'The Eurasian Question' : the colonial position and postcolonial options of colonial mixed ancestry groups from British India, Dutch East Indies and French Indochina compared

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2 Historical context

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the origins of the Eurasian populations in British India, the Dutch East Indies, and French Indochina. I focus on the historical background up until the end of the Second World War. The 'colonial situation' was in 1963 defined by the French anthropologist Georges Balandier as:

> The domination imposed by a foreign minority, 'racially' and culturally different, over a materially weaker indigenous majority in the name of racial and cultural superiority.[1]

The colonial situation was essentially a set of relations between two different cultures: the colonisers considered theirs to be fast-moving, technologically advanced, and economically powerful, and they regarded the colonised cultures as the opposite.[2] These relations were not only upheld by force, but also by a series of symbolic justifications and by stereotypical behaviour, which developed into a dominant colonial discourse. The colonial settlers created specific institutions and policies that supported these justifications and behaviour. In other words, these institutions and policies would confirm the discourse that distinguished the coloniser from the colonised people.[3] The general system of colonialism worked for policy makers as a discursive framework, which they could adapt to local circumstances in their respective colonies.[4]

2.2 British India: From Company rule, via Sepoy Mutiny to Crown Raj

At the height of the British colonial presence on the Indian subcontinent, the British Empire consisted of the current nations India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and parts of Myanmar (see Figure 1). In fact, the Indian subcontinent contained two 'Indias'. One third of the Indian subcontinent – scarcely known to any but a few British colonial officials – was fragmented into 562 nominally independent princely states. Two thirds of the continent came under the direct administration of the British Raj and was divided into fourteen provinces, each of which was divided into districts. In these districts, the most powerful man was the district magistrate, also named the deputy commissioner or collector.[5] Because Burma was for most of the time included in the British Indian empire, the Anglo-Indians had a small 'sister-group' of Anglo-Burmese. Burma was ruled by the British as a province of British India from 1886 until Burma's separation from India in 1937. This independence was based on a new

parliamentary system under a constitution for an independent Burma which was approved in 1935.[6] I incorporate this separate group in my study especially for the period during which Burma was part of British India, but I do not go into as much detail as I do with the main group of Anglo-Indians.

Similarly, I refer only in passing to the people of mixed ancestry who lived in Ceylon (currently Sri Lanka), who were called, as I mentioned earlier, the Burghers. In the census of 1901, there were also 'India-born' Burghers or Anglo-Indians recorded, because travel between India and the island of Ceylon, which was also a British colony from 1795 onwards, was easy in colonial times.[7]

British India was ruled for two centuries by a trade company in possession of a royal charter, the British East India Company. The British succeeded in winning trading rights at Sura in 1612, which was located to the North of Bombay at the western coast of the Indian subcontinent, and they built a factory on its coast in 1613.[8] Between 1818 and 1857, the British conquered the whole of India.[9] Before 1800, it was mostly single men from Europe who went to India and they fathered children of mixed ancestry. Initially, the growth of a Eurasian community was encouraged by the British East India Company because colonial authorities were convinced that Eurasians were loyal supporters of British rule.[10] The development of a mixed ancestry group was not something new on the Indian subcontinent. In British India there was already an established Portuguese presence and a considerable number of Indo-Portuguese *mestizos*.[11]

The company directors offered financial incentives to their employees to marry indigenous women and have children with them. The idea was to create a Protestant British group to counterbalance the Catholic Portuguese influence. The Portuguese authorities in turn encouraged their subjects to produce Eurasian children whom they hoped would grow up to be loyal servants of the King of Portugal. In that way, the Anglo-Indian community was deliberately created to help establish and preserve British power and presence (and in this period also Portuguese power) in India.[12]

'Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, opinions, morality and intellect'

The Anglo-Indian community became the largest mixed ancestry group in Asia.[13] The European ancestry of the Anglo-Indian community was not only British but also French, Dutch and Portuguese. However, the largest part of the Anglo-Indian group was of British ancestry and the group was British in its cultural practices.[14] From the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, relationships between indigenous women and British men were increasingly discouraged. At the end of the nineteenth century, they had to be avoided at all costs, even forcibly if necessary. It was generally known that marrying a girl with some Indian blood, would ruin the career of a young British colonial.[15] In 1810, captain Thomas Williamson wrote in his travelogue *East India Vade Mecum* – which was considered essential reading for all British people heading to India – that concubinal relationships were viewed by both Indians and Europeans as 'equally sacred' to marriage.[16] This changed with the Europeanisation of British society in India and the arrival of more British women in the colony from the 1820s onwards. The British communities in India became more self-sufficient, and more isolated from the indigenous society.[17] The creation of a moral civilising mission

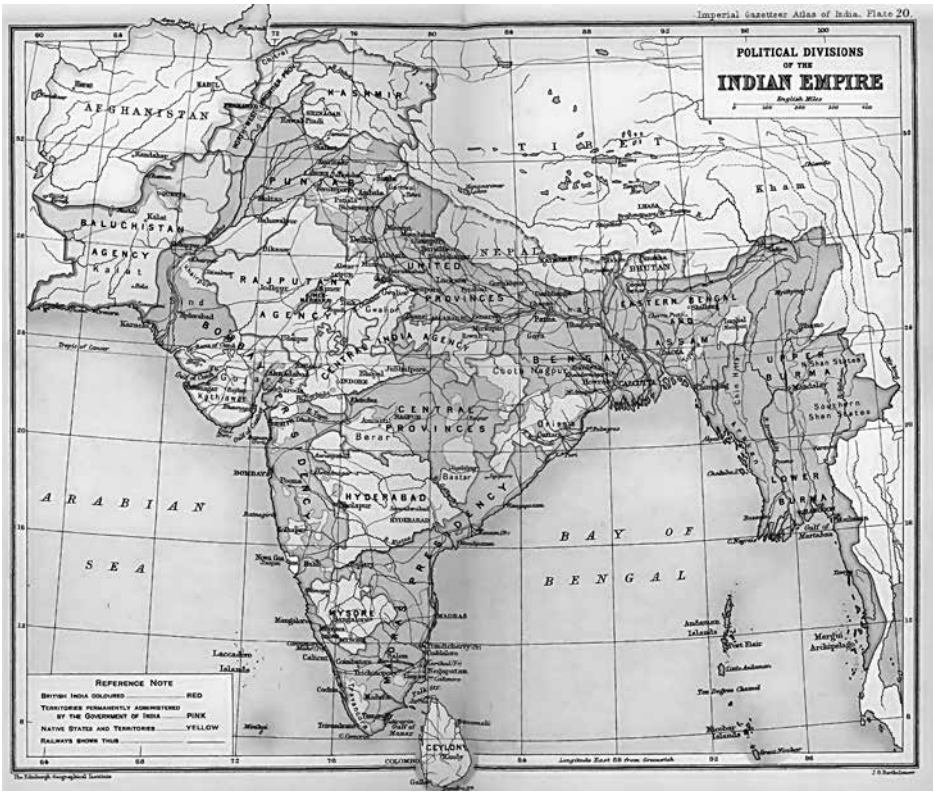

Fig. 1 Map of the British Indian Empire from Imperial Gazetteer of India, Edinburgh Geographical Institute; (Oxford 1909).[18]

connected to British superiority, famously associated with Rudyard Kipling's poem 'White man's burden' (1899), was also connected to this development.

The liberal colonial politician Thomas Babington Macaulay insisted in 1835 in his 'minute on education' that Britain's mission was to create not only a class of Indians sufficiently well versed in English to help the British rule their colony but ones

> [...] who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morality and in intellect.[19]

In addition, he had trumpeted on that occasion that Indian independence, under the leadership of these educated 'English' Indians would be the greatest day in English history. This class would consist of loyal Anglo-Indians and domiciled Europeans. Anglo-Indians indeed helped to protect British interests and helped them rule an enormous and therefore potentially rebellious country.[20] As the Anglo-Indian historian H.A. Stark wrote: 'We formed the wheels, the cranks, the levers of their (British) machinery for government.'[21] Although Anglo-Indians were rarely in control, they faithfully kept their hands on the levers. This became clear during the Sepoy Mutiny of

1857 when many indigenous people revolted. The Anglo-Indians supported the British and continued doing their work.[22] The help of Anglo-Indians was indispensable, because it took the British eighteen months to quash the uprising that had begun at Meerut (a town near New Delhi in Northern India) in May 1857.[23] Later claims made by Anglo-Indians towards the British regarding privileges were always based on their unconditional and loyal support to the British coloniser during the Sepoy Mutiny. After the Mutiny, the British Crown took over rule from the East India Company in 1858 and all people in British India became British subjects. The start of the Crown Raj also marked the implementation of stricter rules, regarding the place of everyone in British Indian society, both juridical and social.[24]

