

The Pao An Tui in Medan

A Chinese Security Force in Dutch Occupied Indonesia, 1945-1948

August, 20, 2013

Master Thesis

Research Master Programme Modern History

Utrecht University

Supervisor: Dr. Remco Raben

Anne van der Veer

3372022

Contents

- Introduction 2
 - The Pao An Tui in Medan 3
 - Structure 4
- 1. Chinese leadership before World War II..... 8
 - State policy regarding the Chinese minority..... 8
 - The Chinese leader as intermediary between the state and the community 11
 - The political orientation of the Chinese community 14
- 2. The Indonesian revolution and the position of the Chinese 17
 - Revolution..... 17
 - Chinese responses 19
 - Policy..... 20
- 3. Defending the Chinese community of Medan 25
 - Revolution and Allied occupation in Sumatra’s East Coast 25
 - Organizing self-defense 28
 - The Pao An Tui as community organization 33
- 4. The Pao An Tui as the Chinese community’s own security force 38
 - Under Dutch command 38
 - Maintaining order in the Chinese Community 40
 - Overseas Chinese nationalism 44
 - Following in the footsteps of the Chinese officers 46
- 5. Disbanding the Pao An Tui 48
 - Obstacles to the final dissolution 48
 - Disbanding the Pao An Tui 50
 - The demise of the Pao An Tui as key community organization 52
- Conclusion 56
- Bibliography 60
 - Primary sources 60
 - Literature 60

Introduction

The Indonesian revolution of 1945-1949 has figured large in the historiography of Indonesia. The struggle for national independence undeniably marked the watershed between Dutch colonial rule and post-colonial state-building, hence its major historical significance. More than six decades after the Netherlands recognized Indonesia's independence most of the major themes have received due attention. The story has been told from every binary imaginable: Indonesian and Dutch perspectives, the national level and the regional dynamics, elite ideology and popular participation, national unity and ethnic diversity.

One issue however has remained largely underexplored, namely the role and political activities of the ethnic Chinese living in Indonesia during the revolution. The Chinese minority represented roughly 2.5 percent of the total population in the 1940s.¹ Despite their relatively small number, their position is very relevant in questions of citizenship and identity in the development of an independent Indonesian nation-state. Under colonial rule, Dutch policy gave the Chinese the distinct status of 'Foreign Orientals' (*Vreemde Oosterlingen*, also including Arabs and Indians) which set them apart from both the Europeans and native subjects (*Inlanders*). Foreign Orientals were given discriminatory but preferential treatment. During the chaotic and often violent course of the revolution widespread resentment among the former *inlanders* against Chinese burst out into the open. The Chinese became the targets of systematic acts of revenge, largely because they were associated with wealth and opportunistic collaboration with the Dutch.

The young Indonesian Republic was barely capable to protect the Chinese from attacks of a myriad of irregular troops and criminal gangs that operated under the flag of the revolution, but were by no means under control of the official Republican army. Under these pressures, the Chinese began to form their own self-defense organizations in Jakarta, Surabaya and Medan.² Mary Somers-Heidhues offered a first examination into the Chinese self-defense organizations in her unpublished Ph.D. dissertation *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia* of 1965. She called attention to their significance for the already problematic relationship between the Chinese and Indonesians by posing that 'fear of the Indonesians became a moving force for the Chinese (...)' and that when they formed their own self-defense organization, the Pao An Tui 'appeared to the Indonesians that the Chinese were fighting alongside the Dutch.'³

By examining the Pao An Tui, Somers-Heidhues is able to account for the active participation of the Chinese in the Indonesian revolution and thereby offers an alternative approach to challenge the conventional perspective on the role of the Chinese in the struggle between the Dutch and the Indonesians, in which the Chinese are mainly treated as passive targets of anti-Chinese violence from the Indonesian side. Somers-Heidhues goes beyond the mere victimization of the Chinese and traces

¹ G. William Skinner, 'The Chinese Minority,' in: Ruth McVey (ed.), *Indonesia* (New Haven, 1963) 97-117, 97.

² Mary F. Somers-Heidhues, 'Citizenship and Identity: Ethnic Chinese and the Indonesian Revolution,' in: Jennifer W. Cushman and Wang Gungwu (eds.), *Changing identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese since World War II* (Hong Kong, 1988) 115-138, 125.

³ Mary F. Somers-Heidhues, *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1965). This quote is from her Interim Report on *Peranakan Chinese Politics* (Ithaca 1964) 50.

how the Chinese did indeed participate by actively responding to the violent attacks in the organized effort of establishing self-defense units.⁴

The Pao An Tui in Medan

In Medan, the northern Sumatran city with a large Chinese population, the local Pao An Tui group was particularly notorious for its cooperation with the Dutch. But the PAT was established already in December 1946, before the Dutch returned to Medan to reinstall their government and take over the military command from the British forces. The Chinese in Medan had formed the PAT on their own initiative and it was only after the Dutch resumed control that the PAT allied itself with the Dutch military. By the time the Dutch returned, in the fall of 1946, the PAT had developed into a full-blown military organization that exhibited remarkable military prowess in confronting the Indonesian people's militias that threatened to harm the Chinese. Due to the PAT's effectiveness in protecting the Chinese community, the Dutch military enlisted the PAT to assist the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (*Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger*, KNIL) in the defense of Medan.

Helpful though the PAT was to the Dutch military, the PAT's cooperative attitude was only one side of the coin. The other side was that the PAT enjoyed considerable autonomy within the Chinese community and manifested itself as a private force which served the interests of the Chinese. The PAT developed into a police force as it appropriated the typical duties of the police and thereby even managed to supersede the position of the official Dutch police within the community. The PAT played a key role in the maintenance of law and order in the community as it developed into the foremost security force in the Chinese district. But since the Dutch did not have the PAT fully under their control, even though the corps served under Dutch military command, the PAT could carry out the maintenance of internal order according to its own rules, methods and principles. The PAT regularly clashed with the Dutch police when the latter tried to interfere in the affairs of the 'Chinese police', but the Dutch did not show that they did rejected such confrontational behavior in any forcible way. Instead, the Dutch acquiesced in the independent conduct of the PAT.

In addition to affiliation with the Dutch, the PAT was firmly aligned with the Kuomintang, the dominant ideological influence among the Chinese of Medan, and exploited its position of key leader in the community to promote the cause of the Chinese nationalist party. The way in which the PAT used its autonomy from Dutch supervision to step up as the Chinese community's own security force indicates that Chinese nationalism was an important source of inspiration for the transformation of a Chinese self-defense corps into a leading community organization.

From this brief overview of the development of the PAT appears that it played four different roles – self-defense corps, auxiliary arm of the Dutch, community leader and KMT-organ – which became closely entwined during the first year of its existence. This study of the PAT in Medan aims to further elaborate on these four roles and to examine how their entwinement came about. It was a rather remarkable combination of features to be united in one organization: military and civilian, subordinate and autonomous, committed to Chinese and to Dutch colonial politics, and as much affiliated with the KMT as with the Dutch. The highly ambivalent character of the PAT did not preclude it to become a strong and stable force in Medan. On the contrary, what may seem contradictory in appearance, may in fact have been the very foundation of its strength. That is to say,

⁴ See also: Mary F. Somers-Heidhues, 'Bystanders, Participants, Victims: The Chinese in Java and West Kalimantan, 1945-46.' Paper presented at the conference 'Changing Regimes and Shifting Loyalties: Identity and Violence in the Early Revolution in Indonesia,' Amsterdam, NIOD, June 25-27, 2003.

the ability of the PAT to successfully integrate the seemingly contradictory roles was actually a sign that it was able to rally the support of both the Dutch authorities and the Chinese community in Medan. And it was this two-sided support base which provides the key to answer the questions running through this study of the PAT in Medan.

In the first place, why did the PAT, a self-defense corps in origin, assume a leadership role in the Chinese community? Why did the Chinese accept that the PAT fulfilled the task of the police and thereby exercised authority over their community? Why did the Dutch authorities in turn acknowledge that the PAT stepped up to maintain law and order in the Chinese community, even though the PAT challenged the authority of the Dutch police in doing so? And finally, what was the role of Chinese nationalism in the development of the PAT into the KMT-affiliated leader of the Chinese community?

Structure

The first step to answering these questions is to examine the historical background of Chinese leadership in the Dutch East Indies in general and in Medan in particular, which is the purpose of chapter 1. The Dutch colonial state applied a system of indirect rule to govern Chinese communities in the Indies. The Dutch had a long-established tradition, dating back to the early seventeenth century, of assigning Chinese officers, as the communal authorities were called, to serve as the administrators of the Chinese and to mediate between the Chinese and the state. The Chinese in turn were accustomed to be governed by their own communal authorities. Furthermore, the Chinese constituted an immigrant minority in the Indies and were given a special legal status, as distinct from native Indonesians, other minorities and the Europeans, accordingly. The state policies of indirect rule and giving the Chinese a separate legal status turned the Chinese community into a distinctive political community, ruled by its own semi-autonomous communal authority on the basis of the community's own customs and traditions and thereby separated from other ethnic groups. And so the colonial state generated Chinese particularism.

The Chinese officers served as agents of the state, but they were also standing at the 'apex of the community's power structure', as G. William Skinner discerns in his highly insightful analysis of the role of the Chinese officers in the colonial administrative structure.⁵ As *primus inter pares* of the local Chinese elite, the officers were naturally associated with the dominant political orientation of the wealthy businessmen, cultural, intellectual and political leaders who constituted the elite. The Chinese community in Medan was a typical *totok* community of Chinese-speaking first-generation migrants,⁶ whose political orientation was largely shaped by overseas Chinese nationalism, 'the extension of Chinese nationalism abroad, the active identification of the Chinese overseas with China as a nation to which they belonged', as defined by Malaysian-Chinese historian Stephen Leong.⁷

The chronology of the rise and development of overseas Chinese nationalism, as reconstructed by Leong, was of great significance for the continuing identification of the Chinese in

⁵ G. William Skinner, 'Overseas Chinese Leadership: Paradigm for a Paradox,' in: G. Wijeyawardene (ed.), *Leadership and Authority: A Symposium* (Singapore 1968) 191-207, 194.

⁶ Dirk A. Buiskool, 'The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Medan.' Paper presented at the conference 'Dekolonisasi dan Posisi Etnis Tionghoa Indonesia 1930-an s/d 1960-an,' Padang, June 18-21, 2006. For the definition of *totok* Chinese see J.A.C. Mackie and Charles A. Coppel, 'A Preliminary Survey,' in: J.A.C. Mackie (ed.), *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1979) 1-18, 5.

⁷ Stephen Leong, 'The Malayan Overseas Chinese and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1941,' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 10:2 (1979) 293-320, 293.

Medan with their motherland, as the influx of Chinese coolie migrants to the booming plantation city coincided with the rise of Chinese nationalism among the Chinese overseas in the period between the First Sino-Japanese War beginning in 1895 and the Chinese revolution in 1911. Once the flow of migrants was slowing down in the 1920s, the development of overseas Chinese nationalism had entered its phase of gradual expansion of the social and institutional base for nationalism, now under the wings of the nationalist Kuomintang government, between the years 1912-1937. The leading Chinese businessmen in Medan, many of them new migrants themselves, were associated with the social organizations which supported the expansion of Chinese nationalism, such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, trade guilds, Chinese schools and the vernacular press. The businessmen in turn, supported the growing transnational orientation of these organizations by their extensive commercial networks, through which they could maintain close contact with China and the Chinese overseas in other parts of Southeast Asia. The most intense manifestation of overseas Chinese nationalism arose during the Second Sino-Japanese War, erupting in 1937, and lasted until 1942, when the Japanese invaded the Southeast Asian countries where the Chinese overseas were settled themselves.

The development of overseas Chinese nationalism as a major ideological force in Medan makes it necessary to examine how the Chinese officers drew on Chinese nationalism to give shape to their administrative duties. Since overseas Chinese nationalism by definition transcends the boundaries of the Dutch Indies, a common state-centered perspective cannot sufficiently explain the role of Chinese officers as key community leaders. The suitable alternative can be found in a transnational approach, which can account for the interrelationship of the Chinese officers' role in the administrative structure of the colonial state on the one hand and in transmitting Chinese nationalism into the local Chinese community on the other. Following the definition used by the Singapore-based historian Hong Liu, who has carefully integrated the theory of transnationalism with the study of the Chinese overseas, transnationalism 'involves individuals, their networks of social relations, their communities, and broader institutionalized structures such as local and national governments,' and focuses specifically on the 'multiple ties and interactions linking people or institutions *across* the borders of nation-states.'⁸

Before the actual leadership position of the Pao An Tui in Medan can be examined, it is necessary to pay attention to the Indonesian revolution and the ensuing war of independence fought between the Indonesians and the Dutch, that is, to the context in which the PAT arose. chapter 2 will therefore be concerned with the impact of the revolution on the Chinese minority and the ways in which the Chinese themselves responded to the revolutionary upheaval. The troubling question as to why the Chinese have been the target of systematic violence by Indonesian irregular troops will be addressed. The Chinese of Medan constituted but one particular Chinese community in Indonesia as a whole and it is worth sketching an outline of the different patterns of Chinese response to the revolution to be able to put formation of the PAT in Medan in a wider perspective. Finally, the second chapter traces how different Chinese attitudes to the revolution were shaped by government policies, those of the Indonesian Republic and the Dutch colonial state, as well as those of the KMT-government in China, which also claimed the loyalty of the Chinese from abroad and continued to involve in the affairs of its overseas subjects.

Once the prewar and revolutionary background of the formation of the PAT have been set out, the actual history of the PAT in Medan between the years 1945-1948 will begin in chapter 3. The

⁸ Hong Liu, 'Sino-Southeast Asian Studies: Towards an Alternative Paradigm,' *Asian Studies Review* 25:3 (2001) 259-278, 265 (emphasis mine).

primary aim is to deliver a comprehensive description of the Chinese self-defense corps, about which so little has been told so far. But the leadership position of the PAT was so exceptionally strong and bore such profound implications for Dutch rule that it is hard to gain a proper understanding of the PAT without giving account to the foundations of its position. The sheer similarity with the dual role of the traditional Chinese officers warrants the application of the conceptual approach to overseas Chinese leadership as offered by G. William Skinner. The PAT was assigned as protector of the Chinese in service of the Dutch and the PAT was the leading community organization. The accuracy of the analogy of the Chinese officer system will be tested to the applicability of the theoretical framework laid down in the first chapter; that is, the tripartite division of state-generated particularism, the influence of overseas Chinese nationalism and the intermediary role of the Chinese leaders.

The local Dutch colonial administration bequeathed an abundance of primary sources on the PAT in Medan, including intelligence, police and periodical reports, correspondence between the Dutch civil and military authorities, records of meetings with the PAT leaders, organizational charts of the PAT, and translated newspaper articles. Despite obvious limitations of relying primarily on Dutch government reports, these sources do provide a wealth of information of the formation, organization and development of the PAT, as well as valuable indications of the perspectives held by a variety of other groups on the existence and activities of the PAT. While keeping in mind that the Dutch had a very specific agenda which guided their rule and policy in Indonesia – to reinstall Dutch rule at the cost of the Indonesian Republic – it is possible to distill alternative viewpoints as those held by the Dutch by seeking recourse to a ‘subversive approach’ to the official historical documents. Subversive reading of official documents, or reading them ‘against the grain’ in other words, ‘entails using the documents contrary to the way they were designed and intended, to draw out materials, insights and understandings that the recorders never intended to preserve.’⁹ Even so, this study of the PAT is an inquiry into the leadership position which the PAT held as intermediary between the Dutch colonial state and the Chinese community. Dutch sources therefore form the basis of its arguments. The position of intermediary depended essentially on the *Dutch* assessment of the authority of the Chinese leaders within the community, not necessary on how they were truly regarded by the Chinese themselves.

The history of the PAT in Medan falls into three stages, divided by two turning points in its development. The first stage, the subject of chapter 3, comprises the formation of the PAT in December 1945 and its consolidation as protector of the Chinese and influential community organization in the period of temporary British military administration, which lasted until late November 1946. Next to archival sources, this chapter draws heavily on Richard McMillan’s study of the British occupation of Indonesia.¹⁰ He focuses on the seven key areas of Allied occupation of which Medan was one and offers a detailed account of the first year of the revolution in the northern Sumatran city.

In the second stage the power of the PAT reached its height during the first year of Dutch reoccupation. Chapter 4 begins with the handing over of command by the British military authorities to the Dutch civil administration and to the KNIL on November 19, 1946. By the October 1947 the

⁹ Carole A. Myscofski, ‘Against the Grain: Learning and Teaching,’ *Honorees for Teaching Excellence* (2001) Paper 4, URL: http://digitalcommons.iwu.edu/teaching_excellence/4 (retrieved 13 August 2013).

¹⁰ Richard McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia 1945-1946: Britain, The Netherlands and the Indonesian Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2005).

PAT had so firmly entrenched its position as military agent and key community leader that it could claim full authority within the Chinese community.

From here on it did not take long before the development of the PAT reached its third and final stage in which the PAT was disbanded. Discussions between the PAT leaders and the Dutch authorities on the terms and conditions of dissolution started in earnest in December 1947 and by April 1948 all PAT members were discharged from service. The dissolution of the PAT was accompanied by its demise as leading community organization and its growing inability to fulfill the role of intermediary between the state and the Chinese community any longer. In the end, the PAT turned out to have been the last vestige of both the Chinese officer system and KMT-nationalism.

1. Chinese leadership before World War II

The position of Chinese leaders in the Dutch East Indies, and thus in Medan, was part of an intricate web of government policies, administrative procedures and community practices and it is worth to disentangle their ties with the state and the Chinese community to see what their position exactly consisted of. This chapter therefore begins with a rather theoretical discussion of the legal status of the Chinese and the system of indirect rule applied to them in order to explain why the Chinese leaders held such an important position in the colonial society. The policies concerning the Chinese were highly segregating in character and cultivated Chinese particularism by administering the Chinese as a separate political community through their own communal authorities.

Once this institutional foundation of the position of Chinese leaders is established, the second part of this chapter can be devoted to the Chinese leaders in Medan themselves and to the ways in which they administered the local Chinese community. These leaders held considerable esteem within the community and it will be shown how their appointment as administrators and their status as community leaders complemented each other. The final section will discuss the political orientation of the wider Chinese community, their political activities and how this was shaped by the involvement of Chinese leaders.

This chapter is concerned with a Chinese community living in the first half of the twentieth century, a period in which overseas Chinese nationalism was such a significant external force that the durable ties of the migrant community with the motherland must be taken into account. This is done by employing a transnational approach, which illuminates the interrelationship of the Chinese migrant community, the Dutch Indies state in which they live and their ancestral homeland China. The transnational approach serves to incorporate two crucial features of the Chinese political community, namely the extensive intra-regional networks of Chinese leaders and social organizations and the role of these agents in transmitting Chinese nationalism into the community of Medan. As will be clear towards the end of this chapter, the position of Chinese leaders was as much the product of state-generated particularism as it was of their transnational networks.

State policy regarding the Chinese minority

In an important work on the colonial legacy of racial and ethnic categorization, Mahmood Mamdani puts forward a highly insightful concept of political identity which captures the determining role of the state in the construction of race and ethnicity as political identities.¹¹ Although Mamdani developed his concept to understand the polarization of Hutu and Tutsi identity culminating in the Rwandan genocide, his analysis bears important implications for colonial categorization elsewhere. To begin with, his definition of political identities as legally inscribed and institutionally reproduced identities provides a solid basis for a discussion of a political community which is not coincident with the 'boundaries of [a] fixed territory'.¹² Because this definition is not based on a group's own political affiliation with the state they live in, it is possible to think of different political identities existing alongside each other within the same territory. In the Dutch Indies, the colonial state generated the

¹¹ Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton 2001) 22.

¹² Peter G. Mandaville, 'Territory and Translocality: Discrepant Idioms of Political Identity,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 28:3 (1999) 653-673, 654.

category of 'Foreign Orientals' as a political identity distinct from that of 'Natives' and 'Europeans' respectively by inscribing these different categories in law.

Furthermore, Mamdani points to the specific forms of political identity which the state generates. First, the state made a distinction between natives and nonnatives, the European colonizers naturally belonging to the latter. But there could also be living other non-indigenous groups in the colony, as were the Chinese in the Dutch Indies. This group occupied the middle ground between nonnative colonizer and the native colonized, legally separated on the basis of race and governed through imported Western law – civil law. Natives were further divided 'into separate groups and governed each through a different set of "customary" laws (...) to be enforced by its own separate "native authority," administering its own "home area"'.¹³

The Dutch colonial policy concerning the Chinese in the Indies was of a much more ambiguous nature than the clear separation of the nonnative colonized from the natives and the Europeans as outlined by Mamdani.¹⁴ As Charles A. Coppel, the leading expert on the Chinese Indonesians and a former barrister, insightfully remarks, the threefold classification had only become a fully-fledged system very recently.¹⁵ The Chinese and other Foreign Orientals were still equated (*gelijkgesteld*) with the Natives by the Article 109 of the Constitutional Regulation (*Regeringsreglement*) of 1854.¹⁶

The dual classification set out in 1954 did not give way to a threefold classification until Article 109 was amended (and renumbered as Article 163) in 1906, yet it was not until 1920 that the new legal system was put into effect. During the intervening period however, exceptions and special provisions were already applied to the Chinese that made them to constitute a legal subset to the category of Natives, most importantly by means of the ordinance passed in 1855 which 'applied to all foreign Orientals in Java the European Civil and Commercial Code while leaving them under customary law (*adat*) in other matters.'¹⁷ Thus, while the Chinese were subjected to the same civil law as the Europeans in principle, the legally discriminating exceptions ordained that they maintained their own family law and that they were subjected to a different criminal procedure (*strafprocesrecht*) than the Europeans. In practice this meant that

in legal cases, the Chinese were liable to European law, and thus their judicial processes took place in the Council of Justice, or *Raad van Justitie*. However, if a Chinese was involved in a criminal case, he was prosecuted by the *Landraad*, or Native Court of Justice.¹⁸

¹³ Mamdani, *When Victims become Killers*, 24.

¹⁴ For a thorough examination of the development of the legal position of the Chinese see Patricia Tjiok Liem, *De rechtspositie der Chinezen in Nederlands-Indië 1848-1942* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2009). For a contemporary account of the legal position of the Chinese in the Dutch Indies see 'Rechtspositie van de Chinezen in Nederlandsch-Indië' drafted by the Ministerie van Koloniën in February 1944, OB III: 135, attachment.

