612.

3) NL-HaNa, NEFIS en CMI, 2.10.62, inv. Nr. 2612.

4) NL-HaNa, NEFIS en CMI, 2.10.62, inv. Nr. 2612.

eyed blonde woman betrayed hundreds of Dutch people’, this alludes to the anticipated innocence of being blue eyed and blond, and thus of belonging to ‘us’. Also the assessor referred to her female duties : he mentioned ‘the special obligations of women in times of war, whereas Wilhelmina’s objectives only seem to have been to have a life of luxury instead of sharing her sisters faith in the internment camp’.

In the public imagination female spies are a very powerful cultural image that capture the imagination. It appears that the simple possibility of a woman being a spy sparks all sorts of fancies, especially wildly sexual ones. Women who were accused of cooperation with the occupier generally were accused of engaging sexually with the enemy and the derogative word ‘Jappenliefje’ (‘Japs sweetheart’) can be found in abundance in intelligence reports when dealing with considered questionable behavior of women. Wilhelmina’s love life was put in the limelight, before the war she had been married to a KNIL (the Dutch East Indies Army) officer, during the war she allegedly had had affairs with Japanese men which earned her the label ‘prostitute’, commonly used shorthand for unwanted female behavior. Female anti patriotic behavior was easily linked to sexuality or to prostitution.

During the trial copies of her Kenpeitai reports were submitted, these documents had been found in the confiscated materials of the PID in Bandoeng, a rare find because a lot of material had been destroyed purposely. Being confronted with this strong piece of evidence van Kooten admitted that she had written these reports. These copies were very important for the court case ; this was the type of evidence the judges were after instead of having to rely mainly on eyewitnesses. The reports also make clear how Wilhelmina assessed her own role, she wrote what we could label as policy advice : to use electric wire around the camps to prevent prisoners of escaping or to shave the heads of women so they could be easily recognized when they tried to flee.⁵⁾

The judges tried to get an explanation for Wilhelmina’s behavior : did she do what she had done because of financial difficulties after her husband was taken POW? She answered that money was not the main problem because she soon had found a job. But she had forged her pendafteran, the ID card on which the descent was stated, declaring that she was a Belgian national. According to Wilhelmina a few people knew about the forgery and blackmailed her with this, the people at the PID had said that they could help her out if she was willing to provide them with information.⁶⁾

Since the evidence of her actions was so convincing, her female lawyer needed a different strategy for her defense. She focused on another classical stereotyped female role : that of victim. In playing the psychological card explaining how Wilhelmina had been abused as a child by her stepfather and as a result suffered of an anxiety psychosis. Also drug abuse was mentioned.⁷⁾ Without result, Wilhelmina was sentenced to the maximum foreseen in the category ‘limited sentences’.

The traces of Wilhelmina in the archive vanish after the court case, this often happens when trying to document the whereabouts of ordinary women. But it is also generally the case for what happened after the trial, once the court case is finished what happens during the imprisonment remains hidden, it is unlikely that Wilhelmina served the full 20 years after the handing over the sovereignty to Indonesia in 1949.

5) NL-HaNa, NEFIS en CMI, 2.10.62, inv. Nr. 2612.

6) NL-HaNa, NEFIS en CMI, 2.10.62, inv. Nr. 2612.

7) Nieuwe Courant, 30.11.46