In general, the Indians treated Anglo-Indians as outsiders, because of their loyalty to the British rulers of India. The British rulers themselves however also looked upon them suspiciously because they considered Anglo-Indians as a threat to the colonial project. They believed that Anglo-Indians might attempt to claim financial or political rights based on their British fathers' position.[25] In a collection of colonial memoirs, compiled by C. Allen in 1975, an Anglo-Indian woman herself recounted the treatment they encountered during the Raj (British rule in India):

> The Indians looked down on the Anglo-Indians because to them you were neither one nor the other. They used to call us *kutcha butcha*, that is to say, half-baked bread, and depending on the shade of your colour they used to talk about the Anglo-Indian as being *teen pao*, three-quarters, or *adha seer*, half a pound, if you happened to be almost white.[26]

'It was like moving into a different world'

The British authorities treated Anglo-Indians with contempt and often ridiculed them. This happened for example when they met them at the Railway Institute dances, organised by Anglo-Indians who lived in railway colonies. A British woman remembered:

> We'd go to be polite to them and it was like moving into a different world, a much more old-fashioned one, because the girls would never sit with their dancing partners but were always taken back to their parents. I'm afraid we used to rather laugh at them because they seemed to be such frumps. They always seemed to be dressed about several years back and never seemed to quite catch up with modern fashion.[27]

Regarding the social landscape in British India, the British colonial authorities held on quite firmly to the ideal of 'racial' exclusivity, whereas in the Dutch East Indies, mixed ethnicity, combined with wealth and a social position did not form an obstacle to European status in the creole society of the archipelago.[28] In my view, the difference was not so clear-cut and the situation in British India was far more ambiguous than the above-described situation suggests. However, the boundaries between the different population groups were sharper in British India than in the Dutch East Indies. That could also have been caused by the efficient colonial rhetoric at work in the British India context.[29] In addition, it was not possible for British men to legally recognise as British the children they had fathered with indigenous women – outside marriage,

whereas such a possibility did exist in the Dutch East Indies and French Indochina. Therefore, the racial hierarchies were stricter and sharper in British India.[30]

Before the start of the twentieth century, people of mixed ancestry were always called 'Eurasians' in British India. In colonial society there was a stigma attached to the term 'Eurasian', which in the nineteenth century was taken to refer to the offspring of the lower classes of both British and Indian society.[31] In order to emphasise their European (or more importantly British) ancestry and avoid this stigma, people within and outside the group campaigned from the end of the nineteenth century onwards to be called 'Anglo-Indian' instead of 'Eurasian'. The term 'Anglo-Indian' was previously used to only refer to colonial British people.[32] From the first Indian census of 1911 onwards, people of mixed ancestry were known as 'Anglo-Indians'. Before that time, this term only referred to British people who lived in British India.[33] However, according to a memorandum composed in 1925 by Anglo-Indians to plead for their interests at the statutory commission, it remained impossible to arrive at a definite interpretation of the position of Anglo-Indians from the variety of names that people used to characterise them in India. In 1925, the situation was as follows: for social purposes, they were known as 'Anglo-Indians'. For occupational purposes, they were designated 'Statutory Natives of India', while they were called 'European British Subjects' in the population censuses.[34]

It was only after 1935 that the term 'Anglo-Indian' acquired a legal connotation and universal currency in the government of India Act.[35] The Indian National Congress had its first meeting in 1885. The party campaigned for a form of home rule, which meant a form of self-government, and many educated indigenous people became active in the movement. This was an early incarnation of home rule or self-government, in which many educated indigenous people became active. Together with later political movements such as the first non-cooperation movement (1920), the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India campaign (1942), the Indian National Congress contributed to the achievement of independence.[36] A selective part of the Indian elite had gone to the UK for education, just like the Anglo-Indians had. Together with an English education, this had irrevocably helped to hasten the downfall of the British Raj's rule.[37] During the Salt March in 1930, which started the Civil Disobedience Movement, Gandhi and 78 followers walked a distance of 375 kilometres to a salt enterprise in Dandi. When he arrived there, he picked up a handful of salt. With that simple act, he broke the salt monopoly of the British colonial government. It was a symbol of the Indian people's refusal to live under British laws and under British rule.[38]

In 1930, 316,549 British people lived in British India, which represented only 0.09 per cent of the total population.[39] Despite an official census count of 140,422 Anglo-Indians, according to president Henry Gidney of the All India Anglo-Indian Association the real number of Anglo-Indians was somewhere between 250,000 and 300,000 in 1941.[40] These confusing numbers were caused by the vague definition of who was and who was not Anglo-Indian. In 1930, the British convened the first Round Table Conference (RTC) to prepare independence, but it was boycotted by the Indian National Congress. In 1931 and 1932, the British also organised the RTC and in those years Indian National Congress members did participate in the event. It was a special occasion, since Indian parties and Indian leaders of principalities took part on

an equal footing like the British representatives. The Government of India Act of 1935 was largely based on the conversations held at the three Round Table Conferences of the early 1930s.[41]

The Act of 1935 ruled that the provinces would be governed almost completely by Indians. The competences of the central legalising council would be extended and this paved the way for an Indian federation with dominion-status within the British Commonwealth.[42] The Anglo-Indian community made its voice heard during and after these Round Table Conferences. They could do so using the already mentioned memoranda, and with articles in the media such as an article by Henry Gidney about the future of the Anglo-Indian community. In this article, he presented the Anglo-Indians as 'kinsmen and descendants of the British'. In his opinion, because of their adherence and loyalty to all that was British and Western, they were considered as much as foreigners as the British were, and therefore needed job protection for a limited period. Thus, Gidney repeated the most important points from the previous memoranda.[43] These efforts of the Anglo-Indians eventually influenced the Government of India Act of 1935 and the subsequent first Constitution of independent India, which turned out to be favourable for the Anglo-Indian community.

During the first months of the Second World War, the Indian Congress leaders, British leaders and indigenous people were determined to remain outside the war. The fall of Rangoon in the former British Indian province of Burma (now Myanmar) to Japan in 1941 changed that passive and neutral attitude. The Congress leaders declared their willingness to cooperate with the British government if the British colonial authorities gave an unequivocal promise that they would grant India complete independence after the war.[44] Most of British India was not occupied by the Japanese forces during the Second World War apart from Burma. The Japanese brought Dutch, Chinese and British prisoners of war (POWs) to Burma to construct the infamous 'Burma railway'. They included a number of Eurasians: Singapore Eurasians with British surnames, some 'Burghers' (of mixed ancestry) from Sri Lanka, and a large contingent of Portuguese Eurasians.[45] Many of these prisoners died of malaria or beriberi. Approximately 16,000 European POWs died, as well as 100,000 Asian forced labourers (called *romusha*).[46] In Burma, the Anglo-Burmans (Eurasians) relied on their Asian ancestry to survive. For example, they changed their names, spoke Burmese and wore traditional Burmese dress.[47] Anglo-Burmans who were less able to do so were interned in prison camps by the Japanese, just like the Indo-Europeans in the Dutch East Indies.[48]

Although the province of Bengal (today's West Bengal in India and Bangladesh at the other side of the border with Burma) was not occupied by the Japanese, the Second World War did influence everyday life there, because it functioned as a boundary fortress. For example, the Anglo-Indian schools in Bengal experienced serious problems. They received fewer pupils, because of the departure of parents and children from Calcutta to safer parts of India. There were fewer qualified teachers, since many of them became soldiers, and unqualified teachers were recruited to fill the gaps. A number of schools had to evacuate their staff and students when their buildings were requisitioned by the military to hill-stations or up-country towns. Furthermore, there were financial problems. The school's income was reduced because of falling numbers of pupils and the inability of Anglo-Indian parents to pay their children's fees.[49]

In the rest of British India, the focus remained on the upcoming formal independence. Gandhi initiated a nationwide movement, the 'Quit India Campaign', hoping that his, and his followers' wishes would be recognised by a new central government. This was a reaction to the mission of Sir Stafford Cripps, whom the UK's prime minister, Churchill, sent to India in March 1942. Churchill wanted Cripps to negotiate with nationalist leaders and to relax the fears of a Japanese attack after the unexpected fall of the British stronghold of Singapore to Japan in February 1942.[50] The Cripps delegation made, according to the British, a generous offer to the Indian Nationalists: the promise of dominion status equal to full independence after the war in exchange for their cooperation during the war. The British considered this necessary for victory.[51] Although he talked to all nationalist leaders in India, Cripps' mission failed. Later, the 'Quit India Campaign' of Gandhi led to an extreme British response; some 2,500 Indians were shot and many thousands were imprisoned including Nehru and Gandhi. The British authorities dismissed Congress and its nationalistic leaders. The news of their imprisonment spread fast and protests erupted within hours on the streets of Bombay with people throwing 'stones and soda water bottles at trains, buses and cars.' Soon after that, students and workers marched down the roads of major cities and small towns shouting Gandhi's mantra 'Quit India' at every person they passed.[52]