¹⁵ Charles A. Coppel, 'The Indonesian Chinese: "Foreign Orientals", Netherlands Subjects, and Indonesian Citizens,' In: M. Barry Hooker (ed.), *Law and the Chinese in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002) 131-149, 132.

¹⁶ 'Reglement op het beleid der regering van Nederlandsch-Indië' (*Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indie*, 1855, no.2). For an excerpt of Article 109 see also Tjiok Liem, *De Rechtspositie der Chinezen*, 665.

¹⁷ J.S. Furnival, *Netherlands India: A Study of Plural Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1944) 241, cited in *ibid.*, 133.

¹⁸ Mona Lohanda, *The Kapitan Cina of Batavia, 1837-1942: A History of Chinese Establishment in Colonial Society* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1996) 176.

The Amendment of Article 109 classified the Foreign Orientals as a separate group which was no longer equated with the Natives. This tripartite division continued to exist until the end of the colonial period.¹⁹

By categorizing the Chinese as 'Foreign Orientals', the colonial authorities made them into what Mamdani calls a 'subject race', as distinct from the colonizing 'master race'. This created different categories of citizens: 'while members of the master race were the only full citizens in the colony, members of subject races were *virtual citizens*, deprived of rights of citizenship, yet considered to have the potential of becoming full citizens.'²⁰

The Chinese themselves were the first to recognize the discriminative implications of their legal status. As Chinese nationalism grew from the beginning of the twentieth century, the Chinese in the Dutch Indies began to strive for emancipation. Their main point of reference was the legal equation of the Japanese to the Europeans which was put into effect in 1899. Although it was possible for the Chinese to travel the route of individual equation (adopting the Christian faith, having a Japanese passport or by requesting the governor-general to make an exception to the law), they strove for formal equation of the Chinese population as a whole.²¹ In Mamdani's account, the nonnative colonized were set apart from the native population on the basis of race and their higher position on the ladder of civilization. What is striking about the Chinese aspiration to move up the ladder is that this was motivated by a stronger conception of race than the Dutch seem to have held during the time. Racial superiority of the Han Chinese was a constitutive element of the nationalist narrative and 'provided the ground for nationalists to appeal to (...) overseas communities'.²²

The ideological appeal of nationalism was reinforced by the Chinese government policy, especially through citizenship law. Promulgated in 1909, the Chinese citizenship law was based on the principle of *ius sanguinis*, which granted the Chinese nationality to all Chinese no matter where they were born. Now that China had subjects living in the Dutch Indies, the Chinese government pressed the Dutch to allow consular officials on their territory to defend Chinese interests. The Dutch government counteracted with its own nationality law, based on the principle of *ius soli*, to concede a special, secondary type of Dutch citizenship (*onderdaanschap*) to 'all persons born in the colony of parents who were domiciled there'.²³ This nationality law was intended 'to protect the *peranakan* [Indies-born] Chinese not only from Chinese government influence but also from the *sinkeh-totok* [China-born]'.²⁴ The ensuing problem of dual nationality of the *peranakans* was addressed in the consular treaty of 1911, 'which – at least in formal terms – excluded Chinese who were "Netherlands subjects" from the jurisdiction of the Chinese consuls in the Indies or the Netherlands'.²⁵ This implies that the consul's activities were thus formally limited to matters concerning *totok* Chinese.

That the Dutch were willing to make changes in the legal position of the Chinese, thereby watering down the restrictive and discriminatory regulations applied to them, is prove for Patricia Tjiiook Liem, that legislative policy was motivated by pragmatism rather than 'a notion of differences of race'. Moreover, once the Chinese (those who had been born in the Indies) had become Dutch

¹⁹ Coppel, 'The Indonesian Chinese', 140.

²⁰ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 27.

²¹ Tjiiook Liem, *De Rechtspositie der Chinezen*, 221-222.

²² Prasenjit Duara, 'Transnationalism and the Predicament of Sovereignty: China, 1900-1945,' *American Historical Review* 102:4 (1997) 1030-1051, 1043.

²³ J.A.C. Mackie and Charles A. Coppel, 'A Preliminary Survey,' in J.A.C. Mackie (ed.), *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays* (Melbourne 1976) 1-18, 9.

²⁴ Lohanda, *The Kapitan Cina of Batavia*, 193.

²⁵ Coppel, 'The Indonesian Chinese,' 143.

subjects, the same applied for the indigenous population. 'Virtual citizenship' was thus not exclusively in store for the non-indigenous Chinese. Nonetheless, the Chinese could still be considered to constitute a 'subject race' because their status as 'Foreign Orientals' was not abolished by the enactment of the Dutch Indies nationality law and the practical implications of this were that they continued to receive preferential treatment under law as compared to 'Natives'.

As the category of Foreign Orientals remained in existence, so did the system of separate administrative rule over the Foreign Orientals. As counterpart to the Native Administration (*Inlands Bestuur*) the Dutch had established a separate Foreign Orientals Administration (*Bestuur voor Vreemde Oosterlingen*) of which the Chinese Administration (*Chinees Bestuur*) was a part. The Chinese Administration was exercised by Chinese officers, as the appointed Chinese headman were called, and they were appointed in the cities and towns with substantial populations. They were awarded with military titles, ranking from lieutenant, captain and major. Despite their military titles, the office of Chinese officer was civilian in character. The institution of the Chinese officers was set up by the VOC within months after the establishment of Batavia in 1619 and remained in place until the Japanese occupation in 1942.²⁶ Although the colonial government gradually abolished the institution of Chinese officers, it was superseded by other representative community organizations rather than by a fully-fledged system of direct rule. Insufficient adaptation of the institutional framework to the changed legal status continued to pose problems for the Dutch administration once they had returned after the Japanese occupation.

The Chinese leader as intermediary between the state and the community

In his analysis of overseas Chinese leadership, G. William Skinner assesses the position of the Chinese officers in terms of their dualistic leader roles. On the one hand, they served as agents of the colonial state, charged with the responsibility to maintain peace and order within the Chinese community, to enforce state directives and for the efficient extraction of revenues from it. On the other hand, they stood 'at the apex of the community's power structure', from which they had

full responsibility for the maintenance of social order, the provision of welfare, and the protection of the sub-system's interest in its dealings with the outside world. They were nobody's stooges, but the locus of real power and of authority which had full internal legitimation.²⁷

Just as the Chinese legal position depended originally on their economic importance, the Chinese officers were installed to fulfill a crucial economic function from the outset. Administering the community was closely tied up to the extraction of revenue from it. In order to collect taxes and duties, the officers had to be able to assess the income and property of community members and had to have sufficient (internally validated) authority to ensure that payment of taxes. The prime criterion for selection therefore was wealth. Only prominent members of the community who had built up 'great riches and exceptional economic power' were eligible for officer positions.²⁸ The businessmen who could meet this criterion were themselves dependent on a stable business environment and were 'unlikely to press for radical alterations in the political or economic *status*

²⁶ Lohanda, *The Kapitan Cina of Batavia*, 73-75, 279.

²⁷ Skinner, 'Overseas Chinese Leadership,' 194.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 195-196.

quo.²⁹ Or as Lea Williams puts it, 'they were thought likely, having a personal stake in the colony, to be loyal to the Dutch.'³⁰ This made them simultaneously the right persons to maintain peace and order within the community.

From the side of the community, the status of potential leaders was primarily determined by, or even a direct function of wealth.³¹ Once the authority of community leaders was validated by the state, that is if they were appointed to the formal offices of the officers system, their status within the community was secured and reinforced. Not only could the officers amass even more wealth through the commercial privileges that came with the office, their prestige was affirmed by the intrinsic value of formal office holding. 'The crucial feature of the elite,' according to Wang Gungwu, 'is that its claim to status rests on its actual or potential association with public service of political power.'³²

By legally differentiating the position of the Chinese and through institutionalizing indirect rule by Chinese officers, the colonial state created a separate political community which was headed by a special type of leader who served as subordinate agent of the state and key community leader at the same time. A Chinese community was by no means autonomous nor ruled by its true representative. But this is not to say that the officers were the impartial occupants of public office as prescribed by the modern bureaucracy.³³ Their power was solidly grounded in their own economic position and in turn they put their office into use to consolidate and expand their economic position. By its very nature, the arrangement bore the potential to develop into a state within a state since 'taxation and revenue collection were the *sine non qua* [sic] of state power'.³⁴

According to Micheal Godley, writing about the Chinese revenue farm network connecting Medan with Penang and Singapore across the Straits of Malacca, this problem became especially urgent in the twentieth century – the period which saw the gradual demise of the officer system. The authority of the officers was gradually undermined by their increasing acculturation with the Dutch elite, which alienated them from 'the very community they were expected to supervise and lead.' Officers could easily be dismissed as 'lackeys of the Dutch' by their communities. In response, officers adopted an alternative strategy that restored their status, not as officials of the colonial state, but as (pseudo)-representatives of China. By putting on a foreign uniform and focusing on their 'Chineseness' and Chinese nationalist politics, the officers who remained in function were no stooges of the Dutch. Quite the contrary, their new role enabled 'the most capable officer-capitalists to consolidate their own commercial kingdoms often at the expense of the Dutch masters.'³⁵ One prime example of such an *imperium in imperio*, as Godley describes, was the informal kingdom of the Tjong brothers in Medan and its surrounding area.

Medan was the commercial playground of two of the biggest Chinese entrepreneurs in the Dutch Indies, the Tjong brothers. In the early twentieth century, Tjong Yong Hian (Chang Yu Nan) and

²⁹ Ibid., 195.

³⁰ Cited in Charles A. Coppel, 'Patterns of Chinese Political Activity in Indonesia,' in: Mackie, *The Chinese in Indonesia*, 19-76, 23.

³¹ Skinner, 'Overseas Chinese Leadership,' 195.

³² Wang Gungwu, 'Traditional Leadership in a New Nation: The Chinese in Malaya and Singapore,' in: Wijeyewardene, *Leadership and Authority*, 208-222, 219.

³³ Christopher Pierson, *The Modern State* (London: Routledge, 1996), 16.

³⁴ Howard Dick, 'A Fresh Approach to Southeast Asian History,' in: John Butcher and Howard Dick (eds.), *The Rise and Fall of Revenue Farming: Business Elites and the Emergence of the Modern State in Southeast Asia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993) 3-18, 6.

³⁵ Michael R. Godley, *The Mandarin-Capitalists from Nanyang: Overseas Chinese Enterprise in the Modernization of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 20.

Tjong A Fie (Chang Hung Nan) built up a business empire covering rubber plantations, palm oil and sugar factories, real estate, banks, a shipping line to and a railroad line in South China.³⁶ Their role as agents of the colonial state could be recognized in their appointment as Chinese Majors (the highest ranking officer of the Chinese officer system), Tjong Yong Hian from 1898 until his death in 1911, when Tjong A Fie succeeded him until he too passed away in 1921.³⁷ From their position as majors and wealthy businessmen, they were able to obtain the opium monopoly for Medan and other revenue farms salt, liquor and gambling.³⁸ The appointment of the brothers proved a lucky hit for the Dutch, whose guiding principle of 'letting the Chinese take care of their own affairs' might have proven a recipe for disorder in the sprawling coolie community needed for the booming plantation economy. As it turned out, the Tjong brothers – largely responsible for the recruitment of coolies in the first place – were dependable community headmen whom the Dutch could entrust with the preservation of order in the Chinese community.³⁹

The Tjong brothers' role as key community leaders whose authority is validated from within the community could be seen from their engagement in philanthropy. They 'financed schools, bridges, Chinese temples, mosques and hospitals.'⁴⁰ Moreover, as they oversaw the recruitment of coolies from China to Deli, they had direct involvement in the migration flow that fed the Chinese community in the first place. The exploitative conditions of the plantation industry which they served notwithstanding, Tjong A Fie also showed his concern for the welfare of the community by making efforts to abolish the penal sanction (by which the coolies were forbidden to leave the plantation during the contract period) and rickshaw pulling. Especially his lobby against the penal sanction was a good example of defending the interests of the Chinese community vis-à-vis that of the Dutch planters community.

The intermediary position of Medan's Chinese officers in the vertical hierarchy between state and society also had an international, or horizontal dimension.⁴¹ The Tjong brothers maintained extensive personal and commercial networks with Chinese businessmen in Penang, Singapore and Guangdong, their ancestral province in Southern China. These transnational links were not about business alone. They were related by kinship to the epitome of overseas Chinese entrepreneurship and the vanguard of overseas Chinese nationalism, Thio Thiau Siat (alias Chang Pi Shih or Cheong Fatt Tze). Especially through their connection with Thio, the Tjong brothers were involved in the momentous transnational project to support the motherland in its modernization efforts. Taken by Michael Godley as the protagonist of his study on the 'mandarin-capitalists' of Southeast Asia, Thio was not only the 'capitalist entrepreneur *par excellence*' but became a true Mandarin official in service of the Qing empire through his appointments as consul in Penang and Singapore, as special imperial commissioner to the Nanyang and superintendent of agriculture, industry, railroads and mining in the southern coastal provinces of Guangdong and Fujian.⁴²

Thio was nothing less than the informal leader of the Chinese overseas throughout Southeast Asia and he took the lead in establishing Chinese consulates and Chinese Chambers of Commerce

³⁶ Dirk A. Buiskool, 'The Chinese Commercial Elite of Medan, 1890-1942: The Penang Connection,' *JMBRAS* 82:2 (2009) 113-129, 114-115.

³⁷ Buiskool, 'The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Medan.'

³⁸ Buiskool, 'The Penang Connection,' 115.

³⁹ Godley, *The Mandarin-Capitalists*, 20-22.

⁴⁰ Buiskool, 'The Penang Connection,' 118.

⁴¹ Liu, 'Sino-Southeast Asian Studies,' 269.

⁴² Michael R. Godley, 'Thio Thiau Siat's Network,' in: Butcher and Dick, *The Rise and Fall of Revenue Farming*, 262-271, 262.

(*Siang Hwee*) in other cities with a substantial population of his brethren. During their tenure as officers, both of the Tjong brothers served as chairmen of the *Siang Hwee* of Medan. Once a consulate was established in Medan, after the consular treaty in 1911, it was the son of Tjong Yong Hian, Tjong Poe Tjong (Chang Pu Ching) who was appointed by the newly installed Kuomintang government.⁴³ As a reward for their philanthropic donations to Guangdong, the Tjongs received honorary titles from the Qing government, which they also bought. To confirm the symbolism of their Mandarin status (though this was only in name, formal office could not be bought by overseas Chinese), the brothers could be seen wearing Qing gowns.⁴⁴

The last Major of the Chinese in Medan, Khoe Tjin Tek, continued the transnational orientation of his predecessors and during his tenure (1922-1942), the nationalist dimension was tilted to a higher level. New opportunities to intensify and expand existing forms of transnational cooperation were rather cynically inspired by a drastic turn of events in China. After the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, China-oriented organizations engaged in a joint effort to provide support for China under the banner of the Nanyang National Salvation Movement.⁴⁵ Although there is little information of the participation in this movement by Chinese living in the outer islands, Medan was undoubtedly affected by the nationalist zeal of the period. The consulate (now occupied by consular officials from China proper) played a particularly active role by channeling money and other gift collected by Chinese charity organizations to the central Red Cross Society in Hong Kong – much to the concern of the Dutch authorities, who feared that the consul's mediation would inspire consuls in other cities.⁴⁶

Although Khoe Tjin Tek handed the position of chairman of the *Siang Hwee* over to an elected member, his involvement with Chinese nationalism could be seen in some of his other engagements. He was the founder of the Medan branch of the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* (THHK), an educational association formed in 1900 to promote Chinese culture and resinification of the Chinese in Indonesia, and helped to establish the Su Tung Middle School in 1931.⁴⁷ This large pro-Kuomintang Chinese-language school was put under scrutiny by the Dutch authorities after anti-Japanese and other 'undesirable reading materials' had been confiscated. Several teachers were deprived of their certificate of teaching qualification or even entry documents.⁴⁸

The political orientation of the Chinese community

It is worth taking a closer look at the *Tiong Hoa Hwee Koan* in Medan to see how overseas Chinese nationalism gained a strong foothold in the local Chinese community. The educational association was central to the nationalist awakening of the Chinese in the Dutch Indies. Its formation, activities and influence have been well documented and the general information available on the THHK can

⁴³ Godley, *Mandarin-capitalists*, 21, 83.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 42. For photographs see KITLV Digital Media Library, <http://media-kitlv.nl/>. Installatie van Tjong Yong Hian als kapitein en Tjong A Fie als luitenant der Chinezen te Medan (image code: 91456); Tjong Yong Hian, majoor der Chinezen te Medan (image code: 3999); Tjong A Fie, kapitein der Chinezen te Medan (image code: 3595).

⁴⁵ Yoji Akashi, *The Nanyang National Salvation Movement, 1937-1941* (Lawrence: Center for East Asian Studies, University of Kansas, 1970).

⁴⁶ Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken: Gezantschap China, 2.05.90, inventarisnummer 558. (hereafter Min BuZa, followed by inventory and file number).

⁴⁷ Leo Suryadinata, *Eminent Indonesian Chinese: Biographical Sketches* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1995) 57.

⁴⁸ Min BuZa, 2.05.90: 553.

help to draw a much more detailed picture of the political orientation of the Chinese in Medan than the scarce local sources allow for. So little has been written on the Chinese living outside of Java, the political and economic center of the Indies, that the limited information on the Chinese in Medan must be compared with existing literature on the Chinese in Java in order to identify patterns of political activity and the significance of particular institutions in Medan.

Comparison of the local sources and general studies indeed reveals that the Chinese community in Medan disposed over all the relevant institutions and organizations which played the key role in the mobilization of overseas Chinese nationalism in other, much better examined, parts in the Indies. And as it appears from existing literature, the THHK was the original driving force behind nationalist awakening and the central organization to which other pan-Chinese institutions became connected. Lea E. Williams, author of the groundbreaking study on the 'genesis of the pan-Chinese movement' in Indonesia, goes as far as to say that

if any date can be selected as that of the establishment of the overseas Chinese nationalism as an organized movement in Indonesia, it is March 17, 1900, the day the THHK was founded.⁴⁹

The THHK stood for a whole range of aims revolving around the unification of the Chinese and the revival of their Chinese culture and identity. More concretely, the THHK aimed to promote Confucianism, to provide guidance in the proper execution of weddings and funerals, to provide education for Chinese children, and finally, to mobilize the support and the loyalty of the overseas Chinese for the motherland.⁵⁰

One of the major grievances which the THHK sought to redress was that few Chinese were able to send their Children to school. Separate schools for Indonesians or minorities like the Chinese did not exist in the Indies and the Dutch schools were only open for the children of the Chinese officers and wealthy, well-connected Chinese businessmen. To change this situation, as the well-known Malay-language Chinese journalist and writer Kwee Tek Hoay wrote in his study on the THHK,

there was only one path: the Chinese had to show that they had a thirst for education. If they were ignored by the government, they would then organize their own schools to meet their needs.⁵¹

In the years following its establishment, the THHK and its local branches founded Chinese-language primary schools throughout the Indies. In line with the principal aims, the THHK schools used Mandarin as the language of instruction as to overcome divisions among the different speech groups. Teachers were recruited from abroad, initially from Singapore and Japan, where Chinese teachers had been working in overseas Chinese schools. The textbooks used in the THHK schools were also imported, first from Japan, later from China itself.⁵²

The Su Tung Middle School in Medan was one of the three Chinese-language secondary schools established by the THHK in the Indies. By the time the Su Tung school was founded, the pan-Chinese movement was guided by the Kuomintang, the Nationalist party which had overthrown and succeeded the Qing dynasty in 1911. The school provided education according to the pan-Chinese

⁴⁹ Lea E. Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism: The Genesis of the Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1916* (Glencoe Ill.: The Free Press, 1960) 57.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 57-60.

⁵¹ Kwee Tek Hoay, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Movement in Indonesia* [translated by Lea E. Williams] (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Translation Series, 1969) 18.

⁵² Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism*, 66-73.

ideals as fostered by the Kuomintang government in China. The curriculum was designed to inculcate students with Sun Yat-sen's Three principles (Nationalism, Democracy and Livelihood), patriotism and Chinese history. Not only were textbooks brought in from China, the school also employed teachers from government schools in the motherland. After the Kuomintang Office of Overseas Chinese Affairs formulated an educational policy in 1937, the THHK schools were to be supervised by consular officials. The first foreign language was not Dutch, but English.⁵³ This last feature points to the importance of education for Chinese business, since English was more valued for the requirements of trade (after all, Penang and Singapore were British colonies) than the administrative usefulness of Dutch.

That Chinese businessmen appreciated the importance of sending their children to the THHK schools was shown by the way in which the schools were funded. To pay for school buildings, textbooks and teachers, the THHK regularly held fundraising campaigns in addition to the membership and tuition fees which it already collected. Moreover, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce actively supported the THHK by contributing to the association in terms of donations.⁵⁴ As for the personal involvement of local community leaders in Medan, the school director in the years 1935-1941 was co-founder Hiu Ngi Fen. Hiu was also the last elected chairman of the *Siang Hwee*.

Lea Williams makes a special reference to Medan when he comes to speak of another institution of the pan-Chinese movement, the Soe Po Sia or reading clubs which were concerned with the dissemination of Chinese nationalist publications and holding lectures on nationalist thought. Of the four major newspapers published by the Soe Po Sia, one of them appeared in Medan. Moreover, 'over one-fifth of the Soe po Sia's in Netherlands India were in the Deli district of Sumatra'.⁵⁵

The Medan branch of the THHK provides a typical example of how Chinese community leaders stood at the conjunction between state, community and transnational networks. Founded by the officially appointed Major of Medan and headed by a well-connected businessman with nationalist affiliations, the THHK, with its Su Tung Middle School, stood at the center of daily life within the community. Among a large *totok* population like in Medan, the pervading influence of Kuomintang nationalism was by no means limited to this particular school. Newspapers, charity organizations and the Soe Po Sia reading clubs were all exemplary for the China-oriented character of the general group.

⁵³ Ong Eng Die, *Chineezzen in Nederlandsch-Indië: Sociografie van een Indonesische Bevolkingsgroep* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1943); Leo Suryadinata, 'Indonesian Chinese Education: Past and Present,' *Indonesia* 14 (1972) 49-71, 53, 61; Coppel, 'Patterns of Chinese Political Activity,' 26.

⁵⁴ Williams, *Overseas Chinese Nationalism*, 101.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 106-108.

