

# Attracting and Educating ‘New Citizens’: Indonesian Public Discourse on the Integration of Indo-Europeans Into Indonesian Society During the Dutch-Indonesian War (1945-1947)

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So far, the study of indigenous people’s attitudes towards Indo-Europeans in the era of decolonization, especially in Indonesia, has focused on native militia violence against Indo-Europeans. Serious studies on the desire of the indigenous people to persuade Indo-Europeans to become part of Indonesian society have been neglected. By employing the historical method, this study examines how Indonesian nationalists publicly imagined, framed, and convinced Indo-Europeans of their place as the most recent members of the nation during the Dutch-Indonesian war (1945-1947). The newly-born nation essentially consisted of indigenous ethnic groups, which in colonial times were socially inferior to Indo-Europeans. This study shows that there was a systematic attempt from the Indonesian side to define Indo-Europeans as ‘new citizens’ of Indonesia and as siblings of native Indonesians rather than a threat to Indonesian nationalism. Indonesian nationalists took various approaches to attract and educate Indo-Europeans. This article demonstrates that the relationship between the birth of the Indonesian nation-state and ethnic minorities is not only marked by violence, as it has been understood so far, but also by Indonesian public discussions about what mixed-race people mean for a multicultural Indonesian society, on how Indo-Europeans influenced the perspective of Indonesian nationalists on the new racial landscape in Indonesia, and on discourse about identity, nation, state and citizenship in the context of the end of European colonialism and the birth of an indigenous state in Southeast Asia.

**Keywords:** Citizenship; Ethnicity; Nationalism; Race; Postcolonial Indonesia



## INTRODUCTION

In the social landscape of Indonesian multicultural society in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Indo-Europeans or Eurasians (also known as the ‘Indo’ among Indonesians) were a group that, although small in number, had an important historical role. The Indo-Europeans had very diverse ethnic backgrounds, but in general the term refers to groups whose fathers were Europeans (usually Dutchmen, but also from other European nations), while their mothers were from

Asia, especially from indigenous ethnic groups in Indonesia, as well as China or other Asian nations (van der Veur, 1968b). The Indo-Europeans were not only distinctive because of their mixed blood, but also their social characteristics, such as the Christian religion they professed, the European culture they practiced, the Dutch language they spoke, and their choice to distance themselves from the natives because they considered their socio-economic position to be higher than that of natives (Hoogervorst & Nordholt, 2017, pp. 453-454, 456; Sjaardema, 1946). However, a few studies emphasize that colonial society was not rigidly divided into two major blocs (ruler and ruled), but ran dynamically, even in defining 'Europeanness'. In colonial times, Indo-Europeans were legally classified as European, but in practice some of them were found in the lower class (a position that pure Europeans in the colony despised), had darker skin than pure Europeans, tended to be ostracized by the European community, interacted more intensively with Indonesians, and had to work very hard to reach important positions in the colonial bureaucracy (Luttikhuis, 2014; Stoler, 1989).

Studies on the existence of Indo-Europeans in Indonesia in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are divided into three historical periods. First, are studies of the origins and dynamics of the social life of the Indo-Europeans in the colonial period, including the birth of the Indo-Europeans and their problematic place in the society of colonial Indonesia from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (Breman, 2020; Henley, 1995; Sjaardema, 1946; Taylor, 2009; van der Kroef, 1953a,b, 1955a, 1972; van der Veur, 1958, 1968a,b; Wertheim, 1947). Second, are studies of the experience of the Indo-Europeans during the Japanese occupation, which was marked by the exclusion of Indo-Europeans from the Indonesian public sphere at the beginning of the Japanese occupation, followed by the inclusion of Indo-Europeans into Indonesian society when Japan began to lose the war (Touwen-Bouwsmas, 1996). Third, are studies of the Indo-Europeans in the postcolonial era, especially in the 1950s and 60s, when Indonesia was fully sovereign and the Indo-Europeans had to decide their political affiliations. These decisions led to the adoption of citizenship (either Indonesian or Dutch), and were followed by an uneasy assimilation of the Indo-Europeans in Indonesian and Dutch society for generations (Captain, 2014; Goss, 2000; Oostindie, 2010, p. 229; Rodgers, 2005; Tajuddin & Stern, 2015; van der Kroef, 1954a,b, 1955a,b; van der Veur, 1960).

In addition to the three periods mentioned above, another period has also received much attention from scholars in relation to the existence of the Indo-Europeans in Indonesia, namely the Dutch-Indonesian war, also known as the Indonesian revolution (1945-1949). The early months of the Indonesian revolution, particularly between September 1945 and early 1946, were known especially among the Dutch and the Indo-Europeans as the *Bersiap* ('be prepared') period, while Indonesian nationalists considered that during this period Indonesia was an independent and sovereign state. This was a time when the Japanese had already lost, and control of security in the cities was taken over by armed Indonesians, one of the consequences of which was the occurrence of large-scale violence at the expense of thousands of Dutch people and Indo-Europeans who had just come out of Japanese camps (Jacobson, 2018, pp. 51 & 126; Touwen-Bouwsmas, 1996; van der Kroef, 1950; van der Veur, 1968a, p. 207). Armed Indonesians considered that they were disrupting security and hindering Indonesia's independence. As might be expected, academic studies regarding the early period, or

more generally during the Indonesian revolution, focus on the politics of hatred and acts of violence perpetrated by armed Indonesian youths against Indo-Europeans, who were considered to be associated with the Dutch and to support the return of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia as well as to oppose the existence of an Indonesian state (Cribb, 2008; Frederick, 2014; Tajuddin & Stern, 2015, p. 357). W.F. Wertheim even noticed that the Indo-Europeans were the group of people who likely suffered the most from the acts of what he described as "terrorism" in the initial phase of the Indonesian revolution (Wertheim, 1947, p. 297).

Among the many studies about the origins and lives of Indo-European people in Indonesia during the colonial period, and especially the suffering they experienced during the revolution due to the violence exercised by diverse Indonesian ethnicities, scholars have ignored the thoughts, discourses and actions of Indonesian nationalists in framing Indo-Europeans as close friends and even brothers of indigenous ethnic groups, especially in Indonesia's formative years. This study fills this gap in the literature. In this article, I argue that the history of the Indo-Europeans in the Indonesian revolution was not only dominated by the violence of the natives against the Indo-Europeans as so far understood, but also by the endeavors to approach and understand each other, in a process that intended to make the Indo-Europeans part of the Indonesian nation. Violence committed by the natives against the Indo-Europeans during the revolutionary period has been well documented. However, the attempts of the Indonesian government and nationalists to promote Indonesian nationalism among the Indo-Europeans and their positive response to these efforts have been neglected.

In fact, apart from being tainted by violence, the relations between the Indo-Europeans and the Indonesian nationalists during the revolution were also marked by the efforts of Indo-European intellectuals and Indonesian nationalists to approach each other in order to achieve a common goal, namely supporting Indonesian independence and making the Indo-Europeans a part of a new, egalitarian Indonesian society. Indications of this have been made in passing by a few scholars (Earle, 1948; van der Kroef, 1953b, pp. 489-490, 1955, p. 460). In fact, efforts to unite Indonesians with Indo-Europeans had been carried out organizationally during the colonial period, as shown in the birth of the multiracial *Indische Partij* (Party of the Indies) in 1912, whose leaders were two Javanese and an Indo-European. One of its founders, Soewardi Soerjaningrat, wrote a famous pamphlet entitled *Als ik eens Nederlander was* (If I were a Dutchman), in which he criticized the colonial government's plan to gather donations from Europeans, Indo-Europeans and even natives for the centenary celebrations of Dutch liberation from French rule. This pamphlet, according to Benedict Anderson, encouraged the 'imaginary transformation' of natives into Europeans and Europeans into natives (Anderson, 2006, pp. 119-120). However, apart from a cursory mention in some of these writings – which were generally pessimistic about the potential integration of Indo-Europeans into Indonesian society – to my knowledge there has been no serious study of efforts made by Indonesian nationalist fighters and the Indo-European community to collaborate side-by-side in order to convince the Indo-Europeans to be part of the Indonesian nation and to ensure that indigenous Indonesians accepted the Indo-Europeans as new members in Indonesian society.

