

'Mabuhay ang Filipina!': The Independence of the Philippines in the Imaginations of Indonesian Freedom Fighters in the Context of the Dutch-Indonesian War

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This study discusses a pivotal but forgotten aspect in the history of Indonesia-Philippines relations, namely how the Indonesian freedom fighters, who were in conflict with the Dutch, responded to Philippine independence, which was proclaimed and acknowledged on July 4, 1946. Using Indonesian print media published between June and July 1946, this study shows that Indonesian freedom fighters devoted considerable attention to Philippine independence and they showed it with various expressions and media, including speeches, writings, editorials, congratulatory letters, news, and photographs. The Indonesian nationalists not only congratulated the Philippines on its independence but also made Philippine independence a momentum to evaluate and reflect on the struggle for Indonesian independence, including by using the Philippines as an example of how a young country can educate its people, emancipate its women and have an important position in the international world, mainly because of its good relations with the United States. Indonesia and the Philippines were also narrated to have close relations, both as brothers and neighbors, and have the potential to build cooperation in the future. These perspectives contributed to providing moral strength and confidence for Indonesian fighters in defending their independence in the context of the Dutch-Indonesian war and postwar decolonization in Asia.

Keywords: Indonesian Independence; Philippine Independence; Indonesia-Philippines Relations; Postwar Southeast Asia; Media Representations



INTRODUCTION

Studies on bilateral relations between Indonesia and the Philippines have been conducted by scholars, and these studies try to answer questions about the history, basis, forms, purposes, and problems in relations between the two countries. Roesnadi (1970) traces Indonesia-Philippines relations to the era of the spread of

Hinduism from Indonesia to the Philippines in the early centuries AD, then continued during the spread of Islam from Indonesia and Malaysia in the 15th century, and the estrangement of relations in the colonial period. In the 1950s, relations between Indonesia and the Philippines were strengthened by their shared understanding of the importance of Asian and African voices in the new world order, as reflected in Carlos P. Romulo's speeches at the Asian-African Conference in Bandung, Indonesia, in 1955 (Mall, 1959).

Indonesia-Philippines relations can also be placed in the context of regional anti-communism and anti-colonialism struggles in Southeast Asia (Abell, 1972). Evelyn Tan-Cullamar (1993) studies the Indonesian diaspora in the Southern Philippines since the early 1900s and found that the movement of Indonesians occurred because there were push factors in Indonesia and pull factors in the Philippines. Ikrar Nusa Bhakti (2010), who examines Indonesia-Philippines bilateral relations from 1949 to the early 2000s, summarizes it as "stable and fully cooperative". He, like several other researchers, emphasizes that the most important milestone in Indonesia-Philippines relations was the formal opening of bilateral relations in 1949. John Nery (2011) sees the anti-colonialism of prominent Filipino national activist Jose Rizal as an element that connected Indonesia and the Philippines in the colonial period.

However, very few serious studies discuss the relationship between Indonesia and the Philippines in the period from 1945 to 1946, when the two countries had just proclaimed their respective independence. Indonesian independence was declared on August 17, 1945 and Philippine independence was recognized by the United States (US) on July 4, 1946. Roesnadi (1970) mentions the reaction of Indonesian officials to Philippine independence on July 4, 1946, but only at a glance. John Nery also discusses the response of the Indonesian press, particularly in *Bakti* magazine (Mojokerto), to Philippine independence, but focusing only on the views of Indonesian nationalists on Rizal. Besides, Augusto V. De Viana (2013) examines the views of the Philippines towards Indonesian independence as reflected in Philippine newspapers, mostly in 1949.

Thus, the study of Indonesia-Philippines relations emphasizes more on the relationship between ideas in the colonial period and post-1949 relations and ignores Indonesian perceptions of the Philippines in the first years after the Second World War. As a consequence, we tend to disregard the ideas and efforts of Indonesian nationalists in seeking solid principles and foundations to build bilateral relations between the two countries and leave us with an incomplete understanding of how the key ideas of the Filipino intelligentsia were read, translated, and adopted into the Indonesian context by various parties among Indonesian nationalists.

This study aims to address this gap in the historiography by examining how Indonesian freedom fighters viewed the Philippines, especially when Philippine independence was announced and officially recognized by the US on July 4, 1946. This study focuses on three main questions, namely (1) why Indonesian freedom fighters considered Philippine independence day important, (2) what were the views of the Indonesian freedom fighters towards Philippine independence day, and (3) how Indonesian freedom fighters placed Philippine independence day in the context of the Indonesian independence struggle, the Dutch-Indonesian war, and the Indonesia-Philippines relations. The primary sources used were print media published by

Indonesian nationalist journalists, especially in the June-July 1946 editions, namely *Antara* news agency (Jakarta), *Mingguean Merdeka* newspaper (Jakarta), *The Voice of Free Indonesia* magazine (Jakarta), and *Kedaulatan Rakjat* newspaper (Yogyakarta) (all translations from Indonesian to English are mine unless otherwise stated). Using these sources, I examined their reports and views related to the events surrounding the independence of the Philippines and the views of Indonesian nationalists. It includes various news, headlines, editorials, articles, and illustrations about the Philippines, especially its history, its independence struggle, and its achievements. These print media were managed by Indonesian nationalist journalists (*Mingguean Merdeka* and *Kedaulatan Rakjat*) or affiliated with the Indonesian government (*Antara* and *The Voice of Free Indonesia*). Most of the journalists and editors-in-chief were nationalist journalists, both from the late colonial period and the Japanese occupation era. As such, their tone was very pro-Indonesia and anti-Dutch, and this was reflected in their framing of Philippine independence and the responses of Indonesian nationalists.

