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# **THE FATE OF CHINESE REFUGEES IN POST-WAR INDONESIA 1946–1947**

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## **Abstract**

*This article discusses the daily lives of the Chinese community in Indonesia after the proclamation of independence. Chinese community had a very different life compared to when Indonesia was still under Dutch colonial rule. Especially when the indigenous community (Bumiputra) voiced the adage “Siap Sedia” (Be Prepared) to ignite the spirit of Indonesian youth as motivation to defend Indonesian independence, so that Chinese community had to evacuate to secure and save themselves from the consequences of the conflict between the Republic of Indonesia and Dutch forces. This article aims to understand the conditions and daily lives of the Chinese community, considered as part of the colonial legacy. The article uses historical research methods including heuristic, verification, interpretation, and historiography. The article generates an understanding that there is a fluctuating dynamic in the lives of the Chinese community, especially in relation to the indigenous community.*

**Keywords:** *Bumiputra; Chinese community; evacuate; the daily live*

# **NASIB PENGUNGI TIONGHOA DI INDONESIA PASCA PERANG 1946–1947**

## **Abstrak**

Artikel ini mendiskusikan tentang kehidupan sehari-hari komunitas Tionghoa di Indonesia setelah proklamasi kemerdekaan. Komunitas Tionghoa memiliki kehidupan yang jauh berbeda dibanding ketika Indonesia masih dijajah Belanda. Terutama ketika komunitas Bumiputra menyuarkan adagium “Siap Sedia” untuk mengobarkan semangat pemuda Indonesia sebagai motivasi mempertahankan kemerdekaan Indonesia, sehingga komunitas Tionghoa harus mengungsi untuk mengamankan dan menyelamatkan dirinya dari dampak perseteruan antara Republik Indonesia dan pasukan Belanda. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk memahami keadaan dan kehidupan sehari-hari komunitas Tionghoa, yang dianggap sebagai bagian dari *colonial legacy*. Artikel ini menggunakan metode penelitian sejarah yang meliputi heuristik, verifikasi, interpretasi, dan historiografi. Artikel ini menghasilkan suatu pemahaman bahwa terdapat dinamika kehidupan masyarakat etnis Tionghoa yang bersifat fluktuatif, terutama dalam hubungan dengan masyarakat Bumiputra.

**Kata Kunci:** Bumiputra; kehidupan sehari-hari; masyarakat etnis Tionghoa; mengungsi

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Indonesian Revolution is one of the pivotal events in the history of the Indonesian nation. It marked the legitimacy of Indonesia declaring its independence, which had been suppressed for centuries by the presence of foreign powers. These foreign powers included the Portuguese, English, Dutch, and Japanese, all of whom sought to exploit Indonesia’s natural resources. Therefore, every region in Indonesia boldly declared “Ready!” after Sukarno read the proclamation text on August 17, 1945 (Purwanto et al., 2023: 441; Frederick, 1989: 236). Consequently, there was a fear among

the people that the Dutch might attempt to re-colonize Indonesia after Japan surrendered to the Allies.

The history of Indonesia's struggle for independence still experiences retrospective falsification. This is evident when historians often craft narratives that tend to sympathize with the indigenous population without considering the perspectives of other groups. The atrocities committed by the Bumiputra community, such as looting and burning of the Chinese community in Surabaya and Tangerang, are not adequately highlighted in the narrative of the struggle for independence (Ravando, 2014: 67-68; *Api Rakjat*, 13 Juni 1946). It seems as though these events were deliberately obscured, becoming hidden aspects of Indonesia's path to sovereignty. Indirectly, there is a biased element through the historical narrative of the Bumiputra community, leading to an exaggerated sense of historical patriotism.

A biased historical narrative does not constitute an Indonesia-centric historiography. Instead, there is a phenomenon of historical racism in Indonesian historiography, as it has attempted to erase the history of other communities. Bambang Purwanto refers to this phenomenon as "misleading denial" (Adam and Purwanto, 2013: 2). Consequently, there is a marginalization of narratives in Indonesian historiography, especially those that tend to be homogenized, resulting in excessive nationalism. It is as if these narratives are treated as absolute, leading to the neglect of the historiography of marginalized people or other communities, whose daily lives were affected by the process of Indonesia's recognition of sovereignty in 1949.