A few studies have attempted to pinpoint the formation of a close relationship between the Indo-Europeans and Indonesian nationalists. Some suggest it did not happen until March 1947, when E. F. E. Douwes Dekker, the figure of emancipation for the Indo-Europeans, who in the 1920s advocated for the unity of Indo-Europeans and indigenous people, was appointed as a member of the Indonesian semi-parliamentary body Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat (Central Indonesian National Committee, or KNIP) (van der Veur, 1958, p. 565). Others argue it happened when Indonesian sovereignty was recognized by the Dutch in 1949, and the Indonesian community development project could finally be started without Dutch interference (Tajuddin & Stern, 2015, p. 357; van der Veur, 1960). However, in the following period, the relations between Indonesians and Indo-Europeans deteriorated. With the recognition of Indonesian sovereignty by the Netherlands in late 1949, the Dutch and Indo-European communities were obliged to choose between Indonesian or Dutch citizenship. Very few of them chose to become Indonesian citizens. The situation worsened for Europeans and Indo-Europeans with the nationalization of the Indonesian economy in the 1950s, which forced tens of thousands of Dutch people and Indo-Europeans to leave Indonesia for the Netherlands (Bosma in Menjívar, 2019, p. 79).

The main overarching question in this paper is why did the Indonesian nationalists try to persuade and educate the Indo-Europeans to become part of the Indonesian nation during the critical years of the Dutch-Indonesian war of 1945-1947? The sub-questions will address three relevant aspects, which also serve to structure the study into separate sections, namely: 1) How did the Indonesian nationalists see the position of the Indo-Europeans in the newly born Indonesia, especially in relation to the project to form the 'Indonesian nation'? 2) How did the Indonesian government formulate the concept of citizenship when facilitating the integration of Indo-Europeans into Indonesian society? 3) What were the strategies used by the Indonesian nationalists to persuade and educate the Indo-Europeans to encourage them to become part of the Indonesian nation?

I have reviewed various publications from the Indonesian government, print media and Indonesian political figures published in 1945-1947 discussing the position of Indo-Europeans in an independent Indonesia. Primary sources, available in Indonesia and the Netherlands, include propaganda booklets from the Indonesian Ministry of Information calling Indo-Europeans to become Indonesian citizens, and an anti-xenophobic propaganda booklet published in October 1945 by a prominent Indonesian socialist figure who one month later was appointed Indonesia's first prime minister, Sutan Sjahrir. Primary sources also include news articles, opinions and photos, which appealed to Indo-Europeans, published by Indonesian nationalist print media in Indonesian and Dutch, especially *De Pionier* (The Pioneer), *Het Inzicht* (The Insight), and *Merdeka* (Independent), and others.<sup>1</sup> While Indo-European circles actually had their own publications, one of them being the *Onze Stem* (Our Voice) magazine published by *Indo-Europeesch Verbond* (IEV, Indo-European Association) between 1919-1956, this study does not rely on such sources but rather focuses on propaganda from the Indonesian side.

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<sup>1</sup> The translations of Indonesian and Dutch texts are mine, unless otherwise stated. The insertions in square brackets are also mine.

While relying almost exclusively on Indonesian nationalist primary sources may give the impression of being one-sided (e.g., the lack of an explanation of counter-propaganda from the Dutch side), there is a larger context to consider here. This study focuses on Indonesian propaganda and sources representing the ideas and actions of Indonesian nationalists. The strong Indonesian perspective here is an innovative contribution to the historiography of Indo-Europeans, which has been dominated by the Dutch and, to a lesser extent, Indo-European viewpoints.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult to measure the reach of magazines, newspapers and propaganda booklets that Indonesian nationalists used to persuade Indo-Europeans. Data on readership and circulation for the print media and booklets that I examined was not available. In rare cases, this reach can be ascertained by searching for information in other newspapers, for example the planned distribution of *De Pionier* newspaper to camps inhabited by Indo-Europeans can be obtained from the nationalist newspaper, *Merdeka*.

I employ the term ‘Indo-Europeans’, an academic term, throughout this article except in direct quotations by Indonesian nationalists and where I discuss such quotations. Here, I use the popular word ‘Indo/Indos’, given that it was usually employed by Indonesian nationalists as a positive umbrella term – equal to other native ethnic groups, such as Javanese and Sundanese – to describe the Indo-Europeans of the period, as primary sources show and despite the derogatory character some Europeans and Indo-Europeans themselves have attributed to it. For this reason, the main method I use in approaching these sources is to use the keyword ‘Indo’, instead of other keywords that are more commonly used in the academic world, such as ‘Indo-Europeans’ and ‘Eurasians’.

I chose 1945 as my starting point because it was in August of that year that Indonesian independence was proclaimed, and in the first months after independence nationalist leaders began to publicly discuss the concept of the ‘Indonesian nation’, including the possibility of the Indo-Europeans as an integral part of it. I chose 1947 as the final year because the efforts of the government and nationalists to convince Indo-Europeans to become Indonesian citizens reached their peak, as shown by various persuasive gestures such as the publication of *Het Inzicht* magazine and the *De Pionier* newspaper (in 1946), and the appointment of a pro-Indonesian Indo-European figure, E.F.E. Douwes Dekker, as a minister of state in May 1947. For the Indonesian state, this move became the greatest evidence that they not only recognized the existence of the Indo-Europeans, but also granted them important political positions in the new republic.

This study also shows that the campaign of the Indonesian nationalists was also directed at the Indonesian natives, with the aim of convincing them to admit the Indo-Europeans as new members of the Indonesian society and nation. This study will be useful to assist us in understanding the contribution and cooperation of Indonesian nationalists and Indo-Europeans in constructing the idea of an Indonesian nation, which is not only multiethnic, but also multiracial, in a time that has been almost always perceived as a time of conflict between the two. This study illustrates that the Indonesian public sphere in the period 1945-1947 was filled by discussions of all-inclusive multiculturalism and equal rights for citizens amidst the most important war in Indonesia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## INDONESIAN INDEPENDENCE AND THE NEW RELATIONS AMONG INDO-EUROPEANS AND INDONESIANS

The proclamation of Indonesian independence on 17 August 1945 by Soekarno and Hatta (later appointed as president and vice president of Indonesia, respectively) was followed by the efforts of Indonesian nationalists to run the new government. Various government institutions were established in Jakarta and other regions in Indonesia, and this helped to raise confidence among Indonesians that they were capable of administering the former Dutch Indies territory.

In addition to the running of the government, the development carried out by the Indonesian nationalists was also aimed at establishing one of the most important elements in this young country: an Indonesian nation. This was not an easy task, considering that at that time Indonesia consisted of a huge variety of different ethnic groups with different traditions and languages, with a history of conflicts. Building harmonious inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations in a country that was tens of times the size of the Netherlands was a significant as well as daunting task. More importantly, the Indonesian government also needed to ensure that the loyalty of all ethnicities in Indonesian-held territory would only be towards the Indonesian government. This task was made even more difficult considering the fact that, during the colonial period, a few ethnic groups in the Dutch East Indies had a strong association with the Dutch due to religious, educational and occupational ties. Moreover, in September 1945, the Allied forces, which were later followed by Dutch troops, began landing on Java and enforced their authority. The hopes of some ethnic groups for the continuation of Dutch rule – as a guarantee of the return of their privileges over the natives as in colonial times – made the task of building ethnic loyalties to the Indonesian government even harder. Moreover, some indigenous ethnic groups, who were known to be close to the Dutch during the colonial period and received semi-European status (Bosma & Raben, 2008, pp. 173-176), for example the Christianized Ambonese and Manado, in the early days of independence had not firmly determined their political stance.