CELEBRATING FIILIPINA'S INDEPENDENCE

The earliest reaction of Indonesian nationalists was to congratulate and appreciate the establishment of the Philippine government, especially the presidency, ahead of Philippine independence. For Indonesians, this signified that the Philippines was ready to exist as a sovereign state. On June 6, 1946 the Executive Board of a Solo-based party *Partai Rakjat* (People's Party), led by Maruto Nitimihardjo, sent congratulations to the President of the Philippines, Manuel Roxas, on his election as President of the Republic of the Philippines. The congratulations were delivered in an English text (except for the salutation, which used Indonesian), a copy of which was published by the Indonesian news agency *Antara*, both the English version and the Indonesian translation. Maruto began his words with a distinctive greeting used as a national greeting by Indonesian fighters in recent months, '*Merdeka!*' (Freedom). Maruto said his party conveyed "our most sincere sympathy and congratulation" to Roxas ("Oetjapan selamat," 1946).

The Indonesian government paid great attention to Philippine independence. To celebrate Philippine independence, it held a special rally. The government, through the Ministry of State, formed a committee to welcome the Philippines' independence day. Information about the formation of this committee was disseminated through the press a few days earlier so that more Indonesians would participate in the activities welcoming Philippine independence. The rally was announced to be on July 4 1946 in the main square of Yogyakarta, Alun-Alun Utara. Indonesia's national leaders would give their speeches, including representatives from the Konsentrasi Nasional, *Badan Konggres Pemoeda Repoeblik Indonesia*, Indonesian Women, and the people of Yogyakarta. Interestingly, there would be a reply speech from a Filipino citizen named Ir. Estrada (full name unknown). In the evening, there would be a "meeting of the gathering of nations" where essential and relevant speeches from Indonesian President Soekarno, Ir. Estrada, and representatives from other nations would be delivered ("Rapat samodera menjamboet," 1946).

Indonesian nationalists youth saw Filipino youth playing a key role in the country's struggle for independence. From July 3 to 7, 1946 the Indonesian nationalist

youth who joined various youth organizations, under a forum called South Andalas Youth held a congress in Lahat, South Sumatra. In between congresses, they sent a congratulatory telegram to Roxas. They expressed gratitude for Philippine independence and underlined that “we believe that this independence is the fruit of the efforts of Filipino youth who cannot be eradicated in their struggle to defend the democratic sovereignty of the Philippine nation” (“Oetjapan selamat,” 1946).

On July 4, 1946, when the Filipino nation finally celebrated its independence, Indonesian officials extended their congratulations and good wishes to the Filipino nation. Soekarno congratulated the Philippines on July 4, 1946 for achieving complete independence after the Filipino nation fought a long struggle to make it happen. Soekarno, who emphasized himself as President of the Republic of Indonesia, regarded President Roxas as his colleague and a fellow head of state. He stated: “On behalf of the 70 million Indonesians who are now defending their independence with the firmest determination against imperialism, I, as the President of the Republic of Indonesia, hereby express encouragement regarding the full independence of the Philippines” (“Hari ini Philipina Merdeka”, 1946).

Soekarno delivered a radio speech devoted to congratulating the Philippines. The Indonesian government hoped that more Indonesians, as well as foreign correspondents in Java, could understand the importance of Philippine independence for Indonesia. According to Soekarno, Philippine independence was a unique event because it would be considered a victory by other Asian nations, both independent and un-independent ones. This included Indonesia, which, despite its independence, still had to defend itself from Dutch interference. Previously, Indonesia and the Philippines had also suffered under Japanese occupation. Soekarno wished that with the independence of the Philippines, there would come a day in the future when Indonesia the Philippines, and other Asian countries could help each other to advance nations in Asia (“Philippine and the U.S.,” 1946).

In addition to Soekarno, another Indonesian official who congratulated the independence of the Philippines was the Chairman of Indonesia’s semi-parliamentary body, KNIP (*Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat*, Central Indonesian National Committee) Assaat. On July 3, 1946 he sent a telegram to Roxas, expressing his delight with Philippine independence and congratulating the Filipino nation. For Assaat, Philippine independence played a major role for the Indonesian nation, which was seeking recognition of its sovereignty, because the independence of the Philippines boosted the confidence of the Indonesian people that the struggle based on the aspirations of the people would lead to the expected results (“Republik Pilipina,” 1946).