The researcher will examine the fate of the Chinese community amidst the turmoil of the struggle to maintain Indonesia's independence, a period reportedly characterized by militias ready to die to protect Indonesia from foreign domination. This phenomenon raises several research questions: 1.) What was the situation in Indonesia at the outset of the independence proclamation?; 2.) What was the fate of the Chinese community in Indonesia during this chaos?; 3.) What measures did the Republic of Indonesia's government take to ensure the safety of the Chinese community? To address these questions, the researcher employs historical research methods including heuristics, verification, interpretation, and historiography. The study will utilize sources such as old newspapers and related references.

This research aims to gain an understanding of the daily lives of the Chinese community during the early days of Indonesia's proclamation of independence. It also aims to contribute to Indonesian historiography regarding the Chinese. Similar to Bambang Purwanto (Nordholt et al., 2008: 245), who adds a new dimension to Indonesian historiography by writing about the daily lives of the people in Jakarta during the colonial period until independence. This writing touches on the segregation policies of the Dutch colonial government, resulting in class conflicts within the feudal circle. Thus, the position of the Bumiputra community, designated as "inlanders," led to patron-client oppression. This phenomenon indirectly affected the daily lives of the Chinese community after Indonesia's independence proclamation.

The researcher employs a conceptual framework that diverges from previous writings. There exists a colonial legacy of social segregation imposed by the Dutch during their administration, which positioned the Bumiputra as the lowest social group, thereby making them experience a sense of being an out-group during the colonial period. Subsequently, Europeans and foreign Orientals (in this case, the Chinese) became the out-group after Sukarno declared Indonesia's independence, indicating that the spirit of Indonesia's independence was only genuinely felt by certain segments of society (Soekanto, 1992: 134). It is plausible that the Bumiputra perceived the out-group as foreigners, leading to retaliatory actions that targeted the Chinese community as spoils of war. Brinton refers to this phenomenon as an act of terror (Brinton, 1962: 237). Such actions give rise to the concept of refugees.

Refugees are a group of people who move from one area to another due to a cause (Barreto and Rios, 2016: 81). According to Article 4 of Government Regulation No. 42 of 1973, this movement is done collectively, driven by self-motivation and self-financed. However, in reality, refugees receive assistance from the government and other foundations (Padmo, 2004: 45-46). The act of seeking refuge is done to achieve safety, especially to obtain adequate food (Wijayakusuma, 2005: 5). Like the Chinese community, who seek refuge due to their psychological need for basic security and food (Maslow, 1970). Once they have found refuge in an area, refugees can decide whether to settle or return to their place of origin.

## **II. DISCUSSION**

### **A. Terror by In-Group Against Out-Group**

The Indonesian Revolution was a period of euphoria for the Indonesian people. This phenomenon is reflected in the response of the Bumiputra community, who joyfully welcomed the proclamation of independence, which was held at Jl. Pegangsaan No. 56 (Cribb and Kahin, 2012; Reid, 1996). The Bumiputra community finally experienced the long-awaited freedom, leading to the formation of numerous militias to defend Indonesia's independence. This narrative is often emphasized by historians, often overlooking the experiences of Europeans and foreign Orientals following the proclamation. The atmosphere experienced by the out-group differed markedly from that of the in-group, where the in-group could enjoy euphoria while the out-group faced repression as a form of antithesis.

The Indonesian Revolution engendered a tumultuous atmosphere. As an indicator of the prevailing tension, the Bumiputra, having seized power, triggered incidents of violence (Brinton, 1962: 107). This violence, in the form of terror, served as an outlet for the resentment stemming from the social segregation policies and social injustices experienced by the Bumiputra community during the colonial period (Onghokham, 2017: 86-87). Violence seemed to become an integral component of the revolution, particularly in its role in defending the sovereignty of the people against colonial forces attempting to reassert control over Indonesia.