2. The Indonesian revolution and the position of the Chinese

Revolution

World War II came to the Dutch East Indies when the Japanese invaded the Archipelago in March 1942. The anti-Japanese sentiment of China-oriented Chinese was met with retaliation by the new Japanese rulers. Many prewar Chinese leaders were interned or forced to hide and in the extreme case of West Kalimantan, a notorious bulwark of Kuomintang sympathizers, virtually every leader was executed. For the majority of the Chinese, however, the consequences of Japanese occupation were less severe and they could continue their daily life and business by adjusting themselves to the new order.⁵⁶ Few businessmen took to collaboration, most notoriously the owners of the Oey Tiong Ham Concern.⁵⁷

The abrupt end of the Japanese occupation on August 15, 1945 did not put an end to the period of tremendous political upheaval, as Indonesian nationalist leader Sukarno declared the independence of Indonesia within two days after the Japanese surrender. Refusing to acknowledge the Republic of Indonesia proclaimed by Sukarno, the Netherlands prepared to return to the Indies and restore colonial rule. The colonial administrative structure having been broken down and new Indonesian institutions having been created under the Japanese, the Dutch attempt to reoccupy the territory was met by heavy resistance from the Republican Army and its affiliated irregular troops. The Indonesian national revolution thus became a protracted and bitter conflict which lasted until December 1949, when Indonesian perseverance and international diplomatic pressure forced the Dutch to recognize Indonesian sovereignty.⁵⁸

The Dutch government was not in the position to reoccupy the Indies immediately though, for the Netherlands had only been liberated from German occupation four months earlier and still had to build up its military. Jurisdiction over the Indies was temporarily handed over to the South East Asia Command (SEAC) of Supreme Allied Commander Admiral Earl Mountbatten. The first British troops of any substantial number arrived in Jakarta in September to restore peace and safety after the war. As the Indonesian claim to self-rule was backed by popular support, especially on Java, there was a growing realization among the British authorities that

the Indonesian Republic (...) had under its command substantial armed forces, that there were other armed groups operating independently of Republican control and that many Indonesians were hostile to a resumption of Dutch rule, which they supposed the British to be facilitating.⁵⁹

The Allied command decided to confine itself to the reoccupation of Indonesia to a total number of seven cities or 'key areas' in Java and Sumatra. From these Allied enclaves, the British would take care of the restoration of order, the repatriation of Japanese troops and the release of prisoners of war. The limited reoccupation allowed the Dutch, who installed their temporary Netherlands Indies

⁵⁶ Somers-Heidhues, 'Citizenship and Identity,' 117.

⁵⁷ Twang Peck Yang, *The Chinese Business Élite in Indonesia and the Transition to Independence 1940-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) 88.

⁵⁸ George McTurnan Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952) and Anthony Reid, *The Indonesian National Revolution 1945-1950* (Melbourne: Longman, 1974).

⁵⁹ Richard McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia*, 114.

Civil Administration (NICA) in the key areas, and Indonesian nationalists more space to negotiate the future of the Dutch Indies.⁶⁰

As the restoration of order was just beginning to take shape while two powers claimed authority, the first months after the Japanese surrender were marked by high degrees of violence. The Republican side was not only represented by the official army, the TRI, but by a whole range of *pemudas* (Indonesian Revolutionary Youths), militias and other self-proclaimed struggle groups. These were getting impatient to further the cause of the Republic as the Republican administration was held up by political and diplomatic deliberations. Some of these groups came forth from militias set up by the Japanese and many acquired their arms from retreating Japanese troops. For the greater part they were loosely organized groups that engaged in the struggle on their own account. Animosity was geared towards Dutch internees, Eurasians, Ambonese and Chinese in particular, groups that were regarded as sympathisers of the old colonial rule and hence the primary enemies of the Republican cause. Like the other victims, the Chinese were subjected to intimidation, extortion and violent attacks on their lives and property.⁶¹

Such were the conditions that set the tone for the experience of the Chinese during the Indonesian revolution as it developed over the years to come. After the initial outburst of anti-Chinese sentiment, anti-Chinese violence of an even more systematic character was to become part of the guerrilla tactics and the 'scorched earth' policy that the Republican troops employed in later stages, especially in response to the First Police Action, the first outright military offensive on the Dutch in July 1947. The tactic to destroy economic assets of the Dutch largely came down to systematic looting of Chinese property in practice. The scale of extortion and looting suggests that violence against the Chinese was motivated by economic needs and jealousy. Since the Chinese owed their beneficial economic position to the preferential treatment they received from the Dutch, the Chinese were also the victims of revengefulness among disadvantaged Indonesians. 'And no doubt in all cases the attacks were at least partly fired by the prejudices and animosities which (...) had grown up between Indonesians and Chinese during Dutch years of rule.'⁶²

Still it remains difficult to assess the motivations of the guerrillas, whether the Chinese were targets purely because of their material wealth, their ethnic background or whether the attacks were indeed politically inspired on the basis of assumed affiliations with the Dutch. Mahmood Mamdani's concept of political identity as introduced in the first chapter does however offer a key to the mechanism behind manifestations of violence. By generating two different political identities for the nonnative Chinese and the native Indonesians, the colonial state politicized indigeneity. These distinctive political identities became especially polarized during anti-colonial struggle. If the original enemy of the colonized natives were the Dutch colonialists, the master race in Mamdani's analysis, then the Chinese were among the other nonnative groups that occupied the middle ground between nonnative colonizer and native colonized, the subject races. By including the nonnative Chinese among those who had no place in the postcolonial future, the Indonesians were not targeting the Chinese because of their ethnicity or wealth, but because they were designated as strangers. Racial strangers who had to make way, along with the colonizer, for the natives who were reasserting power over their own territory.⁶³ Powerful as this explanation may be, the polarization between

⁶⁰ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*.

⁶¹ Kahin, *Nationalism and Revolution*.

⁶² Donald E. Willmott, *The National Status of the Chinese in Indonesia 1900-1958* (Singapore: Equinox publishing, 2009 (Reprint of 1961) 36.

⁶³ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 33.

Chinese and Indonesian political identity was mitigated by policy measures of both the Dutch and the Indonesian government, which tried to bring the Chinese under the same legal banner as the Indonesians.

Chinese responses

Against the chaotic background of rapidly unfolding revolution, leadership figures (many of whom had been interned during the Japanese period) began to establish new organizations to unite local communities and to represent their interests.⁶⁴ The most prominent organization was the *Chung Hua Tsung Hui* (CHTH, the Chinese General Association), which was ‘an umbrella organization for other community associations’ and had branches in cities and towns in both Allied- and Republican-controlled areas.⁶⁵ The first branch was set up in Jakarta on October 15, 1945 and chaired by the former director of the China-oriented *Sin Po* newspaper, Ang Jan Goan. Initially, the CHTH united peranakans and totoks to the extent that it constituted ‘the most all-embracing of all pan-Chinese organizations ever in Java,’ as Charles Coppel remarks.⁶⁶ The unprecedented unity was a legacy of the Japanese occupation. Members of different groups, peranakans and the different speech groups of the totok community, had been drawn closer during internment. Internal differences had diluted under Japanese policy, which treated the Chinese as belonging to a single group, represented by a single organization, the *Hua Ch’iao Tsung Hui* (HCTH, the Overseas Chinese Association). Unlike the state-installed HCTH, the CHTH was a representative association which leaders were chosen by the community.⁶⁷

The CHTH reflected the predominant attitude of most Chinese, which consisted of keeping a low profile, reluctance to take an outright position for either the Republicans or the Dutch and which is often described as an attitude of wait-and-see.⁶⁸ Studied neutrality was indeed a very strong binding factor, but only for the time being, for the CHTH came out to be less and less able to cope with both the divergent situations in which local communities found themselves and deeply-rooted divisions within communities. In the first place, the local branches of the CHTH tended to lean against the side of those who controlled the area. In Dutch-held areas, that is, almost all the major cities, the CHTH could generally be said to cooperate with or even support the Dutch; in areas controlled by the Republic, the CHTH took side with the Indonesian nationalists. Cutting across these geographical divisions were individual Chinese sympathizers of the Republican cause living in Dutch areas.⁶⁹ Secondly, the CHTH could not bridge the divisions between peranakans and totoks. The hope that the new, democratically organized federation could represent all Chinese could not be sustained as totoks began to play a dominant role. Despite his earlier remark, Coppel concedes that

the newly found unity in the Chinese community could not survive the conflicting pressure from the Dutch and Indonesian sides on the one hand, and the growing influence of the Chinese civil war on the

⁶⁴ S.L. van der Wal *et al.* (ed.), *Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlandse-Indonesische betrekkingen, 1945-50*, 11 vols. (The Hague 1971-83) I: 219. (Digital version: <http://www.historici.nl/retroboeken/nib/#page=0&size=800&accessor=toc&source=1>) . (hereafter OB, followed by volume and document number).

⁶⁵ Somers-Heidhues, ‘Citizenship and Identity,’ 123.

⁶⁶ Coppel, ‘Patterns of Chinese Political Activity,’ 40.

⁶⁷ Somers-Heidhues, ‘Citizenship and Identity,’ 123.

⁶⁸ Coppel, ‘Patterns of Chinese Political Activity,’ 41.

⁶⁹ Leo Suryadinata, ‘The Search for National Identity of an Indonesian Chinese: A Political Biography of Liem Koen Hian,’ *Archipel* 14 (1977) 43-70, 64-65.

other. The conflict of interests peranakans and totoks proved too great and new peranakan associations were formed in many places which in some cases broke away from the CHTH.⁷⁰

Unfortunately, Coppel does not go into detail on what the conflicting interests exactly represented, but it is possible to extend the prewar patterns of China-oriented nationalism and integrationist local politics into the revolutionary period.⁷¹ The real bone of contention between the peranakans and totoks was not about making a choice between the Dutch or the Indonesians, as would be expected in a polarized context. What the peranakans resented about the increasing totok dominance was their continuing preoccupation with politics in *China*. Rather than to adjust to the dramatic changes happening in the local context, the China-oriented totoks remained primarily concerned with the authorities that claimed their loyalty from abroad. In the immediate aftermath of WWII, China was elevated to great power status at the international stage as one of the Allied victors by acquiring a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. The better position of China on the world stage provided the incentive for many of the prewar Chinese nationalists to keep faith in the Chinese government to support them in their lives abroad.⁷²

In addition, Chinese responses added up to a wider variety than only the one of studied neutrality. Donald E. Willmott offers a balanced treatment of the four different attitudes that he observes amongst the Chinese in response to the revolution.⁷³ Firstly, there were those who could profit greatly from the chaotic situation by engaging in illegal and extra-legal commerce, either by supplying goods to the Dutch or by smuggling goods for the Republican forces. Many of them had benefited from the Japanese rule and formed a small isolated group looked down upon from all sides as being opportunistic. Secondly, Willmott identifies a group of genuinely pro-Dutch Chinese from the upper circles of Westernized businessmen and 'intelligentsia'. The third and by far the largest group consisted of the common people whose personal security and economic wellbeing were severely affected by the chaotic and often violent conditions of the revolution. 'They did not especially like the Dutch, took almost no interest in the political issues involved in the struggle, and little understood the historical movement that was occurring around them.'⁷⁴ They opted for a neutral position between the opposing parties, but nonetheless tended to acquiesce in the return of Dutch rule. Finally, a group of active supporters of the Indonesian nationalist cause could be found among the Chinese with close contacts with Indonesians and those with ideological anti-colonial and revolutionary sentiments.

Policy

Underlying the different patterns of response was the crucial question of who could protect the Chinese? With three different authorities claiming their loyalty, there were also three different authorities to which the Chinese could turn to claim their right of diplomatic protection. The options of response available were partly shaped by the parameters of policy adopted by the Republican, Dutch and Chinese governments, although for the practical outcome it turned out to be a matter of effectiveness in implementing policy measures. Both the Dutch and the Republic tried to address the problems of the legal status of the Chinese that remained unresolved up until the Japanese installed

⁷⁰ Coppel, 'Patterns of Chinese Political Activity,' 42.

⁷¹ Ibid., 25-38.

⁷² Somers-Heidhues, 'Citizenship and Identity,' 119.

⁷³ Willmott, *The National Status of the Chinese*, 36-37.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 37.

their rule: dual nationality and partial citizenship. The Chinese government tried to live up to its self-proclaimed obligation to offer protection to its subjects abroad while facing enormous problems at home.

Republic of Indonesia passed its first Citizenship Act on April 10, 1946. It embodied a passive system under which terms the 'Chinese who were born in Indonesia and who had resided there continuously for five years were automatically citizens of Indonesia.'⁷⁵ A passive system was chosen in order to 'minimize the number of Chinese over whom Chinese consuls could exercise jurisdiction, and through whom they might extend their influence in Indonesia,' but at the same time it contained a provision that allowed local-born Chinese to reject Indonesian citizenship in favor of Chinese citizenship.⁷⁶ Few Chinese actually chose to reject Indonesian citizenship, though this is not to say that this could be read as a sign that they fully considered themselves Indonesian citizens. In China, the 1909 Nationality Law was still in force and their Chinese nationality would not be lost if they opted for Indonesian citizenship. The problem of dual nationality was thus not overcome by the Republican Citizenship act of 1946.

By offering the Chinese full-fledged Indonesian citizenship on a voluntary basis, the Republic showed its willingness to win the allegiance of the Chinese. The attempt to incorporate them in wider popular support base was also informed by the necessity to win their economic cooperation.⁷⁷ But genuine support depended on more than formal acknowledgement of their membership of the Indonesian nation. Widespread anti-Chinese violence made it hard for the Republican authorities to demonstrate their commitment to represent the Chinese population and look after their wellbeing. Despite all the goodwill the Chinese suffered in the hands of loosely organized and undisciplined, but undeniably Republican forces. The national army, the TRI, was not able to control the irregular troops for one thing, but the 'scorched earth' policy of destroying valuable economic assets of the colonialists was not a tactic by which the Chinese could be spared either. As long as the Republic could not adequately address anti-Chinese violence, it was in a poor position to prevent alienation of the Chinese.

Even if the Republic would have been able to enlist substantial Chinese support, 'the territory under continuous Republican control (...) was limited to areas comprising about half of the island of Java and about two thirds of Sumatra.'⁷⁸ The overwhelming majority of the Chinese lived in areas effectively or nominally controlled by the Dutch, including almost all the major cities in which a large proportion of Chinese were already concentrated or sought refuge from the less secure rural areas.⁷⁹ Within their areas of control, the Dutch were not necessarily better able to safeguard the Chinese from harassment of irregular forces operating on the fringes of Dutch-held areas. The Dutch were however, more effective in framing their concern for the conditions of the Chinese and their commitment to improve them. Incidents of anti-Chinese violence, such as in Tangerang in May and June 1946, were used as propaganda against the Republic and incorporated into the narrative of the Dutch Indies of the future.⁸⁰ A new multiethnic society was in the making, in which all races and ethnicities (indigenous Indonesian groups including) would be able to live harmoniously together under Dutch guidance. The Indonesian nationalists now claiming authority were portrayed by the

⁷⁵ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 41.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁹ Coppel, 'Patterns of Chinese Political Activity,' 40.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 41.

Dutch as oppressors of the worst kind, depriving all other groups of their freedoms to live their lives as they saw fit.⁸¹

The Chinese minority occupied a special position in the idea of a multiethnic Indonesia. This idea was part and parcel of the Dutch scheme to transform the colonial state into a semi-autonomous union of federal states under the Dutch Crown, the federal Republic of the United States of Indonesia. Rather than to submit to the 'radical' nationalists in their struggle for full independence, the Dutch designed a federal system as an alternative to maintain Dutch authority while addressing the aspiration for self-determination. Decentralized federal states would suit the geographical diversity of the vast Archipelago and specific circumstances of the different localities. Each state would have its own parliament in which the special interests of the different ethnic groups could be represented.⁸² The Republic of Indonesia was to be incorporated within this scheme, but in order to make this possible, the position of moderate nationalists – who were considered to be sympathetic to the idea of a federation – had to be strengthened vis-à-vis the radical revolutionaries. Here the role of minorities comes into view. Having their own wishes, customs and interests, minorities were considered to be susceptible to appeals of a federalized multiethnic society in which they would be able to retain their distinctive position and at the same time to participate in local politics.⁸³

While the formation of federal states had to wait until the Dutch administration was reinstalled in the key areas over the year 1946, detachments of NICA officials already began to lay down the outlines of policy from October 1945 onwards. Early reports and correspondence of these officials show that a substantial attention was devoted to the position of the Chinese minority. The spontaneous outbursts of anti-Chinese violence did not escape their attention and gave reason for concern, to say the least, but there was also a more formal side to the Chinese position that needed to be addressed. The drawn-out issue of the legal status of the Chinese that had remained unresolved until the Japanese invasion was picked up almost immediately after the war ended. An officer for Chinese affairs, A.E. Abell, was installed to examine how the Chinese population could best be involved in the new state structure.⁸⁴ Critical of the prewar policy of separate treatment and indirect rule, Abell advocated full incorporation, or better still, absorption of Chinese society in the administrative system – a complete revision of the prewar policy concerning the Chinese. He opposed the re-installment of the European-staffed Office of Chinese Affairs, because it had too little contact with Chinese society; he warned against alienating Chinese communities in the remote corners of the Archipelago, which had largely been left to themselves in isolation and thereby easily fell prey to Kuomintang nationalists; and he pressed time and again to establish and institutionalize contact with local Chinese associations.⁸⁵

One of the outcomes of these policy deliberations was the appointment of Thio Thiam Tjong to serve as Van Mook's Advisor for Chinese Affairs.⁸⁶ Thio's function was not of the type of intermediary between the Dutch administration and Chinese society as it existed before the war, but

⁸¹ Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J. van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of his Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945-48* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982).

⁸² Willmott, *The National Status of the Chinese*, 44.

⁸³ Somers-Heidhues, 'Citizenship and Identity,' 118.

⁸⁴ The appointment of Abell was only on a temporary basis; the function of officer for Chinese affairs would expire as soon as new plans for the inclusion of the Chinese in a system of direct rule were implemented.

⁸⁵ OB I: 219, 260.

⁸⁶ OB V: 20, 21.

that of a well-informed specialist on Chinese affairs who held his position as one of the staff members employed by departments.⁸⁷

Although arguing that the appointment of Chinese advisors in the Indies administration implied the re-installment of the Chinese officer system and thus indirect rule, Ambassador to China and former head of the Office of Chinese Affairs, A.H.J. Lovink agreed with Abell that special treatment for the Chinese must be prevented at all costs.⁸⁸ Lovink, who was to become High Commissioner of the Dutch East Indies in 1949, put more emphasis on Indonesian citizenship which the local-born Chinese were 'about to acquire'.⁸⁹ The equation of the Chinese with the rest of the Indies population would exclude any kind of separate treatment. In addition, the division between Indonesian Chinese citizens on the one hand and those who had resided in the Indies for less than five years or rejected Indonesian citizenship on the other would simultaneously press the Indonesian Chinese citizens to cut off links with China.⁹⁰

These policy objectives were not implemented until 1949 and the continuing involvement of the Chinese government was not addressed by post-war Dutch policy. Requests for involvement were made by local China-oriented organizations, newspapers circulated rumors that Chiang Kai-shek was considering to send troops to protect the Chinese and Chinese consuls cooperated closely with the CHTH.⁹¹ Even if the Chinese government faced problems of postwar reconstruction at home, it did not lose attention for its subjects abroad. According to Donald Willmott, the strategy to maintain neutrality was advocated by Chinese authorities.⁹² Kuomintang ideology may have contained anti-colonial principles, the disconcerting behavior of Republican troops prevented the KMT from backing the Republic. Its attempts to offer protection included making 'direct appeals to both the Dutch and the Indonesian Governments to safeguard the lives and properties of the Chinese' and the establishment of 'safety zones' where Chinese could seek refuge when in danger. Since this last attempt was not to get off the ground, the Consul General issued the advise to turn Chinese school and association buildings into shelters where the Chinese flag would be raised as a sign of neutrality.⁹³

Finally, the Kuomintang extended its influence even militarily through the one organization that was even more resented for its suspected affiliations with the Dutch than the CHTH – the Pao An Tui. These Chinese self-defense organizations were not just able to step up as the guardians of the Chinese because they could operate under the wings of the Dutch authorities. As will be argued in the next chapters, the Pao An Tui could become the instrument of overseas Chinese nationalism after its prewar institutions had collapsed during the Japanese occupation. The PAT thereby succeeded the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and, where it had survived until 1942, the Chinese officer system. Through its close association with the totok business community and Chinese consuls,

⁸⁷ OB VI: 35.

⁸⁸ Hans Meijer, "Op de drempel tussen twee werelden." A.H.J. Lovink; de laatste landvoogd van Indonesië,' *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 114:1 (1999) 39-60, 42.

⁸⁹ 'Indonesian citizenship' on Dutch terms was not formulated in official regulations until the Dutch-Indonesian Round Table Conference of 1949. Until the transfer of sovereignty, the Dutch had not promulgated a new citizenship law in which all Indonesia-born subjects, including the Chinese, would have the same legal status, OB XX: 212; Willmott, *The National Status of the Chinese*, 46.

⁹⁰ OB VI: 35.

⁹¹ Somers-Heidhues, 'Citizenship and Identity,' 119, 123.

⁹² Willmott, *The National Status of the Chinese*, 39.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 39.

the PAT could become the last vestige of overseas Chinese nationalism, the influential ideology which had kept hold of the Chinese of Indonesia for decades.

3. Defending the Chinese community of Medan

Revolution and Allied occupation in Sumatra's East Coast

The raising of the *merah-putih*, the Indonesian red and white flag, during an official ceremony in Medan on October 6, 1945 heralded the establishment of Sumatra as a province of the Indonesian Republic.⁹⁴ Six days later, the British troops that had landed on Sumatra's East Coast moved into Medan to establish a key area of Allied occupation.⁹⁵ Upon British arrival, the Republican party had already occupied important public buildings and had taken over the essential government services.⁹⁶ The goal of British occupation was to maintain law and order in the key area rather than to facilitate the full restoration of Dutch East Indies administration. Therefore, the recently installed Republican administration was left in function, including the municipality, public companies and police. Tengku Mohammad Hassan, a lawyer and religious and social leader of aristocratic ancestry, was installed as the Republican Governor of Sumatra.⁹⁷ The British forces only effectively occupied the former European district of Medan, the triangle located between the airport and the Deli and Babura rivers. Outside this 'protected zone', the remaining districts such as the Chinese quarter in the eastern part were largely left to the Republican authorities and protected by the Republican police.