Various non-state actors in Indonesia congratulated the Philippines, including representatives of Indonesian students and workers. Indonesian students in Yogyakarta, in a communiqué, expressed their “utmost respect, congratulations and happiness for the realization of the independence of the Philippine nation on July 4, 1946”. For them, the independence of nations was the foundation of world peace and they especially paid their respects to their “fellow Filipino students” who had a crucial role in fighting for this new country (“Samboetan-samboetan hari kemerdekaan Pilipina,” 1946). Meanwhile, Indonesian workers’ organizations that were members of the Indonesian Labor Struggle Concentration Agency in Yogyakarta declared in a press statement that they expressed their “joy at the independence of the Republic

of the Philippines” and wished that the Filipino workers “will prosper” (“Samboetan-samboetan hari kemerdekaan Pilipina,” 1946).

The Indonesian nationalist press dedicated its front page to show its support and sympathy for Philippine independence. *Kedaulatan Rakyat*, on July 4, 1946, made a headline congratulating the independence of the Philippines. A photograph of President Soekarno was posted. The centerpiece of the headline was a text containing congratulations from Soekarno to Roxas. The editor of *Kedaulatan Rakjat* emphasized that on July 4, 1946, two countries celebrated their independence: the US and the Philippines. He explained that Philippine independence was achieved after Filipinos for centuries fought to gain independence from their colonizers, at the cost of many lives, including their hero, Jose Rizal. The editor compared the nature of US and Dutch colonialism, emphasizing that the US was better at understanding the soul of the Filipino nation and realized that the colonized nation would one day succeed in gaining its independence. This was in stark contrast to the Dutch, who, wrote the editor, “still has the soul of fascism” (“Kemerdekaan,” 1946).

On July 4, 1946, as planned, the Indonesian government in Yogyakarta held a special ceremony celebrating the independence day of the Philippines. The rally was attended by Indonesian officials such as Vice President Mohammad Hatta, and representatives of the Yogyakarta regional government as well as many Indonesians. The event was opened by the chairman of the rally committee, who explained that after 48 years of sacrificial struggle, the Filipino nation finally succeeded in achieving its independence. This independence, he said, was proof that the Philippines “has made it through the golden bridge and is on its way to a delighted society”. At the rally, the women’s representative, Mrs. Soenarjo Mangoenpoespito, corrected the impression that Philippine independence was achieved smoothly and easily by underlining the magnitude of the struggle, sacrifice, and suffering of the Filipino nation in the past. She saw that the determination of the Filipino nation encouraged other colonized nations to materialize their independence as well immediately. She criticized the Dutch attitude towards Indonesia for not following in the footsteps of the US in granting independence to the Philippines. A representative of the Catholic community emphasized the idea that Philippine independence was successfully realized without getting help from other parties. According to him, this was an insight for the Indonesian people to be confident, not depend on other parties, and unite to achieve happiness and prosperity. The renowned educator Ki Hadjar Dewantoro, who represented the people of Yogyakarta, praised the Philippine independence celebration ceremony initiated by the Indonesians because for him the event was important to convey Indonesia’s message to the world that the Dutch-Indonesian conflict that occurred in Indonesia was a humanitarian issue (“Philipina melaloei djembatan emas,” 1946).

To show that the congratulatory messages of the Indonesian government and people received a warm response from the Philippines, the Indonesian government invited a representative of the Philippines, Estrada, to the event. He delivered his speech in English and Tagalog, emphasizing the history of the Filipino nation’s struggle for independence. He closed his speech by shouting the national greetings of the Philippines and Indonesia. The Philippine representative’s speech seemed to be aimed at sending a signal to the Philippines that the Indonesian government and people had

established a close relationship with a Filipino citizen so that it was expected that in the near future official relations would be established between the two countries ("Philippina melaloei djembatan emas," 1946).

The Philippine independence celebration ceremony was also held in other cities, including Madiun, East Java. On July 4 1946, the Republican government in the city held a mass rally in the city square to celebrate Philippine independence, led by the head of an official of the Ministry of Information, Soekardjo. Speeches congratulating Philippine independence were conveyed by envoys from various nationalities in Madiun, such as Arabs, Chinese, and Indians. The meeting was closed with a speech from the deputy resident of Madiun, who wished that the event could be an encouragement for the Indonesian nation to strengthen its efforts so that Indonesia's independence could be recognized by the world, just like the Philippines experienced. After the meeting, the committee held a parade around the city, which was reportedly attended by many people ("Menjamboet Philipina Merdeka," 1946).

The celebration of Philippine independence in Indonesia continued after July 4, 1946. The Indonesian nationalist press still reported on Philippine independence after July 4, 1946. For example, *Kedaulatan Rakjat* on July 5, 1946, on the first page briefly reported the course of the independence ceremony in Manila the previous day so that Indonesian readers could find out what the official procession of recognition of Philippine independence was like, what themes were discussed at the event, and how the US and the international community viewed the Philippines and Asia. President Roxas' speech in the ceremony indicated that the Philippines strongly supported the US efforts to maintain world security by sustaining its military bases in the Philippines ("Pilipina merdeka," 1946).