The relationship between the Bumiputra youth and the Chinese community is influenced by a specific perspective. These two groups each view themselves as patriots for their respective communities, resulting in loyalty that is confined to the in-group and out-group dynamic. This has led to the emergence of imaginative segregation, indirectly fostering the concepts of “Self” and “Other,” which in turn has generated conflicts culminating in animosity between the two groups (Purwanto et al., 2023: 74). Both groups have inadvertently become entangled in the values of segregation established by the Dutch colonial administration, which persisted up to the proclamation of Indonesian independence. The reversal of power dynamics motivated the Bumiputra to seek retribution, exemplified by the rallying cry of “anti-Chinese” during the early days of independence (*Min Pao*, 31 Oktober 1947: 1). Consequently, Indonesian independence essentially became a form of freedom exclusively for the Bumiputra community as the in-group.

Several individuals from the Bumiputra community threatened the safety of the Chinese. For instance, the “kecu” (bandits) engaged in activities such as robbery, looting, murder, and arson against Chinese homes. Jap Eng Tjiat, Gouw Tek Goan, and Tan Po Gie were ambushed by these bandits while traveling to Arjawinangun. The incident in Cirebon resulted in the death of Jap Eng Tjiat, while the other two managed to escape (Koran *Min Pao*, 14 Oktober 1947: 2). This phenomenon of banditry created a sense of anxiety among the Chinese community, which Maslow refers to as a “terror reaction” (Maslow, 1970: 41-42). This atmosphere of fear was not confined to Cirebon but extended throughout Java, particularly in West Java.

Bandits carrying samurai swords were often found in West Java. Like the robbery experienced by the Liem Poen Kit family in the Trusmi village near Plered. The bandits threatened to slaughter Mr. Liem and his family using samurai swords if they did not surrender their belongings. Although initially defending themselves, for the safety of their family, they handed over property amounting to 7,000 rupiahs. The robbers did not release the hostages but brutally killed Mr. Liem and his two children in front of Mrs. Liem and left them there (*Min Pao*, 18 Oktober 1947: 2). Not only looting and killing, but many Chinese houses were also burned around the Tangerang area, and even there were servants who dared to kill their Chinese employers (*Min Pao*, 18 Oktober 1947: 2; *Min Pao*, 24 Oktober, 1947: 2). This incident is inseparable from what Maslow calls needs or lacks in the body. (Maslow, 1970: 35)

Based on the above phenomenon, it can be argued that crime depends on the welfare of the population. Many segments of society experienced food shortages, resulting in criminal acts, thereby affecting the lives of the elite community. This phenomenon indirectly affected the Chinese, who were considered an out-group, with abundant needs becoming targets for bandits. Therefore, thuggery became more rampant at the beginning of independence, resulting in an unsafe atmosphere and threatening safety. Especially the safety of the Chinese community who often faced sentiments, so many Chinese were evacuated to refugee camps like the Chung Hua Chung Hui building in Tasikmalaya (*Min Pao*, 22 Oktober 1947: 2). This phenomenon provoked a reaction from the Chinese youth, leading them to retaliate against the terror perpetrated by Bumiputra (the indigenous).

## **B. Terror Reaction: Chinese Youth Response**

The Chinese community also fell victim to the war for independence between the Bumiputra community and the Allied forces. For instance, the attack by Gurkha-British forces in early January 1946 resulted in the destruction of numerous homes and the deaths of approximately 85 Chinese individuals. This assault was justified under the pretext of “stabilizing security” against disturbances allegedly caused by the Bumiputra community, which was labeled as “extremist” (*Api Rakjat*, January 1946). The feeling of being threatened and the traumatic experiences inflicted upon the Bumiputra community indirectly fostered a sense of trauma and vengeance among the Chinese youth, leading them to retaliate with greater severity than the enemy. Maslow refers to this condition as “psychopathogenic” (Maslow, 1970: 109). Consequently, the Dutch exploited the psychological state of the Chinese youth to further their own objectives.