According to a directive issued by SEAC, 'full authority over Military and Civilian Affairs is to be exercised only in Key areas, and even in these areas Civilians will be dealt with through the Dutch Civil Administration.'⁹⁸ Only a limited number of Dutch administrators had joined the British troops and in practice the British cooperated with the Republican security forces to maintain law and order in the surrounding districts.⁹⁹ The Republican police, however, was insufficiently able to offer security in the rest of the city as it found itself in the uncomfortable position of representing the Republic while facing groups of people's militias that engaged in an often violent struggle in the name of the revolution on their own account.

Ann Laura Stoler describes in her study on the 'locally organized units of people's militias' (*laskars*) how nationalist youths from the urban Javanese underclass lined up with members of the educated Indonesian elite to form struggle groups.¹⁰⁰ Choosing to remain independent from the official Republican army, *Tentera Keamanan Rakyat* (TKR, later renamed as TRI and as TNI), these people's militias placed the TKR police to the impossible task of defending the city's inhabitants against the violent attacks of their national allies. Much of the violence 'was directed against the person and property of those perceived to be Dutch sympathizers (with ethnic Chinese and Indian merchants both easy targets and easy to blame), [although] not limited to these groups.'¹⁰¹ The

⁹⁴ Richard McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia*, 115.

⁹⁵ Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Netherland Forces Intelligence Service [NEFIS] en Centrale Militaire Inlichtingendienst [CMI] in Nederlands-Indië, 2.10.62: 725 (hereafter NEFIS, followed by inventory and file number).

⁹⁶ Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Algemene Secretarie van de Nederlands-Indische Regering en de daarbij gedeponeerde Archieven, 2.10.14: 3089, Rapport No. 1. (hereafter Alg. Sec.).

⁹⁷ Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3089, Rapport No. 3.

⁹⁸ McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia*, 116.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 116-117, 123-124.

¹⁰⁰ Ann Laura Stoler, 'Working the Revolution: Plantation Laborers and the People's Militia in North Sumatra,' *Journal of Asian Studies* 47:2 (1988) 227-247, 230-231.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 232.

'revolutionary zeal' of the nationalists was accompanied by 'urban thuggery' as the militias had problems to restrain their members in acts of looting, robbery and destruction.¹⁰² So while the Chinese were attacked by the people's militias because they were perceived as enemies of the revolution, they also suffered from plain robbery by plunderers benefiting from the lawlessness. After all, the Chinese had been an industrious community and their many shops and businesses in the Chinese district were obvious objects for theft.

Once it became known among Indonesian forces that Dutch officials of the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs (NICA) had joined the British to administer civil affairs, hostility against the Allies in general grew stronger among the Indonesian population.¹⁰³ It was not until the early months of 1946 however that the relations between Indonesians and the British in particular seriously began to deteriorate in Medan, that is, when armed Indonesians aimed their attacks at British troops specifically. The outburst of violence in Medan was remarkably late to occur and had different causes than the two other Allied key areas in Sumatra. For Padang in West Sumatra, the Battle of Surabaya offered a plausible source of inspiration as Richard McMillan points out in his study of the British occupation of Indonesia.¹⁰⁴ The Javanese city of Surabaya was a Republican stronghold until British forces moved in to capture the city (to safeguard ex-POWs and internees) at the end of October 1945.¹⁰⁵ The resistance of the *pemudas* offered against the British in the ensuing was so strong that 'Surabaya' became instantly renowned for the legendary heroism and revolutionary fervor of its inhabitants.¹⁰⁶ The experience in Palembang showed that the deterioration of Anglo-Indonesian relations could also have had a less clear-cut cause. In the South Sumatran key area the development of a cycle of violent attacks on and reprisals taken by British forces was a cause for the downturn of relations in itself.¹⁰⁷

For the Medan area, McMillan attributes the worsening of relations to the rapid increase of violence related to the 'Social Revolution' erupting in March 1946 in the adjacent Residencies of Sumatra's East Coast.¹⁰⁸ The Sultans and other local aristocrats, who had ruled the 'native' ethnic communities of the Malay, Karo Batak and Simalungun Batak in the colonial system, had remained in power under the Japanese and showed little willingness to relinquish their power to the revolutionary contestants. The traditional attitude of the local aristocrats clashed with the radical objectives of the revolutionaries and indeed, the local aristocrats were reluctant to support the declaration of independence and 'were clearly anticipating the return of the Dutch to help restore pre-War "normalcy"'.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰² Ann Laura Stoler raises awareness to the ways in which the Dutch, and to a lesser extent the British, employed the word 'laskar'. The term 'served as a shorthand for the designations of criminal, communist, and extremist, which – in a continuing colonial tradition – were used interchangeably.' This way, all armed groups could be easily dismissed as bandit gangs unfit for political responsibility. See p. 231.

¹⁰³ McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia*, 116-117.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 117-118.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 31-32.

¹⁰⁶ William H. Frederick, *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989) x. The image of Surabaya as the 'birthplace of the revolution' was well established in both independent Indonesia and the historiography on the revolution. Central to Frederick's thesis however is the demystification of the *pemuda* movement and to emphasize the role of other social groups and continuity instead.

¹⁰⁷ McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia*, 121-122.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 120.

¹⁰⁹ Michael van Langenberg, 'Class and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia's Decolonization Process: A Study of East Sumatra,' *Indonesia* 33 (1982) 1-30, 3-4.

In his study on class and ethnic conflict in East Sumatra, Michael van Langenberg points to the similarity in the experiences of the traditional aristocracies and other members of the plantation-based colonial establishment, which was

made up of two tiers or levels – the European planters, businessmen, and government officials at the top and below them the orang asli [indigenous] aristocracies, the western-educated Indonesian professionals (doctors, lawyers, senior civil servants, etc.), and the wealthier Chinese and Indian merchants (...).¹¹⁰

The rapidly widening cleavage between the former colonial elite and the revolutionaries bidding for power escalated into open violence in March when many of the traditional ‘native’ rulers and their adherents were killed.¹¹¹

Despite the fact that no serious clashes occurred between the British and Indonesians before the social revolution, it would be wrong to suggest that violence was completely absent from Medan. Dutch NICA officials showed remarkably more concern for the higher level of unchecked crime, incidents of violence, and the fact that the economically important Chinese figured large among the victims. The Dutch objective to resume control of the colony clashed with the much more limited agenda of the British to rehabilitate ‘law and order in a territory which had been ravaged by the Japanese occupation’ and to facilitate the Dutch and Indonesians to negotiate the terms of Indonesian self-government.¹¹² To paraphrase Richard McMillan, the British were restoring control in the key areas, but they did it only halfheartedly on behalf of the Dutch.¹¹³

In one of the earliest reports on the situation in Sumatra, including Medan, the leader of RAWPI-organization, C.A.M. Brondgeest recounts that peace and order had disappeared after the first calm weeks. ‘Murder, *rampas* (robbery) and kidnapping occur on a daily basis and the British military does nothing.’¹¹⁴ Charged with the Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (RAWPI), Brondgeest provided an example of the Dutch objective to reinstate colonial rule as he took it as his duty to prepare the ground for the restoration of Dutch authority in Medan.¹¹⁵ As to show that the local conditions were getting worse, he expressed his concerns about the burglaries repeatedly taking place at the quarters set up to accommodate liberated European internees and the systematic attacks to which the Chinese almost exclusively fell victim in the outer districts.¹¹⁶

Although scarce, the few reports that were made by Brondgeest en the later Dutch governor of Sumatra, A.J. Spits, describe a notable increase of hostility and violence against the Dutch, other Europeans, Ambonese, Menadonese and Chinese as compared to the relative calm during the first weeks after the end of the Japanese occupation.¹¹⁷ At regular intervals a Chinese-owned house or shop would be looted and set on fire while its residents easily fell victim to kidnap, rape and murder

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹¹¹ For an exhaustive study of the development of the Social Revolution and its origins in the social, political and economic history of North Sumatra see Anthony Reid, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979).

¹¹² McMillan, *The British Occupation of Sumatra*, 168.

¹¹³ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁴ Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3100, Rapport No.1 Brondgeest.

¹¹⁵ J.A. de Moor, ‘Brondgeest, Carolus Alphonse Maria (1886-1965),’ in: Biografisch Woordenboek van Nederland. URL:<http://www.historici.nl/Onderzoek/Projecten/BWN/lemmata/bwn5/brondgeest> (Retrieved: 10-02-2012).

¹¹⁶ Alg. sec., 2.10.14: 3100, Rapport No. 2 Brondgeest.

¹¹⁷ OB II: 285, p. 514, 524-525.

if they happened to be present in the building.¹¹⁸ Brondgeest and Spits reported how the Chinese expressed their anxieties about their own safety and how they tried to receive more protection from the British. Even when a funeral procession for one of the victims took the form of a protest march, the Chinese could not make the British aware of their desperation.¹¹⁹ Leading figures of community then decided to take their fate into their own hands. They would arrange for their own protection.

Organizing self-defense

On December 13, 1945, the Chinese press published a call for recruits for a Chinese self-defense organization that was to be formed. Aiming to enlist as many as 300 young men, the Pao An Tui was organized as a collective attempt to relieve the Chinese in their distress.¹²⁰ The Association of Overseas Chinese Organizations (*Hua Ch'iao Chung Hui*, HCCH) had taken the initiative. This representative federation of the Chinese community had just held its first general meeting, on December 9, where the delegates collectively pressed for a solution to the problem of security.¹²¹ The manifesto accompanying the first meeting makes clear that the HCCH ambitiously aimed to step up as the representative body of the Chinese community as a whole. As shown by the list of elected committee members a total of 48 organizations were represented in the HCCH, including professional, cultural, educational and charity organizations.¹²² The HCCH would take the responsibility to relieve the Chinese in their difficult position since the

political problems of the local government have not yet obtained a satisfactory solution. The government of our country has not yet been able to execute its duty of protecting the Oversea Chinese fully. The local government is unsuccessful in giving the Oversea Chinese an all-round security.¹²³

Given that the ('local') Dutch and Republican were not able to reconcile their conflict or at least offer protection to the Chinese, and that the Chinese ('our') government did not attempt to intervene, the manifesto goes on to state that 'the Oversea Chinese must plan for their own safety'.¹²⁴

Indications that the HCCH was planning to take measures for the safeguarding of the Chinese began to appear in the days between the first meeting and the formation of the Pao An Tui. The following day the Malay-Chinese newspaper *Kerakjatan* announced that the HCCH had passed a resolution in favor of intervention by the United States, the Soviet Union and China in Indonesia and that it cautiously requested 'the government' (it was not specified which government the HCCH addressed) and the *pemudas* to pay more attention to the harm done to the Chinese by the

¹¹⁸ Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Procureur-Generaal bij het Hooggerechtshof van Nederlands-Indië, 1945-1950, 2.10.17: 679 (Rapport over het Chinese Security Corps (Pao An Tui), verbindingsofficier J. Hoogland, Medan, 25 October 1946). (hereafter Proc.-Gen.).

¹¹⁹ Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Ministerie van Defensie: Archieven van de Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, 2.13.132: 1340 (Nota 2). (Hereafter Min. Def.).

¹²⁰ Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Ministerie van Koloniën: Supplement, 1826-1952, 2.10.03: 86, 87 (Translated articles and excerpts of articles from newspapers published in Medan). (Hereafter Min. Kol.) Mandarin pinyin: Bǎo'ānduì, 保安隊, literally 'Peace protection force'.

¹²¹ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 3950 (Manifesto of the first general meeting of the members of the "Hua Chiao Chung Hui, Medan", Medan, 9 December 1945).

¹²² Ibid., (List of the elected committee members).

¹²³ Ibid., (Manifesto).

¹²⁴ According to a Dutch periodical report, the HCCH sent a telegram to Chiang Kai-shek on December 12, asking the Central Government in China to 'send an envoy to this place, who is given full authority to look after the interests of the Oversea Chinese in Sumatra.' Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3089.

robberies (*rampokkwaad*).¹²⁵ Governor Spits reported that the HCCH had expressed its concerns about the insecurity of the Chinese in Medan in a telegram to Chiang Kai-shek, stating that 'we hope urgently that the Central Government will send an envoy to this place, who is given full authority to look after the interests of the overseas Chinese in Sumatra.'¹²⁶ So even though the plan to raise a self-defense corps was not explicitly mentioned in the HCCH's manifesto or outlines of organization, the call for recruits issued on December 13 was unmistakably related to a longer debate on how to respond to the violence of the revolution.¹²⁷

The HCCH assigned Lim Seng to lead the Pao An Tui. Lim Seng had received the highest number of votes on the individual representatives at the first general meeting of the HCCH and thereby became the first of the nine special member of the representative committee.¹²⁸ The HCCH also took charge of the funding of the PAT, which would amount to f. 1000,- a month. Within a few days after the formation of the PAT was announced in the local newspapers, however, the number of recruits was adjusted to a limit of 100 men due to shortage of money. There was no money for weapons to supply even these 100 recruits. Although the British had tacitly indicated they approved the establishment of a Chinese Security Corps, as they called it, the military authorities refused to supply arms as the corps requested because they were afraid to damage the relations between the Chinese and Indonesians.¹²⁹ Instead, the PAT sought recourse to the community for support and asked the inhabitants of the Chinese district to inform the PAT of pending dangers by way of sounding the gong. The deterrent effect of this tactic was readily noticeable according to a British report:

The gong alarm system has been universally adopted by Chinese households and in two cases potential looters have been scared away by the hullabaloo created by the numerous gongs being beaten.¹³⁰

Despite its limited means, the Pao An Tui repeatedly clashed with Indonesian troops after it fought its first battle on December 16, when plunderers had entered a house in the Chinese district. Only armed with sticks, the corps was no match for the armed plunderers and had to sent out warning to the British forces rather than to get into the fight itself. The British troops shot seven Indonesians

¹²⁵ Min. Kol., 2.10.03: 87 (*Kerakatan*, 10 december 1945).

¹²⁶ Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3089 (Politiek verslag over Sumatra, C.O. AMACAB A.J. Spits, Padang, 17 januari 1946).

¹²⁷ It remains undecided whether the telegram to Chiang Kai-shek played a role in the idea to raise a Chinese self-defense organization in Medan. Governor Spits did not know at which day it was sent exactly (*omstreeks 12 december*), and I have not been able to trace a response from the Central Government in China. It is known that self-defense organizations under the name of *pao an tui* did exist in China. As Chalmers A. Johnson explains, 'The term *pao an tui* is a source of constant confusion. It was the name of the local hsien [county] militia units that existed under the National Government before the [Japanese] invasion and were retained by the Japanese to defend villages that did not have Japanese garrisons. *Pao an tui* was also the name given to the north China puppet army that was organized at the T'ungchou Officers' School outside Peiping in 1938.' After the Japanese invasion in 1937, peasants in the northern villages established self-defense forces to fill the vacuum left by the retreat of the Central Government armies, officials and other agents. 'In their efforts at defensive organization, the villagers welcomed whatever capable military and political leadership they could find – Communist, Nationalist, Sacrifice League (Shansi), secret society, KMT army remnants, or purely local leaders.' Chalmers A. Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: the Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962) 2-3, 211n77.

¹²⁸ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 3950 (List of the elected committee members). Lim Seng is both listed as 'Lui Sheng' and 'Lin Sheng', but despite the confusing Romanization, the Chinese characters (林聲) are the same.

¹²⁹ Min. Kol., 2.10.03: 86, 87.

¹³⁰ Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3100 (Rapport Sumatra Brondgeest no2, Attachment HQ 26 Ind Div Weekly Intelligence Summary No.11 (1 January 1946)).

and arrested six others once they arrived at the scene. Minor as this incident may seem, it set the precedent for the times to follow. The cooperation of the PAT with the British forces gave reason for the Indonesians to suspect pro-Dutch sympathies of the Chinese. A vicious circle developed as people's militias made another attack on the Chinese to retaliate their cooperation with the British on the 16th and as the Chinese responded in turn to protest again against the lack of protection. Merchants closed down their shops and joined a march of 6000 men strong, carrying the bodies of murdered victims to the British Headquarter. They requested more intensive patrolling of the Chinese district by British security forces and the Pao An Tui to be armed by them – a signal that would leave the Indonesians little room for doubt in their earlier assessment of Chinese loyalties. The Indonesian press responded by stating that the Chinese would be as safe as they could be if they would obey the orders of the Republic, if they would refrain from giving assistance to the Allied forces.¹³¹

Instead of supplying arms, the British authorities tried to persuade the PAT to cooperate with the Republican police and by January 17 the two forces together patrolled in the Chinese district.¹³² Their cooperation temporarily relieved tensions, but the problem of the people's militias' hostility against the Chinese soon returned to the surface in all its ferociousness. At the end of March, several houses, including that of president Lim Seng of the PAT, were attacked and one of the guardhouses of the PAT was assaulted by a group of 30 militiamen armed with hand grenades. These incidents finally spurred the British to supply the Pao An Tui with arms after all.¹³³

Even though the PAT did not obtain material support the British authorities until early in April, its intentions were received with suspicion by Indonesians from the outset. The local Malay press commented that 'the corps may well have been founded on different grounds than self-protection' after the call for recruits had appeared. As the Chinese were the prime suppliers of food for the Allies and only to a limited extent in favor of the Republic, the *Sinar Deli* found reason to suggest that the PAT was merely a disguise for an anti-Indonesian struggle group.¹³⁴ The approval, however tacit, of the British and the reluctance of the Chinese to make contact with the Republican authorities instead of the British contributed to the formation of a negative image that was hard to overcome. Suspicions that the PAT was indeed willing to cooperate with the PAT instead of the Republic was confirmed when the British started to supply arms and henceforth the PAT could no longer uphold its claim to be neutral in the conflict between the Indonesians and the Allies.¹³⁵

As part of the careful balancing act that the PAT had to play, its neutrality looked more like a double game that the leaders of the corps were trying to play in order not to upset the Indonesians. The British were taken aback by the diplomatic maneuvering like this:

In spite of the material aid given to the Chinese Security Corps by HQ ALF Sumatra, their attitude at the beginning of the week was one of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. Articles were published in the local press by the Chinese, who pledged their loyalty to the Indonesian "republiek"; at the same time a letter was sent to HQ ALF Sumatra by the Chinese Security Corps apologizing for the articles which were then appearing in the press and stating that they did not represent their real sentiments.¹³⁶

¹³¹ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 725 (Bimonthly report, 1-15 January 1946).

¹³² NEFIS, 2.10.62: 716 and 725.

¹³³ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 725 (over 16-31 March 1946) and OB II: 88.

¹³⁴ Min. Kol., 2.10.03, 86, 87.

¹³⁵ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 Gespreksverslag and Min. Kol., 2.10.03: 86, 87.

¹³⁶ OB IV: 88, Governor Spits is referring to the Weekly Intelligence Summary van HQ 26 Ind. Div. No. 27.

Despite attempts to demonstrate neutrality, the fact that the PAT did receive arms from the British made the Indonesians ever more weary of its motives. The people's militias responded by issuing an ultimatum on May 3 as to test the true allegiance of the PAT. The Chinese corps was called up to join the Republican city police and to be dissolved in it. A cease fire was issued together with the ultimatum to show the willingness of the Indonesian forces to get on a better footing with the PAT.¹³⁷ The PAT and the Republican forces had tried to cooperate in the preceding weeks and, as one pro-Republican Chinese-Malay newspaper argued, PAT's aim was to ensure public order, which would benefit the revolutionary struggle too.¹³⁸ Another opportunity to show willingness to improve relations was provided by the meeting that PAT's leaders had with Republican Prime-Minister Amir Sjariffudin and chief-editor of the *Sin Po* Ang Jan Goan, who visited Medan in April. They agreed to focus on friendly relations between the Chinese and Indonesians and that PAT would have to cooperate with the Republican police.¹³⁹

After receiving the ultimatum, the PAT leaders arranged a meeting with the directors of the HCCH to discuss how to respond to the demands of the ultimatum. According to a Dutch report on the PAT, the meeting was attended by 'representatives of the Chinese community at large', of whom the majority spoke out in favour of preserving the PAT as an independent security force. The HCCH directors however, refused to accept that the PAT would not comply with the ultimatum and they announced that the HCCH was no longer willing to bear the responsibility for the PAT.¹⁴⁰ As will be explained more in detail in the final section of this chapter, the HCCH had come under the influence of Chinese organizations which were both left-wing and pro-Indonesian independence. The Indonesian Republic itself recognized the HCCH as the official representative of the Chinese in Sumatra's East Coast.¹⁴¹ After the split from the HCCH, president Lim Seng of the PAT set up an advisory committee of 23 members and 6 advisors. And he installed a board of directors consisting of 5 men to take over the day-to-day management of the PAT.¹⁴²

As the PAT continued to pose a direct challenge to the Indonesian forces, the little hint of prospects for a better relationship between the Chinese and Indonesians did not materialize. A second ultimatum could not press PAT's leadership to give in either, one that even threatened that 'if the Chinese continued to oppose the "Merdeka"-movement and to refrain from disbanding their Security Corps, then all Chinese outside of the city would be killed,' according to a Dutch report.¹⁴³ Tensions culminated again in Medan after the infamous Tangerang incident of late May and early June, when more than 600 Chinese were killed by Indonesian forces when the Dutch army came to occupy the small town near Batavia.¹⁴⁴ Medan had taken on the characteristics of a besieged fortress in the mean time, with Indonesian troops surrounding the entire city. The Chinese district, located at the eastern border, became a vital part of the frontline. As the PAT tried to defend the district it was as if it fought a battle of military proportions – even before the British troops decided to take action.¹⁴⁵

¹³⁷ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 636 (No. 21), and Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3089 (Politiek verslag Spits over april).

¹³⁸ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 716, en 87.

¹³⁹ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 636 (No. 21) and 725.

¹⁴⁰ Proc.-Gen., 2.10.17: 679 (Rapport over het Chinese Security Corps (Pao An Tui)).

¹⁴¹ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 636 (No. 23).

¹⁴² 2.10.17: 679 (Rapport over het Chinese Security Corps (Pao An Tui)).

¹⁴³ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 636 (No. 21).

¹⁴⁴ Victor Purchell, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1951) 555.

¹⁴⁵ Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3089 (Politiek verslag Spits over april).