Meanwhile, the absence of Gandhi and Nehru until their release from prison in the spring of 1945 left a political vacuum that was filled by the relatively new Muslim League, led by Mohammed Ali Jinnah. It was recognised by the British as being representative of all Muslims living in India. The goal of the league was the foundation of an independent country of 'Pakistan', a separate homeland for India's Muslims.[53] This ideology appealed to many Muslims on the subcontinent. The Muslim League warned its followers about the prospect of a Congress-dominated India. They were concerned that Hindu elites would not share power with them, and that Muslims would be marginalised in an independent India.[54] These ideas were inspired by the fact that Congress, which was theoretically a secular organisation, exploited popular Hindu symbolism and idioms. The Sapru Conciliation Committee of 1944-1945 briefly attempted to keep the Indian subcontinent unified[55], but did not succeed. Jinnah failed to secure half of the seats for Muslims in Nehru's new interim government. Therefore, he launched the 'Direct Action' campaign in August 1946, which triggered large-scale rioting in northern India. On 13 February 1947, the British Cabinet confirmed that Britain would leave India by June 1947. Lord Louis Mountbatten had made this announcement a precondition of his appointment. Once in office, Mountbatten quickly realised that if Britain wanted to avoid a brutal civil war then there was no alternative but to divide British India into a Hindu part and a Muslim part and to arrange a rapid British exit from India.[56]

The British authorities announced that India would become independent on 15 August 1947. At the same time, the Partition of British India into a Muslim country, Pakistan, and a predominantly Hindu country, India, took place. It is estimated that 12 million people crossed the new national borders: seven million Muslims moved from west India to the new country of Pakistan, and five million Hindus and Sikhs moved east to India. This Partition was accompanied by riots and extreme violence in the border region of the Punjab in the north-western part of the Indian subcontinent. More

than one million people died.[57] In East-Punjab, where the new border between India and Pakistan was located, Hindu fundamentalists murdered the entire Muslim community, some 500,000 people.[58] The most serious unrest occurred in the early 1940s in the central northern region of Bihar. In the neighbouring province of Bengal, during the 'Calcutta Killings' of August 1946, at least 6,000 Hindus and Muslims were killed, and more than 100,000 became homeless. However, the aggression was not directed at British or Anglo-Indian shops or other interests. Although the situation during Independence Day on 15 August 1947 and subsequent Partition was extremely tense for Anglo-Indians, the indigenous people did not consider them a primary target. Therefore, some degree of good will and friendship must have been present towards the Anglo-Indians. They may also have been seen as irrelevant.[59] Since, according to an eyewitness in the 1930s, 'whenever there was a demonstration or some trouble, the AFI or the railwaymen (almost all Anglo-Indians) and they had to go and shoot down these people. So they hated us.'[60]

The violent riots predominantly involved Muslims and Hindus. Perhaps this was because the Anglo-Indians were not an immediate economic threat for Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. Also, their religious identity as Christians appeared to be an important factor for exclusion from Partition violence.[61] Thus, despite discrimination based on race and colour, the colonial reciprocity appeared to have established a small degree of mutual respect between Europeans and Indians. Furthermore, testimonies demonstrate that Indians did not see the British, domiciled Europeans and Anglo-Indians as a threat or an enemy, but as friends during dangerous times of communal unrest.[62] An article in the *Manchester Guardian* of 16 August 1947 confirmed this view. It said that Anglo-Indians, alongside Europeans, Chinese and hillmen of Nepal and Tibet had joined in the festivities of Independence Day 'with equal enthusiasm'.[63] That did not mean that they were passive onlookers during this turbulent period. There are stories of courageous Anglo-Indians throughout Northern India who assisted Muslims and Hindus who were at risk.[64]

Approximately 50,000 Anglo-Indians migrated in the three decades following the independence of India, half of whom resettled in the UK. Few Anglo-Indians were harmed during Partition, thus only a few Anglo-Indians migrated to Britain immediately.[65] The main reason for that was that the majority did not feel at risk during the violence, but financial reasons and the lack of British citizenship must also have played a role.[66] Later, because of stricter immigration regulations in Britain, Anglo-Indians increasingly left for Canada, Australia and New-Zealand.[67] Other reasons why most Anglo-Indians initially stayed were the elaborate constitutional safeguards which the leaders of the Anglo-Indian association Frank Anthony and Henry Gidney secured. These safeguards consisted of two seats in the *Lok Sabha*, the Indian constituent assembly, Anglo-Indian representation in legislatures of states with an Anglo-Indian population of over 2,000 people, job reservations ('reserved vacancies') for the community in governmental services like the railway services and customs, and educational grants for its schools.[68] Therefore, the expiration of one of these safeguards in the 1960s – the gradual removal of privileged employment opportunities – was a more important reason to consider emigration to the UK or another country of the British Commonwealth.[69]

2.3 Dutch East Indies: *Cultuurstelsel, Ethische Politiek* and Bersiap

The Dutch ruled over what became known as the Dutch East Indies for almost 350 years. It consisted of the islands of Sumatra, Java, Madura, Kalimantan (Borneo), Celebes (Sulawesi), New Guinea (Irian Barat), Bali, Flores, Lombok, Ambon and small islands to the east of Java (Figure 2). From the end of the sixteenth century, the Dutch and their trade company, the VOC (the United East Indian Company, which was comparable to the British East India Company), established trade stations on the coasts of the Dutch East Indies and obtained a royal charter. They formed peripheral communities. They barely went inland and most of the communities consisted of sojourners living in coastal settlements on Java. Men formed the majority of the European population. Dutch and German sailors, soldiers and merchants outnumbered other nationalities and professions.[70]

Hardly any European women moved to the colony; European men in the Dutch East Indies had relationships with local women. From these unions, the *Indisch* mixed culture sprang.[71] This mixed group was a continuation of the earlier community of Portuguese mestizos, the so-called *Mardijkers* who had originally been Christian slaves in Portuguese service who were caught by the Dutch colonists and later freed. Their mixed offspring were called *mixtiezen* (mixed) and *castiezen* (one half Asian ancestry), *pustiezen* (one quarter Asian ancestry) and *christiezen* (one eighth Asian ancestry).[72]

The categorisation according to the degree of mixedness is indicative of how mixing and the differences between the gradations of mixing were considered important already in the first decades of colonial rule. As mentioned, European men cohabited with indigenous women, the so-called *njai*. This had advantages for the colonial authorities. For example, the colonists learned the indigenous language more quickly. Furthermore, it was generally believed that the offspring of mixed unions might fare better in the tropical climate than Dutch people, who often became ill and died, or were forced to repatriate to the mother country.[73] Later, the VOC decided to discourage interracial marriages. In 1636, the VOC leaders in the Netherlands decided that European men who were married to 'black' women were not allowed to return to the Netherlands. Later in the seventeenth century, the VOC also decided that only white men, and not their indigenous wives, could return to the Netherlands.[74]

Between 1811 and 1815, the Dutch East Indies became a British colony under the leadership of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles.[75] The visible relationships between Dutch men and indigenous women surprised the British, as did the fact that the elite was married to women who were of partly Asian ancestry. For British people, mixed relationships were by that time unacceptable.[76] During their rule, the British tried to impose their ideas on the – in their eyes – 'uncivilised' European community of the Dutch East Indies. They also tried to civilise the indigenous population according to British norms.[77] However, a voice from within the Eurasian community, John William Ricketts used this insight of a more liberal policy in the Dutch East Indies (next to pointing to French, Spanish and Portuguese colonies) to state that 'no inconvenience has resulted from it' and with that advocated for rights for Eurasians.[78]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, after the arrival of more European women, mixed relationships became more contested. In the years between 1880 and 1931,

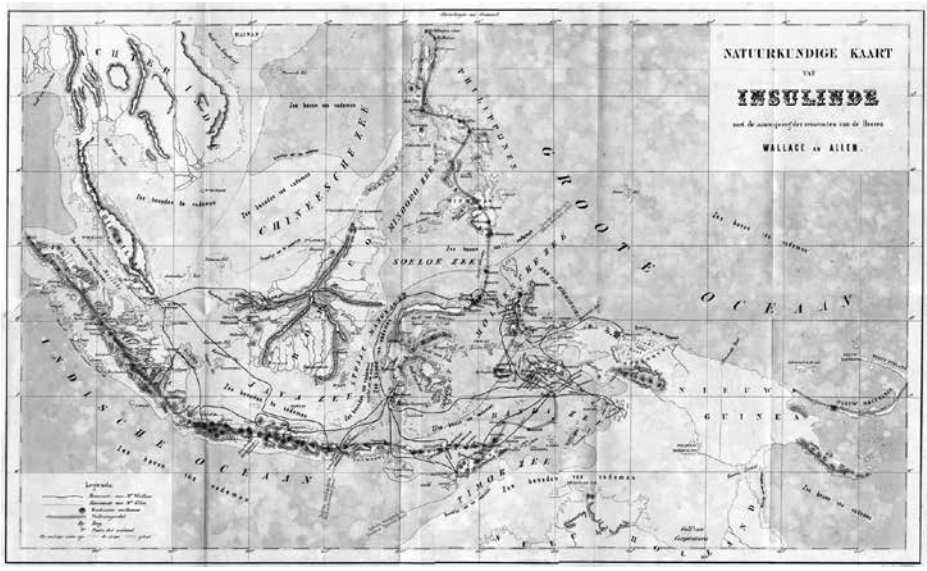

Fig. 2 Map of the Dutch East Indies ('Insulinde'), Dutch Translation by P.J. Veth of Alfred Russel Wallace, The Malay Archipelago. 'Het land van den orang-oetan en den paradijsvogel' (Amsterdam 1870-1871).[79]

the number of European women in the Dutch East Indies had increased from a ratio of almost 500 European (including many Indo-European) women to 1000 European men, to 884 European women to 1000 European men in 1931.[80] At the end of the nineteenth century, Dutch East Indies colonial society was still a true creole and mixed society. Yet more than in British India and French Indochina, Dutch colonialism depended on Europeans with nationalities other than Dutch. There were insufficient Dutch men willing to leave their native country, and even fewer women wanted to leave the Netherlands.[81]