The presence of mixed forces, such as the Gurkha and Chinese troops, enabled the Dutch to mobilize approximately 30,000 soldiers to suppress the so-called “extremists” (*Api Rakjat*, 17 April 1946; *Merdeka*, 21 November 1947). These “extremists” referred to revolutionary groups seeking Indonesian independence, including republican nationalists and Islamic factions. Under the pretext of purging Indonesia of these “extremists,” the Dutch were able to continue their offensive against a newly independent Indonesia. Smelser describes this representation of Dutch values as “collective behavior” (Smelser, 1965: 8-9). The Dutch actions fostered xenophobia among the Bumiputra community, who, unwilling to see their hard-won independence taken away again, initiated a readiness movement.

General Spoor instructed his subordinates to carry out sabotage and intimidation against Indonesian freedom fighters. Consequently, the adage “Be prepared for all possibilities!” emerged (*Api Rakjat*, 28 Desember 1946). Spoor devised a strategy to undermine the newly established Republic of Indonesia using military force. This plan was endorsed by Dutch departments and supported by a faction of the Chinese community harboring grudges against the Bumiputra.

The Chinese community allied with Dutch forces from early 1946. Some Chinese youth chose to join the Dutch troops to avenge their families who had previously suffered from acts of terror. This collaboration was evident as the Dutch forces, including Chinese personnel, inflicted brutal repression on the Bumiputra communities in Jakarta and Tangerang (*Api Rakjat*, 26 Maret 1946). This arrangement allowed Spoor to concentrate his military actions against Indonesia, particularly in West and Central Java. An incident on January 8, 1947, resulted in the death of at least three people, with 24 others reported missing and kidnapped (*Republik*, 8 Januari 1947: 1). The incident occurred when the Dutch warship, a 1,200-ton vessel equipped with 8 cannons and 2 double-barreled guns, bombarded the G.M Tjirebon ship. The presence of Chinese troops made it easier for the Dutch to implement their military policies. However, by mid-1946, relations between the Chinese and the Dutch began to deteriorate.

The rift arose when Chinese traders in Bandung refused to accept payments in NICA currency. This refusal led to difficulties for both internees and Dutch troops in procuring logistics (*Api Rakjat*, 13 April 1946). An incident ensued from this refusal, resulting in the abuse of 35 Chinese individuals by Dutch soldiers (*Api Rakjat*, 9 Oktober 1946). The Dutch attempt to monopolize the NICA currency reflected a broader intent to reestablish the shadow state that had been in place prior to the Kalijati Agreement of 1942. This shadow state was often associated with a black economy due to the economic centralization that occurred under Dutch colonial rule (Nordholt and Klinken, 2007: 33).

The deterioration in relations between the Dutch and the Chinese marked the beginning of improved relations between Indonesian youth and the Chinese community. Sukarno provided a fund of 5,000 rupiahs as a “gift” to displaced Chinese refugees (*Republik*, 31 Desember 1946: 1). This phenomenon is referred to by Skinner as “reinforcement” (Skinner, 2005: 359). Thus, Sukarno indirectly offered a form of psychotherapy, aimed at restoring trust between the Indonesian government and the Chinese community. Additionally, Maria Ulfa Santoso, the Minister of Social Affairs, provided financial assistance of 1,000,000 rupiahs to Chinese refugees in Krian and Sidoarjo (*Republik*, 7 Februari 1947: 1). Consequently, this support influenced the perspective of the Chinese community towards the Bumiputra.

The Chinese youth subsequently began to support Indonesia’s independence. This shift was evident when Li Ti Chun expressed support for the Indonesian struggle in a speech at the Chung Hua Tsung Hui building in Yogyakarta on November 19, 1946 (*Api Rakjat*, 20 November 1946). This phenomenon arose from the position of the Chinese as an out-group to the Bumiputra, leading to a period of “anti-Chinese” sentiment following Indonesia’s proclamation of independence. This resulted in resentment among the Chinese community, who came to view the Dutch as “correct” and thus supported them. Consequently, the rift between the Bumiputra and the Chinese was rooted in entrenched stereotypes and misunderstandings, which were eventually followed by reconciliation.

