

# Boven Digoel and Terezín: Camps at the Time of Triumphant Technology

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**Abstract** This is not a comparison between the colonial isolation camp for the Indonesian Communists and Nationalists at Boven Digoel, New Guinea, and the Nazi concentration camp for the European (including Dutch) Jews in Terezín, Bohemia. It is an effort to place both camps, as two working apparatuses, on the scale of development and refinement of modern technologies of belonging (and destruction); thus, the scale may be more clearly understood. Subchapters—on body and clothing, on hearing, on seeing, and on the urban—suggest that this is an epilogue never written for my 2002 book *Engineers of Happy Land: technology and nationalism in a colony*.

**Keywords** Colonialism · Camps · Netherlands East Indies · Germany · Optics · Acoustics · Fashion · Urban planning

## 1 The Comparison

‘It’s a remarkable piece of apparatus,’ said the officer to the explorer...  
Franz Kafka: *Penal Colony* (Kafka 1988, p. 191)

### 1.1 Terezín

Terezín (*Theresienstadt* in German, no name in Hebrew) is a small town, a short hour by bus, from Prague. It is impressive—if only by the literature it has inspired,

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especially during the last 60 years of its much longer history—by the writing’s scholarly and moral intensity, as well as its being contaminated by either myth or disbelief.<sup>1</sup> As if in this body of writing, the matter and the spirit—Czech, German, Jewish, European, Western, Global, Modern, and Postmodern—were at stake.

Terezín has always been a place and moment of the state-of-the-art and of universal meaning. It was built as a fortress town in the Bohemian province of the Habsburg Austrian Empire, according to then, the most avant-garde plans of the French Mezières School.<sup>2</sup> Declared war worthy in 1790, it was to have a capacity to host 5,655 men and 6,500 horses; at the time of a siege, the garrison was to be able to sustain up to 60,000 persons for 3 months. No siege ever happened, but in 1942, the German and Czech population was evacuated from Terezín, and Jews were brought in—140,000 at one time in the three following years. A great many of them died in Terezín. About 87,000 were moved further to the extermination camps “in Poland”; of those, only 4,000 survived. During my most recent visit, in June 2008, I found a new information center in the town’s central square, meant for military buffs, with papier-mâché models of the fortress city and with plastic toy soldiers of Austria, France, and Russia for sale. In the Jewish Ghetto Museum, around the corner, a few German tourists were slowly passing by the panels displaying photographs and enlarged documents and glass cases with everyday things of the ghetto. They were in a somber mood, and from time to time, they looked and sometimes hissed at the indeed quite unruly Israeli visitors, mostly youth and young families with a great number of small children; they were coming by busloads.

Later that morning, as I walked through the town, at every single moment, I could not help but gaze off at the blind windows of the buildings through the long and perfectly straight streets. Being at the place now, I could also be seen by anyone on the same street, even at the farthest distance; but there were only occasional tourists either in groups or lost. The town was a textbook—Foucaultian, Vaubanesque, Haussmannesque—geometrically pure, always with a perfectly horizontal strip of green, always of equal height, and always standing, at the end of each street, a bastion. Without me wishing so, the spirit of the place led me to the railhead wherefrom the trains between 1942 and 1945 used to leave for farther east, to Auschwitz and the other places.

## 1.2 Boven Digoel

Boven Digoel cannot be further away from Terezín. Even in terms of Indonesian and Dutch East Indies time and space, it is a *finisterre*.<sup>3</sup> In 1926, the Indonesian communists revolted, and the Dutch rulers of the colony, as the crucial aspect (and

<sup>1</sup> Some of the literature I cite below, some I do not. Recently on my visit to New York, I have profited from several talks with Ann Stoler, Arvind Rajagopal, and their students. I was inspired during a meeting in Singapore by comments by Ryan Bishop and Warwick Anderson on an earlier draft of this article.

<sup>2</sup> Terezín walking scenario of weekly tours of the ghetto in the fall of 1943, based on a manuscript by Hugo Friedmann in Makarova et al. (2004, p. 43).

<sup>3</sup> “Thanks to often bad connections, it may take longer to get from Batavia in the easter direction to Boven Digoel than it takes on modern ship to get from Holland to Batavia” (Schoonheydt 1936, p. 23). Besides the literature quoted below, Takashi Shiraishi (1996) is the best authority on the Boven Digoel camp.

perhaps as a new foundation) of their architecture of remaining there, built an “isolation camp”<sup>4</sup> in New Guinea, on the easternmost island of the huge Dutch Indies archipelago, 450 km up the Digoel River, in the deepest of the jungles. At different moments, during the following 16 years, there were about 3,400 inmates in the camp, including spouses and children if they so wished and if they had the courage: the government suggested to the families to go and paid for their travel.<sup>5</sup>

There were no bulwarks, bastions, even wire or watchtowers in Boven Digoel—no hardware to keep the inmates in. The place’s spirit of belonging, so it looks as far as I can see from the blueprint and the traces, was being woken up and kept in mainly by the roadless jungle on all sides. Besides, the Papuans roamed the jungle: they had a reputation for savagery, meaning unfriendliness to invaders at best and cannibalism at worst. About one third of the inmates gradually were let go after some years. In 1943, as the Dutch feared that the camp might be seized and used for propaganda by the advancing Japanese armies, at the moment of the fall of the empire, the internees were evacuated by plane and ship to Australia. The jungle took over again.

Rarely, among the studies of colonial history, and of modern history, is *exoticism* put to work so eagerly and so effectively as in the case of Boven Digoel—tropics, jungle, cannibals, mosquitoes, orchids, birds of paradise, dark-skinned bodies, and hazy horizons—all of it is employed to the limit. Even the attempts to escape from the camp, the ultimate trope of freedom, are most commonly conveyed, in memories as well as in histories, as truly Tarzan-like adventures—as wandering through the forest, with just a compass, a (school) map, and a rope for friends to hold. If not spared (and eaten), the escapees are brought back to the camp (they never got away) by a white police motorboat or, truer still, by a helicopter.<sup>6</sup>

This is, certainly in part, because of my notion of Terezín also being exotic (I learned of it first as completely out-of-the-ordinary adventure stories that I overheard as a child in Prague and also, nobody seemed to escape), that I came to believe that I could describe Terezín and Boven Digoel as one event, as contemporaries and floating (stuck) in the same space. Another exotic-generated impulse might be the bright and colorful awareness that while the cannibals surrounded Boven Digoel, these were the Czechs, my uncles and aunts, my poets, and my tribe, surrounding Terezín.

And, this might come out from that aura of exoticism as well: the thing that matters to me most, in the pages that follow, is that both the Jews in Terezín and

<sup>4</sup> The term “concentration camp” was also used by the Dutch authorities at unguarded moments. See, e.g., “*het concentratie-kamp Boven-Digoel*” in No.164, Notitie van de minister van koloniën (Welter), 6 mei 1940 in Kwantes (1982, p. 744).

<sup>5</sup> In June 1930, the number of internees was 1308; in July 1937, it was 446. See No. 92 Nota van de afdeling Kabinet van het departement van kolonie (Petrus Blumberger) 15 okt 1937 vb. 20 okt 1937 lr. M 27 Kwantes (1982, pp. 468–469).

<sup>6</sup> Adventure follows the Digoel memory: “When I still sat in the grammar school of the Instituut Boedi Oetomo in Blora (Java), repeatedly I have an opportunity to see photographs in a book *Minggat dari Digoel* (Escape from Digoel) published in several thin volumes. These photographs, among other, showed bodies of the inhabitants of Digul: men, women, and children. They had dark skin, kinky hair, and they were all almost completely naked. Besides this, there was also a photo showing a large river, thick forest, and a photo of a body of a person spread on the ground without a head” (Toer 2001, p. vii).

the communists in Boven Digoel were, in a strikingly similar way, brightly, loudly, and most flagrantly in their surroundings and to themselves—*urban* people. Theirs, in fact, by experience, by inclination, or by nostalgia, were the most state-of-the-art milieus of our world at the time—Berlin, Vienna, Prague, or Amsterdam for the Jews and Amsterdam, Batavia Medan, Makassar, or Surabaya for the Indonesians. The inmates', internees', and victims' sense of being and belonging, as well as the architecture and mechanics by which the camps were gathered together and kept in existence, both in the middle of the forest and in the middle of the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the *technique*, the working of the remarkable apparatus, were a blossom (*fleurs* to use a more fitting Baudelairian term) of a dense—or, better—*concentrated* modernity.

## 2 Cannibal Dandies

As you see, the shape of the Harrow corresponds to the human forms; here is the harrow for the torso, here are the harrows for the legs. For the head, there is only this one small spike. Is that quite clear?