Philippine independence remained a topic until mid-July 1946, when the Republican government in Sumatra held a special rally to welcome Philippine independence. The meeting was held in Pematang Siantar, North Sumatra, and was attended by thousands of Indonesians. The Governor of Sumatra, Teuku Muhammad Hassan, stressed that Indonesia "gladly welcomed the independence of the Philippines", even though Indonesia was still in conflict with the Dutch at the time. He stressed that Philippine sovereignty had been recognized internationally, indicating that for Indonesian fighters, they not only needed to declare their nation's independence but also seek international recognition of Indonesia's independence ("Soematera ikoet merajakan" 1946).

INTRODUCING THE HISTORY OF PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE

In addition to congratulatory speeches, the Indonesian public sphere in the first week of July 1946 was also filled with extensive narratives that introduced Indonesian readers to the Philippines. This was a necessary step considering the Philippines was not a country that was widely known by the people of Indonesia. The areas in Southeast Asia that gained a place in the Indonesian press in the first year of Indonesian independence were limited to Malaya, Burma, and Indochina. By introducing the Philippines, Indonesian readers could get to know the broader historical context of the history of the struggle for Philippine independence and were directed to find similarities between the history of the struggle for independence in the Philippines and in Indonesia.

An Indonesian author, Umar Santoso, introduced a brief history of the struggle for Philippine independence in *Kedaulatan Rakjat*, which gave Indonesian readers context about the significance of July 4, 1946 to the Filipino people. He described the ideals of Philippine independence that had been advocated by Filipino heroes from previous eras. He examined the Spanish defeat in the Philippines, which was mainly caused by domestic resistance by Filipino nationalists and attacks from the US. This defeat of Spain refers to an event known as the Mock Battle of Manila. Occurring in 1908 in Manila, the war between Spain and the US (supported by Filipino fighters such as Aguinaldo and his followers) was actually just a pretend war waged by both countries. Military officials of the two countries agreed to a secret agreement that they would conduct a sham war, then Spain would declare defeat and hand Manila to the US. The condition was that Filipino nationalists should be kept away from Manila (Schirmer & Shalom, 1987). It was the Spanish and US colonizations that made Filipinos aware of the importance of independence, and it was during this period of US occupation that many new developments emerged, including the presence of Philippine representatives in the US Congress in 1907, the establishment of the Philippine parliament in 1912, and the signing of the treaty establishing an independent Philippine state by US President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, in 1936. Santoso explained that during the Japanese occupation, resistance against Japan was led by Roxas and Romulo in cooperation with the US.

A more extensive exploration and reflection was published by the weekly magazine *Minggoean Merdeka*, which provided in its July 6, 1946 issue pages 1 to 10 (out of a total of 12 pages in that issue) to review Philippine independence. This was the largest number of pages provided by an Indonesian print media discussing Philippine independence. The article on the first page of the issue, written by R.A. (referring to the magazine's journalist, Rosihan Anwar) was titled "Manuel Roxas: President of the Republic of the Philippines" and featured two photos, one of Roxas and the second of a Filipino woman aiming an arrow, with a caption likening her to firing an arrow in hope towards the goal of an independent Philippines (Anwar, 1946).

This article discussed the profile of Roxas. The perspective in this article positioned Roxas as a Filipino freedom fighter whose background was beset by controversy. On the one hand, he was described as the son of a wealthy family, highly educated, mastering several European languages, active in politics, and above all, a patriot. On the other hand, he was criticized for representing only the elite and having worked with the Japanese occupation government. The author appreciated Roxas' struggle for Philippine independence but reminded his Indonesian readers that Roxas' idealism to build a country led by Filipinos themselves and no longer Americans was not easy due to the still strong influence of US capitalism in the Philippines, the unrealized of the ideals of the workers and peasants, and the attacks on the leftist group (Anwar, 1946).

Rosihan's next article on the Philippines was titled "The Personality of Poet Rizal". Here Rosihan saw that the independence of the Philippines on July 4, 1946, which brought the Philippines into a new phase of history, could not be separated from the long struggle against colonialism in the country. He provided facts about resistance to Spanish rule from the 16th century to the late 19th century, when finally, in 1898, Spanish colonialism successfully ended, and the US rule rose. He introduced to his Indonesian readers the names of Filipino freedom fighters such as Emilio Aguinaldo,

Andres Bonifacio, Apolinario Mabini, and Antonio Luna, and the generations after that, such as Manuel Luis Quezon y Molina, Sergio Osmeña, Carlos P. Romulo, and Manuel Roxas, who were eventually able to lead the Philippines through the Japanese occupation and become an independent nation. In the midst of this struggle, Rosihan reminded Indonesian readers of one name that should not be forgotten, namely Jose Rizal, whom he called "a meritorious figure, a son who breathed the breath of struggle into the soul of his nation, a patriot and poet, a genius, peerless idealist, whose name will be famous until the end of time" (Anwar, 1946).

For Rosihan, Rizal was "a hero of justice and truth, defender of the humiliated and oppressed", who "moved his pen to open the eyes of his people to the cruel and unjust treatment of the Spaniards". He described various phases of Rizal's life related to the struggle for Philippine independence. He closed his article by quoting Rizal's most famous poem, which he composed the night before he was executed by the Spanish. The poem, which emphasized love for the motherland, sacrifice and freedom, according to Rosihan, contained the spirit of love for the nation and needed to be used as a guiding principle by Indonesian youth in their struggle for independence (Anwar, 1946).

