

## Anti-Chinese Sentiment, Acts, and Violence

Why does antipathy 反感 toward any nation arise? It may be easily understood why a global hegemon like the U.S. or other state whose intentions may be easily interpreted as malign may be disliked, but why have others had ill feelings toward Chinese and China, a developing country which only professes to seek "peaceful development"? Can economic explanations be separated from racism? This handout does *not* seek to justify any example, but it is hoped that listing examples will be worthwhile and spur discussion.

**Major Historical & Contemporary Examples:** 1600s Philippines Anti-Chinese Violence - Seen as a threat to Spanish colonialists, massacres and ethnic cleansing against Chinese occurred repeatedly.

1740 Batavia Massacre (Jakarta, Indonesia) - After a large group of ethnic Chinese killed 50 Dutch soldiers, 10,000 ethnic Chinese were massacred, leaving only 600-3,000 survivors in the city.

1871 Los Angeles Chinese Massacre - 500 white men gather to attack, rob, and murder Chinese residents.

1882 Chinese Exclusion Act (Revoked in 1943, officially apologized for in 2012) - U.S. Congress, with strong support from Western states where unemployment after the U.S. Civil War was very high, voted to ban Chinese immigration to the USA. Arguably, this Act began the modern era of regulating global migration, an end to what Aristide Zolberg called the "liberal era" characterized by free migration as a result of global labor shortages.

1885 Rock Springs Massacre - Angry over mining wages being lower for Chinese coal miners (itself an anti-Chinese fact), white miners rioted against the Chinese miners, killing dozens and destroying their property.

1885 (Canadian) Chinese Immigration Act - A "head tax" of \$50 was placed on all Chinese immigrants entering Canada.

1887 Hells Canyon Massacre - A gang of four to six white men killed between 10-34 Chinese gold miners.

1965 Indonesian Anti-Communist Killings - Ethnic Chinese businesses were swept up in the country's anti-communist killing campaigns, though the anti-China motive is disputed by Charles A. Coppel. Around 2,000 ethnic Chinese were killed (out of a total death toll of 500,000), and tens of thousands of ethnic Chinese were "expelled".

1998 Indonesian Riots - Ethnic Chinese businesses targeted by looters across the country, resulting in widespread violence and nearly 1000 deaths (mostly of looters).

2014 Vietnam Riots - In response to placement of an oil rig in a disputed section of the S. China Sea, Vietnamese citizens protest and riot against both the Vietnamese government and China, mainly in Binh Duong Province.

Hollywood movies have rarely cast Chinese (or Asians generally) in positive, protagonist roles, favoring broad stereotypes as explored in the documentaries "The Slanted Screen" [www.slantedscreen.com](http://www.slantedscreen.com) and "Hollywood Chinese" [www.imdb.com/title/tt1052005/](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1052005/). Chinese nationalists also routinely accuse Western media of being anti-China, especially when reporting on sensitive issues.

**Global Surveys:** In 2015, there were fewer than ten countries whose citizens had an "unfavorable" view of China. The highest rates of unfavorability were in Japan (89%), Vietnam (74%), Jordan (64%), Germany (60%), and Turkey (59%). 54% of U.S. citizens surveyed viewed China unfavorably. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinophobia>)

**The Chinese Diaspora:** About 40-60 million ethnic Chinese live outside China. Links- [www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/index.php?chinese-diaspora](http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/index.php?chinese-diaspora) <http://thediplomat.com/2015/11/malaysias-chinese-diaspora-the-other-side-of-the-story/> [www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/jun/11/china.comment](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/jun/11/china.comment) [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overseas\\_Chinese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overseas_Chinese)

**VOCABULARY:** · anti-foreign/xenophobic排外的 · (The) "Blue Team" (hardline foreign policy U.S. Congress members) · ·harm Offensive (Kurlantzick's book on Chinese soft power in SE Asia) · (The) "China Threat" Narrative · diaspora散居 · ethnic Chinese living outside China华裔 · expel/kick out开除 · (The) "inscrutable Chinese" · jingoism/jingoistic · market-dominant minority (MDM, from Chua's *World on Fire*) · neocolonialism新殖民地注意 · (The) Overseas Chinese/Chinese Diaspora华侨 · Panda-hugger (俚语: 西方人钦佩中国或不同意对中国的批评) · pogrom · remittances汇奇款项 · Returned Overseas Chinese海归 · rivalry · Sinophobia 恐华, 惧华 · social Darwinism社会达尔文主义 · xenophobia排外心理 · "Yellow Peril (racist Xenophobia of Westerners against Asians in 19th-20th C.)黄祸

Many publications refer incorrectly to extensive massacres of Chinese in Indonesia in 1965 - 66. Approximately half a million people were killed in this period, but the victims were overwhelmingly members and associates of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Chinese Indonesians experienced serious harassment but relatively few were killed. The persistence of this myth is attributed to a trope dating back to the seventeenth century which equates the social position of Chinese in Indonesia with that of Jews in Europe and which thus predicts periodic pogroms and attempts at genocide. The myth has survived partly because it inspires a sense of urgency in combating discrimination against Chinese Indonesians, but it encourages a misunderstanding of the causes of intense violence in Indonesia and raises serious moral issues concerning genocide denial by substitution.