Kafka: *Penal Colony* (Kafka 1988, p. 199)

It is an iconic image for me of the camps. Women, men, and children in their best clothes—this was an important journey—moving in; the city shoes, overcoats, umbrellas, hats, and, yes, walking canes; this was a time of hats and walking canes.<sup>7</sup> In the case of Terezín, the fashion appeared natural or almost natural, and only gradually did it become desperate as each following month, one after another, the pieces of it were taken away—this mode of dignity designed, cut, and made by tailors, shoemakers, and hatmakers. The colonial modernity on the other side of the globe and the other side of history, and especially as Boven Digoel came into existence, strikes one as a step more pronounced, a step more designed, and fashion-born. The first groups of internees arriving at Boven Digoel could well, if not perfectly well, be perceived from a fashionmaker's point of view:

Many were dressed irreproachably European, which meant first of all colored socks, smart shoes, and knockout hats. Naturally, leather briefcases were not

<sup>7</sup> It had always been “an important journey” for a Jew in those parts of Europe, and he or she had to dress up very carefully for the city streets of Prague for instance: “It is as if before every walk, someone must not only wash and comb himself, etc.—that is already strenuous enough—but also, because before every walk, he always lacks all the necessities, sew his jacket, repair the shoes, make the hat, carve the walking-stick, etc. Of course, he cannot do any of this well, it all holds together for perhaps a few blocks, but in Na Příkope, e.g., everything suddenly falls apart and he stands there naked with only scraps and fragments” (K. to Milena 1920 in Salfellner 1998, p. 171). On some Jewish people coming to Terezín “clothed as for summer vacations”, they could not imagine how to move out of their cities otherwise (see Adler 2005, vol. I, p. 106–108). See also an International Red Cross representative's chilling (and quite akin to reports on Boven Digoel “dandies”) comments on his visit to Terezín in June 1944: “The state of clothes is generally satisfying. The people we met on the streets were correctly clothed.... Elegant women all wore silk stockings, hats, shawls and modern hand bags. Young people are equally well dressed, one can encounter even ‘Zazou’ types”. Dr. M. Rossell. Delegierten de C.I.C.R. (297) April 23, 1944 in Kárný et al. (1996, p.289).

missing, as well as the inevitable penholders and razor-sharp pencils that stuck out from their jackets' pockets; thus equipped they crossed the bridge from the ship to engage themselves in struggle with the primeval forest.<sup>8</sup>

What the Jews in Terezín could see as the framing of their lives, besides the bulwarks of the town, the most memorable, were the SS guards, in their black uniforms, *impeccable* like the bulwarks: the same brutal neatness, ironed trousers, shining boots, white shirts, black ties, an assemblage against which the internees were to define themselves and against which they were to crash. Similarly to other Nazi camps, as an attempt at resistance—yet in the same fashion way (that way of crashing!)—the inmates of Terezín called the SS guards “mannequins”.<sup>9</sup> In Boven Digoel, the internees saw or more often felt and feared the cannibals in the surrounding jungle, the Papuans, Kaja-Kaja as they were usually called in the camp (supposedly meaning “friends”). One of the other names widely used for the savages was “nudists”.<sup>10</sup>

Fashion makes Boven Digoel close to Terezín in more than one way, most of them fundamental. Repeatedly, it was mentioned by “colonial ethnographers” and in “popular writing” of the time that “some Semitic traits” or even “a Semitic tribe” could be distinguished among the Papua communities in South-West New Guinea. There is one photograph in particular often reproduced in the texts on the regions around the camp. Someone put an old bowler hat on the head of an elderly Papuan, arranged rags on him in a certain way, placed a big stick in the old man's hand, took a picture of him, and wrote a caption that is always reproduced with the picture: “A Wandering Jew” (Fig. 1).<sup>11</sup>

In his last book, Italian author and survivor of Nazi camps Primo Levi describes members of the *Sonderkommando* in Auschwitz (prisoners forced to clean the ovens after the victims were burned), in the pause, playing soccer with the SS guards in the shadow of the crematorium chimneys.<sup>12</sup>

One may be advised (for many reasons) not to think as far as the heaps of clothes and glasses and shoes and long hair of women cut at the end. In Terezín, too, the Jews played handball, basketball, volleyball, and especially soccer. Those people, of course, played against each other, in the pause, for the moment before the next

<sup>8</sup> See Schoonheydt (1936, p. 263). This nasty caricature makes the internees appear to me quite powerful as this shows the fear they could awake. See also, for the “dandy” *preciosa*, the internees took to the camp, watches, tie pins, etc., No 857/G: PROCES-VERBAAL, Gespecificeerde preciosas van de onder volgende geïnterneerden afgedragen aan den Commandant van het Dekkings-detachement van het S.S. Wega te Tanjong Priok, 31 Januari 1927, in Arsip Boven Digoel (ANRI, National Archives of the Indonesian Republic, Jakarta), further BDA, no. 166.

<sup>9</sup> It went the other way, too: “... those tortured bodies [in the camps]... even the SS could not name (we know from witnesses that under no circumstances were they to be called ‘corpses’ or ‘cadavers’, but rather simply Figuren, figures, dolls)” (Agamben 2002, p. 51).

<sup>10</sup> Mrs. Sukarsih. Interview, Jakarta, December 1, 1998

<sup>11</sup> See Salim (1980, p. 188). This photo is for instance in Schoonheydt (1936, p. 111). Compare it with a virtually identical image of “A ghetto Jew”. Das Generalgouvernement (1944), in Dwork and van Pelt (1996, p. 37).

<sup>12</sup> See Levi (1979, p. 55). “This match might strike someone as a brief pause of humanity in the middle of an indefinite horror. I, like the witness, instead view this match, this moment of normalcy, as the true horror of the camp.... that match is never over...” (Agamben 2002, p. 26).



*Missiefoto uit Zuid-Nieuw-Guinea van den „Wandelenden Jood”.*

**Fig. 1** A wandering Jew (From Schoonheydt, L. J. A. (1936))

transport and soon after the end will come. Of course, by making those sportive moves (and indeed they were often wearing sports uniforms brought from the outside or made for them in the camp), by adhering to the rules of the particular sport, by staying inside the lines of that field—they were playing the sport, and themselves, into the cut-design of the camp.<sup>13</sup>

Boven Digoel internees sported with no less energy. With respect to triumphant modernity so categorically expressed by the rules of sport, there was no fundamental difference between Europe and Terezín, and between Terezín and Digoel. Boven Digoel might just be ahead of its time. There were some “traditional” dances of Java and Sumatra, like martial *silat* or *pentjak*,

<sup>13</sup> On *Theresinstädter Fußball Liga*, “Terezín Football League” see Adler (2005, vol. II, p. 604).

practiced by the internees in Boven Digoel, but the sporting life in the camp was modern through and through. Soccer was the big thing, and this was before soccer swept through the colony outside the camp.<sup>14</sup> The camp was sport avant-garde. There had been volleyball, like in Terezín, korfbal, and badminton, even tennis, and, indeed, track and field.<sup>15</sup>

A wave of passion for boxing washed over Boven Digoel at one time. At least one Boven Digoel studio photograph survived of two internees facing each other, wearing boxer shoes, boxer shorts, and boxer gloves, frozen in an exemplary boxer posture.<sup>16</sup> Sport uniforms could be mail ordered from as far as Java and even from the famous *Magazijn de Bijenkorf* in Amsterdam. In fact, I did not find a single photograph among many from Boven Digoel in which sports teams or sporting individuals do not wear uniforms.<sup>17</sup> This was how the camp worked (out).

We know about sport in Terezín also from the Nazi propaganda film shot in late 1944. There is, besides volleyball, a long sequence of a soccer match. The two teams have uniforms. The players do not wear the Jewish stars for the occasion. It is staged, of course: this is a play. In Boven Digoel as well as in Terezín, both the internees and the authorities took an active part. In Boven Digoel, they even competed with each other, and sometimes met in combined teams. It is said, and this is clear from the archives, that there was a match or training “almost every day”.<sup>18</sup>

I still can see before my eyes Comrade Hatta, locked in a fierce combat for the ball with Father Meuwese [white Catholic priest at the camp], who again and again tried to overplay Hatta, the ‘brown monster’, his beard flowing in the air.<sup>19</sup>

Nowhere in the modern world were bodies, clothed or stripped of clothes, so much and so truly at the core of the dynamics of mankind as they were in the camps. Nowhere, therefore and logically, did *caring* and medical care of bodies clothed and stripped become so tightly interwoven with mankind being itself.

<sup>14</sup> E.g., “Hirdjan... reporting that, on the second anniversary of the S.P. soccer club, on Saturday night, September 24, 1935, in the house of Natar Zainoeddin (an *invalid*), kampoeng C, there will be a celebration with music”. Het Kamponghoofd; Hulp-Politierapport No.197 TANAH MERAH 23 Sept 1932 BDA, no. 324.

<sup>15</sup> For other kinds of the same thing, see, e.g., PROGRAM: August 27 “...sports of competition: 8:00 billiards: military; 8:00 badminton: military and wives; 8:30 sacks-jumps: internees; 9:00 *Staarptrikken* (ball game): wives; 9:30 *Geldhappen*: children; 10:00 *Sewatjon*: military” BDA, no. 78.

<sup>16</sup> The photo is in Schoonheydt (1936, p. 184).

<sup>17</sup> According to Sartre: “dandyism was a moral code based on effort” (Sartre 1967, p. 133). According to Baudelaire: “For those who are at once its priests and victims, all the complicated material conditions to which they must submit, from their dress, which must be irreproachable...to the most dangerous tricks of sport, are nothing but a form of gymnastics which is designed to fortify the will and discipline the spirit”; *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Schoonheydt (1936, pp. 79, 185); A photo of a “combination team” in *ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>19</sup> Salim (1980, p. 246). One document shows how deep this went. It is a letter by an internee asked by his fellow inmates to serve as a referee for a soccer match, complaining to the camp authorities about the “unsportsmanlike” behavior of some of the players. See “Pr. No. 191/46/21-8-1932: A.M.Dt.Tan Bidjo Verklaring” BDA no.326.