Rizal's biography was also presented by another author, S. Tasrif, this time by placing it in the sociopolitical context of his time. He explained Rizal's background, his education in the Philippines and Spain, his work as an ophthalmologist, his efforts to advance Philippine society and break the bonds of colonialism, his struggle-oriented literary works, especially his two novels, *Noli Me Tángere* (Touch Me Not) and *El Filibusterismo* (The Reign of Greed) which were considered insults to the Spanish government and religious authorities in the Philippines. Tasrif described Rizal as a man who "united the best qualities of the East coupled with the civilization he received from the West" and "a Filipino patriot" who, despite his death, his dream of liberating the Philippines was finally realized on July 4, 1946. To emphasize the brotherhood and closeness between the Philippines and Indonesia, the article featured a photograph of a farmer, apparently located in the Philippines, with a caption emphasizing that Indonesians and Filipinos were agrarian peoples and both "are indeed people of one descent who share the same cultural origin" (Tasrif, 1946).

Another Indonesian author, M. Sjaaf, focused on the Philippines' leading diplomat and resident commissioner of the Philippines to the US Congress, Carlos P. Romulo. He cited Romulo's thoughts on democracy to show that Romulo was a man he called a "warrior and hero of democracy". The proof, explained Sjaaf, was when Romulo sided with the US and opposed Japanese fascism. Sjaaf praised Romulo's fortitude, determination, and courage in fighting the Japanese together with General MacArthur and his army, especially in Bataan. Sjaaf praised two big ideas championed by the Filipino nation: nationalism and democracy. He saw the Philippines as far more advanced compared to Indonesia. He saw the key in the fact that the US, which colonized the Philippines, was a democratic country, and these democratic traits manifested itself in its colonies as well. Sjaaf did not see this in the British, who he thought were arrogant, cruel, and racist towards the people of the countries they colonized, and also in the Dutch, who he said suffered from the so-called '*tropenkollder*' (tropical madness), which was shortsighted and demeaning the natives. Other evidence Sjaaf put forward was that in the Philippines there were no rubber laws and places of exile such as Digoel and Tanah Merah to punish nationalists (Sjaaf, 1946).

An author named Maroeto Daroesman described the history of the struggle for Philippine independence and the current political conditions in the Philippines. He explained to his Indonesian readers what July 4 meant for the US and for the Philippines, the history of the US struggle for independence, the works of leading US political thinkers such as George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, the journey of the US to become an industrial and imperialist country, and the US resistance to fascism in the Second World War. Maroeto said that Filipinos were fortunate because, compared to other colonized countries in Asia, they were more familiar with the ideas of nationhood, democracy, and progress (Daroesman, 1946).

Maroeto recalled his meeting with a young Filipino diplomat in London, who told him his happiness because the Philippines was getting a higher position in the circle of nations, but he was also worried because at home, there was conflict among political streams and also because of the strong influence of US capital. Maroeto then examined how the US saw the Philippines' position in the Pacific. According to him, the Philippines was an important country for the US, including as a US military base in the Pacific, something that could hinder the progress of the Philippines. Maroeto stressed that Philippine independence would have great significance for other Asian countries fighting for their independence, including Indonesians, Indians, Burmese, and Vietnamese (Daroesman, 1946).

WOMEN IN THE PHILIPPINES AS AN INSPIRATION FOR INDONESIAN WOMEN

One of the crucial yet still forgotten themes discussed in various perceptions of Indonesian nationalists towards Philippine independence was related to the high achievement of women in the Philippines compared to women in Indonesia. This achievement was especially in the fields of education, as well as in social and political position. Indonesian nationalists saw that Filipino women's interaction with Western nations, especially the US, has made it easier for Filipino women to adopt modernity. One notable example here was a female journalist named Herawati Diah, who congratulated the Philippines for independence from a women's perspective and focused on the women's aspects, something that other Indonesian intellectuals and activists have yet to explore. Herawati praised women in the Philippines, who – as she said – had advanced like women in the West, including by having European and American education, being able to drive cars and play tennis, which in turn allowed them to become leaders in Filipino society. She even praised the existence of a special university for women in Manila, The Philippine Women's University, which she said was not inferior in quality to other high schools. Herawati shared her interesting experience when she met and discussed with a 23-year-old Filipino woman. The 23-year-old was still very young, but Herawati was amazed that her interlocutor was a jurist, a city councilor in Manila, and an activist in the progressive women's movement. What astonished Herawati even more was that “despite Western influence, Filipino women are still Easterners in their souls”, while still following their traditions and not abandoning their feminine qualities (Diah, 1946, p. 8).

Another thing about Filipino women that amazed Herawati was that apart from politics, women in the Philippines also had a high position in terms of the economy. She likened it to the position of women in Minangkabau, West Sumatra, who

controlled family property. During a previous visit to Manila, Herawati observed first-hand the many and varied possessions owned by women there. However, Herawati recommended that women in Indonesia do not fully imitate what women do in the Philippines because not everything was in accordance with the values that were prevalent in Indonesia, including, for example, women giving pocket money to their husbands (Diah, 1946).