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### Why Not Genocide? Anti-Chinese Violence in Aceh, 1965 -1966 BY: Jess Melvin

**Abstract:** This article provides an account of anti-Chinese violence in Aceh between 1 October 1965 and 17 August 1966. Drawing upon original oral history evidence and previously unknown documentary sources, this article builds upon current scholarly understandings that two phases of violence involving members of the ethnic Chinese community can be identified in Aceh during this period, to explain how a third explicitly ethnic-based phase of violence directed against members of the ethnic Chinese community in Aceh can also be identified. Based on this research and a reflection on the precedent set by the Cambodian genocide as to how the current legal definition of genocide can be applied, this article argues that the assessment that the Indonesian killings should not be understood as genocide is premature.

### Conclusion

The patterns of violence perpetrated against members of the ethnic Chinese community in Aceh between 1 October 1965 and 17 August 1966 suggest that the military leadership's primary motivation was to physically destroy its major political opponent the PKI. This included the targeting of ethnic Chinese members of the PKI and the large-scale murder of members of Baperki who were alleged to be associated with the PKI.

Once this violence that was launched in order to achieve the military's objective of physically destroying the PKI and all those accused of being associated with it, including Baperki members and members of the pro-Beijing community in Aceh, became counter-productive by threatening to destabilise the new regime, the military acted to bring this violence to an end. One of the ways in which the military leadership in North Aceh sought to achieve this was to authorise the wholesale rounding-up of members of the ethnic Chinese community in the district, regardless of political orientation, to be "surrendered" to the military.

The extent of the killings that eventuated from this process before the expulsion order took effect requires further investigation. If it can be proven that such killings occurred, the classification of these killings must certainly be genocide. The killing of members of the pro-Beijing group during the third wave of violence in the province may also be classified as genocide.

Given the severe shortage of data that was previously available about these events it is understandable that it was once believed there was insufficient evidence to conclude that the Indonesian killings as an event should be understood as genocide. Further research is also clearly required, including in other provinces such as North Sumatra where new evidence has come to light, in order to more fully understand the extent to which the explicit ethnic-based violence found in Aceh can also be found elsewhere in Indonesia. Based on the evidence that we now have, however, it would appear that a categorical insistence that discrete cases Anti-Chinese Violence in Aceh, 1965 -1966 89 of genocidal violence did not occur is not supported by this evidence, and, that, following in the footsteps of the Cambodian example, it is premature to conclude that the 1965 -66 killings as a whole should not be characterised and understood as genocide.

From Leo Suryadinata (Ed.), *Ethnic Chinese in Contemporary Indonesia* 2008), Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

(pg. 132-3, Charles A. Coppel's Chapter, "Anti-Chinese Violence Post-Soeharto")

### Concluding Remarks: What Can Be Done for the Future?

What else can be done to reduce the likelihood of anti-Chinese violence in the future? It is often suggested that an underlying cause is the perceived economic gap between indigenous and Chinese Indonesians. It is commonly and loosely said that ethnic Chinese control 70 per cent (or more) of the Indonesian economy. This is obviously an exaggeration, not least because great swathes of the economy have been in the large state sector, which has not been under Chinese control. A less extreme formulation is that they "control 70 per cent of the private, corporate, domestic capital (rather than the economy more widely)" (Backman 2001, pp. 88-89). On the other hand, at a 1999 conference in Canberra, Indonesian ambassador Wiryono cited figures attributed to James Riady that Chinese Indonesians controlled only about ten percent of national wealth (Lloyd & Godley 2001, pp. 243). Whatever the reality of that lower estimate may be, public perceptions generally favor the higher figure.

Can something be done about it? I do not favor the notion of affirmative action for indigenous Indonesians, in part on principle because it would turn back the clock on the recent removal of discrimination against Chinese Indonesians. It is also unsound because it treats all ethnic Chinese alike (whether rich, middle income or poor) on the one hand, and all indigenous Indonesians alike (whether rich, middle income or poor) on the other. There seems to me something inherently absurd about legislating for affirmative action in favor of more than 97.5 per cent of the population purely on the basis of ethnicity and regardless of whether they are wealthy and educated or poor and nearly illiterate. It may seem utopian to propose that the gap between rich and poor could and should be alleviated by a system of taxation such as a capital gains tax and progressive income tax, but that is quite common in democratic societies with a well-established rule of law. [...]