Likewise, *totok* (full blood) and *peranakan* (mixed descent) foreigners, who in the colonial period were at the top level of society, for example the Chinese, the Dutch and the Indo-Europeans, were not clear enough in showing their political orientation in the early days of the revolution. In the view of the Indonesian nationalists, they were more oriented towards their homeland and preferred to wait for the re-establishment of Dutch rule rather than show support for the Indonesian Republic. The birth of an independent Indonesia, run by the natives, triggered negative sentiments towards the ethnic groups who in the colonial period benefited from colonialism, ethnic groups which at the beginning of the revolution did not immediately show a pro-Republican stance. A certain proportion of Dutch and Indo-Europeans who had just been released from the Japanese camps, as well as the Ambonese, were recruited by the Dutch as soldiers in order to support the return of Dutch colonialism in the already independent Indonesia. This negative sentiment hardened into hatred, which later led to violence perpetrated by armed indigenous nationalists against minorities of foreign descent, including the Indo-Europeans.

In the midst of the violence that befell the Indo-Europeans, the Republican government did not remain silent. They took numerous measures to get minorities,

especially those known to be close to the Dutch, to recognize Indonesian independence and support the Indonesian government. One way to do this was by enacting democratic citizenship laws that no longer adopted racially-based social hierarchies as in colonial times. The Republican authority campaigned that in independent Indonesia there was only one nation that existed, namely the Indonesian nation. There were no more social class division based on race. The Indonesian nation in question included both indigenous ethnic groups and Indonesian-born foreigners, such as people of Chinese, Arab or Indian descent (“Oendang2 Dasar Negara”, 1945). Another group deemed fit to be part of the Indonesian nation were the Indo-Europeans, who were labeled by Indonesian nationalists as ‘new citizens’.

A key point advocated by Indonesian nationalists in the first weeks after Indonesian independence was that Indonesia was neither anti-foreigner nor anti-white. President Soekarno rejected accusations that Indonesia was an anti-white nation in an interview with two Australian journalists on 20 September 1945 in Jakarta. Soekarno was initially asked whether Indonesia’s independence was approved by Japanese authority. He replied that the Japanese did not give a firm answer about the news that Japan had surrendered to the Allies, and therefore he emphasized that the Indonesian nationalist leaders took the initiative to proclaim Indonesia’s independence. That implied Indonesia’s rejection of foreign colonialism. However, for Soekarno, the Indonesian nation was not an anti-white movement given that what Indonesia was doing was just defending its independence (“Indonesia Merdeka Adalah Tjiptaan”, 1945). The Indo-Europeans were not specifically mentioned here, but considering that half of the blood of the Indo-Europeans was European, we can interpret Sukarno’s understanding of ‘white people’ such as Europeans, as well as the *peranakan* of foreign origin, as including the Indo-Europeans.

The emphasis on Indonesia’s anti-xenophobic attitude was strengthened by Vice President Mohamad Hatta’s statement on 1 November 1945, which was broadcast by the official government media, *Berita Repoeblik Indonesia*. Hatta again stressed to the Indonesian people that the world’s eyes were on Indonesia before deciding whether to accept it as a new nation. So, said Hatta, violence should not be used as an arbitrary tool targeting foreigners. Hatta said, “we do not hate foreign nations, nor do we hate the Dutch, let alone Indo, Ambon or Menado people who are actually also our nation” (“Makloemat Pemerintah Repoeblik Indonesia”, 1945). The phrase “who are actually also our nation” (*jang sebenarnja bangsa kita djoega*) here first refers to the Ambonese and Menado people, two ethnic minorities in Indonesia who, during the colonial period, because of their religious ties, education and bureaucracy, were known to be affiliated with the colonial government. However, it was clear that Hatta also felt that the Indo-European people had Indonesian blood. For this reason, he placed the Indo-Europeans between the *totok* Dutch and Indonesian indigenous ethnicities, as a sign that the Indo-European group was a mixed group that had an indigenous Indonesian element. This seems to be an implicit call for the Indo-European group to feel closer to their Indonesian heritage than to their Dutch.

Hatta also showed a practical and visionary mind in seeing the need for a friendly attitude with foreigners, including the Indo-Europeans, who in Hatta’s perspective looked more like half-strangers than complete foreigners (such as *totok* Dutch). As semi-foreigners who were also highly educated, worked in middle-level jobs, and had

strong financial capabilities – achievements that were rarely obtained by the majority of natives – Indo-Europeans occupied a special position in the view of the government, especially in the possibility of helping Indonesia carry out development that required professional manpower (“Makloemat Pemerintah Repoeblik Indonesia”, 1945).

Hatta knew very well that as a new ex-colony, Indonesia faced a major problem: a serious lack of educated and skilled personnel. Thus, Hatta emphasized that even though Indonesia was rich in natural resources, this young country still needed foreigners, especially professionals from the more advanced Western countries. In this regard, Indonesia would try to become a member of the United Nations. For this reason, the country also needed to ensure security, safety and the participation of people of foreign descent. Hatta said, “In this country we will exercise the sovereignty of our people with the rules of citizenship which will quickly make all Indo[,] Asian and European groups become true Indonesians, become patriots and Indonesian democrats” (“Makloemat Pemerintah Repoeblik Indonesia”, 1945).

There is another anti-xenophobia view among Indonesian leaders worth mentioning here. A few important points were delivered by Sutan Sjahrir. Known as an anti-fascist, nationalist activist, Sjahrir was an opponent of collaboration with Japan (Mrázek, 1994). At the end of October 1945, he published *Perdjoeangan Kita* (Our Struggle), a booklet that, according to historians, had a profound impact on Indonesian political thought because of his efforts to cleanse the remnants of Japanese influence on the Indonesian nationalists (Bayly & Harper, 2007, p. 183; Kahin, 2003, pp. 164-165; Legge, 2010, p. 159; Turner, 2018, p. 63). However, a section in the booklet actually discusses the right place for foreign-blood minorities, especially the Indo-Europeans, in an independent Indonesia. Sjahrir criticized the long-lasting influence of Japanese propaganda among Indonesian youth, especially for hating foreign nations who were considered enemies of Japan, such as the Allies, the Dutch, the “Indos”, and the Chinese. When referring to the Indo-Europeans in his booklet, he added in brackets that the “Indos” were “our own people” (*bangsa kita sendiri*) (Sjahrir, 1945, p. 4). Here, Sjahrir declares and advocates that the Indo-Europeans were part of Indonesian society, just like other indigenous ethnic groups, such as Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, and Minangkabau. As a consequence, the Indo-Europeans should not be hated, let alone be the targets of acts of violence by Indonesian youth. Sjahrir’s idea also sent a strong message that Indonesian youths who hated Indo-Europeans, and even committed violence against them, were actually still under the guise of Japanese propaganda.

In the booklet, Sjahrir (1945) explains that it was difficult to accept the cruelty and killings that occurred against “the Indos, Ambonese and Menadonese, who are also our own nation” (p. 10). He even reminded Indonesians that hatred towards the Indos, Ambonese and Menadonese would jeopardize the country’s reputation abroad because the international community might consider “national consciousness among the people proven to be very thin or non-existing at all” (p. 10). Sjahrir clearly believed that maintaining security and ensuring the loyalty of the Indo people to the Indonesian state were goals that had to be achieved in order for the international legitimacy of the Indonesian government. This international support was crucial according to Sjahrir because at that time Indonesia’s fate depended on the victors of the war, Britain and the United States (Sjahrir, 1945, p. 15). These two

countries monitored what was happening in Indonesia, and it was clear to Sjahrir that ensuring the safety of the Indos, as people of European origin, was one factor that could shape British and the United States' perceptions of Indonesia. Sjahrir (1945) rejected the politics of hatred against minorities, and he urged that population affairs in Indonesia be regulated democratically and based on the "spirit of humanity and society" (p. 29).