In addition, Herawati saw that the Philippines were greatly influenced by the US, as can be seen from its use of the English language, its young people who liked to drink Coca Cola and played baseball, and its education system that imitated the education system in the US. Nevertheless, Herawati lauded the Americans in the Philippines while giving bad marks to the Dutch in Indonesia. For example, she looked at how the intellectual, cultural and political fields of Manila, as the capital of the Philippines, was dominated by educated Filipinos, with the Americans playing only a minor role there. She compared it to the Dutch in Indonesia, who she described as “a cunning colonizer”, because they controlled positions from all levels, both in government and private, and excluded Indonesians. She compared the US, which kept its promise to grant independence to the Philippines, to the Netherlands, which in 1918 promised Indonesians that there would be political reform in the Dutch East Indies, but did not realize it until 1946 (Diah, 1946).

The deepest exploration and appreciation of an Indonesian thinker about women in the Philippines can be found in Adi Poetera's writing in *Minggoean Merdeka*, 'Filipino Women in the Level of Progress'. He explained the socio-economic context that allowed women to work outside the home, including industrialization and modernization in the West, which later entered various regions in Asia, such as China, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines at the turn of the 20th century. Adi believed that the key to the high position of women in the Philippines compared to other Asian countries was the vast opportunities for women to get education. Through education, he underlined, women could gain knowledge and freedom (Poetera, 1946).

One aspect of education that received attention from Adi was the women-only college established in the Philippines. Adi praised the education system in the Philippines for providing opportunities for women to pursue education from various levels. In addition to attending school, there was one new profession of Filipino women that amazed Adi, namely their involvement as journalists, with jobs including as news writers, workers in printing presses, and even print media leaders. Adi mentioned several print media led by female journalists in the Philippines, such as *The Philwomenian*, *The Philippine Women's Magazine*, and *The Maroon and White*. In short, he concluded that in the Philippines “*Wanita mentjapai tingkatan kemadjoean!*” (Women have made progress!) (Poetera, 1946).

However, Adi believed that Filipino women had not forgotten their own households. He said that women in the Philippines were even leaders in the household, especially in terms of family financial management. Furthermore, Adi explained that about 300 women's organizations in the Philippines focused on activities to advance family and community life, such as by establishing care centers for children, libraries, handicraft centers, and participating in promoting family health care. Adi closed his article by setting up Filipino women as role models for women's struggles in Indonesia and in the East in general (Poetera, 1946).

THE PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENCE AND INDONESIA-PHILIPPINES RELATIONS

Indonesian nationalists not only congratulated the Filipinos on their independence, but also used the momentum of independence to build reflection on the struggle for independence in Indonesia itself. The leader of the *Partai Rakjat*, Maruto Nitimihardjo, for example, explained in an English-language congratulatory message to the Filipinos on their independence, that although Indonesian fighters had limitations, they were formidable fighters against foreign enemies who wanted to rule Indonesia. He appealed to Filipino nationalists for help, emphasizing brotherhood among colonized nations and the long history of Philippine nationalism that gave birth to important nationalist figures: “We are looking for our sister nation’s sons and daughters of Rizal[,] Bonifacio and Mabini as a symbol of hope and living inspiration”. He closed his congratulations by praying that the young Filipino country and nation would get “prosperity, strength and culture” in the future (“Oetjapan selamat” 1946). It is interesting to note that in the Indonesian translation, it was emphasized that in the struggle for Indonesian independence against the colonial nations, Indonesian nationalists drew inspiration and enthusiasm from the great Filipino warriors such as Rizal, Bonifacio, and Mabini, and other prominent Filipino leaders who became their successors.

In addition to congratulating the Filipino nation on their independence, the President of Indonesia, Soekarno, positioned the independence of the Philippines as an inspiration and encouragement for other colonized nations. He underlined the importance and significance of Philippine independence for countries struggling to escape colonialism. He called the Philippines’ independence day a glorious day, recorded in gold ink. To the President of the Philippines, Soekarno stated that “for every nation that is now struggling and defending its independence, the independence of His Majesty gives inspiration and hope” (“Hari ini Philipina Merdeka” 1946).

As explained earlier, from July 3 to 7, 1946 the South Andalas Youth held a congress in Lahat, South Sumatra. It sent a congratulatory message to Roxas and emphasized that what was happening in the Philippines and in Indonesia was essentially the embodiment of one of the points of the Atlantic Charter, namely that every nation had the right to choose the form of government it wanted. The organization closed its congratulations with a wish, not only that the Philippines could become a developed country in the future, but above all so that the Philippines and Indonesia could work together for mutual progress (“Oetjapan selamat” 1946).