### **C. Reconciliation: Fate of Chinese Refugees**

The relationship between Indonesian and Chinese youth improved once the “politics of fear” came to an end. The term “politics of fear” was coined by the Dutch to describe their strategy of creating instability in Indonesia in terms of security and safety (*Api Rakjat*, 14 September 1946). Indonesian and Chinese youth began to commit to fostering a sense of brotherhood. This commitment was formalized during an inter-ethnic meeting held on August 20, 1946, aimed at preventing the recurrence of misunderstandings between the two groups (*Api Rakjat*, 27 Agustus 1946). Consequently, both groups started to collaborate in their efforts to repel the colonial forces attempting to reoccupy Indonesia.

The meeting successfully established a liaison committee between Bumiputra and Chinese youth, chaired by Soembogo with Tjan Pek Tan as his deputy. This meeting marked the beginning of the Indonesia-Chinese Conference in Yogyakarta. In preparation for the conference, the Minister

of Information announced the need to promptly arrange conference equipment. Consequently, the Ministry of Information was relocated to Yogyakarta on September 12, 1946 (*Api Rakjat*, 14 September 1946). With the plan for the Indonesia-Chinese Conference in place, the commitment to fostering brotherhood between Bumiputra and Chinese youth was set to be genuinely realized.

Bumiputra and Chinese youth collaborated to address the needs of refugees. This cooperation was evident when they jointly organized a fundraising event for Chinese refugees in Ngawi. The combined efforts of Bumiputra and Chinese youth led to the charity event held in Ngawi from October 5-7, 1946 (*Api Rakjat*, 9 Oktober 1946). To attract local attention, the youths organized a charity performance featuring both Bumiputra and Chinese performers, as well as a football match with players from both groups. The net proceeds from these events were donated entirely to charity. This collaborative effort between Bumiputra and Chinese youth stands as concrete evidence that the two groups could work together harmoniously despite their differences.

Chinese youth also provided economic support during Indonesia's first Independence Day celebrations. The Chinese community contributed funds for the independence festivities both collectively and individually, such as Chung Hua Chung Hui, which donated 5,000 rupiahs, and Hong Liem, who contributed 300 rupiahs (*Api Rakjat*, 12 November 1946). These amounts were significant, considering the relatively low prices of basic goods at the time—such as rice at 0.15 rupiahs, chicken eggs at 0.5 rupiahs, 1 liter of oil at 0.52 rupiahs, and chili peppers at 0.45 rupiahs (*Api Rakjat*, 30 Oktober 1946). Liem Koen Hian refers to this phenomenon as “Indonesierschap” (*Sin Tit Po*, 2 April 1930). Chinese youth also formed a resistance group for Indonesia's independence, known as Hoa Kiao Tsing Min Nan (*Api Rakjat*, 9 Mei 1946). This battalion, consisting of approximately 500 soldiers, joined the Indonesian people's militia and was officially recognized by the authorities. This involvement indirectly influenced the perspective and fate of the Chinese community in Indonesia.

On the afternoon of November 10, 1946, the Dutch launched an attack by deploying 32 soldiers to Pasar Bojong Rengkong. The Dutch troops indiscriminately fired at the Bumiputra community, burned two houses, and abducted Koeroe, who was considered an “extremist” leader in the area. Mahmoed bin Loerah Sidjan was among the victims of this Dutch brutality; he was captured and then executed. The Dutch savagery escalated in the evening when they massacred the family of Haji Abdoelhair in Jungmalang. Haji Abdoelhair and six of his family members were bound and then shot in the head, resulting in their deaths (*Api Rakjat*, 22 November 1946). The Dutch also launched attacks in Central Java, accompanied by an ultimatum regarding demarcation lines (*Api Rakjat*, 30 November 1946). This ultimatum was perceived by the Indonesian Government as an unreasonable demand and part of the Dutch's “cleansing” operations, which were seen as genocidal. Consequently, the Indonesian government swiftly implemented a policy to evacuate other communities, such as the Chinese, to East Java, which was considered safer from Dutch oppression.