Sjahrir even included a special section in his booklet about people of foreign descent, entitled "*Pembentjian Bangsa Asing*" (Hatred of Foreigners). He claimed that, until then, there had not been a "satisfactory" attitude or political stance from the Indonesian side towards a "somewhat alienated group among the population of our country" (including the Indos). What was worse, he continued, was that there were things that were "wrong and destructive to our popular struggle", which seems to refer to the politics of hatred and violence against minorities including the Indos. The politics of hatred against foreign descendants was very dangerous, he said, because "it will end up facing with the rest of the world and humanity", which would actually be detrimental to the Indonesian struggle. For Sjahrir, xenophobia was not a form of love for the country (Sjahrir, 1945, pp. 31-32).

In line with Sjahrir's urge for Indonesians to be friendly with Indo-Europeans and other minority groups, in the second half of 1945, the Ministry of Information published a propaganda booklet in Indonesian – primarily aimed at Indonesians, but also to Malay-speaking Dutch and Indo-Europeans – emphasizing the same points. The title is *Apakah Negara Itoe?* (What is a State?). The nine-page booklet basically explained the definition of a country, the conditions for the establishment of a country that can be recognized by the world, and examples of modern countries in the globe. Major emphasis here were that the state in the modern era was different from a feudal kingdom, and that the state must fulfill four conditions in order to be recognized internationally, namely 1) having a population, 2) having territory, 3) having a government, and 4) having internationally recognized authority (Indonesian Ministry of Information, 1945).

The first point was crucial. Here, a question that possibly existed in the minds of many Indonesians was discussed: What is the difference between the people and the nation in a country? The ministry explained that the people of a country were usually referred to as the nation of that country. And, more importantly, the ministry emphasized its point by giving an example that "if we name the Swiss nation it does not mean that the Swiss people descended from one lineage or come from one place only" (Indonesian Ministry of Information, 1945). Therefore, according to the ministry, heredity was not a factor that determined a nation; the determining factor was "the history or fate shared by those who live in that society" (Indonesian Ministry of Information, 1945). There was no specific mention here of the Indo-Europeans, but the tone of this explanation was clear, namely convincing Indonesians that what was referred to as the 'Indonesian nation' was not only those who come from indigenous ethnic groups, but also people of foreign descent in Indonesia who met legal requirements to become Indonesian citizens.

Attempts to define 'Indonesian society' had been made since the early weeks after Indonesian independence. One of them can be found in a pro-Republic newspaper published by young nationalists who came from *Ika Daigaku*, a Japanese medical

school in Jakarta, *Berita Indonesia* ("Surat Kabar Indonesia Pada", 1978, p. 131). In an English-language manifesto, the editor of this newspaper explained what he saw as Indonesian society. For him, racial or ethnic equality was not the basis for the formation of Indonesian society. There was a stronger element in the construction of a nation, which facilitated the participation of foreign descendants in Indonesian society. For the editor, the Indonesian people were communities of the same origin who shared the same concepts, language, culture, interests and aspirations ("For the Sake of", 1945).

In October 1945, there were many killings that befell the Indo-Europeans in Surabaya, East Java (Frederick, 2014, pp. 135-140). Feeling of resentment and accusations that the Indo-Europeans supported the Dutch had instigated violence perpetrated by armed Indonesian youths against the Indo-Europeans, including arrests, torture and murder. Violence against the Indo-Europeans continued and even spread beyond Surabaya, including as early as 1946. The perpetrators varied from youth groups to Indonesian soldiers. The Indonesian government did not stand by the violence that was inflicted upon Indo-Europeans. Instead, it tried to deescalate the situation by urging the Indonesian people to avoid violence against minorities, including Indo-Europeans, and foreigners, in this case the *totok* Dutch.

This was evident in an edict issued by President Soekarno where he highlighted two major goals for the new republic: recognition from the international community and the creation of an Indonesian society based on social justice. For the first, the country would need to guarantee the security of the population in Indonesia. Soekarno acknowledged that the Indonesian people had committed acts of violence against the Dutch and the Indos, for example by arresting them for being accused of "*berdosa*" (sinning) against Indonesia. Soekarno understood the reasons behind this action, which according to him occurred as a response to the atrocities committed by NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration) troops against the Indonesian people. But he then emphasized that taking the law into one's own hands was wrong and could lead to anarchy. Therefore, he urged that the task of punishing those deemed guilty should be handed over to the state ("Makloemat Pemerintah Repoeblik Indonesia Kepada", 1945). Here, of course, he was also referring to the Indo-Europeans, whom he still considered "foreigners" yet worthy of protection as exemplified in this quote: "The safety of the Dutch, Indo and other groups in our society must be guaranteed, as long as they do not threaten the safety of the Republic of Indonesia" ("Makloemat Pemerintah Repoeblik Indonesia Kepada", 1945).

In fact, the Indo-Europeans had also been asked by the pro-Indonesian regional authority to take part in maintaining security and public order. This can be seen from the efforts made by the Yogyakarta Sultan, Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono IX, who a few days after the proclamation of independence met with a number of social groups in Yogyakarta. He met first with the city's youth groups and with other community groups, for example *Masyumi* (representing Muslims), *Hwa Chiao Chung Hui* (representing the Chinese) and delegates from what was known as the *Badan Peranakan Indo-Belanda* (An Organization for *Peranakan* Indo-Dutch) in Yogyakarta. The sultan asked them to help maintain the security of the city, and, according to reports, they expressed their support for the sultan's request ("Daerah Istimewa Djokjakarta", 1946).

The Indonesian government was trying to end unjustified violence against

minorities. In an appeal at the beginning of April 1946, Minister of Home Affairs Soedarsono received news about the frequent, unilateral, punitive actions against “foreigners” such as Chinese and Arabs, as well as to “their own brothers”, in this case the Ambonese and Menadonese (“Seroean Menteri Dalam Negeri”, 1946). They were considered accomplices of the enemy and therefore deserved punishment. However, for Soedarsono, the act of arbitrary punishment was wrong because it could destroy unity in society and weaken the struggle. He even mentioned that there were also Javanese who worked with the enemy. The minister asked that these violent acts be stopped and submitted the matter of punishment to the judiciary body formed by the government. There was no specific mention of the Indo-Europeans, but it is implicit in what was meant by foreigners.

### CONSTRUCTING THE CONCEPT THAT INDO-EUROPEANS WERE ‘NEW CITIZENS’

The Indonesian government felt the need to explain the concept of Indonesian citizenship to minorities of foreign descent in Indonesia who had not yet made their choice of citizenship, whether to be foreign citizens based on the origins of a parent (usually the father), or Indonesian citizens. This was particularly aimed at the three minority groups of foreign descent, namely European (the Indo-Europeans), Chinese and Arab. Other groups of foreign descent were also considered (for example, Tamil), but because they were not as numerous as the three groups mentioned earlier, they were not specified and were only included in the section “etc.”. The Indonesian government, through its propaganda machine, the ministry of information, issued a special booklet to explain the Indonesian concept of citizenship to minorities of European, Chinese and Arabic descent, and even call them to eventually become Indonesian citizens by emphasizing the opportunities that they might obtain if they adopted Indonesian citizenship. This was evident in a booklet issued by the ministry in Jakarta in April 1946, entitled *Bagaimana? Apa artinja saja djadi Warga Negara Indonesia? Dan pendoeoek Indonesia?* (How? What does it mean that I am an Indonesian citizen? And residents of Indonesia?; see Indonesian Ministry of Information, 1946a). A subtitle indicated that it was intended “for the Indos, Chinese, Arabs and others”.