In the past, there was an attempt to see Philippine independence in the context of relations between Filipino nationalists and Indonesian nationalists. An interesting example was Sjaaf’s writing about Carlos P. Romulo in *Minggoean Merdeka*. Sjaaf stressed that Romulo, as a Filipino freedom fighter and patriot, was not a stranger to Indonesia, as he had visited Indonesia in the late colonial period. Sjaaf explained that before the outbreak of the Pacific War, Romulo, as a journalist, visited various regions in Asia, namely China, Indochina, Siam, Burma, British Malaya, and the Dutch East Indies. In Manila, several Indonesian students met him to convey a message from Indonesian nationalists that they would like to meet Romulo if he visited Jakarta.

After observing the oppression of Western imperialists in China, Indochina, and Burma, Romulo arrived in Batavia. It was here that Romulo began to discover how

strong Dutch colonial oppression was against Indonesian nationalists. He, according to Sjaaf, presented some evidence, including the fact that an Indonesian nationalist leader secretly sent him a letter of invitation to a meeting in Batavia, the passivity of the Indonesians in preparing against the Japanese, the sharp social hierarchy between the colonizers and the colonized, and the Dutch police's strict monitoring of him as a foreign journalist (Sjaaf, 1946).

Romulo himself mentioned that he met with Indonesian nationalists from the Indonesian National Party (Spencer, 1953), a nationalist party founded by a prominent independence activist, Soekarno (in 1945 he was appointed as President of Indonesia), in 1927. The visit shaped his belief that Dutch colonialism was racist in Indonesia, with the native Indonesians being marginalized and even insulted through a strict social hierarchy. He also observed this colonial racism in Hong Kong, Burma, and Singapore. However, this situation, he argued, was different from American colonialism, at least in the Philippines, which was more democratic, where indigenous peoples were given considerable freedom to participate socially and politically (Cogan, 2000). In addition, from the visit, he saw that Indonesian nationalists were of the opinion that Japan could help Indonesians to free themselves from Dutch colonialism.

Only secretly did Romulo manage to meet with Indonesian nationalist leaders somewhere far from Batavia. Sjaaf talked about Romulo's admiration for Indonesian nationalists because they were Western-educated and bravely used national symbols, which later reminded him of the nationalists in the Philippines known as the KKK (*Kagalang-galang Kataastaasan Kaptipunan*), read anti-colonial reading materials, one of which was the Philippine nationalist newspaper *The Citizen* (managed by Romulo and Quezon), and also because of the Indonesian nationalists' expression of respect for the Filipino nationalist leaders, who became an inspiration for the Indonesian nationalists. According to Sjaaf, this meeting and Romulo's experience while in Indonesia made Romulo return to the Philippines with a promise to introduce the struggle of Indonesians to the Filipino nation, the US, and the world. Sjaaf stressed that for Romulo, Indonesians are "the same countrymen and descendants of his nation". Sjaaf underlined that although around July 1946, many Indonesians did not know much about Romulo's activities, he was confident that Romulo would keep his promise to help the struggle for independence for Indonesians, "his brothers living in the south of his country". Sjaaf closed his writing by wishing the Philippines all the best: "Mabuhay ang Filipina!" (Sjaaf, 1946).

Female journalist Herawati Diah, in an article welcoming Philippine independence, tried to find cultural and political relations between Indonesia and the Philippines. She emphasized that "Filipinos are descendants of the Malays", and used a matrilineal system like one of the ethnic groups in Indonesia, the Minangkabau people. In her article, she provided a special section on the subject. There she said that the Indonesian and Filipino people had a relationship and similarities, both culturally and politically. She added, "The revolution and resistance to colonialism showed the desire of both peoples to live again as in the days before the arrival of Magelhaens and Houtman to the two regions inhabited by the Indonesian nation". Herawati underlined that Philippine independence was vitally important for Indonesia because it acted like "oil poured on the fire for Indonesia's current struggle for independence".

She concluded by congratulating the Filipinos in Indonesian and Tagalog (“Mabuhay ang Filipina!”) (Diah, 1946). The term ‘*mabuhay ang Filipina*’ (long live the Philippines) became the most famous catchword used by Indonesian nationalists to congratulate Philippine independence.

President Soekarno saw close relations between Indonesia and the Philippines in the past and wanted future relations to be even stronger. As fellow colonized nations, he believed that there were also similarities between Indonesia and the Philippines, both in the past and in the future:

We, the Indonesians and the Filipinos, as two peoples of the same ancestors, and both of whom have suffered under foreign rule, should in the future work closely together to maintain strong international relations and to create a new world structure in which there is no place for colonialism, oppression, and exploitation (“Hari ini Philipina Merdeka” 1946)

Views on the importance of Philippine independence for opening cooperation between the two independent and sovereign states were supported by other Indonesian officials as well as by the nationalist press. The Chairman of the KNIP, Assaat, in his congratulations to the Philippines, also hoped that the independence achieved by Indonesia and the Philippines would bring the two nations closer in the future, which would certainly contribute to the stability of the post-war world (“Republik Pilipina,” 1946). In the same vein, the editor of *Kedaulatan Rakjat* expressed his hope for Indonesia and the Philippines that both nations would be willing to work hard to achieve progress (“Kemerdekaan,” 1946).