A more important role for the PAT in the defense of Medan as a whole is indicated by the changes made in the instructions issued by the British military to guide the operations of the corps. After supplying arms to the PAT early in April, the British authorities introduced instructions which laid down the general terms for engagement, but did not contain any detailed regulations for what it was allowed to undertake. This first set of instructions, issued on April 23, 1946, contained the provision that 'the C.S.C. and Indonesian police will patrol all areas except the Rawpi Area,' together with regulations on the size and number of patrols and that they would keep the British military informed.¹⁴⁶ Issued on June 27, the second set of instructions was considerably clearer in its formulation of the powers assigned to the PAT:

The task of the CSC is to defend the inhabitants of certain areas in MEDAN and their own static posts and the provision of information to the Allied Forces which will enable the Allied Forces to take offensive action against hostile elements threatening Chinese lives and property.¹⁴⁷

The areas of operation were divided into a part where 'CSC are entirely responsible for the patrolling of these areas which will NOT be patrolled by Allied Forces unless prior warning has been given to the CSC.' In the other areas assigned, the corps would establish and guard static posts, from where they would gather and provide information, but where they were not to patrol. The British had abandoned their earlier strategy of only protecting the key area, since they stated that 'patrolling in these areas will be the responsibility of Allied Forces'.

The second set of instructions of June 27 undoubtedly involved the PAT in the Allied effort to defend Medan from external attacks. Although the corps was not brought under British command, the British co-opted the autonomous Chinese force by giving it the responsibility to defend an important part of the city. At its inception however, the PAT took a position of neutrality in the conflict between the Indonesians and the Allies. It was organized with the aim of communal self-defense, born out of the need to offer protection to the Chinese.¹⁴⁸ This aim would not be served by taking side with the Allies. But neutrality could hardly be said to cover its true position after the PAT had received weapons from the British while it rejected the ultimatums from the Indonesians. In July president Lim Seng even publicly acknowledged the shift in the affiliations:

Chinese at other places largely under propaganda extremists and have misinterpreted our deals and activities. People alleged that Pao An Tui has connection with NICA or British, we don't deny fact. We should understand that the Allied auth are our allies, to make close connection with them is rather a natural thing.¹⁴⁹

The upsurge of violence in June demonstrated that cooperation with the British indeed provoked revenge. Why then did the leaders of the PAT take the risk of antagonizing the people's militias? Aligning with the Republican authorities was not a good alternative for seeking support from the British, for certainly the Chinese would have feared that the Republicans were not able, or willing, to put a genuine effort in the protection of the Chinese – let alone to allow the PAT to fight against the people's militias. After all, the Republican authorities themselves were in the sensitive position of

¹⁴⁶ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Nota A).

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., (Nota B) emphasis in the original.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., (Nota 3).

¹⁴⁹ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 1881 (Daily review of the Chinese press).

representing the Nationalist cause while standing opposite to the people's militias that tried to further that same cause.

The reason was most likely to have been that the PAT had little to gain from joining the Republican police. By the time the Indonesian forces issued their ultimatums, the PAT had grown impressively strong under British support. It had acquired a highly favorable position, firstly because the PAT was able to act and develop as it saw fit due to a lack of involvement by the British, and secondly by proving that it could indeed be very effective in countering attacks on the Chinese community. Now that the British were acknowledging PAT's worth in their own effort, the prospects of staying under British wings were even more promising. The opportunities, facilities even, offered by the British had enabled the PAT to establish itself as a prominent community organization within the Chinese district and force to reckon with for those outside, both the Indonesians and the British.

The PAT consisted of 100 men in the first weeks of its existence, when they obtained new uniforms in August, the number had increased to 300 men and by October a visiting Dutch marine officer was informed by 'Lt.kol. Tan' that the corps now consisted of 200 'regulars' and 1.000 to 1.100 'volunteers'. The contingent of regulars made up for the official strength of the corps and received arms from the British authorities. The volunteers were to take care of their own sustenance and uniforms and fulfilled their job in the PAT alongside their daily occupations.¹⁵⁰ The volunteers had little difficulty to require arms on their own account. PAT's financial report over the year 1946 lists individuals, companies and divisions that bought weapons and ammunition and the black market must indeed have been well supplied with military equipment from the Malayan Peninsula.¹⁵¹ In total more than 800.000 Japanese Guilders had been spent on weapons and ammunition.¹⁵² According to a later Dutch report, these numbers far exceeded the limits of membership and armament that the British authorities had set to the corps.¹⁵³ And indeed the British instructions of June 27 explicitly stated that 'the only weapons authorized to be in the possession of the CSC are these issued to them by HQ MEDAN AREA'.¹⁵⁴

The Pao An Tui as community organization

The organizational structure of the Pao An Tui suggests that it owed its strength not only to the opportunities given by the British, but especially to its rootedness in the Chinese community at large. The leadership was made up of the prominent figures who had been involved in its formation in December 1945.¹⁵⁵ The three most important leaders were Lim Seng, the president,¹⁵⁶ and the two liaison officers, the brothers Tan Boen Djin and Tan Boen Hock. Lim Seng's role in the formation of the PAT is mentioned in the memoirs of military reporter Hans Post, who accompanied the Dutch troops when they arrived in Sumatra's East Coast in October 1946. Hans Post recounts his first acquaintance with the Chinese soldiers of the 'curious' corps already in the first month of his arrival in Medan. He was struck by the strangely uniformed soldiers and their rifles with abnormally long

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 636

¹⁵² Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, (Nota 4).

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, (Nota B).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, (Nota 2).

¹⁵⁶ I have been informed by Dirk A. Buiskool that Lim Seng had been an employee of the Dutch trading firm Jacobsen van den Berg in Medan, but I have not been able to trace his personal details.

barrels. Present among the soldiers was president Lim Seng, who informed the author of the early history of the corps:

Armed with sticks and spears, young Chinese men began to stand guard and walk patrols; several times they pulled it off with this primitive equipment to halt extremists armed with sten guns, bren guns and rifles. The republican police seemed to sell out to the criminals; the republican press accused the corps of choosing sides against the republic; in short, the Pao An Tui had many problems. For political reasons, the British headquarter refused to supply weapons until March 1946; when several assaults on Chinese houses – among which the residence of president Lim Seng of the Pao An Tui – ended with casualties, the British realized that the terror had become too serious to remain passive. After a small number of firearms was provided, no more *rampokkers* – thieves – dared to enter the districts under Chinese protection.¹⁵⁷

Liaison officers Tan Boen Djin and Tan Boen Hock came from a prominent business family in Medan. Their father Tan Tang Ho had become a member of the local commercial elite as founder of the luxurious Seng Hap department store (established in 1881) and as owner of the spirit farm in Sumatra's East Coast (obtained in 1897) and the salt farm in Bagan Siapiapi. The patriarch of the Tan family had been on the board of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce (*Siang Hwee*) and the *Tiong Hoa Hwe Koan*, the Chinese-oriented educational organization. Born in the Dutch Indies himself, in Batavia, Tan Tang Ho headed one of the very few commercially successful *peranakan* families of Medan. His son Tan Boen An succeeded him as director of Seng Hap in 1918 and he transformed the department store into a full-fledged import firm that was the first Chinese firm to be able to compete with its Dutch equivalents. Tan Boen An held an exceptional position between the Dutch administration and plantation elite and the Chinese community as he represented the Seng Hap in both the Dutch and the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and became the first elected Chinese member of the Town Council (*gemeenteraad*) in 1926.¹⁵⁸ Before becoming the liaison officers of the PAT, Tan Boen Djin and Tan Boen Hok had worked together with their brother in Seng Hap and his two other trading companies.¹⁵⁹

Through their long-established family connections and membership of the *Siang Hwee*, the Tan brothers were likely to have been involved in the *Hua Ch'iao Chung Hui*, the federation of Chinese organizations that had taken the initiative for the formation of the PAT. The *Siang Hwee* was one of the organizations represented by the HCCH, along with 47 other professional, cultural and charity organizations.¹⁶⁰ President Lim Seng of the PAT must have been socially active even before he

¹⁵⁷ Hans Post, *Bandjir over Noord-Sumatra*, Volume I: *Bandjir over Noord-Sumatra* (Medan 1948) 20. Hans Post (pen-name of Hubert Paas) was plausibly employed by the Dienst Legercontacten Indonesië (Military Communication Service). Most of the time he was joined by Ben Huisman, who was a photographer for that service, and he referred to himself as the 'pen-pusher' (*pennenlikker*), a common nickname for a clerk in the military service. See Hans Post, *Bandjir over Noord-Sumatra*, Volume II: *Politioenele Actie* (Medan 1948) 80, 158; and the photograph collection of the Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Fotocollectie Dienst voor Legercontacten Indonesië, 2.24.04.01.

¹⁵⁸ Buiskool, 'The Penang Connection,' 120-121; Buiskool, 'The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Medan,' 4. Dirk A. Buiskool has interviewed the late Tan Boen Djin for his articles on the commercial elite of Medan and he is currently working on a book on the same topic, see <http://www.trijaya-travel.com/dat/travel.php?pa=CV-DAB>.

¹⁵⁹ Twang, *The Chinese Business Elite in Indonesia*, 50.

¹⁶⁰ The *Hua Ch'iao Chung Hui* was similar to the *Chung Hua Tsung Hui* described in chapter 2. The federation of Chinese associations in Medan was only different in name.

engaged in the community's self-defense corps as well, since he became the 'special members' with the most votes at the HCCH's first general meeting on December 9, 1945.¹⁶¹

After the PAT broke away from the HCCH in May 1946 the PAT rapidly transformed into a community organization in its own right – even though it was originally assigned with the limited task of protecting the Chinese community from external attacks and aimed to dissolve itself once peace and order would return to the district. The installment of an advisory committee and a board of directors to run the day-to-day management of the PAT tied the PAT much closer to the Chinese business elite, which was strongly affiliated to the Kuomintang. The influence of these businessmen on the PAT was shown as ideological divisions between the HCCH and PAT became more and more apparent.

The HCCH became dominated by left-wing organizations, the China Democratic League (CDL) and its affiliated youth associations, trade union and newspaper.¹⁶² The Democratic League was a communist front organization, not directly affiliated with the overseas branches of the Chinese Communist Party, but sympathetic towards the increasingly stronger rival of the Kuomintang.¹⁶³ Moreover, the CDL put much more weight on the anti-imperialist ideology than the right-wing Kuomintang and was openly pro-Republican in local politics. Once the HCCH became dominated by these CDL-affiliated organizations, the federation was sympathetic towards the Indonesian efforts to attain independence. An early indication for the association of the HCCH with the CDL can be found in the list of committee members elected at the HCCH's first meeting on December 9, 1945. Among the special members was Wang Renshu, a Chinese writer and journalist who stayed in Indonesia since 1941.¹⁶⁴ In January 1946 he became the president of the CDL in Medan.¹⁶⁵ As reported by Mary Somers-Heidhues, Wang was close to Abdul Karim, the leader of the Communist Party of Indonesia (*Partai Komunis Indonesia*, PKI) and later, in 1947, expelled from Indonesia by the Dutch because he was suspected of aiding the Republic.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, the HCCH had branches in the towns around Medan and had better contact with the Indonesian struggle groups operating from those rural towns.¹⁶⁷

The Pao An Tui on the other hand took a conservative stance that included both affiliation with the Kuomintang and the Allied occupation authorities. After the split with the HCCH, the PAT came to represent the interests of the Chinese business community as its members became involved in the management of the PAT.¹⁶⁸ PAT's aim had been the provision of peace and order in the large and formerly thriving Chinese district. Stability was a prerequisite for the businessmen to resume their commercial activities. Moreover, most of the businessmen would have looked with suspicion to the communist sympathies of the increasingly influential youths. In any case, the PAT found its principal supporters among the businessmen of Medan. Initially still through the HCCH and after the split presumably directly, the business community financed the corps to feed and clothe its members

¹⁶¹ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 3950 (List of elected committee members of the HCCH).

¹⁶² NEFIS, 2.10.62: 636 (No. 23).

¹⁶³ Milton Sacks, 'The Strategy of Communism in Southeast Asia,' *Pacific Affairs* 23:3 (1950) 227-247, 228.

¹⁶⁴ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 3950 (List of elected committee members). Wang Renshu (named Wang Yenshu, 王任叔, in the list) was writing under the pen name of Bahren, or Pa Jen, 巴人.

¹⁶⁵ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 4648 (Resoluties bijeenkomst uitvoerend comité Democratic league Sumatra te Medan op 11-1-46 [translated from Chinese]).

¹⁶⁶ Somers-Heidhues, 'Citizenship and Identity,' 125.

¹⁶⁷ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 4648 (Resoluties bijeenkomst uitvoerend comité Democratic league Sumatra te Medan op 11-1-46 [translated from Chinese]).

¹⁶⁸ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Nota 8).

and to purchase weapons and ammunition on the black market. The PAT in turn accounted for its expenses over the first year – including when and where which weapons were bought – in a financial report that was distributed among the Chinese middle classes (*burgerij*).¹⁶⁹

Despite their diverging political orientation, the PAT and left-wing organizations federated in the HCCH continued to cooperate with each other, particularly in the relief of Chinese evacuees who arrived in Medan in regular flows after they had fled or been rescued from the countryside. Ideology, rivalry in motherland politics and assessment of the Indonesian Republic certainly divided the community, but the hardships of the Chinese demanded cooperation and mutual solidarity of all Chinese. The Chinese press reported about the organization of a relief association under the auspices of Chinese consul Lie Shih to provide assistance, food, clothing and medicine to evacuees. Both PAT president Lim Seng and HCCH chairman Chang Tung Chao were among the seven prominent community leaders who established the association on July 5.¹⁷⁰ The consul launched a relief campaign in the Chinese district to collect money, the Chinese Red Cross provided food and cigarettes and the PAT was responsible for distributing the goods among the evacuees. By the end of July, 750 evacuees had been accommodated in the Catholic school and the Chi An hospital.¹⁷¹

Politics in the motherland may have been a source of division among the Chinese in Medan, the consul who represented the Chinese government tried to be a binding factor regardless of the rapidly developing conflict at home. Lie Shih had been interned by the Japanese during the war and could fulfill consular functions even though consuls from China were not yet admitted to return to their posts in Indonesia.¹⁷² Having shared the experiences of the hardships of Japanese occupation in Medan, he had become part of the local community to a much larger extent than newly arrived consular officials could otherwise have become. Lie initially tried to unite all Chinese, including the outspoken Communist sympathizers, instead of only focusing on KMT-affiliated organizations.

The consul's cooperation with the Pao An Tui was nonetheless very close from the start. That the PAT itself also had connections with the Kuomintang government in China was shown by the fact that its members were trained by former soldiers of Chiang Kai-shek's National Revolutionary Army. Six of those soldiers had come to Medan during the war after having served in China and were enlisted for the PAT to serve as drill instructors.¹⁷³ As they helped to build up the organization of the corps, they used their own military training as a model for the type of drill they taught PAT's recruits, brought their weapons and uniforms with them, showed how new uniforms could be made to resemble theirs and they applied same system of ranking in Chiang Kai-shek's army to PAT's officers. President Lim Seng for example had the rank of lieutenant-general by the sign of his three-star red insignia.¹⁷⁴

The Pao An Tui acquired and consolidated a position of importance during the period of British occupation of Medan. As Chinese self-defense organization, the Chinese inhabitants of Medan were the first to notice how the PAT was able to stand up against the people's militias. Whether or

¹⁶⁹ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Financieel verslag, en brief HCvP).

¹⁷⁰ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 1881 (Daily review of the Chinese press). Besides Consul Lie Shih, the other four founders were Ong Huat Kim (chairman of the *Siang Hwee* and business partner of Chinese Major Khoe Tjin Tek, Buiskool, 'The Penang Connection,' 120), Chang Pu Ching (former Chinese consul and son of Tjong Yong Hian, Buiskool, 'The Penang Connection,' 117), and Hsu Hwa Chang (former Captain of the Chinese).

¹⁷¹ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 1881 (Daily review of the Chinese press, 3-9 July and 31 July).

¹⁷² Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken: Code-Archief 1945-1954, 2.05.117: 2431.

¹⁷³ Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Commandant der Zeemacht in Nederlands-Indië, 1942-1950, 2.13.72: 12 (hereafter CZ, followed by inventory and file number). And Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Nota 10-11 and N).

¹⁷⁴ CZ, 2.13.72: 12.

not the PAT was able to prevent the militias from harming the Chinese was beside the point; when the Chinese came under attack, the PAT fought back and showed the community to be of help. It earned respect by its performance, drew on the mental and material support of the community members and was able to increase both its organizational strength and influence within the district.

More than the *Hua Ch'iao Chung Hui*, leading community organization from which it arose, the PAT stepped into the intermediary position between the government authorities (temporarily represented by the British) and the Chinese community left open after the Japanese occupation. The British were only preparing the ground for the Dutch government to return, but they co-opted the Chinese corps by assigning it the responsibility to defend an important part of the city. Yet the PAT was largely left to itself in its means to carry out its assignment, which gave its leadership the opportunity to strengthen and take on more functions than the purely military defense from external attacks. Exceeding its official powers in terms of membership, armament and tasks of patrolling, the corps developed into a private force in its own right, a force to reckon with for the returning Dutch authorities.

4. The Pao An Tui as the Chinese community's own security force

Under Dutch command

In August 1946 the British government announced that their troops were to leave the Indonesia by late November.¹⁷⁵ The Dutch military prepared to take over the British positions after their withdrawal, while new forces were raised, armed and trained on the spot. Former prisoners of war were already recruited into the KNIL from March onwards and the British assigned these local forces a greater military role in the occupation of Sumatra.¹⁷⁶ These troops first fell under the responsibility of British division until Dutch Headquarters took over the administration of these forces in September.¹⁷⁷ By late October, the Dutch troops began to relieve the British of their positions and progressed to take over the responsibility of defending the different sectors along the demarcation line around Medan.

The formation of local KNIL forces and the arrival of Dutch troops heightened the hostility of Indonesians, who repeatedly clashed with the British and Dutch forces. In preparation of the coming of Dutch Royal Army (*Koninklijke Landmacht*) due in October, the British had arranged a truce with the local Republican leaders in September, but this merely provided the opportunity for the people's militias to strengthen their positions around Medan. By early October, the militias began to put up stronger opposition to the Allied forces in anticipation of the handover of command to the Dutch.¹⁷⁸ In order to 'create a better atmosphere' for negotiations between the Dutch and Indonesian Republic and for the smooth arrival of Dutch troops from The Netherlands, the British made a second attempt to reach a truce early in November. This time, the locally arranged truce was strengthened by the general truce which had been negotiated between the British and Republicans for the whole of Allied-occupied Indonesia, for which detailed truce orders were issued from Jakarta on November 8. The British arranged meetings between Dutch and Indonesian representatives, but disagreement over demarcation lines remained unresolved up until the last British brigade left Medan on November 21.¹⁷⁹

In contrast to the heightening tensions that marked October, the departure of British troops and the replacement of their positions by KNIL troops proceeded peacefully. The truce was observed by the Republican Army (now named *Tentara Republik Indonesia*, TRI) and the cooperation between the Dutch and Republican authorities initiated by the British was continued in an atmosphere of cordiality, according to the Dutch report over November.¹⁸⁰ But the continuing attacks of the people's militias put the newfound understanding to the test. Prospects of better cooperation with the Republican police were strained by the complicated relationship that the TRI had with the people's militias, neither able to control its brothers in arms, nor willing to take strong action against them.

Now that they were in command, the Dutch moved in to establish a much closer relationship with the Pao An Tui than the British had done. The PAT had first come into contact with the KNIL in

¹⁷⁵ McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia*, 5.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 133, 223n90-91.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁷⁸ OB VI: 22.

¹⁷⁹ McMillan, *The British Occupation of Indonesia*, 135-136.

¹⁸⁰ OB VI: 211.

August, when the leaders spoke with liaison officer Major Supheert about the possibilities of cooperation. Soon after the handing over of command to Colonel Pieter Scholten of the KNIL on November 19, the first agreements between the Dutch and the PAT were made on the status of the corps and the uniforms the members would wear. In a meeting between the leaders of the KNIL and the PAT, including the Chief of Staff, General D.C. Buurman van Vreeden, it was agreed to let the members wear the green uniforms of the KNIL, with distinguishable insignia on armbands and head caps. On the point of the status of the corps, liaison officer Tan Boen Djin insisted that PAT would not openly enter the KNIL as military subdivision. They agreed to adopt the term 'city guards' (*stadswachten*). The corps would cooperate with the 4th Infantry and obey the colonel's orders.¹⁸¹

Despite the relative calm and PAT's insistence on remaining independent, the PAT functioned as an auxiliary arm 'for special purposes' of the Dutch military as soon as the Dutch took over command. The KNIL had provided 511 weapons, including 45 (semi-)automatic weapons, on top of the 152 supplied by the British.¹⁸² The later Chief Constable of the Police, W.G. Eybergen reported that 'about one thousand members were fed, clothed, armed, equipped and directed by the KNIL' right after the British had left Medan, which led him to argue that:

In the period following the withdrawal of the British occupation forces from Medan, the CSC was almost completely deployed as a military force to defend the south eastern (Chinese) district against the near continuous attacks and infiltrations of the Laskars and TRI. It is said that the CSC has done an excellent military job. During this period, the CSC thus genuinely occupied a part of the Dutch frontline, facing the organized forces of the Republic of Indonesia.¹⁸³

The easy way in which agreement was reached shows that the Dutch had already established a good relationship with the PAT even while the British were still in charge. The PAT had clearly proven its effectiveness and worth to the Dutch officials in helping to defend the city from the people's militias. The Dutch were not in the least reluctant to involve the PAT in their effort and to provide it with the necessary facilities.¹⁸⁴ The British had inadvertently groomed the leaders of the PAT for the office of Chinese officer and the Dutch eagerly confirmed their official appointment as soon as they took the command.

The leaders of the PAT themselves knew well how to present the PAT as a welcome ally for the Dutch by adopting a position in the struggle closely resembling that of their future superiors. In a reaction to criticism from the pro-Republican *Hua Ch'iao Chung Hui*, Lim Seng employed the exact same rhetoric as the Dutch used in their documentation – and already in July 1946:

We want to maintain friendly relations with Indonesians. (...) But we cannot go together with lawless extremists who at any moment threaten our lives and loot our properties. It is our duty to give a lesson. We want to befriend with good-natured Indonesians, but we will fight and punish those extremists.¹⁸⁵

Like the Dutch, Lim Seng equates the 'extremists' with the revolutionary nationalists, while the 'good-natured Indonesians' constitute a separate group. If it were not for the dominance of the

¹⁸¹ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Gespreksverslag, 3 December 1946).