The best Jewish doctors of Europe were *concentrated* in Terezín (and the best doctors of Europe were Jewish; at least my mother always said so)—the best (Jewish) doctors of Europe, that is to say, those who did not manage to escape before the Nazis got to them. Eye operations, for instance, not yet attempted anywhere else in the world, were performed in Terezín. There were several famous obstetricians of their time trapped in the camp. To give birth was prohibited in Terezín, and so, these doctors worked on interruptions.<sup>20</sup> Yes, this was concentrated modernity. Many of the Jewish doctors managed to bring their best and most modern equipment to the camp. They were permitted to do this by the authorities. The doctors in Terezín were overwhelmed by masses, swarms of sick people. They were helpless facing the multitude. Yet, the best authority on the camp and the camp survivor, describing all this, calls the medical care in the place with perfect justification *übermechanisiert*, “super technological”.<sup>21</sup>

Throughout the existence of the New Guinea camp on Boven Digoel, there was about a one-to-eight ratio between males and females.<sup>22</sup> In this camp, in contrast to Terezín, birth was allowed, and professional Dutch doctors stationed in the camp helped the communist babies into the world.<sup>23</sup> The right-wing colonial press consistently complained that the medical care being made available to the internees was too good, disproportionately good compared to the situation in the colony at large. The “Wilhelmina Hospital” in the camp, indeed, was built specifically for the internees.

In the right wing, there was a large surgery, a room for eye, nose, throat, and ear examinations, a well-equipped pharmacy, a delivery room, several isolation rooms, and a great women’s hall. In the left wing there was a large general examination room, a laboratory, and also several isolation rooms, one of them for tuberculosis patients, and a great men’s hall. In the central part there was one office for the administration and a room for the nurses. This all, and several adjacent service buildings, gave the impression of a model institution.<sup>24</sup>

People died like flies in Boven Digoel and in Terezín. The people of the camps were exposed to, and perished by, all imaginable diseases of their respective parts of the world.<sup>25</sup> These were *textbook cases* of hell, for want of another word. We do not

<sup>20</sup> “Some things I would like to forget....I preserved documentation of 5,000 operations. In January 1945, we were ordered to destroy it, but we hid it. Now it’s in T Memoirial”. Dr. Erich Springer, 1988, Rumburk, Bohemia, in Makarova et al. (2004, pp. 402–404). The doctors and everybody in Terezín was obliged to report pregnant women. At a certain stage, forced abortions were performed. Usually, the birth was permitted, but the baby and both parents were immediately included in the next transport, which meant virtually certain death (Adler 2005, vol. II, p. 525).

<sup>21</sup> Adler (2005, vol. II, p. 259). See *ibid*, p. 496, on the shockingly *à jour* equipment of Terezín doctors’ offices “not different from the big city poliklinics”, amidst the sick and dying masses of the camp.

<sup>22</sup> See “Soal Kaum Ibu di Digoel (The Women Problem in Diegoel)” in Marco (2002, pp. 137–140).

<sup>23</sup> Salim (1980, pp. 179, 242), Schoonheydt (1936, p. 91), Nielsen (1930, p. 111).

<sup>24</sup> Salim (1980, p. 138). As for a slightly skewed appreciation by an internee: “The hospital was always full of patients suffering from malaria, dysentery, and so on... because it was only a small one” (Marco 2002, p. 113).

<sup>25</sup> *Daftar Nama Digoelis Yang Meninggal Dunia*, [List of digoelists who died], in Suwardi (2003, pp. 123–124).



know enough about Terezín where the doctors were Jewish, inmates, and most of them perished. Very few medical records survived either, but there were Dutch doctors in Boven Digoel, and professional records and memories are more available. So, we can read Boven Digoel-based treatises about various tropical diseases, especially the primary killer in the camp: various types of malaria. Especially for its malaria, Boven Digoel entered the late colonial (and especially anti-colonial) lore, but the camp became almost equally legendary in medicine for inspiring some of the finest malaria studies of our time.<sup>26</sup>

There were always mosquitoes along the Digoel River, but by cutting the forest to make the camp, an open, hot, and humid space was created, with pools of standing water after each rain, perfect breeding ground for mosquitoes: if the beasts had been famously big and warlike before, they now became dramatically more so (Schoonheydt 1936, p. 66). Some of the best malaria experts of the colony, and indeed of Europe, visited the camp or were posted there for several year shifts as the doctors at the hospital. The most advanced medical methods were put to work in the camp as almost all the internees got sick at one time or another. The prophylaxis, quinine tablets for adults (swallowed under police supervision at an *appell*-like event every day at four in the afternoon in front of the hospital), the *plasmochine* for small children and babies, were enforced throughout the camp existence. The dosage changed for different medical categories of the camp population, and changing numbers of the sick were closely followed. One does not even have to think about the ethics of the enterprise. From simply a technical point of view, places like camps, by the very way they click, are conducive to experiments (Fig. 2).<sup>27</sup>

### 3 Let Us Become Radio Mechanics

A moment that might tempt one to go under the Harrow oneself. Nothing more happens than that the man begins to understand the inscription, he purses his mouth as if he were listening.

Kafka: *Penal Colony* (Kafka 1988, p. 204)

There was music in Terezín—in large amount and great intensity. At least until the final wave of transports of death in the fall of 1944—there were concerts, symphonies, chamber music, and recitals every night in the halls, attics, basements, and in communal bedrooms among the bunks.<sup>28</sup> Like the best doctors, the best artists, composers, and

<sup>26</sup> “Because they had to take a quinine pill every day, and sometimes three pills a day, and sometimes *atebrine* and *plasmochine* to stop malaria (*prophylactie*), many internees became deaf. Children who took too much *atabrine* got yellow eyes. They look drowsy because of the antimalarica overuse. The children looked tired and weak, while the older people generally became forgetful” (Direktorat Jenderal Bantuan Sosial 1977, p. 89).

<sup>27</sup> Studying camps, and not only tropical, one should be much inspired by Warwick Anderson’s (1996) writings.

<sup>28</sup> See, e.g., Otto Brod’s (brother of Max Brod, Franz Kafka’s friend and biographer) review of Verdi’s *Requiem* in Terezín: “In the course of a year, the piece was imprinted in the heads of singers so deeply that they sang without scores.... Probably, the *Dies Irae* could have been given a greater presto. The piano was out of tune; yet the accompaniment of Frau Pollak was outstanding” (Makarova et al. 2004, p. 216).



**Fig. 2** Anthropological research using the internees of Boven Digoel (From: KITLV Leiden)

performers of 1930s Europe ended in, or passed through, the camp. Within the walls, in a space delineated by the moats and bastions in the middle of the Czech Nazi-protected landscape sounded the music; within the centuries-proven architecture:

all the barracks of Terezín are built with the same design. The quadrangular courtyards' archways and wide encircling loggias are pleasantly reminiscent of the architecture of Southern monasteries. There is also a practical reason for

this plan—an alarm signal sounded from the center of the courtyard must be equally audible in all surrounding dwellings (Makarova et al. 2004, p. 24)

With its music, Terezín blared like a Jericho trumpet, or to use a more fitting metaphor (no walls fell down), Terezín sounded like one of those “remarkable pieces of apparatus” of Salvador Dalí’s surrealist paintings—like a monstrous radio sitting in the sand with nothing but the desert and other remarkable pieces of machines like it around.

There were camp voices, camp noises, and camp music in Boven Digoel, as well. Already on the first ship sailing with the internees to the camp, in January 1927, a communist-inmates’ orchestra played; *Digoel Jazz Band*, it was called, and there were guitars, trumpets, and “sort of drums”.<sup>29</sup> This particular band went on playing in the camp for years, and it even managed to get some more instruments from the outside, “including saxophones”. There was “Hawaiian” music “in the camp on festive occasions”, including the anniversaries of the 1926 rebellion, of the camp opening, and of welcoming the new arrivals on each next ship.<sup>30</sup> There was “traditional music”, like Javanese *gamelan*, gong orchestra, too.<sup>31</sup> However, the modern, modern as much as possible, jazz and jazzy, was to set the rhythm, and thus it has been recalled. Some of the Dutch authorities in the camp occasionally wondered why the internees did not prefer to stay with their *gamelan* and its ancient likes, “so very much better suited” to their “Oriental character” (Schoonheydt 1936, pp. 183–184).

It would be a death sentence, or a transport to almost certain death, for anybody in Terezín to be caught owning a radio, listening to radio, or spreading radio news. Radio meant an unplumbed outside. There was an underground radio in Terezín. The most courageous among the Jews, the camp Communists, with some Zionists also involved, managed to put together a crude machine, to listen and to tell to those who might be trusted.<sup>32</sup> However, this makes few lines in the volumes of histories and memories. What are very well remembered, though, are radio dreams:

In Pepek’s ‘On Terezín Cabaret’ (Terezín, probably July 1944) [a manuscript that survived, in contrast to its author] there is a ‘review’ of... ‘Radio Reportage from Terezín’. [In] the section [of the manuscript] ‘The Laughter of the Helpless’ an imaginary radio-event [is described] with announcer, chorus and separate voices, full of sparkling humor and acid parodies.<sup>33</sup>

There was never a private radio in Boven Digoel, not even in the last years of the camp. The authorities built a telegraph and wireless station in the camp to

<sup>29</sup> “They sit in little groups, some play cards, and a small improvised communist orchestra of guitars and mandolins killed the time by playing Javanese melodies and the latest European dance tunes, of which ‘Valencia’ stuck most in my memory” (Krarup Nielsen (1930, pp. 93–94).

<sup>30</sup> Abdoe’IXarim M.s., “Pandu Anak Buangan [Pandu, Child of Exile]”, in Toer (2001, pp. 81–156; originally: Medan: Uitgevers Genootschap ‘Aneka’, pp. 107–108 (originally published in 1938?)).

<sup>31</sup> “Hardjosentono no. 399... ask for permission to teach gamelan every Monday night, 8 to 12 p.m....” Kampoeng C 25 Juli 1932. Wakil Kampong, No. 185/40 26-7-32 BDA, no. 321. See also a book on Digoel gamelan: Kartomi (2002). These instruments are now at the Southeast Asia Center at Monash University. My thanks to Dr. Kartomi for letting me touch them.