This was related to the stipulation of the Law on Citizens and Residents of the Republic of Indonesia by the President of the Republic of Indonesia on 10 April 1946. This booklet was an explanation of the law, as well as an effort at persuasion to minorities of foreign descent. The Indonesian government stated that the definition of ‘citizen’ in the law was very broad. Not only that, the law was also said to have received a warm response among groups of foreign descent, who, although not of 100% indigenous blood, were born and lived on Indonesian soil, and felt that they were an integral part of the Indonesian nation and saw Indonesia as their homeland (Indonesian Ministry of Information, 1946a).

The Indonesian government felt the need to define and campaign for a concept of an inclusive nation and hoped that Indo-Europeans, as well as people of Chinese and Arab descent, by seeing Indonesia as their homeland and country, could help build a democratic, all-embracing society in Indonesia:

The Chinese, Arabs, Indos and other groups that are persuaded by this understanding will be able to work together with the native Indonesian nation, as a nation and Indonesian citizens, to build a Republic that guarantees democratic association and life in a shared social justice, in the social environment with other states and nations on the basis of equality of rights, sitting low and standing tall together, independence and freedom of self-determination. Let's do it! (Indonesian Ministry of Information, 1946a)

Using the voices of highly respected pro-Indonesian Indo-Europeans was another method used by the Indonesian government to convince the Indo-Europeans that Indonesia, and not the Netherlands, was their homeland, which they must defend. This can be seen in another booklet issued by the Indonesian Ministry of Information a month after the above-mentioned booklet. This booklet specifically aimed at Indo people in Indonesia, in contrast to the above booklet, which still addressed various minority groups of foreign descent. The title was '*Open brief aan het Indo-Comité "Vrij-Indonesië"*' (An Open Letter to the 'Free Indonesia' Committee).

This was a letter received by a pro-Republic Indo committee, *Indonesia Merdeka* (Free Indonesia). The sender was an important figure, W. Ch. A. Doeve, who was known as a key leader in the IEV. Founded in 1919, IEV was an Indo-European organization loyal to the colonial government, which believed in the colonial system (demonstrated in one way through membership in the *Volksraad*, a people's council formed by the colonial government) and had no alliance with Indonesian nationalists (in contrast to other Indo-European-run organizations, such as *Indische Partij*, which was close to the indigenous nationalists) (Cribb & Kahin, 2004, pp. 184-185; Post et al., 2010, p. 514). IEV was disbanded when Japan occupied Indonesia, but its influence remained even in the early years of Indonesian independence. The proof was the above-mentioned letter. Doeve himself was known as an important figure in the Eurasian League, which in the 1930s sought a mixture of the Dutch (including Indo-Europeans) and the natives, by calling on intellectuals in the Dutch East Indies, both Dutch and non-Dutch, who considered themselves sons of the Indies, to unite to form a new nationality, the citizenship of the Dutch East Indies (Bosma, 2004, p. 680).

This letter opened with a firm statement in support of the integration of Indo-Europeans with Indonesian – rather than with Dutch – society from someone who several decades earlier rejected affiliations between Indo-Europeans and indigenous ethnic groups, a change of mind that was clearly a relief for the Republic in its project of integrating Indo-Europeans as Indonesian citizens. It says, "Following the establishment of your committee, I am quick to inform you that I can fully agree with the goal you have set and that I will gladly support you as far as I can" (Indonesian Ministry of Information, 1946b). Doeve emphasized that in the new era there was little the Dutch could do with the Indo-Europeans. He even confidently said that for Indo-Europeans in Indonesia, they did not want to be repatriated to the Netherlands "*want Nederland is niet hun vaderland*" (because the Netherlands is not their fatherland) (Indonesian Ministry of Information, 1946b).

Doeve sent a strong message to Indo-Europeans in Indonesia, those who were members of the *Indonesia Merdeka* committee, but also those who belonged to other

Indo-European circles, especially those who were still hesitant to choose between returning to the Netherlands and becoming Dutch citizens, or staying in Indonesia and becoming Indonesian citizens. This message was also deemed important for Indo-European circles in the Netherlands. Indo-Europeans in Indonesia must forget the Netherlands as their past and be part of Indonesia as their future. Doeve wrote:

Despite all the pitiful hassle of the colonial reaction in the Netherlands, the Indonesians will eventually become the boss of their own house. That is now in line with evolution. The Indos who want to live and die in Indonesia (because there is their homeland) will have to accept the new situation and adapt. Even if they do not like it, the Indos must understand this as soon as possible. They must become loyal subjects of the Republic of Indonesia if they do not wish to be regarded as an unwanted minority. (Indonesian Ministry of Information, 1946b)

What was also interesting is the Government of Indonesia's efforts to speak directly and engage the Indo-Europeans in the language they understood best: Dutch. A narrative was built, that the Indos were not a new element in the social landscape of the Indonesian nation, and that the seeds of Indonesian nationalism among Indo-Europeans had been present at a relatively similar time as the birth of Indonesian nationalism among other ethnic groups in Indonesia. The creation and spread of this idea was done by the government through a channel with which Indo-Europeans were familiar from the colonial time: print media.

The Indonesian government published a Dutch-language magazine to promote Indonesian independence to those who understood Dutch, in this case the Dutch themselves and the Indo-Europeans. It was a weekly magazine, *Het Inzicht*. The publication order for this magazine was issued by the Prime Minister Sutan Sjahrir. The leadership of the magazine was given to his followers, namely Soedjatmoko (later becoming Indonesia's leading intellectual), Soedarpo (who in November 1947 was one of the negotiators between Indonesia and the Netherlands in the Linggajati Agreement) and Sanjoto. Other editorial staff were I. Nasution and M. Wiranatakoesoema. The editorial address was Cikini 70 in Jakarta, but this magazine also had an editorial post at the Indonesian Ministry of Information on Jalan Cilacap 4 in Jakarta ("*Weekblad 'Het Inzicht'*", 1947). The purpose of publishing this magazine was to have an open exchange of ideas with the Dutch in the midst of the deteriorating situation between the two countries (Anwar in Sastromihardjo, 1999, p. xiii).

This magazine was published as counterpropaganda for the publication by the Dutch information service, *Regering Voorlichtings Dienst* (RVD), *Het Uitzicht* (The Outlook). The name was made similar to the Dutch publication. *Het Inzicht's* birth date (16 January 1946) was only a week after the RVD published *Het Uitzicht*. So, the presence of this magazine was indeed part of the Indonesian-Dutch opinion war. The name *Het Inzicht* was given by a Dutchman who was also a close friend of Sjahrir, Jacques de Kadt (interned in Bandung during the Japanese period). De Kadt himself later became a correspondent for the Dutch newspaper *Het Parool* in Indonesia (Anwar in Sastromihardjo, 1999, p. xii). De Kadt was also a member of the editorial staff, thus explaining the magazine's use of Dutch language and rhetoric, as well as its

focus on issues relevant to Dutch-Indonesian relations, including the question of the place of Indo-Europeans in the era of independent Indonesia.

Soedjatmoko and Soedarpo were employees of the Indonesian Ministry of Information, and that meant that through this magazine they voiced the interests of the Indonesian government. *Het Inzicht* was not only distributed in Indonesia, but also sent abroad. If the committee of Indonesian nationalists in Australia received more than one copy of this magazine, they sent it to committees of Indonesian nationalists in other countries in Europe, United States and Africa (Bondan, 2011, p. 151), indicating that this magazine was undeniably aimed at influencing international public opinion, especially for the Dutch-speaking people, to support Indonesia's existence and reject Dutch authority.