¹⁸² Ibid. (Gespreksverslag)

¹⁸³ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Nota 12).

¹⁸⁴ OB VI: 211.

¹⁸⁵ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 1881 (Daily review of the Chinese press).

‘extremists’, whose ‘notoriety has spoiled their government, their fame in the fraternity of nations and even their independence’, Lim would have been willing to cooperate with the Republican cause.

Skillfully as Lim Seng aligned the corps with the Dutch agenda, he did not just let the PAT be absorbed into the KNIL unconditionally and to give up autonomy. The Dutch not only inherited a well-organized and useful additional ally from the British period. The PAT’s growth and consolidation may have been convenient for the Dutch in their attempt to defend Medan against Indonesian forces, but the other side of the coin was that the corps had become an exceptionally strong force in its own right. Its organizational strengthening was largely left uncontrolled by the British authorities, providing ample opportunity for PAT’s leadership to develop and promote its own agenda. The Dutch civil administrators who had arrived in Medan to maintain law and order soon discovered that the British had left a particularly troublesome legacy. As PAT strengthened its position in the Chinese district and grew into its role as protector of the Chinese community, it adopted more and more functions that were not so much to do with defending the community from external attacks as with guarding the public order *within* the community.

The role that the PAT began to fulfill within the Chinese district diverged increasingly from the original objective of self-defense. In protecting the Chinese from external attacks, the PAT had to depend on the cooperation and material support of the British and, since the hand over, of the Dutch military. But as a key community organization, the PAT aimed to exercise authority in the Chinese community as autonomously from the Dutch as possible. So while the PAT grew increasingly stronger as autonomous community leader within the Chinese district, the corps continued to perform its role as auxiliary arm of the KNIL along the boundaries of the Chinese district. By the end of October 1947, the PAT showed all the signs of having followed in the footsteps of the traditional Chinese officers who had fulfilled the function of intermediary between the state and the Chinese society before the war. And similar to the Chinese officers who preceded the PAT leaders in Medan, Chinese nationalism was a major source of inspiration for the way they gave shape to their roles.

Maintaining order in the Chinese Community

Two days after the first year anniversary of the Pao An Tui, the chief officer of the police, F.F. van Nieuwenhuizen, became aware what the corps was undertaking outside of Dutch supervision. He had accidentally found out that two PAT members had attempted to murder a man named Lim Tjin Tek, but that the PAT kept silent about the offence committed within its ranks to the Dutch police officer installed at PAT’s headquarter to keep an eye on its operations. Soon after the PAT members were arrested, Van Nieuwenhuizen was compelled to release the suspects at the insistence of president Lim Seng. Convinced by Lim’s argument that the PAT’s performance was largely dependent on the contribution of exactly those two members, Van Nieuwenhuizen decided to suspend the case until further notice.¹⁸⁶

The case undeniably demonstrated that the PAT was not just the obedient, well-disciplined assistant that the Dutch military supposed it to be. In reality, it was a private force, with its own agenda, its own internal regulations and policy of dealing with the Dutch authorities. Installing a Dutch police inspector at the PAT headquarter was the first attempt to put the corps under supervision more tightly. But his findings made it only more apparent how the PAT was slipping out of their hands. That the PAT engaged in functions of the police was not even beyond its formal powers to start with. The set of instructions issued by a Dutch officer in April 1947 explicitly stated

¹⁸⁶ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Nota E).

that the PAT's principal task, the protection of the lives and goods of the Chinese, was characteristically that of the police (*van zuiver politioneele aard*). Moreover, it was assigned with the power to make arrests, search houses and take immediate action in case the Dutch security forces could not be warned in time.¹⁸⁷

The PAT did exceed, or rather did exploit its formal powers, as chief constable Eybergen's report on the development of the corps makes clear. The Lim Tjin Tek case was only the first example of self-employed crime fighting without giving account of its actions to the Dutch authorities. The headquarter in the Hongkongstraat came to function as the regular police station of the Chinese district. The Chinese 'constables' did not just detain the people until the Civil Police arrived to take them over, but took them into full custody.¹⁸⁸ From the moment the PAT first fell under British command, its primary activity had been patrolling the area and guarding static posts, for example the office of the Chinese consul, the cinema, the water tower and the schools of the district. But since it now had limited police tasks, patrolling easily took on the characteristics of routine community policing. The corps knew exactly what was going on in the district. People came to the headquarter to lodge complaints or to inform the corps of possible offences. Detainees and witnesses were interrogated and evidence was procured as if it was the normal course of events; even the judgements were passed by the corps.¹⁸⁹

The fact that the PAT passed judgments on its detainees was perhaps the most unacceptable expression of autonomy, but it was on a more practical level that the PAT proved the most troublesome. Its members regularly clashed with the constables of the Dutch Civil Police. What the Dutch police officer called 'self-willed' or 'arbitrary' arrests (*eigenmachtige arrestaties*) were justified actions in the eyes of PAT members.¹⁹⁰ Chief constable Eybergen reported that the PAT claimed to be the Chinese community's 'own national military and police apparatus' (*eigen nationaal militair en politioneel gezagsapparaat*) and was indeed perceived in that way by the community members.¹⁹¹ Chinese citizens tended to go by the PAT headquarter instead of notifying the Dutch police. In cases involving Chinese inhabitants, whether among themselves or in a conflict between a Chinese and an Indonesian, the PAT stepped in to settle the case or take further action as if it was self-evidently entitled to it. Dutch police for the Dutch, Republican police for the Indonesians and the Chinese Security Corps for the Chinese – so to speak. The Dutch police, obviously taken aback by this attitude, had a difficult job in trying to convince the Chinese that the PAT was not the 'Chinese police' whatsoever and that they had to obey the Dutch police no matter what the PAT tried to tell them. The PAT itself did not only keep its police activities secret, but even tried to obstruct the Dutch police in the execution of its job in cases involving Chinese.¹⁹²

Starting in February 1947, attempts were made to restrain the PAT in its uncontrolled growth and freedom of movement. Dutch authorities estimated that its total strength numbered up to 1.000 to 1.400 men, but exact figures were not provided by the PAT. Although it would be a difficult task to do something about the large pool of trained and armed reservists (the former volunteers), the lower-ranking personnel was officially cut down to 534 men by July 1947.¹⁹³ Moreover, a new set of

¹⁸⁷ 2.13.132: 1340 (Nota C).

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, (Nota N; the term 'constables' was used in an overview on the formation and dislocation of the Pao An Tui, composed by police inspector C. den Haan, Medan, 10 August 1947).

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, (Nota 14-15 and M).

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, (Nota 16).

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, (Nota 7).

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, (Nota 19-23).

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, (Nota N) and OB VII: 384.

instructions was issued to replace the previous police-oriented instructions. The PAT was now strictly forbidden to accept declarations and complaints, to engage in criminal investigation and obligated to hand over detained suspects to the Dutch authorities immediately.¹⁹⁴

For a few months it would have been possible that the independent conduct of the PAT could definitively be curtailed by these restrictions. The monthly report of February 1947 even stated that the gradual reduction of membership would finally result in dissolving the PAT in May or June.¹⁹⁵ Lim Seng and Tan Boen Djin had repeatedly confirmed that the organization would be disbanded as soon as the situation in Medan 'was normal again', that is once the Chinese would no longer be suffering from violent attacks on their lives and property by armed revolutionaries.¹⁹⁶ The apparent ease with which the decision to start working towards dissolution was reached suggests that the PAT had indeed made itself redundant.

But the fact that PAT was not dissolved confirms that its primary role had shifted from defending the community from external attacks to maintaining law and order within the community. The change in the functioning of the PAT, from military defense to civil policing, made the Dutch more dependent on the PAT. The PAT carried out functions which the Dutch police was not sufficiently equipped. Even if the Dutch would have the ability to break the monopoly of the PAT in the Chinese district, the Dutch police would not be in the position to fill the gap left by the removal of the PAT as the district police. Even the chief constable was reluctant to 'act rigorously against' the PAT, as he knew that at the time 'the Civil Police did not dispose of sufficient trained personnel to be able to take over the care for and guarding of the extensive and densely populated Chinese district'.¹⁹⁷

Finally, the effects of the attempt to curtail the PAT in its unchecked growth and development were annulled when the Dutch launched the First Police Action, the first major military offensive of the Dutch to reoccupy economically important areas starting on July 21, 1947. By August 5, Dutch forces had regained control over most of Sumatra's East Coast by occupying the smaller towns around Medan. As the PAT had been regarded as an 'indispensable army unit' (*onmisbaar legeronderdeel*)¹⁹⁸ in the defense of Medan, the occupation of the surrounding towns renewed the necessity to call in the assistance of the PAT. People's militias still roamed the countryside and their guerrilla tactics had gained an extra dimension by the 'scorched earth' policy; that is, the economic assets that the Dutch tried to regain by the Police Action were in turn tried to destroy by the militias. The Chinese were again among the many victims of the new tactics. The Chinese districts in numerous rural towns were burned to the ground by withdrawing militias or just in time saved from the flames by arriving Dutch forces.¹⁹⁹

While being engaged in their military offensive, the Dutch troops were not available to guard the many displaced Chinese left in their torn-down houses, nor were the Dutch security forces in Medan sufficiently capable of helping out in the countryside.²⁰⁰ Within these circumstances, the Pao An Tui in Medan was called upon to evacuate the Chinese in need, to provide relief services and to guard the areas where Chinese victims were assembled. PAT units joined the Dutch troops in fourteen different towns with substantial Chinese populations, including Bindjai, Lubuk Pakam,

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., (Nota D).

¹⁹⁵ OB VII: 217.

¹⁹⁶ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Gespreksverslag) and (Nota P).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., (Nota 15).

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., (Nota 15).

¹⁹⁹ OB X: 384.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

Siantar and Brastagi.²⁰¹ For a few days, the PAT was focusing again on its original task of defending the Chinese from external attacks. The PAT was back on its original strength of 1.000 men within two months after the First Police Action, after the previously dismissed men had been employed again to serve in the reoccupied towns. The relative stability in Medan was not affected by the offensive around its borders. Only 200 men remained in the city and almost all of its trained membership could be sent to the countryside.²⁰²

Instead of curtailing the self-employed behavior of the Chinese self-appointed constables, the developments of the second half of 1947 contributed to the problem of independently operating PAT members even more. The relocated units consisted of members who had learned the job in Medan and had grown accustomed to the powers they had there.²⁰³ Once settled in places as far as 130 kilometers from Medan, Pematang Siantar being the furthest away, the units could easily act on their own account due to reduced supervision. So even though the new instructions assigned the PAT with a purely military status and deprived it of its police powers, the relocated units soon engaged in police tasks and arrested suspects just as before in Medan.

The Dutch civil officials, the troubled chief constable in particular, were ever more concerned about the unbridled development of a private police force. The presence of the PAT in the rural towns proved particularly problematic. Incidents of clashes between PAT members and the relocated units of the Civil Police added up to a growing list of unacceptable behavior. The case of Titipapan is illustrative for the way in which PAT acted against the Civil Police when it was trying to settle a case concerning 'Chinese affairs'. A Chinese man provoked the indignation of the PAT when he turned to the Civil Police to be escorted to his house. Ten fully armed Chinese constables demanded to take the man over from the officer – who reluctantly gave in – and proceeded to surround the police post. When a police officer went by the PAT commander for an explanation, he was told that

when a Chinese person is involved in a case for the police [*een politioneele kwestie*], he – the commanding officer – should be informed, because according to him, he is the one entitled to examine Chinese issues, and about which he would then report to the police.²⁰⁴

In the nearby town of Lubuk Pakam, a relocated Dutch police inspector reported about two incidents in a row in which PAT members tried to stop a Dutch police patrol from making its round, because they were entering the Chinese district where 'the police had nothing to say'. The dislocated PAT unit, consisting of 35 men, was better armed and with more automatic weapons than the Dutch police, so the Dutch police indeed had a hard time to assert its authority. Since the town itself had not been under attack since it was occupied by the Dutch, the police inspector urged to make the PAT to leave Lubuk Pakam.²⁰⁵

Titipapan and Lubuk Pakam were examples of the rural towns where the PAT could establish little enclaves of Chinese self-rule. The dislocated PAT units set up offices in the towns to serve as a base of operation, to store weapons and where the original members from Medan would have been accommodated during their stay. At these offices, and on vehicles they brought along, the PAT units displayed the 'Blue sky with a white sun' flag of the Kuomintang government. When Colonel Scholten

²⁰¹ OB X:126 and Min. Def., 2.13.132:1340 (Nota 18).

²⁰² Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Nota N).

²⁰³ Ibid., (Nota M).

²⁰⁴ Ibid., (Nota K).

²⁰⁵ Ibid., (Nota O).

finally heard about the PAT units displaying the Chinese flag alone, he ordered liaison officer Tan Boen Djin to let the Dutch flag be raised as well.²⁰⁶

Overseas Chinese nationalism

If the PAT already perceived itself as the Chinese community's 'own national military and police apparatus', this belief was strengthened by the way in which the Dutch responded to actions like those described above. More often than not, incidents of arbitrary arrests, detention and even the execution of suspects were left unpunished. Suspected PAT members were not consequently prosecuted, nor were stern measures taken against the PAT organization as a whole. Intimidating the police and thereby hindering the police to carry out its duties was an offense in its own right, but since the relocated Civil Police units were in no position to assert their authority, the PAT felt little sense of accountability.²⁰⁷

Due to the structural lack of accountability the PAT leaders and members could live in the illusion that they had some kind of extraterritorial rights. It would have taken little imagination to think of themselves as operating in a state of being exempted from the jurisdiction of the local law. Naturally, the PAT did not enjoy extraterritorial rights officially, but the practice of leaving its offenses unpunished left such an interpretation certainly conceivable. The Lim Tjin Tek case shows that it was not just a matter of neglect by the Dutch authorities; instead, they actively contributed to the view that PAT disposed of special rights which the Dutch authorities were willing to endorse. The two suspects in the case had been detained and charged with attempted murder by the Civil Police, but were released again at the insistence of president Lim Seng.²⁰⁸

The most striking feature of the PAT's implicit claim to extraterritorial rights was that it was largely self-conceived. The Chinese government was highly unlikely to have played an active guiding role in PAT's transformation into a 'national military and police apparatus'. Caught in a civil war with the Communist Party, the Kuomintang government civil administration – including the Overseas Chinese Department – was largely out of function. Indirectly however, the longer-term KMT-policy of reaching out to the Chinese overseas had left its mark on the way the Chinese overseas perceived their relationship with the Chinese government. Five decades of transnational nationalism bequeathed them not only the idea to look at the motherland for protection, but also that they themselves had to fulfill a role in service of the motherland. Their orientation to China had included of loyalty to the KMT, the revolutionary party that would bring China on equal terms with the other great powers in the world. The KMT had specifically addressed the crucial role that the Chinese overseas were to play in the quest of modernization and the *huaqiao* with all their organizations, business connections and charity campaigns had indeed put their mark on the contours and substance of Chinese nationalism.

Now that the motherland had ascended to world stage, the Chinese overseas felt that they had a continuing obligation to defend all that the Chinese had gained in status. After all, the Chinese in Medan *were* subjects of China, they had the right to receive diplomatic protection while they resided abroad. But China could not deliver. As a way to accept the unpalatable truth that the now powerful and respected China was still unable to look after its overseas 'sons', the leaders skillfully framed the PAT's role in terms of the duty to protect their brethren as representatives of the

²⁰⁶ Ibid., (Resume bespreking inzake CSC, 6 jan 1948).

²⁰⁷ Ibid., (Nota L).

²⁰⁸ Ibid., (Nota E).

motherland. By taking up this duty self-handedly, the PAT fulfilled the aim which the HCCH had stated so forcefully in its manifesto of December 1945: if the Chinese overseas were neglected by the government, both in the host country and by that of the mother country, they must organize their own protection.²⁰⁹

The PAT strongly identified with the ideology of the KMT, which had been the dominant political outlook of the business community before the war. After the split with the left-wing HCCH, the PAT grew more and more into its role as representative of the KMT and worked even more closely with the new Chinese consuls who had recently been admitted into the Indies.²¹⁰ The new consuls found a strong ally in the already Nationalist-oriented PAT and the PAT was willing to lend its support to the consul upon his request. Already in September 1946, the PAT arrested the principal of a Chinese middle school (recently established by the HCCH and the rival of the Su Tung school) at the insistence of the consul, because he had published a critical article on Chiang Kai-shek, 'the fascist dictator', in the school paper.²¹¹ The consul in turn helped the PAT in its attempt to release one of its members from police detention.²¹²

The arrival of consuls from China did establish a more direct connection between the PAT and the Chinese government, but the more indirect connections with the motherland had a more determining impact on the attitude of the PAT. The officially appointed consuls did not arrive in Medan until a year after the formation of the PAT. Lie Shih had been a consular official until he was interned by the Japanese, but during the first decisive months of the PAT's existence, contact between the war-torn countries was likely to have been hindered.

The other agents of the KMT government who put their mark on the PAT were the six former soldiers of Chiang Kai-shek's army who served as its drill instructors. Their influence on the organizational structure, appearance and training was unmistakable according to the Dutch marine officer who visited the PAT in October 1946. What he encountered in Medan was Chinese Security Corps modeled after a regular corps division of the Chinese National Army.²¹³ The military prowess of the corps was of the same caliber as the Pao An Tui in the nearby Bagan Siapiapi had recently demonstrated. The Chinese-dominated fishing town (the second largest of the world before the outbreak of the world) had been taken over completely by the local PAT after a fierce battle had been fought with the people's militias.²¹⁴ As in Medan its members were trained by former soldiers of the Chinese army, who had been active as guerrilla fighters in Malaya during the Japanese occupation according to Governor Spits, and wore similar uniforms.²¹⁵ The PAT leaders told the marine officer 'to be proud of what had happened in Bagan'.

Chief constable Eybergen attributed the 'unacceptable consequences of the subsequent growth and development' to the involvement of the Chinese soldiers. The developments in Bagan Siapiapi had shown what a Chinese self-defense organization trained by real soldiers was capable of.

²⁰⁹ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 3950 (Manifesto of the first general meeting of the members of the "Hua Chiao Chung Hui, Medan", Medan, 9 December 1945).

²¹⁰ Proc.-Gen., 2.05.117: 2431. In January 1946, Consul General Tsiang Chia Tung was the first Chinese consular official to be admitted into the Indies. China did not recognize the Indonesian Republic, but made contact with the Republican centers nonetheless, see Somers-Heidhues, 'Citizenship and Identity,' 119. New consular officials were installed in Medan in May 1946.

²¹¹ Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3101 (Politiek-economisch verslag over 16 september – 15 oktober 1946).

²¹² Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Nota E).

²¹³ CZ., 2.13.72: 12.

²¹⁴ OB V: 234.

²¹⁵ Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3089 (Periodiek verslag Sumatra, Spits, 9 oktober 1945).

As the PAT in Medan manifested itself more and more as the Chinese community's 'own national military and police apparatus' measures needed to be taken to prevent it from creating a state within a state as had happened in Bagan. Officer Eybergen proposed to purge the ranks of the PAT of 'those Chinese who had not settled in this country' (*niet hier te lande gevestigde Chineezers*), because their influence had been the most 'National-Chinese oriented' (*Nationaal-Chineesch gericht*) and the conscious attempt to obstruct the Civil Police in cases concerning persons of Chinese descent emanated from the 'Chinese National Revival' (*Chineesch-Nationaal-Reveil*).²¹⁶

By October 1947 the Chinese community as a whole seems to have been infused with national self-awareness and civil administrators were concerned about the 'arrogant, quarrelsome and often rude' attitude of the Chinese in Medan, including the consul, as compared to the good will and law-abiding behavior of before the war.²¹⁷ In a meeting with the military officers, officer Eybergen and Resident J. Gerritsen located the source of the problem in the attitude of the Chinese community as a whole, thought the PAT could be pointed out as the backbone of it.²¹⁸ After all, the Chinese inhabitants of Medan and its surrounding area were the ones who gave substance to the claim that the PAT was the 'Chinese police', they came by its headquarters instead of the Civil Police station.

Following in the footsteps of the Chinese officers

The Chinese community's recognition of the Pao An Tui's status as the Chinese police was an expression of the PAT's development into a leading community organization. It may have been obscured by its police activities, but the PAT was in the ultimate account still an auxiliary arm of the KNIL – a military organization subordinate to the Dutch military. The resemblance to the traditional officer system looms large. The PAT united the two incompatible roles as much as the prewar Chinese officers: it was a subordinate agent of the Dutch colonial state in its role of auxiliary arm of the KNIL and simultaneously the key leader of the Chinese community in the guise of a police force. Still, the PAT grew into these roles even before the Dutch regained authority over Medan; the PAT was not called into being by the colonial state itself. The British military co-opted the corps by giving it the authority to maintain peace and order in the Chinese community.

The reinstated Dutch state subsequently appointed the PAT as its subordinate agent by incorporating the corps into the KNIL. Although the PAT would not openly admit it, it had agreed to obey to Colonel Scholten's orders, to work together with the 4th Infantry and to let its members wear KNIL uniforms.²¹⁹ Moreover, the Dutch assigned the PAT with the task of law enforcement, the extension of civil administration down into the community, by authorizing it to carry out limited police functions in one set of instructions.²²⁰ Thus, the Dutch state validated the authority of the Pao An Tui by giving it formal office.

By the time the PAT's claim to status could rest 'on its actual (...) association with public service of political power,' Wang Gungwu's crucial feature of the overseas Chinese elite, it had already come to stand 'at the apex of the community's power structure'.²²¹ The PAT 'protected the subsystem's interest in its dealings with the outside world' by protecting the lives and property of the

²¹⁶ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Nota 21-23).

²¹⁷ Ibid., (Nota M, Resume van besprekingen betreffende het Chinese Security Corps, 18 oktober 1947).

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Ibid., (Gespreksverslag).

²²⁰ Ibid., (Nota C).

²²¹ Wang, 'Traditional Leadership in a New Nation,' 219; resp. Skinner, 'Overseas Chinese Leadership,' 194.

Chinese from attacks by Indonesian militias and it provided welfare services to the evacuated refugees from the countryside.²²²

So far the dual role of the Pao An Tui corresponds to the definitions of the *Kapitan* system as described by G. William Skinner. But the PAT exceeded the limits of its role as state agent and appropriated state functions by carrying out functions of law enforcement on its own account. New instructions that deprived the PAT of its limited police powers did not prevent it from undertaking the intelligence work and even judicial functions that it had accustomed to perform. The law that the PAT tried to enforce, moreover, was not the law of the Dutch colonial state. It was a self-conceived kind of law by which the PAT made its actual or potential opponents into offenders. Indonesians, Chinese collaborators with the Republic, Communists and thieves – all could be found guilty of an offense against which the PAT had to act. In this sense, the PAT ceased to be a subordinate agent of the state – the Dutch colonial state.

