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The Batavia Massacre: The Tragic End to a Century of Cooperation

Kimberly Wilhelmina Wells

Missouri State University, Wells2016@live.missouristate.edu

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**THE BATAVIA MASSACRE: THE TRAGIC END TO A CENTURY OF
COOPERATION**

A Master's Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts, History

By

Kimberly Wilhelmina Wells

December 2019

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THE BATAVIA MASSACRE: THE TRAGIC END TO A CENTURY OF COOPERATION

History

Missouri State University, December 2019

Master of Arts

Kimberly Wilhelmina Wells

ABSTRACT

From its establishment in 1602, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) was an extensive and powerful trading company that sought to gain a monopoly over the spice trade in Southeast Asia, often using coercion to do so. In 1619 the VOC established its central base of operations in Batavia on the Indonesian island of Java. From the start, the VOC pursued a relationship of cooperation with the Chinese merchants in Batavia, which eschewed the use of violence in favor of other means of control, such as taxation and requirements to register with the authorities. For one hundred and twenty-one years, the VOC opted to treat the Chinese community as useful conduits who offered the Dutch important access to labor and trading opportunities. The massacre of the Chinese residents in Dutch Batavia in 1740 overturned this century-long established approach to ruling the Chinese community. Unlike scholars who have argued that the massacre was part of a wider pattern of colonial violence, this thesis will argue that the 1740 massacre was an anomaly for the Dutch governance of the Chinese merchants in Batavia. Analyzing the longer time frame before the massacre distinguishes this thesis from those that also see it as an anomaly. By examining official VOC records, letters between VOC officials, and the memoirs of several admirals, it is quite evident that various conditions, such as an influx of poor Chinese laborers into Batavia's surrounding area, an economic depression, and corruption among Chinese and Dutch officials, generated the 1740 massacre. The massacre was not an accepted policy of the VOC since the Governor in charge was arrested. Even when war broke out throughout Java after the massacre, some remnants of earlier cooperation between the VOC and the Batavian Chinese were still evident.

KEYWORDS: Dutch East India Company, Batavia, Indonesia, Chinese merchants, massacre, cooperation

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Approved:

Eric Nelson, D.Phil., Thesis Committee Chair

Julia Troche, Ph.D., Committee Member

John Chuchiak, Ph.D., Committee Member

Julie Masterson, Ph.D., Dean of the Graduate College

In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

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I dedicate this thesis to my son, Ruben.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

“Dead bodies blocked the doors; their blood flowed into the ditches and canals,”¹ recorded an anonymous eyewitness to the massacre of Chinese residents in Dutch Batavia in 1740. The use of violence by the Dutch against their colonial subjects in Southeast Asia was hardly unusual, and some scholars have argued that this murderous event is best understood as part of a broader Dutch colonial policy,² which used violence to subdue local indigenous groups in what is today modern Indonesia. However, this thesis will argue that the massacre of 1740 was an anomaly rather than an integral part of a wider campaign of coercion. From their arrival in the early seventeenth century, the Dutch East India Company (VOC)³ had found cooperation with Chinese merchants beneficial, even essential, for their trading operations in East Asia, and the treatment of Chinese inhabitants in the colony of Batavia reflected this dynamic. Through taxation and requirements to register with the authorities, the Dutch asserted their control over the Chinese community but used a light hand that privileged cooperation over coercion. The massacre of 1740 overturned this long established approach to governing the Chinese community. The city walls of Batavia that had long protected the Chinese merchants suddenly trapped them. Neighbors killed their neighbors. Even children and women were murdered inside the once protective walls. Ten thousand Chinese inhabitants were slaughtered within a few days. While the brutality of this horrific massacre is not in doubt, its place in Dutch governance was

¹ Leonard Blussé and Nie Dening, trans. and eds., *The Chinese Annals of Batavia, the Kai Ba Lidai Shiji and Other Stories (1610-1795)* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2018), 128.

² Hans Derks, “The Chinese, The VOC, and the Opium,” in *History of the Opium Problem* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 258, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctv4cbhdf.20>; A.R.T. Kemasang, “The 1740 massacre of Chinese in Java: Curtain raiser for the Dutch plantation economy,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 14, no. 1 (1982): 67, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14672715.1982.10412638>; Willem Remmelink, *The Chinese War and the Collapse of the Javanese State, 1725-1743* (Leiden: Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde Press, 1994), 128.

³ VOC is the abbreviation of the Dutch name of the company: *Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*.

unique and ran counter to long standing policy. The Company's arrest of the Governor in charge during the massacre reiterates the fact that the Company did not support this violent policy. This thesis will examine the place of Chinese merchants in Dutch trading networks and the reasons why the massacre of 1740 occurred despite the interests of the Dutch in maintaining these trading arrangements.

Various historians contribute to the large and vibrant historiography on the Dutch East India Company. Books by historians such as Stephen Bown, Adam Clulow, and Tristan Mostert are particularly strong in terms of comparative history of joint stock companies in the seventeenth century.⁴ The historical context during the time of the trading companies is very important to this thesis. Bown's book provides a general comparison between the English and Dutch trading companies, while Clulow and Mostert provide an edited collection of sources exploring the uses of diplomacy and violence by the trading companies. In contrast, Robert Parthesius provides a detailed account of the Dutch shipping industry.⁵ He analyzed various databases to construct a thorough account of the trading areas in Asia and the various shipping regions. He also examines competition between various shipping companies in the region. These books engage with critical questions of the mechanics of trading company operations and their use of violence in a mix of other policies. Collectively, they provide the basic background needed to understand the powerful Dutch East India trading company within the competitive milieu of seventeenth and eighteenth century Indonesia.

⁴ See Stephen R. Bown, *Merchant Kings: When Companies Ruled the World, 1600-1900* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 2009); Adam Clulow and Tristan Mostert, eds., *The Dutch and English East India Companies: Diplomacy, Trade and Violence in Early Modern Asia* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018).

⁵ See Robert Parthesius, *Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters: The Development of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) Shipping Network in Asia 1595-1660* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010).

Recent work in the broader field of colonial history also contributes to our understanding of the Dutch East India Company's place in European imperial endeavors in the Indian Ocean and beyond.⁶ The study of colonialism and imperialism contributes to the study of the Chinese Massacre in Batavia because it provides a fundamental background to the behaviors of colonial powers. The sources on imperial efforts demonstrate the long-standing use of coercion and violence by Europeans to gain control over territory and trade. This context of violence provides an important historical element to the study of Batavia because it shows how the Dutch treatment of Chinese merchants in Batavia was unusual, if not unprecedented.

Chinese trading networks also receive significant scholarly attention.⁷ Several scholars write about the substantial Chinese trading community in the Philippines and the periodic Spanish massacres of this community.⁸ These studies offer revealing comparisons to the relationship between the Dutch and Chinese inhabitants in Batavia. However, there is less scholarly attention on the positive impact of Chinese merchants on various islands throughout Southeast Asia. Chinese merchants established an extensive trading network that became lucrative to the Europeans and indigenous partners all over the region. The field can still benefit from a more detailed analysis of the collaboration between the Europeans and the overseas Chinese merchants. This thesis hopes to contribute to these neglected themes.

⁶ See Roger Crowley, *Conquerors: How Portugal Forged the First Global Empire* (London: Faber & Faber, 2015); C.R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800* (London: Penguin Group, 1965).

⁷ See Anthony Reid, "Flows and Seepages in the Long-term Chinese Interaction with Southeast Asia," in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid, 15-50 (Honolulu: HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001); Leonard Blussé, "Chinese Trade to Batavia during the days of the V.O.C.," *Archipel* 18 (1979): 195-213, https://www.persee.fr/doc/arch_0044-8613_1979_num_18_1_1509.

⁸ See Jose Eugenio Borao, "The Massacre of 1603: Chinese Perception of the Spanish in the Philippines," *Itinerario* 22, issue 1 (1998): 22-40, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0165115300012407>; Lucille Chia, "The Butcher, the Baker, and the Carpenter: Chinese Sojourners in the Spanish Philippines and Their Impact on Southern Fujian (Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries)," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49, no. 4 (2006): 509-534, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25165171>.

Scholars examine the massacre of 1740 from a variety of perspectives. Some focus on the very complex political and social situation on Java before the massacre, examining the tensions between the indigenous communities, the Chinese, and the Dutch members of the VOC. Historians such as Susan Abeyasekere and Ann Kumar write detailed accounts of the history of Java and the impact of Europeans on the area.⁹ Abeyasekere's concise description of the establishment of Batavia and her analysis of primary sources such as letters from General Coen to the Heeren XVII make considerable contributions to the field. Kumar's work is strongest when it deals with the VOC's political and economic effects on the societies of Java. However, neither Abeyasekere nor Kumar focus specifically on the peaceful relationship and economic arrangements between the Dutch, Chinese merchants, and Javanese inhabitants. This thesis adds to this field of study by analyzing further the evolving relationships between the various inhabitants of Java before and after the massacre of 1740.

M.C. Ricklefs, the leading historian on modern Indonesia, brilliantly outlines the complex social structures of the inhabitants of the various Indonesian islands including Java. His descriptions of the various Javanese kingdoms and royal courts provide a relevant and vital background about the island's complex society. In his article entitled, "The Crisis of 1740-1 In Java: The Javanese, Chinese, Madurese and Dutch, and the fall of the court of Kartasura," Ricklefs concisely analyzes the Chinese Massacre of 1740 in the context of the troubles present on Java. He demonstrates that the massacre of the Chinese occurred during a time of upheaval between the various people groups on the island. He also explains that the massacre of 1740 was followed by a time of warfare between three ethnic groups that encompassed the whole island.

⁹ See Susan Abeyasekere, *Jakarta: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Ann Kumar, *Java and Modern Europe: Ambiguous Encounters* (London: Curzon Press, 1997).

Ricklefs offers the most important study to date of Java in the time leading up to the massacre. His focus on the complex interaction of local groups provides a critical context for this study, which focuses on the Dutch and Chinese outsider communities on Java.

While Ricklefs' study differs from other historians because he analyzes the complex impact of the massacre on local indigenous groups, several other historians examine the relationship of the Chinese and Dutch from alternative perspectives. In his doctoral thesis, Johannes Vermeulen offers the most thorough account of the troubles between the Chinese merchants and the Dutch of Batavia before the massacre.¹⁰ He also concisely explains the horrors of the mass killings, focusing most of his attention on who was responsible for the massacre and the consequences of the deadly event. Other historians touch on the massacre in scholarly articles.¹¹ Mary Somers Heidhues describes the event from the perspective of German eyewitnesses, while Claudine Salmon provides a brief account of the revolts before the massacre and the violence that followed.

The leading historians of the massacre Leonard Blussé and A.R.T. Kemasang represent the two contrasting schools of thought. Blussé, who specializes in Asian-European relations, specifically analyzes the relationship between the Dutch working for the VOC and the Chinese merchants who inhabited Batavia.¹² Blussé stresses the collaboration that existed between the Dutch, Chinese merchants, and the indigenous peoples of the islands for many decades following

¹⁰ See Johannes Theodorus Vermeulen, "De Chineezten te Batavia en de Troebelen van 1740" (PhD diss., University of Leiden, 1938).

¹¹ See Mary Somers Heidhues, "1740 and the Chinese Massacre in Batavia: Some German Eyewitness Accounts," *Archipel* 77, no. 1 (2009): 117-147, http://www.persee.fr/doc/arch_0044-8613_2009_num_77_1_4127; Claudine Salmon, "The Massacre of 1740 as Reflected in a Contemporary Chinese Narrative," *Archipel* 77 (2016): 149-154, https://www.persee.fr/doc/arch_0044-8613_2009_num_77_1_4128.

¹² See Leonard Blussé, "Batavia, 1619-1740: The Rise and Fall of a Chinese Colonial Town," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 12, no. 1 (1981): 159-178, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20070419>; Leonard Blussé, *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1988); Blussé, "Chinese Trade to Batavia during the days of the V.O.C.," 195-213.

the VOC takeover of the region; and how, despite this long period of harmonious relations, the deterioration of the trust between ethnic groups---and particularly the Dutch and Chinese---was an important factor in the massacre.¹³ The thesis argued in this paper builds off of this research.

The arguments of A.R.T. Kemasang, the leading Indonesian scholar who specifically analyzes the role of the overseas Chinese in Java, run counter to those of Blussé.¹⁴ Kemasang's main argument in his numerous writings that touch on the massacre is that the Chinese merchants were an economic threat to the Dutch Company. Kemasang contends that the Dutch had much to gain economically from exterminating the Chinese. He argues that the Dutch were hostile to the Chinese from the beginning; hence, the Dutch believed the Chinese were expendable. He compares this massacre to the mass killings that occurred in 1621 on the Banda islands, which were also part of the Dutch East Indies. Additionally, Kemasang contends that the Dutch declared an "open season" on the Chinese in Java throughout the eighteenth century.¹⁵ While Kemasang makes many significant contributions to the scholarship in the field, this thesis will argue that his argument is greatly weakened by his lack of acknowledgement of the cooperation between the Chinese and VOC before the massacre and the fact that he takes some of the events out of context.

The Dutch East India Company was established during a time when the use of force was an accepted means for gaining and maintaining control over trade, and it regularly used coercion to break into and then monopolize the spice trade in Southeast Asia. The Company's main goal

¹³ Blussé, "Batavia, 1619-1740," 160.

¹⁴ See A.R.T. Kemasang, "How Dutch Colonialism Foreclosed a Domestic Bourgeoisie in Java: The 1740 Chinese Massacres Reappraised," *Review* 9, no. 1 (1985): 57-80, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40241012>; A.R.T. Kemasang, "Overseas Chinese in Java and Their Liquidation in 1740," *Southeast Asian Studies* 19, no. 2 (1981): 123-146, <http://hdl.handle.net/2433/56053>.

¹⁵ Kemasang, "The 1740 massacre of Chinese in Java," 67-68.

was to eliminate European competition. As the massacre in the Banda islands in 1621 demonstrates, indigenous peoples were often killed in the fight for European domination. In this context of violent competition, the relationship between the Dutch and the Chinese merchants in Batavia was quite different. The Dutch identified the importance of the Chinese merchants in their overseas trading network. Hence, they strove to have a mutually beneficial relationship with these Chinese merchants in Batavia. For over a century, the Dutch did not use violent force to control or intimidate the Chinese inhabitants. In an environment and era where violence was frequently used against European rivals and local communities, the VOC opted instead to treat the Chinese community as useful conduits who offered the Dutch important access to labor and trading opportunities. Even when pressures and resistance increased throughout Batavia and the surrounding area, known as the *Ommelanden*, the VOC repeatedly implemented non-violent policies to oversee and control Chinese communities. Chinese merchants were treated better than Chinese laborers and the local Javanese communities because they controlled the profitable Chinese trading network that greatly aided the Dutch trading company. Nonetheless, during the century leading up to the massacre of 1740, the Dutch refrained from using violence against any of the Chinese inhabitants in and around Batavia. Though extreme violence was used frequently throughout the region, the VOC's self-interest caused it to work to maintain an environment of collaboration with the Chinese inhabitants in Batavia. The Dutch company was successful in these objectives for a hundred and twenty-one years.

In emphasizing the Dutch efforts to work with the Chinese merchant community, this thesis builds on the work of Leonard Blussé, but takes his arguments a step further by showing that the Dutch deliberately sought this peaceful coexistence from the beginning of the

establishment of Batavia in 1619.¹⁶ From the start, the VOC pursued a relationship of cooperation with the Chinese merchants in Batavia, which eschewed the use of violence in favor of other means of control. The massacre of the Chinese in 1740 ran contrary to this mutually-beneficial economic relationship that was established in Batavia. Various conditions threatened the collaboration between the two groups. An influx of poor Chinese laborers into the area surrounding Batavia, an economic depression, and corruption among both Chinese and Dutch officials gave rise to the 1740 massacre. Though violence was used throughout the region, the massacre was completely out of character with how the Dutch had treated the Chinese inhabitants for over a century. It was an anomalous event. The official VOC reaction was to arrest and punish the Governor in charge during the massacre, which confirms that the violent event was not an accepted policy. Even in the midst of the war that dominated the island of Java following the massacre, some remnants of earlier cooperation between the VOC and the Batavian Chinese were still evident and visible.

This thesis draws upon a variety of primary sources to examine Dutch policy toward the Chinese community and in particular their use of coercion. Letters and documents from the Governors-General of the VOC in the Dutch East Indies to the Heeren XVII along with policies decreed by VOC leaders provide critical perspectives on the Company's treatment of the Chinese merchant community. Since the VOC was a large and bureaucratic trading company, its central archives held in the Netherlands holds vast amounts of information and documentation about the history, holdings, and business of the Company. The local archives in Indonesia also contain thousands of documents written by local rulers. Some of the material from the archives in the Netherlands has been edited and published and can be accessed online. These letters and

¹⁶ Blussé, "Batavia, 1619-1740," 160.

documents provide a crucial Dutch perspective of the events that occurred in Southeast Asia. H.T. Colenbrander compiled documents and letters sent by Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen in *Jan Pietersz. Coen: Bescheiden Omtrent zijn bedrijf in Indie*. This primary source sheds light on the specific military events and economic decisions Governor Coen made during his time working for the VOC from 1607 to 1629. This source is especially relevant to sustaining the thesis of this paper because it demonstrates the importance of the Chinese merchants in the establishment of Batavia and the profitable trading network located there. Throughout the documents, Coen insists on the importance of utilizing the Chinese merchants to create a lucrative trading network. Though Coen was brutal and merciless in his campaign for a trade monopoly throughout other islands of the Indonesian archipelago, he consistently treated the Chinese merchants differently. Coen was responsible for creating the multicultural settlement that was established in Batavia. He sought to populate Batavia with these hardworking Chinese merchants so that both the Chinese trading network and the VOC could benefit from each other.

Various volumes of *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie: Verzameling van Onuitgegeven Stukken uit het Oud-Koloniaal Archief*, compiled by J.K.J. De Jonge, also provide important information for this thesis. These extensive volumes contain letters written from the many Governors-General of the VOC to the Heeren XVII. Like the letters of VOC admirals, these letters provide a vital glimpse into the attitude and policies of the Governors-General and the VOC. They describe many historical events with great detail. The letters sustain the idea that the Governors sought to pursue and maintain a cooperative trading relationship with the Chinese merchants in Batavia.

Many historians use the valuable collection of policies decreed by the Governors-General of the VOC edited by J.A. Van Der Chijs in *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek*. These volumes

of policies are of paramount importance to the thesis of this paper. These regulations repeatedly demonstrate that the Dutch did not pursue an official policy of violence toward the Chinese inhabitants. Some historians such as Kemasang use these regulations to highlight the restrictions and taxes placed on the Chinese inhabitants by the Dutch trading company. While it is true that the Company did pass restrictive measures such as taxation on the Chinese inhabitants, it must be recognized that these were not overtly violent regulations. The taxes and registration schemes were best suited to raising revenues and also keeping track of the number of Chinese residents in the colony. These were policy goals that did not require violence. This thesis's interpretation of the policies decreed by the Governors-General runs counter to Kemasang because they demonstrate that the Dutch Governors used alternative measures of control. The orders and regulations reveal that for more than a century the Dutch deliberately, consistently, and repeatedly passed regulations that may have restricted the Chinese inhabitants of Batavia, but they did not impose physical harm or threats of violence to control them.

Historians also analyze German eyewitness accounts to the massacre of 1740. The VOC often employed German soldiers and sent them to participate in the trade in Batavia. Several German soldiers witnessed the massacre, and they provide detailed accounts of the deadly event in their memoirs. Georg Bernhardt Schwarz's account provides a participant's perspective that highlights his role in killing Chinese inhabitants and plundering their homes in Batavia.¹⁷ His account is valuable to this thesis because it offers the perspective of Europeans who willingly participated in the Batavia massacre.

¹⁷ Georg Bernhardt Schwarz, *Reise in Ost-Indien, worinnen mancherley Merkwürdigkeiten, besonders aber die Anno 1740 in seiner Anwesenheit zu Batavia fürgefallene Rebellion der Chinesen, und deroelben darauf erfolgte grose Massacre umständlich und aufrichtig beschrieben worden* (Heilbronn: Franz Joseph Eckebrecht, 1751), <http://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?PPN63075120X>.

Memoirs and journals of both Dutch and English admirals provide an important insight into the world of European exploration and the struggle for control over trade in the region. *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-1617* offers an English perspective on the rivalry between the English and Dutch trading companies in Southeast Asia. The experiences of Admiral Jourdain paint a vivid picture of how competition and war dominated the European mindset and the treatment of the indigenous peoples in territories the Europeans controlled. The memoirs and letters that the Dutch admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge wrote during his voyage to Indonesia from 1605 to 1608 provide a particularly useful perspective on the VOC's initial establishment in the region.¹⁸ Matelieff was the first Dutch official to recognize the importance of establishing a central base in Jakarta. He also consistently reiterated the importance of the VOC's goals of combating the Iberian Powers throughout Southeast Asia and gaining a monopoly on the spice trade. The messages throughout these letters set a precedent for the policies that his successors would also follow and implement.

The anonymous *Chinese Annals of Batavia* provides an invaluable Chinese eyewitness perspective on Chinese society in Batavia and a detailed description of the 1740 massacre. Though the author's identity is unknown, he certainly was pro-VOC. It is very possible that the author was a secretary of the Chinese Council in Batavia.¹⁹ Hence, it is a source that expresses a perspective from the Chinese merchant class on the island of Java. Since there was a social and economic division in Batavia between the Chinese merchant elite and impoverished Chinese workers, this source cannot be interpreted as being representative of Chinese opinion in Batavia. Nonetheless, it is a valuable and unique source because it gives insight into how some Chinese

¹⁸ Peter Borschberg, ed., *Journal, Memorials, and Letters of Cornelis Matelieff De Jonge: Security, Diplomacy and Commerce in 17th-century Southeast Asia* (Singapore: National University of Singapore, 2015).

¹⁹ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 27.

elite viewed the massacre and who they blamed for it. This eclectic selection of sources work together to describe the events that occurred in Batavia in 1740.