However, English-speaking visitors were still amazed by the relatively smooth integration of Indo-Europeans into the Europeans' daily life on Java and the development of an 'Indisch' culture.[82] Though the disapproval of mixed relationships and mixed offspring only became manifest and open obvious several decades later, already in the 1830s the language heard in the Dutch East Indies Parliament was discriminatory towards Indo-Europeans. In 1835, the commander-in-chief of the Royal Dutch Indies' army Hubert J.J.L Ridder de Stuers criticised the Indo-Europeans: 'They possess the bad characteristics of the Europeans, combined with those bad features of the Indonesians.'[83] From the beginning of the twentieth century, mixedness and intermarriage were disapproved of by colonial society; as expressed by the writer Bas Veth in 1900: 'a mixture is a fatality.'[84] However, such disapproval did not prevent mixed relationships. In Batavia in 1930, 18 per cent of the marriages involving a European partner were still mixed. Elsewhere in West Java, 28.5 per cent of the marriages were between a European and an indigenous person.[85]

'The Eurasians helped to make colonial rule more powerful in the Dutch East Indies'

After the British intermezzo, the introduction of the *cultuurstelsel* (cultivation system) in the Dutch East Indies marked the transition from a trade colony into an agricultural colony. The Javanese people were forced to produce a fixed amount of cash crops – such as coffee, sugar and tobacco – for the European market, while they earned barely enough to survive.[86] Until approximately 1870, there were more Indo-Europeans in the European category than people with full European ancestry. After that point, the colonial culture in the Dutch East Indies gradually became more oriented towards Europe. More Europeans came to the colony, and the invention of the telephone and the telegraph and the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 brought the Dutch East Indies closer to the Netherlands. More Dutch people came temporarily to the colony instead of permanently, and more people who lived in the colony visited the mother country.[87] In the second half of the nineteenth century, a total of 15,000 Netherlands-born people departed for the Dutch East Indies.[88] In 1891, the Cultivation System was abolished and the (agricultural) market was liberalised for western companies. It became more attractive to start a new private (plantation) business in the East.[89] Rather strikingly and important for this study about categorisation is that under the Agrarian Laws of 1870 Dutch people (or *totoks*), were allowed to own land, while Indo-Europeans were not.[90]

Colonial officials became aware of their responsibility to civilise the indigenous people. This resulted in the *Ethische politiek* ('Ethical politics'), a series of measures which were directed at the improvement and augmentation of education and job possibilities for indigenous people.[91] Earlier, Indo-Europeans had already taken advantage of the enlarged educational opportunities in the colony. At the beginning of the twentieth century they filled all kinds of lower clerical positions in the colonial civil service. As one of the later IEV-leaders described their contribution to colonial development:

> The Eurasians did not only contribute to the elaboration of Dutch colonial rule over a wider area but they also helped to make it more powerful in the Dutch East Indies.[92]

Many members of the Javanese nobility took advantage of the 'ethical' opportunities and in 1908 formed the first indigenous association '*Boedi Oetomo*' in the city of Djokjakarta in mid-Java.[93] The name *Boedi Oetomo* can be translated as 'the beautiful pursuit'. This association did not turn against colonialism and did not demand self-government. In that sense, it fit into the 'ethical politics' of the Dutch East Indies government. The first aim was 'to enlighten the Javanese people by harmonious, especially intellectual development.'[94]

The nationalistic movement originated from the organisation *Sarekat Islam*, founded in 1911. This was essentially an Islamic trade organisation, which did not have an aggressive nationalistic agenda. The indigenous people who were active in this organisation were undoubtedly influenced by the Pan-Islamic movement in their moderate nationalist ideology. The goal of Pan-Islamism, which arose after the Japanese had beaten the Russians in the Japanese-Russian war of 1904-1905, was to unify all Muslims under the leadership of the Ottoman 'Caliph' and therefore the Ottomans opposed the colonial presence of western powers in the Muslim world.[95]

In 1927, the first Indonesian political party was founded, the Partai Nasional Indo-

nesia (PNI), which favoured independence from the Netherlands. Ahmed Soekarno a young and charismatic engineer, born in 1901 in Blitar, was chosen as its leader.[96] In his speeches he frequently referred to the Djojobojo-prophecy which predicted that the white power holders (meaning the Dutch people) would be expelled by yellow-skinned aliens (the Japanese) but that the Indonesians would regain their freedom after the last were gone.[97] In the last decade before the Second World War, the position of Indo-Europeans deteriorated. In the Dutch East Indies, Indo-Europeans were struck hard by the crisis of the 1930s. The government designed policies such as hill station retreats and fund raisers to prevent poor Europeans from experiencing the living standards of the indigenous people. For the Indo-Europeans there were no such schemes.[98] The new labour market policy of the government whereby the indigenous population received more job opportunities (in the framework of the ethical politics) made matters worse for Indo-Europeans.[99]

In 1900, the number of Europeans (including Indo-Europeans) in the Dutch East Indies was 60,000 people. In 1930, this number had increased to 240,417, as a result of the arrival of more European men and women. Europeans formed 0.4 per cent of the total population. Most Europeans (80 per cent) lived on Java.[100] These Indo-Europeans were legally recognised as Europeans by their fathers. People of European ancestry who were not recognised by their European father were usually absorbed by the indigenous Indonesian society (the *kampong)* and were not easily recognisable. The total number of Indo-Europeans, including those who had disappeared in the *kampong* was – as was mentioned in chapter 1 – estimated at 8 to 9 million in 1940, according to the sociologist Wertheim.[101] This may have been an exaggerated number, but it is important to understand that the large majority of the people classified as European under colonial law was of mixed ancestry and that large numbers of indigenous people with some European ancestry lived in the *kampong*.[102] Wertheim was an important adviser to the Dutch government. Therefore, his estimates of the number of lower-classed Indo-Europeans, living in the *kampong*, were important, for they gave an indication of the potential number of migrants who might want to come from Indonesia to the Netherlands. The number is of importance to the perception of the migration of lower-classed Indo-Europeans as a threat.

In 1954, in the newsletter of the *Nederlands-Indische Bond van Ex-krijgsgevangenen en geïnterneerden* (NIBEG, Dutch Indies League of Ex-prisoners of war and internees), the editors wrote that semi-official estimates suggested there were two million people of mixed ancestry living in the Dutch East Indies.[103] In 1941, according to official numbers, approximately 300,000 Europeans lived in the Dutch East Indies.[104] The indigenous population at that moment was around 60 million people. Thus, according to that estimate one out of 200 people was of European ancestry in the Dutch East Indies.[105] After the Second World War, the number of Europeans living in the Dutch East Indies had decreased to 250,000.[106]

'This Indo-Dutch society currently needs to disappear'

The Japanese troops attacked the Dutch East Indies from 10 January 1942 onwards, starting with an attack on the oil reserves, that were located near the coast of Borneo.