By and large, the PAT promoted its own interests according to its own agenda. Next to defending the Chinese against external and internal enemies, its agenda also included the aim of self-preservation. In spite of its original objective to dissolve the corps once the situation was safe again, the PAT resisted Dutch attempts to confine the corps in its powers and freedoms by claiming that it now was internal order that had to be maintained.

The PAT justified its position and authority in particularistic terms. The Chinese were taken, both by the Dutch authorities and the Chinese themselves, as a special group with special interests that needed to be defended. The importance of the PAT as the protector of the Chinese community was tied up with Chinese nationalism. Since the Dutch government was not able to protect the Chinese, nor did diplomatic protection come from China, the leaders of the PAT took the responsibility instead. But on whose behalf? Even though it worked together with the Dutch military and was recognized by the Dutch to serve as military agent, the PAT itself suggested that it acted on behalf of the Chinese government. By means of enlisting former soldiers of the Chinese army, executing the Chinese consul's orders and appropriating extraterritorial rights, it gave substance to its role as self-appointed agent of the Chinese government.

The analogy with – or indeed continuation of – the traditional officer system explains how it was possible that the PAT was able to acquire and maintain a high degree of autonomy as key community leader while it was subordinate to the Dutch military authorities at the same time. The two roles were intricately connected with each other. If the Dutch needed the PAT to maintain peace and order in the Chinese community, they were compelled to take its autonomy along with it. As peace and order came to depend more on the behavior of the Chinese community members instead of external attacks, the importance of the PAT in maintaining it was determined by its effectiveness in exercising internal control. Exactly to what extent the PAT exercised control in the Chinese community came to the fore when the prospect of its abolishment came into view at the end of 1947.

²²² Skinner, 'Overseas Chinese Leadership,' 194.

5. Disbanding the Pao An Tui

Obstacles to the final dissolution

The Pao An Tui was by design an organization that aimed to make itself redundant. Once the Chinese did no longer have to fear for their safety, the corps would automatically lose its function. As described in the previous chapter, the first attempt to dissolve the PAT was made in February 1947, after peace and security were sufficiently ensured in Medan. By July, the PAT's strength was indeed cut down by a half, but the prospect that the Dutch would launch a military offensive prevented that the remainder could be discharged and partly incorporated into the Civil Police. The First Police Action brought the rural Chinese communities under Dutch control and during fighting preceding the reoccupation of East Sumatra new groups of Chinese fell victim to the retreating people's militias. The assistance of the PAT was required again to defend them against potential attacks of the militias and to provide relief for the many displaced people.

The PAT was able to assert its importance again in the aftermath of the Police Action and even to such an extent that Colonel Scholten committed himself to save the PAT from premature dissolution. Colonel Scholten's appreciation of the PAT was shown when he had to defend the status of the PAT after the central military leadership in Jakarta issued collective regulations for PAT organizations throughout Indonesia.²²³ These regulations, as specified in Military Ordinance No. 516, would seriously limit the powers of the PAT in Medan and Colonel Scholten feared that the effectiveness of the Chinese corps would be impaired if he had to apply the regulations to the PAT in his area.

The ordinance, issued by Lieutenant-General Simon Spoor on September 6, 1947, was preceded by meetings between the *Chung Hua Tsung Hui* and the Dutch administration in Jakarta, in which the possibilities of establishing of a Chinese security organization were discussed. The definitive establishment of the Pao An Tui, as the organization would be called, was acknowledged by General Spoor's decree, which also listed the job description and instructions of the future organization. The Pao An Tui was to have a central committee, located in Jakarta, which was granted the permission to carry out security services through locally formed PAT units. These local units would be raised on request of the local CHTH organizations and in consultation with the regional KNIL commander and they would fall under the responsibility of the central PAT in Jakarta.

A supplementary document issued by Chief of Staff Buurman van Vreeden stated that already existing groups of armed Chinese should be incorporated into the official PAT for the benefit of coordination.²²⁴ In view of the problems the Dutch administrators had with the PAT in Medan, it would not come as a surprise if the ordinance was in fact presented as a solution to problems of independent conduct of these already existing security units. Thus, to be clear, the Pao An Tui in Medan and the Pao An Tui in Jakarta were two different organizations despite having the same name. The PAT in Jakarta was established by the military ordinance of September 6, 1947, almost two years after the PAT had been established in Medan. The term *pao an tui* was the common Chinese name for groups that were organized for the purpose of peace preservation.²²⁵ According to

²²³ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 303 (Verordening van het militaire gezag no. 516, 6 September 1947).

²²⁴ Ibid., (Brief Buurman van Vreeden aan Trc/tp'r's, 9 October 1947).

²²⁵ See Chapter 3

the ordinance then, the PAT in Medan should be regarded as an already existing group of armed Chinese, which needed to be incorporated into the official PAT, the one called into being by the ordinance.

The instructions were notably restrictive in character, meaning that they accounted for strict supervision measures and that the units were explicitly forbidden to engage in military actions or to carry out police duties. Instead, the ordinance assigned the PAT units exclusively to guard static posts, that is objects like Chinese businesses, factories, refugee camps or Chinese residential areas. PAT members were only allowed to carry weapons while on duty and, as stated in a supplementary document, the military police was to hold inspections on the proliferation of weapons once a week.²²⁶

The ordinance would impose serious limitations on the strength and capabilities of the Pao An Tui in Medan, which had incomparably more powers and freedoms in East Sumatra. For one and a half year it had actively participated in the regional military effort and had a military standing on its own. The regional military command would have a hard time to implement the new regulations without alienating the corps altogether. Therefore, Colonel Scholten wrote to General Spoor to inform him of the exceptional circumstances in his area and the difficulties he foresaw for the implementation.²²⁷ He argued that the locally organized PAT had made an indispensable contribution in keeping law and order in the region and that it 'had always loyally observed his orders'. The corps was given substantial facilities in terms of clothing, equipment, arms (including automatic weapons), care and logistics.

Colonel Scholten asked permission not to deprive the corps of the facilities and more radically, he proposed to consider the Pao An Tui in Medan as an independent organ that would have the responsibility over its own dislocated units in the rest of East Sumatra. Colonel Scholten anticipated that the corps would have strong objections to becoming a decentralized organ of the Pao An Tui in Jakarta, with which it never had any association. Ten days after General Spoor had issued the ordinance, his Chief of Staff Buurman van Vreeden distributed supplementing instructions in which he stated that the Pao An Tui in Medan was excluded from the provisions of Ordinance No. 516 and that separate regulations for this corps would be issued accordingly.²²⁸

What Colonel Scholten feared about curtailing the PAT too drastically was that the PAT's leadership would lose 'prestige' in the eyes of the PAT members and by the Chinese community as a whole. As will be explained below, the authority of the leaders was already diminishing, but losing it altogether would be disastrous for the discipline of the members. The concern about decreasing discipline was shared by chief constable Eybergen, who pointed out that the leadership's influence and grip on the corps was deteriorating. The PAT had more and more trouble to maintain discipline within its own ranks and failing to keep the members bounded to the organization would have consequences for law and order in the wider region of East Sumatra. As the aim of the PAT had shifted from defending the Chinese from external attacks to maintaining peace and order within the community, the dissolution of the PAT came to depend on the question of what exactly was meant by 'restored peace and order'. The corps was not needed to *establish* peace and order, but instead

²²⁶ Ibid., ('Instructies voor commandanten van M.P.-onderdelen terzake Pao An Tui-groepen,' Batavia, 17 september 1947).

²²⁷ Ibid., (Brief Trc/tpc Scholten aan Clg, 16 September 1947).

²²⁸ Ibid., (Brief Buurman van Vreeden aan Trc/tpc's, 9 October 1947). To indicate the difference between the Pao An Tui in Jakarta and the one in Medan, Buurman van Vreeden used the English name 'Chinese Security Corps' for the PAT in Medan.

did justice to its Chinese name and aimed to *preserve* the peace. The Chinese community's 'own national military and police apparatus' was so strong that if it would be disbanded, the Dutch authorities feared, disturbances were likely to break out.

The Lim Tjin Tek case that had learned the Dutch police about the PAT's self-employed investigation activities got a sequel after PAT's strength was diminished in May 1947. The man who five PAT members had attempted to murder half a year earlier was now arrested by the Civil Police at the instigation of Lim Seng. Lim had written a lengthy report on Lim Tjin Tek's criminal activities to convince the police that he posed a threat to the law and order in Medan.²²⁹ The civil authorities had learned from other sources as well that Lim Tjin Tek was feared in the Chinese community as 'the unflinching leader of a number of shady characters of the Chinese underworld', was suspected of collaboration with the Japanese secret police force (the *Kempeitai*) and of having had connections with a criminal Indonesian gang.²³⁰ Lim Seng had made use of Lim Tjin Tek and his 'gang' of 17 Taiwanese in the volatile early months of the PAT's existence to be able to withstand the attacks of the people's militias, until the president fired Lim Tjin Tek and the men he had brought along because of undisciplined conduct. Lim Seng accused his namesake for opening gambling houses, extortion, and most importantly, for blemishing the reputation of the PAT. Still in possession of his PAT uniform, Lim Tjin Tek pretended to be a member of the PAT and tried to create trouble for the real Pao An Tui. The personal feud between the two Lim's did not escape the attention of the civil authorities and as Lim Seng's accusations could not be verified they were eventually dismissed as false allegations.

Lim Seng's attempt to have his rival arrested by the Civil Police showed that the PAT was no longer able to constrain Lim Tjin Tek and his affiliates. By October 1947, the issue of misbehavior had taken a turn for the worse. The extension of the occupied area after the First Police Action had provided opportunities for undisciplined (former) PAT members to escape the control of the PAT. Units in the countryside, whether true or false PAT organizations, took to looting and regularly challenged the dislocated Dutch police units.²³¹ As to indicate the vagueness surrounding the question whether false PAT groups existed, it is worth noting that chief constable Eybergen discerned a 'complete analogous way of behaving' when men in PAT uniforms clashed with the Civil or Military Police, which led him to suspect the existence of internal regulations within the PAT itself.²³² But whether or not the PAT leaders still had the troublesome units under control, the incidents in the countryside illustrated that the PAT leadership was losing the unquestioned authority that it used to have and could no longer prevent that the dislocated units acted independent of central supervision. Despite the precarious developments in the PAT, chief constable Eybergen stressed the need to keep the PAT in function until the police was strong and able enough to act against the opportunistic figures now still bounded to the PAT.²³³

Disbanding the Pao An Tui

The final dissolution of the PAT was still out of the question in October 1947, but by the end of December the situation of the Chinese in East Sumatra was so much stabilized that the existence of the corps was bound to end at last. In a meeting with the Dutch military authorities on December 30,

²²⁹ Proc.-Gen., 2.10.17: 679 ('Report on Lim Tjin Tek from Lim Seng (President of CSC),' Medan, 19 March 1947).

²³⁰ Ibid., (Resident Gerritsen to the public prosecutor, Medan, 19 Mei 1947).

²³¹ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Nota P).

²³² Ibid., (Nota L).

²³³ Ibid., (Nota 21).

Tan Boen Djin had given to understand that the PAT leadership aimed to dissolve the corps by the end of March 1948.²³⁴ Order and safety had been restored and it was time for the PAT to honor the principles of its temporary nature. Attacks on the Chinese were no longer reported, neither in Medan nor in the surrounding villages, houses and formerly abandoned areas were rebuilt and a general trend of postwar reconstruction was set in motion.²³⁵

The prime reason behind the decision was not the return of order and safety *per se*, but the loss of financial support that came hand in hand with the decreased need for the defense organization. The wealthier Chinese merchants who had financed the PAT since its formation were not as motivated anymore to maintain the corps now that the Chinese in the countryside were no longer under attack. Or as Resident Gerritsen sensitively remarked, 'since the whistling of the bullets subsided, the enthusiasm to take out the wallet for this benevolent purpose faded accordingly'.²³⁶ In June, the PAT still managed to raise enough money for four months to follow by means of holding a lottery, but by December the PAT had to borrow f. 60.000,- to cover the expenses for that month.²³⁷

By January 1948 it was clear that the PAT had become embroiled in problems of an altogether different kind. And it was the Lim Tjin Tek case that proved yet again how the cards were really dealt in the corps. With his high-handed tactics in dealing with his opponent, Lim Seng had not only estranged Lim Tjin Tek's supporters, but even uncommitted members of the Chinese community and his fellow officer in the PAT, Tan Boen Hock.²³⁸ The strained relationship between the two leaders harmed the already lessening authority of Lim Seng and his position had clearly become untenable. Dutch authorities were concerned about the weakening position of the preeminent leader for the practical dissolution of the corps. His control over the members was needed to ensure that all the weapons were orderly handed in to the Dutch military.²³⁹ An intelligence report reported that Lim Seng himself feared reprisals from the enemies he had made during his years as president of the PAT. Rumor had it that he was preparing to slink away to Singapore on a small motorboat and intended to form a personal bodyguard of loyal PAT members to protect him until his leave.²⁴⁰

In the mean time, the civil and military authorities had discussed Tan Boen Djin's proposal to dissolve the PAT by the end of March. Remarkably, the regional commander Scholten, since November 1947 promoted to the rank of Major-General, did not endorse the plan unconditionally:

Trc/Tpc [Major-General Scholten] does not have objections in principle, provided that it remains possible to keep a reserve available in case the Chinese would request protection of their lives and possessions in any new places that may be occupied.²⁴¹

Resident Gerritsen proposed to have 100 men absorbed into the Civil Police and another 100 men into the *Barisan Pengawal*, the security arm of the State of East Sumatra (*Negara Sumatera Timur*). Scholten set the date of dissolution on April 1, 1948.

The first 300 men were already discharged in January. For the remaining 700 members there were a number of conditions that had to be settled before they could be demobilized. The PAT itself

²³⁴ Ibid., (Resume bespreking inzake CSC, 6 Jan 1948).

²³⁵ Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3102 (Politiek en economisch overzicht Noord-Sumatra over oktober en december).

²³⁶ Min. Def., 2.13.132:1340 (Recomba Noord-Sumatra, nopens opheffing PAT ter SOK, 12 januari 1948).

²³⁷ Ibid.; and NEFIS, 2.10.62: 1882 (Daily review of the Chinese press, 27-28 June 1947).

²³⁸ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 2624 (Persoonsdossier Lim Seng, Medan, 19 februari 1948).

²³⁹ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Resume bespreking inzake CSC).

²⁴⁰ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 2624 (Persoonsdossier Lim Seng).

²⁴¹ Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Resume bespreking inzake CSC).

was not able to pay for the salaries of the final three months and Resident Gerritsen took it as his responsibility ensure that the members received their due. He requested the Department of Social Affairs for the necessary funds. But as he deemed it right to express gratitude for the assistance of the Chinese soldiers, his list of requests comprised more. Each member was to be provided with one month's extra salary, a civilian suit and rations for one month. The PAT still had a debt for the salaries of December that had to be paid off. Finally, the actual dissolution of the PAT was to take place in a ceremony for which had to be paid. The total of f. 397.000,- added up to quite a substantial amount, but Gerritsen thought it acceptable if one considered the valuable services the PAT had delivered for two years, without having had to depend on government subsidies.²⁴²

By holding a ceremony – to be attended by 2000 to 3000 guests, including the military and civilian authorities – the Dutch officials wished to give the PAT a dignified farewell that would show respect for the dedication of the members. The core of the members had been soldiers for two years on end and the transition to civilian life had to be streamlined. They were now forced, out of sheer necessity, to provide for their own livelihoods.²⁴³ The Dutch reported that former PAT members had formed a mutual help association to promote lasting unity among them, even before the actual demobilization took place. Although it would be tempting to read this as a serious effort to help each other with a potentially difficult integration into normal life, the fact that Lim Seng acted as chairman also allows for a different interpretation. The association may as well have been the personal bodyguard that Lim Seng allegedly was planning to form.²⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the advice of the Dutch officials in Medan was taken to heart by Thio Thiam Tjong. Van Mook's Advisor for Chinese Affairs also made the suggestion that the dissolution of other units, those under the central Pao An Tui in Batavia, should proceed with due ceremony.²⁴⁵

The demise of the Pao An Tui as key community organization

If it were not for the leaders of the Pao An Tui and for the civil authorities, the decision to disband the PAT would not have been taken at this stage. The military authorities did not see the need to bring it to an end as yet. As an auxiliary arm, the PAT was still considered to be a useful assistant that could be called up when its help was needed. But the PAT was more than an auxiliary arm of the KNIL; at the same time, it was a civilian community organization and it was in this latter role that its days were numbered. The Dutch civil authorities attributed the loss of prestige to the 'arrogant behavior' that Lim Seng exhibited in his handling of the Lim Tjin Tek case. This was not the right way he should have acted to eliminate his enemies. The rumored defection of one of his loyal adherents and the refusal of the local Chinese newspapers to publish his statements of the case indicated how much his popularity had dropped.²⁴⁶

Just as G. William Skinner's conceptualization of the *Kapitan* system could be used to explain how it was possible that the Pao An Tui was able to perform the dual role of auxiliary arm of the KNIL and autonomous community leader, the concept can also illuminate how the PAT lost its authority to perform these roles. As Skinner explains, the authority of the traditional Chinese officers was

²⁴² Ibid., (Recomba Noord-Sumatra, nopens opheffing PAT ter SOK, 12 januari 1948).

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3108 (Politiek verslag Noord-Sumatra over maart 1948).

²⁴⁵ Proc.-Gen., 2.10.17: 679 (Secretaris voor binnenlandse veiligheid aan directeur Kabinet GG, Batavia, 28 April 1948).

²⁴⁶ NEFIS, 2.10.62: 2624 (Persoonsdossier Lim Seng); Min. Def., 2.13.132: 1340 (Resume bespreking inzake CSC).

validated both externally and internally, by the state above and the community below.²⁴⁷ But since 'it is axiomatic that a position so structured involves role conflict', 'defects in the Kapitan system are not far to seek'.²⁴⁸ It must be acknowledged that one of the three pitfalls which Skinner identifies does not apply to the PAT. The first pitfall was 'the imbalance in the source of rewards for the Kapitan':

The price for supreme power within the community was acceptance of the agent role, and the inducements for taking on the latter were rewards from the state, not the community.²⁴⁹

But in the case of the Pao An Tui, the main source of 'rewards' was not the state but rather the community. Even if the PAT received material support from the state in terms of facilities, its daily operations were financed by the wealthier community members and as soon as the cash flow was cut off the organization could not be maintained. Skinner's observation only applied to the PAT in its inversion: The reward for supreme power within the community was permission to play the agent role.

The PAT leaders appear to have avoided the second pitfall of Skinner's analysis as well. Other than the Kapitan's of Skinner, the PAT did not lose its authority because it became 'acculturated' to the norms and manners of their Dutch superiors.²⁵⁰ The PAT officers adopted the similar strategy as the prewar Chinese officers did to avoid the pitfall of becoming alienated from the ways of the Chinese community. Like Tjong A Fie and Khoe Tjin Tek did in the first half of the twentieth century, the postwar officers manifested themselves as (pseudo-)representatives of the Chinese state. Instead of wearing the garb of a Mandarin, they were dressed in the uniform of the Chinese National Army. By the time they replaced these uniforms by the attire of the KNIL, the officers had firmly aligned the interests of the Chinese community with precepts of Kuomintang nationalism. If the strategy of affiliating with overseas Chinese nationalism had enabled 'the most capable officer-capitalists to consolidate their own commercial kingdoms at the expense of the Dutch masters,'²⁵¹ after the war, it enabled the PAT officers to consolidate an extraterritorial enclave where the Dutch authorities had virtually nothing to say.

Although the PAT officers did not acculturate to the ways of the Dutch in their outward behavior, a closer look at the third pitfall reveals that the officers were by no means free from identification with their formal superiors. However autonomous the PAT was in its role as key community leader, its leaders had undeniably internalized the agenda of the Dutch. Namely that there was no other future thinkable for Indonesia than a multiethnic Indonesia under Dutch rule wherein the radical, 'extremist', nationalists would have no place. To quote Skinner once more:

In the resources at its disposal, the state had the power to lure its agents past the point of no return, to bring them to such a degree of identification with state's purposes and the larger community's values that they forfeited influence in their own communities.²⁵²

²⁴⁷ Skinner, 'Overseas Chinese Leadership,' 191.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 198.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 199.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 198-199.

²⁵¹ Godley, *The Mandarin-Capitalists*, 20.

²⁵² Skinner, 'Overseas Chinese Leadership,' 199.

It may be too strong to say that the PAT officers came to be regarded as 'tools of the Dutch' by the majority of the Chinese, but it is certainly conceivable that they lost sight of other viewpoints and possibilities for how the future of Indonesia could also be shaped.

The Pao An Tui officers were indeed regarded as Dutch stooges by left-wing organizations which were more sympathetic towards Indonesian independence. The *Hua Chiao Chung Hui*, out of which the PAT had evolved, and the communist-affiliated Democratic League sought the solution for the difficult position of the Chinese neither in fighting the Indonesians nor in giving up its neutrality in favor of the stronger Dutch side. Instead, they opted for a conciliatory approach and made efforts to draw closer to the Indonesians. Too much identification with the Dutch state's purposes drew the PAT away from a community in which the members had a much wider variety of values and goals. As long as the Chinese were under threat, the PAT could be said to represent the community as a whole because it stepped up to protect their most important interest: a safe life. But as the threat reduced, other values and interests gained more room and the PAT could no longer claim the exclusive right to decide what those values were. The one-sided perspective of the PAT was most visibly expressed in the divergence between the Kuomintang and the Democratic League.

The rivalry between the two most important political parties of the Chinese in East Sumatra grew increasingly fierce under the influence of the developments in both China and Malaya, where the Chinese and Malayan communist parties respectively strengthened their positions at the expense of the Kuomintang.²⁵³ But as the Democratic League gained more ground in East Sumatra, the KMT-affiliated Pao An Tui refrained from playing the role as KMT representative. While the conflict became increasingly important and indeed the dominant political issue in the Chinese community, the preeminent adherent of the KMT party kept quiet and was even dissolved.²⁵⁴ Its role as key community organization was definitively played out.