One of its key contents was an article containing the most elaborative explanation from the Indonesian press about what Indonesian citizenship was and a call for Indo people to become Indonesian citizens, as well as ideas about how Indo-Europeans might adapt to Indonesia's sociocultural life. The article, entitled '*Een idee-fixe*' (A Fixed Idea), consisted of two pages, including two photos. This particular space, quite large for a 12-page magazine, reflected the importance of the Indo-Europeans. The article and photos were a kind of civic education for Indo-Europeans. The original author was unknown (only the initials H.T. were provided). The article opened with a problem existing among the Indonesian people regarding Indonesian citizenship. The author stated that, in public discussions as well as on radio and in the press, there were misunderstandings about the Indonesian citizenship law. This problem was concerned with "Indonesian citizens", particularly the "Indo-problem", especially from a cultural-sociological aspect ("*Een Idee-Fixe*", 1947). Among the *peranakan* group there was a view that likened the Indonesian citizenship law as "*een poging tot 'Gleichschaltung' van de minderheden*" (an attempt to carry out '*Gleichschaltung*' of the minorities). Readers of this magazine who were knowledgeable about geopolitical developments in Europe, would certainly understand the term *Gleichschaltung*, which was introduced and used by Nazi Germany during its reign. According to Robert Michael and Karin Doerr, the term means "all of the German Volk's social, political, and cultural organizations to be controlled and run according to Nazi ideology and policy" and "all opposition to be eliminated" (Michael & Doerr, 2002, p. 192). So, here in the public sphere in Indonesia, particularly among Indo-Europeans, there seemed to be a fear that the Indonesian state would become an authoritarian, fascist state where minorities were oppressed and were forced to join Indonesian society while their aspirations were ignored.

The writer then cited an ideal example of a person of European-Indonesian descent who could be a role model for the Indo-Europeans during the revolution: E. F. E. Douwes Dekker. Born in East Java in 1879, Douwes Dekker received Dutch blood from his father and German-Javanese blood from his mother. He was known as a journalist and activist, who often criticized Dutch colonialism for its cruel treatment of the natives and encouraged the emancipation of the natives who were colonized by the Dutch and the Indo-Europeans, who were not fully accepted either among the *totok* Dutch or among the indigenous population. Its most influential activity was to form a nationalist party open to everyone, signaling a new chapter in the birth of Indonesia's national consciousness due to its inclusiveness. The party, *Indische*

Partij (1912), which he founded together with two prominent indigenous nationalists, Tjipto Mangoenkoesoemo and Soewardi Soerjaningrat, had the aim of bringing about Indonesian independence. However, this fast-paced party only existed a year. Their anti-colonial stance, and especially Suwardi's harsh anti-colonial pamphlet, '*Als ik een Nederlander was*' (If I were a Dutchman), resulted in the dissolution of the party while its leaders, including Douwes Dekker, were exiled to the Netherlands. After being exiled in the Netherlands, he took a few different jobs, but his movement was still monitored by the colonial government, which again arrested and exiled him, this time to Suriname, before the Japanese entered Indonesia. He returned to Indonesia after the end of the Pacific War and on 1 May 1947 was appointed as minister of state by Prime Minister Sjahrir.

In this article in *Het Inzicht*, Douwes Dekker was framed as a living icon of a patriotic Indo-European that should be followed by other Indos. He was constructed as an Indo-European figure who has tried to sow an awareness of the new citizens among the Indo-Europeans since the previous decades. Here the Indo-Europeans were called "*nieuwe staatsburgers*" (new citizens). It was explained that the Indonesians realized that there were Indo-Europeans who had tried to absorb indigenous culture in their attempt to assimilate with the majority of Indonesian society. The methods included "publicly renouncing the family name they have had for centuries, sometimes even putting on a sarong, putting on a *pitji* [Muslim cap]". However, although appreciating these efforts, the Indonesian side felt that these were just artificial measures.

The author emphasized that the president and vice president of Indonesia had a firm stance about the inclusion of Indo-Europeans as Indonesian citizens, namely that they were welcome to continue using and preserving their distinctive culture:

The president stated months ago that transition to Indonesian citizenship does not entail a change in name or religion. In the recent Jogja conference of the 'peranakan Belanda', Dr. Douwes Dekker, however, stressed the need for the Indos to change their names. When asked, the Vice President has said emphatically that name change is not a necessary thing. "It is not the change in the name that we want, but the change in the mind," said Dr. Mohamad Hatta. The Indos, as well as Chinese Arab descendants that accept citizenship may keep their names, even if they sound so exotic and un-Indonesian. And as for spiritual liberty, no power in the Republic could compel these people to steal this precious possession from them. This is guaranteed in the Constitution of the Republic, in the Political Manifesto 1 November 1945 and in the Linggajati Agreement. ("Een Idee-Fixe", 1947)

The Indonesian side regretted if the Indo-Europeans in Indonesia felt that they were superior to the native Indonesians. The idea of Indo-Europeans' superiority over the native was evident at the Pangkalpinang Conference (1-12 October 1946, initiated by the Dutch to listen to the aspirations of minorities and to form pro-Dutch federal states), including the idea that minorities, especially Indo-Europeans in Indonesia, should carry out a mass migration to "*het verre en vreemde*" (far and strange) Brazil – an idea that, according to the author, was a "*kinderlijk naiviteit*" (childish nativity), given the enormous cost, even if allowed by the Brazilian government ("Een Idee-Fixe", 1947; "Emigrasi ke Brasilia", 1946). The Indonesians were said to have discouraged

this mass exodus; this proposal was deemed to be put forward by the defeatists as the only way for the minority to survive. To show that minorities in Indonesia disagreed with the idea of exodus, the author gave an example from the Chinese descendants who rejected it, an attitude that "*zijn nuchterder schijnt te zijn*" (seemed to be more sober) ("Een Idee-Fixe", 1947).

In addition to the various feelings of dissatisfaction or worry among Indo-Europeans about Indonesian citizenship, the author stated that there was optimism that the Indo-Europeans will gradually understand that Indonesia was not as cruel as the Indo-Europeans imagined, and that the Indonesian government was very open to welcoming Indo-Europeans as part of Indonesian society:

Fortunately, over time, however, common sense is also beginning to penetrate in broad layers among the Indo group, and people come to realize that the Republic is "not as extremist after all" as was previously thought. Confidence in the democracy of the Republic will grow all the more soon if they keep their eyes open to the future, and start to consider the situation in the Republic more sensitively, free from all kinds of delusions and free from any fixed-idea. ("Een Idee-Fixe", 1947)

In order to reinforce the message above, two relevant and touching photos were displayed. The first was a photo of E.F.E. Douwes Dekker, who wore culturally hybrid clothing (a white shirt with a black tie plus a black Muslim cap). The next photo was of a number of Indo-Europeans, the majority of whom were women, who had obtained Indonesian citizenship. They were seen sitting in a room and listening to a lecture given by President Soekarno. Dressed in urban clothing typical of European ladies in the Dutch East Indies in the pre-war era, they seemed to be looking ahead with full attention, a sign of their serious desire to hear Soekarno ("Een Idee-Fixe", 1947). This photo provided visual evidence that a number of Indo-Europeans were already adopting Indonesian citizenship and that they were being treated with great respect by the Indonesian government.

The inclusion of Douwes Dekker in Sjahrir's cabinet shows the Republican government's recognition of the existence of the Indo-Europeans and their political aspirations. Most importantly, it was the Republican government's way of attracting the attention and participation of the Indo-Europeans in order to prove that the Indo-Europeans also had a place in the Indonesian political stage, not only as citizens, but also as decision makers, even though Douwes Dekker's ministry seat was not a strategic one. As indicated by George McTurnan Kahin, the composition of the third Sjahrir cabinet suggested the most diverse backgrounds up to that time when considering the parties, ideologies, religions, gender, and communities represented (Kahin, 2003, pp. 194-195). With regard to minority communities, Sjahrir proved his anti-xenophobic rhetoric he expressed a few months earlier when he appointed representatives from diverse minority groups in the cabinet, such as A.R. Baswedan (vice-minister of information, representing the Arab community), Tan Po Gwan (minister of state, representing the Chinese community) and Douwes Dekker (written in his Indonesian name: Setiabuddhi) as state ministers representing the Indo-European community.