<sup>32</sup> Eva Stichová-Beloda recalls: “I retyped *Das Kapital*, Stalin’s Notes on National Problem, and radio news. Where the radio was I didn’t know, somewhere in the ghetto. I only wrote. [They] gave it to me” (Makarova et al. 2004, p. 134). On *Mundfunk* in Terezín (from *Rundfunk*, broadcast, something like mouth-cast) see Adler (2005, vol. I, pp. xlvi). On the ban on radio, see *ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 580–581.

<sup>33</sup> (TSAD, 1999); Makarova et al. (2004, pp. 366–367).

communicate with the colonial higher-ups. There, the news of the events in the colony and the world beyond it was received daily, but the internees, it seems, could get only a tiny bits of it (Schoonheydt 1936, p. 59).

Mostly it is called silence, what surrounded Terezín and Boven Digoel as a tight ring—or a set of rings—ripples of silence disappearing into the distance. The silence is intensely described in the memories of the internees, a force threatening to overwhelm and crush them all. As the ship entered the mouth of the Digoel River, and as it moved upstream, as the dark-green walls (they are repeatedly called “walls”) of the forest on both sides, in these 3 days, the silence enclosed the ship, and for the years to come, it remained hanging around the camp. Even for people who knew the magnificent forests of Java and Sumatra, there was a shock of only a “few birds and no monkeys shouting in the trees”.<sup>34</sup>

However, were not the ripples of the silence that surrounded Boven Digoel and Terezín in fact akin to radio waves? Was not this a cut-and-designed silence? Were not the sounds and murmurs of the outside world that the inmates in the camps so badly wished to hear, in fact *jammed*? Was it not white noise and static that in fact surrounded the camps?

The people of the camps, to keep alive, attempted to fight the silence—in a mode of getting through it and over it. This might have been one function of the jazz making in Boven Digoel. These people attempted *energetic* listening, *do-it-yourself* listening, “active listening”, whatever Adorno might have ever meant by it. There is a description of another method, another technique of getting through the silence around Boven Digoel, of another proactive (or interactive) project: to analyze the silence, to make it into categories, to cut it, to set it as if on a tuning dial of a radio. One, at least, tried to do it: the cicadas, these people would tell each other, can you hear, they begin their “concert” in the forest “sharp at six”; an hour later exactly, “another choir” takes over after a short pause, prompted by “an invisible conductor”.<sup>35</sup>

The people of Terezín never got to break the walls, and the people of Boven Digoel never even touched the silence of the forest. Merely, in the process of the failure, they became even more than what they had been before, people of Berlin, Amsterdam, Surabaya, Batavia, urban and modern, active listeners, in the terms of their time, *à jour* and truly, a (dream) *radio folk*. Especially when they wished to say something real and when they happened to put their mouth to the ear of a neighbor in the camp, theirs was a long-distance whisper.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> “A forest without monkeys, elephants, or tigers, with wild pigs, *casuarises*, birds, and first of all many reptiles. Completely other than the fauna of Sumatra!... We were also hit by an immense silence... The first reaction to the silence was—remarkably enough—that we began to speak softer. We stopped singing!” (Salim 1980, p. 111). There were a “few songbirds or none at all... I—as a Sumatran—missed the monkeys, who in my land jumped from tree to tree” *Ibid*, p. 316. “Many birds here can speak (talk nonsense) when taught” Marco (2002, p. 147).

<sup>35</sup> Krarup Nielsen (1930, pp. 119–121) and (taking it largely from Krarup Nielsen) Salim (1980).

<sup>36</sup> They came closer to becoming a modern being, as Heidegger or Sartre defined “him”, “a being of distances... defined much more by his end and the terms of his plans than by what we can know of him if we limit him to the passing moment” (Sartre 1967, p. 38). Letters home had to pass the censor or be smuggled through. See, e.g., *BDA*, no. 305. I found very little of this correspondence, mostly empty envelopes—these had been kept by recipients, so the children and grandchildren of the families told me, because of the exotic stamps on the envelopes.

#### 4 From Darkness to Light

The explorer already felt a dawning interest in the apparatus; he sheltered his eyes from the sun with one hand and gazed up at the structure... The condemned man imitated the explorer; since he could not use a hand to shelter his eyes he gazed upwards without shade.

Kafka: *Penal Colony* (Kafka 1988, p. 195)

*Die Lichtung* in German (the language of philosophers and of Terezín, as well) comes from *das Licht*, “light”, and it means among other things a “clearing in forest”, a place, in other words, where light is allowed to come in. Martin Heidegger used the word most effectively, both poetically to describe the clearing in forest and as a philosopher to express an urge and drive of the human being to the light and thus to itself.

The Nazis *cleared out* the Czech and German population from Terezín in 1942 to make space for the Jews and for the horrors that were to happen there. Clearing, of forest, literally, was the first task the Dutch colonial authorities had to accomplish after they conceived the idea of the camp. Captain Becking (who had gained a reputation as a commander who crushed the Communist revolt a few months before) was sent to Boven Digoel to make the space for the camp (Fig. 3).

By 100 soldiers and 600 forced-labor prisoners, as the first group of the internees was to arrive in 3 months, trees were felled, undergrowth burned, the forest was logged and landscaped, temporary barracks, radio, and telegraph station and hospital were built, and rice, vegetables, and banana were planted. Hours before the first ship with the internees arrived, “a small but highly significant ceremony took place”—the Dutch flag was raised on a bamboo pole in the middle of the clearing. Light was let in. Captain Becking’s people, as well as the internees who were arriving, above everything and in spite of everything, at the farthest outreach of the empire, at the edge of almost everything in the world as they knew it (all of them were coming from the West), were pioneers and lightbearers.<sup>37</sup>

One should take seriously the claim made by Adolf Eichmann, the SS-man much responsible for the Holocaust: Terezín as it was conceived in 1942 was to be an experiment. Eichmann—so he repeatedly stated before he was hanged in Jerusalem—had been impressed by Zionism.<sup>38</sup> His idea of Terezín, too (so he put it), was to make Jews make a place for themselves, an island, a ghetto, a clearing, in the vastness of the Nazi world. The Jews were to be allowed their own sense of life, purely Jewish—and *pure* could be taken as another word suggesting light. If only history had let Eichmann fly as he wished! The idea of the “camp on the hill”, the “camp of light”, is horrifying, and it must be taken seriously—not because it is so “banal”,<sup>39</sup> but because it is so

<sup>37</sup> “It is evident that the isolation colony was also conceived as a step toward expanding the colonized lands to Irian (New Guinea), to open and pacify the primeval forest for planting rubber, coffee, quinine, and other export crops” (Suwardi 2003, p. 4). Compare: “Terezín (as a place of a camp for Jews) merits a special notice, because later, as the Jews are transported further on, it could serve as a German model settlement (*deutsche Mustersiedlung*)”; Reynhardt Heydrich’s letter to Martin Bormann October 11, 1941, in Kárný et al. (1996, p. 272).

<sup>38</sup> Zionism, in fact, was an inspiration of the Dutch and especially Eurasian (*Indo*; dreams of a second wave of colonization as well, and especially referring to New Guinea” (Rutherford 1998).

<sup>39</sup> Arendt (2006) Here also, *passim*, one can read about Eichmann and Zionism.



**Fig. 3** Preparing the ground for building the camp at Boven Digoel (From: KITLV Leiden)

logical, linear, structure minded, architectural, engineering, technological and, in that sense, high modern.

The Jews as well as the Indonesians made a superhuman effort to carry as much to the camps as they could of the world they had lived until then. The SS permitted 50 kg of luggage and a small handbag per person, forcing a selection of what really matters to the extreme (hoping also, of course, that at the bottom of the trunks, there would be gold and money, which they promptly confiscated). As in brandy (I believe) is the essence of grapes, the trunks, boxes, and backpacks became the essence of modern.

In all but very few of the 50-kg luggage taken to Terezín, therefore, there was at least one book. This tells us one thing about how the clearing of that new brave world was being filled, how the light and more light was being let in. At the deepest of the horrors, in 1943 and 1944, with the darkness of Europe all around, Terezín boasted possibly the finest Jewish library in Europe of the time.<sup>40</sup> Books poured in with every new transport, and the Nazis were mightily helping it as they looted still existing Jewish libraries in the occupied territories and as they brought the most valuable of the trove to Terezín.<sup>41</sup> This, in Terezín, was a public library. Books were borrowed and

<sup>40</sup> “We have to distribute books to hospitals, old people’s homes, and children’s homes; we have libraries everywhere, in barracks too, also reading rooms. We have 587 books by Heinrich Heine, 15,000 prayer books.... Each transport is bringing around 1,000 books, because everybody takes 2–3 books to Terezín” (Professor Utittz, a man in charge of the central library from 1942 until he was transported to Auschwitz in 1944, in Makarova et al. (2004), p. 194).

<sup>41</sup> “Incidentally, an eagerness to establish museums commemorating their enemies was very characteristic of the Nazis. During the war, several services competed bitterly for the honor of establishing anti-Jewish museums and libraries. We owe to this strange craze the salvage of many great cultural treasures of European Jewry” Arendt (2006, pp. 2–3).

books were lost. Naturally, who could resist the temptation to take a book on the transport “further on”, to Auschwitz, for instance, even if it was a library book?<sup>42</sup>

The light filling the clearing at Boven Digoel was even sharper on the eye. The internees there, the targeted tiny part of the population, the rebellious ones, the avant-garde, with an extreme vision of modernity in the largely illiterate and “dark” colony (this was how they themselves saw it), were arriving at the camp in New Guinea loaded with books. Internee Hatta, the most famous internee of Boven Digoel, is recalled as arriving at the camp with “fifteen boxes of books”.<sup>43</sup>

The initial idea of the concentration camps in Germany referred to a law of Imperial Germany before 1918 and of the German Republic before 1933. In the case of “state being in danger”, the head of state might assume extraordinary powers; the persons “posing a danger to public order” might be isolated as long as necessary, without a trial and without any charge being brought against them (Agamben 1998, pp. 167, 169). The Dutch colonial law 153 *bis* allowed the same thing. The Dutch top official in the colony, the governor-general, could isolate any person “posing a threat” as an administrative measure, without trial, and for an indefinite period of time. Thus, “legally”, the Jews in the camps as the Indonesians in Boven Digoel were not criminals. The Dutch instructions explicitly stated that the Boven Digoel internees, locked in, for sure, had the same duties and the same privileges (in the camp) as everybody else in the colony.<sup>44</sup> As in the case of the Jews, there was no time set for their release.