This thesis is organized into four main chapters with an introduction and a conclusion chapter. The first main chapter provides important background information about the creation of the VOC and the establishment of its headquarters in Batavia. It also introduces the overseas Chinese merchants and their impact on islands in Southeast Asia. The next chapter aids the thesis argument because it provides the context of colonial violence throughout the region, but also explains that the Dutch treatment of Chinese merchants in Batavia differed from the events in the Banda islands. The chapter also includes a comparison of Spanish policies toward Chinese merchants in Manila, which provides a relevant and stark contrast to the Dutch policies in Java. The chapter that follows analyzes the various policies the VOC implemented to control the Chinese inhabitants of Batavia and its surrounding area and highlights the various economic factors and corruption that led to the massacre. The chapter offers a brief description of the massacre and then contends that the massacre was an anomaly due to the long standing period of cooperation between the Dutch and Chinese merchants and due to the arrest of Governor Valckenier, who was in charge during the massacre. The final main chapter analyzes the period of warfare that dominated Java after the massacre. It demonstrates that even though the Dutch used violent armed forces to combat Chinese rebels during the Java War, the VOC did return to the implementation of policies that encouraged cooperation with the Chinese merchants who remained in Batavia. The conclusion chapter reiterates the various situations that made the 1740 massacre an anomaly for the Dutch governance of the Chinese merchants in Batavia.

CHAPTER 2 INTERNATIONAL TRADE, JAVA AND ITS INHABITANTS

For centuries Europeans had sought spices and other exotic goods from Asia through intermediaries in the Eastern Mediterranean. Then at the end of the fifteenth century the Portuguese established a sea route to Asia around the southern tip of Africa and then within a few decades a trading-post empire that allowed them to control much of the spice trade in the Indian Ocean.²⁰ Other European nations soon challenged the Portuguese for control of lucrative trading opportunities in Asia, including its neighbor Spain that came to control the Philippines and had ambitions to seize the Spice Islands in modern Indonesia as well.²¹ By the end of the sixteenth century, the Dutch also became active participants in the Asian trading network for both economic and political reasons.

Creating the VOC

The Dutch Republic experienced great economic prosperity during the seventeenth century, also known as the Dutch Golden Age. Dutch wealth depended heavily on the Baltic trade, but after 1580 Dutch merchants increasingly focused their attention to the spice trade in the East. An important factor that aided the Dutch in becoming a mercantile world power was the internal political structure in the United Provinces.²² The Dutch established “a decentralized government made up of merchants, cheap goods and services, and an innovative environment.”²³ This environment fostered opportunities for economic growth, with the Dutch particularly

²⁰ Parthesius, *Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters*, 11.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Peter C. Emmer, “The First Global War: The Dutch versus Iberia in Asia, Africa and the New World, 1590-1609,” *E-Journal of Portuguese History* 1, no. 1 (Summer 2003): 3, https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Portuguese_Brazilian_Studies/ejph/html/issue1/pdf/emmer.pdf.

²³ Ibid., 4.

excelling in shipbuilding, manufacturing, and the carrying trade.²⁴ These advantages quickly elevated the Dutch into formidable competitors against their European rivals.

Several different Dutch trading companies became especially competitive in the East. Each sought to gain exclusive rights to the various spices, especially those from Indonesia. Sixty-five Dutch ships were sent by six different companies to Asia between 1597 and 1602.²⁵ Dutch merchants competed successfully with Portuguese traders, but they were also competing with each other, which increased the price of pepper and other spices.²⁶ To increase profits, Dutch merchants began to entertain the possibility of combining their various competing enterprises into a single Dutch trading company. Though negotiations were difficult, the companies eventually merged into the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) in 1602, becoming the largest joint-stock company in the world at the time. Furthermore, the founding of the VOC resulted in the first modern stock exchange. Many residents of the United Provinces invested in the VOC, making it the first company owned by its investors. The investors had the right to hold that capital permanently or they could recoup their capital by selling their stock. Consequently, a stock exchange was established in Amsterdam for the trading of VOC stock.

The structure of the VOC was flexible and strong, and they were a significant competitor in the maritime trade in Asia. It only took a few decades for the VOC to become “the most powerful trading corporation in the seventeenth-century world and the model for the large-scale business enterprises that now dominate the global economy.”²⁷ The success of the Company was largely due to the freedom it enjoyed. The decentralized company was highly independent

²⁴ Ibid., 3.

²⁵ Ibid., 6; Parthesius, *Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters*, 11.

²⁶ Parthesius, *Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters*, 34.

²⁷ Timothy Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Press, 2008), 16.

because it was structured after the constitution of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands.²⁸ Since there were six trading companies that merged together to form the VOC, there were six Chambers. The Chambers or *Kamers* represented the cities of Amsterdam, Zeeland, Hoorn, Enkhuizen, Delft, and Rotterdam.²⁹ These Chambers also had a great degree of freedom in decision-making. Each Chamber was controlled by “its own Board of Directors, with the VOC’s general management consisting of a central board of seventeen directors, the so-called Heeren Zeventien (Gentlemen of Seventeen).”³⁰ The Heeren XVII made collaborative decisions for the whole Company.

The United Provinces gave the VOC extensive powers. It granted the VOC the right to appoint its own Governors-General who ruled the Company’s territorial possessions. It also granted the VOC powers usually reserved to states to “make treaties with rulers and states in Asia, to build fortifications, and to undertake military operations.”³¹ Political considerations may have played a role in the Dutch government’s decision to grant the VOC sweeping powers. In the middle of the sixteenth century, Philip II, the Habsburg ruler of Spain, also controlled the Low Countries, which included the future Dutch Republic. Beginning in 1568, the Dutch Revolt, also known as the Eighty Years’ War, was a war fought between the United Provinces and their Habsburg overlords. The Dutch opposed Spain’s political and religious claims to sovereignty over the Low Countries. When Philip II ascended the Portuguese throne in 1580, he unified the Iberian countries under one ruler. The Portuguese controlled much of the spice trade in the East. The unification of the two countries put the United Provinces’ mortal enemy in control of the primary source for Dutch spices. Even though the Dutch were on their way to becoming the chief

²⁸ Parthesius, *Dutch Ships in Tropical Waters*, 34.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 35.

conduit of trade in the Baltic, they shifted their attention to securing access to spices from the East. The Dutch wanted spices not just for their own consumption, but because their trading partners in the Baltic wanted them too. Thus, the VOC's goals were to profit from the spices and to combat the Iberian powers against which the Dutch people were at war. The VOC intended to undermine its Habsburg adversaries by seizing control of the lucrative trade with the east that would otherwise help Philip II finance his war against the Dutch.³² These factors strongly fueled the ambitious Dutchmen in their overseas trade. Hence, the war in Europe fueled the Dutch interest in spices in the East.

By virtue of its expansive shipping industry, the Dutch quickly enlarged their influence all over the world in the seventeenth century, but especially in the islands of Southeast Asia where they competed directly with their Iberian enemies. The VOC used its charter rights to wage war and seize territory to attack Portuguese and Spanish ships and forts in the East. The spice trade in the East was immediately lucrative for the VOC. In order to benefit even more from this trade, commanders of the VOC understood that it would be very advantageous for them to establish a more permanent base for conducting business in Southeast Asia.

Looking for a *Rendezvous*

The Dutch realized the lucrative potential of spices in Southeast Asia a few decades before the VOC was established. Spices, especially pepper, made Dutch merchants very wealthy. After the founding of the VOC, this company established hundreds of outposts in Asian towns that held offices and warehouses for the spice trade. Though they had these various outposts

³² Borschberg, *Journal, Memorials, and Letters of Cornelis Matelieff De Jonge*, 33.

throughout the region, the VOC's trade in Southeast Asia became so extensive that they needed control of a whole city with good port facilities in which they could base their operations to oversee departures and return voyages. A permanent central base in Asia was essential to the success of the Dutch trading network.

The need for a central base of operations was first expressed by Admiral Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge. Matelieff was a director of the VOC and fleet commander during his voyage to Asia from 1605-1608.³³ He wrote a series of epistolary memorials that provided advice and instructions to improve trade and VOC voyages in Asia. Matelieff's memorials were filled with recommendations of a place where ships could gather to form a convoy before embarking to other islands or on a homebound voyage.³⁴ He termed this permanent base a *rendezvous*. Admiral Matelieff described the importance of this *rendezvous* in his memorial titled "Discourse on the State of the East Indies," which was dated 12 November 1608. He contends,

First of all, we must choose a *rendezvous* or meeting place in the Indies, where all ships from these lands can easily call and take in fresh supplies. All provisions, foodstuffs and ammunition of war should also be brought there and amassed gradually, for in the Indies it is impossible to obtain these quickly. This has not been attempted at all thus far, although it is what we need most in the East Indies. All goods from all regions could also be brought and kept safely there, for inland navigation with large ships involves a lot of expenses and inconvenience. One ought to use the large ships mostly against the enemy and have them closest at hand to help all those who might be in distress in the East Indies.³⁵

³³ Peter Borschberg, "The Value of Admiral Matelieff's writings for studying the history of Southeast Asia, c. 1600-1620," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 48, no. 3 (October 2017): 414, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S002246341700056x>.

³⁴ Borschberg, *Journals, Memorials and Letters of Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge*, 134.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 255.

The Admiral's idea of a central base was certainly a new and innovative idea. He believed a *rendezvous* would shorten the time ships took to get home, which would optimize profits.

Matelieff continues,

Therefore, if we want to do anything useful here in the Indies, we have to see to it that we obtain a place as well, where we can rest when we come from Holland. This will bring us much profit, such as the restoration of our people and ships in the first place, and secondly the increase of our reputation with the Indian princes and peoples who thus far do not place much trust in us, saying: "It's true that the Dutch are good people, better than Spanish and Portuguese, but what use is it? They come here in passing only, and once they have their ships full they leave again."³⁶

Matelieff passionately felt that establishing a *rendezvous* would benefit relations with indigenous populations, which would undoubtedly result in economic gain for the Company. Recognizing the importance of establishing a permanent headquarters for the Company in Asia, he strove to find the perfect location.

Due to his familiarity with the islands of Southeast Asia, Matelieff provided six possible locations for this *rendezvous*, and in turn evaluated each position. Some of the possible locations included Melaka, ports on the Malay Peninsula, and ports like Banten and Jakarta located along the Sunda Strait on the island of Java. Of the options he mentioned, Jakarta became Matelieff's favorite location. One of the advantages of this city was that it was accessible year round and under any kind of wind condition. This accessibility provided a quick turn-around of ships, which inevitably saved money.³⁷ As Matelieff summarized:

Therefore, I would choose one out of two places: either the city of Jayakarta (or the freshwater river there, three or four miles west in the direction of Banten), or the city of Palembang on Sumatra. Then again, Palembang is equally hard to reach when the

³⁶ Ibid., 336.

³⁷ Ibid., 137.

monsoon approaches and one sails into the Sunda Strait from the outside. This has recently become evident, in January 1608, as Paul van Caerden tried to reach Johor from Banten and was unable to sail very far. My best advice would be, therefore, that we negotiate with the king of Jayakarta, so that we can build a fortress either in his city or at the aforementioned freshwater river; the Sunda Strait can be sailed in every season, either to Banten or to Jayakarta, if one has rounded the Cape of Good Hope and one does not have to endure the monsoon.³⁸

This detailed assessment of the benefits of establishing a permanent base in Jayakarta (Jakarta) was fundamental in conducting efficient trade in Southeast Asia. Additionally, it aided the Dutch in their fight against the Iberian powers in the region. Matelieff's recommendation of a *rendezvous* in Jakarta on the island of Java would have a significant impact on the success of the Company.

Securing Jakarta

When the Dutch settled in Southeast Asia in the beginning of the seventeenth century, there were strong indigenous states present throughout the region. The two most powerful Javanese kingdoms at the time were the kingdom of Kartasura and the kingdom of Mataram. The state of Mataram was founded in Central Java by the end of the sixteenth century. Sultan Agung was the most powerful monarch of the Mataram dynasty because he expanded the territory throughout the island.³⁹ These prosperous times eventually ended for the powerful dynasty due to the tyrannical rule of Amangkurat I. It was during this troubled time for the Mataram dynasty that the kingdom of Kartasura was established. These kingdoms were led by ruling courts that consisted of the leading rulers of the region. The Javanese courts established the official policies of the people who lived in the kingdom. Another powerful leader who would become a threat to

³⁸ Borschberg, *Journals, Memorials and Letters of Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge*, 256.

³⁹ M.C. Ricklefs, *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java, 1726-1749: History, Literature and Islam in the Court of Pakubuwana II* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), xxi.

the various courts was Pangeran Cakraningrat. Cakraningrat skillfully ruled the island of Madura, but he also sought to control Java.⁴⁰ The various rulers had frequently clashed and fought over territory throughout Java. The relationship between these courts became more complicated when the European powers arrived.

The European sea-faring nations established colonial outposts in order to conduct trade. Initially, simple trading posts were created. Eventually more permanent outposts became necessary to secure control over trade. The European companies constructed factories made up of warehouses and fortifications. Many colonial fortresses were created throughout Southeast Asia. This was certainly the case on the island of Java in Indonesia. The British East India Company and the VOC gained permission from the sultan of Banten to establish warehouses in his kingdom at the turn of the seventeenth century.⁴¹ Both European trading companies sought to establish monopolies of trade on the island, and this rivalry often ended in violence. Hence the environment in Banten was unstable. Realizing the great potential of the Javanese town Jakarta, the VOC signed a contract with the Prince of Jakarta in 1610 that granted permission to the Company to build fortresses and warehouses in the city.⁴² Tensions and distrust continued to exist in Java between the English and the Dutch as well as between the rulers of Banten and Mataram.

General Matelieff was instrumental in his recommendation of Jakarta as the best place for a permanent base. Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen held the same sentiments as General Matelieff. Coen was appointed Governor-General in 1618, but he understood the necessity of a central base at Jakarta as early as 1614.⁴³ By the time he was appointed as Governor-General, he

⁴⁰ Remmelink, *The Chinese War and the Collapse of the Javanese State*, 16.

⁴¹ Abeyasekere, *Jakarta*, 8.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

wanted to capture the city of Jakarta and secure it for the VOC. Coen used instability on the island to his advantage. The rulers of Banten and the court of Mataram, under the leadership of Sultan Agung, were fighting for control over the regions of Banten and Jakarta. Consequently, those indigenous groups would not form an alliance against the Company. The English were too distrustful of either indigenous group to form an alliance. Even the cunning leader, Coen recognized these weaknesses, and he capitalized on them.

General Coen's first action in capturing Jakarta was to fortify the defenses of the Dutch buildings and to increase the garrison stationed there.⁴⁴ In response, the Bantenese and English also strengthened their separate forces. By December 1618, however, Coen's forces were outnumbered by the English. Recognizing the need for reinforcement, Coen decided to sail to the Moluccas to request additional aid.⁴⁵ Fortunately for the VOC, the English and Bantenese forces could not agree on how to attack the Dutch fort. Some minor fighting occurred, but a stalemate was quickly reached. By the end of January 1619, the English withdrew due to the Bantenese presence. Then, the stronger Bantenese forces removed the Prince of Jakarta from the city.⁴⁶ The Dutch forces were able to maintain control of Jakarta until Coen returned in May 1619. With superior reinforcements in tow, Coen was able to formally establish the port at Jakarta for the VOC. Wanting to honor the Batavians, who were the ancestors of the Dutch, they renamed the city and fort Batavia.⁴⁷

After its seizure, Batavia became the administrative center of the Company's shipping network in all of Southeast Asia.⁴⁸ In September 1627, Jan Pieterszoon Coen returned to Batavia,

⁴⁴ Ibid., 11.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 12.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ G.L. Balk, F. van Dijk, and D.J. Kortlang, *The Archives of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) and the Local Institutions in Batavia (Jakarta)* (The Hague: Nationaal Archief, 2007), 24, <file:///F:/Research%20Seminar/Massacres-terrorism/Archives%20of%20the%20VOC.pdf>.

and he became the commanding officer of the VOC for two terms as the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies.⁴⁹ Though the Dutch were successful in establishing their *rendezvous* in Jakarta, the VOC headquarters continued to experience some resistance from the strong indigenous forces. Sultan Agung of Mataram was an ambitious ruler who strove to expand his Javanese empire throughout the island. The presence of the VOC threatened his growing empire, and he sought to eliminate his opponent. Sultan Agung and his men orchestrated two deadly attacks against Coen and the VOC.⁵⁰ Coen proved to be a skillful and ruthless adversary. He launched multiple counterattacks using his superior naval forces. By October 1628 a reinforcement of Javanese forces arrived to attack Batavia. Though there were many Javanese casualties, the Javanese challenge against the fortress of Batavia was successful enough to place Batavia at great risk of falling to the Javanese.⁵¹ However, this dire situation eventually changed. The Javanese became frustrated with the failure to capture the fortress, so they withdrew. Nevertheless, Sultan Agung regrouped and renewed his efforts to take over Batavia again, sending another force to the city in August. This siege of Batavia in 1629 ended disastrously for the Javanese who suffered many fatalities due to disease and starvation.⁵² After the failure of the second siege, Sultan Agung recognized that the VOC could not be driven out of Java. The VOC had successfully secured Batavia from enemy attack.

Initially, Sultan Agung allied himself economically and diplomatically with the Portuguese at Malacca and India.⁵³ Eventually, he realized that the Portuguese were not strong enough to combat the VOC. Recognizing the power of the VOC, Sultan Agung began to

⁴⁹ Bown, *Merchant Kings*, 50.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ M.C. Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia Since c. 1300* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 45.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 46.

establish an alliance with the Company. Open warfare between Dutch and Javanese ships came to an end. However, an official declaration of peace never materialized because the sultan refused to release the eighty Dutchmen he held captive.⁵⁴ This fact notwithstanding, Sultan Agung and his forces transitioned their focus from battling the Dutch to fighting indigenous enemies around the island of Java, and the VOC remained strong in their headquarters in Batavia. Though General Coen was instrumental in securing the fortress or *rendezvous* at Batavia in Jakarta, he would not witness the further success of the town. Ailments, including dysentery and cholera, plagued Coen. He died from these ailments on September 20, 1629.⁵⁵ Coen was considered a national hero in the Netherlands for establishing the Dutch as masters of the Indonesian trade. Despite, or perhaps due to, his ruthless leadership, Coen fortified the city of Batavia for the VOC.

Relationships and Tensions in Java

The indigenous courts quickly learned that it was advantageous to align themselves, both economically and militarily, with the powerful Dutch trading company. Due to an agreement established with the kingdom of Mataram, the VOC was permitted to erect fortresses and build shipyards throughout Java.⁵⁶ It was during the late seventeenth century that forts were established at Tegal, Semarang, and Rembang, and smaller trading posts were created in places such as Demak and Juwana.⁵⁷ These posts were much smaller than the large city of Batavia where the VOC had gained concessions over the whole city. The smaller outposts were

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Bown, *Merchant Kings*, 51.

⁵⁶ Luc Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger: The Dutch East Indies Company and the Northeast Coast of Java 1680-1743*, trans. Beverley Jackson (Leiden: Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde Press, 1996), 26.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

technically under Dutch control; but in reality they were within the orbit of Javanese authority. As Nagtegaal concisely explains, “The fortresses had only two areas of responsibility: on the one hand, they had a military role to play, and on the other hand, they had to serve the Company’s trading interests. In practice, however, the Dutch Residents often brought considerable political pressure to bear, informally, on the Javanese regents.”⁵⁸ The Dutch did realize, however, that it would be beneficial to have alliances with indigenous peoples. Alliances would certainly aid them in the establishment of their lucrative trading network in Java and throughout Southeast Asia. The diplomatic relations between the VOC and the Javanese courts were complicated. The majority of the Javanese elite wanted to side with the VOC for political reasons, but it was not always a simple arrangement. Since both the kingdoms in Java and the Company made diplomatic agreements that benefited their own interests, circumstances frequently changed these agreements.

The VOC was particularly wary of its alliance with the Mataram Empire, which it treated with distrust. Though the VOC had initially had a mutually beneficial agreement with the court of Mataram, this relationship was severed after a deadly event. In 1686 Captain Francois Tack was sent to address a disagreement between the Company and Mataram, but the Balinese rebel Surapati intervened in the conflict. Surapati became a threat to both the court under the rule of Amangkurat II and the Company. Surapati convinced Amangkurat II’s Balinese bodyguards to fight on his side, resulting in the death of Captain Tack and 67 other European soldiers.⁵⁹ This event caused the VOC to distrust the kingdom of Mataram. Since Surapati had murdered these

⁵⁸ Ibid., 27.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 74.

VOC members in 1686, the Company wanted him captured or killed.⁶⁰ This request was never fulfilled, and Surapati continued to be a strong opponent throughout Java.

In order to maintain the strong trading network in Batavia, the VOC continued to provide military support to its allies throughout Java. Surapati continued to pose a threat to the sultans of the island. Nearly a decade later, Surapati became a threat to Sultan Amangkurat II of Mataram. Amangkurat II reached out to his Dutch allies for help because his kingdom was in a state of collapse. In a letter written in 1699 he pleads, “I fear in my heart that without the help and succor of Your Illustrious Excellency my country will be lost and this is why I so greatly desire the power and assistance of the Company.”⁶¹ Though the Dutch did not fully trust the court, they did finally intervene on their behalf in 1704, albeit reluctantly.⁶² The VOC also provided military support in the various conflicts that plagued the courts from within. The rebel Surapati continued to be a formidable opponent until his death in 1706.⁶³ The alliances and relationships between the Javanese courts and the VOC were messy and self-serving on both ends. However, they do demonstrate the need for the alliances that existed on the island. The sultans and their courts recognized that they needed the military support of the powerful Europeans, and the VOC understood that peace benefitted their trading operations and the security of their headquarters on Java.

The Javanese courts continued to participate in conflicts. Additionally, there were tensions within the courts themselves. The Mataram Empire was greatly weakened by these internal conflicts. Consequently, the First Javanese War of Succession erupted in 1704 after the

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ M.C. Ricklefs, “Letter from Susuhunan Amangkurat II in Kartasura to the Supreme Government in Batavia, 18 December 1699,” in *Harta Karun. Hidden Treasures on Indonesian and Asian-European History from the VOC Archives in Jakarta*, document 14 (Jakarta: Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2014).

⁶² Kumar, *Java and Modern Europe*, 30.