### DE PIONIER: A SPECIAL NEWSPAPER FOR EDUCATING 'NEW CITIZENS'

Close to the Pangkalpinang Conference (1-12 October 1946), the Indonesian government was worried that the Dutch could not only gain sympathy, support and cooperation from indigenous local elites in areas outside Java-Sumatra, but also from groups of foreign descent, in this case the Chinese, Arabs, and Indo-Europeans. The Indonesian government persuaded the Indo-Europeans to refuse Dutch propaganda and to consider supporting Indonesia, which rejected the conference because of its divisive nature. The Indonesian government created another propaganda attempt that specifically targeted the Indo-Europeans. This task was given to the Indonesian Ministry of Information. The ministry used a method that suited the abilities and needs of the Indo-Europeans, namely using a Dutch-language newspaper named *De Pionier*.

In order to make Indonesians and especially the Indo-Europeans know about the publication, the ministry promoted this newspaper publicly. This can be seen in a column in the newspaper *Merdeka*, which stated that the newspaper *De Pionier* “is for the New Citizens (Indo group) who do not really understand Indonesian, with the intention of making them more aware of our struggle and more aware of the Republic” (“Soerat Kabar ‘*De Pionier*’”, 1946).

This newspaper was published three times per week, and in the early stages it was to be managed by the ministry and then stand alone when it was sufficiently established. In addition to selling it to general readers, the ministry even took further steps to ensure that the majority of Indo-Europeans read the newspaper by sending it to camps where a number of Indo-Europeans were still staying (“Soerat Kabar ‘*De Pionier*’”, 1946). The slogan of this newspaper was “*van allen, voor allen*” (of all, for all). However, the editorial composition of this Yogyakarta-based newspaper was not known because the newspaper itself did not mention its editorial members. The first edition (and the only edition I could get) was two pages long.

One may wonder how that name originated. Why was this newspaper named *De Pionier*? The reasons were:

Well, the Indos who stay inside [Indonesia] and feel like citizens of the Republic, who live and work within the Republic [area], and who give all their strength to build this country – our Fatherland – must be considered without a doubt as “pioneers”, as those who, by their example and their industry and labor, pave the way along which many Indos still living in the occupied territories will soon return—hopefully in a short time—for finding a place of work and bread in our independent country. Since this paper is compiled by these pioneers, mainly for the other pioneers, it was therefore considered proper to give it the name that appears above, namely, *De Pionier*. (“Een Woord Vooraf”, 1946)

This newspaper attempted to provide Indo-Europeans with information about the latest events in Indonesia – of course from the perspective of the Republic – as well as the latest news from abroad. This newspaper emphasized its importance as a “liaison officer” between the Indonesian government and the Indo-Europeans. And that meant, wrote the editor of this newspaper, that this newspaper also had a role “to inform the [Indonesian] government about everything that lives in the minds of the Indos, of their wishes and desires” (“Een Woord Vooraf”, 1946). In this way, this

newspaper wanted to show that the Indonesian government was a democratic government, which was willing to listen to the aspirations of minority groups.

One of the interesting things was the news quoted by this newspaper from the Dutch news agency, *Aneta*. While at that time the Dutch and the Indo-Europeans considered evacuating themselves to the Netherlands because they were worried about security issues in Indonesia, the news posted on *De Pionier's* first page actually showed the opposite impression. In a brief report, it was stated that the ship *Weltevreden*, at the end of November 1946, would sail from the Netherlands to the Dutch East Indies with 990 men, women and children, who went to the Netherlands for safety (perhaps shortly before the Japanese occupation) and now “*naar Indonesia wensen terug te keren*” (wish to return to Indonesia) (“Korte Berichten”, 1946). Their ethnic backgrounds were mentioned, namely 300 Indonesians and 600 Dutch and Indo people who were born in Indonesia (it was not explained what ethnicity the rest of the 90 passengers were). These huge numbers gave the impression to Indo-European readers that, at least in November 1946, under the Indonesian government, the situation in Indonesian was peaceful, serene, and even evoked memories of good, past times, for which people optimistically returned to from faraway Netherlands. In other words, the purpose of presenting this narrative was to convince Indo-Europeans that there was no need to repatriate to the Netherlands, let alone find a new safe place to live, such as Brazil.

As might be expected, the news presented in it gave more space to the progress achieved by the Republic and, as far as possible, minimized the presence let alone the achievements of the Dutch in Indonesia. Parts of the news were taken from the official Indonesian news agency, which was strongly pro-Republican and anti-Dutch, *Antara*. The use of money is a case in point. A widely-used money in a time of war was a symbol of legitimacy for a government, and in this context *De Pionier* reported that the money that had just been issued by the Indonesian government on 26 October 1946, *Oeang Repoeblik Indonesia* (ORI), was widely accepted, and that people were using it instead of NICA (Netherlands Indies Civil Administration) money to buy and sell in Jakarta (“De Koers van Het”, 1946). This news was clearly an attempt to persuade the Indo-Europeans to use Indonesian money, which was illustrated as stronger in value than NICA money.

Other news gave a strong impression to the Indo-Europeans about the legitimacy of the Indonesian government in the eyes of the international community in the hopes of strengthening the trust of Indo-Europeans in the Indonesian government. This was evident from the news about the visit of K. L. Punjabi, a delegation of the Indian government, at the end of October 1946, at a number of ports to be used to deliver rice from Java to India (“K.L. Punjabi van Zijn Tournee”, 1946). In April 1946, Prime Minister Sjahrir offered 500,000 tons of rice to India, and in return India would send textiles to Indonesia. The Dutch clearly rejected the Indonesian offer because they judged that there was not much rice available in Indonesia and there were still many starving people there, but the Republic went ahead with its plan and India itself welcomed the offer, one of which was followed by the Punjabi visit above (Zara, 2020). This news was clearly an important matter that the Republican side needed to pose to the Indo-Europeans to show that the Indonesian government had received recognition, albeit informally, from a foreign country, and more importantly, that Indonesia

had contributed to solving post-war world problems, especially among fellow colonized countries in Asia.

Also crucial in this first edition was the view of an anonymous author (possibly the editorial staff of *De Pionier*, which was affiliated with the ministry of information, because its content reflected the perspective of the Indonesian government) placed on the first page at the top side of the page; this placement signified its importance to the readers. This was a long elaboration on a number of big questions and dilemmas the Indo-Europeans faced in thinking about being Indonesian citizens: What was an Indonesian citizen? Can an Indo become an Indonesian citizen? How did Indo people become citizens of Indonesia? And, the most important thing, whether Indo people must completely remove their long-held identities (tradition, religion, culture, and language) in order to be accepted as part of the Indonesian nation (“Wat Betekent het ‘Indonesisch’”, 1946)

The answers to these fundamental questions about identity began by conveying two views in the public at that time regarding Indonesian citizenship, namely those who did not know and did not understand the concept of Indonesian citizenship and those who knew but were suspicious of the idea. The author explained that the requirements for becoming an Indonesian citizen were clear in the Indonesian Citizenship Law, namely that a person who was born in Indonesia and lived in Indonesia for the last five consecutive years was eligible and would automatically become an Indonesian citizen. The important part here was that Indo-Europeans could also automatically become Indonesian citizens if they met the above requirements. Only if a person had accepted another nationality did he need to make an application to become an Indonesian citizen. The status of which nationality a person had is of paramount importance, wrote the authors, especially when one was looking for work, an important issue in those difficult times. Even if someone had good qualifications, the employer tended to give a job to someone with the same nationality. And, the author continued, it was possible that people could simply answer that they were “citizens”, but the employer needed written documents that proved that the job applicant was a citizen of a certain country. Therefore, a message was conveyed to the Indo-Europeans who read the newspaper and wanted to obtain Indonesian citizenship: “Now, to get such a piece of paper, you can turn to the police office in Yogyakarta, who will be happy to help you” (“Wat Betekent het ‘Indonesisch’”, 1946).