The time and space of freedom had been blurred, or homogenized, perhaps, and this was that light in the camps.

Formally, schools were not permitted in Terezín.<sup>45</sup> However, the more intensively and, indeed, experimentally, schooling filled in the camp. Semilegal and underground lectures and series of lectures on all topics and all school subjects were permitted in Terezín for children as well as for adults, elementary as well as highly specialized.<sup>46</sup> Children were separated from their parents by the Nazi order in Terezín, at times for a larger part of a day, at times for a larger part of a year. Numbers of dedicated adults, however, got themselves to be admitted into the boys’ and girls’ barracks, and they gave every hour they had to *enlighten* the children—often until the hour of their or the children’s transport to the East came. This is chilling but highly convincing (this is how education is): many of the Terezín survivals are categorical in their insistence that those in the camp were the most

<sup>42</sup> From a report by Hugo Friedmann, another Terezín librarian: “I cannot state in my report (to the SS Commandant) that of 60,000 books, the library today has only 48,000?... One person doesn’t return it, takes it with him on the train and forgets to send it back. Maybe, there it passes from hand to hand” (Makarova et al. (2004), pp. 28–29). “A reading room was opened on June 1 (1943). It is used by an average by 110 Persons a day” (Adler (2005), vol. I, pp. 606).

<sup>43</sup> E.g., Mrs. Sukarsih. Interview, Jakarta, December 1, 1998.

<sup>44</sup> “In their place of residence, these persons enjoy the same rights and are subject to the same duties that law imposes on other free inhabitants”(GS (GG) to Roest 18xii26: no.86: GS aan dd. gouv de Molukken 5i27 in Kwantes (1978), p. 522).

<sup>45</sup> “In Terezín, education is banned” (Makarova et al. 2004, pp. 61–62).

<sup>46</sup> See, e.g., the list of lectures given in Terezín between 1943 and 1945, compiled by a survivor: Russian 92, graphology 64; drawing 56; national economy 49; Latin 48; psychology 39...” (Makarova et al. 2004, p. 12). Lecturers came: 331 from the Protectorate, 92 from Germany, 47 from Austria, 29 from Holland, and 1 from Denmark. *Ibid.*, p. 14. According to another survivor, “Never in my life have I seen anything so intensive as Terezín.... The intensity of those years may be compared perhaps only with the 5th century BC, the time of Pericles”, *ibid.*, pp. 61–62.

compact, most densely packed, and the finest institutions of education that modern Europe has ever had.<sup>47</sup>

In Boven Digoel, the authorities permitted schools. They, in fact, encouraged and supported them; the largest seven-grade school in the camp even bore the name of Captain Becking.<sup>48</sup> Internees, some of them with colonial diplomas and degrees, became the teachers in the government schools. In addition, there grew up several “private” or “house” schools run fully by the internees.

Statement over the fourth quarter of 1941:

The wild schools [so the private schools were also called for not adhering exactly to the government rules]: teacher no. 1 two students; teacher no. 4 four students; teacher no. 5 two students...

The government school: thirty-seven boys and twenty girls.<sup>49</sup>

The greatest energy was spent on getting to school, staying in school, and being good at school in Boven Digoel, passion for school beyond everything that was happening in the colony outside the camp. There were courses of many levels and syllabi in Boven Digoel, from elementary to high school, and there were specialized and professional courses for artisans and artists as well as for adult illiterates, courses in philosophy, astronomy (and astrology), journalism, and mathematics.<sup>50</sup>

Schooling refined and heightened the scaling and hierarchy in both of the camps, the scaling, and hierarchy getting deep into the minds of the inmates, significantly including the scaling and hierarchy of language.

Especially early on, most of the Jews came to Terezín from the surrounding lands of Bohemia and Moravia, and they spoke Czech. Later, Jews followed from Germany, Austria, The Netherlands, and Denmark; the *lingua franca* of the camp out of necessity became German; but German, also, had been decreed by the SS to be the official language of the camp.<sup>51</sup> This was the chatter of the everyday. There was SS techno-barking, *LTI*, *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, “language of the Third Reich”, as Victor Klemperer called it,<sup>52</sup> or *Amtsprache*, as Eichmann called it at his trial. There was the inmates’ German, Czech, Dutch, and Danish (very little Yiddish and virtually no Hebrew), and there were the uncertain bridges spanning this mix, several modes of

<sup>47</sup> “To my knowledge, this is the first time that here in Central Europe, the attempt was made to concentrate [*sic!*] all children of a certain age, accommodate them in closed homes, and organize the whole life of youth and its integration into society under this precept... We are convinced that collective education, guiding youth to fit into the community, to subordinate individual interests to the interests of the community, and to display individuality within the bounds of the communal system are an essential part of the mission of modern education” (Otto Zucker, “What did we learn from this year’s experience? One year of L 417 (a boys’ block)”, in Makarova et al. (2004), p. 157).

<sup>48</sup> Schoonheydt (1936, p. 63). “It still appears, however, that for these (interned) gentlemen the common government school of the second class is still not enough” (Schoonheydt (1936), p. 267).

<sup>49</sup> Rapport by kampongshoofd dated 31.12. 1941 BDA.

<sup>50</sup> See also, e.g., Marsudi kepada Wedana TANAM MERAH: letter May 5, 1932, on opening a journalistic school; Arsip BDA, no. 314.

<sup>51</sup> “Almost all Jews spoke *Deutsch* [*sic*], many of them better than the Germans themselves” (Josef Manziel (Manzi) Nahariya, Israel, 1997, in Makarova et al. (2004), p. 382).

<sup>52</sup> Klemperer (2002), *passim*.



“the peculiar Terezín jargon”.<sup>53</sup> Only the schooled people could make some order out of it. A pyramid was built, and much was attached to it, severely more than anywhere outside the camp. There was the barking and the jargon at the bottom of the pyramid. Higher up, there was a will to learn, toward the ideal, courses in Hebrew, Zionism and, mainly in the boys’ and girls’ barracks, an urge for the future. Also, there was an effort to purify the German—to move it closer to Goethe or, say, Kafka, higher, to the top.

A significant segment of the internees in Boven Digoel, the avant-garde (the extremists) of the colony, had passed through some kind or another of colonial school before their internment, and they spoke Dutch; many of them spoke it fluently and also when they were just among themselves.<sup>54</sup> For those in the colony who did not make it as high as to learn Dutch (for the Javanese, Sumatrans, Balinese, etc., with their respective regional languages), the *lingua franca* of the archipelago was Malay. Like German in Terezín, Malay, as Captain Becking decreed it in Boven Digoel, became the official language of the camp. As in Terezín, in this camp, as *die Lichtung* amidst the barely enlightened colony, there was a pyramid erected made of grammar and light.

Again, there was the chatter at the bottom. Malay was in the middle, and Dutch, and then a correct Dutch, and then classical Dutch were ever closer to the top. There was a great number and great variety of courses by the internees to improve their Dutch, to make it above the colonial Dutch, into a highly cultured Dutch, Dutch-Dutch as it was called.<sup>55</sup> And it was striking and often confusing to the Dutch authorities in Boven Digoel how eagerly the internees learned English! It seemed that in New Guinea, not Dutch but English was on the top. There were numerous courses of English and, through the camp, there were signs spiritedly displayed, like *ENGLISH TEACHER*, *LAUNDRY*, *TAILOR*, or *HAIRDRESSER*.<sup>56</sup> Internees loved to shock a person of the Dutch colonial authority in the camp in English, especially when they suspected that the other had not learned it yet. Was it the Hebrew of the Indonesian camp, a search for the pure spot of all the given? Was it a presentiment of English becoming Globalish of the postmodern? As they were building the pyramid of light, into the future, it could be both.

The Papuans, Kaja-Kaja, watched the camp at Boven Digoel from the forest, and then, *progressively*, they began to come closer, into the light.<sup>57</sup> A parallel to that in

<sup>53</sup> See the amazing *Wörterverzeichnis*, in Adler (2005, pp. xxx–lix).

<sup>54</sup> “In our camp...among ourselves we spoke Dutch practically all the time...” Salim (1980, pp. 230–231). Dutch journalist van Blankenstein, one of the two who visited the camp (in mid-1928), had the same impression. See van Blankenstein (1999, pp. 188–193).

<sup>55</sup> There are many applications by the internees to organize and teach courses in Dutch. See, e.g., BDA no.305 and BDA no.315.

<sup>56</sup> See Direktorat Jenderal Bantuan Sosial (1977, p. 81). There is a photo of the youth soccer club VOGEL in sports uniforms, holding a blackboard in English! “*Till we meet again*”, see in Schoonheydt (1936, p. 187); see also “*Farewell photo taken for departure of family Barani. Boven Digoel*”, this again written in English on the blackboard for a group photography, *ibid.*, pp. 156, 168. According to Dr. Schoonheydt, “When I once asked an ‘English teacher’ in the camp why people were taking so much trouble to learn English, he answered that English would inevitably become the language of a ‘communist world state’” (Schoonheydt (1936), pp. 168–169).