Non-state actors had different ways of welcoming Philippine independence while criticizing Indonesian government policies, including by mentioning Tan Malaka, a left-leaning Indonesian freedom fighter who once fled to the Philippines after being chased by colonial police. It was understandable that Indonesian officials, such as Soekarno and Assaat, despite knowing that Tan Malaka (under the pseudonym Elias Fuentes) used to be in the Philippines about two decades before and had friends among Filipino nationalists, avoided mentioning Tan Malaka by name in their congratulations to the Philippines. This was clearly because, in early July 1946, there were serious tensions between the Indonesian government and the opposition led by Tan Malaka. Due to his opposition, Tan Malaka and his comrades were arrested by government forces on March 17, 1946 (Poeze, 2009, p. 33). However, the Partai Rakjat chose to use the name Tan Malaka in response to Philippine independence. One important phrase was written by the party’s leader, Maruto Nitimihardjo, at the end of his letter to Philippine President Manuel Roxas, which brought the imagination of Filipinos and Indonesians to Tan Malaka as a bridge between the two countries: “The Popular Partay [sic], Maruto, Chairman, Comrade of Elias Fuentes, who is still in Custody” (“Oetjapan selamat” 1946).

The satirical column of *Kedaulatan Rakjat*, Podjok (lit. means corner), written by the author under the pseudonym Semar, gave a mocking response to the Dutch regarding the meaning of Philippine independence in the struggle for Indonesian independence as well as to other nations in Asia and Africa. Semar stressed that on July 4 “the whole of Asia and Africa rejoiced” in welcoming the Philippines’ independence.

However, Semar wrote that there were still those who felt disappointed with the independence of the Philippines. He represented it in the figure of Mas Slamet, a Javanese aristocrat who rejected the existence of the Republic and wanted the continuation of Dutch colonialism in Indonesia. Semar referred to Mas Slamet as "*djongos Van Mook*" (houseboy of van Mook) and a slave-spirited man. According to Semar, Mas Slamet was so disappointed with Philippine independence that he complained to his "mother", the Queen of the Netherlands, Wilhelmina. Semar alleged that Philippine independence made Lieutenant General of the Dutch East Indies Hubertus Johannes Van Mook angry with the US by making the political situation in Asia murky. Semar went so far as to compose a poem describing Mas Slamet's disappointment, anger and sadness over the independence of the Philippines.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze Indonesian nationalists' perceptions of Philippine independence, which was recognized by the US on July 4, 1946. By examining a number of Indonesian print media in mid-1946, this study reveals that for Indonesian freedom fighters, Philippine independence was an important achievement, not only for the Philippines but also for other former colonized countries, including Indonesia. Indonesian freedom fighters expressed their views on the Philippines in various ways and media. These perspectives made Indonesians more familiar with various aspects of Philippine life, such as with Filipino nationalist leaders, the story of the struggle for Philippine independence against Spain and the US, the achievements of Filipinos, and historical cities in the Philippines. Various parties in Indonesia congratulated the independence of the Philippines, including intellectuals, journalists, students, women activists, political parties, the president, and other Indonesian officials, showing that Philippine independence had broad relevance and meaning for various layers of Indonesian society.

The extensive discussion of the Philippines in early July 1946 was a new discourse in the Indonesian public sphere, leading Indonesia to look to its closest neighbor to the north as a brother separated by colonialism, comrades-in-arms against colonialism and potential allies in the future. Emphasizing the similarity and closeness of Indonesia and the Philippines also aimed to send a message to the Netherlands that the Philippines, which was close to the US, had a history of independence struggle that was in line with Indonesia. The Indonesian nationalists' praise of the way the US prepared the Philippines to become independent indicated the Indonesian nationalists' efforts to reach out to the US through the US success story in the Philippines and attacked the Dutch weakness in treating Indonesia in colonial times.

For Indonesian fighters, Philippine independence was one of the crucial moments to reassess how far the Indonesians had gone and raise morale in their conflict with the Dutch. Philippine independence was an opportunity to compare Indonesia and the Philippines and then learn good practices in state life and community life in the Philippines to be applied in Indonesia. Examples were in the fields of education, gender equality, state administration, and roles in the international world. Not only that, with the independence of the two countries, Indonesia hoped that both would start seriously thinking about bilateral relations in the future.

Nevertheless, this study is almost entirely one-sided, focusing only on the responses of Indonesian nationalists to Philippine independence. Understanding the reactions of Filipino nationalists, such as the government, officials, nationalist activists, and the press, to Indonesian nationalists' responses to Philippine independence will be important in completing the study of Indonesia-Philippines relations. However, this theme is beyond the scope of this study and can be placed as a potential subject for future research agendas.

This study shows that relations between Indonesia and the Philippines were not only built with the official opening of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 1949 but with the foundation that had been built earlier. Celebrating Philippine independence on a large scale was one way for Indonesian independence fighters to broaden their international political spectrum, from mainly seeking support from Western countries to also seeking support from fellow Asian countries. This study fills gaps in the literature on Indonesian historiography, especially with regard to the history of Indonesian-Philippine relations, by showing the importance of Philippine independence for raising the morale of Indonesian freedom fighters in the context of the Dutch-Indonesian war and the birth of new countries in postwar Asia.



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DISCLOSURE

The author declares no conflict of interest.