The most important reason for the Japanese attack was the need for raw materials, notably oil and rubber.[107] After the unexpected fall of the British stronghold Singapore to Japan in mid-February 1942 and the destruction of the allied fleet in the Battle of the Java Sea on 28 February, defeat of the western troops (including the Dutch) in the largest part of South-East Asia was inevitable. The Dutch army unconditionally capitulated on 8 March 1942 in Kalidjati, Java.[108]

After Japanese troops had occupied the Dutch East Indies in February 1942, they tried to eliminate all western and colonial influences, notably the Dutch ones. They introduced the Japanese time and calendar, and the use of the Dutch language was forbidden. They made the Indonesian language, *Bahasa Indonesia*, and Japanese the two official languages.[109] All European people (including many Eurasians) were interned, similarly to what happened in the neighbouring British colonies in South-East Asia: Singapore, Malaya and Hong Kong.[110] Furthermore, the Japanese tried to turn the Indo-Europeans against the Dutch, by offering them privileges in a Japanese-ruled Indonesia. The Japanese could use them for their own political purposes in building up the 'Greater East Asia co-prosperity sphere.' Therefore, the majority of Indo-Europeans were allowed to remain outside the camps. In some instances, Indo-Europeans had a choice. Sometimes they could pass as Indonesian and avoid internment, but fair-skinned Indo-Europeans usually could not escape the camps. Life outside the camps was dangerous and complicated. Though they were free, they did not have any income or housing. Many had to sell clothes or furniture to survive; and they lived in constant fear of the *Kempeitai,* the Japanese secret police, who were suspicious of all western-looking people. The Indo-Europeans, in particular, with their assumed divided loyalties, were regarded with suspicion. The *Kempeitai* was infamous for using torture in interrogations.[111]

Another explanation for the considerable number of Indo-Europeans outside the camps was that the many Indo-Europeans working in technical occupations could not easily be replaced. The Japanese needed them for economic and military purposes.[112] Despite all the efforts of the Japanese, many Indo-Europeans remained loyal to the Dutch, even those who were living in the indigenous environment.[113] A considerable number of Indo-Europeans were interned with Dutch people in the Japanese camps, usually as prisoners of war and not as civilian internees. Of the total of 300,000 Europeans living in the Dutch East Indies at the start of the war, 100,000 people (including Indo-Europeans) were interned in civilian camps and 40,000 men became prisoners of war.[114] Only *asal-oesoel*, the proof of an Asian ancestor, could save Indo-Europeans from internment. In 1942, one Indonesian ancestor was sufficient to remain outside of the camps, but in 1943 this policy was changed. All Indo-Europeans with more than one white ancestor were interned.[115]

Many Eurasians preferred internment to surviving outside of the camps as aliens under the violent Japanese occupational regime. They thought the camps would provide protection and shelter.[116] Before the war most of the Indo-Europeans had done their best to hide their Asian ancestry. Now they used a reverse strategy, and they tried to find an Indonesian ancestor because it seemed to be advantageous to have as many Asian ancestors as possible.[117] Indonesians did not escape the brutal treatment of the Japanese. Many of them were mobilised as *romusha* or 'volunteer labourers'.

Skilled workers were taken to do work overseas and much larger numbers of poor labourers were forced to work on specific projects, such as the Burma railroad, where many died. The forced labour disrupted the old structure and the colonial hierarchy of Dutch East Indies society.[118]

Some Indo-Europeans explicitly chose the Japanese side and tried to persuade other Indo-Europeans to collaborate with the Japanese and their war effort in Indonesia. For example, P.H. van den Eeckhout, an Indo-European who was interned in camp Kesilir in East-Java, founded the so-called *Persaudaraan Asia Golongan Indonesia* (PAGI)-group. This group consisted of Indo-Europeans who had declared their intention to opt for Indonesian citizenship when it would be possible after the war.[119] They stressed their Asian ancestry, were loyal to the Japanese cause and advocated for the complete integration of Indo-Europeans into Indonesia. As a privileged group, they lived in separate barracks in the internment camp Kesilir, they only spoke Malay and wore Indonesian clothes.[120] It is unclear what the exact role of this group was at the time. What can be noted is that Van den Eeckhout and his PAGI group were linked to the Glodok-affair. On 23 January 1945, all Indo-Europeans who the Japanese considered dangerous for Indonesian society had to be arrested. This was the first time that the Japanese authorities specifically targeted Indo-Europeans in their attempts to make Indonesia Asian. In total 669 Indo-European boys and young men were incarcerated in the Glodok prison in the old city centre of Djakarta. About 70 of them died within a few months. Only at the end of July 1945 did the Japanese decide that all Indo-Europeans were to be released from Glodok and sent to a labour camp at Halimoen.[121]

Already at an earlier stage, the Indo-European A.Th. Boogaardt, who was loyal to the Japanese cause, had given a radio speech in September 1943 in which he tried to convince the Indo-Europeans of the advantages of giving up their loyalty to the Dutch rulers and supporting the Japanese instead. Another example of a supporter of the Japanese was one of the old founders of the *Indische Partij*, P.F. Dahler, who in 1941 was interviewed by the Japanese press agency Domei. This agency used his viewpoint as propaganda material in an article in a Malayan newspaper, *Tjahaja,* in January 1943: 'Indo-Dutch people must become Indonesian!' In this article, he explains that this command particularly applied to the Indo-Europeans:

> The Indo-Dutch, who are still favourable to the IEV, and who have been advised several times from different sides to choose between East and West, but so far have disregarded that advice.[122]

Dahler had also another clear piece of advice for Indo-Europeans:

> This Indo-Dutch society currently needs to disappear from the public society in this country, that is to say that an Indo-Dutch person must not only consider himself Indonesian, but he must also fully become Indonesian. The person who does not want that, must be considered an alien in Indonesia forever.[123]

Dahler, who had been a former member of the People's Council of the Dutch East Indies was an ardent advocate of Indonesian nationalism. Under Japanese occupation, he was appointed head of the *Kantor Oeroesan Peranakan* (KOP), who took care of affairs concerning Indo-Europeans for the Japanese authorities.[124]

In March 1943, the Japanese initiated a special registration and categorisation procedure for all Indo-Europeans who were still outside the camps on Java. They were divided into eight groups depending on ancestry. A contemporary eyewitness remembers the following division made by the Japanese: 'Group 1: *totok*-father and Indo-European mother; group 2: *totok*-mother and Indo-European father; group 3: Indo-European father and Indo-European mother; group 4: *totok*-father and Indonesian mother; group 5: *totok*-father and *totok*-mother, born in the Dutch East Indies. Thus, this fifth group seems to be of full Dutch ancestry with two *totok* parents. Yet, they were still counted as part of the 'group of mixed ancestry' because of their birth in the colony. Group 6 consists of people with an Indonesian father and *totok*-mother; group 7: Indonesian father and Indo-European mother; and lastly group 8: Indonesian father and mother of another Asian nationality.' On such registration cards the following qualification was indicated: 'This is a child of turbid parents.'[125]

The racial classification was essentially a continuation of the racial colonial hierarchies developed in the nineteenth century in the Dutch East Indies. The only difference was that Asians instead of Dutch *totoks* occupied the top positions in the social ranking. The internees felt this racial reversal intensely, since they became dependent on Indonesians who provided them with food through the barbed wire (*kawat*).[126] This racial reversal became clearer when after November 1943 the civilian camps were no longer controlled by Japanese civilian authorities, but by Japanese military officials. The camps were rechristened as 'military internment camps' instead of their earlier euphemistic description as 'protected neighbourhoods'. This rebranding as military camps meant stricter rules, less food, and deteriorating living conditions. From September 1944 onwards, when it became clear that Japan was losing the Pacific War, the internees were concentrated in larger camps predominantly on Java. Many internees did not survive in these huge camps or the transportation to them in crowded trains in the final months of the war. There were also a number of Indo-Europeans amongst the internees who were sent to these camps. However, they were a minority, since most Indo-Europeans remained outside the camps, at least on Java.[127]

'You will face a very hard time'

Because being openly and recognisably Dutch was dangerous during Japanese occupation, many Indo-Europeans looked for a reinforcement of their (partly) indigenous background. For example, Indo-European women sent their sons to relatives in the *kampong* or *dessa* (indigenous village) where their families originally came from. For the women, the advantages were that they had fewer mouths to feed, and their sons had a good hiding place. 'Disappearing in the *kampong*' had a positive connotation at that time as opposed to the pre-war period when it was connected to '*verindischen*' and 'going native'. Many of these boys hiding in the kampong adapted to life in the *dessa* and became Muslim. They married Indonesian women and stayed after the Japanese occupation had ended and after decolonisation.[128] During the confusing occupation years, however, it remained hard for Indo-Europeans to know who their real friends were and whom they could trust. This uncertainty is conveyed in the memoir of the Indo-European Math Jalhaij who wrote about a meeting with an old Indonesian friend

during Japanese occupation who told him that he would face difficult times in the future:

> 'You Indo-Europeans make jokes of everything and take matters lightly, despite the distressing position you are in.' Jalhaij asked: 'Distressing position, what do you mean?' 'Look, you are proud and stubborn. Although you were born here out of Indonesian mothers and know Indonesia better than the Netherlands, you keep rejecting every cooperation with the Nippon, because your fathers are *totoks* and you always keep standing behind your fathers. Even worse, most of you don't even have an interest in Indonesian affairs. Exactly because of that you will face a very hard time.'[129]

Two days after the Japanese had capitulated, on 15 August 1945, Soekarno proclaimed Indonesian independence in the backyard of his house in Batavia (renamed Jakarta after independence). A violent and confusing period, the *Bersiap* (which literally meant 'Be ready'), consisting of revolutionary violence in the wake of the Japanese loss, followed in Indonesia, during which Indo-Europeans were a special target. It is estimated that between 25,000 to 30,000 Dutch and Indo–Europeans were killed. It is difficult to give precise numbers for each population group since many were kidnapped or disappeared, and were never found.[130]