East Java was relatively safer and well-stocked with logistical supplies for refugees. This observation was made by Honig, a representative from the Economic Affairs department in East Java, who noted that the region experienced rapid economic development and better security compared to West and Central Java (*Min Pao*, 20 Oktober 1947). This situation was influenced by the Renville Agreement, which placed East Java within the Dutch demarcation lines, leading the Dutch to focus their efforts on reclaiming West and Central Java, which were part of the Republic (Ensiklopedia Jawa Timur, 2015: 138). As a result, the Chinese consul visited refugee camps in East Java to assess the conditions of the Chinese refugees. For instance, Sjoe Tsjoen made a four-day journey to East Java to visit the Chinese community there (*Min Pao*, 22 Oktober 1947: 1). Consequently, many members of the Chinese community were evacuated to East Java.

Bumiputra and Chinese youth cooperated to secure the safety of Chinese refugees. The evacuation of Chinese individuals from Cicalengka in 1946 was overseen by the Indonesian Republic police, who worked in collaboration with Cheng Thing Hua, the chairman of Chung Hua Chung Hui in Cicalengka (*Api Rakjat*, 25 Juli 1946). This collaboration was positively received by Lie Ti Chun, the Special Envoy of China, who represented his country in supporting the reconciliation between Bumiputra and Chinese youth, as well as the recognition of Indonesian independence (*Api Rakjat*, 20 November 1946). Tan Po Goan, the Minister of State of the Republic of Indonesia, expressed his joy at the reconciliation between Bumiputra and Chinese youth. He felt the atmosphere of brotherhood when he visited the conditions of Chinese refugees in Banten, and tears streamed down his face as he witnessed Bumiputra and Chinese youths working together to care for the refugees (*Api Rakjat*, 31 Desember 1946). Thus, the Chinese community continued to experience a degree of good fortune, allowing them to sustain their daily lives.

The management of Chinese refugees was the responsibility of the Social Office's Refugee Division. Some Chinese refugees were temporarily housed in Paseban, Kabupaten Madiun (*Api Rakjat*, 5 September 1946). Karawang was also designated as a refugee camp, managed by the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) and the Chinese Committee, with funds amounting to 8,000 florins provided by the Cikarang regent. Refugees in Karawang were given opportunities to work to support their living expenses (*Api Rakjat*, 20 Juli 1946). Maria Ulfa Santoso, the Minister of Social Affairs, indeed instructed that the Chinese community be made productive. As a result, efforts were made to provide vacant land for cultivation (*Merdeka*, 11 November 1947). Siauw Giok Tjan, the Minister of State for Chinese Affairs, announced that the Indonesian Government allocated 1,000,000 rupiahs for the refugees (*Merdeka*, 25 November 1947; *Min Pao*, 25 November 1947). The refugee funds came not only from the government but also from collaborative efforts between Bumiputra and Chinese communities in various regions.

Daulat Rakjat was an association of Bumiputra and Chinese youth in Jember. This organization, comprising young people from both communities aged 18, aimed to advance Indonesia in social, cultural, and economic fields (*Api Rakjat*, 4 April 1946). It was one of the networks of Bumiputra and Chinese associations in the Besuki Residency, deeply moved by the plight of Chinese refugees.

As a result, these associations united to collect charitable funds, which were then donated to the managers of refugee camps in the Besuki Residency, amounting to 90,000 florins (*Api Rakjat*, 4 Oktober 1946). This demonstrated the successful reconciliation between the Bumiputra and Chinese communities, who cooperated to address the logistical needs of the Chinese refugees. Chinese refugees were also relocated to Sidoarjo, Krian, Jombang, and Mojokerto.

Initially, Chinese refugees were placed around Bojonegoro and Lamongan. These refugee camps were located at the demarcation line between the Indonesian Republic and the Dutch government, which posed a threat to the safety and security of the Chinese refugees. Consequently, Bumiputra and Chinese youth cooperated in managing the refugee situation at these border areas, with assistance from the Indonesian Red Cross (PMI), the Indonesian Army, and the Chinese Committee (*Min Pao*, 5 November 1947: 1). Given the precarious location of the camps precisely at the demarcation line, negotiations were conducted with Tsiang Chia Tung, the Chinese Consul General, to discuss the security of the Chinese refugees. During these discussions, both governments agreed to offer the Chinese refugees options: to either relocate to Dutch-occupied areas or to return to mainland China (*Merdeka*, 11 November 1947).