⁶³ Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, 79.

death of Amangkurat II. The VOC was heavily involved because they had established alliances with these indigenous peoples and provided military support to Amangkurat II's brother Pakubuwana I.⁶⁴ The First War of Succession ended after five years with the defeat of Amangkurat III. This victory helped Pakubuwana I take the throne. The VOC had played an instrumental role in this victory, but peace did not reign for long. Pakubuwana I died in 1719, sparking the Second Javanese War of Succession from 1719 to 1723.⁶⁵ Again, the VOC was pulled into this new war. The Company sided with Amangkurat IV against his brother and the rebels that supported him.⁶⁶ Due to the military strength of the Company, Amangkurat IV was able to defend his throne. The VOC, whose major focus was to maintain a profitable trading company, still became a major participant in the conflicts of the island. In return for military support, the various sultans had financial obligations to the VOC, which were often represented in payments of cash and rice.⁶⁷ Although the Dutch often displayed a reluctance to participate in these indigenous wars, the VOC understood the importance of maintaining diplomatic relationships with the various peoples of the island.

From the beginning of the VOC's presence on the island, the Company strove to maintain economic relations with their allies on Java. The courts had the same goal since they needed the military support of the powerful Company. The Company continued to provide aid to its allies throughout the seventeenth century. Unfortunately, these political and economic arrangements with the indigenous peoples of Java became more complicated throughout the following century. The 1730s brought additional conflicts between the court located in Kartasura and the rebellious leader Cakraningrat. Cakraningrat skillfully positioned himself between the court and the

⁶⁴ Ricklefs, *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java*, xxii.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 174-176.

Company.⁶⁸ This position would help him gain control over a significant part of Java in the following decade. Due to the various treaties between the court and the VOC, the Company was expected by their ally to provide more military support than they actually ended up providing.⁶⁹ The VOC, however, was exhausted by the continuous violence and warfare on the island. In this particular conflict, the Company refused to provide military support. Consequently, the indigenous courts interpreted this denial of military support as a release from any obligation they had previously had to the Company.

Overseas Chinese in Java

There was a continuous and substantial Chinese presence in the islands of Southeast Asia starting centuries before the Europeans arrived. Chinese government policy concerning its subjects abroad shifted through time. As large numbers of Chinese established themselves in Korea, Japan, and the islands in Southeast Asia during the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties,⁷⁰ some of these dynasties implemented strict policies about the Chinese travelers who moved away from their Chinese homeland. The rulers of these dynasties either considered these Chinese merchants as sojourners who would eventually come back to China or as lawbreakers who would be punished if they returned.⁷¹ Hence, once a Chinese citizen had officially emigrated away from China, they were no longer under the protection of the Chinese dynasty. They were shunned. Nonetheless, recognizing the economic advantages of other islands throughout

⁶⁸ Remmelink, *The Chinese War and the Collapse of the Javanese State*, 60.

⁶⁹ Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, 218.

⁷⁰ Wang Gungwu, "Sojourning: The Chinese Experience in Southeast Asia," in *Sojourners and Settlers: Histories of Southeast Asia and the Chinese*, ed. Anthony Reid (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2001), 4.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Southeast Asia, hundreds of thousands of Chinese people emigrated or sojourned away from China.

Centuries before the arrival of the Dutch, Chinese merchants became instrumental both in the trade between China and Southeast Asia and in the internal trading networks of the region.⁷² Their influence only grew when European powers came to the region. Some Chinese merchants had become very wealthy because they “acted as intermediaries between the Dutch or English East India companies and riverine rulers or collection centers.”⁷³ Chinese merchants allowed the Europeans to tap into the established Chinese trading networks.

Some of the greatest Chinese seafarers were the Fukienese who inhabited the Fujian province. Due to the difficult terrain of Fujian, the Fukienese had learned to import rice from other provinces and established an impressive trading network that also traded in products like porcelain, ironware, and textiles.⁷⁴ As early as the fourteenth century, these Chinese merchants became pioneers of long-distance trade. By the sixteenth century the Chinese government passed a policy encouraging Fukienese merchants in the overseas trade, issuing over a hundred trade licenses in 1575.⁷⁵ Some of these Chinese merchants became very wealthy. The Ocean trade routes in Southeast Asia were divided into the Eastern and Western trade routes. The Eastern trade route was more lucrative because it led to the Philippines, where silver from South America was traded.⁷⁶ The Chinese there settled mostly in Manila and traded with the Spanish. The Western trade route went to the Malay Peninsula and Western Java.⁷⁷ Initially, the port of Banten

⁷² Gungwu, “Sojourning,” 5.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Blussé, “Chinese Trade to Batavia during the days of the V.O.C.,” 196.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 197.

was an important trade market, but many Chinese merchants eventually also settled in the region around Jakarta.

In Batavia, the Dutch quickly established a trade link with Chinese merchants. The large Chinese junks brought rich cargoes and thousands of new settlers to Batavia and the surrounding towns. The Dutch relied heavily on Chinese junks to export goods from Batavia such as pepper, sandalwood, incense, buffalo horns, elephant tusks, and large quantities of silver to China and other Southeast Asian ports.⁷⁸ Pepper was sold in especially great quantities. Over three thousand tons of pepper came through Batavia in 1644 alone.⁷⁹ Chinese junks were able to export and ship goods at a much cheaper rate than if the Dutch sent their own ships to China. The trading network between the Chinese and Dutch became so lucrative, they eventually relied exclusively on Chinese junks for shipping and trading goods.

Dutch Inhabitants in Batavia

Initially, the VOC planned to populate Batavia with Dutch citizens. As Admiral Matelieff envisioned it, “families would be brought there from Holland, so that one would have all kinds of crafts and business there. His Majesty’s lands would profit from this and could then be provided with everything necessary.”⁸⁰ The admiral believed that Batavia could become an important colonial city for the Dutch. Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen had the same vision. He initially promoted a policy that optimized the influx of Dutchmen to Batavia.⁸¹ He urged the Heeren XVII to send Dutch citizens, even women or girls, to Batavia to populate it. In his letter to Holland in October 1620 Coen explained that “there could be many more servants for the

⁷⁸ Ibid., 205.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Borschberg, *Journals, Memorials and Letters of Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge*, 193.

⁸¹ Blussé, “Batavia, 1619-1740,” 166.

Company if they sent more younger, honest women or daughters. In this way, God willing, the territory they have in Asia can become a fundamental place (even to the point of being considered a place of high social standing).”⁸² While initially the Heeren XVII pursued this policy, they eventually reversed course as it came to be viewed as a failure and with it the dream of creating a city populated by Dutch citizens in the East.

Another problem that arose from sending Dutch people to populate Batavia was that most did not stay for long. Few Dutchmen settled permanently, instead returning home as soon as they were able. To prevent this from occurring, VOC authorities encouraged marriages between Dutchmen and Indonesian women so that they would be compelled to remain with their Asian families in Batavia.⁸³ Though this plan did tie a few Dutchmen to Batavian soil, it did not greatly increase the Dutch population in Batavia. Batavia did not become the great Dutch colonial city that Admiral Matelieff and Governor-General Coen had envisioned. Instead Coen shifted VOC efforts to populating Batavia with Chinese merchants.

Demand for Chinese in Batavia

Since the Chinese had established an expansive trading network throughout Southeast Asia before Europeans settled there, the Chinese always greatly outnumbered the Dutch in the islands.⁸⁴ As early as 1607, Admiral Matelieff noted the presence of Chinese merchants and ships conducting trade in the region and specifically with Manila. In a letter of advice to Admiral

⁸² Jan Pieterszoon Coen, *Jan Pietersz. Coen: Bescheiden Omtrent zijn bedrijf in Indie*, ed. H.T. Colenbrander (‘S-Gravenhage: Martinus Nijhoff, 1919), 605, <https://archive.org/details/janpieterszcoenb01coen/page/n9>. Author’s translation of “Veel andre meer dienen U. E. daertegen met menichte van jonge, eerlijcke vrouwen off dochters te senden, soo sal dan staet van indien welhaest met godes hulpe fundament (om tot goeden stant te geraecken) becomen.”

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁸⁴ Amry Vandenbosch, “A Problem in Java: The Chinese in the Dutch East Indies,” *Pacific Affairs* 3, no. 11 (November 1930): 1001, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2750073>.

Paul van Caerden in which he explained the situation in the East, Matelieff also noted the Chinese presence remarking, “Nor should you believe that you can keep up with the Chinese junks if your ships are ill-kept and slow.”⁸⁵ His earliest reports make clear that Matelieff understood that efficient Chinese ships dominated the carrying trade in the region.

Matelieff also recognized the importance of Chinese merchants and laborers throughout the region. He believed that the Chinese merchants would come to Jakarta if the Dutch established a permanent base there. In regard to creating a central fort, Admiral Matelieff contends,

Private merchants should sail there with linen or pieces of cloth and then come to Jayakarta to sell whatever they came across there. If people talk about the Chinese goods that would be brought there, they are mistaken: if we were permanently settled at Jayakarta, all the Chinese would come there, and those coming to Patani do not bring anything, but what the people there need. Someone could add that if this factory were well managed, it would bring in some profit from Chinese trade.⁸⁶

Admiral Matelieff rightly predicted the lucrative trade relationship that was established with Chinese merchants in the centuries that followed. He recognized the importance of the Chinese in overseas trade. Additionally, Matelieff perceived the Chinese as hard workers. He mentioned, “When it comes to carpentry, one could also employ Chinese workers, who would come in great numbers and are fit for all kinds of labour.”⁸⁷ The Dutch considered the Chinese to be fundamental catalysts to their success in trade and establishing a permanent base in Southeast Asia. Thus from the origins of Batavia, the Chinese played a vital role in the success of the Company and its headquarters.

⁸⁵ Borschberg, *Journals, Memorials and Letters of Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge*, 243.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 289.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 302.

Governor-General Coen knew the success of Batavia depended on Chinese merchants. When the Dutch established Batavia in the Dutch East Indies, Chinese inhabitants from other parts of the Indonesian archipelago were encouraged to work in Batavia. The importance of Chinese workers is evident by the fact that when the VOC was determining the best location for the center of operations in 1619, they considered Batavia because it was accessible to Chinese sailing ships.⁸⁸ Coen instantly realized that the Chinese were exactly the kind of laborers they needed in Batavia and that they would play a vital role in the inter-archipelago trade. Consequently, he spoke very highly of the Chinese. In his June 1623 letter to the Heeren XVII he wrote, “There is no group of people that serves us better than the Chinese or is as easily to come by as the Chinese.”⁸⁹ The Chinese were hard workers and there were many Chinese laborers available. Due to these factors, Coen adamantly pushed for the immigration of Chinese workers. This policy was swiftly put into place, and the ethnic makeup of Batavia quickly changed. In various letters written to the Heeren XVII, Coen described how important the Chinese were.⁹⁰ He believed the Chinese merchants and laborers would be beneficial to the establishment of Batavia.

Chinese immigration to Batavia quickly ensued. However, not all migration was voluntary; at least some coercion was involved. Some historians explain that one such way was through the use of kidnapping Chinese people from the China coast.⁹¹ In his letter from 6 September 1622, Coen wrote, “All the Chinese people who were on the coast of China, Manila, and other places, should, in our opinion, be used.”⁹² Though kidnapping might be too strong of a word, Coen did want to use these Chinese workers to his advantage. Undoubtedly, some Chinese

⁸⁸ Blussé, “Batavia, 1619-1740,” 165.

⁸⁹ Coen, *Bescheiden Omtrent zijn bedrijf in Indie*, 794. Author’s translation of “daer is geen volck die ons beter dan Chinesen dienen, ende soo licht als Chinesen te becomen sijn.”

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 768.

⁹¹ Blussé, “Batavia, 1619-1740,” 166; Kemasang, “Overseas Chinese in Java,” 126.

⁹² Coen, *Bescheiden Omtrent zijn bedrijf in Indie*, 726. Author’s translation of “alle de chinesen die op de custe van China, Manilha ende elders becomen, sijn wy van meningte daertoe mede te gebruycken.”

were brought to Batavia against their own will. In the 1620s the Dutch forced large numbers of Chinese traders to move from Banten to Batavia.⁹³ Since Batavia was the Company's central headquarters, it makes sense that Coen would want to populate Batavia, instead of Banten, with Chinese merchants.

Since Coen's original plan of populating Batavia with Dutchmen failed, he instead focused on populating Batavia with Chinese merchants and laborers. However, the growth of the population of Batavia was not only through coercive means. Many Chinese people recognized the economic benefits of Batavia along with the advantages of working with the prosperous and powerful Dutch Company. Within a year, thousands of Chinese workers were arriving in Batavia aboard Chinese junks.⁹⁴ As time progressed, Chinese merchants realized the profit that was possible if they worked with the Company. The Chinese merchants played a vital role in facilitating the migration of Chinese labor to take advantage of the economic opportunities. Consequently, thousands of Chinese workers continued to migrate to and inhabit the island of Java throughout the seventeenth century. These factors created a large Chinese population in and around Batavia.

VOC profits were based on trade that actively integrated Chinese merchants into expanding Dutch commercial networks.⁹⁵ The VOC trading post empire also relied on the Chinese labor, with its many trading centers, including the fortified city in Batavia, largely built and inhabited by Chinese workers. The city was built with the intention of housing Dutch immigrants, but, as already noted, this policy was not successful. Though it was difficult to

⁹³ Kemasang, "Overseas Chinese in Java," 124.

⁹⁴ J.K.J. De Jonge, and Marinus Lodewijk van Deventer, eds. *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie: Verzameling van Onuitgegeven Stukken uit het Oud-Koloniaal Archief*, Vol. 1 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1869), 197, <https://archive.org/details/deopkomstvanhet01devegoog/page/n367>.

⁹⁵ Chris Nierstrasz, *In the Shadow of the Company: The Dutch East India Company and its Servants in the Period of its Decline (1740-1796)* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2012), 76, accessed September 23, 2017, <file:///F:/Research%20Seminar/Massacres-terrorism/VOC%20and%20Servants%201740-1796.pdf>.

convince Dutchmen to settle in Batavia, the Chinese that came to Batavia had few problems settling in. In a letter to the Heeren XVII from 5 August 1619 Coen wrote, “We have our hands full due to negotiations with the enemy. The Chinese are stopping the prince of Banten. Then who can build the castle and city at Jakarta?”⁹⁶ The solution to Coen’s dilemma was found in the many Chinese settlers on the island of Java. So Coen used the numerous Chinese inhabitants to assist in the building of the city. A year later in a letter written in October 1620, Coen informed the generals in Holland that “the Company is stabilizing the *rendezvous* at Jakarta with the captured Javanese and with a good party of Chinese that were there.”⁹⁷ The Chinese inhabitants played an important role in creating the structures of the city. They built houses, as well as owned and ran successful artisan shops in the city.⁹⁸ Unlike other European colonial settlements where the Chinese and indigenous peoples were segregated into living places outside of the fortified cities, the Dutch welcomed the Chinese people inside Batavia, where they all lived together. Since the VOC was unsuccessful in populating Batavia with Dutchmen, it was the Chinese that became the first true settlers in Batavia.

These Chinese settlers were involved in financial and economic matters since they aided in the shipping business that was in Batavia. Though Chinese merchants and the Dutch collaborated in maintaining a successful economic partnership, some historians believe the working relationship between the Dutch and Chinese was an unbalanced one. Kemasang argues, “The Dutch supplied the capital and land whereas the role of the Chinese was limited to

⁹⁶ Coen, *Bescheiden Omtrent zijn bedrijf in Indie*, 492. Author’s translation of “Om de negotie waer te nemen ende op den vyant te passen, hebben met elle man de handen vol. De Chinese hout de pangoran van Bantam aldaer op. Wie sal dan een casteel ende stadt tot Jacatra bouwen?”

⁹⁷ Ibid., 588. Author’s translation of “Hebben geerne verstaen, dat U.E. mede goet vinden de generale rendezvous tot jacatra te stabileeren. Met de gevangen Javanen ende goede partye Chinesen sijn daarmede besich.”

⁹⁸ P. Bleeker, *Bijdragen Tot De Geneeskundige Topographie van Batavia* (Batavia: Ter Drukkerij Van Het Bataviaasch Genootschap, 2006), 11, <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=zL78nR7Z29EC&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=en&pg=GBS.P1>.

supplying the labor.”⁹⁹ Historians like Kemasang contend that the Chinese were never considered as equals to the Dutch. In general, the Dutch considered Asian culture inferior to European culture, while they considered Asian culture superior to African culture.¹⁰⁰ Initially, the Dutch found the Chinese favorable because they were not a political or cultural threat to their rule.¹⁰¹ Consequently, the Dutch did not oppose the Chinese, and instead welcomed their labor. Racism and superiority were certainly factors in this era. It is vital to remember, however, that many Chinese migrant workers earned considerable wealth in their partnership with the VOC. This is why thousands of Chinese merchants lived and worked in Batavia by their own will. Many Chinese inhabitants enjoyed their prosperous lives in Batavia so much that they stayed and married Balinese women.¹⁰² In some cases, Chinese merchants were given more privileges than Europeans. The Chinese were encouraged to trade with the Dutch because the goods they brought benefited the Company and Batavia.¹⁰³ The Dutch were certainly aware that the Company and the establishment of Batavia were successful due to the skillful work of the Chinese inhabitants.

Chinese merchants became a central part of Batavian society. They worked and benefited financially from their trading relationship with the VOC. Recognizing the value of the Chinese merchants to their trading enterprises, the VOC protected the Chinese from their Javanese

⁹⁹ Kemasang, “Overseas Chinese in Java,” 125.

¹⁰⁰ Gert Oostindie and Bert Paasman, “Dutch Attitudes towards Colonial Empires, Indigenous Cultures, and Slaves,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31, no. 3 (Spring 1998): 351, <http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy.missouristate.edu/article/10778#f2>.

¹⁰¹ Vandenbosch, “A Problem in Java,” 1001.

¹⁰² Blussé, “Batavia, 1619-1740,” 167.

¹⁰³ Abeyasekere, *Jakarta*, 24.

opponents, in part by permitting them to live inside the city walls of Batavia.¹⁰⁴ In the hundred years that the Chinese merchants maintained economic cooperation with the Company, there was no “Chinatown” in Batavia. Some Chinese elite even inhabited some of the best residences in town.¹⁰⁵ Aside from the heavy poll tax the Chinese were ordered to pay, the Chinese merchants lived very privileged lives. The Chinese merchants were integral to the success of the Company, and they were treated accordingly. Chinese laborers were also vital to the Dutch in Batavia because they built and maintained the physical infrastructure of the Dutch colony. Though the Company also sought to have a cooperative relationship with Chinese laborers, the Dutch began to view these laborers as liabilities who eventually stirred up trouble in the countryside.

As the number of Chinese merchants increased, Governor-General Coen recognized that he could not control the large Chinese population on his own. In October 1619 he appointed Su Ming-kang, also known as Bencon, as the *kapitein* (Dutch for captain) of the Chinese.¹⁰⁶ This was a very privileged position, and the population of Batavia respected and treated these Chinese officers with the same level of courtesy as the European leaders of the Company. The Chinese captain was in charge of all civil and economic affairs of the Chinese. The *kapitein* also served as a mediator between the Chinese inhabitants and the Company. The Chinese considered the position of the captain to be a very prestigious position that they celebrated with great pomp and circumstance.¹⁰⁷ The *kapitein* system worked well for many decades. Eventually, however, the

¹⁰⁴ Remco Raben, “Klein Holland in Azie. Ideologie en pragmatism in de Nederlandse koloniale stedenbouw, 1600-1800,” *Leidschrift* 9, no. 2 (1993): 48, file:///F:/Thesis/Sources/Klein_Holland_in_Azie._Ideologie_en_pra.pdf; Marsely L. Kehoe, “Dutch Batavia: Exposing the Hierarchy of the Dutch Colonial City,” *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 7, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 19, <https://jhna.org/articles/dutch-batavia-exposing-hierarchy-dutch-colonial-city>.

¹⁰⁵ Abeyasekere, *Jakarta*, 24.

¹⁰⁶ Blussé, “Batavia, 1619-1740,” 167.

¹⁰⁷ Abeyasekere, *Jakarta*, 25.

influx of Chinese laborers in the suburbs of Batavia, known as the *Ommelanden*, began to complicate the entire system.

Though the Dutch controlled the prosperous trading Company, they certainly recognized the vital role the Chinese merchants and laborers played in the success of the Company in Batavia. François Valentijn was employed by the VOC as a minister in Java. He wrote various volumes of a book titled *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*, in which he accurately described the territories in the East Indies. Valentijn also recognized and chronicled the impressive work the Chinese merchants conducted in Batavia. In the 1720s he noted,

Besides the Dutch, the Chinese do appear to be the most respected. It is an uncommonly smart, polite, diligent and obliging people who do great services to this city. They not only conduct wholesale trade in the city with tea, porcelain, silk fabrics and lacquerware; but they also engage in many crafts, being very good blacksmiths, carpenters, very fine chair makers, both drawing-room and usually ornamental sedan-chairs. They make all the awnings that they use here. They varnish and gild very nicely. They are also the principal arak burners, contractors of large leases, brick makers and sugar handlers on the mills outside Batavia and merchants in the town. Many own the restaurants for the sailors and soldiers, or tea houses for them too, and a large crowd of them also make money by fetching water, fishing, or to transporting Chinese people anywhere they need (which is a great convenience). They always stand up in the vessels with two crossed oars. Many also use ply sampans and large vessels to collect the goods from the ships. The entire agriculture of Batavia also depends on them, because they are extraordinarily ingenious and diligent. Not only to make sure that they have everything throughout the year, but they also walk everywhere with all that can be imagined, and all day long, they bring all kinds of vegetables, fabrics, porcelains, lacquers, tea, and whatever else, to the houses for

a small profit. There is nothing that one can imagine that they do not undertake and in which they do not practice.¹⁰⁸

In Valentijn's judgment the major economic center of the VOC in Batavia relied on Chinese merchants to function. The Dutch recognized the importance of these elite Chinese, and they formed a mutually beneficial trading relationship with them. Chinese merchants and workers continued to take on more roles in the century that followed. The Company especially encouraged Chinese entrepreneurs to open sugar mills in the *Ommelanden* of Batavia.¹⁰⁹ Sugar cultivation became a success, which attracted thousands of Chinese workers to the *Ommelanden* to work in the cane fields. The population of Chinese workers in and around Batavia steadily rose. Even with the influx of Chinese immigrants that occurred in the next hundred years, the Dutch sought to maintain a collaborative and peaceful relationship with the hardworking and successful Chinese merchants. However, given the overriding context of war and violence that defined relations between the Dutch and other European powers, and the Dutch and many indigenous groups, the relative lack of violence in relations with the Chinese inhabitants in Batavia was notable.