In an indirect way, the Japanese prepared the way for the independence of the Dutch East Indies. The Dutch tried to restore colonial rule by carrying out two so-called 'police actions', which was a euphemism for a colonial war. Unrest continued until Indonesian and Dutch authorities agreed on the formal transfer of sovereignty to Indonesia on 27 December 1949.[131] A large number of the *totoks* repatriated to the Netherlands.[132] In the option period between December 1949 and December 1951, approximately 30,000 Indo-Europeans opted for *Warga Negara* (Indonesian Citizenship). However, in 1951 there were still 136,000 Dutch people in Indonesia, who had not chosen Indonesian citizenship and thus were legally aliens in the newly independent state.[133]

2.4 French Indochina: A young colonial patchwork of regions and ethnicities

French Indochina was formed from 1856 onwards, when the French annexed the lower Mekong Delta from China (see Figure 3).[134] In 1858, they had annexed Cochinchina, the most southern part of present-day Vietnam.[135] By 1876 the French government had claimed all of Cochinchina as a French colony. The French troops used Cochinchina as a base for the conquest of the middle and northern parts of Vietnam.[136] In 1887, the French founded Indochina, under the name of *Union Indochinoise*. It unified Cambodia, Laos (added in 1893), the Chinese enclave Kwangchow Wan and the three regions that are now in Vietnam: Tonkin in the north, Annam in the middle, and Cochinchina in the south. French Indochina was a colonial invention, a patchwork of regions and ethnicities, governed via different and often conflicting mechanisms, but unified under French control. It included one proper colony – Cochinchina with Saigon as a capital – and four protectorates: Tonkin, Laos, Annam and Cambodia.[137] It came about as a result of economic interests of the French in the South East Asian region,

rivalry between France and Britain in that area and finally the intervention of French missionaries.[138] French colonial rule did not erase indigenous hierarchies but placed the French colonial authorities, the *colons,* at the top of the social ladder by using the power strategy of 'divide and rule'.[139]

In Indochina, the offspring from mixed relationships between European men and indigenous women were named *Métis*.[140] Although mixed marriages between European men and indigenous women did occur, the marriages *à la mode du pays* (which were similar to concubinage in the other two cases) were the prevalent form of domestic arrangement among European men throughout Indochina in the second half of the nineteenth century.[141] Potential French colonists were given advice about this local practice before they arrived. They were informed that in the house, 'the native woman will have to keep herself entirely in her role and be officially unknown.'[142] But in the 1930s, a Vietnamese writer, Vu Trong Phung, cast doubt on the nature of the marriages in his satirical report *The Industry of Marrying Europeans* in which he described marriages that had according to him a rather 'industrial' nature. He started this report by sketching a scene in a court room in Hanoi in which an indigenous woman answered the question 'What is your occupation?', with 'My occupation is ... marrying Europeans!'[143]

Mixed unions were accepted in the pre-colonial and early colonial era of Indochina, but they became increasingly suspect from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards. Under the leadership of the new governor-general Paul Doumer, who was appointed in 1896, mixed unions came to be seen as an evil phenomenon. He forbade civil servants from entering into marriages with indigenous women, but cohabitation with a *congai* (a Vietnamese concubine) remained common.[144]

In the French colonial perception, a *congai* was regarded as belonging to the same category as a 'prostitute'. In Indochina *congais* were expected to have sex with their masters in addition to providing household services.[145]

As a result of the strict policy of governor-general Doumer, colonial society denounced mixed people or *Métis* in Indochina. They did so sometimes with even more disdain than the colonisers had towards indigenous people. Therefore, *Métis* developed deep feelings of rancour towards both the French coloniser and the colonised people.[146] Despite the strict (informal) boundaries between groups, French colonial society in Indochina was heterogeneous, including people from other French colonies: Antilleans, people from Réunion, Indians, people from the Vietnamese elite and *Métis*. Another development which contributed to the problematisation of miscegenation was – as elsewhere – the arrival of more French women in Indochina, who accompanied their husbands when they moved to the French colony. In the 1920s, their arrival did not immediately lead to fewer unions between European men and indigenous women.[147] European (mostly French) women had difficulty in adapting to the colony's climate and habits and they felt the rivalry of the *Métis* women on the marriage market. According to a report on the Eurasian problem of 1938, European women were 'instinctively' jealous of the *Métis* women and that led to a greater disapproval of miscegenation and sharper boundaries in colonial society.[148]

The French had their own kind of civilising mission: *La mission civilisatrice* coupled with the goal of *mise en valeur* – the economic development of the colonial empire for

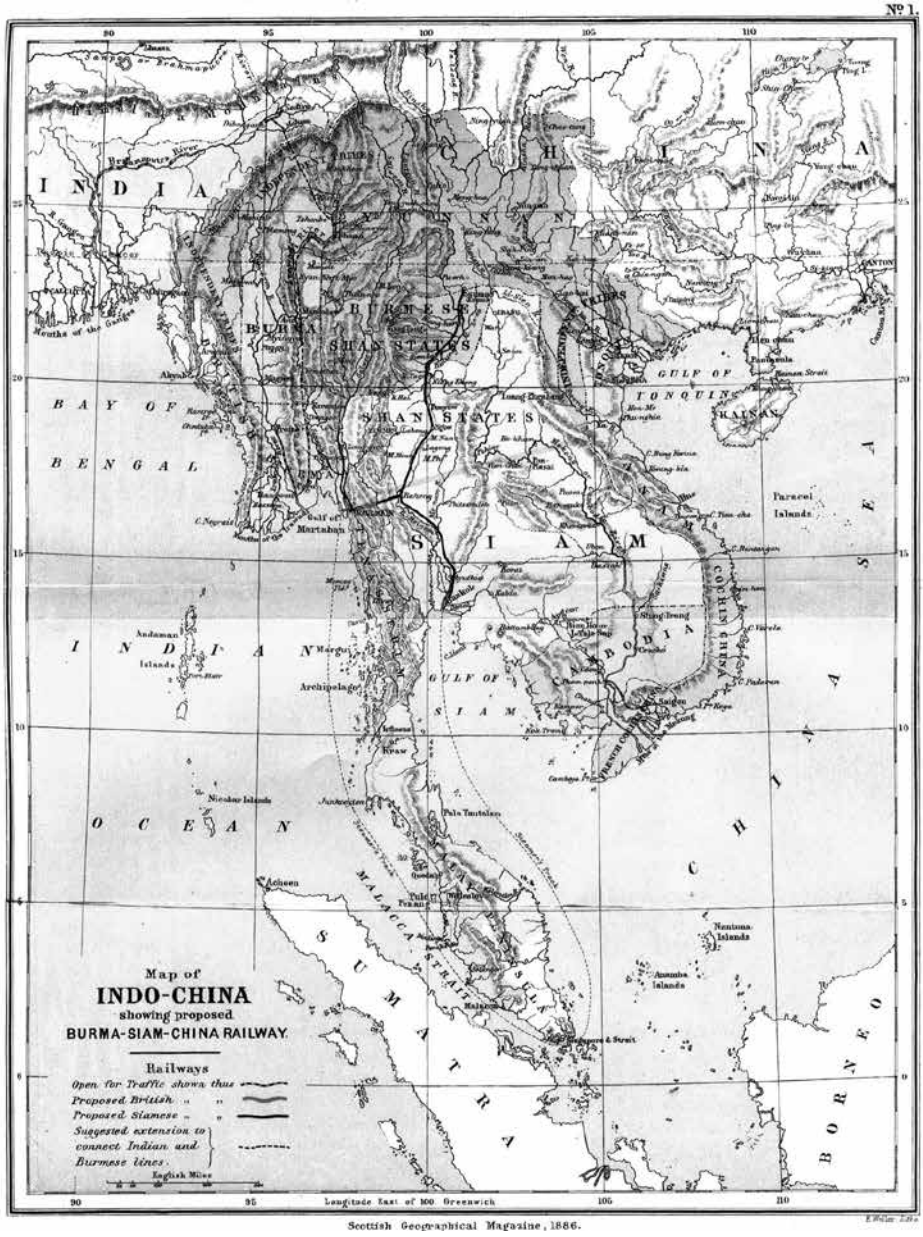

Fig. 3 Map of French Indochina (1886) with proposed railway Burma-Siam-China.[149]

the benefit of all residents.[150] With reference to the French civilising mission, the influential French politician Jules Ferry said on 28 July 1885:

> One can link the system of colonial expansion to three kinds of ideas: economic ideas, ideas on civilisation [...] and ideas of the political and patriotic order. [...] It is the second point that I have to introduce [...] it is the humanitarian and civilising side of the issue [...] The superior races have a right towards the inferior races. I say that they have a right because they have an obligation. They have the obligation to civilise the inferior races [...] But in our time, I stress that the European nations are performing that superior obligation of civilisation with magnificence, with grandeur and honesty.[151]

'We must respect the blood of France'

The French emphasised the moral and cultural dimension of the colonial project, which stemmed from the old revolutionary French belief in the universal value of its republican civilisation. Linked to this civilising mission was the sentiment that the French colonists (*colons)* considered themselves responsible for the creation of the *Métis* group. The general idea among them was that the phenomenon '*Métis'* was born with the establishment of the colonial domain. Therefore, they felt they had to care for the abandoned and neglected *Métis* children and to assimilate them as 'real' French people into the French group. This was seen as part of the important role the French had to play in all their colonies, including the Asian ones.[152] Already in 1913, the French minister of colonies Lebrun put these ideas forward by issuing a formal demand that the governors general of all French colonies were to raise awareness of the need for European fathers to fulfil their 'duties toward their children born of native women'.[153] One colonial administrator wrote:

> We must respect the blood of France. Be it no more than a drop that flows in all the veins in which it runs, this sole drop should suffice to ennoble the rest.[154]

The French reference to responsibility was remarkable when compared to the way the other two cases approached the Eurasian offspring of European men and indigenous women. The international colonial exhibition that the French organised in the Bois de Vincennes, Paris, in 1931, reinforced these ideas. The Vincennes exhibition showed the 'great' accomplishments of the French in the South-East-Asian colonies to the metropolitan population in France.[155] Unlike Algeria, Indochina was never a settlement colony. The French population in Indochina never numbered more than 42,000 people. In 1913, the small European community (including *Métis*) in Indochina was estimated to number 23,700 people. In 1929, this number had increased to 40,095 people, because of the influx of more French. That was only 0.2 per cent of the total population of Indochina. In 1937, a survey counted 6,000 Eurasians with French citizenship.[156] In 1940, the total number of indigenous people was just below 23 million. At that time, there were only 517 European women to every 1,000 European men, despite the campaign to attract more French women to Indochina.[157] Amongst others, the female French author Clotilde Chivas-Baron, who had lived in Indochina for four years, supported this campaign. She has written extensively about her experiences during that period.[158] The presence of more French women in Indo-

china was considered an improvement, because the general idea was that the French women would create purer metropolitan French homes with their 'innate French virtues.'[159]

When it became connected to the radical Vietnamese youth movement during the late 1920s, the Vietnamese women's movement strongly influenced the Vietnamese nationalist movement. In particular, the movement for women's education had become increasingly nationalistic by 1927. In the 1930s, the colonial government voiced concerns about this strengthened relationship between the Vietnamese nationalist and feminist movements. The connection was mainly via the indigenous environments in which abandoned *Métis* children had to grow up.[160] Nguyen Ai Quoc, the future Ho Chi Minh, established the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP) in 1930. From the start, women's rights were part of the ICP's agenda. The ICP counted women among its members, and among other things, sought to improve the conditions of pregnant women and working mothers. Specifically, the party called for women's access to trade union membership, maternity leave, child care at the workplace, maternal rights in cases of divorce, and the prohibition of polygamy and forced marriages. Shortly after the ICP was founded in 1930, the Vietnamese Women's Union, a branch of the Communist Party that was devoted to women's issues, emerged. Women organised trade unions and supported the ICP strikes and uprisings of the 1930s in Northern Annam and Tonkin.[161] One of the most well-known uprisings is the 'Yen Bay' Uprising on 10 February 1930, when the Vietnamese nationalist movement attacked the French garrison post at Yen Bay to the North-West of Hanoi. Joined by a significant number of indigenous troops stationed there, Vietnamese nationalists conquered the arms depot and killed a number of French soldiers. Numerous strikes of workers and agricultural manifestations, organised by militant communists, preceded this uprising. The event provoked fierce French repression. The French sentenced 83 indigenous rebels to death and 13 were guillotined in June 1930. The powerful French secret police, *la Sûreté,* was involved and infiltrated various communist organisations and interrogated their members.[162] The images of docile, placid indigenous populations which had been prevalent until this uprising did not equate anymore with the representation of these 'rebels' as fanatical nationalists who were heavily opposed to French colonial rule.[163]

Nationalist aspirations continued in the years that followed, but they did not overcome the repression of the French colonial authorities.[164] Most French *colons* enjoyed a luxurious lifestyle in French quarters of cities like Hanoi and Saigon, or in Indochinese hill stations like Dalat and Yunnan.[165] Indeed, Indochina gained a reputation in France as a country in which the humbler European man could live in luxury and afford a number of servants.[166] Saigon became a diverse city. The French colonial government planned to make Saigon the economic capital of Indochina, and the city attracted many foreign companies and immigrants, including French people, other Europeans, Chinese and Indians from other French colonies such as Martinique, French India and Guadeloupe. These people had already received French citizenship in these areas.[167]

In June 1940, Indochina was invaded by Japanese troops, one and a half years before the Dutch East Indies were occupied by Japanese forces. In 1941, the *Viet Minh*

Ill. 1 Saigon street scene in front of the theatre in the 1920s.[168]

was founded as a front organisation of the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP). *Viet Minh* was an abbreviation of *Viet Nam Doc Lap Dong Minh*, or National Front for the Independence of Vietnam.[169] It was a merger between the Indochinese communist party and a number of Vietnamese political organisations. The most important goal of the *Viet Minh* was to unite all Vietnamese communist and nationalist forces in a common liberation front against the French and later the Japanese.[170] During Japanese occupation, the Vietnamese communists in the ICP still flitted between two goals: their desire for a post-war independent country that spanned the geographic borders of Indochina, and their wish for an independent Vietnam consisting of Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina.[171] In the end, the latter goal was accomplished, and Laos and Cambodia both became independent. After the Japanese surrendered on 15 August 1945, Ho Chi Minh proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) on 2 September 1945. In this speech, he used quotes from the American declaration of independence.[172]

In French Indochina, the French administration had been left in place by the Japanese occupiers. The central French government in Vichy and its representative in Indochina, Governor General Decoux, found a compromise. The French would retain their power while allowing economic cooperation with the Japanese and Japanese military presence on Indochinese soil.[173] The French were certain that this was the best way of coming to terms with the new situation, they believed their position in the Far East remained 'toujours forte'. At least, the government wanted people to believe this.

It was also a justification for their continued presence in Indochina after the Japanese were gone.[174] The Japanese saw in the compromise a way of saving valuable military and administrative resources as well as raw materials and food stuffs.[175] In addition, the French feared an Indochinese-Japanese alliance because that would signal the end of 'white superiority' in the eyes of the Indochinese people.[176] The French wanted to implement the so-called 'Brazzaville policy', named after the Brazzaville conference in January-February 1944, where it was first presented. The basis for this new policy was the idea of a Federation or Union, connecting the French mother country and the colonies.[177] After their *coup d'état*, the Japanese removed the entire French administration, before they set up a temporary Vietnamese 'puppet' administration. The Japanese chose to rule through local royalist elites.[178] After the Japanese surrendered, emperor Bao Dai, who had become head of an independent Vietnamese state under Japanese 'protection', abdicated on 25 August 1945, and transferred his power to the new independent Vietnamese government.[179]

'One word, I repeat ... one word: independence'

At first, Ho Chi Minh did not see any other option but to negotiate with the French colonial rulers. He offered concessions to the French, agreeing to permit them to return to the north to replace the Chinese. He also agreed that an autonomous Vietnam would be part of the French Union, a loose federation of states, connected to France, comparable to the British Commonwealth. In return, the French offered a referendum on the status of Cochinchina, the southern part of Vietnam. They asked whether this area would re-join Annam and Tonkin in a reunited Vietnamese state or remain a separate French territory. This was all part of the March Agreement of 1946. After this agreement, two further conferences were held: the Dalat preliminary Conference (April-May) and the Fontainebleau conference (July-August). The Dalat Conference was a failure. The French delegation promoted a tight union with one foreign policy, whereas the Vietnamese advocated a loose association of equal states. In fact, the French wanted an Indochinese Federation of five 'free states' with a federal assembly of sixty members, whose main task would be to present a federal budget. The five states were to control their internal affairs, with the important condition that policy topics such as justice, hygiene, social security, economic planning, transport, customs, communications and immigration were to be the responsibility of the French High Commissioner and his federal administration. To the Vietnamese, this was unacceptable, because they realised that the French would only grant them 'second rank' independence. In September 1946, Ho Chi Minh left Paris for the last time, convinced that diplomacy had failed.[180] When Ho Chi Minh told the French former clandestine resistance newspaper *Franc-Tireur* on 15 August 1946 that all that was needed was 'one word, I repeat ... one word: independence', he was asking for the one thing that no French government would have given him at that time.[181]