Many Chinese refugees opted to stay rather than return. As a result, the Indonesian and Chinese governments collaborated to pressure the Dutch to provide a more favorable environment for the Chinese refugees (*Min Pao*, 10 November 1947: 1). Consequently, the transportation of Chinese refugees was monitored by the International Red Cross. Without this oversight, the safety of the refugees could be compromised, especially as the Dutch continued their “cleaning” operations in West Java, including Karawang, until December 12, 1947. These operations initially targeted Chinese refugee camps, causing many to relocate to their relatives in East Java (*Min Pao*, 24 Desember 1947: 2). Initially, East Java faced minimal resistance but failed to prevent Dutch stabilization efforts through political and military means (*Min Pao*, 22 Oktober 1947: 2). By August 1947, the Dutch had managed to secure control over the eastern part of Java (*Merdeka*, 3 November 1947: 2). Consequently, Niu Shu Chun, the Chinese Vice Consul, and the International Red Cross visited East Java to coordinate with the Dutch authorities, aiming to ensure the safety and security of the Chinese refugees (*Merdeka*, 21 Oktober 1947; *Merdeka*, 7 November 1947). The majority of Chinese refugees were concentrated in East Java, particularly in Jember, where the number of refugees increased from 3,000 to 12,000 following the Dutch “cleaning” operations (*Min Pao*, 28 November 1947). Meanwhile, some Chinese refugees chose to return to mainland China.

The collaboration between the Indonesian and Chinese governments to repatriate refugees who chose to return to China involved close coordination with the Dutch authorities and the International Red Cross to ensure safety and security during the journey to the Surabaya port (*Min Pao*, 10 November 1947: 1). The Chinese Consul General also held discussions with the International Red Cross regarding the repatriation of Chinese refugees to China (*Merdeka*, 14 November 1947: 2). The repatriation efforts focused on Mojokerto as the assembly point for

the refugees. Dasilva, representing the International Red Cross, stated that the transportation process began between December 5 and December 20, 1947. This transportation occurred amidst ongoing clashes between Indonesian forces and Dutch troops. The refugees were escorted by the Indonesian Red Cross and Chung Hua Chung Hui to Mojokerto, where they were handed over to the International Red Cross (*Min Pao*, 8 Desember 1947: 1). Meanwhile, refugees from Central Java traveled through Salatiga and Mondongan before reaching Mojokerto to meet the International Red Cross (*Min Pao*, 5 Desember 1947: 1). This mass exodus led to a significant decrease in the Chinese community in Indonesia. The number of refugees in Jember, for example, diminished considerably. Some refugees opted to settle in Kampung Tengah (*Merdeka*, 28 Oktober 1947: 2). Thus, the ongoing conflict between the Republic of Indonesia and the Netherlands had profound implications for the daily lives of the Chinese community, transforming their previously peaceful and secure existence into a state of turmoil and anxiety, compelling many to start anew.

### **III. CONCLUSIONS**

#### **A. Inference**

The atmosphere in Indonesia tended to be tense during the early days of independence. This was a result of the political contestation between the government of the Republic of Indonesia and the Netherlands, both resisting each other to achieve their respective goals. The Netherlands launched a military aggression, referring to it as “cleansing,” while Indonesian forces, along with civilian militias, engaged in a state of readiness. In this conflict, the Chinese community became targets of both sides, experiencing treatment that resulted in trauma due to being perceived as “other.” Consequently, security and rescue policies were implemented for Chinese refugees, carried out through cooperation between the government of the Republic of Indonesia, the Chinese government, and the Dutch authorities. Eventually, there were two options: to settle in Indonesia or to return to mainland China, leading some Chinese refugees to settle in Indonesia while others embarked on an exodus to China.

#### **B. Recommendation**

Research on the Chinese refugee diaspora in Indonesia remains far from perfect. This study suggests that other researchers delve deeper into the historiography of daily life, as this historical theme is still rarely explored. Especially the daily lives of the diaspora who once lived in Indonesia. Studies on the daily lives of the *Vreemde Oosterlingen* diaspora such as Indians, Arabs, and Chinese before and after Indonesia’s independence are still very rare. Therefore, it is recommended for researchers to be willing and capable of further examining this topic.

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