The increasing influence of the DL signaled a shift from a primary China-oriented outlook of the Chinese towards concentration on local politics. The DL had been the most outspoken pro-Republican Chinese organization in Medan and although it was engaged with the cause of the Communist Party of China, the DL could more easily have contact with Indonesian communists by its international ideological foundation.²⁵⁵

Surprisingly, the new activities of the Pao An Tui's prominent liaison officer gave another indication of the general shift towards local politics. From August 1947 onwards, Tan Boen Djin had been involved in the transformation of East Sumatra into a semi-autonomous federal state under Dutch supervision, the *Negara Sumatera Timur* (NST). His involvement began with his appointment as one of the two Chinese members of the preparatory Committee for an East Sumatran Special Region (*Comite Daerah Istimewa Sumatera Timur*, Comite DIST).²⁵⁶ Subsequently, he was appointed to the Representative Council (*Dewan Sementara*) in October and finally to the seven-member Advisory/Executive Council (*Badan Amanah*) in February 1948 of the now officially proclaimed State of East Sumatra.²⁵⁷

The shift to local politics was by no means completed. On the contrary, the intensifying rivalry between the Kuomintang and the Democratic League was by and large a manifestation of

²⁵³ Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya: Resistance and Social Conflict During and After the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983).

²⁵⁴ Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3108 (Politieke overzichten over januari-november 1948).

²⁵⁵ Somers-Heidhues, 'Citizenship and Identity,' 125.

²⁵⁶ Van Langenberg, 'Class and Ethnic Conflict,' 10.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 16, 19.

China-oriented politics and ran parallel with the struggle in China. The dissolution of the Pao An Tui left the intermediary position between the Dutch administration and the Chinese community vacant. From August 1948 onwards, the Dutch authorities repeatedly reported that they lacked contact with the community and had but little sight of the developments in the KMT-DL conflict.²⁵⁸ The PAT clearly had left a gap for which no substitute could yet be found. The rivaling Chinese political parties were not suitable as community representative because of their partisanship. Tan Boen Djin's appointment in the NST institutions was too individual and of too limited a scale that he could not be able to play the intermediary role as the PAT had done. The Dutch indicated to put their hope on the new Chinese Indonesian party that was established in May and was given a branch in Medan in July, the *Persatuan Tionghoa* (Chinese Union).²⁵⁹

But the era of relying on Chinese intermediaries maintain contact with the Chinese community had come to an end. The NST was specifically designed to finally break with the segregating system of indirect rule which had created such fundamental divisions among the Indonesian population. The Chinese were to become full citizens in the new state structure, along with the former 'Natives' and other 'Foreign Orientals' who would all enjoy the same legal status. Naturally, there was no place for Chinese rulers of the officer-type under direct administration. Even though the Dutch did not appoint Chinese officers officially after they returned to reoccupy Indonesia, the PAT leaders had taken the initiative to take over the dual role which the traditional Chinese officers had performed before the war and thereby ensured the unofficial continuation of the Chinese officer system. And so it turned out that the dissolution of the PAT removed the last vestige of Chinese particularism.

²⁵⁸ Alg. Sec., 2.10.14: 3108 (Politiek overzicht augustus 1948).

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, (Politiek overzicht juli en oktober 1948). Tan Boen Djin was among the founders of the local branch of the *Persatuan Tionghoa*. It would be very interesting to examine the role of the former PAT leader in years following the dissolution of the PAT, but the formation of the East Sumatran State and Tan Boen Djin's involvement herein is beyond the scope of this study.

Conclusion

From its establishment on December 13, 1945 until its dissolution on April 1, 1948, the Pao An Tui played a major role in the conflict between the Dutch and the Indonesians in Medan. From a small, under-armed Chinese self-defense organization, the PAT transformed into a 1000-men strong, full-blown military organization within a year. Four months after its establishment, the PAT was working together with the Allied forces to defend Medan against infiltrations of Indonesian people's militias. As long as the British were in command in Medan, the military authorities kept the PAT at a distance from the official forces and largely left the PAT at its own devices to look after the Chinese community's own affairs in the Chinese district. But as soon as the Dutch took over the command from the British in late November 1946, the officers of the KNIL sought to draw the PAT much closer to the regular Dutch forces. Aware of the importance of the large and densely populated Chinese district, the KNIL officers had recognized the value of a well-organized and disciplined Chinese self-defense corps and co-opted the PAT to serve as an auxiliary arm of the KNIL for the special purpose of protecting Chinese lives and goods.

The official appointment of the PAT as auxiliary arm of the KNIL did not make the PAT entirely subjected to Dutch military command; the instructions issued to regulate its actions did not prevent the PAT leaders from acting largely according to their own will. The PAT had achieved its most dramatic increase in membership – from 100 to 1000 men – already in the first and formative year when the British were still in command. As the PAT operated largely outside of British supervision, its leaders were able to extend the PAT's responsibilities and influence within the community so pervasively that the PAT was functioning as if it were the Chinese community's own police force by the time the Dutch assumed control over Medan. The Dutch authorities were perfectly aware of the independent conduct of the PAT and repeatedly denounced the high-handed and even unlawful actions of the Chinese self-appointed 'constables', but they showed a marked reluctance to take measures to curtail the PAT in its freedom of movement. By October 1947 the PAT, with its dislocated units in the rural town surrounding Medan, was so effective in challenging the authority of the Dutch police that it had virtually created a state within a state.

The recurring question arising from the history of the Pao An Tui in Medan is how a Chinese self-defense corps was able to acquire such a strong and independent position, a position from which the PAT could challenge the absolute authority of the Dutch without provoking the Dutch into tightening their control over the PAT. The answer to this question must be sought in the historical roots of the position of Chinese leaders in Medan. By tracing the prewar precedents of Chinese leadership, it becomes clear that the PAT leaders had an example at their disposal after which they could model their own role of leaders of the wider Chinese community. And so they did. President Lim Seng and the two liaison officers Tan Boen Djin and Tan Boen Hock turned the PAT into a genuine community organization which fulfilled the function of intermediary between the Dutch (and British) authorities and the Chinese inhabitants of Medan.

The incongruity of the two roles of the PAT, of being simultaneously a military corps subordinate to the KNIL and a autonomous civilian force challenging the authority of the Dutch police, become explicable by analogy with the Chinese officer system. The traditional officers too served as agents of the state while holding a position of full authority within the community at the same time and the duality of these roles was inherent to their position as intermediaries officially

charged with the responsibility to administer the Chinese. By serving both as the state's indirect administrator and the community's protector, the officers of the PAT followed in the footsteps of the traditional Chinese officers who had been the preeminent leaders of the Chinese community before the war.

The Japanese occupation had left a gap between the reinstalled Dutch administration and the Chinese community and the PAT officers moved in to fill it and thereby ensured the continuation of the long-standing institution of the Chinese officer system. The defining characteristic of this institution – and the foundation of its strength – was that the authority of the Chinese officers was validated from two sides, both externally by the state and internally by the members of the Chinese community. The double-sided validation of the Chinese officer's authority provided a solid basis for their power, because it was mutually reinforcing. Seen from the perspective of the state, as G. William Skinner's analysis of overseas Chinese leadership shows, the Chinese officers' 'effectiveness in maintaining peace and order and in enforcing directives from the outside system was directly proportional to his internally validated authority'.²⁶⁰ 'External reinforcement of the leaders' authority,' in turn, 'almost by definition enhanced their power' within the Chinese community.²⁶¹ So as long as the officers were able to secure the support of both the state and the community, their position was impregnable.

The PAT leaders obtained external validation of their authority when the British assigned the PAT with the responsibility to defend a large part of the city and the Dutch subsequently co-opted the PAT to serve as an auxiliary arm of the KNIL, which automatically enhanced their power within the community and their status as community leaders. From their de facto appointment as agents of the state, the PAT officers only had to take a small step to reinterpret the task of 'protecting Chinese lives and property', as it was phrased in the instructions. They redefined the original task of defending the Chinese against external attacks from the people's militias into the task of maintaining law and order within the Chinese community – just as the traditional Chinese officers had done before them. The Dutch authorities themselves indicated to endorse the self-imposed and redefined task of the PAT when they issued instructions which authorized the PAT to carry out limited police functions in April 1947. The assignment to enforce the law in the Chinese community, albeit for a short period, signified that the Dutch lent their approval to the restoration the system of indirect rule and community governance with the PAT officers as key leaders.

Indirect rule was the foundation on which the position of PAT leaders as Chinese officers was built in three aspects. Firstly, the legal categorization of the Chinese as Foreign Orientals turned them into a separate ethnic group which could be governed by its own communal authorities. Secondly, the creation of a separate political community subsequently generated a distinct political identity for this group as compared to other ethnic groups in Indonesia. Indeed, the violence against the Chinese resulted from the polarization of different political identities of the native Indonesians and the nonnative Chinese during. The Chinese were perceived by the Indonesians as racial strangers who had to make way, along with colonizer, for the natives who were to be the masters of their own territory. Finally, the system of indirect rule formed foundation of Chinese particularism. The appointment of Chinese officers was the expression that the Dutch were willing to let the Chinese take care of their own affairs, and the community leaders in turn took it as a license to promote the interests of their own community. How he was to execute his job was left for the community leader himself to decide.

²⁶⁰ Skinner, 'Overseas Chinese Leadership,' 195-196.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 196.

Looking down into the Chinese community of Medan to identify the bases of legitimacy on which the PAT built its position as key leader reveals that the PAT officers had turned their security corps into a community organization which claimed to promote the collective interest and welfare of the Chinese. First and foremost, the PAT defended the most fundamental interest of Chinese: a safe life. The PAT protected Chinese lives and property from violent attacks of the people's militias and they did it well – the Chinese district was the first area outside of the zone protected by the British forces that was truly safe. In addition, the PAT helped to provide food and shelter for the refugees who came to find security in the Chinese district from in and around Medan.

Once the PAT was able to protect Chinese lives and welfare, the leaders could take their task to a higher level by committing themselves to the representation of the Chinese as a group in the social and political sphere. In their role as key leaders of the Chinese community, they had to show convincingly that they were *Chinese* leaders, not stooges of their Dutch superiors who had disavowed their own origins. They had to draw on a common identity, on commonly held values, attitudes and goals defined essentially by their shared ethnicity. In short, the PAT officers had to show that they, regardless of their elevation to agents of the state, were and would remain one of their own kind. And this the PAT officers did by drawing on Chinese nationalism, the dominant ideology which had pervaded every institutional layer of overseas Chinese society. The political, intellectual and moral influence of the dominant group in Medan's Chinese society, largely comprised of wealthy and pro-Kuomintang businessmen, was forcibly shown in the ideological orientation of the major organizations and institutions of the Chinese.

Before the war, the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the Chinese press and Chinese-language schools were all firmly in the hands of the KMT-affiliated business elite. The China-oriented worldview of the businessmen, whose extensive commercial networks enabled them to maintain close contact with China and other overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, fell on fertile ground in a Chinese community which was established in a time of rising Chinese nationalism. The consolidation of Chinese nationalism and KMT-ideology in the major community institutions fostered a strong and continuing sense of belonging among the newly arrived migrants, to the motherland and to each other as a group of Chinese subjects residing abroad.

The traditional association between the community leaders and Chinese nationalism continued after the Japanese occupation as the PAT took over the position of key leader from the *Hua Ch'iao Chung Hui*, the federation of Chinese associations. Although the HCCH had given the initiative to the PAT's formation, the federation became dominated by the increasingly influential but still smaller group of communist sympathizers and supporters of Indonesian independence. The PAT found its most important support base in the group of wealthy KMT-sympathizing businessmen, who financed and maintained the corps and were in turn allowed to exert their influence through the advisory committee which president Lim Seng had set up. One reason for the businessmen to support the PAT was that the self-defense corps facilitated a safe and stable business environment which they required to resume their commercial activities.

What was more, the businessmen recognized that they could use the PAT as a vehicle to exert their influence in the Chinese community after their prewar institutions, such as the Chinese Chamber of Commerce, had collapsed during the Japanese occupation. To be sure, the takeover of the HCCH by left-wing China Democratic League-affiliated organizations was a clear demonstration that the pro-Kuomintang group was losing ground in Medan. But unwilling to give up their dominant position within the community, they found the perfect alternative in the PAT once it had broken away from the HCCH in May 1946. The PAT had already earned great respect because of its

performance as protector of the Chinese. Moreover, the self-defense corps could be seen as a KMT organization in its infancy, as its two liaison officers were the sons of a leading businessman themselves, its members were trained by former soldiers from China and its organizational structure was modeled after a regular corps of the Chinese National Army.

Once the PAT was transformed into a leading community organization under the influence of the commercial elite, the power of the PAT officers was legitimated by the wider community, including groups which did not support the cause of the KMT as actively as the businessmen. An overwhelming part of the Chinese community (excluding only the actively committed CDL-affiliates) was willing to obey the PAT, the self-appointed 'Chinese police', rather than the official Dutch police. Thereby the community indicated to recognize the PAT as the highest authority in the community. By and large, the Chinese of Medan gave their consent to be governed by the PAT. Their implicit belief that the PAT was indeed authorized to manifest itself as the Chinese community's 'own national military and police apparatus' was given an air of credibility by the Dutch authorities, who refrained from taking stern measures against the PAT for its unlawful appropriation of police duties.

The dissolution of the PAT provides the final argument to conclude that the leadership position of the PAT officers depended as much on state-generated particularism as on their affiliation with Chinese nationalism. While the system of indirect rule formed the basis of the PAT officer's authority as agents of the state, Chinese nationalism provided the source of justification for PAT's claim to represent the collective interest of the Chinese community. But since the roles of state agent and key community leader were mutually dependent, it was inevitable that the position of the PAT officers would collapse as soon as their authority would be undermined by either one of their constituencies. By the end of 1947, the PAT lost the support of the Chinese in Medan as the PAT was no longer able to represent their interests. As the Sumatra Bin Poh quoted an old Chinese proverb: 'Those who win the favor of the people shall flourish while those who lose it shall go to ruin.'²⁶²

²⁶² 2.10.17: 1457 (*Sumatra Bin Poh*, February 25, 1949). The *Sumatra Bin Poh* had been the mouthpiece of the KMT, but was taken over by the China Democratic League in September 1948: 2.10.14: 3108 (Politiek en economisch verslag over de Negara Sumatera Timur, September 1948).

Bibliography

Primary sources

Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken: Gezantschap China, 2.05.90: inventarisnummers 553, 558.

Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken: Code-Archief 1945-1954, 2.05.117: inventarisnummer 2431.

Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Ministerie van Koloniën: Supplement, 1826-1952, 2.10.03: inventarisnummers 86, 87.

Nationaal Archief (Den Haag) Algemene Secretarie van de Nederlands-Indische Regering en de daarbij gedeponeerde Archieven, 2.10.14: inventarisnummers 3089, 3100, 3101, 3102, 3108.

Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Procureur-Generaal bij het Hooggerechtshof van Nederlands-Indië, 1945-1950, 2.10.17: inventarisnummer 679.

Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Netherland Forces Intelligence Service [NEFIS] en Centrale Militaire Inlichtingendienst [CMI] in Nederlands-Indië, 2.10.62: inventarisnummers 636, 715-738, 1881-1882, 2624, 3950, 4648.

Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Commandant der Zeemacht in Nederlands-Indië, 1942-1950, nummer toegang 2.13.72, inventarisnummer 12.

Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Ministerie van Defensie: Archieven van de Strijdkrachten in Nederlands-Indië, 2.13.132: inventarisnummers 303, 1340.

Nationaal Archief (Den Haag), Fotocollectie Dienst voor Legercontacten Indonesië, 2.24.04.01.

Wal, S.L. van der, *et al.* (ed.), *Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlandse-Indonesische betrekkingen, 1945-50*, 11 vols. (The Hague, 1971-83) (digital version: <http://www.historici.nl/retroboeken/nib/#page=0&size=800&accessor=toc&source=1>).

Literature

Akashi, Yoji, *The Nanyang National Salvation Movement, 1937-1941* (Lawrence: Center for East Asian Studies, University of Kansas, 1970).

Buiskool, Dirk A., 'The Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Medan.' Paper presented at the conference 'Dekolonisasi dan Posisi Etnis Tionghoa Indonesia 1930-an s/d 1960-an,' Padang, June 18-21, 2006.

Buiskool, Dirk A., 'The Chinese Commercial Elite of Medan, 1890-1942: The Penang Connection,' *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 82:2 (2009) 113-129.

Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya: Resistance and Social Conflict During and After the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983).

Coppel, Charles A., 'Patterns of Chinese Political Activity in Indonesia,' in: J.A.C. Mackie (ed.), *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1979) 19-76.

Coppel, Charles A., 'The Indonesian Chinese: "Foreign Orientals", Netherlands Subjects, and Indonesian Citizens,' In: M. Barry Hooker (ed.), *Law and the Chinese in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2002) 131-149.

Dick, Howard, 'A Fresh Approach to Southeast Asian History,' in: John Butcher and Howard Dick (eds.), *The Rise and Fall of Revenue Farming: Business Elites and the Emergence of the Modern State in Southeast Asia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993) 3-18.

Duara, Prasenjit, 'Transnationalism and the Predicament of Sovereignty: China, 1900-1945,' *American Historical Review* 102:4 (1997) 1030-1051.

Frederick, William H., *Visions and Heat: The Making of the Indonesian Revolution* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1989).

Godley, Michael R., *The Mandarin-Capitalists from Nanyang: Overseas Chinese Enterprise in the Modernization of China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

Godley, Michael R., 'Thio Thiau Siat's Network,' in: John Butcher and Howard Dick (eds.), *The Rise and Fall of Revenue Farming: Business Elites and the Emergence of the Modern State in Southeast Asia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993) 262-271.

Johnson, Chalmers A., *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: the Emergence of Revolutionary China, 1937-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962).

Kwee Tek Hoay, *The Origins of the Modern Chinese Movement in Indonesia* [translated by Lea E. Williams] (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, Translation Series, 1969).

Langenberg, Michael van, 'Class and Ethnic Conflict in Indonesia's Decolonization Process: A Study of East Sumatra,' *Indonesia* 33 (1982) 1-30.

Leong, Stephen, 'The Malayan Overseas Chinese and the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1941,' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 10:2 (1979) 293-320.

Liu, Hong, 'Sino-Southeast Asian Studies: Towards an Alternative Paradigm,' *Asian Studies Review* 25:3 (2001) 259-278.

Lohanda, Mona, *The Kapitan Cina of Batavia, 1837-1942: A History of Chinese Establishment in Colonial Society* (Jakarta: Djambatan, 1996).

Mackie, J.A.C., and Charles A. Coppel, 'A Preliminary Survey,' in: J.A.C. Mackie (ed.), *The Chinese in Indonesia: Five Essays* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1979) 1-18.

Mamdani, Mahmood, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

Mandaville, Peter G., 'Territory and Translocality: Discrepant Idioms of Political Identity,' *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 28:3 (1999) 653-673.

McMillan, Richard, *The British Occupation of Indonesia 1945-1946: Britain, The Netherlands and the Indonesian Revolution* (London: Routledge, 2005).

Meijer, Hans, 'Op de drempel tussen twee werelden.' A.H.J. Lovink; de laatste landvoogd van Indonesië,' *BMGN – Low Countries Historical Review* 114:1 (1999) 39-60.

Ong Eng Die, *Chineez in Nederlandsch-Indië: Sociografie van een Indonesische Bevolkingsgroep* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1943).

Pierson, Christopher, *The Modern State* (London: Routledge, 1996/2004).

Post, Hans, *Bandjir over Noord-Sumatra*. Deel I: Bandjir over Noord-Sumatra; Deel II: Politionele Actie; Deel III: Bedwongen Bandjir (Medan: Pax, 1948-1949).

Purchell, Victor, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1951).

Reid, Anthony, *The Blood of the People: Revolution and the End of Traditional Rule in Northern Sumatra* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979).

Sacks, Milton, 'The Strategy of Communism in Southeast Asia,' *Pacific Affairs* 23:3 (1950) 227-247.

Skinner, G. William, 'The Chinese Minority,' in: Ruth McVey (ed.), *Indonesia* (New Haven, 1963) 97-117.

Skinner, G. William, 'Overseas Chinese Leadership: Paradigm for a Paradox,' in: G. Wijewardene (ed.), *Leadership and Authority: A Symposium* (Singapore 1968) 191-207.

Somers-Heidhues, Mary F., 'Citizenship and Identity: Ethnic Chinese and the Indonesian Revolution,' in: Jennifer W. Cushman and Wang Gungwu (eds.), *Changing identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese since World War II* (Hong Kong, 1988) 115-138, 125.

Somers-Heidhues, Mary F., *Peranakan Chinese Politics in Indonesia* (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1965). This quote is from her Interim Report on *Peranakan Chinese Politics* (Ithaca 1964) 50.

Somers-Heidhues, Mary F., 'Bystanders, Participants, Victims: The Chinese in Java and West Kalimantan, 1945-46.' Paper presented at the conference 'Changing Regimes and Shifting Loyalties: Identity and Violence in the Early Revolution in Indonesia,' Amsterdam, NIOD, June 25-27, 2003.

Stoler, Ann Laura, 'Working the Revolution: Plantation Laborers and the People's Militia in North Sumatra,' *Journal of Asian Studies* 47:2 (1988) 227-247.

Suryadinata, Leo, *Eminent Indonesian Chinese: Biographical Sketches* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1995).

Suryadinata, Leo, 'Indonesian Chinese Education: Past and Present,' *Indonesia* 14 (1972) 49-71.

Suryadinata, Leo, 'The Search for National Identity of an Indonesian Chinese: A Political Biography of Liem Koen Hian,' *Archipel* 14 (1977) 43-70.

Tjiook-Liem, Patricia, *De rechtspositie der Chinezen in Nederlands-Indië 1848-1942* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2009).

Twang Peck Yang, *The Chinese Business Élite in Indonesia and the Transition to Independence 1940-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Wang Gungwu, 'Traditional Leadership in a New Nation: The Chinese in Malaya and Singapore,' in: Wijeyewardene, *Leadership and Authority*, 208-222.

Williams, Lea E., *Overseas Chinese Nationalism: The Genesis of the Pan-Chinese Movement in Indonesia, 1900-1916* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960).

Willmott, Donald E., *The National Status of the Chinese in Indonesia 1900-1958* (Singapore: Equinox publishing, 2009 (Reprint of 1961)).

Yong Mun Cheong, *H.J. van Mook and Indonesian Independence: A Study of his Role in Dutch-Indonesian Relations, 1945-48* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982).