¹⁰⁸ François Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*, Vol. 3 (The Hague: H.C. Susan, 1856), 533, <https://archive.org/details/franvoisvalentij00valegoog/page/n6>. Author's translation of "Naast de Nederlanders komen de Chinezen wel als 't allermeest in aanzien zijnde voor. Het is een ongemeen schrandere, beleefd, naarstig en gedienschtig volk, dat groote diensten aan deze stad doet. Zij plagten niet alleen grooten handel in de stad met thee, porselij, zijden stoffen en lakwerken te doen; maar zij oefenen zich ook zeer naarstig in veel ambachten, zijnde zeer goede smids, timmerlieden, zeer fraaije stoelmakers, zoo die men in een salet zet, als van ongemeene sierlijke draagstoelen. Al de zonneschermen, die men gebruikt, maken zij. Zij vernissen en vergulden zeer fraai. Zij zijn ook de voornaamste araksbranders, aannemers van groote pachten, steenbakkersen behandelaars van de suiker op de molens buiten Batavia en kooplieden in dezelve. Vele houden als gaarkeukens voor de matrozen en soldaten, of ook theehuizen voor dezelve en een groote menigte van hen ernest zich met waterhalen, visschen, of om met Chinesche prauwen (dat een groot gemak is) de menschen overal naar toe te voeren, op welke vaartuigen zij altijd staande met 2 riemen al wikkende roeijen. Velen varen ook met tsjampans en groote vaartuigen, om de goederen van de schepen af te halen. De gansche landbouw van Batavia rust ook op hen, waarin zij ongemeen vernuftige en naarstig zijn, niet alleen om te maken dat men alles het gansche jaar door heeft; maar zij loopen ook met al wat men bedenken kan, dan ganschen dag overal rond en brengen allerlei groenten, stoffen, porselijnen, lakwerken, thee en wat dies meer is, aan de huizen en laten het voor een geringe winst over. Daar is niets, dat men bedenken kan, dat zij niet ondernemen en waarin zij zich niet oefenen."

¹⁰⁹ Blussé, *Strange Company*, 90.

CHAPTER 3 CONTEXTS OF COLONIAL VIOLENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The seventeenth century Dutch Golden Age took shape during a time of economic prosperity, cultural flowering, and bitter bloody conflict. At the dawn of the century, the Eighty Years' War, which pitted the Dutch against their Habsburg overlords, was still decades from a resolution and now encompassed not only intense theatres of warfare in the Netherlands but also bloody confrontations in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia where the Dutch competed with Habsburg Iberian kingdoms for control of the spice trade.

Portuguese Violence in Asia

The Portuguese were the first to establish an empire in the East. By dispatching expeditions sought along the west coast of Africa, by the end of the fifteenth century the Portuguese had established a sea route to Asia along which they built a trading post empire in the first half of the sixteenth century with the intention of monopolizing the trade in spices and other exotic goods from the East. From the start, the Portuguese used violence to control the Indian Ocean sea lands by taking advantage of their superior ships and guns. Portuguese sailors also used violence as a means to terrorize the indigenous people with whom they came into contact. For example, in December 1508 explorer Francisco de Almeida and his fleet landed in the port of Dabul on the western coast of India. Almeida sought to control the wealthy Muslim port, so he instructed the men to instill as much terror as they could. His soldiers quickly obeyed by killing every man, woman, and child in sight. The next day, the soldiers plundered and burned the town.¹¹⁰ Similar massacres of inhabitants, who were usually followers of Islam, occurred along

¹¹⁰ Blussé, *Strange Company*, 226.

the coast of India, most notably in places such as Goa.¹¹¹ The Portuguese explorers and soldiers were fueled by religious zeal and economic competition. Since the Portuguese were the first Europeans to venture out East to pursue maritime trade, they set the example of violence in the region. The Dutch joined the overseas trading network a century after the first Portuguese expeditions.

Dutch Rivalry with Iberian Powers

From the start, the VOC pursued both economic and military objectives as they sought to establish a monopoly on the spice trade with Asia. While organized for trade, it sought to weaken the Habsburg rulers of Spain and Portugal by breaking their monopoly over the sea routes to Asia. As early as 1603 Steven van der Hagen, the first admiral of the VOC, went to Asia with an armed fleet to destroy as many Portuguese and Spanish ships and forts possible.¹¹² The war effort was also a constant driving force in the mind of Admiral Matelieff and the Heeren XVII, who frequently reiterated the importance of combating the Iberian powers. In January 1608 Admiral Matelieff wrote a letter of advice to Admiral Paul van Caerden, in which he described his experiences at Ternate, an Indonesian city on the island of Maluku. The Portuguese, having constructed forts on the island as early as 1522, were oppressive rulers over the inhabitants of Maluku. They ruled with terror and violence, and the Dutch capitalized on this. Observing the Portuguese tyranny over the Maluku people, the Dutch strategically decided to cast themselves as saviors of the inhabitants of Ternate. Accordingly, the Dutch devised a plan by which they would help the indigenous peoples expel the Portuguese from their territory. In turn, the VOC

¹¹¹ Crowley, *Conquerors*, 286.

¹¹² Tristan Mostert, "Scramble for the spices: Makassar's role in European and Asian Competition in the Eastern Archipelago up to 1616," in *The Dutch and English East India Companies: Diplomacy, Trade and Violence in Early Modern Asia*, eds. Adam Clulow and Tristan Mostert (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018), 38.

would be able to establish Dutch control over the island and the spices for trade. When the Dutch arrived at the island in the seventeenth century, the indigenous peoples of Ternate gladly allied with the Dutch. Admiral Matelieff describes the situation at Ternate to Admiral van Caerden:

Now the Ternatans are scattered everywhere, so that one hardly knows where to look for them. If I had not arrived they would all have gone their separate ways and there would have been no hope for Ternate. But now they are starting to arrive there from Jailolo, since they see that we are building a permanent place and do not want to abandon them. For this is the word that is going throughout the Indies: the Dutch are better people than the Portuguese, but we are only looking for cargo and then leave those who traded with us in trouble. But if they see now that we are building a permanent place and protecting it, the blacks will take our side. Already the people of Makian, who sent messengers to see how our battle would end, promised me to take our side as soon as we had a permanent place on Ternate. I replied to them, however, that they should keep quiet, that I could not protect them now but had only been sent to help the Ternatans to their land, but that they should prepare to join us when the first fleet came-which they promised to do.¹¹³

Both Matelieff and the indigenous peoples realized that they could mutually benefit from an alliance. The Ternatans believed the Dutch would protect them from Portuguese tyranny and religious conversion, and the Dutch knew that the Ternatans could help them attack the Portuguese and Spanish in the area.

The VOC also sought to weaken its Habsburg opponents by muscling in on its trade. Matelieff observed, “I do not think it wise to attack the Spanish fort with our men alone, one would have to bring a large number of men. Nothing is lacking but rice and sago, but all the cloves of the island would fall into our hands in spite of the Spanish, and the Ternatans would come right up to the Spanish fort.”¹¹⁴ Matelieff and other Dutch admirals recognized the twofold mission of the VOC in Asia and obediently followed it. As a result, the VOC pursued profitable

¹¹³ Borschberg, *Journals, Memorials and Letters of Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge*, 239-241.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 241.

trade in Asia for the Netherlands while simultaneously aiding the war effort against the Iberian powers by combating and undermining their Portuguese and Spanish enemies at every opportunity.

The military mindset was evident even while the VOC was establishing trading forts and seeking alliances with indigenous peoples in Southeast Asia. Even though the Company strove to gain economic control, they also viewed themselves as a political and military force in Asia. Matelieff understood the important role the VOC played in the war against the Habsburgs even so far removed from the homeland. In his 12 November 1608 memorandum entitled “Discourse on the State of the East Indies,” Matelieff identifies three opponents of the Company in the Indies:

Firstly ... the Portuguese and the Spanish, who seek to harm us by armed violence. Secondly, the English and the French and others who, while we and the king of Spain are fighting each other, conduct their business in peace and at little cost. Meanwhile they let us ward off the enemy at our expense as their protectors, and then spoil the European market by importing their spices at a low cost, without paying us convoy fees. Thirdly, the Indians, who thanks to our protection feel liberated from the Portuguese and two kinds of merchants such as Dutchmen and Englishmen on their market, look for the biggest profit without acknowledging that we are the ones who liberated them. No, they go after the best price for their goods, as is the nature of such wild tribes. As long as this is not remedied, the expenses will fall to us and the benefits to them. Accordingly, we have disorder in our coffers, which is such that even if we succeeded in protecting ourselves by force of arms, our commerce could still come to chaos if we do not bring order to our trade and our coffers. I shall deal first with the subject of protection and then with trade.¹¹⁵

Matelieff understood that violence had to be used in order to combat the Company’s enemies and to maintain control over trade in the region. While the Dutch and the Habsburgs fought in Europe, a second theater of war also raged in Asia. Into this violent mixture, other European

¹¹⁵ Borschberg, *Journals, Memorials and Letters of Cornelis Matelieff de Jonge*, 255.

rivals, such as the English, created additional tensions between the Europeans and the indigenous people of Asia.

European Rivalry

European rivalry over trade in the Spice Islands became increasingly violent throughout the seventeenth century. In 1600 the English had also established a trading company known as the East India Company. By 1613 the English established a factory in Makassar on an island in eastern Indonesia.¹¹⁶ The English trading company also conducted trade with the indigenous peoples of the islands, and this competition for spices often resulted in violence. Though the English initially had a cooperative relationship with local rulers and communities, they eventually strained those economic ties because of their use of coercion. Although initially accepting the presence of the English Company, the sultan of Makassar ended up wanting the English to leave after the English abducted and killed multiple Makasar nobility.¹¹⁷ In addition, the Europeans were also attacking each other in and around the area of Makassar. Admiral Jan Pieterszoon Coen described an attack on the VOC ship *Enkhuizen* by Spanish ships. The Dutch struggled to fend off the Spanish, and eleven Dutchmen were killed in the battle.¹¹⁸ Warfare for economic and political purposes was widespread between the Europeans in Asia. The English East India Company also combated the Portuguese on various occasions. This bloody competition between these two countries often occurred in towns along the coast of India.¹¹⁹ Violence was an accepted and expected part of the economic competitions between European

¹¹⁶ Mostert, "Scramble for the spices," 43.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 44.

¹¹⁸ Coen, *Bescheiden Omtrent zijn Bedrijf in Indie*, 121.

¹¹⁹ John Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain, 1608-1617, Describing his experiences in Arabia, India, and the Malay Archipelago*, ed. William Foster (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1905), 184-185.

powers. The Dutch also used violence against their European competitors. Tragically, local populations were often caught in the crossfire between European colonial powers, becoming collateral damage in these conflicts. A disastrous example of this is the heinous massacre that occurred in the Banda Islands in 1621.

Dutch Violence in the Banda Islands

The Banda Islands of Indonesia are extremely small and remote. However, they immediately attracted the attention of European trading companies because nutmeg and mace were exclusively produced there.¹²⁰ Since the VOC sought to establish a monopoly on trade in the region, they quickly wanted control over the islands. When the Dutch reached them in 1599, the Bandanese gladly accepted the help of the Dutch because they wanted to remove oppressive Portuguese settlers from their islands.¹²¹ Joining forces with the Bandanese, the VOC successfully expelled the Portuguese. Soon after the Dutch created contracts with the Bandanese people to secure a monopoly on the trade of nutmeg and mace. However, it was not long before the Bandanese indigenous peoples broke the monopoly trade agreement with the VOC. The English trading company established a factory on the islands in 1609, buying spices from the local population, and inciting the anger of the Dutch traders.¹²² This sentiment only worsened when the Dutch Admiral Pieter Verhoeven and forty-six of his men were murdered by some Bandanese inhabitants.¹²³ The Dutch believed that their English competitors were behind this deadly event, which prompted them to consider the English presence to pose a bigger threat to

¹²⁰ Vincent C. Loth, "Armed Incident and Unpaid Bills: Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Banda Islands in the Seventeenth," *Modern Asian Studies* 29, no. 4 (1995): 706, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/312802>.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 709.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 711.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

their lucrative trading system than the Iberian powers. The competition and animosity between these European rivals had devastating effects on the Bandanese. Admiral Jan Pieterszoon Coen arrived in the Banda islands in February of 1621. Within this context of fierce competition and violence, Coen led a gory campaign to control the main Banda island of Lonthor. In the weeks that followed, Coen and his commanders murdered an estimated thirteen thousand Bandanese.¹²⁴ The economic competition between the European powers over spices spiraled out of control, and violence became rampant throughout the region. Seizing enemy shipping, which served the dual purpose of weakening an opponent while strengthening one's own fleet, was another important aspect of European competition around the islands of Southeast Asia. Both the Dutch and English frequently seized ships and seizures often resulted in death.¹²⁵ The context of violence during this period was so pervasive, it reached even the most remote islands of Indonesia.

Violence between Javanese and Chinese on Java

Europeans hardly held a monopoly on violence on Java in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Various Javanese rulers fought each other for control of the island's territories. In addition, there were tensions and conflicts throughout Java between the Javanese and the Chinese communities. Like many other islands in the region, large numbers of Chinese workers settled in the various urban centers. By the end of the seventeenth century towns such as Jepara, Semarang, and Rembang counted a few hundred Chinese men and their families as residents.¹²⁶ In the decades that followed, hundreds of Chinese immigrants arrived each year, and by 1740 there were well over five thousand adult Chinese males residing on the north coast of Java.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Ibid., 726.

¹²⁵ Coen, *Bescheiden Omtrent zijn Bedrijf in Indie*, 497; Jourdain, *The Journal of John Jourdain*, 368.

¹²⁶ Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, 96.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

The growing power and influence of the Chinese in these towns sparked violence between the two ethnic groups.¹²⁸ The Chinese role in Java was unique because “they were first and foremost traders who reinvested their profits in the economy and had relatively little to do with the state.”¹²⁹ The Chinese merchants in Java worked very hard and many became extremely successful and wealthy. Consequently, many Javanese people resented the Chinese merchants, especially those who worked with the VOC. Another source of anger for the Javanese was that some Chinese merchants assimilated very slowly to the Javanese culture. They did not wear traditional Javanese clothing nor did they participate in other Javanese customs.¹³⁰ This bitterness toward Chinese immigrants erupted into bouts of ethnic violence, including in 1736 when many Chinese merchants, farmers, and traders were killed.¹³¹

A socio-economic division became evident throughout Java as well. Chinese merchants created an impressive trade network throughout the region. The Company quickly learned to benefit from this trading system, and offered the Chinese merchants much needed protection in return. When Javanese workers, encouraged by their lords, killed Chinese merchants, the VOC intervened to protect the Chinese. This protection greatly aided the expansion of the Chinese trading network.¹³² The two great trading networks depended on each other. However, not all Chinese inhabitants of Java were involved in the profitable trading network. By the turn of the eighteenth century, there was a significant gap between the small number of wealthy Chinese merchants and the largely impoverished Chinese population, creating troubling social tensions. There was also an influx of Chinese immigrants residing in rural areas around the cities in Java.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 105.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 104.

¹³⁰ Ricklefs, *The Seen and Unseen Worlds in Java*, 179.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid., 120.

They worked at sugar and saw mills and were considered the social inferiors of Chinese merchants.¹³³ By contrast, the elite lived in the larger towns, where they enjoyed quite a bit of prosperity and wealth. Thus, before the massacre of 1740 there were social gaps and tensions between the various segments of the Chinese population in Java. The war that followed the massacre would further divide these social-economic groups on the island.

Comparison of Spanish and Dutch Policies toward Chinese Merchants

The Spanish were also an imperial force to be reckoned with that established colonies on almost every continent. Though economic gain motivated the Spanish to participate in the overseas trade, religion also greatly inspired the Spanish to conquer new territories. A brief historical explanation is important in order to understand the context behind Spanish colonial policy. The Iberian Peninsula was an eclectic mix of religions in the middle ages. Moorish invaders conquered much of the peninsula in the eighth century, creating a society in which Christian, Muslim, and Jewish communities lived together.¹³⁴ Though for a time relatively peaceful religious coexistence prevailed, conflicts and violence did occur. Christian forces strove to unify the entire peninsula under the Roman Catholic Church. From about 718 to 1492, the Christian rulers combated leaders and followers of Islam. This ongoing fight in the name of Christianity defined the Spanish character.¹³⁵ In the same year that the final Iberian Moorish territories were taken by Christian kingdoms, Christopher Columbus ushered in the age of colonization of overseas territories. The missionary impulse of Christianity, specifically the beliefs of the Roman Catholic Church, became a central part of the Spanish character. This

¹³³ Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, 101.

¹³⁴ Henry Kamen, *The Spanish Inquisition: A Historical Revision* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 1.

¹³⁵ Bernard Moses, "Colonial Policy with Reference to the Philippines," *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association* vol. 1 (1904): 89, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3038324>.

would be evident in the ways the Spanish empire sought to colonize the various territories around the world.

The Chinese conducted trade around the islands of the Philippines for centuries before Spanish colonization--Chinese sources referring to the island of Luzon as early as 1372.¹³⁶ Though the Chinese merchants and shippers initially just traded with islanders, they eventually established permanent settlements around Manila Bay on the island of Luzon. Known as Luzons, the inhabitants of these settlements extended trading networks between Luzon, China, and Brunei.¹³⁷ The eastern Chinese overseas trading route expanded under the supportive Ming dynasty.¹³⁸ Hence when the Spanish arrived in Manila in 1569, there were already an abundance of Chinese traders in Manila Bay where the Spanish established their colony's capital.

The Spanish were aware of these Chinese merchants, and Chinese merchants continued to immigrate to Manila once the Spanish established a direct trading route from the Americas to the Philippines.¹³⁹ Known as the Galleon trade, Spanish ships brought mostly silver from the Americas and traded it for Chinese and other goods at Manila.¹⁴⁰ Chinese merchants who transported goods from China to Manila were a critical link in this profitable trade. Chinese shipping to Manila reached a peak of fifty-one junks in 1637.¹⁴¹ The Chinese also dominated the retail and artisanal sectors of the Manila economy along with the food provisioning trade.¹⁴² As a result, the Spanish depended heavily on the Chinese for these services. Unlike the Dutch,

¹³⁶ Reid, "Flows and Seepages in the Long-term Chinese Interaction with Southeast Asia," 34.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 34-35.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 37.

¹³⁹ Richard T. Chu, "The 'Chinese' and the 'Mestizos' of the Philippines: Towards a New Interpretation," *Philippines Studies* 20, no. 3 (2002): 332, www.jstor.org/stable/42634470.

¹⁴⁰ Robert F. Marx, *The Capture of the Treasure Fleet: The Story of Piet Heyn* (New York, NY: David McKay Company, Inc., 1977), 102.

¹⁴¹ Reid, "Flows and Seepages in the Long-term Chinese Interaction with Southeast Asia," 38.

¹⁴² E. Wickberg, "The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History," *Journal of Southeast Asian History* 5, no. 1 (1964): 67, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20067476>.

however, who welcomed the Chinese and wanted to establish a mutually beneficial economic relationship with them, almost from the start, the Spanish feared and resented them.

Comparison of Spanish and Dutch religious philosophies in Asia. Manila was ruled by the Spanish colonial government, and religion was a key component of the Spanish empire. After seven centuries of religious warfare on the Iberian Peninsula, the Spanish possessed a strong crusading tradition and believed that it was their duty to convert indigenous peoples to Christianity all over the world. Consequently, thousands of Spanish sailors sailed to the Philippines to “convert the heathen” and to obtain financial gain.¹⁴³ Many Filipinos, indigenous inhabitants of the Philippines, were converted to Christianity. The Spanish sought to accomplish the same goal with the Chinese inhabitants of the island. Richard Chu concisely explains,

To ensure their loyalty and subservience, the Spanish colonial government, in cooperation with the Catholic Church, sought to convert the Chinese. It encouraged conversion by providing converts with benefits, such as the opportunity to marry local women. With the establishment of more Catholic Chinese-*mestizo* or Chinese-*indio* families, the Spaniards hoped that not only would they be carrying out their mission of conversion, they would also be creating a colony of loyal and faithful subjects.

The Spanish need for religious conversion differed greatly from the Dutch philosophy and treatment of the Chinese in Java. Converting indigenous peoples was not a goal which the Dutch traders pursued. Perhaps since the Dutch were fighting for religious freedom from the Spanish in Europe, the Dutch had no desire and saw no benefit to converting people in Southeast Asia. For the Spanish, however, it was a central part of their mission of colonization.

Comparison of treatment of Chinese inhabitants in Java and Manila society. The social divisions between the Europeans, the indigenous peoples, and the Chinese in Manila also

¹⁴³ Moses, “Colonial Policy with Reference to the Philippines,” 92.

differed from those in Java. In Manila many Chinese settlers had offspring with indigenous, or *indio*, women. The Spanish designated these interracial offspring as *mestizos*.¹⁴⁴ Even though many Chinese inhabitants did convert to Catholicism, they were still treated differently than *mestizos*. Instead, *indios* and *mestizos* enjoyed the same rights under the Spanish government, while the Chinese did not.¹⁴⁵ The Chinese were treated as inferior to the other social groups in Manila. The Chinese were usually restricted to a certain place of residence, while the *mestizos* and *indios* were permitted to live in more areas.¹⁴⁶ The Chinese were also restricted from political involvement in the Philippines. *Mestizos* and *Indios* played important roles in the local government, something the Chinese inhabitants were restricted from doing.¹⁴⁷ In Java, the opposite occurred. The VOC appointed a Chinese captain who worked for the Company to reside over the Chinese people of Batavia. These Chinese officials were respected and treated as other Company employees. While the Chinese merchants of Manila were treated by the Spanish as inferior to the *indios* and *mestizos*, the Chinese inhabitants of Batavia were treated by the Dutch as superior to the indigenous peoples.