<sup>57</sup> “Initially, these naked, black, and athletic figures stood still in a distance—with the birds of paradise or a papaya fruit in their hands—some screaming to attract our attention” (Salim (1980), p. 84). “... their naked, black, powerful figures formed no contrast with the color of the stems of the trees” (Schoonheydt (1936), p. 35).

Terezín, as I have already suggested, might be the Czechs gazing at the camp from the darkness of the Nazi Protectorate. First, they did not want to know, and so they did not know anything about the Jews in Terezín. Then, some of them, a butcher, a grocer, got an order from the SS, and Czech policemen were hired by the SS to guard the camp. According to most accounts, theirs, Nazi, and equally so Jewish accounts, the Czechs felt uncomfortable, but with time, they came closer to the “culture” of the camp, attracted, doing some increasing good for the inmates of the camp. I also like to think of them as coming from the darkness, like the naked savages of the jungle, increasingly feeling shame the closer they came.<sup>58</sup>

Kaja-Kaja began to do some barter trade with the camp people in Boven Digoel, and a little later in the history of the camp, they might come, for instance, to see the camp doctor. Some stayed for longer periods of time, and they became servants, garden boys, and maids of the guards, civil authorities and, gradually, internees as well.<sup>59</sup>

“They smelled”, one of the survivors of the camp, an old lady now, wife of an internee, told me: “We taught them what soap was; and naturally we demanded that they put trousers on or something, at least for as long as they were in our sight”.<sup>60</sup> Kaja-Kaja were taught and learned to address the guards, the officials, and the internees in the camp in the same way: “*bapa*” or “*ibu*”, “father” or “mother”, an address of respect in Malay; they were addressed in return by their (first and only) names (the internees, actually, were addressed “*bapa komunis*” or “*ibu komunis*”, “father communist” or “mother communist”). The internees recalled later with pride mixed with amusement how they taught the bright of the Kaja-Kaja “some manners”, like the handshake or “sort of” military salute. The people of the camp also taught the Papuans “a smattering of Malay”—not a smattering of Dutch and certainly not of English!<sup>61</sup> As the time passed, Kaja-Kaja exchanged a wild pig they hunted or sago they picked for an iron ax or nails. They might barter for (or steal) boxer shorts or a battery-powered flashlight and took it with them back to the forest.<sup>62</sup>

Heidegger’s notion of *die Lichtung* plays upon a light coming from the fourfold: the earth, the water, the sun, and the human being. The Boven Digoel and Terezín

<sup>58</sup> In the early stages of Terezín Nazi history, the Jews were marched to the camp from the nearest railway station, from the village of Bušovice, about 2 miles through an inhabited space, with houses and shops, while the local Czechs pretended not to see them or looked from behind the windows. By June 1943, this had been *upgraded*: a railway connection was built right into the camp. After that, closed train carriages passed through. See Adler (2005, vol. II. pp. 276–278; vol. I, p. 133).

<sup>59</sup> “Great patience was needed to make these autochthonous into a civilized *jongos* (Dutch-colonial for ‘boy’)” (Salim (1980), p. 184).

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Mrs. Djoehaeini Maskoen, a survivor of Boven Digoel. Also, see: “they were all very dirty... only those who stayed to work in the camp for some time could be made to bathe” (Salim 1980, p. 201). This passage by Salim is verbatim taken from Schoonheydt (1936, p. 132).

<sup>61</sup> “... one buries them beneath speech” Baudrillard (1994, p. 137).

<sup>62</sup> Sometimes, flames followed the “forest inhabitants” into the dark: “At the same time as the camp was established on Boven Digoel, Captain Becking began with regular patrols deeper into the area. Whenever he got reports of Papuans moving with weapons and of acts of real or alleged head hunting, he moved against ‘the man-eaters’”. Mostly, Becking’s soldiers found, of course, only empty houses as the “forest people” managed to move away, and then “the military could not do much more than tear down the huts of the cannibals and put the whole place on fire” (Schoonheydt 1936, p. 245). For a photo of the cannibals’ huts burning, see *ibid.*, pp. 246.

*Lichtung* had been on that enlightenment side, but more of our age. There was, in the camps, primarily a technological lighting doing the job of *die Lichtung*.<sup>63</sup> Nature, as seen from the camps, was the walls or beyond the walls. The light of the camps, in many of its variations, was man-made.

There is one particular kind of light and brightness one very soon sees when learning about Terezín: the internees' drawings and paintings; rarely an artist but large numbers of the pictures survived. Some are the most idiotic oils or pastels of Alpine landscapes or soft-porno "Venetian nudes"; these might still be hanging on the walls of respectable Central-European houses. They were done by the inmates, "commissioned" by the SS and other people of authority in the camp. Equally bright and blinding are the Terezín children's drawings, many of them now in the Prague Jewish Museum. There are houses and roads, butterflies, coffins, and scenes of children playing. One 10-year-old girl left behind a whole series of bright pastels called "Paradise"—a tropical island, radiant flowers that she probably never saw and certainly will never see—it could be easily Boven Digoel (Volavková 1993). Repeating what I wrote about radio and hearing, this was a long-distance seeing, seeing through and over the wall, ahead of its time, a global act.

There were a number of internees painting in Boven Digoel as well—modern painters, with canvas or paper, oil, pastels, pencils, or ink, respecting perspective—everyone noticed them, there were an amazing number of them in that place and certainly disproportionately more per capita than in the colony (and in the world) as a whole.

One could see these artists all the time at all places in the camp working behind their easels. One time it might be at the bank of the Digoel River, another time it is somewhere at the edges of the jungle....They are also busy painting the decoration for the camp theater performances (Fig. 4).<sup>64</sup>

It was a long-distance art; however I try not to overuse the word. The sailors who arrived with the ships bringing the new internees, supplies, and the mail were eager customers, as were the retiring civilians and guards of the camp, and the internees themselves, who wished to send a picture to friends and family far away, or to own a souvenir themselves, to look at the camp through the painter's eye.

The Boven Digoel camp, as the trees were cut and the forest was opened to the tropical sun, was an especially bright and radiant place, dazzling.<sup>65</sup> As the Kaja-Kaja

<sup>63</sup> For a list of 48 persons of civilian and military authority in the Boven Digoel camp paying a fee for a street lighting, "Opgave van straat verlichting over Maart 1942", see BDA, no. 64. "What more may you want? The main street is fully in electric light—in Ambon, the capital of the whole of Moluccas archipelago, in contrast, they still use gas lighting on the streets". Abdoe'IXarim: Pandu Anak Buangan, p. 86.

<sup>64</sup> Salim (1980, p. 221); "our painters are now forgotten... Their paintings and drawings, however, were always for sale in our camp. Often the sale took place in military camp or to the civil officials. The visitors to the post, namely the sailors, were well-paying clients" (Salim 1980, pp. 240–241). There was also art photography: "Especially the pictures of the Papuas were very much in trend", *Ibid*.

<sup>65</sup> "... the Lagers themselves were not always a good observation post... An inmate did not know about the existence of other Lagers, even those only a few kilometers away... The companion who worked beside him today was gone by the morrow; he might be in the hut next door, or erased from the world; there was no way to know.... his eyes were fixed to the ground by every single minute's needs" (Levi 1979, pp. 16–17).



Fig. 4 Boven Digoel camp “Society for Art and Entertainment” (From: KITLV Leiden)

approached, attracted by the clearing, they were programmed by the light, and they programmed themselves to be a part of it, and to add to the shine. For a shag of tobacco or an iron ax, they were made to dance; the beads and shells they wore, the mud and clay painting on their bodies, their spears and shields and feather crowns added to the camp’s luster and made it even more what it was.<sup>66</sup> The internees were still locked in, could not get beyond the forest, but the Kaja-Kaja’s brilliant stuff traveled the long distance (here it is again) and fast. Maybe this is what the camps were ultimately to become. Whenever I think of camps, I cannot but recall the surreal wall on the second floor of Paris’s *Centre Pompidou*—the famous André Breton wall. Among the paintings of Breton’s artist-friends, artifacts of other nineteenth and twentieth century European masters whom Breton liked, and the most diverse *art trouvé* that Breton collected at the flea markets of Paris of the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, there are a couple of shields, a few spears, and some painted masks of Papuans, if not directly from Boven Digoel then at least very close to it. They are the *highlights* of the exhibition.<sup>67</sup>

One of the most fearful events in Terezín, and as such always recalled, was a moment when, as a way of punishment, for an attempt to escape most often, the light

<sup>66</sup> “For the barter trade with us, the post inhabitants, the wilds offered their weapons, other *etnografica*, all kinds of animals, like birds, and even little wild pigs... Pieces of clothing had for them a great value and food such as rice, salt, and brown sugar played an important role in the barter. When we gave them a lump of salt, they gobbled it—smacking loudly—and swallowed it in big pieces” (Salim 1980, p. 183).

<sup>67</sup> “... en avril 2003 présentait l’intérêt d’offrir des objets de Mélanésie, d’Australie, d’Indonésie ou d’Amérique du Nord... a discrètement été achetée a 1,2 M Euro par la fille du collectionneur, Aubes Breton...” (Gérard) Geiger, “Le triomphe la vente”, in Geoffroy-Schneider et al. (2006).

in the barracks was switched off; it might last for days or even weeks. Boven Digoel, too, perhaps, is most plastically remembered as an electric picture, thus dark and light. In the early evenings, as the darkness made itself felt and as it slowly penetrated into everything (this is the most enchanting moment, especially in the tropics), the camp switched into becoming a light in the darkness. By the intelligent design (and there was no way to disbelieve it) the streets' electric lights went on (only in the largest cities of the colony there were electric street lamps installed at the time), and gas and petroleum lamps were lighted one by one inside a house and on the houses' porches. There were lights on the Digoel River, too: the internees were permitted to fish at night, and they installed bicycle lamps on their boats (Direktorat Jenderal Bantuan Sosial 1977, pp. 92–93).