In that respect, renaming the old empire the *French Union,* which was part of the Fourth Republican Constitution implemented in October 1946, was too late for a new round of negotiations with the Vietnamese nationalists. This new constitution permitted local peoples to direct their own administration and govern their own affairs

democratically. France, however, would retain control over major state issues, the military and diplomatic policy. Through this system, the Indochinese Federation became an associated state governed by a High Commissioner, who replaced the position of Governor General from the old colonial times.[182] This High Commissioner in Indochina, Emile Bollaert, had already offered the Vietnamese people two concessions. France accepted the unification of the three parts of Vietnam (Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina) within a single state. France offered the new Vietnamese state 'independence' within the French Union, using the Vietnamese word 'doc lap' rather than the French 'indépendance'.[183] The *Métis* members of *La Mutuelle de l'Indochine* and its allies portrayed the fate of the *Métis* for the French government as symbolic of the imperial future of France in Asia. Eurasians, they wrote, were 'the last French island in Indochina' and they 'assured the durability of the French presence' in the region.[184]

Negotiations between the Viet Minh and the French authorities failed, and 'la guerre d'Indochine' or the 'First Indochina War' (also called the 'War of Resistance') began. After almost nine years of guerrilla fighting, and months of heavy fighting with the French troops, the Viet Minh celebrated victory at Dien Bien Phu on 7 May 1954. Dien Bien Phu was a village in the central highlands of Annam, typically called in the French press *le Verdun tropical* referring to the battle near the eponymous town in northern France where so many had died in the First World War.[185] Subsequently, the Geneva Accords arranged the withdrawal of the French from all Indochinese terrain. It also divided Vietnam along the seventeenth parallel, leaving the Viet Minh in control of the north. A regime under the leadership of King Bao Dai, who had returned once again, ruled South-Vietnam. This administration was supported by the United States.[186] The idea was that national elections would be held in 1956 to reunite the Vietnamese country, but these never took place.[187] The 'Partition' into North and South-Vietnam led to the evacuation of 800,000 people from the communist northern part to the capitalist southern part of Vietnam. All these migrants were Catholics, including many Europeans and *Métis* children from child protection institutions, who fled the communist regime ruled by the Viet Minh. The monarchies of Laos and Cambodia (once part of the French Indochinese union) now obtained international protection as neutral independent states.[188] In the end, this complex and explosive situation led to the second Vietnamese war of independence, also referred to as the 'Vietnam war'.

The *Métis* question became urgent during the First Indochina War, because of the continuous arrival of French soldiers. It only referred to *Métis* children who were also called 'bastards' because they were unrecognised and abandoned by their European fathers. The few children who were born from the legitimate union between a European man and a native woman, or more uncommon, of a European woman and a native man, were not considered a problem in the Indochinese case.[189] Since Indochina was a unified area under French colonial rule, I refer to Indochina as a whole for the colonial period. I focus on Vietnam for the postcolonial period, because of the importance of Vietnam as a *lieu de mémoire* for French colonial nostalgia in the post-war period, in which the *Métis* played an important role.[190]

2.5 Comparison and conclusion: Large changes to come

From the historical overview presented above, it is clear that in all three colonies, the composition of colonial populations started to change in the second half of the nineteenth century. This process started earlier in British India, but it was essentially the same in the other two colonies. Over time, more European women arrived and the number of relationships between European men and indigenous women decreased. These white European women were expected to symbolise and live up to the idea of superiority of the European culture.[191] Because of their arrival, the percentage of Eurasians among the group of Europeans decreased and gradually the social standing of Eurasians dropped.[192] This change in the composition of the colonial population was not only caused by the arrival of more European women. Infrastructural changes and more emphasis on the colonial civilising mission contributed to the process of bringing the Asian colonies closer to their respective European mother countries as well.

These developments were part of the phenomenon of *Modern Imperialism* which Thomas Lindblad and Elsbeth Locher-Scholten defined as:

> The process of acceleration of colonial expansion between 1870 and 1914, in which the division of nearly the whole non-western world resulted in the political domination of western states over these non-western regions.[193]

In this expansionist tendency, Eurasians became a valuable link between the European coloniser and the indigenous people as well as an extension of European power, in colonial institutions such as the civil service, the army and on the plantations.[194]

The development of *Modern Imperialism* took different shapes in the three colonies: it was named *Ethische Politiek* in the Dutch East Indies, Kipling's *White Man's Burden* was used in British India and *la Mission Civilisatrice* in French Indochina. The Dutch version was framed in less ideological terms than its Indochinese and British Indian counterparts.[195] The French colonial project, by contrast, was associated with the essential ideals of French republicanism, which included faith in progress through science, the equality of all, and the messianic conviction of France's exceptional destiny as a nation. In other words, the French colonial ideology stressed the moral, cultural and universal value of its civilisation.[196] Furthermore, French colonial authorities never made racial categories official and never gave them legal or codified definition, while that did happen in British India and to a lesser extent in the Dutch East Indies. This principle of resistance against racial hierarchies was inspired by the ideas of the French Revolution: liberty, equality and fraternity. The French colonial civilising mission was attached to its universalist principles and focused on civilising and educating the indigenous people through a policy of gradual cultural transformation.[197] In practice, thinking about race did play a role in French Indochina. For example, the nationality of unrecognised *Métis* was specified in a survey as one of the following three categories: the first category was formed by children of the Annamite race and they were classified as French subjects; the second category consisted of children of the white race and they were French citizens and the third category was formed by children of the mixed race and they could become French nationals.[198]

Another feature of the French colonial ideology was that it was directed towards

assimilation, whereby colonised peoples were believed to be capable of becoming 'French', and elevated in a cultural, moral and intellectual way, regardless of colour, religion or cultural tradition. Such people were considered *évolués* – those who had 'evolved' to reach a higher stage of civilisation. Proponents of this sort of complete assimilation imagined a single, unified imperial community: 'une nation de cent million d'inhabitants' (a nation of one hundred million inhabitants).[199] These colonial civilising missions could guide policy making of the former colonial rulers with regard to the admission of Eurasians to the mother countries, for example to 'rescue' them from the native nationalists. But this could also be considered from a contrasting perspective. Once the colonial civilising mission was completed, Eurasians, as domiciled, balanced citizens of the former colony could build up their own country. The way the colonial civilising mission was framed in every separate context determined the importance of other explanatory factors for staying or leaving after decolonisation, such as the colonial status of Eurasians, their class, decolonisation process and aftermath and bureaucracy and accessibility of citizenship rights.

Another difference between the three colonies was that the process of Europeanisation and the turn toward disapproval of mixed relationships took place earlier in British India than in the Dutch East Indies and French Indochina. The Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 in British India did not only influence British colonial officials but also Dutch colonial authorities. They became worried about the power of the small white European population in the colonies, and more European people were encouraged to settle in the overseas territories.[200] Because of the recent date of its settlement, French rule in Indochina in this period is generally depicted as more coercive than British rule in British India and Dutch rule in the Dutch East Indies.[201]

In all three colonies, nationalistic indigenous political parties were formed in the first half of the twentieth century. In British India and the Dutch East Indies, a clear trend was visible in the kind of political parties that were founded. Initially, these political parties were quite moderate and used the possibilities that colonial rule provided, but later, they became more radical. For example, they started leading violent uprisings and demanded independence from the coloniser. In French Indochina, by contrast, the nationalist political parties were more radical from the beginning.

During Japanese occupation, Eurasians in the Dutch East Indies, French Indochina and British Indian province of Burma experienced similar hardships in- and outside internment camps. In the Dutch East Indies and Burma, Eurasians could pass as indigenous people and remain outside the internment camps, provided their skin was dark enough, they wore the right clothes and spoke the indigenous language. Life was full of danger for *Métis* people in French Indochina as well, especially after the Japanese left and the Viet Minh leader Ho Chi Minh proclaimed independence. The British had prepared the indigenous people on the Indian subcontinent for a peaceful independence. They had organised a series of Round-Table-Conferences in the years 1930-1932. The decolonisation of British India was accompanied by many riots surrounding the Partition of British India into Pakistan and India and the relocations of Hindus to India and Muslims to Pakistan. However, the new regime in India acted less aggressively towards the Anglo-Indians than the new regimes in Indonesia and Indochina towards Indo-Europeans and *Métis*. Anglo-Indians were not a target dur-

ing these riots, but they were sometimes forced to take position in the fights.[202] In the end, the Japanese occupation became the prelude to independence. British India was not occupied by Japan, but the Partition of India meant that decolonisation was marked by violence. The partition of Vietnam into a communist North and a capitalist South was politically motivated, and not the result of ethnic or religious tensions, as was the case in India. In short, the decolonisation process in all three colonies, was accompanied by extreme violence. In the Dutch East Indies and Indochina the Eurasians were targeted, which must have been an incentive to leave the former colony. They were a target during the decolonisation wars because of their economic and legal position in the colony. This important aspect of their complicated position is discussed in the next chapter.