Another notable difference between the treatment of the Chinese in Batavia and Manila was where they were permitted to reside. The Chinese merchants lived within the city walls of Batavia. They cohabited in the city with Europeans, and they were fully incorporated into Batavian society. The Spanish had a different policy in Manila. As early as 1581 the Chinese were confined to an area of their own outside the city walls.¹⁴⁸ The Spanish did not trust the Chinese merchants, and thus they were not allowed to dwell within the city walls of Manila.

¹⁴⁴ Chu, "The 'Chinese' and the 'Mestizos' of the Philippines," 332.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Wickberg, "The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History," 65.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Chia, "The Butcher, the Baker, and the Carpenter," 516.

While the Dutch lived in close proximity with many Chinese inhabitants, the Spanish segregated the Chinese from other ethnic groups. One scholar has argued that the Spanish probably recalled the uneasy coexistence or *convivencia* of the Christians, Muslims, and Jews that dominated Spanish society during the middle ages, and now strove for an alternative society, one that kept different cultural backgrounds separated.¹⁴⁹ They obviously believed that this would help keep the peace between the various people groups in the city. Wickberg highlights the impact of the Roman Catholic faith on this policy. She contends, “Spanish social policy was one of social division mitigated by cultural indoctrination, centering upon Catholicism, which was available to all elements in society.”¹⁵⁰ Though the Chinese merchants and laborers of Batavia and Manila were very influential to the success of the trading industries in both locations, they were treated quite differently by the two European powers.

Spanish Massacres of Chinese People in Manila

The number of Chinese workers in Manila steadily increased. By the seventeenth century there were over twenty thousand Chinese immigrants living in Manila, and the city was dependent on Chinese merchants and workers.¹⁵¹ While the Dutch in Batavia recognized the usefulness of Chinese workers and sought to maintain a cooperative and peaceful relationship with them, the Spanish viewed the Chinese inhabitants of Manila with suspicion. The Spanish quickly used violence to control and suppress the Chinese inhabitants on the island. Fear was a major motivator in their use of violence. The Spanish worried that the Chinese would conduct uprisings against the colonial government. This apprehension was warranted since the Chinese

¹⁴⁹ Wickberg, “The Chinese Mestizo in Philippine History,” 64.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 66.

¹⁵¹ Chia, “The Butcher, the Baker, and the Carpenter,” 515.

population was almost ten times the Spanish population in Manila.¹⁵² The Spanish government also implemented other restrictive measures in order to control the Chinese, such as segregation and various forms of taxation.¹⁵³ But Spanish actions indicate that they did not feel like these measures were adequate to safeguard their authority over the burgeoning Chinese population. Since the Chinese lived within their own living quarters, there was little sense of unity or collaboration in Manila. Hence, the Spanish justified the use of violence as a necessary measure for eliminating even the idea of a Chinese threat.

The first massacre of the Chinese in Manila was in 1603, only a couple of decades after the arrival of the Spanish. In May 1603 three government officials from China arrived in Manila. The mandarins explained that they were judges, and they were on an expedition to the island in search of rumored gold and silver.¹⁵⁴ This story made the Spanish very suspicious. The Europeans interpreted the arrival of the mandarins as a sign that an invasion from China was imminent. The events that followed are disputed between Spanish and Chinese sources. The Chinese sources explain that the Spanish began preparing for a massacre months before the actual event. The Spanish bought all the Chinese metal weapons they could and restricted the Chinese inhabitants from being in groups larger than three hundred.¹⁵⁵ This narrative supports the idea that the Spanish planned a premeditated massacre of the Chinese community. Spanish sources, however, state that the Chinese workers had conducted an uprising against them, sparking the massacre.¹⁵⁶ Regardless of the actual motivations behind the massacre, mass violence ensued, leading to the murder of over twenty thousand Chinese inhabitants.

¹⁵² Borao, "The Massacre of 1603," 22.

¹⁵³ Reid, "Flows and Seepages in the Long-term Chinese Interaction with Southeast Asia," 40.

¹⁵⁴ Borao, "The Massacre of 1603," 4.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 7.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 8.

After the massacre, the Spanish were mostly concerned with discovering if an invasion from China was coming and in reestablishing their trading relationship with Chinese merchants from Fujian.¹⁵⁷ China never launched an attack on Luzon, and soon after the massacre, Chinese workers began settling once again on the island of Luzon. The Spanish government believed that the massacre was necessary in order to maintain control over Manila. The colonial government never pursued nor punished the European leaders in charge during the massacre. Since there were no dire consequences after the massacre for the Spanish, the use of violence became an accepted policy when they felt threatened. Consequently, subsequent massacres of the Chinese in Manila occurred in 1639, 1662, 1686, and 1762-1764.¹⁵⁸ It is important to recognize that the Spanish fear of potential Chinese invasion was legitimate and serious throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. After Chinese leaders under Koxinga brutally captured Dutch fortifications in Taiwan, the Spanish feared that their settlements in Luzon were next.¹⁵⁹ However, these much-feared Chinese invasions of Luzon never materialized. The Spanish consistently and repeatedly resorted to deadly violence to control the Chinese inhabitants of Manila. Given the success of their reign of violence over the Chinese, the Spanish seemed to have no inclination to establish or maintain an atmosphere of peaceful collaboration with the Chinese merchants.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 10-11.

¹⁵⁸ Chia, "The Butcher, the Baker, and the Carpenter," 516.

¹⁵⁹ Tonio Andrade, "The Company's Chinese Pirates: How the Dutch East India Company Tried to Lead a Coalition of Pirates to War against China, 1621-1622," *Journal of World History* 15, no. 4 (Dec. 2014): 416, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20079290>; Tonio Andrade, *Lost Colony: The Untold Story of China's First Great Victory over the West* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011), 83.

Differences in Spanish and Dutch Use of Violence

European powers in both Manila and Batavia had similar encounters with established Chinese communities and trading networks when they arrived in the islands of Southeast Asia. The Spanish and Dutch had to regulate and form policies in regard to the large Chinese merchant communities who lived in the two cities. The Spanish used violence on numerous occasions against Chinese merchants starting just thirty years after the establishment of Manila and segregated the Chinese community into separate settlements from other ethnic groups. Under similar circumstances, the Dutch chose to pursue a strikingly different path striving to maintain an economic relationship with a Chinese merchant community that was allowed to settle within the city walls of Batavia and enjoyed privileges that were not given to indigenous Javans. The Dutch certainly sought to assert their authority over Chinese merchants through the levying of heavy and burdensome taxes and required Chinese residents to register with the authorities. Nonetheless, despite these restrictive and controlling measures, the Dutch did not resort to violence in response to the influx of Chinese immigrants, even though the Dutch sailors and commanders of the VOC were no strangers to violence. For over a century, the Dutch responded with peaceful forms of regulation.

This time of peace and cooperation between these trading partners was eventually disrupted by a Dutch massacre of the Chinese inhabitants of Batavia in 1740. But in comparison to the repeated use of violence by the Spanish toward the Chinese residents of Manila, the Dutch massacre in Batavia was atypical of the policies the Dutch pursued for over a century. The Chinese massacre of 1740 was an anomaly for the Dutch trading Company in their response to Chinese inhabitants. A closer look into the tensions leading up to the massacre is necessary to better understand this anomalous event.

CHAPTER 4 THE BATAVIA MASSACRE OF 1740

Since the establishment of Batavia, the Dutch had generally viewed Chinese merchants as assets who contributed to the success of the city and the inter-archipelago trade. The Chinese were instrumental in building Batavia: they were involved in financial and economic matters as well as in aiding in the crucial role of bringing products from China to Batavia. Many Chinese merchants lived within the city walls with the Dutch. For over a century, this mutually beneficial trading relationship between the VOC and Chinese merchants helped Batavia thrive as a major trading center in Southeast Asia. In addition to living within the city wall, thousands of people of other ethnic groups lived in the *Ommelanden* (suburbs or the surrounding area). Ethnic Chinese and Javanese composed a majority of its population. After the peace treaty with Banten in 1683, the *Ommelanden* attracted many immigrants.¹⁶⁰ Initially, the VOC offered incentives to Chinese citizens to farm in the *Ommelanden*. Some incentives included “an exemption of poll tax, guaranteed purchase of products by the Company, and the establishment of minimum prices.”¹⁶¹ This development coincided with the establishment of the sugar industry creating an influx of people in Batavia’s surrounding area.

Change in Batavia and the *Ommelanden*

In the years leading up to the massacre, the *Ommelanden* became unstable due to several factors. One important factor was the decline of the VOC, which some historians date to as early as 1690. A second factor was the growth of the sugar industry in the *Ommelanden*. As Blussé notes, “This period coincides with a strong development in the sugar culture, an overwhelming

¹⁶⁰ Blussé, *Strange Company*, 90.

¹⁶¹ Blussé, “Batavia, 1619-1740,” 169.

immigration of Chinese laborers, the waning political influence of the Chinese Captain among his own people, and increasing corruption.”¹⁶² Third, economic difficulties resulted in high numbers of unemployed Chinese people who began threatening the *Ommelanden*, and eventually Batavia itself. This confluence of a variety of factors contributed to the massacre. In this new environment, the Dutch pursued a violent policy that ran counter to over a century of precedent. But this policy shift proved an anomaly as the arrest and sentencing by the Heeren XVII of the Dutch official responsible for the massacre demonstrates. The massacre occurred because Dutch officials in Java faced a deteriorating local situation and chose to use force in an effort to address the crisis, but it did not reflect a broader change of policy by the VOC leadership in the Dutch Republic.

Chinese *Kapitein* System

The Chinese made up a significant percentage of the population in Batavia; as a result, in 1619 the VOC created institutions that were run by Chinese leaders. This system was known as the *kapitan* or *kapitein* (Dutch for captain) system. It was not a Dutch innovation. The Portuguese first implemented a similar structure in Melaka in 1511.¹⁶³ The *kapitein* system in Batavia was “an intermediary system and a product of the indirect rule as it provided a convenient link between the immigrant Chinese communities and the colonial and indigenous authorities.”¹⁶⁴ So Bing Kong, the first *kapitein* in Batavia, was appointed by Governor-General Jan Pieterszoon Coen and served for seventeen years. He held considerable power, presiding

¹⁶² Blussé, “Batavia, 1619-1740,” 169.

¹⁶³ Xiao An Wu, “The Early Maritime Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia: Ports, Routes, and Communities,” *Malaysian Journal of Chinese Studies* 4, no. 1 (2015): 54, https://www.newera.edu.my/files/publication/MJCS_2015vol4no1-4.pdf.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

over economic matters that affected the Chinese community such as collecting taxes and other civil matters.¹⁶⁵ An important responsibility of the *kapitein* was to regulate the Chinese and other foreigners in Batavia, while serving as the mediator between the VOC and these populations.¹⁶⁶ The hierarchical structure of the system in Batavia differed from other areas because it considered the Chinese *kapitein* more important than Dutch majors, lieutenants, and sergeants.¹⁶⁷ The VOC relied on the economic activities of the Chinese community and thus valued the role of the Chinese *kapitein* in the colonial administration of Batavia.

The status of the Chinese captain in relation to other colonial officials in Batavia shows that the Chinese were more highly esteemed and had more rights than other ethnic groups. Their privileged place in the colony was also evident in Dutch policies that allowed the Chinese community to establish their own settlements inside and outside of the city. The demand for Chinese workers in the *Ommelanden* increased as the sugar industry grew.¹⁶⁸ The increased demand for sugar often prompted Chinese workers to buy land in the *Ommelanden*. Chinese traders of sugar and arrack, an alcoholic drink derived from sugar, became very wealthy, which attracted large numbers of Chinese laborers to the *Ommelanden* to participate in the same industry. The Chinese population doubled between 1680 and 1740, by which time they greatly outnumbered the Dutch and were the second largest ethnic group in Batavia after the Javanese.¹⁶⁹ It was this rapid growth in numbers that came to concern the Dutch authorities.

¹⁶⁵ B. Hoetink, "So Bing Kong: Het Eerste Hoofd der Chineezzen te Batavia (1619-1636)," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 73, no.3 (1917): 354, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20769883>.

¹⁶⁶ Priyanto Wibowo, "The 1740 Racial Tragedy and Loss of Batavia Sugarcane Industries," *Paramita* 23, no. 2 (2013): 129, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307669605>.

¹⁶⁷ Wu, "The Early Maritime Chinese Diaspora in Southeast Asia," 54.

¹⁶⁸ Wibowo, "The 1740 Racial Tragedy," 131.

¹⁶⁹ Blussé, *Strange Company*, 84.

Dutch Control through *Hoofdgeld* or Poll Tax

The VOC was able to maintain a profitable trading company by tapping into existing Chinese commercial networks. The two groups complemented each other and recognized the mutual need for one another. Since this arrangement was lucrative to the Company, they strove to maintain this relationship of cooperation. However, the burgeoning influx of the Chinese population concerned the VOC. The Dutch considered Chinese merchants subjects but they feared that they might take over; so they instituted taxation and registration policies that asserted their authority, but they refrained from violence that might threaten or disrupt the trade.

The Dutch embraced a long tradition of using taxation as a means of asserting authority and control over a population. Their primary tool was a monthly tax that every Chinese resident had to pay in order to secure a license or *hoofdbriefje*. The poll tax or *hoofdgeld* was introduced around 1620, early in the colony's history. It initially required the payment of one and a half *rials* a month in order to be exempted from serving in the local militia and to supply the necessary funds for strengthening the security of the fort.¹⁷⁰ The Chinese had to present the license each month to prove they had paid the poll tax. Written by an anonymous Chinese author around 1794, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia* provides a Chinese perspective, albeit an elite one, on this tax. While many historians write about the oppressive and destructive nature of the poll tax on the Chinese inhabitants, the *Chinese Annals* depict the poll tax in more positive terms noting that “all the Chinese happily observed” the tax because they received privileges and exemptions in return.¹⁷¹ While some Chinese probably resented the tax, other inhabitants, as reflected in the *Annals*, apparently felt more positive about these regulations because they

¹⁷⁰ J.A. Van Der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek, 1602-1811*, Vol. 1 (Batavia: Batavia Landsdrukkerij, 1885), 76-77, <https://archive.org/details/nederlandschind08chijgoog/page/n7>.

¹⁷¹ Blussé, “Batavia, 1619-1740,” 176; Kemasang, “Overseas Chinese in Java,” 134.

recognized the freedom and economic advantages that they experienced, something other ethnic groups in Java did not have.

The poll tax was expanded after *free-burghers* (Dutch inhabitants of Batavia who were not employees of the VOC) complained to the States-General in Holland in 1647 and 1652 that the Chinese received more privileges than they did.¹⁷² The *free-burghers* were restricted from many aspects of trade by the Company while the Chinese benefited economically from the inter-archipelago and overseas trade. The poll tax was established to document Chinese citizens as well as extract the Chinese wealth. The Chinese inhabitants in Batavia were the only group that had to pay a poll tax, but they enjoyed certain privileges in return. The economic partnership these Chinese traders and merchants had with the VOC made them very wealthy. These privileges are evident in the great economic opportunities the Chinese merchants enjoyed and in the rights the Chinese had by living inside the city walls. The *Chinese Annals* provide an additional example of these privileges. The author writes,

But the Dutch books differ from Chinese works; and by giving up their own doctrines and teaching those of China, the Western people showed that they were willing to conform to the wishes of the people, and showed tolerance and cordiality towards strangers. The establishment of the free school, the orphanage and the hospital, all were very beneficial for our Tang people [in Batavia].¹⁷³

The Chinese were given their own institutions such as hospitals and schools, something the Javanese inhabitants were not given. Though the Chinese were heavily taxed, they did reap some substantial benefits from the taxation in conjunction with their partnership with the Dutch Company, as the perspective of the *Chinese Annals* demonstrates.

¹⁷² Blussé, *Strange Company*, 83.

¹⁷³ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 92.

Instability and Corruption in the *Ommelanden*

In the years leading up to 1740, the *Ommelanden* became a dangerous and corrupt place due to a number of factors. The first major issue was illegal immigration. Many Chinese entered the *Ommelanden* without registering with the VOC or the Chinese *kapitein*. This was problematic for the Dutch authorities because they could not tax these people or regulate them. A second issue involved large groups of Chinese who had no permanent homes and who instead moved around the countryside robbing or stealing as they went.¹⁷⁴ The situation became so dangerous that many inhabitants were too frightened to leave their homes at night. By 1713 some of these bands numbered as many as one hundred fifty, and they made the *Ommelanden* and Batavia perilous and unsafe.¹⁷⁵ Though these roving bands of Chinese seriously threatened Batavia and VOC authority, the Dutch opted to respond as they had in the past with nonviolent policies toward the Chinese community designed to maintain their authority but not jeopardize the lucrative trading relationship.

As early as the end of the seventeenth century, the VOC passed a number of policies that aimed to minimize illegal Chinese immigration. On May 21, 1690 the Company stated that any Chinese person that arrived in Batavia after 1683 had to report to the Chinese *kapitein* stating their name, occupation, number of people in their household including slaves, how long they had lived here, and the purpose of their residency.¹⁷⁶ This was an early VOC attempt to forcefully, yet peacefully, regulate the growing illegal Chinese population. It is important to note that, despite the threat the Dutch felt from the influx of illegal immigration and their frustration in trying to mitigate this threat, they did not resort to violence. Instead, they opted for a nonviolent,

¹⁷⁴ Vermeulen, "De Chineezzen te Batavia en de Troebelen van 1740," 23-24.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 24

¹⁷⁶ J.A. Van Der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek, 1678-1709*, Vol. 3 (Batavia: Batavia Landsdrukkerij, 1886), 263, <https://archive.org/details/BZKIT01AF27014318860003/page/n263>.

albeit restrictive, alternative. Though this policy seemed to work initially, it eventually became ineffective. Therefore, almost four decades later in 1727 the VOC implemented another immigration and safety policy that excluded new Chinese inhabitants from the outer regions of Batavia. Those Chinese who could not produce their permission ticket or had been admitted into Batavia within the last ten to twelve years were to be sent back to China.¹⁷⁷ This policy aimed at limiting the number of roving criminals in Batavia and the *Ommelanden*. Admittedly, this was a very coercive and restrictive response of the Dutch to an increasingly threatening situation, but it was not a violent response. Once again, instead of resorting to violent means of controlling a large and unruly Chinese population, the VOC opted for a policy of registration and deportation, which shared significant similarities with policies regulating the Chinese community over the previous century.

The 1727 policy proved no more successful than previous measures the VOC had taken to reign in Chinese migrants. The record books documented that twelve hundred Chinese workers registered with the Dutch upon arrival, but that there were also numerous Chinese who came to Batavia illegally by June 12, 1736.¹⁷⁸ The Dutch were particularly concerned with regulating the illegal immigration of Chinese workers because Batavia and the surrounding area were overpopulated, resulting in a very high rate of unemployment. Overpopulation and high unemployment contributed to the dangerous Chinese mobs that were destabilizing the area. Wanting to prevent a serious conflict with these Chinese wanderers, the Dutch responded with a policy similar to that of 1727. This new policy stated that all Chinese citizens that had been in Batavia since 1729 must come forward and turn themselves in if they did not have a proper

¹⁷⁷ J. A. Van Der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek, 1602-1811*, Vol. 4 (Batavia: Batavia Landsdrukkerij, 1887), 197, <https://archive.org/details/BZKIT01AF27014318870004/page/n195>.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 395.

permission letter. In essence, this was an offer of amnesty to the illegal Chinese. They were summoned to report in so that they could be added as legal subjects of the colony by the Higher Government. They would need to pay a tax in order to receive this permission letter; if they failed to do so, they would be returned to China.¹⁷⁹ The permission letter served a dual purpose because it ensured that Chinese inhabitants were taxed as well as monitored by the VOC or Chinese captain. As we have already seen, for over a century the Dutch had used taxation to regulate the Chinese community. By the 1730s, however, the challenges of governing a growing Chinese population had made these policies less effective than in the past.

Economic Factors

VOC management of the sugar trade contributed to the disruption and instability in the *Ommelanden* and threatened Batavia. While the sugar trade thrived in the seventeenth century, in the eighteenth demand for Javanese sugar decreased. Nonetheless, the Heeren XVII continued to promote sugar production even as the VOC reduced prices for sugar.¹⁸⁰ Lower demand and falling prices led to the bankruptcy of several sugar plantation owners. Due to their control over the export and prices of sugar, the VOC was directly responsible for much of the crisis in the sugar industry, even if some plantation owners made poor business decisions that further harmed their enterprises.¹⁸¹ The economic burdens that bankruptcy produced proved to be too much for many Chinese citizens. “As sugar mills were closed down due to the crisis on the sugar-market and the erosion of the soil, the river irrigation system fell into decay and roving bands of unemployed coolies started to render the countryside unsafe,” explicates Blussé.¹⁸² Elite Chinese

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Blussé, *Strange Company*, 91.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 93.

¹⁸² Ibid., 27.

sources also documented the behavior of these dangerous people. In the *Chinese Annals*, it was reported,

The people lacked ways to make a living; they loafed about and wandered around doing nothing, and made the daily consumption of opium their work. It got so bad that swarms of robbers sprang up everywhere. In the countryside, raiders grouped together and robbed and hurt people's lives. All the robbers that were caught were Chinese who had not paid the Dutch poll tax.¹⁸³

This eyewitness account by an elite Chinese resident of Batavia demonstrates the divide between the wealthy Chinese merchants who benefitted from the VOC and the impoverished Chinese laborers of the *Ommelanden*. At least some of the Chinese elite recognized the danger that the impoverished Chinese posed to Batavia. These unemployed laborers and the growing issue of illegal Chinese immigrants contributed to the unrest and threatening uprisings that increasingly worked to undermine the relationships in and around Batavia.

Corruption

Corruption was perhaps the most serious and destructive issue in Batavia's surrounding area. The *Ommelanden* were considered to be rough and lawless because only two sheriffs were appointed to keep law and order in these expansive territories.¹⁸⁴ These sheriffs did not possess sufficient authority or support to maintain order. As a result, the VOC's officials grew increasingly corrupt and deceitful. Over time even the *kapitein's* authority over his people deteriorated. The cooperation that existed in this area dissolved, as corruption among the Chinese leaders and Dutch officers dissipated the trust that existed between groups. Ni Hoe-kong was the

¹⁸³ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 120.