Once every 6 weeks or so, *G.S. Albatros*, the government motorboat, the “white ship” as it was called, came up the river to the camp with supplies, newspapers, letters, and sometimes new group of internees. Before the ship sailed again, those 2 or 3 days, nights in fact, these were the moments that the people of the camp recall most—the deepest time. On the black surface of the river, between the black earth and the flickering stars, the ship floated with all its lights on as modern ships do when in port. Every person of the camp, internees, officials, guards, and friendly Kaja-Kaja, gathered at the bank of the river, they talked, smoked, looked at the ship, the sign of the world. Always, to let also another sense work on it, there was a gramophone.<sup>68</sup>

## 5 Build the City

the complementary process of stockpiles of people—the line, waiting, traffic jams, concentration, the camp.

Baudrillard: *Simulacra* (Baudrillard 1994, p. 68)

The overwhelming majority of the people brought to Terezín were not the eternal peddlers as the Nazis chose to picture a Jew. They even were not the *Ostjuden*, the Jews from the East, the small towns and villages of Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, or Russia. They came from the European Center and West, and virtually all from the big “cities of lights”. The overcoats, canes, and umbrellas with which the Jews arrived at Terezín, like the dreams they were clinging to and losing, and like the increasing absence of freedom they felt, also like the death they were going to get as they moved on from Terezín to the annihilation camps, were distinctly urban.

The leather briefcases under the arms of the internees to Boven Digoel, of a tailor, a clerk, or a teacher, in the context of the overwhelmingly rural colony, cried urban at least as strongly as the memories of the latest vacations in Paris, let us say, brought to Terezín by a Jewish doctor, university professor, or actor.<sup>69</sup> The internees

<sup>68</sup> “... the lit-up steamer floated on the otherwise so dark and lugubrious river, and we the internees, on the bank... enjoyed this show... [After three days the ship went back] to our country of origin” (Salim 1980, pp. 153–154).

<sup>69</sup> For a list of internees and their original professions see, e.g., BDA for January 24, 1936. In general, “this land was supposed to be impregnated by the sweat of the men and women, who, before they were exiled, never handled an ax or hoe for a living”. Abdoe'IXarim: Pandu Anak Buangan, p. 83.

of Terezín as well as those of Boven Digoel *designed* their entry into the camps, when they were forced to go, as if it were an extension of the places they came from—they clenched their teeth and all in the everyday before it was intensified, was switched to a higher volume, telescoped. Whatever they might do or reject doing, in order to survive, to keep hope and desire, in that concentrated space, in that density close to the limit of bearing—on that higher scale—they built a city.<sup>70</sup>

In Terezín, almost everything happened inside the apartment-bloc-like barracks, and the rest happened in the blocks' courtyards and on the sidewalks.<sup>71</sup> The old town cleared of its prewar population had been remade so that, at one time, five times as many men, women, and children, internees, and guards, young and old, sick and insane, could be squeezed in it. The genius of the eighteenth century construction of the garrison town for a single purpose of war helped and opened the way. By applying all the engineering spirit of Europe available in the twentieth century, the Nazis upgraded the town architecture and urban structure with rationality and single-mindedness hardly to be found in any modern city of history up to that time.

With a few exceptions, families were separated, men from women, healthy from unhealthy, young from old, and the movement through the space of the camp was strictly and under the threat of death *structured*. There was a special department for everything including, significantly, free time—free-time department, *die Freizeitgestaltung*. Urban space and the sense of the urban space was not erased but subjected to scrutiny (analysis); it was heightened, more sharply defined, divided, and subdivided. Living quarters were numbered, and the name *Heime*, “homes”, became generic and not meaning much; the numbers did. Inside each living quarter, cubic “blocs” were cut into smaller squares and rectangles of room and ultimately bunks—horizontally and vertically, into two- or three-level bunks, one (numbered) person to a bunk. At the edges of the bunkroom, the geometry left some space, time, and humanity. Along the wall or under the lowest bunk on the floor, there was a space for what might have remained of the personal belongings: the smallest and darkest region of it all, shrinking, but equally important—an attic of this city of utopia.

Beyond the cubes of bunks and blocs, there were the South–North and East–West streets of Terezín, straight, all crossing at a right angle, Manhattan-style, homes named Q 117 or L 53, from bulwark to bulwark, inside the perfect, star-shaped whole.

One could get lost in Terezín, never like in a village or in a forest, only like in a city. To be on the street after 8:00 p.m. in winter and 9:00 p.m. in summer (8:30 and 9:30 in later years) was against the Terezín rule, and one might be sent to Terezín prison for it or even on transport and to death. A special group, the Manes Group (the group leader was Philipp Manes), was constituted of Jews by the Jewish Council of the Elders, with the permission of the SS authorities, to take care of those who might get lost and miss the curfew: there was a great number of old and confused people in the camp. The Manes Group, helping through the night and waiting for calls in one of the barracks—

<sup>70</sup> See, e.g., “the forbidden city”, or “the city of exiles”, in Krarup Nielsen (1930, pp. 97, 100). On the wave, at the same time, of the colonial efforts to clean and improve the native kampongs, see Abidin Kusno (2005), p. 18 and *passim*.

<sup>71</sup> Here, the modern and urban sense of absence is well conveyed: “The town is flooded, if one might look at it from the bell tower—which is forbidden—one might see an empty central square, around which a turbulent stream of people moves” (Hugo Friedmann, “Terezín Walking Scenario”, (1943), in Makarova et al. (2004, p. 19).

like the space along the walls and under the bunks, at the edge of the city geometry—grew up into the most important center for making Terezín culture, music, group readings, lectures.<sup>72</sup> What *purser* a sense of “getting lost in a city” might one ever get?

In Boven Digoel, after the first few months when everybody lived in the big wooden barracks “30 m<sup>2</sup> long, 1.5 m<sup>2</sup> for a person”<sup>73</sup>, the internees were permitted, indeed encouraged, to build houses for themselves as individuals, families, or groups of friends. The camp authorities provided tools and some materials like zinc for roofs, and the guards were ordered to help the internees if needed. Thus, there are the memories of the camp, of the authorities and guards as well as the survivors, of “small boxes of houses” and “neat little houses”; most of the memories have it both ways: the neat and the boxlike. Some of the houses eventually, as the years of internment passed, even grew to two-stories, and almost all grew up into having a “small but well-kept” vegetable and flower garden in front or in back.<sup>74</sup> The terms by which the houses are reported and remembered—almost as a rule Dutch or English, rarely Malay, Javanese, or in other regional languages—are proudly and thoroughly modern and urban; we get “bedrooms”, “verandas”, “guest rooms”, “sitting rooms” and, almost never missing, “studies”.<sup>75</sup> There were most important chicken pens beyond the gardens in the back of most of the houses, it is true; but chicken pens were a common phenomenon of the very urban quarters of Batavia, the colony metropolis, at the same time as well.

On every other street of the camp, there soon appeared a smaller or larger shop with groceries and other goods. There was a government store, a Chinese shop belonging to a free man allowed into the camp, but most of the shops were owned and operated by the internees. Here is a page from one of the shops’ archive:

*Mrs. Sophie* [internee]:

4 *kati* [1/3 pounds] green nuts, *f.* [guilders] 0.40  
 1 *kati* red pepper, *f.* 0.40  
 ½ *kati* white pepper. *f.* 0.40  
 1 can oil *f.* 0.40  
 5 packets tobacco *f.* 1.15...  
 2 cans sardines *f.* 0.80  
 2 *kati* white sugar *f.* 0.14  
 1 can coffee *f.* 0.90...

<sup>72</sup> Manes group organized poetry competitions, for instance (see Spies (1997) and Manes (2005)).

<sup>73</sup> “In 1927 when I arrived at Boven Digoel, internees still lived in a place that was called *Interneersingskamp* (internment camp). The place was made of 14 barracks... each of length of ±30 m. Every internee was given a space of ±1.5 m, those with wife and children lived with their families, the unmarried internees lived with other unmarried people. Each barrack had one kitchen for all” (Tanpa Nama (Anonymous), Minggat dari Digul, in Toer (2001, p. 266n35)).

<sup>74</sup> The neat and the forced had been blurred as perhaps never before. Through the neatness: “in the camps, city and house became indistinguishable” (Agamben 1998, p. 188).

<sup>75</sup> “My little house consisted of a small front gallery, an inner hall, and a bedroom. On the front gallery, there stood a rattan lounge that I ‘inherited’ from the previous occupant of the house. In the inner hall there were two chairs, a table, and quite a large bookcase; in my bedroom there was only a couch. I slept there, on my own mat, ‘safely’ under a red-white-and-blue mosquito net provided by the Dutch authorities of the camp.” (Salim 1980, p. 142). A “Schetskaart”, sketch map, of a camp house can be found, e.g., in BDA, no. 262.

*Mr. Brodjosoewarno* [internee]:

- 2 notebooks *f.* 0.12
- 1 pencil *f.* 0.10
- 1 small wall lamp *f.* 0.70
- 1 packet matchboxes *f.* 0.26

*Mr. Kartaatmadja* [internee]:

- 1 packet tea *f.* 1
- 1 teapot *f.* 1.25...
- 1 tablecloth *f.* 0.45
- 1 packet tobacco *f.* 1.32...