Then, the author posed an important question, a question that must have been on the minds of every Indo-European who was repeatedly persuaded to become an Indonesian citizen: what were the consequences, rights and obligations of becoming an Indonesian? The answer, first of all, wrote the author, was “[o]nly this, that you recognize Indonesia as your homeland, [and] the Government of the Republic as the legal government of this country” (“Wat Betekent het ‘Indonesisch’”, 1946). In addition, Indo-Europeans who become Indonesian citizens also had the same rights and obligations as those of “*autochtone Indonesiers*” (native Indonesians). Obligations, according to the author, were not too difficult at that time: paying taxes or participating in maintaining security. As for the rights of Indonesian citizens, they were innumerable, “*vele en velerlei*” (many and varied), for example “buy, sell, rent and rent land and estates”. In short, “*kies u maar uit*” (take your pick) said the author. The few obligations and the many rights above illustrated how easy it was to become an

Indonesian citizen, with very few obligations and so many benefits and opportunities, which were almost unlimited, and thus Indo people had the freedom to choose.

This was followed by another important question that would have been on the minds of Indo-Europeans: did they have to change their religion, culture, or name if they become Indonesians? The answer was: "Do you need to change your religion? No. Do you need to change costumes? No. Should you adopt another name? No. Do you need to speak another language? No. Short and correct, "*you don't have to do anything that you don't feel like doing*" ("Wat Betekent het 'Indonesisch'", 1946). The last part above was written in italics in the original text, so it emphasized the general freedom that was obtained by Indo-Europeans who wanted to become Indonesian citizens.

The concluding part of this persuasive article should also be noted. The author understood that for the Indo-Europeans half of their blood was Dutch. This meant that they also had strong ties with the Netherlands. So, then the question arose, did being an Indonesian citizen (which meant choosing to be part of their Indonesian heritage) mean hating the Dutch (which meant hating the other half of their heritage?). The writer explained that they did not need to hate the Dutch, because Indonesians did not hate the Dutch. What Indonesians hated, wrote the author, were those who were among the Dutch, or from any country, "*die geen onafhankelijk Indonesia wensen*" (who do not want an independent Indonesia). The author conveyed a sentence that symbolized the steadfastness of Indonesia's principles to defend its independence as well as its virtue not to use the politics of hate: "Indonesia fights only against all who threaten its independence, but without hatred and without bitterness" ("Wat Betekent het 'Indonesisch'", 1946). He even convinced the Indo-Europeans that in the Netherlands itself there were many people who sympathized with Indonesian independence so that for Indonesians there was no reason to be in antipathy with the Dutch people.

The writer hoped that what he said could influence and ultimately convince the Indo-Europeans to choose to become Indonesian citizens. By becoming an Indonesian citizen, it was hoped that Indo people could also support the ideals of other Indonesian ethnic groups, namely to support Indonesian independence and the existence of the Indonesian government. Unity between indigenous Indonesians and Indo-Europeans was desirable. The writer wrote, "*samen met de Indonesiers worden tot een groot, vrij en geeerd volk*" (together with the Indonesians, you will become a great, free and honored people) ("Wat Betekent het 'Indonesisch'", 1946).

## CONCLUSION

For Indonesian nationalists, the Indo-Europeans occupied an important position in the socio-cultural landscape of the Indonesian nation whose independence was proclaimed on 17 August 1945. Indonesian blood that flowed in the body of the Indo-Europeans was considered a link between the Indo-Europeans and other indigenous ethnic groups. Indonesian nationalists, including the Indonesian government, political figures and the mass media, actively participated in constructing several main ideas in relation to the Indo-Europeans. First, it was always emphasized to the Indo-Europeans that, considering that half of their blood was Indonesian, their homeland should be Indonesia. Secondly, the Indonesian nationalists highlighted that the

Indonesian society they built would abolish the segregation of society based on race, as in the colonial era, by adopting democracy, inclusiveness and free choice, values compatible with the post-war world. Thirdly, Indonesian nationalists convinced the Indo-Europeans that, by becoming Indonesian citizens, they could get many benefits.

The discourse on Indo-Europeans was not only aimed at the Indo-Europeans themselves. The campaign carried out by Indonesian nationalists was also directed at the indigenous Indonesian ethnicities, with whom the Indo-Europeans would interact and hopefully be absorbed. There were particular themes constructed by the nationalist leaders as well as the Indonesian mass media for Indonesian society in general, and especially for armed Indonesian youth – who in various cases used violence to punish the Indo-Europeans. The government was trying to build a sense of security among the Indo-Europeans so that they wanted to settle in Indonesia, and eliminate their desire to migrate to other safer countries. The Indonesian government hoped the international community knew that it could control the domestic situation, including protecting minorities of foreign descent. Indonesian leaders, such as Soekarno, Hatta and Sjahrir called on the Indonesian people to refrain from committing arbitrary violence and tried to convince them that the Indos were actually a legitimate part of the Indonesian nation and that they should not be made targets of violence.

The mass media played a crucial role in disseminating discourse about the Indo-Europeans during the Indonesian revolution. The supply of paper at that time was limited, but the Indonesian government believed that print campaign was indispensable, so it published two print media in Dutch, one of which was specifically aimed at the Indo-Europeans. This showed the strong commitment of the Indonesian nationalists to the efforts to persuade Indo-Europeans to support Indonesia's existence, to become Indonesian citizens, and at the same time to reject the Dutch presence in Indonesia and its recolonisation projects. Despite so many obstacles, including the rarity of paper, the limited reach of the media, the lack of facilities, and security-related issues, this print media provided a substantive space to discuss the dynamics of the Indo-Europeans at that time. Photographs were used to emphasize the written ideas as well as to highlight the visual evidence of the pioneering role of the Indo-Europeans in adopting and progressing Indonesian nationalism.

It is also crucial to note here the important role of the ministry of information. Print media do have advantages in terms of the diversity of information that can be conveyed in one publication, but there are also disadvantages in such medium, namely the lack of depth in the news or opinions published. A booklet may fill this gap, given that it consists of more pages to elaborate concepts of citizenship in more depth. With its booklets, the ministry had the opportunity to explain more basic concepts, for example on the question of who was a citizen, what were the conditions for becoming citizens, whether foreigners can become Indonesian citizens, and the importance of cooperation between Indo-Europeans and Indonesian ethnicities to create a democratic and egalitarian Indonesian society and for the benefits of both parties.

This study sheds light on how the Indo-Europeans influenced the ways the Indonesian nationalists redefined the meaning of the Indonesian nation at a time when the Dutch-Indonesian war occurred. It elaborates on the history of how Indonesian identity, which is in essence very closely related to the rise of indigenous

ethnic groups to the historical stage, was constructed, debated, and compromised in order to form a broader sociocultural landscape, by involving – and seeking legitimacy for that involvement – people of foreign ancestry. This study almost exclusively discusses the ideas, media and propaganda techniques of the Indonesian side to the Indo-Europeans. Therefore, it does not specifically look at the impact of the discourse on Indo-Europeans' decision-making to be part of Indonesian society or on Indonesia's reputation internationally, as detailed examination of these is beyond its scope. Finally, this study elucidates how Indonesia promoted its adoption of democracy and egalitarianism in the development of its identity amidst critical political situations when minorities were vulnerable to being targets of violence.

This is the history of Indonesian multiculturalism in the formative phase and one of the most deciding periods in modern Indonesian history. In contrast to most studies on Indo-Europeans during the Indonesian revolution, which almost exclusively focus on Indo-Europeans as victims of indigenous people's violence, I explain the experiences of how Indonesian nationalists Indonesianized the Indo-Europeans, and how the Indo-Europeans chose to become Indonesians. These two aspects have been nearly forgotten in the historiography. The struggle of Indonesian nationalists to realize an all-inclusive, egalitarian and democratic concept of Indonesian nationalism for minorities was in line with postwar expectations where racially-based citizenship under the banner of colonialism and fascism was removed and a recognition was given to racial, ethnic and cultural diversity.



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