¹⁸⁴ Blussé, "Batavia, 1619-1740," 172.

kapitein of Batavia during the time before and during the massacre, and there were significant factors that created a decline in his authority. A group of unethical moneylenders manipulated many Chinese in the *Ommelanden*. Ni Hoe-kong was not trusted and did not handle this problem, and when other problems arose he did not provide any assistance. When he had the opportunity to show benevolence to his people by paying the poll taxes of bankrupt Chinese inhabitants, he deserted them.¹⁸⁵ Many Chinese merchants considered Ni Hoe-kong to be an unworthy Chinese leader who neglected his people in their time of need.

The perspective represented in the *Chinese Annals* also recorded the lack of integrity that Ni Hoe-kong, also known as Lian Fuguang, displayed when it mattered the most. Ni Hoe-kong often argued and fought with his lieutenants, and many believed that he could not be an effective leader for his people. While several Dutch officials committed crimes that financially benefitted themselves, the author of the *Annals* accused Ni Hoe-kong of equivalent crimes by submitting to them.¹⁸⁶ He also asserted that many Chinese resented the *kapitein* because of his obsequious behavior and his own self-indulgent habits. He and other lieutenants were too busy partying and living lavish lifestyles to notice the unemployment and reckless behaviors of his charges. Representing a strain of elite Chinese opinion in 1739, the *Chinese Annals* argued, “In hard times the Chinese captain should be the shepherd of the people. But he showed no empathy for the people’s sorrow.”¹⁸⁷ The *kapitein*’s lack of control and corruption only fueled the tensions and instabilities of the *Ommelanden*. He had little authority in the area, and he failed to lead a large and unruly population. The author of the *Annals* believed that the *kapitein* should have paid for the permits of the Chinese that could not afford them,¹⁸⁸ which would have saved countless

¹⁸⁵ Blussé, *Strange Company*, 89.

¹⁸⁶ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 124.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 122.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

Chinese lives. When these tensions finally led to revolts and violence a few months later, Ni Hoe-kong was accused of standing idly by as his countrymen were slaughtered. In 1775 when Ni Hoe-kong died, many Chinese merchants still blamed the *kapitein* for their misfortunes. The Chinese author of the *Annals* condemned him by saying, “If one million people were plunged into misery, this was all because this captain failed to protect the people and take responsibility. He deserves punishment by Heaven.”¹⁸⁹ To show their disgust with him, some elite Chinese believed Ni Hoe-kong deserved the burial rights of the poor.¹⁹⁰

Before these issues erupted, the Chinese and Dutch lived in cooperation in Batavia for over a century. They created a mutually beneficial relationship in which the VOC established a monopoly on trade between Batavia and Europe, and Chinese merchants thrived economically and financially by supplying this trade with Asian goods. Tensions and economic hardships disrupted this status quo. Illegal immigration greatly increased the number of roaming Chinese workers in the *Ommelanden*, causing disturbances and violence. The economic hardships brought on by the closing of the sugar mills only intensified this dilemma. Some of the Dutch and even Chinese officials were so corrupt and self-indulgent that they offered no aid or solutions to the problems of the people in the surrounding area. As Chinese uprisings and revolts began to threaten Batavia, the Dutch implemented taxation and regulatory policies to try to regain control of the region. At a certain point, though, the conflicts escalated to a boiling point in Batavia. Pushed to the breaking point, the Dutch exploded into violence in their response to the Chinese threat. As a result was the massacre of 1740.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 177.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

Violence and Orders leading up to the Massacre

In order to reduce and better regulate the number of undocumented Chinese, the Dutch passed policies that stated that roaming Chinese without permits would be sent to China or Ceylon, where they were often employed in sugar mills.¹⁹¹ This had historically been a peaceful policy, but it turned violent in July 1740 when a number of permit-less Chinese exiles were not allowed to disembark in Ceylon, and instead were thrown overboard.¹⁹² Most of the laborers drowned, but those who survived returned to the *Ommelanden* and told of the horrors of the event. The author of the *Chinese Annals* recorded that on the night before the massacre the Dutch General Van Imhoff “issued an order to send to sea and drown at night all the Chinese people who had been rounded up outside the town on the sugar plantations and inside the town.”¹⁹³ This order was following the same technique of violence as the July incident. This disastrous event fueled Chinese resistance against corrupt Chinese officials and Dutch authority in the *Ommelanden*. A group of about five thousand Chinese men stood in opposition to the Dutch. The ensuing revolts threatened the VOC, as the Chinese began attacking Batavia and burning villages in the *Ommelanden*.¹⁹⁴ The Dutch, who feared a conspiracy of cooperation among Chinese citizens who lived within the city of Batavia, resorted to violence against this group. As Chinese insurgents flooded the city, the Dutch responded by deploying its military forces against the Chinese inside Batavia and in the *Ommelanden*.¹⁹⁵ By the time the attack was over, thousands of Chinese in Batavia and its surrounding area had been killed.

¹⁹¹ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 120-121.

¹⁹² W. Dharmowijono, “Van Koelies, Klontongs en Kapiteins: Het Beeld van de Chinezen in Indisch-Nederlands Literair Proza 1880-1950” (PhD diss., Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2009), 295, https://pure.uva.nl/ws/files/790902/69544_08.pdf; Blussé, “Batavia, 1619-1740,” 176.

¹⁹³ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 124-125.

¹⁹⁴ Blussé, “Batavia, 1619-1740,” 177.

¹⁹⁵ P. De Roo de la Faille, “De Chineesche Raad Te Batavia en Het Door Dit College Beheerde Fonds,” in *De Betrekkingen Tusschen Nederland en China Volgens Chineesche Bronnen* by G. Schlegel (Leiden: Brill, 1893), 312, <file:///F:/Research%20Seminar/Massacres-terrorism/Chineesche%20Raad-%20Roo%20de%20le%20Faille.pdf>.

What began as a loose association of rootless and largely unemployed Chinese laborers in the *Ommelanden* eventually formed into a strong group of rebels that was able to effectively surround the city.¹⁹⁶ On Friday, October 7, 1740 there were rumors that the Chinese were going to attack Batavia from both inside and outside of the city walls. The violence and turmoil in the *Ommelanden* began to impact the Chinese inside the city. On that same day, when a group of roughly five hundred armed Chinese rebels attacked a Dutch post, the Dutch were convinced a revolt from within Batavia was imminent.¹⁹⁷ Rumors of a conspiracy spread through Batavia like wildfire and seriously fueled the paranoia and fear of the residents of the city. When the Dutch heard of these rebels and their attacks, they decided to strike back.

The Dutch responded by restricting the movements of Chinese living within Batavia. On October 8, the Dutch authorities became suspicious of the Chinese inhabitants because they were removing their wives and children from the city. The Dutch, believing this restlessness was a sign of a collaborative uprising in support of the rebels, forbade Chinese men from entering the city.¹⁹⁸ A second Dutch order authorized the killing of any Chinese person who passed the guards outside the city and refused to give up their arms or resisted in any way.¹⁹⁹ This order was a direct response to the violence and terror in the *Ommelanden*. The Dutch then imposed further restrictions, including a strict curfew that required all Chinese inhabitants of the city to remain inside their homes after 6:30 pm and to keep their doors closed. They were warned that anyone outside after curfew would be shot.²⁰⁰ Governor-General Adriaan Valckenier wrote a letter to the

¹⁹⁶ Vermeulen, "De Chineezzen te Batavia en de Troebelen van 1740," 57.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 60.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 63.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 64.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

Heeren XVII on October 31, 1740, describing these events leading up to the massacre in detail.

Valckenier reported,

These movements could only be expected to create very dangerous consequences. Consequently, we did not allow the Chinese to enter with any troops, nor did we tolerate the departure of the Chinese people and children from this city. Moreover, learning that the Chinese wanted to commit all kinds of hostilities, we ordered that anyone who would not willingly put down their weapons would be shot down. We patrolled the city walls with guns, a sergeant, a corporal, and eighteen European soldiers.²⁰¹

This order pertained to all Chinese people living within the city walls of Batavia. The letter demonstrates that Governor-General Valckenier felt that these restrictive orders were necessary to control what he considered to be the dangerous Chinese inhabitants of the city.

While these increasingly restrictive orders were implemented, Chinese officials placed a warning on every Chinese door. It explained that these restrictive orders by the VOC were “not a pardon for life, but it was meant to eradicate all families! ‘If you Chinese are good people, this is cheating. How abominable! Then you should close the doors and stay indoors.’ Just like sitting ducks awaiting death! ‘At night don’t go outside, otherwise the soldiers that patrol at night may mistakenly kill people without blame’.”²⁰² Many Chinese people believed this strange warning and stayed indoors. They later decided that this order was a trick to frighten the Chinese in Batavia and to keep them from revolting. Meanwhile, the VOC continued to implement strict

²⁰¹ J.K.J. De Jonge and Marinus Lodewijk van Deventer, eds., *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie: Verzameling van Onuitgegeven Stukken uit het Oud-Koloniaal Archief*, Vol 9 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1877), 302, <https://archive.org/details/deopkomstvanhet04devegoog/page/n503>. Author’s translation of “deze bewegingen niet dan zeer gevaarlyke gevolgen te verwagten waren, hebben goedgegadt de Chinesen met geen troepen in te laten, noch ook niet te gedoogen het vertrek ven derzelver wijven en kinderen uyt deze stad en daarenboven op de gedane berigten van den drossaart Vink, dat de Chinesen allerhande hostiliteyten kwamen te plegen, verstaan allen van natie, die niet gewilliglyk hare wapens, welken zy by haar mogten hebben op bevel kwamen neder te leggen sonder aensien voor den kop te doen schieten, mitsgaders rondom de stad binnen het geschut en de hekken te laten patrouilleren, met een zergeant, een corporaal en 18 Europeese soldaten.”

²⁰² Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 126.

orders. The last measure the Dutch took to prevent an uprising was stripping the Chinese of all weapons, even small knives.²⁰³ Evidently, the fears of a revolt prompted the Dutch to take drastic measures to control the Chinese inhabitants inside the city walls.

Chinese Massacre of 1740

As the night of attacks outside the walls concluded, the morning of October 9 dawned and violence ensued. The Dutch leaders instructed Dutch soldiers to ransack Chinese homes and to murder Chinese inhabitants. Especially people who arrived on newly docked ships were encouraged to participate. Describing the proceeding situation, Dharmowijono stated that “the following day, the government (VOC) brought all the ships to Batavia and instructed the people on the ships together with the soldiers and Christian citizens to murder all the Chinese males, both young and old.”²⁰⁴ Aiding the Dutch was an armed indigenous Javanese population, who became known as the “mob” and was motivated by years of hatred and jealousy toward the Chinese. Dutch officials summoned the indigenous peoples and told them “‘For good or ill, extirpate the Chinese people and achieve great merit. The Company will certainly reward you!’ When the various indigenous peoples heard this order, they called up their people in droves, mastered their courage, and fought in the vanguard and attacked the Chinese.”²⁰⁵ Aided by the mob, the Dutch and other Europeans murdered the Chinese inhabitants, plundering and burning Chinese homes. In a letter to the Heeren XVII, Governor-General Valckenier described the groups who were recruited to sustain the massacre: “On the eleventh of this month men were

²⁰³ Kemasang, “How Dutch Colonialism Foreclosed a Domestic Bourgeoisie in Java,” 73; Kemasang, “Overseas Chinese in Java,” 137.

²⁰⁴ Dharmowijono, “Van Koelies, Klontongs en Kapiteins,” 296. Author’s translation of “De volgende dag riep het Gouvernement al zijn schepen naar Batavia en instrueerde het bootvolk om samen met soldaten en christelijke inheemsens alle Chinezen van het mannelijk geslacht, jong en oud, te vermoorden.”

²⁰⁵ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 128.

ordered to use the Blacks who were walking armed along the streets since the order of the massacre was given. This order was also given to the soldiers, artisans, and seafarers who played an enormous role in plundering houses and taking possessions.”²⁰⁶ With the aid of these people, the Company had a large force to attack the Chinese inside and outside of the city.

The Chinese in the *Ommelanden* continued to attack the Company’s forts throughout the surrounding region while violence also persisted inside the city. A report from a fort at Tangerang in the *Ommelanden* warned that a Chinese rebel group consisting of about three thousand men was attacking various ports and was heading toward Batavia.²⁰⁷ The Company sent European and indigenous troops to defend these valuable forts. On October 12 the Company sent troops to combat the rebel Chinese east of the city. Though the Company lost two valuable cannons, they reported that a large number of Chinese rebels were killed and that the others fled the area.²⁰⁸ Though the VOC was able to quell some of the rebels, the attacks continued. Dutch commanders in the *Ommelanden* reported that some Javanese and over two thousand Chinese came from the area of Anke to attack Batavia. This violent group burned and killed everything with which they came in contact.²⁰⁹ The next day the Company sent seventy-two grenadiers, thirty civilian riders, and two hundred baliers, equipped with guns to Fort Anke to combat these rebels.²¹⁰ Even after the massacre ended in Batavia on October 22, opposition by the Chinese and violence from both sides continued in the *Ommelanden*.

²⁰⁶ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 307. Author’s Translation of “Terwyl men op den 11e dezer maand ordre heeft verleend, om alle zwarten, die gewapend alleen langs de straten mogten lopen, gelyk dat sedert den aanvang van voorgem. massacre was gepractizeerd, door de bedienden van de Justitie laten brengen by hare meesters, en geen derzelver in te laten in de afgebrande huizen mitsgaders de zoldaten, ambachtsgezellen en zeevarenden, dewelke op eene zeer enorme wyze de verdistrueerde huizen quamen te plunderen en alles weg te sleepen.”

²⁰⁷ Vermeulen, “De Chineezzen te Batavia en de Troebelen van 1740,” 78.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 79; De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 308.

²⁰⁹ Vermeulen, “De Chineezzen te Batavia en de Troebelen van 1740,” 80.

²¹⁰ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 309.

It is important to note that, while the Chinese groups who were revolting in the *Ommelanden* were armed and dangerous, the Chinese in Batavia had taken no action against the Dutch and largely complied with orders to stay indoors. Nonetheless, the Dutch were consumed with paranoia and took their fears out on the Chinese within the city. No one was safe or exempt from the violence when the soldiers went into the homes of the Chinese residents and began killing people. “No matter whether they were men or women, old or young, they were pulled outside and killed. The cries of the voices were unbearable to the ear,” describes the anonymous Chinese *Annals*.²¹¹ There were Chinese citizens who tried to defend themselves when they realized their precarious situation, but these smaller uprisings were also quelled. The Dutch began using cannons in addition to small arms to attack the Chinese. The Chinese had no place to go as the death toll steadily increased. A Chinese eyewitness recounts, “The survivors ran for their lives scattering in four directions towards the mountains. Some of them ran towards the mountain cliffs, and others hid in the innermost [parts] of empty houses; they were murdered by the native soldiers. Jade and stone [people high and low] were burned together! Heartbreaking and pitiful to the eye this was!”²¹² Once the massacre was underway, there was no stopping it and few people were spared. Even Chinese prisoners and patients in the hospital were killed.²¹³ VOC troops controlled the city walls preventing escape.²¹⁴ For the two weeks that the massacre endured, an estimated ten thousand Chinese were killed.

Governor-General Valckenier described the horrible events of the massacre in his letter to the Heeren XVII written on October 31, explaining that “the Chinese, as well as the slaves of the residents, both inside the walls and in the suburbs began to be killed in a general massacre. This

²¹¹ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 128.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 131.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 128.

²¹⁴ Kemasang, “How Dutch Colonialism Foreclosed a Domestic Bourgeoisie in Java,” 73.

was done without the interdiction of the Governor-General, and without any restraint being exercised by him in the occurring events.”²¹⁵ Though it is unclear who ordered the massacre of the Chinese in Batavia, Governor-General Valckenier pointedly did not take credit for ordering the killings. Instead he merely reported that the massacre occurred. He goes on to describe, “A very fierce fire arose in the afternoon among the houses standing on the East side of the great river on the bazar, which subsequently spread to different places of the city and lasted two to three days, eventually spreading to the point of threatening to devour the warehouses of the Company on the Anker harbor.”²¹⁶ Again, his reporting of the events was vague and did not actively state who the people were that participated in the destruction of the town. Valckenier then described intensifying violence across the town:

On Sunday, the massacre became more and more intense, so much that within twenty-four hours the west side of the city was swallowed by the flashy fire. From the ninth to the twelfth of this month, other Chinese houses in the city were ignited in flames without any attempt to extinguish them. An estimated six hundred to seven hundred houses were destroyed inside and outside of the city wall.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 305. Author’s translation of “dat zy zoowel als de slaven der ingezetenen binnen en buyten de muren en in de voorsteden een generale massacre onder de Chinezen begonden aan te rigten, zonder dat de interdictie door den Heere Gouverneur-Generaal daartegens gedaan van dat effect is geweest, dat eenig redres daaromtrent is vernomen.”

²¹⁶ Ibid. Author’s translation of “maar integendeel zag men in de woningen staande aan de Oostzyde van de groote rivier op de bazar 's namiddags een zeer hevige brand ontstaan, die vervolgens tot verscheyden plaatsen van de stad overgeslagen is en 2 a 3 dagen geduurt, mitsgaders de pakhuyzen van de Comp. op de Ankerwerf staande gedreigd heeft te verslinden.”

²¹⁷ Ibid. Author’s translation of “erwyl men op Zondag de massacre hoe langer hoe heviger zag worden, in diervoegen dat de stad van dat gespuys binne 24 uren is gezuverd geworden en de westzijde derzelve door den geschichten brand der Chinezen als in lichten vlam gezet, zonder dat, dat vernielend element, hetwelk als gezegd van den 9 tot den 12 dezer maand in de stad heeft doorgestaan en alsoen eerst geblust is geraakt, eenige andere huizen, dan die van die natie heeft aangetast, in zooverre dat, naar gissing wel 6 a 700 huizen en huysjes binnen en buyten deze wal soo verdistrueert als in de assche gelegd zyn.”

The Governor-General does not elaborate by providing any estimate of the death toll. However, his report does paint a vivid picture of the progression of the violence that occurred within the city walls.

The Chinese *kapitein* also witnessed the massacre inside Batavia, but he did not warn his people of the Dutch attack or intercede for them. Instead, he fled to the castle to seek protection for himself, but when Dutch soldiers opened fire on him he escaped to the house of a Dutch friend who later turned him over to the authorities.²¹⁸ Valckenier adds to this account when he noted, “The Captain of the Chinese Nie Hoe-kong during the before mentioned massacre, dressed up in women’s garments trying to escape. When this became known to us, he was arrested and detained, which was not usual for Chinese working with the Company.”²¹⁹ The behavior of the Chinese captain only added to the distrust many Chinese felt toward their captain. Nie Hoe-kong remained in jail until the uprisings subsided. In the *Chinese Annals* the author speaks very negatively of the Chinese captain. However, Captain Ni Hoe-kong found himself in a precarious situation during the massacre, and it is difficult to interpret from the *Chinese Annals* and VOC sources the options he had and the motives behind his decisions. As a high official who worked as mediator between the Dutch and Chinese inhabitants, he was caught in the middle of the two groups when the massacre erupted. It must be recognized that Captain Ni Hoe-kong served as a convenient scapegoat for the Chinese merchants who aimed to reestablish the lucrative trading relationship with the VOC in the years following the massacre.

²¹⁸ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 127.

²¹⁹ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 311. Author’s translation of “den in desen ten meermalen genoemde captain der Chinese Niehoekong, dewelke onder voormelde massacre op den 10 courant in vrouwengewaad heeft soeken te echappeeren en soodanig verkend synde is opgevat en ten sesen casteele in arrest gesteld en not verscheyden andered Chinesen althans in Company.”

German Accounts of the Massacre

There were other Europeans in addition to the Dutch who witnessed and participated in the massacre. German travelers were eyewitnesses who wrote detailed accounts of the massacre, demonstrating that the violent event had a significant impact on their experiences in Southeast Asia. One such traveler was Johann Wolfgang Heydt, who wrote an account about the massacre including his opinion about the causes of it. His specialty of mapmaking brought him to Batavia, and this gave him a high social status there. Though he did not personally participate in the massacre, Heydt believed the Chinese got what they deserved. This condemning attitude toward the Chinese reflects the negative attitude that existed toward the Chinese by many Javanese and Europeans throughout Batavia. He explained that the wealthy Chinese in Batavia were all connected by openings in their houses, demonstrating that the Chinese were collaborating to attack the Dutch.²²⁰ Though it is uncertain if these claims were true, this demonstrates the sort of rumors that may have led Europeans to believe the Chinese were planning an uprising within Batavia. Consequently, Heydt believed the Chinese townspeople were to blame for the uprising and the resulting massacre.

Another German eyewitness was Georg Bernhardt Schwarz, who actively participated in the massacre. Schwarz was a barrel-maker from Wurttemberg, Germany who moved to the Netherlands to sign on with the trading company as a soldier.²²¹ It was not unusual for men without special qualifications to sign with the Company. Schwarz arrived in Batavia in May 1735, and he quickly learned to make a living working with a master-carpenter.²²² At the end of his travel accounts he describes the massacre of the Chinese. Schwarz explains that he and other

²²⁰ Somers Heidhues, "1740 and the Chinese Massacre in Batavia," 133.

²²¹ Ibid., 125, 128.

²²² Ibid., 128.

sailors were instructed to kill all Chinese in the town. Carpenters especially were told to enter homes and destroy property and murder the Chinese, due to their access to tools that could be used as weapons.²²³ Like many others, he obeyed. Even after the city was in ruin with death all around, Schwarz decided to plunder the town. He describes,

Since I knew that my neighbor had a fat pig, I wanted to capture it and bring it to my house. When the master carpenter saw this, he hit me and said I should first kill the Chinese and then rob them. I quickly grabbed a rice pounder and beat my neighbor, with whom I'd sat and drank with, to death. Although I found it terrible, I had to work against my will because my boss was watching. Then I went into a room and found a pistol. I went on and killed with it all that I could. Once I killed two or three, I was so used to killing and did not feel bad about it, that it did not matter if I killed a Chinese or a dog.²²⁴

Schwarz's account reveals an initial reluctance to kill his Chinese neighbors, but this reluctance was apparently short-lived, and he quickly moved on to murder many. Nowhere in his account does Schwarz express remorse for participating in the massacre. He continued to kill, plunder, and steal throughout Batavia. Though he was later arrested, it was due to the theft of tea, not for the murder of the Chinese inhabitants.²²⁵ Schwarz's account is valuable because it provides a participant's account from the perspective of a European who willingly participated in the massacre.