*Mr. Darmoprawiro* [internee]:

- 2 cans coffee *f.* 0.90
- 1 bottle oil *f.* 0.40
- 4 *kati* green nuts *f.* 0.90
- 1 bottle eau de cologne *f.* 0.75... <sup>76</sup>

There were, as the years passed, sidewalk cafés and even a few little restaurants where internees met and played billiards.<sup>77</sup> Some of the Boven Digoel streets had names, like “Digoel Street”, or “Main Street”, but generally, like in Terezín, there was numbering; and the *kampongs*, quarters into which the camp was divided, were called only “A”, “B”, “C”, “D”, “E”, and “F”. *Kampong* A, like the letter A in the alphabet, came first and was closest to the river. *Kampong* F was the last to be built, and it was on the periphery.<sup>78</sup>

There were command centers for the Dutch authorities in Boven Digoel and for the SS guards in Terezín. The internees were virtually never let in there, but then, there were “public buildings” for the internees and for the internees’ “self-government” and “self-regulation”. The seat of the “Jewish Council of the Elders” still stands in Terezín, and it still is an utterly imposing edifice. Even as one walks up there today, the wide staircases and the long halls with superhumanly high ceilings, the heavy double doors of what used to be offices at the time, still breathe the air of waiting and decision. In the Boven Digoel camp, the public buildings were not inherited. The “head of the *kampong*” office and the “*kampong* police” office had to be newly built (and nothing remains of them now except some cement floors).

<sup>76</sup> BDA, no. 125.

<sup>77</sup> “Boven Digoel camp became a metropolis (I could not help but think here of Walter Benjamin’s Paris, the metropolis of the nineteenth century)... It was out of the ordinary in all matters—as for those who rule, so for those who are ruled. Or have my reader ever heard about a community (in the colony) where 95% of the inhabitants can read and write? Did my reader hear about a place where the inhabitants are political 100%, be their consciousness sophisticated or raw?... Look at this image of BOVEN DIGOEL. The main street is neat, houses stand in a line, there are public offices, schools, a hospital, harbor, shops, a theater, a library, mosques, and so on, yes—and don’t forget jail.” (Abdoe’IXarim: Pandu Anak Buangan, p.85).

<sup>78</sup> Direktorat Jenderal Bantuan Sosial (1977, p. 80). “Until 1930, there were seven *kampoengs* in Boven Digoel with the names: A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. Then some people began being sent back, and in 1934 there remained only *kampoeng* C and B. The rest had been taken by thicket and forest again.” Mawengkang (1996, pp. 51–52).



In the public buildings of both camps, however, petitions were accepted, approved or denied, and people were called in, reprimanded, or given permission to expand a house, to move a house, to send wife or child back home (this in Boven Digoel), or to get out of the next transport, to get a few more weeks of life (this in Terezín). In the way of knocking on the door, filling out forms, and writing one's signature, human beings were being built into the compact, modern, and urban, and they themselves were made compact modern and urban—functional for the time that was and the time that was coming. Looking at this crux of the camps makes one feel as if reading Kafka's *Trial* rather than his *Penal Colony*.

In *die Lichtung* in the sense of Heidegger, the earth, the water, the sun, and the humans (and thus the divine) are the fourfold source of light. For *die Lichtung* in the camps—that is in the high modern and urban—first of all, the earth has to be flattened and hardened so that one can build solidly on it. In Terezín, the Jews walked on the same pavement on which the Czechs, Austrians, Germans, and Jews of more than a century earlier had walked and driven. There was a sewage system under, and covered by, the hard surface, close to the surface; it was not as accomplished as the Baron Haussmann's undergrounds of nineteenth century Paris, the metropolis of the century, but it was functional through the apocalypse. As for Boven Digoel, in the context of technique and urban planning of the colony, to the same effect, the state of flattening the earth, hardening the surface, building upon it and a little bit underneath it, appeared gloriously Haussmanian.<sup>79</sup> In the middle of nowhere (as the modern goes), on the space just months ago taken from the forest (the savage fourfold), the streets of the camp were swept, and the main ones graveled.

There was a sewage and water-control system in Boven Digoel that only the most modern cities of the colony at the time could boast. Deep ditches were dug along all the streets in the camp, and many were made of concrete. They were all covered with metal plates (this was not done even in the most progressive cities of the colony) so that the mosquitoes would not breed there. Flood water from the regular and otherwise devastating tropical floods was led through and around the camp down to the river by a centralized system of bamboo pipes. There were frequent and strict inspections of the system by the "malaria squad" made up of internees and supervised by the authorities. To neglect the street and especially the ditch in front and around of one's house had been a crime punishable by fine and prison.<sup>80</sup>

Permission to build a house in the camp appears as thin as the paper on which the application was written. The file is made of one or two pages at most—a few lines of request and the most simple, crudest sketch of a layout, front and side view with

<sup>79</sup> The identity of Terezín, in the view of some, was defined by *die Schleuse*, "sluices, locks" that in the case of war, might allow the approaches to the city be flooded by two rivers that flowed around it: a marvel of eighteenth century water-control technology, the pride of *Dutch* technology in fact. *Die Schleuse*, according to Adler's classic on Terezín, became the most powerful *Zentralwort* of the camp. Through *die Schleuse*, as it came to be officially called during the Nazi period, special rooms and buildings at the entrances to and exits from the camp/town, arriving and departing Jews were "processed", lists were made of them, and most of their remaining property was taken away: they were "sluice-d" as they were "streaming in". (Adler (2005, vol. I, pp. xxxii, l).

<sup>80</sup> See, e.g., records of the interrogation of nine internees accused of not cleaning the street and the ditches around their houses". *Perkara pelanggaran netheidsverordening (The Case of Conflict with the Neatness Ordinance; Tanah Merah 13 April 1937. Wedana, BDA, no. 147).*

measurements in meters, strictly two dimensional. All approved on the condition that the house would have the standard size in length and width and that it would face the street at a right angle, at a prescribed distance from the street, with the number of the house and the number of the “master of the house” displayed so that it could easily be seen from the street<sup>81</sup>—postman’s dream.

Buses, cars, and trucks on the main highway between Prague, Dresden, and Berlin passed by Terezín. The highway cut through the middle of the camp. That section of it was called “Aryan Street”, and access by the Jews to it was forbidden—there were guards and a man-high fence along the road. There was yet another throughway in the camp. When a transport from Terezín to Auschwitz or other camps of annihilation had been put together, as it happened every few weeks, and when the procession passed through the town, all doors and windows on the street had to be closed. There was a single bicycle reported throughout the Boven Digoel history—it is not know whether an internee or a guard brought it to the camp—and there was one squeaking cart for a time, some recall, drawn by a donkey (Schoonheydt 1936, p. 93).

This, the fenced highway, the closed street windows, the bicycle, and the cart were noticed and repeatedly described as unnatural—as an absence of traffic. Through the days and years, whenever at home, the internees sat in their house or barrack, looking to the street and for the street. On some evenings, in Boven Digoel or in Terezín, they might see others go, or they themselves might be going, through the street to hear a camp lecture or concert, or see a play, *almost* as city people did.<sup>82</sup> In Terezín, they might see Goethe’s *Faust* in an avant-garde production.<sup>83</sup> In Boven Digoel, in *kampong B*, there was a big barrack where they could see cabaret or a Tom Mix movie.<sup>84</sup>

These were the engineers of modernity who built the camps. Because the camps were such tiny spots compared to the modernity at large, and reflecting everything, containing everything—the *minis* of our world—they remain so distinct, so sticking out, and so standing in our way wherever we try to move. The camps were built fast, as fast as only few and only the most modern cities of our time are built: in a matter of weeks. They were “the sequence of fragments...in a state of continuous flux (instead of articulating it with a view to a final meaning)” (Barthes 2005, p. 10). Only in their truly supramodern creations, Le Corbusier in his time, and of those who followed in his steps, had an idea of a city been so instantly applied to the

<sup>81</sup> Mawengkang (1996, p. 66) “In the barracks a surface space of 16 square meters is allotted to each family” (Krarup Nielsen 1930, p. 110). “In camp A, there are at present 12 houses each of 4×4 m” Marco (2002, pp. 4–5). The same crude and angular measurement is always a part of the requests by the internees to build a house, e.g., “Riool register”, BDA, no. 316, also BDA, no. 11, BDA, no. 23.

<sup>82</sup> “BULLETIN: *K.S.V.D. (Kunst- en Sport Vereeniging Digoel)* [Digoel Union for Art and Sport], Theater Division, its OPERA group, will present on the following evenings: this coming Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, June 7th, 8th, and 9th, 1929, in the House of the Internment-Camp Theater. The story is called *Covetous, or Greedy of Money*, and it will be played by 25 actors... Tickets: Chair f 2.-, Bench f 0.35... Administration K.S.D.V.” BDA, no. 78.

<sup>83</sup> From a prologue to the “Fatal Games of Love”, by Karel Capek: Arlequine: “Come to us, precious public... we invite you to our Theater under the Chimney. Later or earlier, we will understand that this filthy possibility given to us was still not the worst one...” (Makarova et al. 2004, pp. 411–413).

<sup>84</sup> “To go to the movies, to listen to music, to watch opera, theater, sport, to dance—all this, one can have in this Boven Digoel” (Abdoe’lXarim: Pandu Anak Buangan, p. 86).

place—stamped on the ground, with a thump. This is surely why the idea of the camps has been so triumphant and why the flatness of the technical drawings of the camps, whatever we know about the fourfold, are so beautiful. Just watching them, one becomes an engineer, and there is nothing to correct in this.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Flatness “... as in the Aristotelian reflection: ‘Aristocrats seek the plurality of fortified positions, oligarchic regimes prefer acropolises, and democrats like flat spaces’” (Virilio 1986, p. 78).

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