²²³ Ibid., 130; Derks, "The Chinese, The VOC, and the Opium," 258.

²²⁴ Schwarz, *Reise in Ost-Indien*, 119-120. Author's translation of "Und weil ich wohl wusste, dass mein Nachbar ein fettes schwein hatte, so wollte ich solches mit lauffen lassen, und in mein Hauss bringen. Als nun der Meister Zimmermann solches gesehen, schlug er mich, und sagte, ich sollte zuerst die Chineser todt schlagen, alsdann erst rauben; nahm desswegen in Ermanglung einig andern Gewehrs flugs einen Reiss Stampffer, welcher in einem langen Stück Holtz eines Arms dick besteht und schlug damit meinen Nachbar, mit welchem vorhern zum öfftern gegessen und getruncken, todt. Dieses, ob es mir schon erbärmlich vorgekommen, musste ich dannoch wider meinen Willen, indeme mein Vorgefesster vor der Thüre stunde, verrichten. Als ich ihne nun umgebracht, gieng ich in seine Cammer, fand daselbst einen Pistohl; diesen nahm ich, und weilten noch viele gemachte Padronen hatte, welche justement recht darein taugten, so gieng ich weiters, und schosse damit alles todt, was ich nur antraff. Da ich nun deren zwei oder drei umgebracht, so ware ich des messgens schon gewohnt, und machte mir auf die letzte eben so wenig ein Gewissen darauss, ob ich einen Chineser oder einen Hund todt geschlagen."

²²⁵ Somers Heidhues, "1740 and the Chinese Massacre in Batavia," 131.

The perspective of Heinrich Schröder differs from the previous accounts because he provides a perspective of the massacre in Batavia from a nearby city. Like many others, Schröder believed the *kapitein* was conspiring with the rebels and was planning an attack against the Dutch.²²⁶ While the massacre was unfolding in the city, Schröder was at his post in Tangerang. Roughly three thousand Chinese had captured a sugar mill near Tangerang, so Schröder and other soldiers had been dispatched to crush this insurgency. After a twenty-hour fight, most of the Chinese rebels were captured with their riches and many were killed.²²⁷ Conditions were difficult for the soldiers in the *Ommelanden*. Since the conflict had destroyed everything, food was scarce and diseases ran rampant.²²⁸ Eventually, Schröder was instructed to depart for Surabaya, but instead he made it to Semarang. In Semarang, the Chinese rebels had destroyed rice fields and ransacked the city.²²⁹ Schröder's account demonstrates that the revolts and massacre in the area greatly devastated the people living in Java. It also provides a detailed account of the warfare that continued after the massacre throughout Java between the Chinese, Javanese, and the VOC.

The most vivid sources describe thousands of dead bodies lying in canals and ditches around Batavia, like the *Chinese Annals* which reports, "Dead bodies blocked the doors; their blood flowed into the ditches and canals."²³⁰ All sources agree that the massacre killed thousands. The Dutch who had lived in cooperation with their fellow Chinese citizens for a century ended up murdering their neighbors *en masse*. In the Dutch Republic, painters and poets examined this heinous event in their works. The poet W. van Haren wrote in 1742 that "Java's

²²⁶ Ibid., 134.

²²⁷ Ibid., 136.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., 137.

²³⁰ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 128.

stream, that earlier flowed so softly and mildly through its regions, erupted into a fierce torrent through the land, vomiting the dead into the terrified sea.”²³¹ Figure 1 shows an illustration by painter J. Van Schley that displays Chinese houses on fire and hundreds of dead bodies flowing in the river.²³² Everywhere observers recognized the scope and brutality of the massacre.

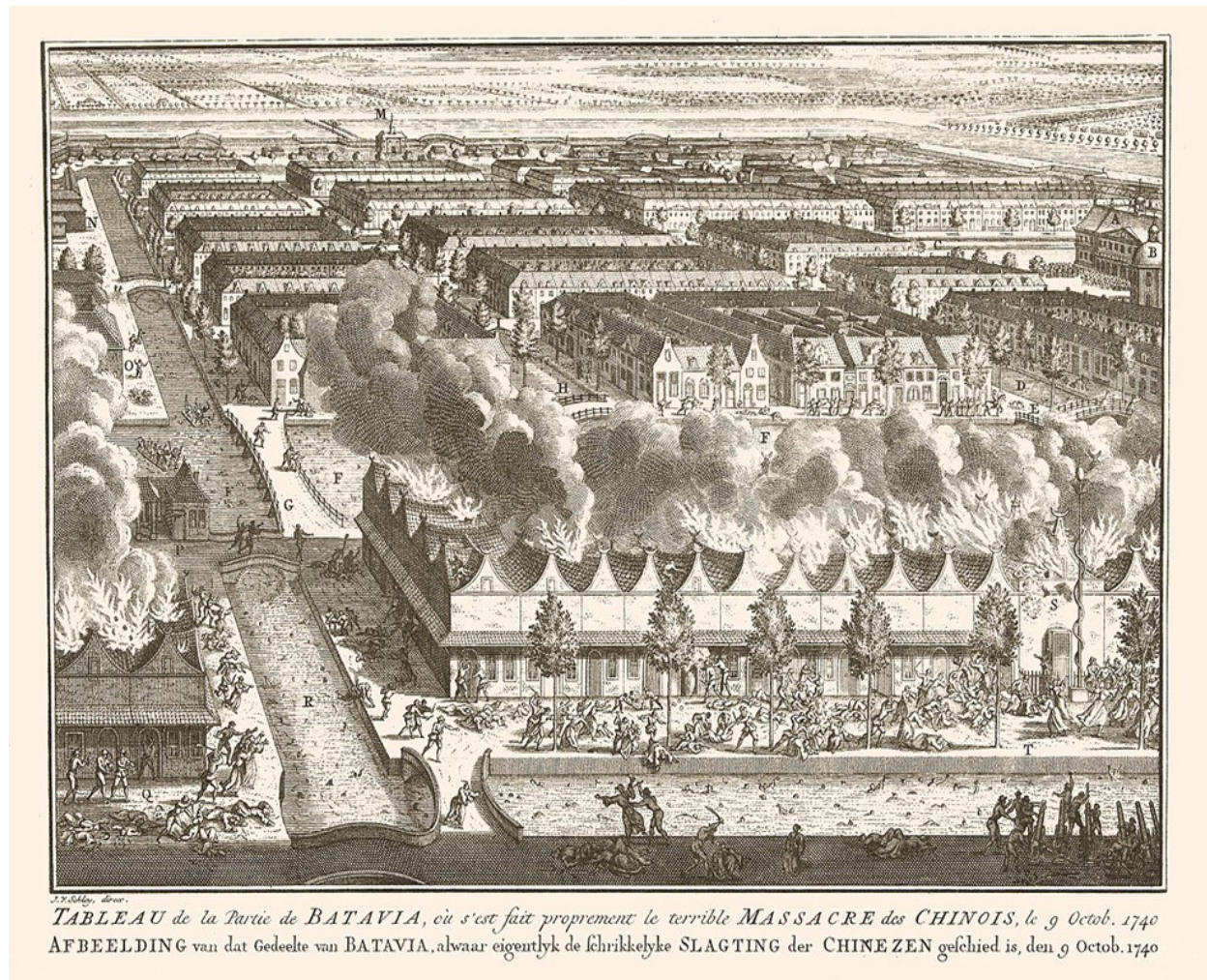


Figure 1. The murder of Chinese in Batavia and the burning of the city.

²³¹ W. Van Haren, “Op Den Moord Gepleegd aan de Sineezen Te Batavia, Den 9en October, Anno 1740,” shown in W. Dharmowijono, “Van Koelies, Klontongs en Kapiteins: Het Beeld van de Chinezen in Indisch-Nederlands Literair Proza 1880-1950,” (PhD diss., Universiteit van Amsterdam, 2009), 289, <https://docplayer.nl/34948961-Van-koelies-klontongs-en-kapiteins-het-beeld-van-de-chinezen-in-indisch-nederlands-literair-proza-dharmowijono-w.html>. Author’s translation of “En Java’s stroom, die eerst zo zacht en mild deze oorden, besproeide, snelt met drift naar de onlangs stille ree, en braakt de dooden uit in de verschrikte zee.”

²³² J. Van Schley, *Depiction of the part of Batavia where the terrible slaughter of the Chinese occurred on 9 October, 1740*, c. 1740, INALCO Library, Paris.

Unique Collaborative Environment

For over a century before the massacre, the Dutch had relied on Chinese merchants who facilitated trade, Chinese laborers who worked in farming and construction, and Chinese entrepreneurs who owned sugar mills, artisan's workshops and retail establishments. As early as 1619 the Dutch recognized the importance of living in close proximity with the Chinese, so they designed the city to have "a carre-shaped fort and for a city surrounded by a moat, for protection of the Chinese inhabitants and others who would like to establish themselves under Company protection."²³³ Even the strategic building of the trading post in Batavia reflects the importance of the cohabitation of the Dutch and Chinese. Since there were very few Dutch *free-burghers* in Batavia and they wanted to protect the Chinese from outside attacks, the Dutch colonial city differed greatly from other colonial cities in Southeast Asia.²³⁴ In other European colonies all ethnic groups, including the Chinese, lived in separate towns outside of the city walls. In Batavia the Dutch strove for *convivencia* or a peaceful coexistence with the Chinese. This collaborative environment the VOC established in Batavia with the Chinese inhabitants was unusual for the time, but it was something the Dutch were able to maintain for a hundred and twenty-one years. Though the Dutch were guilty of large-scale savagery and violence against the Chinese during the massacre of 1740, the massacre was an anomaly. It represented an uncharacteristic departure from their long-standing practice of refraining from violent policies toward the Chinese inhabitants of Batavia.

²³³ Raben, "Klein Holland in Azie," 48.

²³⁴ Blussé, *Strange Company*, 79.

Arrest of Governor Valckenier

The arrest and trial of the Dutch Governor-General Adriaan Valckenier for orchestrating the massacre provides further evidence that the massacre represented an aberration rather than marking a shift in VOC policy. Though ultimate responsibility for the massacre remains a subject of debate, two prominent officials, Adriaan Valckenier and Gustaaf Willem Baron van Imhoff, are the two figures who contemporaries identified as responsible. The two men were related since their great grandmothers were sisters. This family tie, as well as differences in character and the jealousy that existed between them, led to hatred and an unhealthy competition between the two men.²³⁵ Both played significant roles in the coordination of the massacre. Valckenier and van Imhoff not only organized the massacre in the *Ommelanden*, but they also deployed other men to implement stricter measures inside the city walls.²³⁶ While Valckenier was the one ultimately tried, his guilt in orchestrating the massacre has never been completely proven.²³⁷ In fact, the author of the *Chinese Annals* blamed van Imhoff for the massacre, consistently and repeatedly describing van Imhoff, who was the governor of Ceylon, as the “evil king.”²³⁸ The *Annals* author displayed intense animosity toward van Imhoff since it was his suggestion to send the Chinese to Ceylon. It was during this event that it was reported that the Chinese were thrown overboard to drown.²³⁹ Many Chinese inhabitants believed that the events that led up to the massacre stemmed from this event. Lin Cuipu, a Chinese official, argues that van Imhoff should have received the blame because “innumerable lives were later killed by his poisonous hand. Heaven let him come to Batavia to confuse the hearts of the great king and the

²³⁵ Vermeulen, “De Chineezten te Batavia en de Troebelen van 1740,” 50.

²³⁶ Somers Heidhues, “1740 and the Chinese Massacre in Batavia,” 120.

²³⁷ W.R. Van Hoëvell, *Batavia in 1740: Geschiedenis van Neerland's Indie* (Leiden: Rijks Universiteit, 1879), 95, accessed September 14, 2017, file:///F:/Research%20Seminar/Massacres-terrorism/Batavia%20in%201740%20Verheven.pdf.

²³⁸ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 118, 123-125, 127.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 124-125.

councilors and the resulting disorder was an act of destiny!”²⁴⁰ Apparently, many Chinese merchants believed that van Imhoff should have been arrested and sentenced for the massacre.

Valckenier clearly agreed with these Chinese eyewitnesses. Two months after the massacre, he arrested van Imhoff and his councilors and sent them to Holland to be punished for their crimes of insubordination.²⁴¹ They were quickly cleared of these charges, and in turn, they accused Valckenier of coordinating the massacre. Valckenier was arrested at Cape Town in November 1741 and was sent back to Batavia to face his trial. He spent nearly a decade in prison awaiting resolution to his case, but died on June 20, 1751 before his verdict could be read.²⁴² Even though it was a complicated situation and it was difficult to determine who was truly to blame for the massacre, the VOC still arrested and held the Governor-General responsible for the violence that occurred during his rule. The very fact that Governor-General Adriaan Valckenier, the Dutchman who was in power during the massacre, was actually tried for carrying out the massacre demonstrates that the Dutch did not endorse, support, or tolerate a policy of violence in Batavia. Even though the Batavia situation turned into a massacre of the Chinese, this was deemed to be unacceptable and even “criminal” by the Dutch authorities in Europe, who indicted and tried the high ranking official that they identified as responsible. The massacre was a truly horrific event in Java’s history. It was not, however, a premeditated plan or strategy of the VOC in their ongoing relationship with the Chinese. Instead, several political, economic, and social factors coalesced together to break the long-standing cooperative coexistence of the Chinese and Dutch in Batavia in a tragic and murderous way. The massacre was an unsanctioned act that was

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 119.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 133.

²⁴² Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 134.

an aberration, and the VOC would strive to maintain a collaborative relationship with Chinese merchants even in the midst of warfare on Java.

CHAPTER 5 AFTER THE MASSACRE: VIOLENCE AND WAR

Regardless of any previous attempts to avoid violence during the period of 1619-1740, the massacre dissolved any trust that may have existed between the Chinese and Dutch. It created an atmosphere of violence throughout the island. In the nearly two decades that followed the massacre, there were numerous violent conflicts between the Chinese, Dutch, and Javanese, ending the cooperation that existed between these groups. The massacre ushered in a period of warfare that would last seventeen years. Warfare typically marks a dramatic change in relations, and this was the case in Java as well.

Ongoing Violence leading to War

Some Chinese merchants who survived the massacre remained in Batavia in hopes of restoring the economic relationship with the Company, while other Chinese inhabitants of Batavia and the *Ommelanden* fled east to Semarang to join the rebellion. This town had been under the control of the Company since 1708, and it was an important European fortress. In this central part of Java, the Chinese refugees from Batavia joined forces with other Chinese soldiers and Javanese seeking revenge against the VOC and other elite.²⁴³ After the massacre, the high officials of the Javanese court met to discuss how the Javanese should officially respond to the outbreak of violence. Since the Javanese courts had long-standing alliances with the VOC, they needed to determine if they wanted to continue to support the Company or join the rebellion. However, the members of the court could not come to a unanimous decision, resulting in an

²⁴³ M.C. Ricklefs, "The Crisis of 1740-1 In Java: The Javanese, Chinese, Madurese and Dutch, and the fall of the court of Kartasura," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde* 139, no. 2-3 (1983): 271, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27863505>.

impasse. In the political vacuum, many Javanese men sided with the Chinese before Pakubuwana II finally made an official decision, creating a social-economic division among the Javanese inhabitants. Even though the Dutch expected some support from their former allies, they became distrustful of the Javanese and their ruler. Governor-General Valckenier suspected, “The Javanese were not very trustworthy, and we wondered if they were conspiring with the Chinese.”²⁴⁴ Though the Company harbored early suspicions of a conspiracy between the Chinese and the Javanese court, they still hoped their Javanese allies would come to their aid.

The Company did not have a strong force prepared to defend its fortresses throughout Central Java. By contrast, the Chinese forces were large and powerful by May 1741, with rebel groups numbering in the thousands. Consequently, they were successful in plundering VOC posts throughout Central Java. Governor-General Valckenier was worried about these strong rebel forces, and he expressed this concern to the Heeren XVII. In the letter written on November 6 Valckenier asked for permission to “publish an act of amnesty for the sake of salvaging the good Chinese and to better facilitate the eradication of the hostile opposing forces.”²⁴⁵ Evidently, the Dutch were fully aware that an impending war could pit an alliance of elite Chinese, Javanese, and Europeans against rebels drawn primarily from the impoverished inhabitants of the island.

The rebels began attacking VOC posts. Even with the request of more forces to help defend the posts, the VOC and its allies remained an insignificant and weak army. The post at Juwana, for example, had only fifteen men guarding it.²⁴⁶ On May 23 the post was easily

²⁴⁴ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 373. Author’s translation of “Dat de Javanen niet veel te vertrouwen waren en enigszins twyfelden of dezelve met de CHineezen niet wel eenen lyn trokken.”

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 374. Author’s translation of “Eene acte van amnestie te mogen publiceren, ten fine de goede Chinezen te salveeren en de quaaadgezinden des te gemakkelyker te verdelgen.”

²⁴⁶ Ricklefs, “The Crisis of 1740-1 In Java,” 272.

attacked by a large group of over a thousand Chinese who killed half the occupants.²⁴⁷ The Company, expecting a warning from the local population living in and around Juwana, were completely blind-sided by this attack.²⁴⁸ After this surprise attack by this mixed group of Chinese and Javanese rebels, the VOC became concerned about their port at Semarang. Since the garrison at Semarang was small and weak, they summoned anyone they could find to help defend the city, which created a dire situation in other ports, such as Demak. Even with reinforcements, Semarang remained extremely vulnerable to rebel attacks. A powerful rebel army that numbered over three thousand soldiers surrounded the city, which only had about 90 Europeans and 208 Indonesian soldiers to defend it.²⁴⁹ At this time, the VOC was still waiting anxiously for aid from Pakubuwana II, but it never came. As rebel forces surrounded Semarang, the VOC attempted to combat these strong opponents by sending a force of forty-six Europeans and one hundred forty-six Indonesians, many of whom were Javanese soldiers.²⁵⁰ Since the Company was still unaware of the Javanese decision to side with the Chinese, they did not realize that this plan would never be successful. Instead, most of the soldiers deserted and fled, and some artillery was lost before the VOC soldiers returned to the fortress.²⁵¹ The Chinese forces continued to dominate the VOC troops around Semarang, eventually blockading the river and cutting off the source of fresh water that flowed into the city.²⁵² The situation seemed desperate. Though the Company's forces in Semarang were weak and ill, they were nonetheless able to maintain control over Semarang throughout the summer of 1741.

²⁴⁷ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 374-375.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ricklefs, "The Crisis of 1740-1 In Java," 272.

²⁵⁰ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 376.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Nagtegaal, *Riding the Dutch Tiger*, 1.

The large Chinese forces continued to surround and besiege the VOC posts throughout the central north coast of Java, often plundering and damaging villages. The town of Rembang was seriously threatened in July of 1741 when the Chinese forces attacked the post. The VOC was unsuccessful in sending reinforcements to help protect the post, and the Chinese massacred every European and Moorish sailor they encountered and seized the rich arsenal of cannons in Rembang.²⁵³ By the end of July 1741 the Company no longer had any doubts about the position Pakubuwana II had decided to take in this war because Javanese forces began attacking VOC posts. Valckenier reported that the situation in Tegal was also grim. He wrote, “Matters there worsened from day to day, and the residents had begun to doubt the loyalty of the Javanese, so this day, not only were all European homes outside the town plundered and burned, but the Company’s property and mills were also destroyed.”²⁵⁴ Pakubuwana II had officially joined the Chinese rebels against the VOC, and his forces combined with the Chinese to destroy the European posts throughout the region.

The only significant ally the VOC now had was Cakraningrat IV and his Madurese forces. Cakraningrat IV allied himself with the VOC in order to rule independently under the VOC, offering aid to the Company in order to disconnect himself from Kartasura and gain control in East Java.²⁵⁵ The VOC agreed to this arrangement, and their combined forces quickly went on the offensive. By November 1741 the VOC troops were still greatly outnumbered by the Chinese and Javanese forces around Semarang. In a letter written on December 6 Governor-General Johannes Thedens informed the Heeren XVII that Semarang was surrounded by 20,000

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 381. Author’s translation of “Dat de zaken aldaar van dag tot dag verergerden en hy gebragt was buyten den twyfel, omtrend de vyandschap der Javanen, alzoo dezelve 's daags bevoorens niet alleen alle Europese huysen buyten de logie staande geplundered en verbrand; maar ook 's Comps. thuyt met de moolen op Brebes.”

²⁵⁵ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 91; Ricklefs, “The Crisis of 1740-1 In Java,” 280.

armed Javanese and 3,500 Chinese rebels who had thirty cannons aimed at the city.²⁵⁶

Nonetheless, the VOC was able to break the blockade and most of the enemy soldiers fled the area.²⁵⁷ Throughout the rest of 1741 and 1742 the VOC reclaimed the other areas that were threatened by the Chinese and Javanese. Meanwhile, Cakraningrat IV gained control over much of East Java.²⁵⁸ As the VOC continued to defeat their opponents, Pakubuwana II realized his mistake in breaking from the Company. Perceiving that his people were outraged about his policies and that his kingdom faced the imminent threat of falling to Cakraningrat IV, he begged the VOC for forgiveness.²⁵⁹ Though the VOC reluctantly accepted the apology and renewed the alliance, this did not eliminate Pakubuwana II's problems because the rebels were now more anti-Pakubuwana II than anti-VOC and consisted more of Javanese rebels than Chinese.

Distrust between the various Javanese courts and the VOC continued for the next few years. Cakraningrat IV continued to gain power over the region. In December 1742 his forces took control of Kartasura and removed the rebels. Cakraningrat IV was adamant about wanting to execute Pakubuwana II to serve as an example to other kings. The VOC, for its own economic gain, opposed this policy and Cakraningrat IV reluctantly obeyed and returned Pakubuwana II to the court.²⁶⁰ Even though the Chinese and Javanese Rebellion was defeated in 1743, the situation in Java continued to be a complicated web of distrust and tentative alliances throughout the rest of the 1740s. The VOC eventually changed their allegiance in 1744 and went to war against Cakraningrat IV, who was defeated the following year.²⁶¹ Warfare continued to rage throughout the region. Various wars of succession wracked the island. Princes and courtiers of Mataram

²⁵⁶ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 400.

²⁵⁷ Ricklefs, "The Crisis of 1740-1 In Java," 281.

²⁵⁸ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 91.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ricklefs, "The Crisis of 1740-1 In Java," 282.

²⁶¹ Ibid.

fueled the rebel armies until 1757.²⁶² When the heavy fighting finally came to an end, inland Java was still divided between various Javanese courts and kings, while the VOC controlled much of the coast.²⁶³ The heavy fighting that devastated the island after the massacre of 1740 greatly weakened the VOC. The massacre and the warfare that followed not only weakened the alliances between various groups on the island, but it also left the VOC in what a modern historian described as “an advanced state of incompetence, corruption and financial difficulty.”²⁶⁴ The massacre of 1740 was a strong influential factor that sparked this time of warfare. It is within this violent setting that the VOC also implemented heinous acts of brutality to combat the enemy as a result of its circumstances.

Dutch Violence during the War

History is littered with examples of violence causing more violence, and Java in the 1740s fits this pattern. The deadly attacks on several VOC posts left the Company in a weak military and political position that caused them to embrace violence as their central method of combating the powerful Chinese rebellions throughout Java. The massacre that occurred in Batavia in 1740 signaled change from the norm of how the VOC had previously interacted with the Chinese in Batavia. The fear of a rebellion and other factors pushed the Company to resort to violence, something that was not supported by the Heeren XVII. Consequently, the massacre of 1740 represented a significant catalyst to the conflicts and violence that spread throughout Java in 1741. Finding themselves in a full-scale war, the VOC resorted to violence to defeat the strong Chinese army and its Javanese supporters.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 97.

In the midst of heavy attacks on VOC fortresses throughout the north central region of Java, Governor-General Adriaan Valckenier wrote a letter on November 6, 1741 to the Heeren XVII explaining the dire situation in which the Company found itself: “We were informed by the Ministers by a letter of the 14th of June that Semarang was surrounded by the rebellious Chinese and that they had taken their place of residence in the sugar mill of the captain of the Chinese.”²⁶⁵ In response to this threat, the Company sent troops to defend the city against the rebels’ attacks. Valckenier instructed that it would be beneficial “to spread the garrison to Semarang with as much military personnel that they could spare, and also to send a number of 600 indigenous soldiers to the Cheribonsen country road to Semarang under the command of the Bali Captain Ismael.”²⁶⁶ This was a strategic military response to the threat to this important city. The VOC used as many Europeans and allied Javanese as they possibly could to combat the Chinese and Javanese forces. Eventually, realizing that these actions were not enough, the Governor General recognized that more violence was necessary to defend its ports from destruction.

The rebel armies were a serious threat to the VOC throughout Java by 1741 because they greatly outnumbered the Europeans at the various forts throughout northern Java. Seized with panic about their difficult situation, Governor-General Valckenier opted for “a general massacre of the Chinese in Semarang and throughout Java.”²⁶⁷ However, his opinion did not represent the ideology of the other high officials of the VOC toward Chinese inhabitants. Though he believed

²⁶⁵ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 375. Author’s translation of “Door de ministers by derzelver letteren van den 14 Juny is aan ons kennis gegeven, dat samarang door de rebellerende Chineesen omsingeld was en dat dezelve hun verblyfplaats genomen hadden op de zuykermolen van den capitain der chinezen.”

²⁶⁶ Ibid., 376. Author’s translation of “Te gelasten om by eerste bequame gelegenheid uyt het guarnisoen aldaar naar Samarang voort te schikken zooveel Europ. militairen als daar maar eenigsints konden gemist worden; maar ook over den Cheribonsen landweg naar Samarang te laten vertrekken een aantal van 600 inlandse militairen, onder den Balisen Captain Ismael.”

²⁶⁷ Ibid. Author’s translation of “generale massacre der Chinesen, soo tot Semarang als over geheel Java.”

such a sanguinary campaign would be helpful in their dire circumstances, a large-scale massacre of the Chinese throughout Java did not materialize.²⁶⁸ They did, however, use violence while protecting Semarang against the rebel Chinese. By November, European reinforcements from other parts of the island were finally reaching Semarang, whose garrison now numbered over three thousand VOC troops, not counting Cakraningrat IV and his Madurese allies.²⁶⁹ This increase in military power enabled the Company to defend its fortress against its Chinese and Javanese opponents. Similar to how the rebel armies terrorized and killed its opponents, the VOC killed most of the Chinese rebels in the surrounding area.²⁷⁰ This violent action exhibits the common use of violence that armies adopt during a period of war.

The only place where the VOC reported a massacre of the Chinese during this period was in Surabaya. A few months before the retaliation of the VOC against the Chinese in Semarang, the VOC fought against the Chinese around the post of Surabaya. The Chinese and their Javanese allies plundered and burned all of the European homes,²⁷¹ greatly threatening the security of the Company throughout east Java. However, once the VOC received enough military support, they quickly took a more aggressive approach. The events were briefly mentioned in Valckenier's November 6, 1741 letter to the Heeren XVII, where he reports, "The Surabaya servants had witnessed the massacre of the Chinese people in that district and they had found all sorts of war ammunition."²⁷² In areas such as Surabaya Cakraningrat IV played an influential role in the violence because the soldiers he provided were key participants in the violence against

²⁶⁸ Ricklefs, "The Crisis of 1740-1 In Java," 273.

²⁶⁹ Ricklefs, *A History of Modern Indonesia*, 91.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 381.

²⁷² Ibid., 380. Author's translation of "De Sourabayase bediendens haar hadden te kennen gegeven de massacre der in dat district gememoreerd hebbende Chineesen en dat zy by dat gespuyz gevonden hadden allerhande soorten van oorlogsammunitie."

the Chinese.²⁷³ Cakraningrat IV wanted to gain control over much of Java, so he had his own reasons for clearing the eastern part of Java of the Chinese.²⁷⁴ In this time of war, the VOC found it necessary to defend its fortresses, and they used violence without restraint.

The VOC was relieved and proud of these victories over the rebel Chinese in Java. On November 25, 1741 an act was passed that added a “thanksgiving day for victories over the rebellious Chinese at Semarang.”²⁷⁵ The *Plakaatboek* does not shed light on how this victory materialized. It does demonstrate, however, the attitude of the generals toward the victory over the powerful rebel armies. The events that occurred throughout the north central and eastern parts of Java differed from events in Batavia. The rebellious Chinese were the enemies of the VOC, and thus violence was employed by the VOC to defend its valuable forts throughout the island. It is important to recognize that there was a relevant distinction between how the Chinese merchants were treated in Batavia compared to the Chinese rebels throughout Java. These Chinese elite, striving for a renewal of their lucrative trade relationships with the VOC, celebrated the victory at Semarang with their trading partners.

It is significant to remember the context in which these violent acts occurred. By 1741 the VOC was in a full-scale war that included the Chinese, Javanese, and Europeans. The November 6 letter addressed a few massacres that occurred by the hands of the Chinese rebels. For instance, an August 17 report mentioned that a sailor, two people from Bali, and roughly three hundred fifty Javanese were murdered by the Chinese.²⁷⁶ Warfare creates a setting where mass violence runs rampant. It is in this context that violence toward the Chinese rebels became an accepted

²⁷³ Ricklefs, “The Crisis of 1740-1 In Java,” 273.

²⁷⁴ Kemasang, “How Dutch Colonialism Foreclosed a Domestic Bourgeoisie in Java,” 74.

²⁷⁵ Van Der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek*, Vol 4, 536. Author’s translation of “Uitschrijving van een dank- en bededag wegens overwinningen op de ‘rebellige’ Chinezen bij Samerang.”

²⁷⁶ De Jonge and van Deventer, *De Opkomst Van Het Nederlandsch Gezag in Oost-Indie*, Vol 9, 382.

practice by members of the VOC. In this sense, it is important to note that while large scale violence was not used by the VOC in Batavia before 1740 as a way of maintaining control of the Chinese inhabitants, it became a common practice of war during the unstable period that followed. The massacre of the Chinese in Batavia in 1740 precipitated a war throughout Java where massacres were utilized to destroy the opposing side.

From the establishment of Batavia in 1619 until 1740 the VOC pursued a relationship of cooperation with the Chinese in Batavia, refraining from violent policies toward the Chinese inhabitants. The massacre that ensued due to various social and economic circumstances was uncharacteristic of the policy that the Dutch sought and implemented in Batavia for a hundred and twenty years. The period of warfare that followed the massacre of 1740 changed the atmosphere of Java and the relationships between the inhabitants of the island. Violence became common. But the Dutch did not simply declare an “open season” of massacres against all Chinese in Java;²⁷⁷ instead, they only used violence in response to their Chinese opponents during a time of active war. This context of war cannot be ignored. The violence performed by the Dutch during the war was in response to the attacks on their valuable forts in places like Semarang and Surabaya. Wartime violence cannot be compared to the unfortunate and anomalous massacre of the Chinese in Batavia in 1740. The time of warfare created a change that required violence to defend and regain control of territory. Nonetheless, despite the surrounding context of war activities in and around Batavia, the official policies passed in regard to the Chinese in Batavia after 1740 continue to show a glimpse of the collaborative philosophical approach the Company had toward the Chinese for more than a hundred years. Though the massacre had destroyed the trust and damaged the economic partnership between the

²⁷⁷ Kemasang, “How Dutch Colonialism Foreclosed a Domestic Bourgeoisie in Java,” 74.

groups, the VOC still sought to have an environment where the Dutch company and the merchant Chinese could work together to mutually benefit both groups economically.

Policies in Batavia after the Massacre

Though the massacre changed the relationship between the wealthy Chinese merchants and Europeans in Batavia, there is evidence that the VOC did continue to implement policies that avoided violent coercion to control the merchant Chinese. The first policy the Company passed after the massacre was an act of amnesty. Since the massacre was a response to the Chinese rebellion that occurred in the *Ommelanden* of Batavia, the VOC passed an act of amnesty for the Chinese of Batavia just days after the bloodshed occurred. This policy, which was passed on October 22, 1740, provided amnesty to the Chinese people that attacked the city of Batavia before and during the time of the massacre.²⁷⁸ The Chinese inhabitants that remained in Batavia were pardoned of their roles in the rebellion. The VOC's intent with this pardon was to alleviate the tension that was left in Batavia between the survivors of the massacre and the Europeans. Of course, they were also undoubtedly hoping to restore some of the economic trust and partnership they had with the Chinese in the city as well. Governor-General Valckenier certainly had an ulterior motive in passing the amnesty act because Chinese rebels continued to rise up throughout Java to seek revenge for the massacre. Not only did the VOC want to restore the strong economic ties with the Chinese of Batavia, but the Chinese were also granted amnesty in hopes that they would fight in the imminent war against the Chinese rebels and their Javanese supporters.

²⁷⁸ Van Der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek*, Vol 4, 510.

Though the VOC had resorted to violence to quell the Chinese rebellion outside the city walls, resulting in large-scale battles that led to the death of many Chinese people, the policies passed after the massacre provide some evidence of the VOC returning to older approaches of governing the Batavian Chinese but also of adopting significantly more restrictive policies to segregate even wealthy Chinese merchants from Europeans. Undoubtedly, relations between the groups had changed after the massacre since trust had diminished. While thousands of Chinese lived inside the city walls before the massacre, this arrangement was quickly altered. The act passed on November 11, 1740 banned the Chinese from living within the walled city of Batavia and from being within the city walls after six pm. Additionally, the policy prohibited the shipping of goods in the city to Chinese, Gentiles, and Muslims.²⁷⁹ Realizing that the massacre changed the relationship between Europeans and Chinese, the Company decided it was best to live in separate areas of the city, which is something other European powers, such as the Spanish in the Philippines, had orchestrated from the beginning of their establishment in Asia. This was a new practice for the Dutch, and it was not instituted until after the massacre. The new policy passed on March 3, 1741 sanctioned an area south of Batavia to be the new Chinese settlement.²⁸⁰ This distrust is also evident in the other policy passed on the same date that banned the Chinese in Batavia from allowing more than two people to stay the night in the arak distilleries.²⁸¹ The Company was suspicious of Chinese people congregating together in large groups, so the Chinese were instructed to report back to the Chinese settlement at night. These policies were certainly restrictive and repressive. However, the VOC did not continue to use

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 513-514.

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 522.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

violence in response to these Chinese inhabitants. Instead, the policies reflect an attempt to restore some of the trading relationship the Dutch had with the wealthy merchant Chinese.

Nonetheless, the VOC continued to closely monitor the Chinese in Batavia. By October 12 certain suspicious Chinese in Batavia had two weeks to turn in any weapons they owned, and it was forbidden for anyone to sell new weapons to these same citizens.²⁸² This was a similar policy to the one passed shortly before the massacre occurred. The VOC's ongoing fear of Chinese uprisings sparked these policies. This is not surprising considering the thousands of Chinese rebels who were conspiring against the VOC in other parts of Java. On the same day the Company prohibited for the Chinese to enter the city of Batavia, even under the guidance of Europeans.²⁸³ They were only permitted to do so if they received a special permit from the Governor-General or another high-ranking official of the Company. It was difficult to restore the relationship of the past century that had existed between these two groups, and restoring trust would take time. Though the Dutch sources do not shed light on the opinions or fears of the Chinese in Batavia after the massacre, one can only assume that they were consumed with even more distrust and fear than the Europeans. Chinese economic interactions and dependence on the Company certainly changed. However, over time, the economic relationship between the Dutch and the Chinese did improve. In 1742 the VOC provided an official office to the appointed Chinese captain, where he could organize and preserve all official documents and hold formal weekly meetings.²⁸⁴ Hence, the Company restored and further improved the authority and role of the Chinese Council, and it controlled its own archive of all Chinese activities in Batavia.

²⁸² Ibid., 534.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 16.

Chinese merchants were also permitted to enter Batavia again, and some remnants of the lucrative partnership were eventually restored between the two groups.

The massacre changed the policies that related to the Chinese. Though these restrictive policies were burdensome to the Chinese in Batavia, they were not violent in nature. The Chinese who were granted amnesty by the VOC were still considered “partners” to the Europeans. Though neither group could return to the more peaceful time before the massacre, they nonetheless discovered ways to return to their mutually profitable partnership. The major policy change, however, is evident in the way the VOC responded to the rebels outside the city during the period of wartime that followed. As is characteristic during times of war, the VOC used violent armed forces to combat the rebel Chinese and Javanese; however, this violence was not extended to the Chinese merchants in Batavia. Though the Dutch refrained from overtly coercive policies of control in Batavia in order to reestablish the trading partnership, the full scale war between the Chinese, Javanese, and the VOC changed how the Company treated Chinese rebels. The violence used by the Dutch against their opponents during wartime does not reflect or represent the philosophical approach the Company had toward the Chinese people in Batavia for over a century.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

Since the VOC established its headquarters at Batavia in 1619, its policies toward the Chinese population in the city had been one of economic cooperation. The members of the VOC realized that the Chinese were advantageous because of the lucrative trading network that they had built which linked Java to other parts of East Asia, and they passed policies for over a century that reflected this essential need for collaboration. The Chinese massacre of 1740 was completely out of line with these long-term policies. The massacre should not be considered as part of the pattern of Dutch colonial violence; instead, it should be considered on its own because of the century-long period of peaceful collaboration that preceded the event.

Unique Situations leading up to the Massacre

Several factors disrupted the institutionalized *modus operandi* of the Dutch in their relationship with the Batavian Chinese. Conditions in the *Ommelanden* became increasingly dangerous due to unsettled, wandering Chinese laborers. This issue only intensified with the increasing number of illegal Chinese migrants entering Java, who very quickly became a threat to everyone in the *Ommelanden*. People did not feel safe enough to leave their own homes. The Dutch responded by passing multiple policies that were intended to regulate the illegal Chinese immigrants and to minimize the dangerous roaming groups they formed. These policies forced the Chinese to prove their legal citizenship by showing their permission tickets. If they were unable to do this, they faced deportation to China or to Ceylon.²⁸⁵ Instead of responding immediately with violence toward the undocumented Chinese and the increasing number of dangerous Chinese loiterers, the Dutch passed a series of policies that aimed to mitigate, if not

²⁸⁵ Van Der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek*, Vol. 4, 395.

completely eliminate, the danger in the *Ommelanden* in a way that would not threaten their profitable trade and partnership with the Chinese merchants resident within Batavia's city walls. In doing this, the Dutch clearly demonstrated their preference for seeking alternative methods of control and maintenance of the growing threat of new Chinese migrants and established poor laborers in place of simply a violent response.

Economic factors as well as corruption were the two other triggers that set off a Dutch response of violence against the Chinese. The decline in the sugar industry pushed many Chinese business owners into bankruptcy. The increase in unemployment only worsened the danger and instability of the *Ommelanden*. Many historians argue that the taxation by the Dutch was a repressive measure to cripple the Chinese since they were burdened by many tolls and extortions.²⁸⁶ Though taxation of the Chinese in Batavia was heavy and burdensome at times, taxation was an alternative measure to violence. Taxation proved sovereignty of power and provided the income needed to maintain its armed forces in the colony. For these purposes, the VOC was able to maintain control over the Chinese inhabitants without causing them physical harm. While other colonial powers, such as the Spanish in the Philippines, conducted mass killings to control large Chinese populations, the Dutch selected a more peaceful method of control.²⁸⁷ Moreover, there is evidence that at least some Chinese merchants did not consider Dutch taxation as exorbitantly harsh, but that there were even some benefits attached to the taxation that other ethnic people did not receive. While taxes were onerous on average Chinese laborers, merchants found them less burdensome.²⁸⁸ Taxation of the Chinese had been a policy of

²⁸⁶ Kemasang, "Overseas Chinese in Java," 135; Salmon, "The Massacre of 1740 as Reflected in a Contemporary Chinese Narrative," 152.

²⁸⁷ Borao, "The Massacre of 1603," 30; Blussé, *Strange Company*, 78.

²⁸⁸ Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 67.

the VOC since the establishment of Batavia in 1620.²⁸⁹ Taxation did not become an economic issue or burden to the Chinese until after the 1720s when the sugar industry declined, directly impacting the *Ommelanden*.

This issue was worsened further by corruption in the surrounding area, where bribes were commonplace. The influx of Chinese laborers only increased the corruption. *Nachodas*, or commanders of Chinese junks, felt pressured by various policies of the VOC that regulated Chinese immigrants. Consequently, the *nachodas* bribed port officials who had connections with sugar mill operators.²⁹⁰ This vicious cycle of corruption spiraled out of control. The *kapitein* was completely undermined because illegal Chinese workers often bribed the sheriffs to avoid being denounced.²⁹¹ Long-term cooperation was destroyed due to this ongoing large-scale corruption. Even the Chinese captain participated in this fraudulent behavior. Some Chinese merchants came to greatly resent kapitein Ni Hoe-kong, including the anonymous author of the *Chinese Annals*. In addition to his dishonesty, he showed no compassion for the Chinese who were bankrupt and burdened by taxation. It is due to these factors that at least some of the Chinese elite blamed Ni Hoe-kong for the disasters of the massacre, creating a suitable scapegoat. Even in regard to the taxation of permits for illegal Chinese laborers, the *Annals* reveal that some of the Chinese believed that the *kapitein* could have prevented the conflict entirely if he had merely paid for the permits.²⁹² They believed that much of the violence would have been avoided if the Chinese captain had been a noble and compassionate leader. However, such a simplistic explanation of the massacre does not do justice to the intricate and interwoven elements that actually led to the deadly event. There were many people and circumstances to blame for the massacre.

²⁸⁹ Van Der Chijs, *Nederlandsch-Indisch Plakaatboek*, Vol. 1, 76-77.

²⁹⁰ Blussé, *Strange Company*, 91.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Blussé and Dening, *The Chinese Annals of Batavia*, 123.

Additionally, due to a lack of communication between the corrupt officials in the *Ommelanden* and the more stable authorities in Batavia, many of the people in Batavia were unaware of the issues of the surrounding area. They did not know of the lack of authority that the Chinese captain held or the self-indulgent behavior of lieutenants and sheriffs.²⁹³ As a result, this corruption deteriorated every foundation for trust in the *Ommelanden*.

The Massacre as an Anomaly

The Chinese massacre of 1740 was not just another episode of violence in the broader pattern of colonial brutality. This event should not be aggregated with other acts of European violence or Dutch brutality, such as the violence in the Banda islands. Dutch policy toward the Chinese merchants differed from other indigenous groups because the Dutch and the Chinese merchants benefited mutually from each other. The Dutch trading company needed the Chinese merchants to profit from the internal Asian trade routes, and cooperation was essential for this partnership to be successful. Since the Dutch did not consider the Chinese merchants as equals, the VOC instituted policies, such as registration and poll taxes, that asserted their authority, but they refrained from violent policies that would threaten the trade. The Dutch Company was successful in upholding this collaborative environment for over one hundred and twenty-one years. Due to this unique environment, the massacre that occurred was an anomaly for the Dutch policy at Batavia. Violence toward the Chinese merchants in Batavia was not tolerated by the Heeren XVII, which was demonstrated by the arrest of Governor Valckenier. Even in the war that ensued in Java after the massacre, there were still efforts made to maintain a mutually-beneficial environment between the VOC and the Batavian merchant Chinese. The VOC and the

²⁹³ Blussé, *Strange Company*, 93.

Chinese merchants did eventually return to a mutually-beneficial trading relationship similar to the one they enjoyed before the violent event broke out.

This thesis contributes to the larger field of colonial studies because it has shown that while the Dutch regularly used violence to advance their interests, not all Dutch violence was the same and should not be considered as one. Far from advancing VOC interests, the violence against Chinese merchants in Batavia ran counter to VOC policy and harmed their trading operation. Thus, context is vital, and violent acts must be considered in context. The massacre of 1740 followed an unusually extended time of cooperation and peace between Chinese merchants and the VOC. This thesis emphasized the need to study the massacre within this important context. This study encourages similar studies in colonial violence, such as the treatment of indigenous peoples in places controlled by other European powers.

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